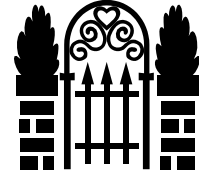


# MIGDAL April 2011



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The opinions expressed in MIGDAL are those of the contributors and do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Editor, the Executive or Council.

To contact the Editor, Gillian Cantor, you may phone her on 01253 724472, email her on [editor@brjc.org.uk](mailto:editor@brjc.org.uk) or write to her at the Synagogue. Contributions from readers are most welcome and will be considered for publication. Anything for the next issue should reach the editor by 30 June 2011.

## **From the Editor**

While coastal areas such as our own have fickle weather at the best of times, I sincerely hope that, by the time you read this, Spring is bursting out and our own Synagogue building, after all the disruption of building work and moving out of a part of our premises, so that a Maisonette could be formed, will be looking very good indeed. Co-incidentally 2011 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Synagogue and we reproduce on pages 16 to 18 an article written at the time of its opening.

To help secure another 50 years, I would like to draw readers' attention to two fund raising initiatives, the donation of a chair – see page 10 – and a November Jubilee Ball – see page 11. Your help, whatever form it may take, on both of these would be greatly appreciated.

February has seen the Goldberg family move to a new life in Utah. We wish them every happiness there; it was also the month Lee Smith, who is still an active League of Jewish Women volunteer at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, as she has been for a great number of years, celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wish her a hearty mazel tov.

I hope you will enjoy both the more serious and light hearted material in this issue of Migdal and thanks again to members and friends for their varied contributions to it. Finally I wish all readers a happy Pesach.

Gillian Cantor, Editor

## **Howard Jacobson Visit Update**

Many readers will recall that due to his illness Howard Jacobson's talk in Southport had to be cancelled at short notice. Eric Moonman, who has sent his apologies for the inconvenience of the postponement, says that he has been in discussion with Howard and Jenny Jacobson since the cancellation of their December meeting in Southport. I am pleased to say the "plan" is still alive despite Howard's extensive travels abroad over the next five months. Jenny has now sent this letter, which I share with all the communities concerned.

"Please don't think that the cancellation of your event doesn't weigh heavily on Howard (and me). It's awful – and in our minds you DO have priority.... It will be June before we know how the second half of the year pans out but, in June, I will get back to you, or you to me please."

# Visit of Rabbi Tony Bayfield 21 January

"Didn't we do well!" I'm tempted to say, despite the Shule being in some disarray, due to the building work being carried out, and fog and road works in many parts of the region. Yes, Rabbi Bayfield's visit on 21 January 2011 was a resounding success, an opinion echoed by all present.

Our determined Congregation plus two visitors from Southport Reform's Synagogue, enjoyed a beautifully taken service from David Jacobs of the Movement for Reform Judaism and responsible for Synagogue Partnership, with a sermon by Rabbi Bayfield on how we are all defined by the people we know and with whom we are connected, Rabbi Bayfield by his daughter, who was becoming a well known and in demand rabbi.

After the service there was a delicious chavurah finger buffet, enjoyed by everyone and especially welcome that cold evening. After the supper Rabbi Bayfield and David Jacobs went on to Southport and I hope the weather was better.

The Synagogue sanctuary might have been looking a lot worse had it not been for the team of people who had spent much time making the whole area look as neat as possible in the circumstances.

Thanks must go to all those who provided food and helped make the Synagogue look presentable.

## Condolences

Our sincere condolences go to Mr Gerry Stoll whose beloved sister Norma Wexler, passed away on 6 February 2011 in America. MHDSRIP. We wish Gerry and his family Long Life.

## Blackhurst Budd, Solicitors

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### "For your Legal Needs"

As our commitment to the local community, we will donate 10% of our legal fees for work introduced through readers of Migdal.

For any enquiry, please contact Martin Block

# From the President's Desk

## Hatikvah

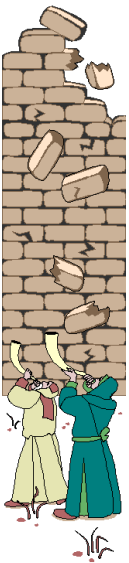
Well dear friends, our builders commenced our project to build a maisonette on the 4<sup>th</sup> January. By the

time you read this, it should be complete or, if not, very close to being finished. Those of you who have attended services or visited the shule in order to lend assistance must be impressed that there has been so little disturbance to services or to the life of the Synagogue. The only significant area of reorganisation has been the cheder. I speak on behalf of all of us, members, parents and the children, when I thank Leslie (and we have a lot to thank him for) for his generosity in allowing the children the run of his home every Wednesday throughout January and most of February.

Before I continue and as I have already mentioned Leslie, I must publicly thank him for his vision, enthusiasm and hard work in leading us to and through this ambitious project. Many of us I know were sceptical but we all knew that to do nothing was not an option. I must also thank our Treasurer, Alan. Treasurer is indeed a very loose title. Alan carries out so much work behind the scenes that to describe the talents he brings to our executive is almost impossible. Many others have helped; if I tried to name you all I would be bound to omit someone. So can I just add all our thanks to those who have assisted with clearing, cleaning and preparing our Synagogue for its changing future.

To return to where I started, I hope that everybody is pleased with the work. I know that I have been most impressed by and grateful to our builder, Norman Pennington. His workmanship and co-operation has been fantastic. I feel sure that thanks to him and all those who have worked tirelessly to ensure the viability of the project we will have cause to be grateful for many years to come.

We now look forward to the next major and significant event in our calendar. On the weekend of 25/26 March Daniel Hurst is to celebrate his Barmitzvah and based on the reports from Rabbi Zalud, I have no doubt that Daniel will thrill us all with his recital of his sedra and haftarah.



What follows is a little prose that I wrote some seven years ago for a previous issue of our newsletter. I find it as true today as it was then; I make no apology for repeating myself. - I was leafing through past copies of Migdal, looking for inspiration, something to appease our editor and ensure that she has something to publish from the President. I discovered that whilst I have often shown optimism and pride, what I have written in the past has perhaps been a little too serious. I therefore decided to try my hand at a little humour, so with apologies: -

There is a shule in Blackpool just along the Raikes Parade,  
Where every Shabbat morn and eve many a prayer is made.  
Sometimes we have a minyan and often times we don't;  
We have lots of willing helpers and never hear "I won't".

When putting on a simcha, we oft are heard to say:  
Give them lots and lots to eat, that will make them stay.  
And do you know its true, whenever so inclined,  
Our members are not backward, they never get left behind.

This shule is blessed with Readers, they take services with a smile.  
Their efforts are most appreciated and always are worthwhile.  
And yet, there are times and moments one really must concede,  
When picking up a machzor the words are hard to read.

At times we get despondent when we've tried with all our might  
To please you and to make you feel that you should stay in sight.  
We want you and we need our members one and each;  
So please do try to join with us some can learn and some can teach.

We try to encourage all our friends to regularly come along.  
Sometimes we are successful but it's always the same old song.  
The service times too early, they finish much too late.  
I really am too busy, have too much on my plate.

We must continue to build upon successes of times past.  
We strive to provide a future and to make the promise last.  
The shule is always there for you and for your kinder too;  
The only thing that's missing is that we're not seeing you.

Leon Tax

שלום

# The MP's Decision

While walking down the street one day, a Member of Parliament' is tragically hit by a truck and dies. His soul arrives in heaven and is met by St. Peter at the entrance. "Welcome to heaven," says St. Peter. "Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see a high official around these parts, you see, so we're not sure what to do with you."

"No problem, just let me in," says the man. "Well, I'd like to, but I have orders from higher up. What we'll do is have you spend one day in Hell and one in Heaven. Then you can choose where to spend eternity." "Really, I've made up my mind. I want to be in Heaven,' says the MP.

"I'm sorry, but we have our rules." And with that, St. Peter escorts him to the lift and he goes down, down, down to hell. The doors open and he finds himself in the middle of a green golf course. In the distance is a clubhouse and standing in front of it are all his friends and other politicians who had worked with him. Everyone is very happy and in evening dress. They run to greet him, shake his hand, and reminisce about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the people. They play a friendly game of golf and then dine on lobster, caviar and champagne.

Also present is the Devil, who really is a very friendly guy and has a good time dancing and telling jokes. They are having such a good time that before he realises it, it is time to go. Everyone gives him a hearty farewell and waves while the lift rises. The lift goes up, up, up and the door reopens on heaven where St. Peter is waiting for him.

"Now it's time to visit Heaven." So, 24 hours pass with the MP joining a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, playing the harp and singing. They have a good time and, before he realises it, the 24 hours have gone by and St. Peter returns.

"Well, then, you've spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now choose your eternity." The MP reflects for a minute, then he answers: "Well, I would never have said it before, I mean heaven has been delightful, but I think I would be better off in Hell." So St. Peter escorts him to the lift and he goes down, down, down to Hell. Now the doors of the lift open and he's in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and rubbish. He sees all his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the waste and putting it in black bags as more waste falls from above.

The Devil comes over to him and puts his arm around his shoulder. "I don't understand," stammers the MP. "Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and clubhouse, and we ate lobster and caviar, drank champagne, and danced and had a great time. Now there's just a wasteland full of garbage and my friends look miserable. What happened?"

The Devil looks at him, smiles and says, "Yesterday we were campaigning..... *Today you voted!*"

## **The Film "Lebanon"**

A short while ago, I struggled against heavy rain to reach the Blackpool Odeon in order to see a very gritty film called "Lebanon", which gave a very personal account by Samuel Moaz, the film's director, of an incident in the 1982 Israel/Lebanon war. In June that year, a lone tank and paratroopers are despatched to search a hostile town, a simple mission that turns into a nightmare. The four members of the tank crew find themselves in a situation they cannot contain.

Moaz was a conscript at the time and, as you will see if you watch the film, he had serious issues with the territory and Lebanese civilians. Lebanon was the winner of a Golden Lion award at a recent Venice Film Festival and was shown as part of the Fylde Film Society's fortnightly Monday night screenings. I for one was impressed.

## **Blackpool Jewish Forum**

Recent Forum evenings at the Carousel Hotel, Blackpool, have been reasonably well attended and enjoyed by those present. The provisional date for the Forum 2011 AGM is 10 April starting 2.30 pm at Raikes Parade. For more information, phone Mike Neiman (640597), Roz Stillings (354020), Gerry Black (823629) or Estelle Ballan (319334)

## **Food for Thought!**

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.  
Bakers trade recipes on a "knead to know" basis  
A hangover is the wrath of grapes.  
Dijon vu – the same mustard as before  
A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

# Dvir Aminolav

Dvir Aminolav was the first Israeli soldier killed in the 2008 Gaza War. His mother Dalya missed Dvir, terribly. One night before she went to bed, she said in a loud voice: "G-d, give me a sign, give me a hug from Dvir so that I will know that his death had some meaning." That week her daughter asked her to accompany her to a musical performance at The International Crafts Festival in Jerusalem. Dalya, feeling quite depressed, did not want to go to the concert, but she didn't want to disappoint her daughter either and agreed to go.

The concert was a bit delayed. A two year old boy began wandering through the stands. He walked up to Dalya's seat and touched her on the shoulder. Dalya turned around, saw the boy and smiled warmly. "What's your name?" Dalya asked. "Eshel," the boy replied. "That's a nice name. Do you want to be my friend, Eshel?" The boy nodded and sat down next to Dalya. Eshel's parents were sitting two rows above. Concerned their little boy was bothering Dalya, they asked him to come back up. But Dalya insisted that everything was fine.

"I have a brother named Dvir" two-year-old Eshel chimed in, as only little children can. Dalya was shocked to hear the unusual name of her beloved son and walked up to where Eshel's parents were sitting. She saw a baby in his carriage, and apologizing, she asked, "If you don't mind me asking, how old is your baby?" The baby's mother replied, "He was born right after the war in Gaza."

Dalya swallowed hard. "Please tell me, why did you choose to name him Dvir?" Baby Dvir's mother explained. "When I was at the end of my pregnancy, the doctors suspected the foetus may have a very serious birth defect. Since it was the end of the pregnancy, there was little the doctors could do and I just had to wait and see how things would turn out. When I went home that night, the news reported that the first casualty in the war was a soldier named Dvir. I was so saddened by this news that I decided to make a deal with G-d.' If you give me a healthy son, I promise to name him Dvir, in memory of the killed soldier.'"

Dalya, the mother of Dvir, stood with her mouth open. She tried to speak but she couldn't. After a long silence, she said quietly, "I am Dvir's mother." The young parents didn't believe her. She repeated, 'Yes, it's true. I am Dvir's mother. My name is Dalya Aminimalov, from Pisgat Zeev.'" With a sudden inspiration, Baby Dvir's mother handed Dalya the baby and said "Dvir wants to give you a hug." Dalya held the little baby boy in her arms and looked into his angelic face. The emotion she felt at that moment was overwhelming. She had asked for a hug from Dvir and she could truly feel his warm and loving embrace from the World of Truth.

# Ben Rich, the new Reform Judaism CEO

*After a comprehensive international search, which attracted a strong list of candidates, the Movement for Reform Judaism has appointed strategist and communications expert, Ben Rich, as its next Chief Executive, to succeed Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand.*



Ben has been working as a consultant for the Reform Movement alongside Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand and Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield CBE since helping to launch the new Reform Siddur three years ago. He will be leading a strong senior team, including the newly-appointed Pam Goldsmith, currently Co-Chair of Finchley Reform Synagogue, who becomes Director of Operations and Community Support.

In addition to his work for the Movement, in recent years Ben has undertaken projects for Alyth, Kol Chai and Middlesex New Reform synagogues, as well as JCoSS and Mitzvah Day. Ben is a member of the London Jewish Forum, a regular columnist for the Jewish News and the former chair of the JC Power 100, as well as a Governor of the UK's first Hindu state school, in Edgware, which he helped to establish.

Prior to setting up his own consultancy specialising in providing communications advice to faith and community organisations, Ben was a director of Luther Pendragon, one of the largest and most successful independently-owned PR businesses in the country. There, in addition to helping to run the 50-strong consultancy, he advised a range of blue ribbon clients, including National Grid, Wrigley's and the Cabinet Office. His award-winning 2005 campaign on behalf of the Home Office to mark Holocaust Memorial Day played a major part in his decision to refocus his work on faith communities. Previously, he served for four years as Deputy Policy Director for the Liberal Democrats, working closely with Paddy Ashdown.

Ben says: "I feel very honoured and excited at the opportunity to take on this role, heading up what I know from personal experience is a very strong team. We are at a unique moment of opportunity for Reform Judaism. I believe Reform Judaism represents the values and practices of the vast majority of British Jewry, even if old habits and affiliations die hard.

Yet the remarkable success of cross-communal organisations such as JCoSS and Limmud, the increased prominence of Reform Judaism, and the changing of the guard in Jewish communal leadership, all combine to throw in the air many traditional assumptions. I look forward to leading the Reform Movement into the next stage of its journey.”

Stephen Moss, Chair of the Movement for Reform Judaism, says: “The post attracted an extremely strong field from a range of different backgrounds. In the end, however, Ben stood out and was the Board’s unanimous choice because of his strengths as a strategist and communicator, his outstanding knowledge and contacts across the Jewish community, and his expertise in leadership, stakeholder relations and fundraising.”

Ben (44) grew up in a Liberal Jewish family in South London. While at university in York, where he was chair of the Jewish Society, he attended Sinai Synagogue, Leeds working closely with the then rabbi, Walter Rothschild, who was also the progressive chaplain. On returning to London he attended, at different times, West London Synagogue and the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John’s Wood, before moving to Pinner. He can now regularly be found with his wife and two young children at Tot Shabbat services at both Middlesex New (the Reform synagogue in Harrow) and Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue. He is also helping to organise the first Harrow Limmud in March.

Ben Rich will start work full-time on 1<sup>st</sup> May, although from the beginning of March he will start to work-shadow Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand to ensure a smooth and orderly handover.

## **Donate towards a chair!**

We invite members, readers and friends to make a donation towards our lovely new chairs that have replaced the pews. The suggested donation is £30 a chair. Would anyone wishing to make a donation, please send a cheque, payable to the Blackpool Reform Jewish Congregation, to Alan Cantor, Treasurer, 509 Clifton Drive North, St Annes, FY8 2QX or leave it for him at the Synagogue.

# Golden Jubilee Ball

*At December's EGM Rachel Howson and Maxine Perkins volunteered to form a fund raising group. At the EGM, they suggested members and friends donate a chair. Many have already done so, but there are many more chairs awaiting donation. Here is Rachel's and Maxine's report on their next idea.*

Now that we have built the maisonette - I like it and I certainly hope you do too - it is time to get on with some serious fund raising. At the EGM together with Maxine Perkins I found myself volunteering to head up a fund raising committee; it was not that either of us claim to have any special skills but rather that everybody involved in our small congregation is already doing so much, we recognised that some new blood was needed.

That said, we are really lucky in that we discovered that this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year since our synagogue was built. WOW! So it should not surprise you to learn that our very first venture - first in effort not necessarily in time - is to be a GOLDEN JUBILEE BALL. Please do set aside the evening of Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November. Although the date is not set in stone, we have made a provisional booking at the Hilton and they are able to accommodate us. We will need you to bring your family and all your friends. It would be nice if we can get 200 although we recognise that we might need to settle for 150.

As yet we have not chosen a menu but it will be a fish and/or vegetarian meal, so you need have no qualms about bringing your Jewish friends. We will be having a serious raffle and Maxine and I will be contacting many of you to give us a somewhat more substantial than usual prize. We will also be arranging an advertising brochure and we will be contacting many of you to help sell advertising space to your friends and business contacts.

So this message is very simple: If YOU care about our community, and we know that you do, then it is time to put your hands in your pockets, in the pockets of your families and if they will let you to extract some financial assistance from your friends. Please help us to ensure the survival and continuity of Blackpool Reform Jewish Congregation and perhaps even Judaism in Blackpool so that our children and theirs too might benefit from your generosity. Thank you for reading this.

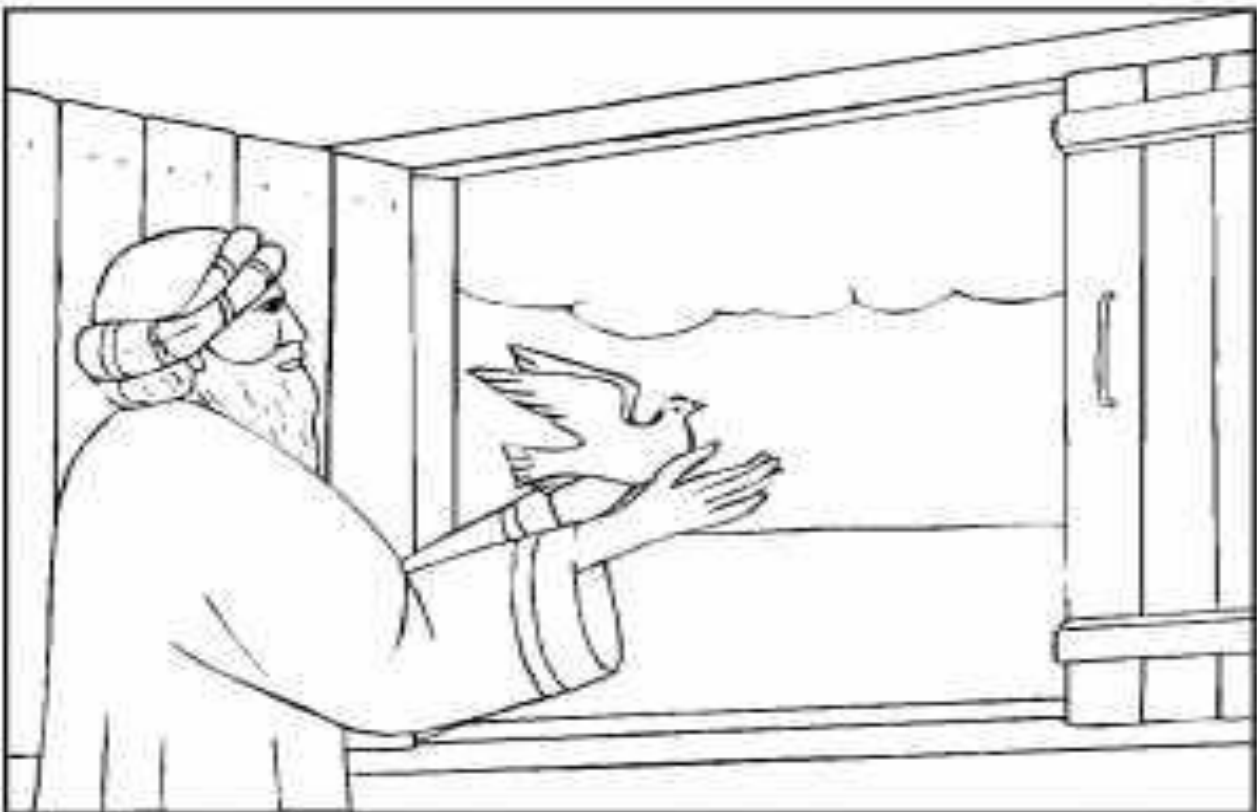
Remember the date is planned to be **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2011** – put it in your diary NOW!

## **Forthcoming Birthdays - Mazel Tov to:**

Gemma Douglas on 25 July  
Sophie Hyman 6 April

Samantha Douglas on 9 July  
Mathew Taylor 23 July

## **Children's Corner – For you to colour Noah releases the dove**



### **Do you know anyone who wants to rent a two bedroom Maisonette?**

At the time of writing our new 2 bedroom Maisonette within our building is available for letting on a Shorthold Tenancy Agreement for £115 per week. If you know anyone who is interested in renting it, please would you contact the editor on 01253 724472.

## **Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January**

We at the very last minute were able to secure a slot for our Synagogue's children to do a reading at the Holocaust memorial day, 27 January 2011, being held at the Salvation Army. Many primary and secondary schools had prepared presentations on the 'Untold stories' of the Holocaust. Unfortunately, due to the short notice, we weren't able to get many of our youngsters to attend. However, the Howson girls, with very little preparation, stepped up to the mark and in turn read a piece out of our Siddur, especially for this day. The day was well attended by many of our fellow congregants and many from the Orthodox Synagogues. The children did us all proud and made us all realise the reason and the importance as to why we keep telling these stories and teaching them how proud they should always be to be Jewish.

Now we have made this link and our first Holocaust Memorial Day, we would like to get even more of our children to be involved next year. Watch this space .....

## **Recollections of Nazi Germany**

As part of Holocaust Memorial Week, on 28 January 2011, at Preston's Harris Library, a German refugee, now of mature years, was invited to address an audience on her recollections of what was, in the light of the period, a difficult childhood. Some 100 people of various faiths crowded into a fairly small room at the library and there was audible shock by what the speaker had to say, despite the coverage the subject receives on TV and in books and films. The reaction to such talks supports the importance of their continuing to take place, particularly to young people.

## **Talk on "Candle of Jacob, Jersuaalem"**

Towards the end of last year, I defied a very chilly evening to attend an interfaith event held under the auspices of the Bible Pattern Church, South Shore. Inge Buh, a German non-Jew, who runs a refuge for Holocaust survivors, gave her audience an illuminating talk of the refuge & her reasons for starting it. The event raised £671 for this worthy cause.

# **My Holiday in Israel by Avril Mannino**

My expectations of lots of chicken soup, matzo balls and “lockshen” were soon dashed, as I learned to my surprise that 80% of all Jews in Israel are secular. Wow! What a disappointment but it was soon made up by the love of the country. Instead we ate plenty of falafel, schnitzel and shawarma.

Victor and I went with a Biblical Tour Group, run with Jewish guides. Starting from the Beersheba desert, then through the Shfela lowlands learning about the Tanach, on to Elah Valley and a Bedouin experience. Finally our first Kibbutz – great – and guess what we passed en route, a Macdonald’s – they get everywhere! The next day we rose early and went on to Negev’s Wilderness of Zin, where out of Egypt the Children of Israel fled and encountered G-d on Sinai (which is a 4,500 square mile desert – awesome). We saw the Ramon crater and we talked about Tectonic plates and how an enormous flood possibly took place. Throughout the desert we saw an occasional acacia tree, a supplier of food and water.

We went on to the location of the “Reed Sea”, where Moses (whose name means no name) was found. We discussed the Pentateuch on the way to the lowest desert on earth, through the Wilderness of Paran, and then to Beersheba from where the guide took us to Tel Arad at Masada – very emotional. Our new guide, Baruch, spoke of Masada, Ein Gedi and Qumran, the heart of Leviticus. Through the Judean desert, we had wonderful views. A highlight was a dip in the Dead Sea en route to Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls and the entire Isaiah script were found.

Then we arrived in Jerusalem – Wow! – and had a tour on foot of the whole city – so exciting. Of course we couldn’t miss a visit to Yad Vashem, very moving. The next day we went to the Armenian quarter, where we saw a Karaite Synagogue. The Karaite sect don’t accept the views of most Jews, only oral tradition and Talmud. We witnessed a Bar mitzvah at the Wailing Wall, very exciting. We left Jerusalem on to the Valley of Jezreel and ending in Haifa. Photos were taken at Gesher Kibbutz, the English leaving their mark, as well as railways.

The following day it was to Galilee and a wonderful boat ride on the lake. Next we climbed the Golan Heights to Gamla, a Jewish settlement, where there were more suicides than Masada! We saw a very new olive oil business near a Druze village – the Druze have very strange beliefs! Our final leg was to Netanya (meaning G-d gives), with men dancing in the streets; what a lively town. The last day we looked at Caesarea, Pontius

Pilate's House, the Olympiad where Herod started the "Games", had lunch at Jaffa, took photos of views & finally a bus to Ben Gurion Airport to home. It was all a wonderful experience, with incredible guides who brought home the Old Testament and Talmud into present day life and Tenach and I hope I have given you a glimpse of that experience.

PS: There was unfortunately a sad postscript to the trip. Our guide in Jerusalem was Kay Wilson, who soon after we returned to England was stabbed to death. AM

## Ask the Rabbi....

**Question:** Do Jews believe in ghosts, demons, evil spirits, etc? I've been told that Judaism does not believe in the Devil. Rather, we were made by G-d with the inclination to do good or bad, therefore, all good and evil in the world is a manifestation of one of these drives.

**Answer:** Firstly, it is important to know that all things in our universe are the creation of G-d, both what appears to us to be good and what appears to be evil. The Jewish understanding of Satan is an angel created by G-d whose job it is to tempt us. It is explained in the Book of Job, Satan cannot operate without G-d's permission and directive. There is room in our philosophy for a belief in demons and other malevolent forces but, again, they are creations of G-d and exist as tools to steer us in the right direction and to avoid pitfalls.

## Cookery Corner - Spinach Frittata

**Ingredients:** 2 packs frozen spinach (10 ounce size)  
3 pieces of matzah  
4 eggs, beaten  
Salt and pepper to taste and a dash of nutmeg  
3 tablespoons margarine and grated Parmesan cheese

Heat the spinach in a saucepan with 1/2 cup of water, until completely thawed. Strain the spinach, reserving half the amount of liquid. Crumble the matzah and pour the spinach and the remaining liquid over them. Mix thoroughly until the matzah is soft. Add the beaten eggs, salt, nutmeg and pepper. Heat the margarine in a 12- inch skillet or frying pan and add the spinach mixture. Cook on medium heat, uncovered for 5 minutes on each side. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan and serve immediately. Good as a Breakfast meal for Pesach.

## Portrait of a Community: Blackpool

*The article below by E F Gee on the early years of our Congregation is taken from the December 1961 edition of the Synagogue Review, the organ of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain and was brought to our attention by the Movement for Reform Judaism archivist, David Jacobs.*

At the beginning of this century the Jewish tendency of communal segregation began to weaken. Under the influence of this comparatively new experience, the first, pioneering, Jewish families settled in Blackpool and became the nucleus of a new Jewish Community. Some of their problems were caused by the unusual sociological structure of the town. Most of the residents are in various ways related to catering for holiday makers; and neither large-scale industries nor academic institutions exist in Blackpool. The new families had to work hard until very late in the evening in order to establish themselves in the holiday-making trades, and most of them resided by their business, be it boarding houses or shops. Hence there was no natural centre of Jewish life, such as a street mainly populated by Jewish families. Few secular Jewish social gatherings existed. The continuous need to share the time and the efforts with Gentiles overcame, many a time, the natural desire to congregate in a Jewish way and for Jewish purposes. Orthodoxy has proved to be practically impossible in this social climate. The problem of the first settlers of how to keep the major communal values of our Creed is still relevant. Social clubs have been an unsatisfactory answer.

Fourteen years ago, a small group of Jewish families, deeply concerned with this problem, decided to establish a Congregation, so as to bridge the gap between their daily activities and their desire to fulfil themselves as Jews. They joined the Jewish Liberal Movement. A Minister was engaged. Yet after a short time the laity felt a growing disappointment in the particular approach to religious and communal matters. Many of the congregants found it difficult to associate the ritual of Divine Service with the memories of their parent Synagogues and with the understanding of Jewish worship, and they were not convinced by the Liberal theological answers to questions such as 'Who is a Jew?', 'the relevance of the Laws of the *Torah*', etc. For a long time they continued searching for a vivid and acceptable interpretation of our Creed. Many discussions and debates were held. A Liberal-minded minority explained and re-explained its views, and others offered their own ideas after the minister had left. Rabbi P. S. Goldberg, the Minister of the Reform Community in Manchester, was consulted. He explained the continuous need for re-forming the forms but keeping the contents of Judaism, and thus he could show a way to those who wanted to become good

neighbours and participants in Blackpool affairs, and yet be sincere Jews at the same time. The members did not hesitate any longer. In 1958, the Congregation resolved to join the Reform Movement.

Mr. S. Hart (President of the Congregation), Mr. B. Gorwitz (Vice-President and Dr. N. Ross (Hon. Treasurer) are the 'troika' and the trustees of the Congregation. Assisted by Mrs. G. Kay (Hon. Treasurer of the General Fund) and Mr. P. Gordon (Hon. Secretary), the other member of the Executive, and by an industrious Council, they have become personally responsible for our new achievement, our Synagogue.

For many years we were kindly permitted by the Blackpool Friends to use their premises, the Friends' Meeting House, for our various religious and communal activities. Our dream to have premises of our own, to have a Synagogue, never weakened. There are only 200 individual members in our Congregation. It has been, and still is, very difficult to raise enough money from such a small number, but we do not regret the effort. At the ceremony of Consecration of the ground and the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Synagogue which took place on 27th March, 1960, in the presence of many visitors, Rabbi Goldberg mentioned the saying on the notice board of a United States Air Force station during the war: 'The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer'. That is precisely what happened to us. Under the influence of Rabbi Goldberg and his Congregation, and with the friendly guidance of Mr. S. Kay, now President of the Manchester Congregation of British Jews, our Synagogue was built. In July, 1961, the Synagogue at 40 Raikes Parade, which contains a main hall of 250 seats, a most beautiful ark, a gallery, classroom, kitchen, minister's study, etc., was handed over to the Congregation. The total cost was £23,000.

A year ago, the Rev. M. Arieli, an arts graduate and a former Grammar School teacher of Hebrew Literature from Tel-Aviv, became the Minister of the Congregation. Since his arrival and under his guidance the Congregation has widened its activities. We have now an active Youth Club, Religion School (four Classes), Hebrew lessons for adults, a busy Ladies' Guild, a Choir and other communal and religious activities. The Congregation has provided an answer to the local problem, and more and more applications for membership are being received.

On November 5th, we celebrated the Dedication of the Synagogue, and Rabbi P. S. Goldberg, the guiding light in our history as a Congregation, officially opened our House of Worship. The Mayor of Blackpool and many visitors as well as the congregants took part in our unforgettable *Simchah*.

Mr. S. Hart, President of the Blackpool Reform Congregation, introduced Mr. M. Fox, who kindled the perpetual light, and presented Rabbi Goldberg with an inscribed silver key. Rabbi Goldberg, the Rev. M. Arieli, Minister of the Blackpool Congregation, Dr. Norman Ross and Mr. B. Gorwitz performed the opening of the door ceremony and re-entered the Sanctuary, carrying the *Sifrai Torah* which were placed in the Ark by Mr. D. Kelner.

Rabbi Goldberg, assisted by the Rev. E. Cahn, Southport, performed the Dedication Prayer and Service. The choir was reinforced by the voluntary choir of the Manchester Congregation, under the direction of Mr. Fixman, and accompanied by the organist, Mrs. G. Brown.

The Rev. M. Arieli, in his stimulating sermon, underlined the determination of the Blackpool Congregation to build their own House of Worship. He invited all present for afternoon tea at the Savoy Hotel.

At the Savoy Hotel, Mr. B. Gorwitz, Chairman for the afternoon, made a Toast to the Town of Blackpool. His Worship the Mayor, Alderman Clifford Cross, J.P., himself a lay reader for the Methodist Church, congratulated the Congregation on the fine House of Worship they had built and the warm family atmosphere that prevailed amongst its members. Rabbi Goldberg, in making a Toast to the continued success of the Synagogue, pointed out that this depended upon the regular attendance of all the members and that, although considerable efforts had had to be made by the congregants to finance the building of the Synagogue, its furnishings, etc. still required further financial efforts. As the Representative of the R.S.G.B., Dr. Abelson seconded the toast. Mr. S. Kay, President of the Manchester Congregation, presented a silver breastplate on behalf of his Congregation to Mr. S. Hart, who warmly thanked him, not only for this present but also for his personal labours and that of his entire executive, choir and minister and for all the help and guidance which they had given and which Blackpool would never be able to repay.

Mr. Gorwitz spoke about the proposed Memorial Hall, intended to honour the late Ralph and Enid Cohen, for which their family had subscribed a large sum; he called for support for this project which, requiring a further £4,000 it was hoped to be officially opened in March, 1962.

## **Can you help us by placing an ad. in Migdal, at a very modest cost?**

Why not place your Business Advertisement in Migdal and support our Congregation, as well as helping your business, at a very modest cost? For more details please contact the editor, see page 1 for details.

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# Dates for your Diary

*Apart from Kol Nidre, the dates refer to the first calendar day of the various Festivals; Festivals begin on the evening before*

Tuesday 19 April 2011	Pesach
Sunday 1 May 2011	Yom HaShoah
Sunday 22 May 2011	Lag B'Omer
Wednesday 8 June 2011	Shavuot
Thursday 29 September 2011	Rosh HaShana
Saturday 8 October 2011	Yom Kippur
Thursday 13 October 2010	Succot
Thursday 20 October 2010	Simchat Torah
Wednesday 21 December	Chanukah
Thursday 8 March	Purim

## **Our AGM 7.30pm on Wed. 13 April 2011**

Please note this in your diaries and do come along to our AGM on Wednesday 13 April, starting 7.30pm, particularly to hear about the changes to our building and our community to lay the foundations for a firmer future. There will be plenty of opportunity to hear your ideas, if you wish to contribute.

## **Chavurah Supper 6 May 2011**

The next chavurah supper will be on Friday 6 May 2011. The service that evening will start at 7pm. Details will be announced soon. Meanwhile, please put a note in your diary!

## **Jubilee Ball - Saturday 12 November 2011**

Please put this date in your diary for this important event to celebrate our building's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to help secure our community's future. Do read the article on page 11 for more information.

# **CST – Taking Share of Responsibility**

Above all, the purpose of CST, the Community Security Trust, is to ensure that any member of our community is able to lead the Jewish life that they choose. CST is part of our community, so it can only succeed if our community takes its share of responsibility, which means a whole range of things. It means contacting your local CST and asking what role you can play with our local security teams. It means understanding why we do security and co-operating with our local teams. Sharing responsibility also means keeping a sense of perspective about where things stand. Anti-semitism shouldn't define our lives as British Jews, not now, not ever.

Today, our community is largely able to express its Jewishness in whatever way it wishes. That can be religious, cultural, political, charitable, sporting or whatever sort of Jewish life you do, or do not, wish to have. Our community is, on the whole, successful and well integrated into the rest of society. We have come a very long way since the newly arrived immigrant generations of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, we often see rises in antisemitic incident levels when Jews or Israel are in the news. These are mainly directed against the most vulnerable and visible parts of our community, be it people or property.

In recent years, the threat of terrorism is something that all of our society has come to understand and find a way of living with. The fact that these terrorists have also targeted Jews is what underpins all of CST's work. We sincerely hope that CST's efforts help our community to feel confident that someone is standing up in defence of its rights. We take responsibility for the physical security of the community; and provide a professional and confidential reporting service for the minority of people who are unfortunate to suffer anti-Semitic hatred. It is not CST's wish to tell individuals how they should feel about the situation. How you react to all of this is up to you. Some people regard it as unimportant, but others are afraid or are deeply concerned for their own or their children's wellbeing.

Because of our work with the victims of anti-Semitic crime, CST regards its work as being about people's physical and emotional well-being, not about statistics. It is the human aspect that makes us all the more determined to work against anti-Semitism; and against the fear that anti-Semitism causes. We want to deter those who wish to harm our community, and we work with politicians, police and others in ensuring that our community's concerns are understood, heard and acted upon.

Each year, CST secures over 1,000 events across the whole community. We have recently installed security upgrades and shatter-proofing for windows at hundreds of communal buildings. CST does not charge the community for our services and relies upon charitable donations for our running costs. CST, however, can only be as strong as the community that we serve. We rely upon the community for our volunteer personnel and for co-operation with our work: whether that is at schools, synagogues, community events or wherever. All of this relies upon partnership between CST and our Jewish community. We really do need your support and for you to take your share of the responsibility.



### **Ben Rich Interview with Andie Newman**

*Tell us what you have been doing up until now*

The short version is that I went straight from student politics into working for the Lib Dems where I became Deputy Policy Director under Paddy Ashdown. When I got married, in 1994, I thought it was time to get a real job, so spent the next 13 years helping to build what became one of the most successful independently-owned PR firms in the country, Luther Pendragon. When we sold that in 2006, I saw an opportunity to start working for causes I cared about, so I set up my own business advising faith and community groups on their communications. In 2008, the Movement for Reform Judaism asked me to help launch their new Siddur and I've been working closely with Tony and Shoshana ever since.

*What strengths do you think you can bring to the job?*

I suppose in the first instance I'm a big picture man: I've worked with some of the biggest companies in the world – McDonald's, British Gas, Wrigley's – to devise strategies to help them address issues, enhance their reputations, and grow their businesses. For example, I worked with Sky to help them secure the Prime Ministerial debates last year. So, first and foremost, I aim to bring clarity of thinking and direction to everything we do within Reform Judaism.

*Why did you want this job?*

When it came up it felt tailor-made for me. I loved building a successful business at Luther but, after the highs (and lows) of my previous involvement in politics, I sometimes found it hard to engage emotionally with the tribulations of chewing gum. My work since leaving Luther - on behalf of Jewish and faith organisations about which I cared emotionally as well as intellectually - was the perfect antidote, but the opportunity to combine that once again with leading an organisation and a team working for a cause in which I passionately believe, was simply too good to miss. I know so many people in the Reform Movement and my first major task will be to lead a strategic review which will enable me to meet and listen to many more.

*What do you want for the Movement?*

I honestly believe we are at a unique moment of opportunity for Reform Judaism. Even today, I think we represent the values and practices of the vast majority of British Jewry, even if old habits and affiliations die hard. Yet the remarkable success of cross-communal organisations such as JCoSS and Limmud, the increased prominence of Reform Judaism, and the changing of the guard in Jewish communal leadership, all combine to throw in the air many traditional assumptions. I look forward to leading the Reform Movement into the next stage of its journey.

*Tell me about your relationship with Reform Judaism*

In common with many of our Rabbis, I grew up in the Liberal movement and I am equally comfortable in either a Reform or Liberal service. As a child, Julia Neuberger was my rabbi at South London and Mark Goldsmith my Hebrew teacher. I went to University in York where I attended a Reform synagogue – Sinai in Leeds - and on returning to London went regularly to West London for a period.

When I moved to Pinner I became a member at Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue, and when Kathleen Middleton became rabbi at Middlesex New Synagogue I started taking my children to her wonderful Tot Shabbat services, and have been attending (and encouraging others to attend) ever since. I am now looking forward to joining MNS.

I have worked with Tony Bayfield and pretty much all the rabbis for the past four years, helping to promote Reform values and beliefs.

*Isn't this a job for a rabbi?*

The role is Chief Executive, not spiritual Head of the Movement. Whilst, of course, there are rabbis out there who could perform both roles (and have done in the past, brilliantly), I'm really excited that the Movement has chosen me on the basis that I will be able to get the best from our professional team so that the Movement can communicate its religious messages to the maximum effect. In doing that, I'm very excited about working closely with the Assembly of Rabbis, as I know from Stephen that they are keener than ever to play a full role in the leadership of the Movement.

*Would you like to see a merger between the Liberal and Reform movements?*

Look, that's not on the cards and it's not the sort of thing that you 'impose from above' in any circumstances, but if you want my personal point of view I'll tell you: Of course we should continue to work closely together but that doesn't mean we should merge. Liberal Judaism needs to be at the cutting edge, ultimately rational and constantly testing boundaries - that's important – it challenges us all. But Reform Judaism emphasises the value of togetherness, wholeness, a home in which the vast majority of British Jews can feel comfortable. We need that too if we are to come to represent the mainstream of British Jewry. So the roles are different. Might that change in the future? Who knows, but it is not part of my agenda. Not unless members tell me they want it to be.

*What's your greatest achievement?*

I guess you mean professionally? When I was at Luther Pendragon I was very proud of my team for winning the IPPR award for the best not-for-profit campaign on behalf of the Home Office to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. It's nice to have the external validation that you have done something well.

But if I think about it, I've never been as proud as the day when JCoSS opened its doors to its first students last September. I worked for eight years on that project – with Pam Goldsmith who was one

of the governors and is an absolute star (I'm so looking forward to working with her and the rest of the senior team) – and I can tell you it was like becoming a Dad.

*Are you worried that you'll be confused with Rabbi Danny Rich, who is Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism?*

I think we're both big enough personalities to stand on our own two feet. Actually, we are distantly related and my father always accuses us of looking alike! To confuse matters still further, he actually does have a brother called Ben who works for the BBC, but just remember I'm the good-looking one, even if I have more grey hairs!

*Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?*

Well it depends what members want to know. I've no secrets, so if anybody does have any further questions for me they can email them to me at [ben.rich@reformjudaism.org.uk](mailto:ben.rich@reformjudaism.org.uk) and I'll try to answer them directly and, if appropriate, we can add them to the website.