

Un Cri de Coeur.....	1
Kosher Komes to Kobham	2
The South London Charities Committee	3
From the Box.....	4
Kingston Wall Hanging.....	4
KINGSTON WIZO.....	6
Ostrava: Ruth Elias - The Triumph of Hope.....	7
Ostrava during the occupation	7
COOKERY.....	9
Succot in the Negev and S Torah in the Gallilee.....	10
Riverside Club.....	11
NATIONAL THEATRE - TWO THOUSAND YEARS.....	12
Limmud Conference 2005.....	12
LUNCH AND LEARN	13
Chanukah Party	14
Joke 1	14
Joke 2	15
The Real Thing Ladies Guild	15
Cheder Report	15
The Rabbi's Page – Some thoughts on Israel.....	16

Un Cri de Coeur

The misery and pain of most survivors and many rescuers did not end in 1945.

Last year, we had a multitude of celebrations to commemorate the conclusion of WW2 and therefore the ending of the massacre of the innocents of the Holocaust. To most however, this was the beginning of a long period of disorientation and insecurity

When the war ended, I returned to live with my mother for a short period having been 'hidden' in Paris during the war by Olga and Ester Masoli. I returned to the Masolis towards the end of 1945 as my mother was unable to look after her two little boys and I experienced a very happy few years until my aunt (my mother's sister) came to fetch me and took me to Manchester in August 1948. I was then 9 years old.

This was the beginning of a difficult period which I can still remember very vividly. I had been living like a lord in Paris within a loving environment, spoilt rotten with no religious influences although the Masolis were non-practising Catholics. My aunt and uncle suddenly appeared, I was provided with an Austrian passport – the nationality of my parents. Interestingly, in the passport, which I treasure, it states:

'Permitted to land at Folkestone
on 15/8/48
on condition that the holder does not remain
in the United Kingdom longer than

SIX MONTHS (6).'

Fifty-seven years later, I am still here!!!! The Home Office have been understanding! They must have known I was going to make a massive contribution to the Gross National Product and the NHS!

I was now living in rainy, smoggy, grey cold Manchester with austere relatives and introduced to the Jewish religion –which was new to me. I was not enamoured by this change of lifestyle and the prospects of Shabbes, shule, tzistzies, davening etc. did not register positively on my radar .

Many many years later Olga informed me, to my surprise, that she had kept ALL the letters I had ever sent after I left Paris. I am now looking at the very first one dated 28 August 1948. It reads as follows (including my spelling and grammatical errors).

*Ma petite Ester et ma petite Olga
Nous sommes bien arriver mais je m'ennui parce que l'oncle va travaille et la tante fait des commition. Depuis que je suis ici je pleure quand je pense a toi, je ne voulais pas te dire mais je voudrais bien revenir chez nous mais je ne peu pas je voudrais que tu vienne me chercher le plutot possible. Je t'embrasse bien fort en esperant te revoir bientot je t'embrasse encore tres, tres fort.*

*Votre Misou qui vous aime beaucoup.
Misou'*

I will not translate, these were the cri de coeur of a very unhappy 9 year old and I was unable to see them for almost 10 years. They were not Kosher!

Now, as the grandfather of an 8 year old, I can appreciate the immense pain experienced by Olga and Ester and 'their' little 9 year old boy. Alas, the misery and pain of most survivors and many rescuers did not end in July 1945.

Marcel L
(Misou)

Kosher Komes to Kobham

Following the recent refurbishment of WAITROSE in COBHAM, they now have an extensive range of Kosher products. These include a range of Gilbert's meats. worsht and viennas. There is also a range of fresh Yarden's produce as well as chrane, new green and pickled cucumbers, Shabbos, Yartzheit and Chanukah candles. Matzo Meal, jars of pickled herring, borsht and boiled gefilte fish are also available as well as a range of Osem products and various other "goodies" too numerous to mention here.

I have spoken to the Manager and asked if they could also stock cholla (which other Waitrose shops already have) and I have also requested whether consideration could be given to stocking Pesachdick produce.

The Manager is very excited about the whole idea of stocking Kosher produce BUT.....if we don't USE this rarely available facility in our area, we will LOSE it!!! **IT IS UP TO YOU!!!!!!**

Derry D

The South London Charities Committee

Early in 1956 a small group had the idea of forming a local charity committee and from this beginning grew one of the most successful committees of the period. Apart from many thousands of pounds raised for the Shaare Zedek Hospital, Jerusalem, and numerous other charities the SLCC became a social focal point for the whole of the Young South London Jewish Community and even North Londoners ventured across the river to become members!

And now 50 years on a small group of us are trying to contact as many people as possible to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the formation of that committee. So many friendships were made in the years that the SLCC flourished that we wondered how many of you would be interested in a reunion to be held during Autumn 2006.

If you are a past member or even just attended some of our functions or know someone who did we would love to hear from you. Now it is up to you to come up with some contact e-mail addresses, addresses or phone numbers so we can be in touch with as many people as possible. If we find there is sufficient support we will put it back to you the former members to see what sort of event we should have.

Because of its success in the late fifties and early sixties with so many members of the South London Communities taking part as well as some from North London we feel we cannot let the 50th go by without a celebration so let us hear from you by sending your details to: The Jewish Chronicle, C/O Box 2890 25 Farnival St, London, EC4A 1JT or by e-mail to SouthLondonCC@aol.com

We are looking forward to your replies

Sincerely
Alan W Benjamin

From the Box....

It is now 19 months since I first took office as a Warden of the Synagogue. It was, I remember, a beautiful sunny Shabbat when I first “came in from the cold” as a new inexperienced and somewhat petrified recruit.

Looking back over that period, I feel I would now like to take this opportunity of thanking so many members of the community for their warmth and very kind words of support and encouragement. There are two very special people whom I must thank particularly – I could not have undertaken the job without them. Firstly, my wife Shirley who constantly reminds me of all the things that I should be doing and which I probably would have forgotten; as well as being by my side, literally and metaphorically, in so many communal events and activities. Secondly my colleague and friend, Arnie (the boss warden), who has guided, coached and encouraged me so very much and without whom I could not have possibly continued, let alone made whatever success of the post you think that I have.

It has been and still is a wonderful experience for me. Arnie and I have shared in many of your sorrows but have also been delighted to share and be part of your Simchas. Being on the Bimah on a Shabbat morning, particularly when there is a Barmitzvah or Aufruf, makes the wardenship so very rewarding for both of us.

Working with Rabbi Mason, Elisheva and their children has been a constant joy and delight. Finally once again a sincere and heartfelt THANK YOU to the Rabbi, Arnie, Shirley and, most importantly, to all of you - the wonderful Kingston community.

Arnie, Jan and their family join Shirley and me together with our family in wishing you all a Happy and Healthy Chanukah.

Martin L

Kingston Wall Hanging

On Sunday September 18th, in front of a large audience, Mrs Flora M and Hodaya M unveiled the the beautifully embroidered wall hanging in the foyer of the Shule. Under the expert guidance of Mrs Jill T, a professional artist and teacher who specialises in creative textiles, a team of six ladies, who became skilled in machine and hand embroidery, worked for two years on the project. Over 500 hours of sewing was involved, and the ladies worked on sections which were eventually sewn together to form the complete hanging, which measures 6ft by 4ft. It is made from many varied fabrics and threads, together with silks, beads and ribbons.

The design was the result of collaboration between members of the community and two talented young artists, who produced the drawings while working for their A level examinations.

The theme of the collage is the borough of Kingston and the Jewish community. The River Thames runs through the centre of the hanging, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel embroidered on it, with decorative threads in the appropriate colours denoting each tribe. The seven days of Creation are shown as six trees and an ornate Havdalah candle, representing Shabbat. Each tree is embroidered to depict the details in Bereshit.

A map exists showing where the Jewish community lived in Kingston in medieval times, and part of this has been embodied in the picture. To show that it is a Royal borough, a gold and silver embroidered crown is shown as a bridge over the river, and the three salmon from the borough's coat of arms are also incorporated in the hanging .

Mr Peter B and Rabbi Mason expressed their gratitude and deep appreciation of all the hard work which had gone in to the making of the hanging, which is a beautiful addition to the decoration of the Synagogue.

Jill T described it as "a very inspiring and successful project. It was a very positive experience and everyone got on so well together".

Before the ceremony for the wall hanging, a plaque on the newly refurbished Bimah was unveiled by Salim N, dedicated to his dear wife Celia. Tributes were paid to Salim and Celia for their devoted service to the community over many years. The Ladies Guild provided a delicious cream tea.



KINGSTON WIZO

Our busy autumn programme began with a Book Bring and Buy, where members could bring old paperbacks, purchase new ones and discuss favourite authors over coffee and cakes.

In November Michele Vogel, Chairman of WIZOuk, the new name for British WIZO, spoke at our Annual general meeting. She pointed out that 1 in 8 people in Israel benefit directly from WIZO projects, and spoke about recent developments to combat poverty. It was important to help people without them losing their dignity. She also told us about Dormitory Villages where children can live safely, away from their families, and other projects to keep vulnerable young people off the streets.

Our Bridge Supper proved as popular as ever, and 40 guests enjoyed the generous hospitality of Shirley and David L.

Ruth L was our guest speaker at a luncheon in December at the home of Shoshana and Steven C, and spoke of her life as a theatre critic and writer.

Ostrava: Ruth Elias - The Triumph of Hope

Ruth Elias (née Huppert) was born in Ostrava. Although her parents divorced, she had a very happy childhood, living with her father, uncles, and grandmother. Her father and uncle ran a prosperous sausage factory. In 1942, the family were deported to Theresienstadt (Terezin). There she lost her husband and, pregnant, she was sent to Auschwitz to become part of the infamous Dr Mengele's experiments. She was compelled to starve her newborn baby to death. Ruth incredibly survived and later married Kurt Elias, another survivor of the camps, in Prague. They later emigrated to Israel.

In 1988 Ruth wrote her life story in German, her mother tongue, - *Die Hoffnung erhielt mich am Leben* – for her grandchildren. She starts her story:

“My dear grandchildren,
This book is dedicated to you. Your fathers grew up without a family. When they were still little boys, my heart would ache each time they asked me, “Why don't we have a grandpa and grandma? Why don't we have any uncles and aunts?...”

In 1998, it was translated into English and published as *The Triumph of Hope*. It is available in bookshops. She also wrote a short piece for *Memoirs of a City* a book published in Hebrew in Israel in 1994. Elisheva Mason has translated it for us:

Ostrava during the occupation

Ostrava was the first Czech city that was occupied by the Germans, already on 14th March 1939. The next day all Bohemia and Moravia were occupied. At six or seven in the evening those with no warning were looking at the waves of soldiers that were flooding the streets. In song and shouting- “Zieg Heil”, “Heil Hitler”, they came in waves, some of them walked, some rode a motorcycles with a sidecar.

The radio and the papers didn't warn about the possible occupation coming. When my father came in the morning to open the factory, one of the senior workers stood there, wearing an S.A. uniform with the *Hakenkreuz* (swastika) on his sleeve. He told my father that he had nothing to look for there, from today he was chosen to direct the factory. It was clear that the Volksdeutsch (native Germans) had prepared everything already before the war. My father had to abandon his factory, his life's work.

Our lives changed completely. We were forced to stop learning at school, because it was a German school, and only to the Aryan population was permitted to attend, the Jewish managers were dismissed.

The first anti- Jewish rulings came out. We were given new identity cards and in them there was “J” sign (Jewish). It was forbidden to walk around the streets after eight in the evening. On all public buildings, cinemas, theatres, restaurants and some shops, there was a poster put up: “Entry forbidden for

Jews and wanderers". In the trams, busses and trains there were few seats designated: "For Jews only". There was a positive side to it- there was always a place to sit in public transport; which Aryan would like to sit on a place designated for a Jew? Since 1941 the Jews had to wear a yellow badge with the sign "*Jude*" on it. Because the yellow colour sticks out so much, one could recognise the Jews already from far away. All the other people, Germans and Czechs were too afraid to exchange even one word with the Jews; they didn't want to be punished.

Only few weeks after the beginning of the occupation, I had the opportunity for my first visit to the Gestapo. It was when there was a call to the Jews to give up, "of their own will", valuable objects like jewellery, furs, paintings, carpets, musical instruments, radios, cameras, etc. Immediately we began a quick activity, because we preferred to give our valuables to our Czech friends instead of giving them to the Gestapo. To the Gestapo we gave a few things, less valuable things that we had. We had to stand for long hours in front of the Gestapo building. It was forbidden to leave the queue. Old people and the sick were beaten with cruelty, when without any strength they had to continue standing in the line. When our turn came and we entered the building, we were told to stand in the middle of a black and white square, and person who moved received a portion of hits and screaming. Around were scary Gestapo people, with terrifying look and impenetrable appearance.

It was forbidden for us to speak or utter any sound. I don't know what happened to the items that we brought. I don't remember if we got a receipt for the items that we gave over. My memories are engraved only with the shouting and the call "*SAU JUDE*" that we were called. Undoubtedly, the Gestapo people did not believe that the Jews have so few valuable items.

We, the Jews slowly got used to the situation and we organized our lives accordingly. In the big apartments, a number of families were accommodated because there was a ban against possessing big apartments.

The youngsters amongst us helped the children that had to stop their learning at schools. In the Jewish – owned factories began a process of "aryanization". A loyal *volksdeutsche* TREUHAENDER was put in charge of our factory. On the Jewish shop windows was written JUDE, they painted swastikas on them, and some of them were broken. The synagogue was plundered, and the Torah scrolls desecrated.

Without any reason the Gestapo was arresting Jews, imprisoning them afflicting and questioning them in their cruel ways. The arrested people had to sign false statements and when they refused to do that, they were beaten. But the reality was different. Because of the "statements" they were sent to different concentration camps and they never came back from them. We tried not to be conspicuous. We tried to live a lonely life, with hope that something (or someone) will help our survival. The men were forced to work in heavy and dirty jobs; my father was cleaning the streets. He worked in the rain and sun with German supervision and woe to him if he tries to rest. In those days were worried about our health.

The Jews from Ostrava got in the panic of thinking about emigration. The most spoken topic was that of immediately leaving Czechoslovakia. My sister and I we wanted to emigrate, but on one condition, that all the family will go together.

(continued)

COOKERY

SPICY SWEET POTOATO PIE

Ingredients:

2 lb 4 oz minced beef
2 medium onions
2 garlic cloves
2tsp ground coriander
2 tsp ground cumin
9 oz button mushrooms
1 x 400 g can chopped tomatoes
15 fl oz beef stock (from cube)
2 aubergines chopped
1 tbs olive oil
1 lb 2 oz sweet potatoes
10 oz potatoes
1 oz Tomas
1 bunch parsley

Method:

Preheat oven to 200 C 180 C fan oven 400 F gas mark 6. Brown mince in a non stick pan. Sauté the onions and garlic until soft, add spices and cook for 2 mins. Add mushrooms, browned mince, tomatoes and stock to the pan and reduce heat. Simmer for 2 hours.

Roast aubergines in the olive oil for 20 mins and add to the mince mixture.

For the topping roast the sweet potatoes and potatoes in their skins for about an hour. Scoop the cooked potatoes into a bowl and mix in the Tomar and season. When the mince is cooked add the chopped parsley, put in an oven proof dish and top with mashed potato. Bake for 30 – 40 mins. Until topping is golden.

Succot in the Negev and S Torah in the Gallilee

It has been four years since we last visited Israel. Indeed we were scheduled to fly the day after 9/11. Although our flight was delayed 24 hours, nevertheless we were determined to take my Mum to be with the family for Rosh Hashanah as planned and we flew off in a half empty Jumbo Jet amid the post 9/11 activity.

For a number of reasons our Israeli family have been coming to see us in England since then so it was with some excitement that we set off for our trip in the middle of Succoth... As always El Al was outstanding in its efficiency even if we had to deal with some mild disbelief at Heathrow when the security guard repeated "There's a community there, in this Kingston near where you live?"

We had decided that the itinerary for this 12 day trip would be up to my sister, my nieces and their families. This turned out to be an excellent move which resulted in Succot in the Negev and Simchat Torah in the Gallil.

We were met at the airport – the wonderful still new Ben Gurion – by Miriam our niece who told us we needed to be ready for an early start the next day. She had organised a jeep for our travels. The next morning, after we had had a truly Israeli breakfast in their Succah on the roof of their apartment in Ra'anana, we set off for three days touring in the Negev. Our mystery tour took us via Jerusalem where we visited the new Yad Vashem. Those of you who have been will know the design of the building was inspired and the stories of survivors which have been so thoughtfully presented are completely compelling. The impact of the visit was palpable and afterwards the three generations of our family discussed our feelings and reactions to the experience. .

We stayed on a Moshav Hatzeva Miri having booked "zimmer" . It was clear all around us that it was Succoth. For me this is one of the aspects of Israel which makes it so special, The signs of festival celebrations are the norm. It feels comfortable and we belong. Two or three highlights of our short negev trip were the breakfasts, the tiyul in the desert and visiting a new settlement "Gift of the Desert" in the middle of the sand where lunch was served in a tent like structure. Part of the fun of staying at the moshav was that around 8 each morning a moshav member appeared in his car with trays of prepared delights for breakfast. We sat outside in the morning sunshine and were introduced to the products of the farm, creative salads and three types of omelette. No sooner had we finished feasting than our young chef (just back from a trip backpacking around the world) re-appeared to remove all the debris.

Our excursions each day included a visit to a succah or two as well the reconstructed site at Mamshit where there was a special festival market with wares being sold which reflected life many centuries ago. We drove in the jeep above the "Little Crater" and then stopped in the middle of the sand

dunes to trek to the "Yorkeam Spring" to view dried out beds and watering holes which appeared as if from nowhere.

Our return journey took us via Beersheva. I haven't been there since I did my Israel trip as a student . It was unrecognisable but then my summer in Israel as a student was some time ago.

The day after our return to Ra'n ana we picked up a car and all travelled north. I opted to drive, fortunately accompanied by my niece, while David went in the other car as a passenger. (Wise decision!!) Driving from Herzlia to Karmiel erev chag was, to say the least challenging!!

We spent yomtov evening at the home of our younger niece who lives in Rakefet, a quite new settlement near Misgav and Karmiel. Apart from the pleasure of being with our Israeli family, niece number two was thrilled that at last we had managed to bring in our hand luggage the last of the 12 piece dinner set that Rebecca had chosen to have as a memento of her late grandmother (My Mum who passed away earlier this year.) There was some continuity in eating off this much loved china on this beautiful hillside in the Galil.

Simchat Torah in the Galil was a real celebration as it should be. The service in shul was warm and welcoming and I was reacquainted with many of my sister's friends. However it was the evening which was memorable. As we went for a walk in Karmiel right in the centre of the town we could hear loud and joyous music. We were reminded once again that we were in Israel – Israel where everyone celebrates the festivals. There was a live band playing enthusiastically, the mayor of Karmiel was talking through the microphone, there were dozens of men dancing with children on their shoulders or hoisting a sefar torah up high. There was singing, dancing laughter and fun. The women too were dancing – a discreet distance away – none the less enthusiastically. The atmosphere was relaxed, the mood joyous. I found it hard to pull myself away. Everything seemed so optimistic. Surely a country where people gather in the streets as families to praise the torah and celebrate the traditions deserves to live in peace. Let us hope so.

Shirley and David L

Riverside Club

Are you at a loose end on a Tuesday? Nothing interesting to do? Local friends away or busy? We can help make your Tuesdays special.

Men and women from a wide area meet in the Shul hall, any time from 10.15 a.m. They are greeted by friendly faces, and cups of tea or coffee with biscuits. Some sit in groups and chat, some play cards. Others take part in a handicraft section. Mid-morning there is a voluntary exercise class to music (and we regularly hear much hilarity from that area!)

Anyone wishing for verbal exercise can later join in a lively and topical discussion led by one of the guests. Feelings can run high, and contention is always in the air – now there's a surprise in a group of Jewish people!

A wonderful three course meal is prepared on the premises, and after lunch there is always entertainment. Often there is music – some guests can't resist dancing to that. Sometimes there is a quiz or an informal talk – but there is always someone to talk to (or moan to). Afternoon tea is served after what we hope has been a delightful day.

HOW ABOUT JOINING US?

Pearl G

NATIONAL THEATRE - TWO THOUSAND YEARS

A new play by Mike Leigh is always something to look forward to, and this was no exception. Sadly for me it failed to live up to expectations. There was no clue as to what we were going to see, as even the programmes couldn't be printed in advance because last minute changes were being made right up to opening night.

Depicting a Jewish family must always have its drawbacks, and this family was even more dysfunctional than most. I think the over playing of the 'Jewish theme' by the central characters didn't help. They just weren't credible. 'We go away and suddenly you're a frummer' was the cry, and their son, indeed shocked his way around the set, but was this something an almost 100% non Jewish audience really would understand? Mike Leigh, sitting behind me, certainly seemed a bit on edge, and the luke warm applause at the end can't have done much to raise his spirits. Maybe he needed to explore a Jewish theme this time, but it certainly didn't quite hit the mark.

Simone H

Limmud Conference 2005

The 25th Limmud conference surpassed itself with over 1000 lectures and events on offer to the 2000 eager beavers congregated on Nottingham University campus in December. Kingston certainly was very well represented.

Getting things moving, mentally and physically with Bibliyoga, a mixture of Yoga and Talmud Torah, orchestrated by the charismatic, quirky Marcus Freed, was, for me anyway, a great way to start each day, followed by the difficult decision of choosing between an impossible selection of hourly changing lectures. The level of learning is impressive and far reaching and the percentage of yamulka-clad males perhaps is an indication of the commitment to Judaism.

Coinciding with Chanucah this year meant each afternoon a huge number of participants, armed with their own Chanuciah, and their own tunes, filled one of the huge lounges. Quite impressive, as were the very welcome doughnuts that followed!

It is impossible to pick out any particular event, but political forums with the likes of Abduljalil Sajid, Warren Bass, Michael Broyde, Danny Rich, Board of Deputies President, Henry Grunwald and President of the United Synagogue, Simon Hochhauser certainly stimulated some heated discussion. There was a recurring question, however: where were the Orthodox representatives of the Chief Rabbi?

Simone H

LUNCH AND LEARN

One of the burning issues of the year must be the recent controversy over the kashrat of whisky. Can whisky that is matured in a sherry wood cask be kosher?

This was the subject discussed at the December ***Lunch and Learn***, which is one of the many innovations introduced by Rabbi David Mason. Every month on the first Tuesday (but the second in February) a small group meet for a finger lunch and an insight into a topical issue of halacha or other Jewish interest. It is wonderful that Kingston can provide this stimulating and thought-provoking event that rivals its competitors in the City

The Rabbi has a knack of selecting subjects that are thought provoking and/or controversial and are certain to provide a lively discussion. He provides his detailed reasoned explanation into the subject matter, supported by the many authorities and there is ample opportunity to question or challenge his response. This together with good food (including Kettle Chips) and last month even whisky! make this a most engaging and enjoyable break to the working day.

Lunch and Learn.is open to everyone

And on last month's burning issue. Yes, the Rabbi provided opinions from many leading sages that confirmed that even though the sherry that was previously been stored in the cask may not be kosher, the sherry was not a key constituent to the whisky. Accordingly, the use of the sherry cask to enhance the flavour does not affect the kashrat of the whisky. Did you expect Anything else?

PW

Chanukah Party

Many of the communities' families came together on the fourth night of Chanukah to light their own chanukiot in the sukkah of the Shul. They were festively feasted on home made soup, latkas and donuts. Maoz Tsur was sung with gusto led by Rabbi Mason. It was a lovely way for many members of the community to come together for one night of Chanukah and celebrate in the Shul. Thanks are given from everyone to the Festivals Committee for their continuing ideas on encouraging the community to celebrate and participate in the festivals.

Joke 1

On the first day God created the dog. God said, "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. I will give you a life span of twenty years." The dog said, "That's too long to be barking. Give me ten years and I'll give you back the other ten." So God agreed.

On the second day God created the monkey. God said, "Entertain people, do monkey tricks, make them laugh. I'll give you a twenty-year life span." The monkey said, "How boring, monkey tricks for twenty years? I don't think so. Dog gave you back ten, so that's what I'll do too, okay?" And God agreed.

On the third day God created the cow. God said, "You must go to the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer. I will give you a life span of sixty years."

The cow said, "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. Let me have twenty and I'll give back the other forty." And God agreed again.

On the fourth day God created man.

God said, "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. I'll give you twenty years." Man said, "What? Only twenty years! Tell you what, I'll take my twenty, and the forty the cow gave back and the ten the monkey gave back and the ten the dog gave back, that makes eighty, okay?" "Okay," said God, "You've got a deal."

So that is why the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play, and enjoy ourselves; for the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family; for the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren; and for the last ten years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.

Life has now been explained to you.

Joke 2

Moishe is driving in Jerusalem. He's late for a meeting, he's looking for a parking place, and can't find one. In desperation, he turns towards heaven and says, "God, if you find me a parking space, I promise that I'll eat only kosher, respect Shabbas, and all the holidays."

Miraculously, a place opens up just in front of him. He turns his face up to heaven and says, "Never mind, I just found one."

The Real Thing Ladies Guild

Time to reveal hidden treasures. Sunday 11th december 2005 was a tasty evening with a difference.

Everyone present at the shul, some 120 people, had a delightful evening

The three course meal with coffee was excellent. and Mark Fleming, TV personality was delightful

Guests had brought a varied array of goods and chattels ranging from prized carriage clock, gold cigarette case, silver ware, porcelain ornaments, vases, etc. Mark selected a few items at random and gave an indication of value based primarily on rarity, condition and demand. Some may now be inclined to sell and claim their riches, while others will retain their memorabilia.

The moral of the story is, if you like it buy it. a most enjoyable evening was had by all, and many thanks to all those involved.

jennifer S

Cheder Report

As another busy term draws to a close with our traditional Chanukah bowling party, it is time to reflect on the Cheder children's and staff's achievements since those warm and heady days of September.

First, it is a pleasure to report how the Cheder continues to grow under Charlotte De V's excellent leadership and the Rabbi's wonderful inspiration. The introduction of a new nursery class last year has been a great success led, as ever, by the irrepressible Kitty B. We have welcomed back Olivia S onto our teaching staff and it feels like she has never been away! The

students taking the AJE junior exams at the end of last year again made us all proud and continued to demonstrate to the wider Jewish community what excellent education is taking place in South West London. At the upper end of the Cheder the Rabbi is teaching our ever-popular GCSE class and is continuing the tradition of brilliant GCSE results for all of our students.

We aim at the Cheder not only to educate our children but also to show them how much fun Judaism can be. Thanks to Daryl-Anne E, the children have been making their own Mazuzot and, more recently, their own Chanukiot. Many of you will no doubt be lighting your candles in the beautiful clay creations made by your children and grandchildren!

Under the leadership of Marion Rodin, regular structured children services have started on the 2nd Shabbat of each month in the Synagogue. Services are also arranged for the Yom Tovim. The children's services have been well attended by both children and parents. The older children are learning to follow the Shabbat service and the highlight is, inevitably, when the Rabbi and the Wardens come in to say hello (especially if they have sweets with them!). The children have their own Kiddush after the service which always goes down well.

If you have any ideas for the further development of the Cheder or you know of any families with children who are considering joining the Cheder please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Charlotte or myself.

With best wishes for a happy Chanukah from the Cheder!

Leslie S
Chair of the Education Committee

The Rabbi's Page – Some thoughts on Israel

We left Israel for the UK over two years ago now, and I still miss Israel as if it was the first day that I arrived here. It is still difficult to find out what is happening in Israel through the Internet, and not by turning on the Israeli Radio or TV. There's nothing like being there. In fact, this feeling of yearning is not a new phenomenon. There are many examples in the history of Jewish scholarship of those who could not visit the land of Israel and yet yearned to be there.

Take for example Rabbi Judah HaLevi, who lived in Spain from 1075 to 1141. He was a philosopher, writer and poet who contributed some great works to the Jewish library. One poem he penned was called '*Ode to Zion*', and its first line was full of this yearning:

"Zion, do you not ask after the welfare of your captive ones?"

In fact Naomi Shemer used a line from HaLevi's poem in famous '*Jerusalem the Golden*'.

Judah HaLevi looked at life outside Israel as being in 'captivity' rather than being at home, in a natural abode full of safety and security. He talks to Zion from the Diaspora and wonders if it cares about those who cannot reach it.

This sense of desire to be in the Holy Land and yet not physically being able to be there was experienced by Jews throughout the history of our exile. We are in fact the lucky ones. We can book a comfortable seat in a plane (hopefully El-AL) and arrive in Israel after less than five hours of flight. In another hour we can be in Jerusalem and within minutes of some of our nation's holiest sites. There are many people who can tell you what an incredible feeling it was to visit the Western Wall for the first time after the 6-day war in 1967 when the Old City came under Israeli sovereignty.

So where does this sense of longing to be in Israel come from?

Our religion.

We are aware that there are 613 commandments that God passed to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. Many of these commandments are actually dependent on residing in the land of Israel. Many of the laws surrounding agriculture were only obligatory in Israel. Sacrifices were only required in Israel. Any law connected to the Temple, such as bringing first fruits there would be relevant only in Israel. Furthermore, our Torah tells us that we must treat Israel with respect and not give it up unless there is an over-riding reason to do so. Israel is part of the life blood of our religious identity.

Our history.

We know from our classic texts that the drama of Jewish history had the land of Israel as its goal. It was there that Saul, David and Solomon presided as kings and it was there that most of the prophets were able to communicate their inspired words to us. Living in Israel allows you to be in touch with this history, learn about it and want to follow its footsteps. While were in Israel, Elisheva and I loved the opportunity to find somewhere new to visit and learn

more about our land.

Our exile.

We are a people in exile. This means that we technically should not feel comfortable in our present situation and should be always looking towards a state where Jews naturally live in Israel. We don't know when it will come about – but we should be ready for it. Anyone who is in exile surely not happy about his situation. Therefore we need to ask ourselves - do we understand the reality that we as a nation are at present in a state of exile from our home. Actually, in many ways our situation is increasingly blessed. While in exile, one is often disconnected from the home. Not so today. We can visit and should be visiting Israel so as to learn that very Jewish yearning for the land of Israel.