



# ALONIM

Newsletter of the Bristol & West  
Progressive Jewish Congregation

*Iyyar/Sivan/Tammuz 5766*  
*May/June 2006*

# עלונים



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Do you have something to share which you think might be of interest to the rest of the congregation? We would like to remind readers that articles are always invited for our 'Forum' section. In particular, next issue we would like to invite pieces on Israel. Copy may be sent in any pc compatible format but should be a maximum of 350 words for a full page item and proportionally less for smaller pieces. Also, if you have enjoyed an event at the synagogue, please write a small piece for us. Items will be particularly welcome from our junior members.

The Editors

### ALONIM & E-LONIM copy date deadlines

Month	Copy date	Festivals covered, notices needed
June E-lonim	Wednesday 24th May	
Jul/Aug	Wednesday 14th June	Tisha b'Av
August E-lonim	Monday 24th July	
Sept/Oct	Wednesday 16th August	High Holy Days/Sukkoth

Editorial and Production Team

*Judith Lazarus and Malcolm Rawles*

This version of the newsletter has been prepared for use on the synagogue website.

For reasons of personal security, all contact details, dates and times have been removed.

Also all photographs, articles of a personal nature, references to children etc.

**ALONIM Contributions & Editorial Policy.** The editorial policy is to encourage contributions from all Synagogue members and ALONIM readers, concerning any aspects of communal and Jewish life, including advertisements of forthcoming events, cultural and communal reviews, information concerning synagogue activities, letters and feedback, and articles of Jewish cultural and religious interest. Typically, contributions that fit on one side of A4 are preferred, and PC format submission is particularly appreciated

by e-mail. The editor will **NOT** print anonymous or unattributed articles. Contributors are asked to be aware of the need to protect the copyright of others. Opinions expressed in ALONIM do not necessarily reflect those of the synagogue Council or the Editor. The copy date deadline for submissions is notified above. Submissions after this date cannot be guaranteed to appear in the next issue.



I am writing this before Seder Night, Erev Pesach, with all the eager anticipation that this much-loved time brings. Passover is our most popular Festival and the fact that it traditionally takes place in the home is significant. Long-acclaimed for our family values, this special evening in which children are the focus of our story-telling underlines the determination of every generation to ensure that the defining event of Jewish History is fixed in the minds of these new young custodians of the Jewish heritage.

Freedom and speech are the two essential parts of Passover. Pesach is a combination of two words; *Peh* and *Sach* meaning 'the mouth speaks'. We may have been free for a while after the Exodus from Egypt but thereafter when our Temples were no more, throughout our long history, we have usually lived under repressive regimes that at best restrict and at worst have prevented us from leading our lives on the same terms as our neighbours. Even when forced to convert, Jewish mouths continued to speak at home. Rabbis would argue that segregation from the rest of the population was good in that it gave us the freedom we needed to perform all the mitzvoth of our faith and thereby to hand it down orally, intact. Could this be a

justification for Israel's Security Fence?

The matriarchs and patriarchs of our Bristol family take great comfort today from the fact that they can see in their lifetimes that their earlier efforts to establish a Progressive Congregation in Bristol and the West of England are now being handed down to a new generation who are free to bring their own interpretations of our age-old themes. Your new Council is doing just that and you will be hearing more from them in the months ahead. They are asking many questions and wish to share their thoughts with us all. Quite contrary to widespread perceptions, Rabbinic Judaism contained an ample supply of "reformers" who found some support for controversial ideas just as Liberal Judaism today often comes up with what would have been unthinkable just a generation ago. Is it not miraculous that when inspecting Torah and the other Writings, with minimum imagination, they easily translate into modern equivalent terms? "Is this year different from any other year"? Watch this space!

**Robert Hurst**  
**Chairman**

## The Venturers

A new synagogue club for the over 50s!

We shall venture far and wide, as well as nearby.

Monthly outings to places—exhibitions, theatres.....and more!



## Squeaks of the Scribe's Quill

Looking ahead, being farsighted, allows us to plan and utilise thought to our advantage. Part of our education lies in being trained to be able to do this. Yet it is often difficult to consider all the possibilities for the future, and take into account all variables, so we consider it a virtue to build a level of flexibility into our approach to life. I wonder how much the stories of our heritage have to say about this. In particular, at this time of the year, from the perspective of our religious calendar, we could consider whether the sequence of events we celebrate allegorises life in general.

Our story is a story of hope. We start in slavery and end up in a land of promise. *pesah* is our Spring festival representing the Spring of our lives. As we sit down at the *seder* table we anticipate a good meal but we also expect to have to eat *matzah* – described as the bread of slavery. Pharaoh's total control over the Israelites is like parental control over children, which is relinquished through a series of power struggles, eventually to cease. We celebrate the first day of *pesah* then count down fifty days to *shavuot* as though we are passing through the initial stages of our

educational system towards our graduation, represented by the granting of the *torah* from heaven.

Having been awarded this as a working guide for life we then move on through the wilderness, the school of hard knocks, hopefully having our sharp edges knocked off. We need to learn how to work in concert with others, to cooperate and gradually build a society with rules which allow individuals freedom to function together for the benefit of all. This takes time, perhaps a life time, but eventually we reach that Promised Land and can settle down and build our homes, represented by the *sukkot* of our Autumn festival. Here we find fruitfulness, the harvest of our life. We decorate our *sukkot* as symbols, just as we furnish our homes when we have established our careers and businesses and are wealthy and comfortable. The hope we started out with has turned into aims and then successes. This is the ideal, the dream of 'next year in Jerusalem'; that we always can always hope for a better life.

What an optimistic religion! With the disasters, persecutions, expulsions and massacres that are an integral part of our history how can we possibly avoid becoming



cynical? Are we not simply misunderstanding our relationship with God? Don't we know that striving for a better life may fail? Yes, of course we understand that success and failure are both part of life, both like two sides of the same coin, but we still know that life demands we try; we can spin that coin again and again trying to make it land the right way up. Most of us have that impetus within; whatever happens we strive to make life better, we always 'have another go'.

This is how we build that essential flexibility into our lives. As taught subtly by our tradition, each year retells the story of our ancestors heading off towards the Promised Land. This teaches us and our children that, given direction and purpose, there is a certain inevitability for us Jews, with which we can connect heaven and earth and use that connection to improve ourselves, our community, society in general, human destiny....

**Rabbi Francis Ronald Berry**



## Rabbi's Summer Dates

This year Kathy and I will be taking May as our holiday month and will be unavailable during that month. We will be returning to Bristol briefly at the start of June, July and August but will be available for consultation by telephone [0033 296 21 65 51] or email [berryuk@freeuk.com]. Anyone who would like to come and stay with us in Brittany 'on retreat' and/or study with me, will be welcome by arrangement.



## Study with the Rabbi

All classes will restart in the Autumn.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the rabbi.





Bristol Council for Christians and Jews held a meeting in March to discuss the situation in Israel/Palestine. The following were written by members of this congregation.

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Once again I listened to a list of ‘crimes’ that Israel had perpetrated against the Palestinians. The list was like many others I have heard, often from people purporting to be peace makers. It was disturbing but also emotive and selective. For example one story referred to a woman who was held up all day at a checkpoint. She wanted to go to Israel to give birth in a hospital there. Eventually she was forced to hide behind a rock to deliver her child. The little girl moved once or twice and then died. This is such a distressing story. But how do we know this baby would not have died anyway, with or without a checkpoint? Our media are filled with such stories; we hear them every day and they always raise more questions than they answer. Some of the answers might condemn Israel further but some might actually exonerate it.

And yet, I feel betrayed. Every time I hear one of these stories I cry inside. I do not believe that Israel is behaving in any way worse than the US and the UK are in Afghanistan and Iraq, but I feel more distraught by its wrongs. To me the lack of resolution between Israel and Palestine is a personal wound. It grieves me deeply. The question is obviously why? Why should it matter to me what is happening in Israel? I am after all British. There are three answers that I have recognised so far.

Firstly, I see in Israel the only safe sanctuary in the world for Jews or people of Jewish

descent. One doesn’t have to look far into history to see how quickly a country can turn against its Jews. Assimilation has been no safeguard. Keeping separate has offered no protection. Time and again the Jews have been murdered and evicted from places that we considered home. There is, for the first time in over two thousand years, finally a country where I know that the state itself will never attack me for being a Jew. That means something to me. It is not that I live in the constant expectation that the UK will suddenly be taken over by anti-semites. It is just that in the back of my mind I know it is not impossible.

Secondly, each Shabbat I pray with conviction that the State of Israel may live up to the ideals of its founders. For me that goes further back than the past fifty odd years. I actively chose to live a Jewish life because, having visited and explored other faiths, I found Judaism to be the healthiest, the most balanced and realistic. On exploration I discovered it to be a people-centred faith, with justice always at its core. These concepts mean a tremendous amount to me. Could I be a Jew if the point was not to build a better world but was instead to reach salvation and go to heaven? But then how can I view the only Jewish state in the world? It may be no worse than any other country, but I want it to be better. I want it to be a light to the nations. I want it to shine out as an example of true justice in a world that is constantly lacking in such values.



Finally, I have grown up with an awareness of the underdog. I have been raised to deplore the misuse of power and authority. The Israeli State appears to be much more powerful than the Palestinian State. As such I deplore their actions against their neighbour. However, I am conscious that this little country is surrounded by Muslim countries that have threatened to annihilate it. Who then is the underdog?

For me the bottom line is that I am aware of an enormous ignorance. I don't know whether the lists of atrocities are accurate. I don't begin to understand the political map of the Middle East. And yet, I have all these strong feelings most of which transpose into a sense of disappointment. I have no idea how things can move toward peace but I very badly want them to reach it.



Going just now to Israel I saw decent hard-working people going about their lives in exactly the same way as we do here. Troubled like us with the total global situation and many other issues, other than their own security that has been daily news and routine since 1948. Their national pride is refreshing as they take pride in all the modern miracles that have made Israel a major success in any Western democratic terms. (Not that they do not have social problems as we do here). It is almost as if being Jews is secondary. Dare I say that ideological Zionism is being consigned to the proud history of that country much as the Socialist-inspired Welfare State in the UK, though fundamental in 1949, is now much in need of reappraisal? I could live there and feel as safe there as here and would certainly never be confronted as in France for wearing the

wrong dress code should I become traditionally observant. What future for Jews in the Diaspora now apart from assimilation?

The tragedy of the Palestinians is that nobody really wants them or, it seems, to help them. Peace activists are rarely peace brokers as they are one-sided and media-fodder. Surely there are sufficient moderate Arabs everywhere who should be guiding them to seek peace away from radical Islam and to rapid economic improvement which could relatively easily be achieved together with Israel, Jordan and Egypt who have much to gain themselves from economic cooperative growth in the area. Where is their Mandela?

**Robert Hurst**



The editorial team would like to invite comments on this subject for the next issue of Alonim. If you would like the chance to consider your position on Israel, and to express your feelings, then please send your copy to Judy Lazarus. Copy welcome early.

Please note that, as per the usual editorial policy, no comments that are aggressive or abusive toward another member will be printed. This is an opportunity to discuss these issues in an open but tolerant fashion.





A regular feature in which the editors speak to various members of the synagogue who in different ways act in the wider Jewish community or as Jews in other contexts. Some will be formal representatives, but not all. In this issue,

## Multi-faith Response to Major Emergencies

The Jewish Community in the South West has two representatives on the group, Rabbi Ron Berry, and myself. It should have many more; and I hope this article will persuade others to think about giving a little of their time.

Now having about 160 volunteers, it started out as an offshoot of "The Churches Council for Industry and Social Responsibility" to bring coherence to a scene of any major disaster. Where in the past a minister of religion or lay person would rush to the scene untrained and unprepared; the Response Team would be able to respond and work in conjunction with the police and emergency services.

Though having been started by the Church it has always striven to involve other religious groups. Our Community was first represented by our then Rabbi, Hadassah Davis. Other faiths have been asked to join in, but so far have not responded.

When a major or critical incident occurs, it may be a coach crash as has happened on the M4, or an aircraft disaster, a serious fire or explosion, the emergency services swiftly respond utilising well-prepared and practised plans. Faith Communities also have an important role to play in the aftermath of a disaster. We hope and pray that one will

never happen in our area, or indeed anywhere, but if it does, we need to be prepared for effective and co-ordinated immediate action.

The fields in which we work are at the scene, casualty centre, hospital and mortuary dealing with bereaved relatives and friends and uninjured survivors, also secretarial support at the Response Centre. We can choose which or all of the fields we want to be involved with.

My job is that of Resource Manager. After being contacted I would be responsible for contact with the police, for estimating the size of the incident and details of hospitals receiving casualties. I would keep a log of events and put faith representatives on stand-by.

We have two training sessions a year, and as an added bonus this enables me to make contact with the members of other faiths, the lunch break being filled with interesting conversations.

As I have already written, we need more Jewish volunteers. Just to tempt you, if going to a real incident, we would, within reason, be allowed to exceed the speed limit!

**Bernard Barnett**



On March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Synagogue Cinema we watched 'Primo', the film of the play directed by Richard Wilson and written and performed by Antony Sher, adapted from the book 'If This is a Man' by Primo Levi.

The play took place on a sparse stage with, as far as I remember, no set except a chair and a doorway to the outside, through which we could see a pile of – shoes? And through which Antony Sher entered and exited. In his ordinary cardigan and ordinary spectacles, he became transformed into the camp internee, one of the 'groups of strange individuals... who emerged in squads...with an odd embarrassed step, head dangling in front, dressed in long striped overcoats'...He moved around the stage, alone with just the chair, and the lighting, and with minimal directing. Together with Levi's words, the transformation, and the horror, were complete.

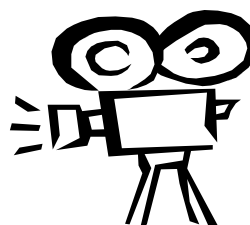
As the film began, I thought 'I cannot look at this...how can I look at this ...How can we look at this ...what can we do with our seeing of this?' Philip Roth wrote 'One of the century's truly necessary books'. Not good, not bad, but necessary and unbelievably true and watching the film felt like that, necessary, and beyond judgment. The film was a document of a clearly brilliant play – uncluttered, dark and intense.

The opening came as a shock, with the lines that open the author's preface to the book, 'It was my good fortune to be deported to Auschwitz only in 1944..' and Sher delivered the monologue in the style of Levi's writing; '...when describing the tragic world of

Auschwitz, I have deliberately assumed the calm, sober language of the witness, neither the lamenting tones of the victim nor the irate voice of someone who seeks revenge.'

Thinking about the film, I think of mirrors. The play, the film, is a mirror of our own history, of humanity's ability to dehumanize and of our ability to adapt and of our resilience. As if passing through a mirror, Levi describes what he has heard about in detail, 'the goods wagons, closed from the outside... This time it is us who are inside.' Levi became what he saw, one of those humiliated individuals, and of the generosity of his friend in the camp, Levi says 'Thanks to Lorenzo, I managed not to forget that I myself am a man'. And when there is no reflection, when the guards can neither be understood nor understand, when everything turns to nightmare, beyond reason, then there is only numb obedience.

Paul Bailey wrote of the book that '...millions of accusing ghosts haunt its every sentence' and ghosts stayed with me long after watching this film. At this time of year we are retelling the story of the Exodus and remembering 'Yom Hashoah' and we worry and argue about the politics of the Middle East. Primo Levi could not forget what was done in the camp, by man to his fellow man, and he charges us, too, that we should not forget.



Clare Sandler



The Combe Down Burial Ground was first purchased in 1812, before the establishment of the Kingsmead Street Synagogue in 1836. At the time it was an open cast stone mine, so the first task was to fill it in and plant the land. The earliest gravestone is dated 1842 and the ground was enlarged in 1862.

The Kingsmead Road Synagogue closed in 1910, with the lease on the building expiring in 1911. The original burial books, which the Burial Society would have held, no longer exist and it is supposed that they may have been water damaged as a result of the flooding that used to afflict the synagogue. However Judith Samuels compiled a list of the majority of those interned. I now hold this list, together with a plan of the site. One of the supporters has also taken photographs of most of the graves.

It is believed that there was originally a live-in caretaker on the burial ground, responsible for the care and protection of the site.

Just next door to the cemetery is a pub, called 'The Woodman'. At one time it was common for people to retire from the burial ground after the service, to the public house for the provision of refreshments. One assumes that the pub kept kosher...

The last internment is said to have been in 1942, but the latest date on a headstone is 1921. After this the cemetery fell into disrepair. A lot of work was carried out by the Combe Down Heritage Society to clear up the

site. Unfortunately the Prayer Hall (now called The Chapel) is in particularly poor condition with all tiles missing from the roof, no door and walls in need of attention. In the Nov/Dec issue of Alonim, I reported that the initial estimate for restoration would be £1,500 with £250 pledged immediately.

On 17<sup>th</sup> January 2006 a new committee was formed called "Friends of Bath Jewish Burial Ground". It has as its aims the repair and maintenance of the cemetery. In the long term it intends to establish a permanent exhibition of the Jews of Bath, to be sited in the Prayer Hall. Committee Members include representatives from Combe Down Heritage Society, Bath And North East Somerset Council, the Board of Deputies, Bristol Hebrew Congregation and Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation.

Knowledge about Jews in Bath continues to expand with the recent identification of a house in Manvers Street with a mezuzah on the door. This is believed to have been the venue for Shabbat services, mainly for servicemen (British and US), during the war.

In order to progress the work on the Cemetery it is necessary to have funds and a bank account has been set up for the Friends of Bath Jewish Burial Ground. Please send any donations to:

**Norman Marks**



# Festival Fun

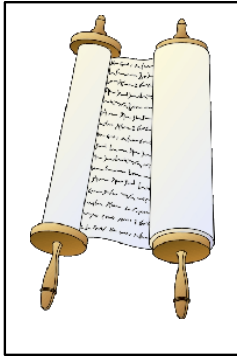
## PURIM 2006

If you were a stranger and happened to turn up at the synagogue in Bannerman Road, Easton on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006, you would have been welcomed by a mysterious lady in a mask, who would have shown you where to hang your coat (for indeed it was a chilly evening!).

You would then have been directed towards the kitchen, where another oddly garbed, bearded man, also masked, would have cordially invited you to join him and the other small but select band gathered there, in either a glass of wine or a soft drink.

Also set before you on a table would have been many tasty delicacies. One such delicacy-‘hamantaschen’ based so legend has it on the ears or perhaps hat of evil schemer Haman.

Indeed many people attending this event were dressed in odd costumes, e.g. men in kilts, women dressed as men and also some Japanese Samurai!



What was this event about, dear reader?

It was the Purim service and party for 2006, or year 5766 if you prefer.

The event, although not as well attended as the previous year, was nevertheless a happy event recalling through the traditional noisy reading of the megillah, how Esther saved the Jews living under the rule of King Xerxes or Ahasuerus, as the scriptures call him from annihilation.

Once again the story unfolded of how the wicked Haman (Boo!) was willing to pay in silver, by casting lots to determine how ‘to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole Kingdom’.

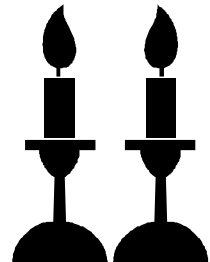
Esther’s cousin Mordecai obtains evidence of this wicked plan and passes it to Esther who is able to persuade Ahasuerus (Xerxes) to turn the tables on Haman, who as we know, comes to a sticky end and the ‘Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day’ and so it was with those of us who attended Purim 2006.

**Bernard Price**



## Pesach 2006

Sixty-six people, ranging from the nearly new-born to those in their eighties, gathered in the transformed sanctuary for the communal seder on Thursday 13th April. The evening was great fun with much laughter and singing of traditional songs. We had a particularly impressive reading of the four questions from young Asher Brill. The afikoman was found with alarming speed. It will have to be hidden more carefully next year. From my seat it looked as if it was redeemed for the princely sum of 5p, but I couldn’t be sure. Sadly, Elijah failed to show again, but hopefully next year...



The waitressing this year was friendly and helpful. Huge thanks to the Rabbi and David Jewell for a well planned service, to Robert Hurst for directing our singing and, especially, to Sheila Wilson and Lesley Hayes for their efficient but gentle organisation and the contributions of food etc. from so many.

Judy Lazarus



## Salaam Shalom

From a “standing start”, and in a relatively short space of time, an exciting initiative between Bristol’s Jewish and Muslim communities is growing. Its name is Salaam Shalom and it’s already creating a buzz in Bristol.

Salaam Shalom is a Home Office funded project which will have, at its core, an online radio station with a potentially global audience. The initial drive for this project, and for direct work with Bristol’s Muslim community, started at a student level and it is hoped that it will be led by younger members of both communities.

Rabbi Berry, encouraged by our Council, works with the Jewish students at the University alongside the Anglican chaplain of the University and Orthodox Jewish chaplain, Rabbi Natan Levy. Rabbi Levy organised a discussion group with Bristol Muslims to discuss the links between Isaac and Ishmael. The coincidence between the Jewish High Holy Days last year and Ramadan was not lost, and this very successful meeting was repeated with a session on the creation story from the point of view of Judaism and Islam. The meetings were attended by both Rabbis and members of the Muslim and Jewish communities.

The ball was rolling. At the instigation of Amer Salman of the Bristol Muslim Cultural Society, and with the consent of the Bristol Progressive and Hebrew Congregations, an application was made for a Home Office grant, under the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, to set up a Muslim-Jewish online radio station.

The result is a direct grant – the largest awarded in the South West this year – to launch the Salaam Shalom radio project.

So why is this project so important to Bristol Jews, Muslims and, ultimately the British Government? The grant application stated that Salaam Shalom’s core aims are to:

*Improve understanding, respect and co-operation between Muslims and Jews through interaction and mutually beneficial projects requiring us to work closely together.*

*Create trust between our faiths in Bristol firstly, and then to export that trust to other communities as opportunities arise.*

*Combat the voices of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism through peaceful means.*

*Further the economic (Employment, Enterprise Training) educational, recreational, cultural and social needs of Jewish and Muslim Youth while encouraging their active participation in mainstream society, and provide support to interested stakeholders.*

Perhaps more succinctly and with greater emotion, Rik Saunderson, Salaam Shalom board member and representative of Bristol’s Jewish students, stated: “I see this project as being a shining beacon. I want to be able to go to student events where the Muslim-Jewish relationship is often confrontational and be able to say “look at what we’ve done, we *can* make this work!”.

As well as Rik, who is also a member of the Park Row Council, the Board of the Salaam Shalom includes:

Amer Salman (Chair) Chief Executive of BMCS; Peter Brill (Vice Chair) BWPJC; Adnan Ahmed (Secretary) Bristol Muslim

# Muslim/Jewish Dialogue

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Community (BMC); Michael Romain (Treasurer) BWPJC; Farooq Siddique – Community Development Officer, BMCS; Martin Vegoda – Park Row Council; Anira Khokhar - Bristol Muslim Community; Rabbi Francis Berry; Rabbi Natan Levy

Two full-time, salaried employees are being recruited: a Station Director and a Technical Manager. (see ads below)

Most of the project will be run with the help of volunteers from both Jewish and Muslim communities. It's vital that members of our community, especially the younger ones, join us in this exciting project – regardless of your experience. Once the full-time members of staff have been appointed, they will be looking for anyone with skills or just an interest in broadcasting, fundraising, music or even making the tea! There will be plenty of opportunity for training and the chance to broadcast once the station is on air.

Salaam Shalom has not lost sight of the importance of continuing the study and dialogue between the two communities "off air". Rabbi Levy is arranging further inter-community meetings at the University chaplaincy,. A stimulating debate is guaranteed on the subject of "Abraham and Moses, two important Muslim prophets". Confirmation of this will appear as soon as possible.

So when you start to read about Salaam Shalom in the Jewish, regional and possibly national media over the next few weeks and months, tell everyone that this is *your* project and that it could be a significant step forward in British Jewish-Muslim relations.

**Peter Brill & Michael Romain.**

## Station Director

**Role:** To help establish and ensure the successful and smooth delivery of an Internet radio station for a joint Muslim/Jewish project focused on creating dialogue and understanding. To initiate and/or support additional cross community dialogue, events and projects.

This will be a full time position- a one year contract with possibility of extension subject to receipt of further funding.

*For further information and a full job spec. please contact Peter Brill on 07977 219016, or Michael Romain on 0117 973 9312*

## Technical Manager

**Role:** To manage all technical aspects of the development, launch and maintenance of an Internet-based radio station for a joint Muslim/Jewish project focused on creating dialogue and understanding between Muslims and Jews.

This will be a full time position- a one year contract with possibility of extension subject to receipt of further funding.

*For further information and a full job spec. please contact Peter Brill on 07977 219016, or Michael Romain on 0117 973 9312*



Like myself, several members of the congregation have shown an interest in Yiddish and I thought some articles on the subject might have general appeal. Linguistically the development of the language is considered to fall into four periods. In this article I want to look at the origins of Earliest Yiddish - i.e. the 1<sup>st</sup> period - which takes us up to around 1250.

Yiddish is classified amongst the western Germanic group - Dutch, English, Frisian and German. During the tenth century Jews from northern Italy and France - speaking a Jewish Romance language-southern and western Laaz, - migrated to form and join settlements along the west bank of the Rhine. Some German speaking Jewish settlements already existed there. Charlemagne (742-814) had invited Jews from Italy and southern France to settle there to encourage growth in trade and it seems that economic life in the Rhineland was thriving. Thus early medieval Rhineland German in its various dialects with the addition of elements of Laaz, Aramaic, and biblical Hebrew was to form the basis of early Yiddish. This "new" language was written using Hebrew characters and from right to left. Ashkenaz was the rabbinic name for Germany. Babylonian academies had collapsed during this period. Many Babylonian teachers arrived in the Rhineland which was also to have an impact on this developing language. This was also the time of the First Golden Age of German literature and for this reason Yiddish is of great interest to present day scholars of that period of German literature.

Things were to change with the advent of the crusades which initiated the great Jewish migration southwards and eastwards. Pope Urban 11 proposed a policy that "punishing the murderers of Christ was to be followed

whilst en route to their official enemies the Moslems." This was the first crusade (1095-99) to be followed by two more, all of which brought slaughter and devastation to the Jewish settlements. During this period (1095-1272) the Jewish migration southwards and eastwards took place and medieval German and Yiddish had more or less become two distinct languages. The stock of German words was to vary as the Jews encountered different dialects and contact was later to occur with Slav speaking Jews from Bohemia and Moravia which would be the beginning of the Old Yiddish period.

The oldest surviving document in Yiddish is a blessing in a Hebrew prayer book from 1272.

Transliterated:-

*Gut tak im betage se waer dis makhazor in beis hakneses terage*

"May a good day come to him who carries this prayer book into the synagogue."

As the Jews became increasingly isolated, Yiddish went in its own direction but still kept many features of medieval German which were no longer found in the outside world -hence its importance to present day academics. But the Jews had a lingua franca uniquely theirs which enabled them to maintain networks amongst Jewish communities in Europe. It was not understood by outsiders and for many centuries enabled the development of a rich cultural life and economic progress. Sadly at the same time, this linguistic separateness would only help to increase anti-Semitism even further, particularly in Poland and Russia.

The three other periods in Yiddish development to be looked at individually are:-

Old Yiddish 1250-1500. Migration to eastern



Europe to escape persecution

Middle Yiddish 1250-1500. Yiddish splits into two dialects. Eastern Europe becomes the centre of world Jewry

Modern Yiddish. 1700-present. Slow decline in usage of western Yiddish after 1700 but increase in eastern Yiddish. Russian repression and the Holocaust.

**Malcolm Rawles**

**THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!**

An afternoon performance  
with the incomparable  
***Thelma Ruby***

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## Summer Family Barbecue

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# BoD- Representative

## **BWPJC representative for Board of Deputies**

As you know, the Board of Deputies does much important work in representing the Jewish community in the UK. The Board was founded in 1760. It is fully representative (indeed it is the primary representative body), drawn from a broad cross-section of the Jewish community throughout Britain today.

The essence of the Board is its representative character. This is based upon a system of delegates (or Deputies) elected from the great majority of Jewish communal organisations, including synagogues, social and welfare organisations, local community bodies and many others.

There are currently around 300 Deputies. They work through regular Plenary Meetings (held in London), which consider current issues and general communal requirements

and arrive at agreed policy decisions.

Our current representative on the Board is Bernard Barnett, who has just completed his three year period of tenure. During this time he has hardly missed any meetings.

It is now necessary to elect a deputy for the next three years. Bernard has kindly expressed his willingness to stand for another three years if the community agrees but does not wish to put off other interested parties. All nominations will then be put forward to an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) for a vote. Even if we only have one candidate, we must still elect them under the rules of the Board.

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact either me or Bernard.

**Yoav Ben Shlomo**



## **News from Council**

At the last Council meeting, held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, Council agreed on two specific changes that we wish to let members know about.

The first concerns Alonim. Since the move from a monthly edition to one every two months, we are aware that events sometimes slip through the net. We have therefore established **E-lonim** (short for e-Alonim) which will be sent out every other month in between Alonim. This will be short (2 sides of A4) and its primary aim is to cover events/news that have missed the last Alonim but cannot wait for the next edition. This will be primarily distributed by email but paper copies will be sent by mail for those without email. Please let Yoav Ben-Shlomo know if you do have an email address but are getting the paper copy. If you want to get an item into E-lonim, then contact Judy Lazarus.



**Shabbat Services** are held at the synagogue, 43-47 Bannerman Road **every Friday evening at 8 pm** and **every Saturday morning at 11 am**. Please try to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the service begins.

*Services for May & June 2006*

### **Friday evening services**

Chavura suppers are held on the first Friday of each month (**5 May, 2 June, 7 July**). I gather (although I haven't been able to get to one myself yet) that they have had an injection of extra new talent, and are even better and more joyful. Do come along. The service on these days will start at **6.30pm**. Please bring some food (as always vegetarian or fish) to share with others.

All other Friday services (**12, 19, 6 May and 9, 16, 23, 30 June**) will start at **8pm**.

### **Forthcoming events**

**Shavuot** falls on **Friday 2 June**. There will be an evening service at **8pm** on **Thursday 1 June**, followed by study session. The tradition was to study all night; we have done that in Bristol in the past, but these days we simply see how long we last. It's usually a happy and interesting (if tiring) occasion. There will be a festival morning service at **11am** on **Friday 2 June**.

We also have more two bnei mitzvot in the next two months:

Matthew Fligelstone on **Saturday 13 May**.

Judy Lazarus on **Saturday 3 June**.

Best wishes to both of them.

The synagogue will also be holding a celebratory kiddush on **Saturday 1 July** to mark the diamond wedding anniversary of Frank & Ruth Wallace, long-standing members of the community. Very many congratulations to both of them.

### **Advanced notice.**

We shall mark **Tisha B'Av** with an evening service at **8pm** on **Wednesday 2 August**.

**David Jewell**  
**Chair R&P committee.**



# SERVICES – May/ Jun 2006

## LJ Lectionary excerpt for May/ June 2006

DATE	PORTION	TORAH READING	HAFTARAH
6 May	Acharey mot-Kedoshim	Lev. 16:1-10 or 19:1-14 or 19:23-37	Jeremiah 11:1-14 Amos 9:7-15 II Kings 23:1-7 & 10-14
13 May	Emor	Lev. 23:1-14 or 23:23-38 or 24:1-9	Nehemiah 9:1-14 Psalm 81 II Chronicles 4:19-5:10
20 May	B'har	Lev. 25:1-13 or 25:14-28 or 25:39-55	Jeremiah 32:6-27 Nehemiah 5:1-13 Amos 8:1-11
27 May	B'chukkotai	Lev. 26:3-13 or 26:14-28 or 26:33-46	Jeremiah 16:19-17:14 Amos 8:1-11
2 June	Shavuot	Exodus 19:1-18 & 20:1-14 or Deuteronomy 5:1-18	Ruth 1:1-2:12 & 4:13-17 or Isaiah 42:1-12 or Isaiah 49:1-13
3 June	B'midbar	Num.1:1-19 or 3:1-13 or 3:40-51	Hosea 2:1-3 & 18-25 Psalm 28 Nehemiah 12:27-31 & 43-47
10 June	Naso	Num.4:21-33 or 6: 1-12 or 6:22-7:11	Judges 13:2-25 Judges 16:1-31 II Chronicles 6:1-17
17 June	B'ha-alotcha	Num.8:1-14 or 10:1-10 or 11:1-14	Zechariah 2:14-4:6 Joel 2:15-27 Psalm 90
24 June	Sh'lach-lecha	Num.13:21-33 or 14:1-20 or 14:26-44	Joshua 2:1-24 Job 36:1-26 Joshua 14:6-15
1 July	Korach	Num.16: 1-19 or 16:20-35 or 17: 6-24	I Samuel 11:14-12:11 I Samuel 12:12-22 Ezekiel 44:15-31
8 July	Chukkat-Balak	Num.20:1-13 or 22:21-35 or 24: 1-18	Micah 5:6-6:8 Judges 11:4-28 Joshua 24:1-15