

GAZETTE

CHANUKAH 2017

Melave Malka Full House

by Leon Kaye

Over the years, I have taken a keen interest in the events leading up to, and following, the historic announcement that came to be referred to as The Balfour Declaration.

So it was with very special pleasure that I learned that this year's Melave Malka would not only be celebrating our Shul's 80th Anniversary with a meal and with musical entertainment, but that it would also include a lecture by an eminent historian on how, in November 1917, the British Government came to announce its intention to "use its best endeavours to facilitate the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people".

And, with exquisite timing, our Melave Malka was to be held two days after the 100th Anniversary of that great milestone in the journey towards the establishment of the State of Israel.

I was not alone in looking forward to this event: our Chairman announced a couple of weeks before that all the tickets had been sold.

And indeed it was "House Full" – nearly 150 people altogether, including special guests and "performers".

Our guest speaker was Michael Berkowitz, the Professor of Modern Jewish History at University College London, and it took me back to my undergraduate days to hear such a riveting lecture. He set out a revealing interpretation of the origins, purpose and significance of the Declaration, and he brought the events surrounding its appearance to life by exploring the personalities of the two protagonists: Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary who signed the famous letter and Lord Rothschild, its recipient. During his lecture, he referred a number of times to what he considered to be the definitive book about the Declaration: "The Zionist Masquerade" by Dr James Renton. When chatting to him afterwards, I said that I thought the most comprehensive study was that written by Leonard Stein back in 1960. Professor Berkowitz confirmed that that was a very fine work, but he explained that Dr Renton had been able to draw on extensive original source materials that were not available back then. [So, on the Monday morning following the event, I got in touch with the Beckenham Bookshop who said: yes, they could get me a copy, but did I know that the price was £75. It must be good !!]



We were also royally entertained during our meal with some wonderful singing by that basso profundo Cantor David Hilton, our very own Rev Cantor Rome, a fine choir led by David Druce and with a lively piano accompaniment by Sharona Joshua and David Silkoff. It was a veritable feast of music and it was enthusiastically received. It was also a lovely gesture from the children of the community to present the Synagogue with a beautiful picture which they made themselves at cheder.

And talking of the meal..... It was superb! A couple of days after the Melave Malka, I happened to attend a small function at a fine restaurant in one of our local hotels – and half of the guests had to send their main courses back to kitchen as they were quite literally cold. But our wonderful ladies led by Felise White and Mitch Bourne contrived to serve both the soup and main courses piping hot AND quite delicious. A magnificent achievement given the very large number of people present.

Our first Lady, Marie Blumenfeld, possibly our longest standing member gave a short speech marking the eighty years of our synagogue. At the end of the evening, Heidi Alexander, MP for Lewisham East, thanked the community for involving her in our celebration and commented upon the importance of the friendships she has formed within our community.

Events of this amazing quality don't just happen. So, from the highly efficient sale of tickets; to the availability of both parking and security; to the seating plan that avoided that old conundrum: "where should I sit?"; to the lovely food; to the delightful musical interludes; to the brilliant lecture and, at the end, the well-supported raffle that raised over £600 – one can only say to all of those involved: three hearty cheers and mazeltov for giving us what was a night to remember.

From our Chairman and Referee



Chanukah comes early this year and does not clash with any other festival.

Hopefully during the Chanukah period you will get an opportunity to come to the synagogue. Not only will you enjoy the services but also see the new toilets so kindly refurbished with a donation from the Maizels family. In this edition of our mini gazette I wish to thank them publicly on behalf of all the community.

The upkeep of our lovely synagogue is continuous and we are fortunate to have many who are prepared to help. It is not often, however, that we receive such generosity as recently shown by the Maizels family. We also fondly remember Doreen's husband Sidney and their son David at this time.

You will have had notice of our Chanukah lightings in members' homes. I hope you will support their generosity and enjoy the festivities.

Marilyn and I wish you all a happy Chanukah.

Minister's Missive by Rev. Cantor David Rome

On the festival of Chanukah we perform the beautiful mitzvah of lighting the eight stemmed candelabra (plus the shamash) which reminds us of the miracle of Chanukah. When the final jug of oil left in the ruined temple lasted for eight days in reality it should only have lasted for one.

You may note that I just referred to the candle stick as a candelabra. It is interesting that the word menorah which was always used to describe the candelabra that we light on Chanukah is nowadays more commonly referred to as a chanukiah.



What is the reason for this change?

In reality, the term chanukiah is more correct than using the term menorah because the menorah is that which was lit every day in the Temple and it consisted of seven branches only! After the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days and because the Jerusalem Temple had been destroyed, the mitzvah of the menorah was reinstated but now represents the miracle of Chanukah, hence using eight branches in honour of the oil lasting eight days. This is how the chanukiah was reborn.



REFUAH SHELEMAH

If you know of someone for whom you would like a Refuah prayer, please let the synagogue office know their Hebrew name and the name of their mother.

Message from the Bishop of Lichfield

As national chairman of the Council of Christians and Jews, I send you warm greetings for your celebration.

This is a momentous year for Jewish people across the world, as you mark a declaration which heralded the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel. It is also a significant year for the Council of Christians and Jews, as we celebrate our 75th anniversary this year: founded at the darkest time of European history in 1942, we remain committed to friendship, understanding and co-operation between our two faiths. And there is also heartfelt local cause for thanksgiving tonight: eighty years of communal life at the Catford and Bromley Synagogue.



From my time as Bishop of Woolwich, I know what an important part you play in the life of South East London, where your presence is a blessing to so many within and beyond the Jewish community. As I recall the many kindnesses I have received at your hands, I am truly sorry that I cannot join you tonight, but I send my warm congratulations and the assurance of my prayers.

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OFFICE HOURS

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Review of 'Oliver' by Leon Kaye



One evening in the summer of 1960, I decided to take a break from my studies at LSE and popped round the corner to see the new production of Lionel Bart's "Oliver". It starred LSE old boy Ron Moody as Fagin; the feisty Georgia Brown as

Nancy; and a certain Barry Humphries as the undertaker.

The show had opened to rave reviews and the production more than lived up to those reports. And, to this day, I can still recall how touched I was by the lovely song "Who will buy".

We never went to see the subsequent movie – it was hard to think of the loveable Harry Secombe as the wicked Mr. Bumble, and it seemed a pity that Ron Moody's delightfully "Yiddish" portrayal of Fagin in the theatre had been toned down and "Anglicised" in the film in order to avoid the possibility of giving offence.

So I came fresh, as it were, to the music when it was presented by our very own Music Club. And I have to confess that I had forgotten how many delightful melodies had been crammed into just one show – nearly twenty altogether.

How wonderfully well all of those songs were served up to us. What a good idea to have the appropriate still from the movie as the backdrop to each song – it provided an added dimension in each case. And I wonder whether the lovely Sharona Joshua has ever been on more sparkling form at the piano than she was that night in linking and accompanying each number. And the assorted drums, vibraphone, glockenspiel etc played by the talented David Coronel added a real 'theatrical' atmosphere.

I was slightly apprehensive before the show commenced. David Rome had recently had the "Catford Cold" that had been doing the rounds and I wondered how his voice would hold up through such a lengthy programme. But any such concern evaporated when he launched into the rousing "Food Glorious Food" and he just seemed to sail effortlessly through song after song. And he didn't just sing beautifully – he actually brought each song to life with the humour or pathos or menace involved. And I was conveyed back to that summer night in 1960 when our very talented trio all sang their parts so delightfully in their touching rendition of "Who will buy".

It was also wonderful to have in the audience two people who personally knew Lionel Bart from their days in show business.

Clearly, a very great deal of work had gone into this. The three players supported each other with such verve and with never a slip – it was a most professional production. Truly, they gave us a magical night.

To quote from Oliver Twist himself: Please Sir, we want some more!!

Mitzvah Day by Rowena Rosenfeld

Mitzvah day is an international Jewish-led day of good deeds which saw hundreds from synagogues support the elderly and homeless, as well as refugees and others from poor or vulnerable backgrounds.



The team from the Synagogue, coordinated by Rowena Rosenfeld, collected a mass of food donations by customers at Waitrose, Beckenham. The customers who visited the store on Sunday 19th November were very generous, and by the end of the day no less than 321 kilograms of food had been collected. This was gratefully received by the Lewisham food bank which is one of many organised by the Trussell Trust.

Several community members helped - the same group that have supported the Waitrose food collection for the past five years. Several shul members also came in to donate goods and to provide their support. This is a high profile event where we reach out to the wider community and promote interfaith relations. People were surprised and pleased to know we were from Catford & Bromley Synagogue and were collecting, not on behalf of Jewish people in the area, but for the food bank.

While the food collection was taking place in Waitrose our Cheder children held a book sale at the synagogue. This went very well and all proceeds were donated to charity.

JEWISH CARE

Jewish Legacy

A gift in someone's Will means Lewis can use the art room whenever he likes

Lewis, community centre member

From helping them express their inner Chagall to making sure they see a friendly face and enjoy a hot Kosher meal every day, our work depends on donations. £1 in every £4 that we raise comes from gifts in people's Wills.

To find out more please call Alison Rubenstein on 020 8922 2833 or email arubenstein@jcare.org

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Jewish Care Charity Reg No. 802559

Mazel tov

<i>Rosemary & Ian Schlazer</i>	on the engagement of their daughter Denise to Daniel Norman
<i>Edith and Judith Arram</i>	on the Barmitzvah of their grandson Noah
<i>Helene Altman</i>	on the birth of her second granddaughter
<i>Louis Kleinman</i>	on celebrating his second Bar Mitzvah
<i>Joe & Marilyn Burchell</i>	on the Batmitzvah of their granddaughter, Ava

Condolences

<i>Ivan Rosenfeld</i>	We are sorry to advise of the loss of Ivan
<i>Dr Lewis Alan Ruben</i>	We are sorry to advise of the loss of Lewis
<i>Phyllis Price</i>	We are sorry to advise of the loss of Phyllis

Stone Consecrations

<i>Sarah Packer</i>	Wednesday 6th December (mother of Susan Lader) 12.00 pm <i>Bushey</i>
<i>Laurelle Freeman</i>	Sunday 18th March 2018 12.00 pm <i>Waltham Abbey</i>
<i>Rachel Foe</i>	Sunday 22nd April 2018 3.00 pm <i>Waltham Abbey</i>
<i>Barry Burke</i>	Sunday 10th June 2018 10.00 am <i>Bushey</i>

Ladies Society by Joan Goldberg

Despite being incapacitated, Benita has ensured the smooth running of the Ladies Society over the last few months.

All the Celebrants over the High Holy Days enjoyed Savoury Kiddushim, even though Benita was unable to be present, due to the excellent support of all the members of the Guild.

We once again wish our Celebrants, and all other members of our synagogue who have been celebrating various Simchas a hearty Mazletov.

Our annual 'Jewish content' film showing was held in the home of Wendy and Harry Isaacs recently, and was enjoyed by those who attended. This raised some much needed funds for the Society, and we thank Wendy and Harry for their usual hospitality.

Following the success of a Kiddush given by the Friendship Club for members of the synagogue, we have now introduced a new Kiddush to our repertoire. This consists of dips and crackers etc. and has proved most successful.

The weekly Kiddush after the service on Shabbat has continued, and we thank all those who help with the preparation of this.

The Society continues to participate in all aspects of Shul life, while maintaining the fabric of the kitchens etc. and to this end, we are continually fundraising, and are always grateful for any donations we may receive.

Benita wishes me to thank all who have contacted or visited her over the last few months. The visits and calls are much appreciated. Benita is now pain free, but her recovery is a slow process.

All the Society members, the Board, and Community wish Benita a continuing recovery to good health, and a much awaited return to her rightful place at the centre of our synagogue

The Society wishes Rev. Rome, his Family and all the Community "Chag Same-ach" for the festival of Chanukah.

Maccabi by Joe and Jacob Kat C & B Maccabi Joint Youth Leaders

It's been great to see more and more Catford cheder children start to attend club regularly on Sundays. Many of them are the children and grandchildren of ex-Maccabi regulars. We can only hope this continues and we can expand our numbers, especially as Catford is the only synagogue for miles around that has both a cheder and Maccabi.

As well as running the regular weekly sessions, we are proud to have been invited to take part in the Holocaust Memorial Day Production next



January at the Rivoli Ballroom again, ensuring there will be a Jewish youth presence at this important event. The theme this year will be The Power of Words. It's a great honour that we have been asked to introduce the

guest speaker, Lord Alf Dubs, whose inspiring speech last year reminded us of the links between the past and the present day refugee crisis.

Our thanks to all the parents who have supported us, with a special mention for Judith Paniri who has helped strengthen the links between cheder and club. Thanks also to the trustees, Joe Burchell, Pip Wolfson and Alex Arbisman, and to Debi Alper for help with administration and cooking lunches.