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## Shabbat UK creates a real 'buss'



The Shabbat Project first began in South Africa in 2013, aiming to bring together Jews of all backgrounds, both religious and secular, and recognising our shared heritage by celebrating one Shabbat together in full accordance with Jewish law.

Since its introduction to the UK in 2014 by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mervis, enthusiasm and commitment for Shabbat UK has grown year-on-year and become an integral part of the Jewish calendar. 2016 however, was particularly special for Leeds residents, since the Chief Rabbi and his wife elected to join us for our celebrations.

Planning the programme of events began in January when, with the

LJRC acting as facilitators, a cross-communal team was created, encompassing all three Orthodox synagogues as well as the Kollel.

An ambitious timetable of events was created which for the first time brought all three of the congregations together to celebrate in unison.

Festivities began as early as Tuesday 8th November with the arrival of the Shabbat UK promotional bus, which toured Leeds hotspots, distributing Shabbat UK goodies and reminding people to sign up for events.

Thursday saw the Challah Make (see p.4-5) and on Friday night a beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat service featuring

the award-winning a capella group Six13, was held at Etz Chaim, followed by a dinner at which the Chief Rabbi gave a moving D'var Torah.

On Shabbat morning a poignant service was held at the Beth Hamidrash Haggadol, incorporating the annual Remembrance Shabbat for AJEX (The Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women). The Chief Rabbi delivered an affecting address before congregants, dignitaries and ex-servicemen, followed by a 'kiddunch'.

The afternoon saw a very special Minchah service and Seudah Sh'lishit at the United Hebrew Congregation. (continued p.4.)

## LJRC President, Laurence Saffer, reflects on his first year in post



During my first year of tenure I endeavoured to get to know our affiliated organisations, in the course of which I met many wonderful people. As a community we are blessed with infrastructure and institutions

that cater for our needs from the cradle to the grave. Our community is fantastic and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who work for and on behalf of it in various professional and voluntary capacities.

However, as well as recognising our strengths it is important to identify areas where we can improve. The recent work done in collaboration with the JDC has gone some way to help identify these areas and others have become clear through both national and international events and via conversations with our affiliates.

The LJRC was first formed because of the need for a representative body that would defend the interests of the Jewish community to the outside world, particularly during periods of increased anti-Semitism. That requirement is as true today and is as it ever was but during the summer of 2014 it became evident that it was an area in which we were under-performing. As events in the Middle East unfolded, our community was put under terrible pressure concerning events over which had no control. We had no adequate mechanism with which to engage elected representatives or leaders of other faiths and it was clear that we needed to build one.

Accordingly, we have since developed strong relationships with all eight of our Leeds MPs, as well as those of neighbouring towns; councillors and their leadership; MEPs and local heads of faith. This work has been carried out with the assistance of our new Community Engagement Team and I would like to thank them for their contribution.

We have given assistance and support to our friends in Bradford, Harrogate, and York. We are also strengthening our ties with other northern Jewish communities and similarly sized communities to our own in Europe through the JDC. We have continued to engage

with the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) through collaborations such as the forthcoming Shul Vitality Project (more details in the next edition) and look forward to working with the new regional JLC External Affairs Manager who is taking up post shortly. We have also strengthened our bonds with the Board of Deputies (BOD) with planned joint projects.

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Many of our communal organisations have emerged organically to fulfil an identified need and this clarity of purpose has often proved useful in helping them to achieve their goals. However, occasionally it is to the advantage of all of us to draw on external resources to help us in areas in which we are struggling. Organisations within our community need to be able to come to the LJRC to seek assistance when required. Although our organisations are autonomous, they are also a part of our community and we can and should be here to help each other.

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We must not be distracted by nostalgia for the past but rather celebrate our present. Between 8,000 and 10,000 Jewish people choose to live here and make this their home. We must ensure that they are able to enjoy a full and rich Jewish life, lived in whatever way they see fit: whether that means going to shul, learning Ivrit or playing bridge, football, or golf, with a Jewish group. All are valid expressions of Jewish identity and all show a commitment to, and involvement with, our community.

On a number of occasions over the course of the year we have helped to bring together communal organisations to great effect - witness, for example, the tremendous success of Shabbat UK. We are, quite simply, strongest when we pull together as a community. Working towards that is the primary goal of our organisation.

Laurence Saffer

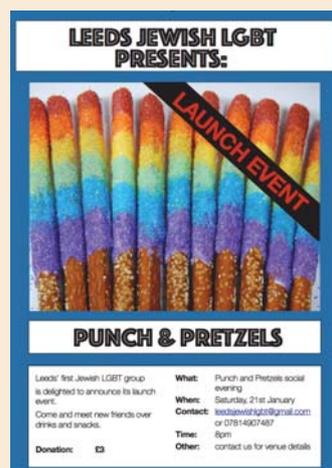
President, Leeds Jewish Representative Council  
[presidentljrc@mail.com](mailto:presidentljrc@mail.com)

# Say it with JPride

As the only umbrella organisation for the Leeds Jewish community, the LJRC has always taken its responsibility very seriously and tried to be as inclusive of all elements of both secular and religious Jewish life as possible.

In October of last year we organised a series of meetings between our lay leaders, clergy and a representative of Keshet UK, to discuss the needs of the LGBT+ sector of our community. One thing which was quickly evident was the lack of opportunity for Jewish LGBT+ people to meet each other; a situation which we were eager to rectify.

With the help of Suzanne Benjamin, the first event was quickly planned and public response was immediately supportive. The hugely successful "punch and pretzels" social evening took place at the end of January, with 20 attendees, spanning a wide age range.



Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with everyone enjoying the relaxed and safe environment. Interest in the new group has already been expressed from as far afield as Sheffield and Manchester.

The newly named JPride is



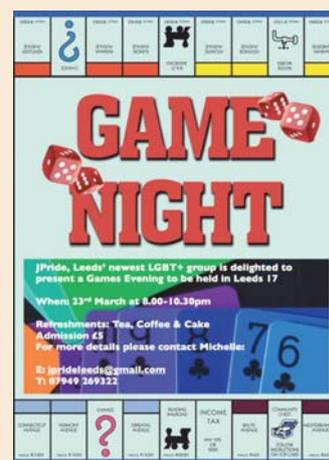
still in its infancy but with its enthusiastic steering committee already planning a busy programme of events, including a games night, a bagel brunch and a summer barbecue, all the indications are that the group will become a permanent fixture on the social scene.

A partner group for friends and family of the LGBT+ community is currently being established. For more information on either group or to get involved please contact:

T: 07814 907 487

E: [jprideleeds@gmail.com](mailto:jprideleeds@gmail.com)

E: [jprideparents@gmail.com](mailto:jprideparents@gmail.com)



## Taking the drama out of a crisis

The LJRC and CST have been leading on a project that will help protect our community in a crisis. Working closely with key local organisations plans are now underway to create a strategy for how we respond to a given crisis situation.



As part of a national strategy by CST, round table exercises and discussions are being held to establish emergency procedures

for each Jewish venue, including safe shelters, emergency contacts and media planning.

## LJRC's first tango in Halifax

When the ladies of the Calderdale Interfaith Group asked if someone could give a talk on their personal relationship with Judaism, the LJRC was delighted to oblige.

The group was lively and engaged. Faiths represented included Anglican, Catholic, Muslim and Bahai.

Ann Dewar and Susie Gordon both spoke at the event in Halifax in order to give a more diverse overview of Judaism.

Hopefully it will be the first visit of many.







# Make every day a Mitzvah Day



After winning a national award for last year's Mitzvah Day programme, this year's organisers had a hard act to follow.

They needn't have worried. Taking place this year on Sunday, 27 November, Mitzvah Day Leeds was mainly centred at The Zone youth hub, where a buzz of activity took place throughout the day.

Events encompassed a wide range of projects and ages, with a particular emphasis this year on creating schemes with longevity.

A physical 'Mitzvah tree' was created onto which participants could attach a pledge in the shape of a leaf, committing them to perform the Mitzvah throughout the year.



Some of the activities that took place included:

-  Nisa Nashim collected toiletries for PAFRAS (Positive Action for Refugees & Asylum Seekers)
-  Scouts and Guides cleaned up the cemetery at St Paul's Church in Shadwell
-  food collections for Leeds (North) Food Bank
-  Sinai Knit and Natter made hats for premature babies
-  Collecting litter at the Henry Cohen campus



## Did you know:

- The literal meaning of mitzvah is 'command' and so mitzvot are not just good deeds but also a religious duty
- The Jewish faith is actually built around 613 commandments, not just the best known 10
- At the end of Jewish services, the Aleinu prayer calls for 'Tikun Olam' - the perfection/repair of the world
- The Hebrew word for charity is tzedakah which also means justice
- Jews are obligated to donate 1/10th of their income to charity

# Bradford service marks HMD

More than 100 people from across Bradford's diverse communities came together to honour the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides at a Holocaust Memorial Day service.

How Can Life Go On? was this year's theme, which asked people to think about what happens after genocide and of our own responsibilities in the wake of such a crime.

In a moving tribute pledges were made to never forget the Holocaust nor its lessons. Representatives included people from Bradford's Jewish community, Central and Eastern European communities, Bosnian Srebrenica and



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2017

modern day victims. Gypsy, Traveller and Roma groups, second-generation relatives of victims, children who were hidden during the Holocaust, disabled people, representatives from trade unions as well as lesbian, gay and bisexual groups, were also present.

The Lord Mayor of Bradford, Councillor Geoff Reid, lit candles at the event held at Bradford Town Hall, with similar ceremonies taking place across the world. He was joined by various heads of faith, local MP Naz Shah and the Leader of Bradford Council, Susan Hinchcliffe.

LJRC President, Laurence Saffer, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Jonathan Arkush and researcher and historian, Nigel Grizzard, also attended. Nigel, who gave a key note speech at the event, recently discovered that five members of his family had been killed in the Holocaust and he spoke about his personal experiences and lessons for the future.

# Tribute to Bramley soldier at BHH and UHC

It's been a long-standing tradition that AJEX, the LJRC and community members attend Bramley's annual remembrance services. This was recently reciprocated when the Friends of Bramley War Memorial and War Remembrance Graves Clean Up visited BHH and UHC to honour one of Bramley's former residents.

The seven visitors paid tribute to former serviceman, Hans Rosenfeld, who died during the Battle of Arnhem during WWII. He is named on AJEX'S Garden of Rest Memorial at BHH and a wreath was laid in tribute.

Accompanied by AJEX's Wilf Jackson, Richard Dante and Leonard Fineberg, they were then given a tour of the two synagogues and shown the war memorials at each.

The day ended with the placing of a Magen David Remembrance Poppy at UHC's WWI Memorial. The hosts received many messages of thanks following the visit, commenting that it was a truly moving and memorable day.



## Leeds looks to the future with new strategy

An exciting new strategy to help our community become stronger, more sustainable and more attractive to Jews has been created as part of a pan-European project.

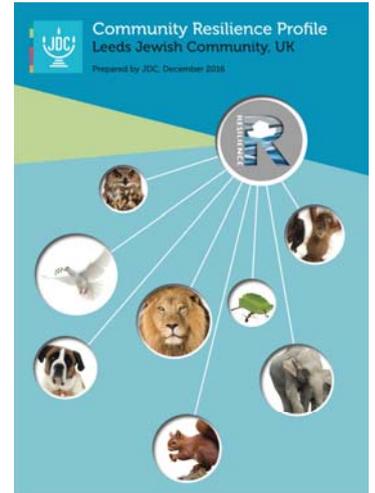
Leeds was selected as one of only four cities across the continent, (along with Athens, Rome and Strasbourg) by New York based Jewish Relief organisation, the JDC.

JDC consultants spent three days in Leeds meeting community leaders and members and said they had been inspired by their hospitality and openness.

Initial findings were presented to the LJRC Executive before the JDC issued their Community Resilience

Profile document which can be found on our website ([www.ljrc.org](http://www.ljrc.org)).

Plans are now underway to implement the new strategy, which outlines recommendations for the community's vision, coordination between organisations, economic sustainability, communal leadership and strengthening of social ties.



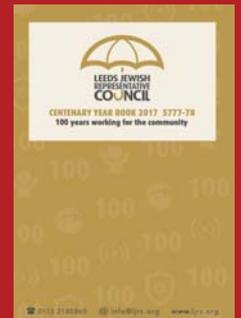
## Centenary Year Book has landed

Look out for our special edition 2017 Centenary Year Book which contains everything you'll need to know about who's who in our community.

Our Year Book is a crucial source of funding for us and ensures that we're able to continue our various interfaith, community and civic projects.

So a huge thank you goes out to all of our patrons, advertisers and affiliated organisations. Your generosity has enabled us to achieve so much over the years.

Here's to the next 100!



## Simon's keeping the (inter)faith



**Simon Phillips is the LJRC's director of interfaith and works as a community engagement officer at West Yorkshire Police.**

Over the past few months Simon has been busy meeting with members of faith communities and community groups in the wake of both Brexit and the ongoing refugee and asylum-seeker situation.

He recently met with members of the Refugee Council, The British Red Cross, Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network and City of Sanctuary, to discuss how Jewish and other communities can help support and integrate new arrivals.

Simon also took part in round table discussions on Brexit, community cohesion and Leeds City Council's Strategic Faith Leaders Group.

In an attempt to broaden the LJRC's network of diversity he visited the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain Leeds branch, and spoke at a civic engagement event at the Mount Pleasant Islamic Trust.

For more information about the LJRC's interfaith projects email: [interfaithljrc@outlook.com](mailto:interfaithljrc@outlook.com)

