

Jews on the Jouse

* September 2020 * Elul 5780 * Edition 9 *

ברוכים הבאים!

Welcome to the ninth edition of the newsletter for the York Liberal Jewish community and the first to be distributed electronically.

In this newsletter we look ahead to the immediate services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as well as further ahead to Sukkot, Simchat Torah and Chanukah. There is also information about our regular Friday night and Shabbat morning services.

Many Jewish organisations are increasing their online provision and there is information about some of the opportunities available.

We also welcome back student rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber at the start of this year.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all *גמר חטימה טובה* G'mar Chatima Tova (May you be sealed in the Book of Life). *RUTH MORRIS*

WELCOME BACK TO STUDENT RABBI GABRIEL KANTER-WEBBER

Gabriel is a trainee rabbi starting his fourth (penultimate!) year of studies at Leo Baeck College in London. Originally from Kingston upon Thames, he spent a year as a youth worker running LJY-Netzer, the youth movement for young Liberal Jews, and has also worked as a freelance journalist. Since entering rabbinic school, he has worked with Liberal and Reform communities from Glasgow to the Isle of Wight, including two previous very happy years in York! Gabriel is married to Manuella and once crocheted a cuddly Torah scroll.



ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR SERVICES

Our 5781 High Holy Day Schedule

We may not be physically together this year, but the ruach (spirit) and kavanah (intention) of the York Liberal Jewish Community is undiminished. Please join us for the High Holy Days this year by becoming a member if you have not already done so. New members will have a reduced fee for 2020 and no one will be denied membership for lack of funds—contact chair@jewsinyork.org.uk for further information. A High Holy Day brochure containing the Zoom links to the online services, details of the physical services, and links to liturgy and service books will be sent to members beginning next week. Below is our schedule of services and events. Education sessions are shown on page 4.

Rosh Hashanah

Friday, 18 September:

6:00 PM - Rosh Hashanah Seder (a York tradition). Virtual. The seder booklet and instructions will be sent to you. Seder led by student rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber.

Saturday, 19 September:

11:00 AM – virtual Rosh Hashanah morning service led by student rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber.

2:00 PM – Family-friendly Tashlich walk and ceremony on the River Ouse, city centre. Social-distancing required.



ראש
השנה

Yom Kippur



Yom Kippur

Sunday, 27 September:

7:00PM – virtual Kol Nidre led by student rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber with Samuel Borin.

Monday, 28 September:

11:00AM – virtual Yom Kippur morning service led by student rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber

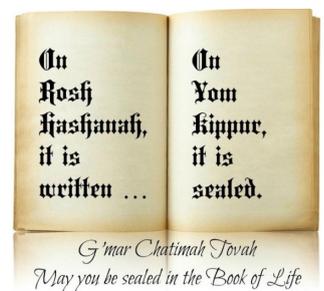
12:00PM – virtual Musaf service led by Liberal Judaism; followed by additional programming until 4PM. Details here.

4:00PM- virtual option, collaborative Afternoon service with Birmingham Progressive Synagogue and Three Counties

4:00PM- physical option (outdoors), family-friendly, socially distanced, community-led Afternoon service

5:30 PM – virtual Yizkor and Neilah service led by student rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber

6:45 PM (approximately) – virtual Havdallah following on from Neilah service



RABBI'S WORD

In March, just as lockdown was beginning, it was my wife's birthday. Knowing that we were going to be spending a lot of time together in a small flat, I bought her a two-player card game called Jaipur. Set in an exotic marketplace, we are each a trader trying to stockpile precious metals, spices and silk. The spindles of silk, though, with protruding wooden handles, look just like Torah scrolls, and we will normally say, "I'm going to sell three Torah scrolls."

I miss using a physical Torah. On the one hand, being able to 'read Torah' without going to all the trouble of learning the vowels and cantillation by heart makes life a lot easier. On the other hand, it makes me lazy - I do one, maybe two, run-throughs on Thursday and Friday and then I'm all set - and I miss the physical sensation of rolling the parchment around, finding the right place, knowing that generations of previous rabbis and lay-leaders have done exactly the same thing to exactly the same object.



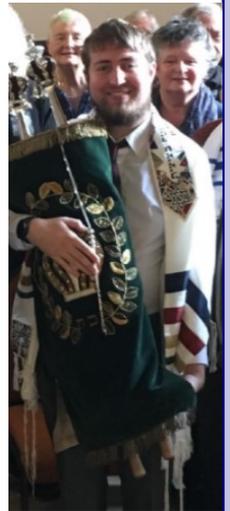
Torah scrolls are great works of art. The Keset ha-Sofer, a book of Jewish law about the rules for producing a Torah, says, "Even if, after the work is done it makes no difference to the writing, we consider it necessary to write using a fine quill." You might think you write just as well (or just as badly) with a biro as with a Parker Pen, that the one is a completely adequate substitute for the other, but the Keset ha-Sofer suggests that there may be differences we haven't noticed.

Life as a student rabbi under lockdown has shown me what a difference is made by many things I'd never really considered before. "Me, leading a service over Zoom, isn't so different to me leading a service from a bimah," I thought. But then I realised that many things are missing. The one-on-one kiddush chats, hearing about people's children and grandchildren and holidays – remember when people used to have holidays? The travel – I miss my spare Friday afternoons in Manchester or Cardiff or York, having an explore, going to a food market, visiting a museum.

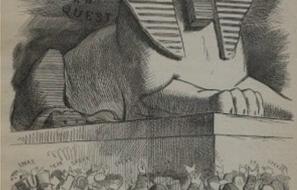
And the Torah scroll itself.

At the end of the Torah service, we sing Hashiveinu: "Chadeish yameinu k'kedem, renew our days to how they were in earlier times." In normal times, we never mean that line literally. Our lives always change week-on-week, year-on-year, and that's a good thing. But when the change happens far too fast – when our lives have changed immeasurably from how they were just weeks ago – we remember how things used to be. And we can be forgiven, at the end of our virtual Torah service with no Torah scroll, for meaning it literally. A full return will never be possible, but we must hold fast to a belief that we will all meet again, we will use our physical scrolls again, we will have our kiddush chats again.

And in the meantime, as a rabbinic student privileged to be working, again, with the York Liberal Jewish Community, it's my job to use the nicest pen I can under the circumstances to craft the best Jewish life we can have for ourselves right now. *STUDENT RABBI GABRIEL KANTER-WEBBER*



Bigots, Semites and Anti-Semites: Jews and their Critics in Victorian Britain



JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

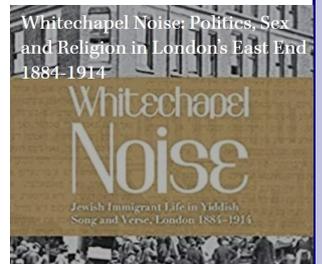
Regular virtual talks are being delivered from across all branches of the Jewish Historical Society of England. In September, there are two talks:



'Bigots, Semites and Anti-Semites: Jews and their Critics in Victorian Britain' by Professor David Feldman, Director of the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, Birkbeck. 8pm. 10th September

'Whitechapel Noise: Politics, Sex and Religion in London's East End 1881-1914' by Vivi Lachs Associate Research Fellow at Birkbeck College. 7.45pm. 29th September

For more details, see <https://jhse.org/events/>



LIMMUD EVENTS 2020

JW3 & Limmud Present: It Says What?!?

Tune in every Friday at 1pm UK/2pm CET/3pm IST and start a conversation you can continue into Shabbat.

JW3 and Limmud partner to bring you unexpected and poignant Jewish wisdom online. In this 30-minute bite-size series, educators from across the community will share some of their favourite pieces of Jewish wisdom.

Watch free via JW3 & Limmud's Facebook pages and JW3's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/JW3London>

No booking or fee required.



Limmud Tour of Britain

We are thrilled to present our first online Limmud Tour of Britain series. We will bring you presenters from the many thriving Jewish communities around Britain.

Come and explore local Jewish communities and history as well as the usual Limmud mix of topics of national and global interest. Each evening will be at least three sessions running in parallel over two time slots, so in true Limmud fashion – you will have plenty of choice!

The tour will take place online on Tuesday evenings from 07:30pm-10:00pm (BST)

8th & 15th September
2020



20th & 27th October 2020

Get your tickets now for this tour.

£5 per evening, or, receive 10% discount by booking for all four evening.

Limmud Manchester

25 NOVEMBER @ 20:00 - 21:30

Save the date for Limmud Manchester's next online evening.

Interested in volunteer? Please email manchester@limmud.org



For information about Limmud Festival (25 December to 31 December 2020), see <https://limmud.org/events>



SHANNON'S WORD

Thank you to everyone who has logged into our services over the last few months. Especially as we entered lockdown and as it started to drag on, our weekly services reminded us of the powerful purpose of Shabbat—to delineate and set aside time for ourselves and to be with community. It may not seem like much to some people, but our virtual services have been a lifeline for people who would otherwise not interact with anyone that day. Even though we haven't been physically together in the same room for months, we have in some respects never been closer than we are today. If you have not yet tried the online services, please do and if you are unable to access the technology, let us know and we'll see if we can help. You never know what can happen at one of our online services—we once had a European cantor log in and sing his heart out for us!

It was not an easy decision to have largely online High Holy Day services but with social distancing and other restrictions required of us, we felt staying virtual through the High Holy Days was the safest and most inclusive option. We will reassess our ability to meet in person again soon but meanwhile are planning to continue having weekly online services for the remainder of 2020.

Moving forward, we would like to see—and really need—more volunteers to help in future. I know how skilled and resourceful our members are and the YLJC would really benefit from more engagement and fresh input. If you have an idea and would like to help with a service or event, a fundraiser or social action campaign, or contribute to our various heritage projects in York, please contact me at chair@jewsinyork.org.uk or at 0300 102 0062. I can assure you that volunteering with us and building a stronger Jewish community in York is incredibly rewarding.



LEGACIES

Legacies are crucial in enabling the community to fulfil its long term goal of appointing a rabbi. If you would like to discuss leaving a legacy to the Community please contact Ben Rich for a discreet conversation.

BEN RICH

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY—SHABBAT SERVICES, SUKKOT, SIMCHAT TORAH AND CHANUKAH



All services can be accessed through Zoom links. Please see your emails for the relevant link:

Friday 4 September: Sam Borin and Ruth Morris (Community led)

Saturday 12 September: Shaan Bloch and Adrian Tellwright (Community led)

Friday 2 October (erev Sukkot and Shabbat): Sam Borin and Ruth Morris (Community led)

Saturday 3 October: (Sukkot morning service, with emphasis on children): Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Saturday 10 October (Shabbat and Simchat Torah service): Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Friday 16 October: Sam Borin and Ruth Morris (Community led)

Saturday 24 October: Community led service

Friday 30 October: Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Saturday 7 November: Community led service

Friday 13 November: Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Saturday 21 November: Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Friday, November 27: Sam Borin and Ruth Morris (Community led)

Saturday 5 December: Community led service

10-17 December, Nightly lighting of candles for Hanukkah: Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Friday 11 December: Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Saturday 19 December: Community led service

Friday 25 December: Gabriel Kanter-Webber



UPDATE ON THE 'RABBI FOR YORK' FUND

YLJC has an ambition to hire our own rabbi, part-time for three years.

The idea with the Rabbinic Fund is that by hiring a rabbi, we would be able to offer more services and events and have some pastoral and educational support here in York, which would be particularly helpful for the cheder children as they approach bar and bat mitzvah age. Our aim by appointing someone for a three year period is to give them the opportunity to grow the community over this time and identify additional sources of funding, so that at the end of this initial period we hope to be able to make a more permanent commitment and possibly even extend the hours.

In discussions with the Liberal Judaism head office, we have come up with a fundraising goal of £75,000 to hire a part-time rabbi on a 3-year contract (£25,000 per year). We have already secured match funding of £25,000 from the Benedictus Trust. This is funding that is only guaranteed if we can find a matching £25,000 and are seeking grants and other funding avenues. Our total is currently over £40,000. If you would like to contribute to the 'Rabbi for York' fund, please contact Shannon Kirshner at chair@jewsinyork.org.uk or call at 0300-102-0062.

HIGH HOLY DAY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Gabriel Kanter-Webber will be leading online sessions for the main festivals coming up in the next couple of months. All the sessions are on Thursdays, 7:00 to 7:30 PM. Please see your emails for the relevant links to access the sessions. All are welcome:

17 September – Rosh Hashanah

24 September – Yom Kippur

1 October – Sukkot

8 October – Simchat Torah

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED!

Do you have an article you would like to contribute to future editions of the newsletter? If so, please send your ideas to info@jewsinyork.org.uk. The deadline for the December edition is 28th November 2020.

