

Jews on the Jouse

March 2025 Adar 5785 *Edition 25*

ברוכים הבאים!

Welcome to the Pesach edition of YLJC's newsletter. As the days are getting longer, we look forward to the community's Purim and Pesach celebrations.

There are also details of the upcoming Clifford's Tower commemoration in March, the Clothes Swap in April, and Northern Chagigah to be held in November this year.

Chag sameach!

RUTH MORRIS

PURIM 2025 (PURIM IN AUSTRIA)

DATE: Friday, March 14, 2025

VENUE:

TIME: 6:00 PM doors open, 6:30PM start time

Join YLJC and friends for dinner theatre at its finest, with the three essential (vegetarian) Austrian foods: Schnitzel, Spätzle and Strudel. Introducing Captain Von Verosh and his evil henchman Hamanz, the latter brought to justice by our heroine Esther, whose charmer to charm became the key to Jewish survival.

Don your lederhosen and your dirndls, practice your yodelling, and come join us for the upheaval.

COST: £10/person, dinner included, vegan option available. Reservations required -

Please contact chair@jewsinyork.org.uk by Thursday 6th March 2025 to confirm numbers to allow us to cater correctly. You can pay directly into the YLJC Bank Account or when confirming.



PESACH 2025

DATE: 14th April

VENUE:

TIME: 6.00-8.30pm

Join YLJC and friends for our annual Pesach seder. Please contact Shaan via chair@jewsinyork.org.uk to confirm contributions of food/dessert to ensure we have a wonderful spread. Reminder it is Vegetarian (Pesach friendly, details on our website) and Fish ONLY. PLEASE ENSURE YOU BRING A NOTE/LABEL YOUR DISHES WITH ALL INGREDIENTS FOR ALLERGENS. Our seder was a sell-out last year so make sure you book your place early.



CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED!

Your community newsletter needs you! Please send your articles to info@jewsinyork.org.uk. The deadline for the next edition of the newsletter is 24th May 2025.



Purim Kids Carnival

Come down in your best costumes for a wonderful afternoon of Purim party fun!

Carnival Games • Music • Chocolate Fountain • Popcorn Machine • Photo Stand • Arts & Crafts • Costume Parade • Purim Sing Along

Sunday 16 March | 2pm - 4pm

TICKET PRICES: *PRICE PER FAMILY

MEMBERS - £5

NON-MEMBERS - £7.50



BOOK ONLINE

sinai
youth

CHAIR'S WORD: MARCH 2025

It's now 15 months since I have taken on the role of Chair; year two and the most important part of the job is to use this message and opportunity to thank all of you for being part of YLJC, not only for your help, support and honesty but also for your friendship and your guidance. I am still learning as I go and hope that you find it to be working well. I am always ready to listen to what should or could be done differently especially in how we improve things for YLJC.

This is going to be a different year for the Committee, with both Ben and Lilian having stepped down (due to the Constitutional rules) at the AGM. It is hard to express in words how grateful I am to them both for all they have done in the previous 10 years for YLJC as well as those not on Committee anymore but for their support in getting us to where we are (Shannon, Chloe, Katrina, Lee to name but a few) – we thank you. Ben and Lilian will continue to support YLJC with Ben heading up the New Ritual Committee to support our Rabbi and continue the road/guidance on Progressive Judaism as well as Fundraising, and Lilian in her capacity as a town planner to continue her engagement on the historical developments around both Jewbury and the Clifford's Tower car park area.

Ruth Brompton-Charlesworth (Secretary), John Charlesworth (combined role of Membership & Treasurer) and Jules Beaumont have been voted for and joined the Committee and together with Rabbi Elisheva, Sarah, Jay, Owen, Howard and myself we begin as a new "unit" for the first time in a few weeks at our first monthly committee meeting and I look so forward to us all doing what is best for YLJC. Beth (Thorpe) has again offered to remain our Children's Champion supporting us and Rabbi Elisheva with events and engagement as needed – thank you.

With that in mind, and as much as I hate talking about money, but this is a key (definitely not only) element that is critical to the survival and development of who we are. Part of our growth and stability is our Membership, could I please impose on you all and I ask for folks to check that Membership payments are up to date, at the correct amount (where possible). Any wonderful ideas for Fundraising, donations or contacts to help us to help YLJC would be welcomed and please feel free to reach out to me for a chat or just sharing of ideas for that helps. This is so important to keep us growing and in support of our constant growth and to continue having our own Rabbi.

More of our community have passed their Beth Din in the last few weeks, with a further cohort due later in March. All in all we are looking at welcoming 4 Jews by Choice in the first 3 months of 2025, together with Rabbi Elisheva supporting 3 others from Birmingham Progressive Synagogue through this personal journey. I am so grateful to those choosing YLJC for this incredible and brave voyage and to Rabbi Elisheva for her ongoing support and making this happen.



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We have many festivals upon us in the coming weeks and months. First up is PURIM, this will be held on Friday, 14th March 2025 (Purim in Austria) followed by our annual PESACH Seder, this will be held on Monday, 14th April 2025 (full details in my weekly updates). Please do come along, enjoy a little prayer, and wonderful food – also an opportunity of seeing kids (of all ages) and the adult kids engage, grow, learn and above all have immense fun – it gives us all the perfect time to be together.

As always, my fondest wishes to you all. As the days and months extend, I ask us all to continue to pray for what continues to happen in Israel and Palestine, may each day be one closer to peace.

A very proud, YLJC Chair
SHAAN BLOCH



WHY I LOVE BEING A DEPUTY

I feel being a Deputy representing a community or an organisation is an honour and an excellent opportunity to make a difference by proactively getting involved in the work of the Board. The Board's new President Phil Rosenberg is passionate about inclusion and empowering Deputies to bring their own skills, knowledge and experience to the Board to make a difference. Phil's vision is for the Board to be the voice for all Jews regardless of denominational affiliation or community group. Working for social justice lies at the heart of the work of the Board.

For many years I have been campaigning for access to information on HIV prevention and sexual health particularly for disabled people and minority groups as they are far too often excluded from accessing sexual health services for a number of reasons. I have raised the subject through the "Questions to the President" process and I am delighted to report the Board each year marks World AIDS Day by encouraging people to get tested to help end HIV transmission by 2030.

Many of us are deeply concerned about the repeated failures of government to ban so-called Conversion therapies. Again, I used the "Questions to the President" process to ask if the Board would support the campaign to ban such therapies which they have done. The Board has officially supported the ban by posting on social media and they included this statement in the Jewish Manifesto which was sent to all candidates at the General Election 2024.

Photo: Owen, Pete Simms & Sara Radivan

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Conversion therapy is the use of harmful emotional and physical techniques in an attempt to “cure” a person’s sexual orientation. A wide variety of evidence shows that conversion therapy can cause long-term significant psychological harm. It is time for the practice of conversion therapy to be banned in the UK.’ Board of Deputies of British Jews.

I work with Pete Simms who leads the Pastoral Care team at Salford Food Parcels, and we have embraced the principle ‘Every Day is Mitzvah Day’ by serving cake and coffee and access to information on sexual health once a month to clients who attend the Food service. Sara Radivan the Board’s Deputy & Community Engagement Manager has attended two of the sessions and is always supportive with information or advice. Sara was also a rock of support when Pete and I hosted the Board’s Jewish Living Experience Exhibition (JLEE) to community group leaders, local councillors and the general public at Pendleton Gateway in Salford last August which was a remarkable success. We certainly want to explore options to host the exhibition in York before too long.

I have submitted a Question to the President for the next Plenary on Sunday (23rd February) asking if the Board would consider supporting LGBT+ History Month which they have agreed to do so, finally Phil in his Presidential Manifesto has pledged to launch a Commission on Disability inclusion in the Jewish Community; that would really be something.

OWEN POWER, YLJC
BOARD OF DEPUTIES
REPRESENTATIVE



NATIONAL HIV TESTING WEEK

I TEST.

THE BOARD OF NATIONAL OFFICERS LIBERAL JUDAISM IS PROUD TO SUPPORT HIV TESTING WEEK 2025!

OUR COMMUNITIES ARE ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO KNOW THEIR HIV STATUS BY TESTING TO END TRANSMISSIONS & COMBAT THE STIGMA OF HIV!



CONTACT:
OWEN POWER 21 MAPLE ST LONDON W1T 4BQ

STARTSWITHME.ORG.UK

Produced by Terrence Higgins Trust for HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND
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and in Scotland (SC038850). Company reg no. 1778146. Photography by George Povey.



**1ST OF
DECEMBER
WORLD
AIDS DAY**

On this World AIDS Day the **Board of Deputies** remembers all those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS and encourages people to get tested to help end transmission by 2030.

#WORLDIDAIDS DAY

 **BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS**
ADVOCACY | DEMOCRACY | COMMUNITY



DECLUTTER YOUR CLOSET, REFRESH YOUR STYLE, AND SUPPORT A GREAT CAUSE! YORK LIBERAL JEWISH COMMUNITY CLOTHES SWAP!

Shalom members of the York Liberal Jewish Community!

As we move through the spring season, with our Purim celebrations and preparations for Pesach, our thoughts turn to renewal and fresh beginnings. What better way to embrace this spirit than by refreshing your wardrobe sustainably and supporting our ongoing Mitzvah Day work? Get ready for a fantastic Clothes Swap happening on **Saturday April 5th at the Friends Meeting House in York!**

This isn't just any clothes swap – it's a chance to declutter your closet, find some amazing new-to-you pieces, and contribute to our Mitzvah Day efforts all at the same time! We're making a big push to make this event a success, and we need your help!

Why a Clothes Swap?

We all have those items in our closets that we no longer wear. They might not fit, they might not be our style anymore, or maybe they're just taking up space. Instead of letting them languish, bring them to our clothes swap! You'll be giving them a second life and helping someone else find a treasure and contributing to saving the planet. Plus, you'll have the chance to browse through a wide selection of clothing and discover some hidden gems for yourself! It's a win-win for everyone! If its is to be successful we need stuff that is good quality and desirable.

Our clothes swap is an integral part of our ongoing Mitzvah Day work and more broadly our Tikkun Olam agenda. By participating, you're not only decluttering and refreshing your wardrobe, but you're also directly contributing to our community's efforts to make a positive impact. The proceeds from the clothes swap will go towards **York City of Sanctuary / York Refugee Action**. We have been supporting these charities through our food collections at services for welcome packs for refugees.

DATE: Saturday 5th April

TIME: After Shabbat Service

LOCATION:

WHAT TO BRING: Gently used clothing in very good condition – men's, women's, and children's items are all welcome! Please ensure that all items are clean and in good repair. NB **NO shoes and NO underwear**

WHAT TO EXPECT: A fun, friendly atmosphere where you can browse, swap, and connect with members of the community.

How to Get Involved:

DONATE: Bring your unwanted clothing to the Friends Meeting House on the day of the swap. We will also be accepting donations at the **Purim Event on 14 March**.

VOLUNTEER: We need volunteers to help with set-up, sorting, and organization on the day of the event. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Sarah Hubbard (s.hubbard25hotmail.co.uk)

SPREAD THE WORD: Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about the clothes swap! The more people who participate, the more successful it will be.

Let's make this clothes swap a resounding success and demonstrate the power of community action! We look forward to seeing you there!

Warmly,

THE YORK LIBERAL JEWISH COMMUNITY SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE



REFLECTION: PESACH AND THE PROMISE OF RENEWAL

Pesach is the festival of renewal. We tell the story of our journey from slavery to freedom, from oppression to hope, and from darkness into light.

Each year, as we sit around our Seder tables, we do more than retell an ancient narrative –we commit ourselves to the ongoing work of transformation, both personal and collective.

This year, as we move towards one Progressive Judaism, we embrace that spirit of renewal in a profound way.

We are uniting as a community, drawing strength from our shared values, and finding new ways to engage, innovate, and build the Jewish future we believe in.

Pesach arrives with spring – when nature reminds us that life is resilient.

The Song of Songs, traditionally read at this time, declares: “For behold, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The blossoms appear in the land, the time of singing has come.” (Song of Songs 2:11-12)

These words resonate not only with the beauty of the natural world but also with the cycles of hope that define Jewish time. Just as the earth renews itself after the barrenness of winter, we too are called to refresh our souls, renew our commitments, and embrace the possibilities ahead.

This Pesach, the need for renewal extends far beyond our personal and spiritual lives. Our civil and political worlds are fractured, often defined by fear rather than hope. Yet, Pesach teaches that transformation is possible.

The Exodus was not just a moment of liberation but the start of a journey – a slow, often frustrating process of building a society based on justice, equality, and shared responsibility.

This is the challenge of Pesach, not only to celebrate freedom but to take responsibility for helping the world renew.

Leonard Cohen’s well-known lyric reminds us: “There is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in.”

Pesach is a festival of optimism, not because suffering is absent, but because redemption is always possible. The Seder does not shy away from struggle, but it insists on hope – on a future that is worth striving for.

As we gather this year, let us find inspiration in renewal – of nature, of society, of Jewish life. Let us take up the challenge of transforming the world, knowing that through cracks, through struggle, and through change, the light of renewal shines brightest.

Chag Pesach Sameach!

Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Rabbi Josh Levy Co-Leads of Progressive Judaism

THE MACCABIAH GAMES 2025

The Maccabiah Games, referred to as the 'Jewish Olympics', were first held in 1932, in the midst of a worldwide depression. 390 athletes and 14 nations competed, figures similar to the participation in the very first Olympic Games 36 years before.

The Maccabiah is now the 3rd largest sporting event in the world, after the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games, and take place every 4 years in Israel. Maccabi GB took a delegation of over 500 athletes to the 21st Maccabiah Games in Israel in 2022.

The 22nd Maccabiah Games is taking place from the 6th - 22nd July 2025.

Applications are open for athletes to compete in the Maccabiah Games 2025. For more information, see <https://www.maccabigb.org/>



YELLOW CHANDLE 2025

Yellow Candle 2025, a project led by Maccabi GB, has officially begun. This annual initiative pays tribute to the 6 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, uniting communities in remembrance.

As Yom HaShoah approaches on the evening of Wednesday 23rd April, thousands of Yellow Candles will be lit, serving as a powerful reminder to never forget one of the darkest chapters in history.

Each Yellow Candle comes with a biographical card, sharing - where known - the name, age, place of birth and death of a Holocaust victim. By lighting a candle, we honour their memory and ensure their stories continue to be told, strengthening our collective commitment to remembrance and resilience.

We are incredibly grateful to The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation, Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust, The Jewish Chronicle, We Are All Making A Difference, Yad Vashem UK Foundation, and Yom HaShoah UK, for supporting the Yellow Candle Project.

Maccabi GB will be charging £3.50 for each Yellow Candle. You can 'bulk buy' these for your organisation or community in quantities of 48 and you will be invoiced once you have placed your order.



SARA RADIVAN, REGIONAL MANAGER, BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is the democratically elected representative organisation of the UK Jewish community, and comprises more than 300 Deputies directly elected by synagogues and communal organisations. The Board is continuing to advocate for its five key priorities of fighting antisemitism, standing up for peace and security in Israel and the Middle East, defending our religious freedoms, making our community more united and more inclusive and celebrating our faith, heritage and culture.

We are all aware of the surge of Jew hatred since the heinous attack on Israel by Hamas on 7th October 2023 and fighting antisemitism is the Board's number one priority. In January 2025 the Board's 'Commission on Antisemitism', which has the support of both Government and Opposition, started its evidence sessions. The Commission, chaired by the Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism Lord John Mann and former Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt, will focus on the issue of antisemitism and make recommendations to tackle the problem at root. The Commission will review all legislation relating to hate crime, policing and prosecution, to ensure we have the toughest possible framework in place for offenders.

Much of the Board's campaigning energy has been directed towards the hostages and we were all delighted to see the release of several hostages over the past few weeks. The Board will continue to campaign vociferously until all the hostages have been brought home. We pray that the ceasefire will hold. A key aspect of the Board's work will be to counter anti-Israel bias in the media, the UN and elsewhere and to push back against Iran and its proxies.

The Board recently launched its Employer's Guide, with the backing of the Government, to ensure that Jewish workers are supported in the workplace after an incredibly difficult year. The Guide can be read and downloaded from [here](#)

Inclusion is important. For the first time in 15 years, no women were elected as Honorary Officers on the Board, however, towards the end of last year, the Board announced that, for the first time in its history, there was a gender-balanced executive. The Board also has Deputies who align with LGBTQ+ and who have disabilities.

Recently the Board held its first Parliamentary Advocacy Day bringing Deputies directly to Westminster to speak to their MPs about topics of particular concern to the UK's Jewish community. The Board has been leading on campaigning for the hostages as well using its influence in Government to ensure that minds are focused in Westminster on this vital issue. It was great to see York Liberal Jewish Community's active Deputy Owen Power take an active part in the Parliamentary Advocacy Day.

At Chanukah, the Board of Deputies, alongside hostage advocacy organisations, launched a campaign for UK Jews to light a candle for every hostage with a British connection still held by Hamas. Thousands of cards were displayed in synagogues and Jewish shops around the country and the campaign was widely shared on social media. York Liberal Jewish Community's Deputy Owen Power was most active in this campaign and posted on social media every day of Chanukah with the hostage cards. As stated, we continue to pray that the ceasefire holds and every one of the hostages will be reunited with their families and loved ones.



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Interfaith relations have suffered since the 7 October 2023 attack. The Board launched its Optimistic Alliance at which 60 Muslim and Jewish leaders came together at the launch, which was focused on a range of issues including how to tackle anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hatred; challenging extremism and supporting mainstream voices; defending shared religious freedoms; confronting societal challenges like poverty and climate change; and find ways to engage better over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. President Phil Rosenberg recently joined with other Jewish and Muslim leaders from 11 denominations and attended the signing of the Drumlanrig Accords at Spencer House. This landmark document will be presented to the King at Buckingham Palace.

At the time of writing this article, the Board's first Crowdfund has just finished. Thank you to everyone who donated and helped the Board raise over £230,000, funds which will be used to continue to advocate on behalf of UK British Jewry. The Board also encourages all Synagogue members to pay their £35 per year voluntary Communal Contribution. This is the only source of income the Board receives and every penny counts.

Discussions are beginning to take place regarding the Board's British Jewish Culture Month, with a proposed launch in 2026. In order to inoculate the public against the virus of antisemitism, we need to celebrate and educate about the contribution of our community to our country's society, economy and culture.

The Jewish Living Experience Exhibition continues to "travel the country". It would be great if the Jewish Living Exhibition could be hosted and housed again in York.

I look forward to continuing to work with York Liberal Jewish Community's Deputy Owen Power

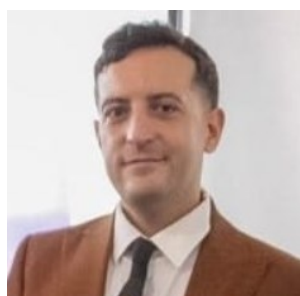
The Board of Deputies ensures that the UK's Jewish community can live freely and happily and continue to practise their traditions, and has an enhanced knowledge and understanding of Jewish life across British society, including the regional Jewish communities.

Sara Radivan, Board of Deputies Deputy & Community Engagement Manager sara.radivan@bod.org.uk / +44 (0)7957 962 055



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY CIVIC EVENT 2025

York City Council held its Holocaust Memorial Day Civic Event at 6pm on Monday 27 January 2025. York St John University kindly hosted the event again at their Creative Centre. The speaker this year was Professor Bucci from Holocaust Centre North at University of Huddersfield, who is an expert on the history of the Holocaust. The theme this year was 'For a Better Future'. The Seven Commitments of Holocaust Memorial Day were also read, and the Lord Mayor attended. The event was fully sold out and Professor Bucci's talk was extremely well received. There were additional contributions from the students of York St John, the York Chinese Society, The Mount School choir, Heather Baker, and Holly Taymar.



SAM BORIN

Image from: <https://jlifemagazine.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/>

We are excited that bookings are now open for our Progressive Judaism Northern Chagigah weekend (21-23 November 2025). Originating in the Movement for Reform Judaism, and now a joint event for all northern Liberal and Reform communities, it's a chance for members to meet for a weekend of relaxation, learning, prayer and fun in a gorgeous hotel in East Yorkshire that we will have exclusive use of.

Everyone comes for different reasons – to be spiritually recharged, to enjoy a Shabbat away from everyday routine, to make new friends and/or to be delighted that their children are being looked after and Jewishly engaged. Northern Chagigah is all about what YOU want. Whether it's to be up at the crack of dawn, in the pool, tackling Talmud, having a good sing in a Shabbat service or enjoying a lie in and joining for lunch. We can't wait to spend the weekend with you.

For more details and to book go to [The Movement for Reform Judaism - Northern Chagigah 2025](https://www.movementforreformjudaism.org.uk/northern-chagigah-2025)



JOINT LJ-MRJ SHAVUOT EVENT FOR FAMILIES

We're delighted to invite you to help plan a special Shavuot outing, bringing our LJ & MRJ communities together for a fun and memorable day.

Shavuot falls on the 1st of June, right in the middle of half-term, so we've picked Sunday the 18th of May for this exciting event.

The day will be full of engaging activities, including an inter-communities national challenge game, picture challenges, songs, scavenger hunts, and more—all designed to bring us closer together and most of all to have fun. Community teams and participants will communicate via WhatsApp groups to complete the challenge game. To cap off the day and in the spirit of Shavuot, everyone will celebrate with ice cream!

Our vision for this in-person activity day is that each community will hold it in a suitable location near them (a park, a beach, etc.), either with other local LJ and MRJ communities, or by themselves if there are no other nearby communities, but all will be linked in real time through the national challenge.

This event is primarily for families, but everyone is welcome to join in the fun.



A REFLECTION ON THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES PARLIAMENTARY ADVOCACY DAY

Board of Deputies President Phil Rosenberg was determined to empower Deputies by organising an annual Parliamentary Advocacy Day to enable them to engage with their MPs on social issues of interest to the Jewish community. The first Advocacy Day took place on Tuesday 11th February 2025, and I was delighted to participate and represent York Liberal Jewish Community. My MP Rebecca Long Bailey because of illness and York MP Rachael Maskell because of pressure of work were unable to meet me but both offered alternative arrangements to meet which I am looking forward to. I was delighted my fellow Deputy Judith Prinsley took me under her wing and I joined her meeting with Catherine West MP for Hornsey and Friesen Barnet. Other Deputies attending included Liberal Judaism chair Karen Newman. It was an incredibly special day, and the time we spent engaging with Catherine and her team was positive and productive. We touched on an entire range of issues including the plan for a British Jewish Cultural Month, the impact of antisemitism on mental health, proscribing terrorist groups, inclusion and community cohesion. We appreciated the time Catherine spent with us, and we were delighted by Catherine's obvious determination to be of help. Judith and I had a real sense that we were being listened to, and our concerns taken seriously. We felt we were experiencing a glimpse of parliamentary democracy in action in this hugely historic setting. It was great to see so much of the Palace of Westminster with its vast halls and corridors with its impressive paintings and statues. Without the help of the army of ushers and guides who were always ready to help and escort us to each location we needed to get to we would have got hopelessly lost as neither of us have any sense of direction! We got to watch some of the Business of the Day in the Commons from the Strangers' Gallery which was quite an experience in-person. We finished our day taking tea with Peter Prinsley MP in the Tea Room, I was delighted to meet Peter as I consider Peter to be a friend for life from the time he spoke about D/deaf exclusion in so many aspects of life. Following the success of the day, the Board of Deputies plans to make Parliamentary Advocacy an annual event and I am looking forward to the next one!

OWEN POWER, YLIC BOARD OF DEPUTIES REPRESENTATIVE



LJ Chair Karen Newman with
Joe Powell MP



Owen, Judith Prinsley &
Catherine West MP



Owen with Judith Prinsley &
Peter Prinsley MP

SHABBAT IFTAR—MARCH 2024

Last year, Cory Rich, child of Ben Rich and Rachael Reeves and a founder member of YLJC in her own right, went to Birmingham University. There she attended Birmingham Progressive Synagogue's *Shabbat Iftar*, a joint meal with local Muslims to mark both the Jewish sabbath and the breaking of the Ramadan daily fast.

As a creative writing student she captured the event in a poem that she was later invited to read at Birmingham's city-wide Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations.

Shabbat Iftar – March 2024

Last week at my synagogue
the doors were open
I ran in and out of the kitchen and up and down the stairs
I washed apples
I folded prayer sheets
I heard someone say
'you've brought too much fruit'
and 'no no, we did that on purpose'
and 'is there anything I can help with?'
and 'we don't have as much time as I thought!'
and 'who brought 100 loaves of challah?'
and 'are we sure that's enough?'
and 'they barely fit in the kitchen!'
and 'people are arriving!'
and a woman in a hijab
covered in purple flowers and little flecks of yellow
that could be bees darting between them
is here
and she takes my hand and says
'Shalom aleichem'
and I said
'Salam alaykum'
and I probably said it wrong
but she smiled
and went to get a name tag
and more people began to arrive
and some of them were Jews and
some of them were Muslims and
all of them were chatting
and I could hear
'Ramadan Mubarak' and 'Shabbat shalom'
and 'Shalom aleichem'
and 'Salam alaykum'
but so many people were talking
the languages merged and
were siblings again
and so were we.
and we go upstairs
slowly side by side
to the sanctuary



with Hebrew across the walls
and the words
'Wait quietly for God, O my soul
for my hope comes from God'
and we are not being quiet
so God must have arrived
along with our guests
who pray with us while we pray with them
and my hope comes from God
but it comes from this too
from my Jewish family holding open the doors
for my Muslim family to break their fast
without a wait
and from the reminder to
'sit beside someone you don't know
Yet'
and hearing one conversation in a mix of
broken Arabic
and broken English
and broken Hebrew
and all I can hear
is 'shalom aleichem'
and 'salam alaykum'
and I think in this moment
Peace may be upon us all

CORY RICH

CLIFFORD'S TOWER COMMEMORATION 2025

This year's Clifford's Tower commemoration will take place on 16th March at 6.30pm in the atrium of the Castle Museum. The event is free but booking is required. The event is ticketed via Eventbrite and the link can be found on the Council website. This year's speaker is Professor John Jenkins, Department of History, University of York and there will also be a contribution from Barbara Boyce as well as musical interludes. As usual, Kaddish will be recited.

SAM BORIN

Image from: https://www.yorkmix.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Clifford_DSCF5386CreditEnglishHeritage.jpg



THE ULTIMATE MITZVAH

It is a good thing to give time and expertise to a faith community. It is a mitzvah. It is only through this that most communities survive, especially when the community is relatively new. For example some people must take responsibility for being committee members and these people are generally visible to the congregation. Others have the knowledge and expertise to lead the services, and be involved with the education of the young people and those requiring assistance. There are lots of people preparing food, setting out chairs and generally helping to enable a service to run smoothly; these are indeed fulfilling mitzvot. Most people, especially new members, would love to do something for the community but are unsure what to do.

Let me offer the ultimate Mitzvah: The Chevra Kaddish which is often referred to as "The Sacred Sisterhood/ Brotherhood who perform tahara for those who have passed away. This is the greatest mitzvah of all. As we all know the only certainty in life is that one day we will die, and when that happens we will need to be prepared for burial. It is a very meaningful experience to wash and prepare someone's physical remains. It is performed with care and dignity, working as a team of four people. Some are very experienced whilst others are relatively new to this. But full training will be given, before, during and after the procedure, and no one will be asked to do this without experienced support.

It is important that a Jewish woman/ man is prepared for burial by other Jewish women/men, washing and preparing according to tradition and the faith, reciting prayers. The reason that I think that it is such a huge mitzvah is that you are the last person on earth to be able to help that person, and because of this they cannot say thank you. Also the general congregation don't know who you are so it is like 'Good work by stealth.'

THE TAHARA TEAM

