

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As always, we have tried to provide an interesting and balanced programme of events during the past year which we hope you have enjoyed.

In October 2015 members attended a meeting at Eastcote Methodist Church to hear Louise Finan, from Christian Aid, talking about the refugee crisis and the NGO response.

For our November meeting we were invited to join the congregation of the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue for their Mitzvah Day Event. The focus was on 'Detention Action' – indefinite detention for asylum seekers. A range of activities took place on the day which included a talk by a recent asylum seeker, a clothing collection for refugees and a 'Bike Project' which collected and refurbished unwanted bicycles to be distributed to refugees.

In December we tried something a little different for our Christmas & Chanukah celebration. Our meeting took the form of a Tea Party, held in the afternoon at NPLS, when Rabbi Lea Muhlstein gave an interesting and entertaining talk entitled 'Celebrations – Food for Thought.' There was a very happy atmosphere and it was decided to try a similar formula in December 2016. Those who attended were asked to bring groceries for the local Food Bank and we are most grateful for all the generous donations.

At our January meeting, commemorating National Holocaust Memorial Day, we welcomed Mary Edusa-Mensah from the Charity Open Doors and Katya Roshchyna from World Jewish Relief, who spoke respectively on the current fate of Christians in various parts of the world and Jews in Ukraine.

In February we met at Emmanuel Church, Northwood, to hear Rabbi Dr. Charles Middleburgh's talk on 'The Aftermath of the First World War.' This meeting was again held in the afternoon and was well attended.

For April we reverted to our usual evening meeting time. Rabbi Dr. Andrew Goldstein gave us a most thought provoking talk about the life and work of a remarkable man, Rabbi Dr. Richard Feder and his book 'Jewish Tragedy'

which he wrote in 1947, having lost his wife, children and grandchildren in the persecutions of the Second World War. Rabbi Feder later became the Chief Rabbi of Bohemia and Moravia.

Last month we met at Northwood Methodist Church for a talk given to us by our Branch Secretary, Cynthia Drapkin, explaining how a Torah Scroll brought together a congregation in Northwood and a town in Eastern Slovakia. A power point selection of photographs was shown by her husband, Neil, by way of illustration and we were shown a copy of the beautifully scripted Psalm 150 which had been presented to the grammar school in the town. Cynthia's talk concluded with a lovely moment of unity when we all recited together the words of the psalm.

A few months ago we sent out a Questionnaire asking for members' views regarding times and venues of meetings, Speakers and topics. Thank you to all those who responded, your opinions were most helpful and we shall try to incorporate them into the planning of our future programme.

Many thanks to Sidney Moss who continues to produce his excellent programme leaflets and to Donald Edwards and Neil Drapkin for making recordings of our meetings which are readily available. Thank you to all members of our Committee - Cynthia and Neil Drapkin, Fr. Timothy Gorham, William Haines, Sidney Moss, Sue Solway and Rabbi Kathleen Middleton.

A great deal of work goes into the planning, booking and running of our meetings which would not be possible without their invaluable contributions.

We are privileged to welcome to our AGM The Rt. Revd Michael Ipgrave, currently Bishop of Woolwich and soon to be the Bishop of Lichfield. Bishop Michael is the Chairman of the CCJ Trustees and we look forward to hearing from him.

It is our hope that you will continue to support us and enjoy our various events and the opportunities they give us to meet and discuss topics of mutual interest and to strengthen the bonds of friendship.

The Revd Wendy Graham
July 2016