

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

During the past year we have been fortunate in obtaining some excellent Speakers for our meetings. We have enjoyed their talks and the various topics they have brought to our attention.

At our AGM last year we were privileged to welcome Bishop Michael Ipgrave, who had been newly appointed Bishop of Lichfield, and is Chairman of the CCJ Trustees. His talk on Jewish Christian relationships was well received and promoted a stimulating discussion afterwards.

In September there were two Speakers - Rabbi Natan Levy and Sheik Muhammad Al-Hussaini - who worked well together in a friendly atmosphere, presenting their different viewpoints.

At our November meeting we welcomed Professor Tony Lane, Professor of Historical Theology at the London School of Theology in Northwood. His topic, 'Why is Christianity divided?' proved a most interesting subject.

For our meetings in December, January and February we changed from evening to afternoon meetings in order to spare members the difficulty of driving in inclement weather during the long dark winter evenings. This change has met with general approval and will be continued next winter.

Our Christmas/Chanukah celebration meeting in December took the form of a tea party, where kosher doughnuts and mince pies were served at beautifully decorated tables. As in recent years, members responded generously to the request to bring groceries which were donated to the local Food Bank. In true party style our Speaker, Fr Robin Burgess, gave a talk on 'The Role of Wine in Religion'. We held a raffle with some excellent prizes and our Treasurer, Neil Drapkin, provided us a set of his famous Quiz questions which happily did not overtax our brain power! The afternoon was much enjoyed by all who attended, and we shall repeat the formula in December this year.

As is our custom, we honoured Holocaust Memorial Day at our January meeting when survivor Steven Frank described his experience of being deported from Holland as a child to the Terezin Ghetto. Mr. Frank spoke very movingly and illustrated his talk with photographs of his relations who had not survived.

In February we welcome a long standing friend of CCJ, Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Rabbi Emeritus of the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue. Rabbi Goldstein spoke in his usual erudite and entertaining manner on 'The Psalms in Jewish Liturgy'.

In March Mr Robin Moss gave an excellent talk on his thoughts about being a British Jewish Zionist, which gave us food for thought.

We did not meet during April due to Holy Week, Easter and Passover, but at the time of writing this we are looking forward to our May meeting when one of our Committee members, Rabbi Kathleen Middleton, will speak to us about 'The After Life'.

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to all our Committee members – Neil and Cynthia Drapkin, Tom Crosby, Fr Timothy Gorham, Rabbi Aaron Goldstein, William Haines, Rabbi Kathleen Middleton and Sue Solway. Without their invaluable contributions to the planning, booking and running of our meetings there would be no Hillingdon CCJ.

Thanks are due also to Sidney Moss who continues to produce his excellent programme leaflets, to Donald Edwards and Neil Drapkin whose work enables recordings of our meetings to be readily available, and to Fiona Holding and Christine Piper for their assistance with the refreshments.

We have recently updated our Website – www.ccj-hillingdon.org.uk – and details of our forthcoming programme of events will be found there as and when they are arranged. We would be pleased to hear any suggestions from members and friends of suitable Speakers and topics of interest.

Later this year CCJ will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of this wonderful organisation and we hope that you will continue to support our Hillingdon Branch and invite others to join us in sharing our mutual interests in discussion and friendship.

The Reverend Wendy Graham
July 2017