

קהלת תורה

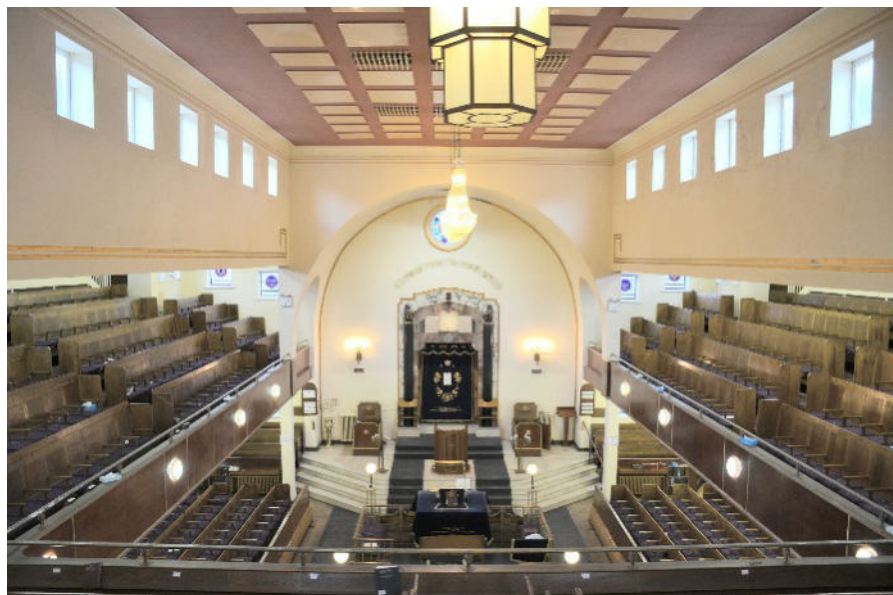
HOLY LAW SOUTH BROUGHTON CONGREGATION

150 YEARS



5625-5775

1865-2015



150 Years of the Holy Law

by
Geoff Kuhillow
and
Stanley Field

Holy Law South Broughton Congregation

November 2015 - Cheshvan 5776

150th Anniversary Year

Rov - Rabbi Yossi Chazan

Chazan - Chazan Zevi Neumann

Honorary Officers

President - Laurence Ingleby

Vice-President - Kevin Feddy

Joint Treasurers - Neville Gouldman, Paul Isaacs

Warden - Simmy Goldmeier

Joint Hon. Secretaries - Philip Landes, Julian Kershner

Life Officers

Life President - Jan Fidler

Life Vice-President - Jeffrey Gilbert

Life Warden - Martin Mann

Eldermen

Dr Sydney Baigel, Neville Berens

Ex Officio

Richard Adler, Michael Bass, Gary Rich

150th Celebration Organising Committee

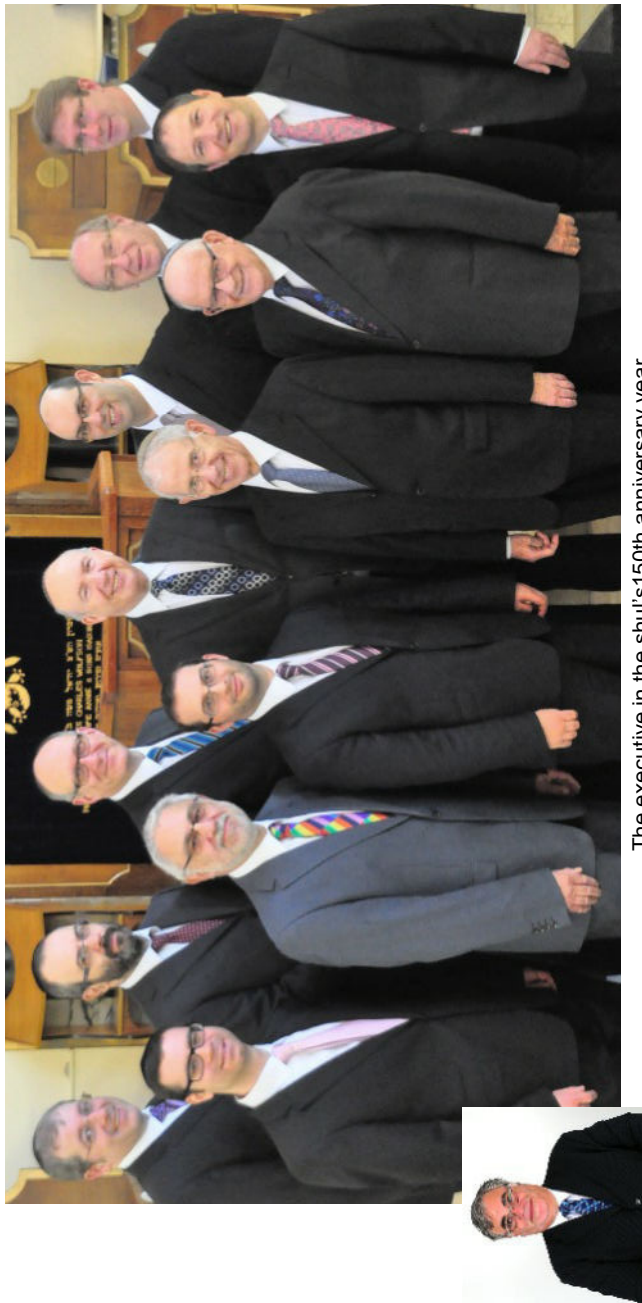
Joint Chairmen Dov and Elaine Hamburger

Natalie Bor, Zena and Stanley Field, Raiselle and Charles Gaffin

Jeffrey Gilbert, Janice Haber, Laurence Ingleby,

Geoff Kuhillow, Raphael Suissa

Boards showing past honorary officers appear on pages 67 & 69



The executive in the shul's 150th anniversary year.

Back row left to right: Richard Adler (*Ex-officio*), Philip Landes (*Joint Hon. Secretary*), Kevin Feddy (*Vice-President*), Laurence Ingleby (*President*), Jeffrey Gilbert (*Life Vice-President*), Frank Baigel (*Past President*), Julian Kershner (*Joint Hon. Secretary*).

Front row left to right: Simmy Goldmeier (*Warden*), Charles Gaffin (*Past President*), Anthony Haber (*Past President*), Jan Fidler (*Life President*), Martin Mann (*Life Warden*), Neville Gouldman (*Joint Treasurer*)

Inset photo - Paul Isaacs (*Joint Treasurer*) photo: Lawrence Purcell

HOW THE HOLY LAW WAS BORN . . . 150 YEARS AGO

TRY to imagine the scene. Penniless and with little more than the clothes they stood up in, bedraggled Jewish immigrants from “Der Heim” stepped off a train at Manchester’s Victoria station in the 1860s.

Fleeing penury and persecution – the dreadful twins that haunted our Jewish forebears in Central Europe and Russia – they settled in the nearby Cheetham Hill area.

They were not, however, the first Jews in the city. Records show that in 1788, jeweller Simon Solomon and flower dealer Hamilton Levi took shops in Long Millgate and Shudehill.

In 1794, a group of Jews leased a burial ground in and by 1796 had begun worshipping in an upper chamber room on Garden Street, Withy Grove.

But back to those who arrived in the 1860s. Many of those poverty-stricken newcomers found work in Red Bank and Strangeways in cramped little workshops manufacturing cheap clothing, cloth caps and waterproof garments.

Isolated in their self-imposed ghetto, they worked horrendously long hours which would be unthinkable today.

But a love of Yiddishkeit and Jewish orthodoxy with which they were imbued kept them going.

And so it was that a handful of those Eastern European Ashkenazi immigrants, most of them living in the slums of Red Bank, banded together to found a shul in 1865 in Park Place.

They called it Chevra Torah, which subsequently became Kehillat Torah – Holy Law Congregation.

It is believed to have taken shape by putting corrugated iron over two backyards. The Chevra was at first probably no more than a shtiebel.

And it is said that anyone who didn’t attend at least three shiurim a week would be asked to leave the kehilla.

Its location was not far from the railway station, from which more new immigrants disgorged and joined the earlier settlers.

In primitive surroundings, daily services were held and a bond established between the few families determined to provide a Jewish basis for themselves and their children.

Sadly, there are no records now available that would shed light on the Chevra’s growth and activity.

But an old Pinkus – a ledger and constitution – recorded in a beautiful Hebrew script by a certain Meir ben Perez from Vilna gives us a few clues.

Interestingly, it relates that in 1865 the Chevra had a salaried Rov. In 1883, the Chevra Torah applied to the Chief Rabbi for permission to employ its own shochet. However, for whatever reason, this permission was not granted.

Soon the Park Place meeting place had to be abandoned and the congregation moved to premises in Fernie Street at the back of Lord Street in the same area. It remained there from 1875-1878.

Next came a move to a loft above the “Hay Shop” in Cheetham Hill Road from 1878 to 1901. Not surprisingly, at that time it became known as the “Hay Shop Shul”.

Then, in 1901, came a momentous amalgamation with the Beth Aaron Shul, which had been founded in 1898 in Red Bank. And the Holy Law and Beth Aaron Synagogue and Beth Hamedrash was born.

The congregation met in a converted church in Bank View, Red Bank.

The Beth Aaron had been led by wealthy businessman and moneylender Samuel Aaron Claff, who until 1904 owned the building and after whom the name Beth Aaron originated.

Such was Claff’s dynamic personality that the newly-amalgamated synagogue became universally known as the “Claff Shul”.

The kehilla spent the years 1901-1933 in Bank View until the current grand building in Bury Old Road was opened following a merger with the Sedgley Park Synagogue in 1933.

Built on the site of a mansion called Howcaster, it was the first purpose-built (and certainly the largest) synagogue in Prestwich.

Another merger was to come years later – in 1978 – when the old South Broughton Synagogue, of Sabrina Street, was to come under our umbrella, creating the grand title Holy Law South Broughton Congregation.

THE PINKUS RULED THEIR DAILY LIVES

THREE times a day, the growing band of pious, Yiddish-speaking newcomers davened in their cramped-but-loved shul, the Chevra Torah, in Park Place at the top end of Cheetham Hill Road.

No easy task as they spent long, long hours scratching a living of sorts on sewing machines in the mushrooming sweatshops nearby.

But, in reality, they had no option. For their very existence was governed by the terms of a Pinkus (a constitution), written in 1865, which dictated how their lives were to be lived.

In a beautiful script, it listed the aims and objectives, the rules and regulations, the hopes and aspirations of the shul which had been founded two years earlier.

The Pinkus opened with an introduction in Yiddish and Hebrew where the virtues of forming the Chevra were extolled as a meeting place for worship, study and brotherly relationship.

All of which helped to ameliorate the hardships encountered by the “newcomers and landsleit”.

The Pinkus contained the names of all members of the Chevra. Unless a person’s name was there, he could not consider himself a member.

By 1866, there were 90 names. Members were recorded by Hebrew name only – in those days there was no concession to Anglicisation.

Among the rules in the Pinkus – translated into English so many decades later by esteemed Holy Law minister Rabbi Julius Unsdorfer – was the primary stipulation: “Members must attend regularly Divine services.”

Other major points were: “It is obligatory upon every member to listen to the Rav’s discourse.

“It is forbidden to talk during prayers or the Reading of the Torah.

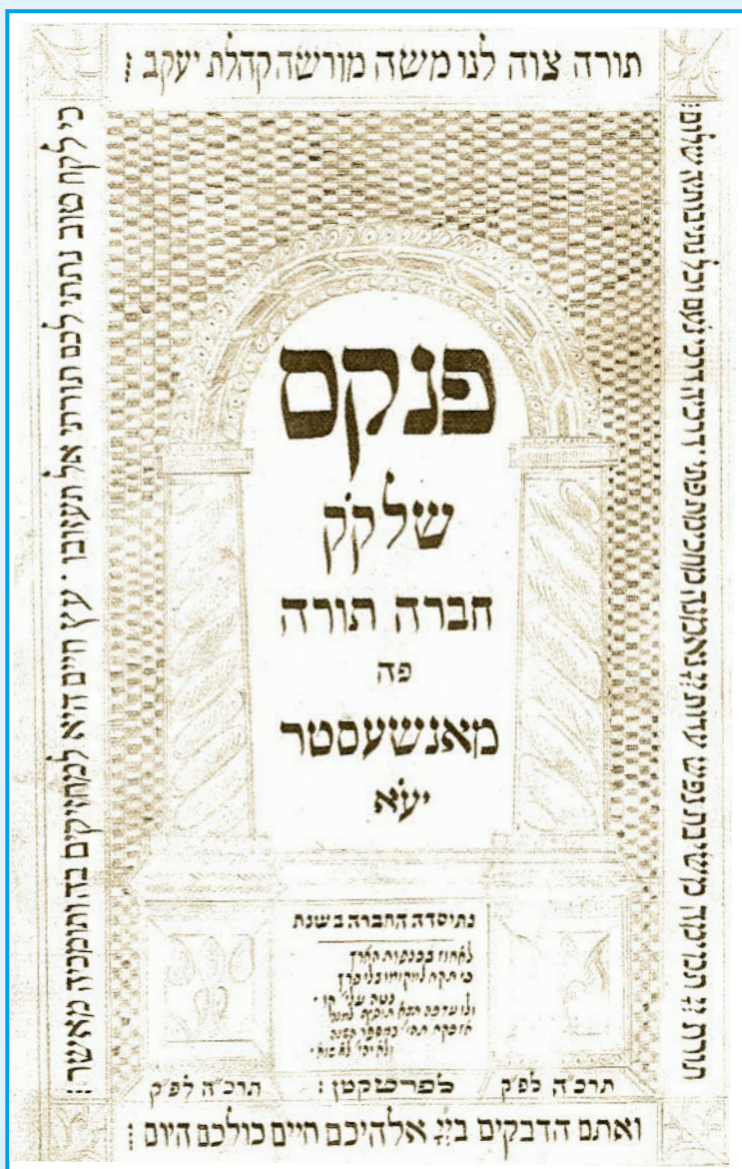
“Members should refrain from engaging in quarrels of any kind, whether in connection with the Chevra or otherwise.”

The procedures to be followed in times of a tragic loss were clearly defined.

It decreed: “On the death of a member, the Chevra is responsible for all arrangements for taharah, funeral, etc. No outsider may perform these rituals. All members should attend the funeral.

“On a rota basis, a minyan must be provided by the members in the house of mourners and the Rav is to conduct a shiur every evening before mincha.

“If a member is unable to attend during Shiva, he must pay the sum of 6d.



The Pinkus (ledger) of the old Chevra Torah - forerunner to the Holy Law - which in a beautiful Hebrew script, lists the aims and objectives, the rules and regulations, the hopes and aspirations of the original founders

“A hazkarah is to be made year by year on the yahrzeit when a light must be kindled.

“During the first year, a hazkarah is to be made every Shabbos and the Rav should say a kaddish for the departed every Shabbos after the shiur.”

Although wages were abysmally low and poverty was a way of life in so many families, the Pinkus had clear stipulations on finance.

For instance, every member had to pay three old pence [little more than 1p in today's currency] a week or risk having his membership terminated.

The same fate faced any member who was in arrears for more than three months without a reasonable cause.

On becoming engaged, a member had to contribute one shilling (5p) and an additional 1s 6d (7½p) when he got married. There was a further 1s 6d to be paid when he had a son and 6d on a yahrzeit.

The Pinkus had strict rules, too, governing the duties of the Rav.

For instance: “The Rav is obliged to conduct shiurim every Shabbos. He must also officiate on Shabbos, festivals and solemn days, and read the Torah in accordance with the conditions of his appointment.

“The Rav is empowered to convene a meeting of officers and the Committee of Ten whenever he desires, whether in the interest of the Chevra or in his own interest.

“The Rav's services cannot be terminated in the middle of the year, nor his salary increased or decreased.

“Should the majority of the Chevra decide to terminate the Rav's services in the middle of the year, they must pay his salary in full until the end of the year.”

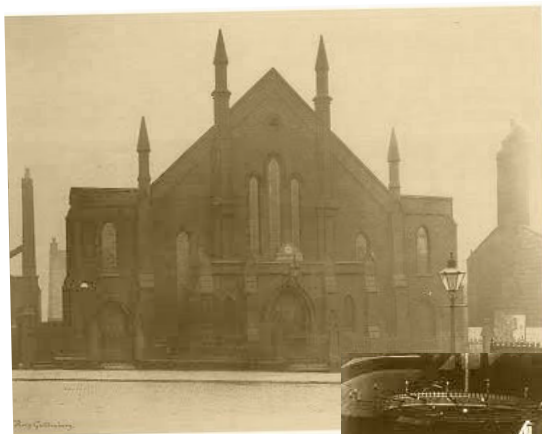
And on the President, the Pinkus said: “He is to have in his possession a book into which all the accounts of the Chevra are correctly entered.

“The President is empowered to spend up to the sum of 10 shillings [50p] without consulting the members.

“He must be friendly disposed towards all members of the Chevra. He must show patience, forbearance and modesty.

“The members must accord the President the honour and esteem his high office warrants.”

THE HOLY LAW BETH AARON SYNAGOGUE (known as the Claff Shul) in 1903



photos courtesy: English Jewish Heritage



Wealthy benefactor Samuel Claff
who provided finance for the
"Claff Shul" acquisition

photo courtesy:
Manchester Jewish Museum



Morris Weingard, 19 and Gertrude Herstritt, 16
at their wedding at the "Claff Shul" around 1900

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW SHUL 1934-35



THE WONDERFUL DAY OUR SHUL WAS OPENED

WHAT a wonderful occasion it was on September 15, 1935, when the Holy Law Congregation's present building on Bury Old Road, Prestwich, was opened.

The high and mighty of the community mingled with oh-so-proud congregants to see the gleaming building consecrated by the Chief Rabbi, Dr J H Hertz.

From the days when it was known as Chevra Torah back in 1864, the shul had had a colourful history, moving to various homes and acquiring different names along the way.

While the state-of-the-art new building was going up, services were held in the basement of the Odeon Cinema on Bury New Road from 1933-35.

But finally the much-awaited day for the consecration of the new edifice arrived.

The much-admired building catered for much of the Jewish community which had moved on from earlier sojourns in Strangeways, Red Bank, Cheetham and Hightown.

However, few nowadays realise that the synagogue could have been built across the road. That idea was mooted after the Sedgley Park Hebrew Congregation offered to merge with the Holy Law Congregation in 1931 if we were prepared to build a new synagogue on land they had purchased on Park Hill, Bury Old Road.

The merger duly took place and plans for a new shul on the Park Hill site were drawn up by the honorary architect, Theo Birks, chief-of-staff of the well-known architect Joseph Sunlight.

But before the plans could proceed any further, an offer to buy a building called Howcaster across Bury Old Road materialised.

The much more attractive site – our present home—was bought in 1933, largely out of the proceeds of the sale of the Park Hill site for private development.

The minutes' book records that the land was purchased from Prestwich Council "at a satisfactory figure".

The congregation boasted 200 families in its new home – a figure that was to quadruple before the turn of the century.

The executive committee which began the new era was: Hon president, M Fidler; vice-president, G Sunlight; joint treasurers G Mendell and D L Fidler; hon. warden G L Rubinstein; hon. secretary, T Collins; co-opted member, E Edwards.

The committee was: M Sherman, H Wiseberg, J Siroto, M Mendleson, G Lazarus, H Libbert, G Lipshaw, G Herwald, G Mosco, H B Rosen, W H Franks and H Kaufman (also Frost and Harrison, co-opted).

Mr M Fidler and Mr E Edwards were the shul's representatives on the Board of Deputies and Messrs Taylor, Lazarus and Frost were the representatives on the Board of Shechita.

Interestingly, the bimah in those early days was positioned in front of the Holy Ark (the Oren Kodesh). But that wasn't to everyone's satisfaction.



Bimah at the front with the executive seating facing the congregants

Indeed, Mr Nathan Frost told a 1933 meeting that many members would be willing to donate "large sums" if the structure of the synagogue could be altered so that the bimah could be placed in the centre of the sanctuary. However, the meeting decided unanimously that the plans should be kept in their existing form.

So the resiting of the bimah to its present position would have to wait for another day.

But other changes and improvements were introduced as the years rolled by.

Not least among them was the abolition of shnoddering -- cash offerings for mitzvahs and aliyahs -- in 1942.

When the ending of the practice was proposed at the annual general meeting, it was "universally acclaimed" and carried.

DEBT THE SHUL OWES TO RABBI DAGUTSKY

AS the 19th century was drawing to a close, the growing Holy Law had become Manchester's leading east European congregation.

As such, it needed a distinguished rabbinic leader. Someone extra-special. A giant in his generation.

And it found him in the much revered Rabbi Menachem Ber Dagutsky.

He took the helm when the synagogue was popularly known as the "Claff Shul" – after philanthropist and leading member Samuel Aaron Claff – and was to lead the congregation with distinction for 30 years.

This colossus left his mark in other ways, too. He was a founder of Manchester Yeshiva and recruited students from among young working-class apprentices.

Indeed, he often paid them from his own pocket to substitute for the wages they formerly earned in their jobs.

On countless occasions, he gave of his all-too-tiny stipend to the poor and needy to help others, denying both himself and his family.

A story is also told how his family once entreated the shul not to give him his weekly pay on a Friday because, more than likely, he would give it away as pre-Shabbos tzedakah before reaching home.

Guide, philosopher and friend to his flock, this shochet, mohel and minister shaped the destiny of the Holy Law in the early part of the 20th century.

He came to England in 1886 from Lida, Lithuania (now Belarus) and it can be said that during his rabbinic career he was involved in all the major institutions of Manchester orthodoxy.

The Dagutskys who remained behind in Lida, a town full of Torah scholars and charitable laymen, perished in the Holocaust.

Following his appointment to the Holy Law, Rabbi Dagutsky became one of the leading dayonim of the Manchester Shechita Board after it was founded in 1892.

It was no easy task as the "Reverend Supervisors" (as they were called) had an uphill struggle to regulate kashrus – in those days machlochos (arguments) were commonplace among East European Jews.



Rabbi Yossi Chazan visits the grave of revered Rabbi Dagutsky at Urmston

Virtually every activity and every institution became a bitter issue, especially the matter of organised kashrus and shechita.

Rabbi Dagutsky and his Oxford graduate youngest son Harry became leading religious Zionists in Manchester and in 1898 Rabbi Dagutsky was one of the three Manchester delegates to the third Zionist Congress in Basle.

The Manchester Yeshiva was founded after Shabbos on February 27, 1911, by rabbis Dagutsky, Yehoshua Dovid Silverstone and Yisroel Yoffey.



Rabbi Dagutsky

Rabbi Dagutsky and his colleagues intended the yeshiva to recreate the curriculum of the Lithuanian yeshivos – Talmud and legal codes being the principal texts and the language of instruction being Yiddish.

Two years later, he was instrumental in bringing Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Segal, then rosh yeshiva of the small Eitz Chaim Yeshiva in London's East End, to Manchester as rosh yeshiva.

At the height of World War One, the Holy Law convened a special celebration to commemorate Rabbi Dagutsky's 70th birthday at which he was presented with a special poem written in Hebrew.

After his long and distinguished career, including several communal trials and tribulations (not the last rosh in Manchester to experience this!), he died on 17th Kislev 5679 (November 21, 1918), aged 73, and was buried with full honours in Urmston.

Tributes from members included the declaration that their spiritual guide was "the most popular, most gentle, kind and ideal rabbi".



Hyman and Mary Sherr, who were members of Holy Law before it moved to Prestwich. They came from Russia and had 11 children, most of whom were Holy Law members. Hyman had a tailor shop at the bottom of Cheetham Hill Road.

Picture supplied by Edwina Rosenberg, one of their grandchildren

RABBI UNSDORFER . . . A TRULY AMAZING MINISTER

JULY 9, 1950, is a very important date in the annals of the Holy Law. For on that day a special service was held for the induction of one of the congregation's most respected and revered ministers – Rabbi Julius Unsdorfer.

He had already made his mark in the synagogue for four years, conducting shiurim there – among many other shuls – and teaching in the Hebrew classes.

But now – in a service conducted by the Communal Rabbi of Manchester, Dr Alexander Altmann – he was officially the Rov.

But first, a little about him. Julius Unsdorfer was born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, in May 1919, the third of six children. He was the eldest son.

At the age of 19, he was sent with his younger brother Shmuel and a group of yeshiva boys to the yeshiva in Manchester to avoid deportation to the camps.

His parents HaRav HaGaon Shlomo Zalman and Sheva Unsdorfer – as heads of their community – had the chance to escape to the United States, but stayed with their community and perished in Auschwitz. One brother Simcha lived through the horrors and made his home in London.

Once in Manchester, Julius met and married Ada, the third of eight children of Wolfe and Golda Rivka Jaffe – a prestigious family in Manchester.

They married on “Battle of Britain” day – September 15, 1940.

Mr Jaffe hoped that Julius would enter the family business. But the young man's call was to the rabbanut, culminating in him accepting the position of the Holy Law's rabbi.

His daughter Malka, who now lives with her family at Kfar Chabad in Israel, says: “When my father came to England in 1939, he spoke, read and wrote only Yiddish.

“It was through my mother's encouragement that by 1946 he was able to communicate thoroughly with the local congregation.

“The Yiddish language came in useful when my father translated the original ‘Pinkus’ – the rules and regulations of the Holy Law from its opening 150 years ago.”

Rabbi Unsdorfer obtained an MA degree at Manchester University in 1953 and nine years later wrote a thesis comparing the Karaite Liturgy to our Prayers for a Ph D at Leeds University.

Malka recalls: "My mother arranged elocution lessons for him so that he would be able to speak English without anyone detecting his foreign accent.

"As a child, I remember my mother practising with the vowels "a,e,i,o, u". I also remember him typing out his sermons, and rehearsing them over and over again on a Thursday to my mother, ready for Shabbos.

"Never did he have a piece of paper in front of him when delivering a sermon in shul.

"As a family, we treasured our summer holidays. Whether in the Isle of Man, Cleveleys, Blackpool or St Annes, my parents spared no expense for our enjoyment.

"Houses were rented and my parents koshered the cooking equipment, etc."

Julius Unsorfer loved his congregation . . . and the congregation loved him right back. Their appreciation was often shown with gifts at yom tov when, at Shavuot, the Unsorfer house resembled a florists' and at Pesach and Rosh Hashana a fruit shop.

Those were joyful times, but there were sad ones, too.

While dressed in a white kittel at the seder table, it was the only time he would talk about his family lost in the Holocaust. The pain for him was evident, especially as his eldest sister, her husband and six children also perished.

Rabbi Unsorfer – working alongside the chazan, Rev Reuben Berkovits, who was appointed in January, 1953 – was an innovator. He started a children's service at Holy Law and, after delivering his sermon, would go along there to say a few words to the children.

Malka remembers another major innovation.

"It was to my father's credit that the bima was moved to the centre of the shul," she recalls.

The introduction of a brides' room was down to him, too. And he wrote and published "The Jewish Brides' Handbook" which was given to each couple before their wedding.

Rabbi Unsorfer was an adoring family man with four daughters and a son.

"As children, we certainly felt the respect and love they had for each other," said Malka. "My mother never got over his passing in 1978".

"For both my parents, their lives were for their children and grandchildren and for my mother in later years, her great-grandchildren."

Induction of Rabbi Julius Unsendorfer, 9th July 1950



Back row from left:

Henry Bass, Abe Freedman, Joe Kinsky, Ben Gordon, Hymie Robinson, Harry Hersh, Marcus Flacks, Jack Siroto,
Tavie Collins, Harry Hocking, Michael Fidler, Aaron Jacobs, Nathan Bercovitch, Nelson Frumkin, Sonny Isaacson and Rev. Wolfson

Front row from left:

Maurice Libbert, Moris Fidler, Rabbi Dr. Altman, Rabbi Unsendorfer, Louis Fidler, Nathan Frost, Samuel Davies, Rev. Glickman, and Isaac Glickman

Sadly, Ada passed away in 2009. But her contribution to the shul should not be forgotten. She initiated the Ladies' Guild and taught many ladies to read Hebrew and to follow the service.

Few knew that the immaculately attired Rabbi Unsorfer was only known as "Julius" among his congregation. Ada always called him "Yechezkiel" and to their nieces and nephews he was always "Uncle Yechezkiel".

Malka said: "He was always calm and friendly and a most likeable person. He brought us up in a loving and friendly atmosphere.

"As children, my siblings and I felt proud of being 'The Rabbi's Children'."

An old congregant recalls: "Rabbi Unsorfer was the Holy Law and the Holy Law was Rabbi Unsorfer."

Never were truer words spoken.



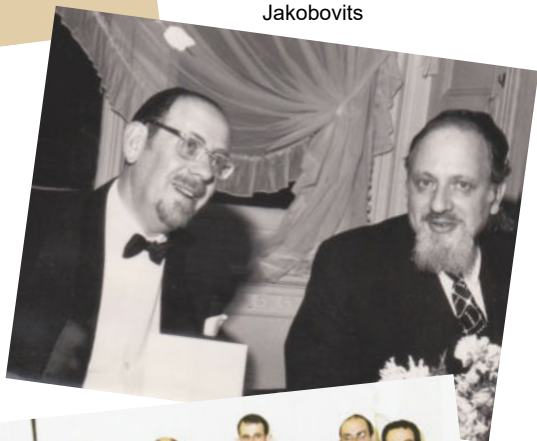
The Unsorfer Family



Rabbi Julius Unsorfer takes a group to Israel after the Six-Day War, 1967



Rabbi Unsdorfer
with Chief Rabbi Immanuel
Jakobovits



Picture: Courtesy of Jewish Telegraph

Holy Law Executive and communal leaders with the Mayor of Bury, Paul Nesbit,
at a midnight choral selichos service at the shul on 9th September 2001

IVAN'S CAREER ON BOTH SIDES OF 'THE POND'

DUBLIN-BORN Rabbi Ivan Wachmann was the Holy Law's minister for 17 years from 1973.

His Irish charm and melodious voice were winners and his annual rendition of the Ne'ilah service, so moving and emotive, at the closing of Yom Kippur was a favourite with congregants.

Rabbi Wachmann was educated at the yeshivot of Manchester, Gateshead and Etz Chaim, London, before taking up his first position at the age of 21 at Wallasey Hebrew Congregation.

On the closure of the community, he moved to Allerton Hebrew Congregation, Liverpool, which he left in 1964 for Langside Hebrew Congregation, Glasgow.

During his years of service to the Holy Law, he was also chaplain to Strangeways Prison.

Amid controversy, Rabbi Wachmann left the shul in 1990. But three years later he began a new career when he moved to Florida and became Spiritual Leader of Temple Shalom Synagogue in Pompano Beach.

He made aliya and died in Israel in March, 2013, at the age of 77.

Picture: Courtesy of Jewish Telegraph



Down Memory Lane... former Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, Holy Law president Emil Prizant and the then minister Rabbi Ivan Wachmann

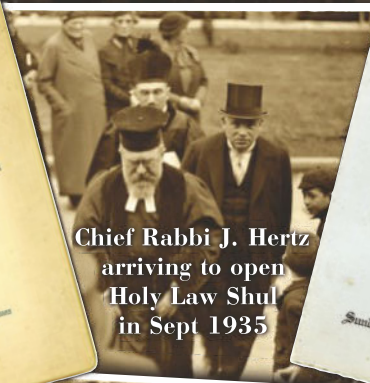
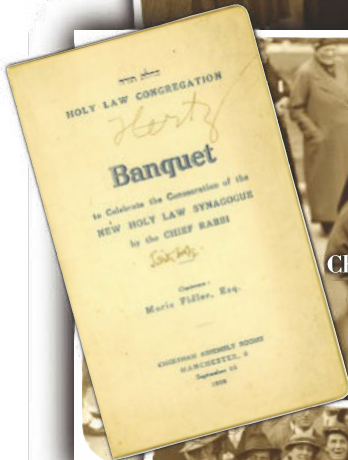


Rabbi Ivan Wachmann teaches a young congregant Lee Davies to blow the shofar

NEW SHUL 1935



Chief Rabbi J. Hertz
and entourage at railway station
Sept 1935



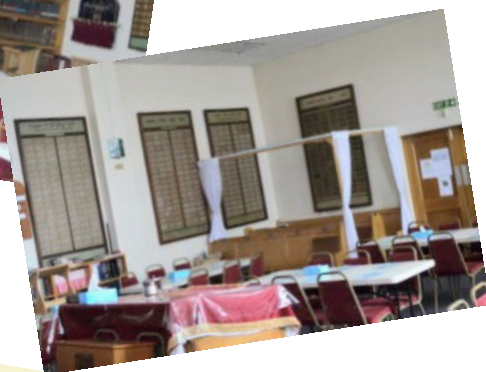
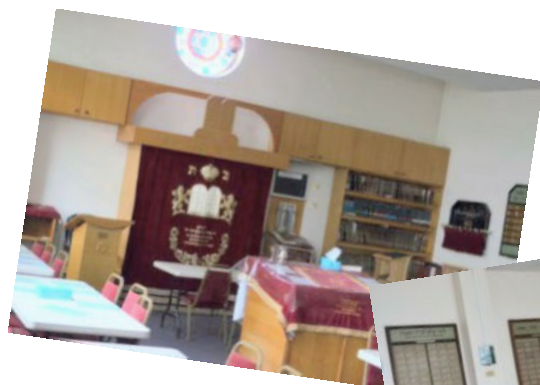
Chief Rabbi J. Hertz
arriving to open
Holy Law Shul
in Sept 1935



Chief Rabbi J. Hertz
standing on the steps of
The Holy Law Shul on its Opening Day
Sept 1935



Induction of Rabbi Yossi Chazan as Rov by the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks. Among dignitaries in the picture are Emil Prizant, Chazan Edwin Ross (part hidden), Morley Wolfson and David Levene.



Above: Beis Hamedrash



Left: Bride's Room



RABBI CHAZAN . . . A ROV IN A MILLION



IT is not for nothing that the Holy Law's present Rov, Rabbi Yossi Chazan, is known as "The Rabbi Who Never Sleeps".

For a light will often be burning in his office at an unheard-of hour when most other people are asleep.

There he will be learning, studying, davening, preparing shiurim and sermons, and attending to the hundred-and-one myriad duties which seem to take up every waking hour.

What a joy it was for the Holy Law South Broughton Congregation when in 1991 the New York-born rabbi accepted the offer to become its Rov.

He is a tireless worker within his congregation, which is very proud of his unstinting parochial work from giving shiurim several times a week, to visiting the sick in hospitals, to helping individuals, couples and the young and old in a friendly and welcoming manner.

And all the time this father-of-12 has the support of his dedicated rebbetzen Mindy and his devoted family.

"The buzzword of Judaism is growth," he says. "And thank G-d, over the years we have seen slow but steady growth.

"Sometimes when my children come from overseas, they say how noticeable it is that the shul has been transformed into such a warm and caring unit."

Rabbi Chazan was educated at the celebrated Mesifita Torah VeDaas. He is a graduate from Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim (Lubavitch) in Kfar Chabad, New Haven, Montreal and New York.

In 1981, he became a Kollel fellow at the Yeshiva Centre in Melbourne, Australia, from where he developed a reputation for scholarship and excellence.

Then in 1984 he was appointed Director of Education at Manchester's Jewish Cultural Leisure Centre. Their loss was our gain when, seven years later, he moved a few hundred yards along Bury Old Road to join us.

His reputation grew and grew as a vibrant and challenging leader serving the local community, Anglo-Jewry and, indeed, world Jewry.

This has been proven time and again by the multitude of offers for him to lecture in many different parts of the planet.

His skilled erudition extended his widening fame, interpreting with lucidity difficult and problematic portions of Torah, Talmud and halacha.

For many years he ran series of Shabbat afternoon lectures – and the hundreds of men and women he attracted to hear him at the Holy Law were testament to the respect in which he is held.

Holy Law president Laurence Ingleby says: "I have the honour of being president of the shul in its 150th year and I wish to pay tribute to the guidance and friendship shown to me by our revered Rabbi Chazan.

"I came to the executive from the back rows because a position of vice-president needed to be filled and, being totally outside my comfort zone. It was initially daunting for me.

"However, the support shown to me by the Rabbi was much appreciated and the Holy Law is indeed blessed to have Rabbi Yossi and Rebbetzen Mindy as our rabbinical family.

"No matter where I go in the world and mention the name 'Chazan', he is known and respected and we are envied for having him as our spiritual leader.

"I must also pay tribute to his endless concern for the health and wellbeing of his congregants and the many hours he spends visiting the sick in hospital and in their homes and the time he spends into the early hours mentoring families and trying to guide them through family problems."

An invaluable member of the Holy Law team, Rabbi Levi Cohen, is also fulsome in his praise of Rabbi Chazan.

He says: "As the director of adult education and programming at L'chaim Chabad Manchester, I've had the pleasure of working together with the Holy Law Congregation and Rabbi Chazan quite often.

"The contribution and benefit of the esteemed Rov to the Holy Law, and his impact on Manchester's Jewish community in general, is tremendous, deep and far-reaching.

"In particular, the Rov stands out as a true leader and a leader of truth, one who believes in his congregation in a very literal way, whether it be the decorum, spiritual growth or the advancement in learning.

"No congregant is too little or unworthy of being encouraged to grow in personal Yiddishkeit.

"The Rov is continuously pushing the bar. What faith he has in all of us!"

Rabbi Cohen adds: "We wish the Rov much nachas from all those he holds dear, which includes all of us.

"Of course, his best nachas is when we continue to learn from him and his wonderful ways."

Holy Law life vice-president Jeffrey Gilbert believes Rabbi Chazan's incredible attributes are too numerous to list. But he particularly remembers a Holy Law trip to Israel which the Rov led In May, 2007.

Mr Gilbert recalls: "The rabbi's knowledge seemed inexhaustible on visits to Masada, Gush Etzion, Yad Vashem, Yerushalayim, Hebron, Tiberias, Sefat and Meron during our seven-day tour.

"Similarly when we encountered holy sites and the graves of Rambam, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Meir.

"It was an unforgettable tour that led to three of the 11 participants making aliyah. "It was also a first in the history of the shul and is often mentioned in Rabbi Chazan's sermons."



Rabbi Yossi Chazan takes a group to Israel in 2007

MY HAT! SIDNEY PREFERRED YARMULKE TO A TOPPER



HOW splendid Sidney Wilner looked as he sat on the bimah in his black silk top-hat.

He was the Holy Law's administrator – appointed in 1970 – and in those days the wearing of a topper on Shabbos and Yomtov was a require-

ment for a man in his position.

But Sidney, who ran the shul for 24 years, never liked the formal headwear. In fact, in private he jokingly referred to it as “my badge of servitude”.

However, as the years passed – and with a new century on the horizon – the old-fashioned habits of yesteryear were dying out.

“The day dawned when they let me wear a yarmulke,” smiles Sidney, who is now 90. “That made me so pleased.”

The efficient and amiable administrator came to the Holy after 15 years as secretary of the South Manchester Hebrew Congregation in Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield.

“I also taught in the cheder there,” he recalls “And I wrote a Purim operetta, which was well-received.”

But then everything changed when he was “headhunted” for the Holy Law by the executive's David Hamburger.

A new, exciting chapter was about to begin – but there were many varied chapters behind him, too.

Sidney was born in London's East End – “a true Cockney,” he says – to Rabbi and Mrs Bernard Wilner on Simchas Torah, 1924.

But it wasn't long before the family moved to pastures new. Time was spent in Sheffield where his grandfather had a cutlery business which was to offer employment to Sidney's father.

Then came schooldays in West-cliff before the Wilners returned



Police hold back crowds in the Battle of Cable Street
which Sidney remembers so well

to their roots in the East End when Sidney's father got a job as Rov in a shul there.

The young Sidney clearly remembers the famous Battle of Cable Street in 1933 when the Jews of the East End stopped the march of the fascist Oswald Mosley and his thugs.



Kibbutz Lavi where the Wilners lived for 3 years

"I remember shouting 'Down with Hitler' and 'Boycott German goods'," he recalls.

In 1934, it was removal time again when Mr Wilner senior became Rov of the Hove Hebrew Congregation, Sussex.

Then came the war and when he was 18, Sidney was called for a medical for army service.

But no doubt to the relief of his parents, he failed it!

"Chest problems earned me a Grade 4 classification – which meant I wasn't even fit for street sweeping," he jokes.

The year 1951 brought both sadness and joy. Sadly, his mother died – but there was happiness when he met and married his beloved Eve.

The two Zionists met on hachsharah (training on a farm for life in Israel) and the following year made aliyah to Kibbutz Lavi in Lower Galilee.

"I worked in the vineyards with Yehuda Avner, who went on to become Israel's ambassador to the UK," Sidney recalls.

While on an army course in Tel Aviv in 1955, a "state of emergency" was declared and Sidney was rushed down to the Gaza Strip.

"I was sent to the top of a water tower and was told to look out for anything suspicious," he says.

"Nothing much happened until two Egyptian fighter bombers appeared, heading straight for me.

"Fortunately, they didn't open fire. But I reported what I had seen to my superiors and the next day the bombers came again.

"However, this time the Israeli Air Force was waiting for them and shot them down."

During this brief spell of “duty”, Sidney’s home was a border kibbutz – but a non-religious one.

“I couldn’t eat there,” he says. “For three days I had only bread and water while I demanded kosher rations.

“Eventually, they came and you should have seen the envious faces of everyone else as I heartily tucked into my kosher meat and liver.”

But problems arose back on Kibbutz Lavi, where the Wilners’ daughter Vered was born (they also later had a son, Danny, who is now a rabbi at Aish Hatorah in Jerusalem).

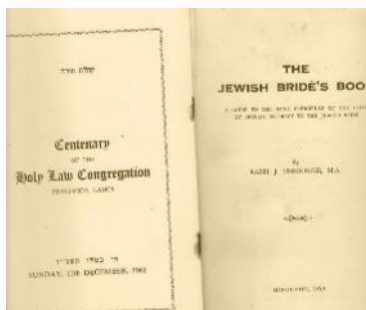
Sidney had health problems in the heat and Eve didn’t like the system of children sleeping in the children’s house and not with Mum and Dad. So back to England they came – a journey which eventually led to the Holy Law.

At 70, Sidney had to retire, which enabled him to attend shiurim and spend time reading his precious seforim.

But first a stroke and later failing eyesight afflicted him.

“My biggest regret is that I can no longer read my beautiful books,” he says.

“But, thank G-d, I still have Eve. I firmly believe that without her selfless devotion over the years, I would not be here now.”





CHAZAN W GARBACZ
approx 1927 - 1930

תעודת בית דין
MANCHESTER BETH-DIN
JEWISH ECCLESIASTICAL COURT

Clerk is the Court:
M. GOLDSTONE

Office:
149 Cheetham Hill Road,
Manchester.

Enclosure: 1930.5691

1931-569

This is to inform you that the Rev. W. Garbacz has been for over three years as Chazan of the Holy Law Congregation, a prominent Synagogue in Manchester. During this time, the Beth Din have had several opportunities of coming into contact with him, and can state with pleasure that he is a man in every respect suitable to be Chazan of even the greatest Congregation. He is a man, peaceful, virtuous and God-fearing, and any congregation that may appoint him as reader will find in him the proper man they desire.

Signed on behalf of the Beth Din,
17th November 1930.5691

M. Goldstone
Clerk to the Court



Chazan Garbacz was the grandfather of current member Dr Dov Stein, who supplied the picture

CHAZAN BERKOVITS . . . ONE OF THE 'GREATS'



THE legendary cantor Rev Reuben Berkovits was the chazan of the Holy Law for two decades from 1953 to his retirement in 1973.

He was a cantor of the old school, a joy to behold, and his singing is still talked about in wonderment by older members of the congregation.

This amazing man began his amazing life in Szombathely, Hungary, where he was born on September 24, 1916.

He was the youngest of eight children whose father was a shochet and chazan of the local orthodox community. They lived within the shul compound.

At the age of 10, he was sent to yeshiva in Papa – a famous yeshiva town nearby. And from there he was drafted into the Hungarian

army at age 18.

The Jews in the army were the least important soldiers. They were not given houses or even tents to sleep in so they spent the nights sleeping under their horses.

Rev Berkovits' daughter Rivka Schlesinger, who lives in Israel, recalled in the Holy Law's magazine, The Bulletin: "At some time during the fighting in World War Two, my father was captured by the Germans and sent to a concentration camp.

"Even though he never told us exactly what happened to him during the war, there are some stories that my mother, grandmother and uncles do remember him telling about his experiences.

"He escaped from one of the camps and was shot while escaping. But as he was lying down the bullet scraped his back and left just a scar to prove it.

"Once, he was on a train being taken to a concentration camp, but he managed to jump off the train and hid in the forest.

"However, the Germans caught him and made him work.

"One of the jobs was to enter a minefield. The Jews had to enter first on foot to blow up all the mines so that the Germans could go through unharmed.

"One story told to us by his sister was that the German officers made him sing lieder for them in the evenings and therefore kept him alive."

At the end of the war Reuben was still incarcerated in a Russian work camp where everyone tried to prove they were Jews in order to get out.

He was chosen to sweep the floor of the camp commander, who was rumoured to be Jewish.

He hid in a closet during roll call and when found later by the commander, he begged to be able to prove his religious persuasion.

The commander challenged him to sing Kol Nidrei. Reuben sang the opening lines so beautifully that the commander cried and let him leave the camp.

On his lengthy journey to England via Europe, Reuben had several voice lessons with the famous Beniamino Gigli.

Said Rivka: "Starting out in Dublin in 1949, he eventually moved to Manchester and the Holy Law shul in 1953 where he married our mother and settled down to begin a family.

"He was actually offered other positions overseas – even Miami Beach – but loved the kehilla of the Holy Law.

"He was the last of the European chazonim along with a few other contemporaries such as chazonim Hershman and Haber.

"His incessant and sharp sense of humour was present even in the tunes he chose during the services, using a Eurovision winner – the song Congratulations – for a wedding ceremony!"

Older members of the shul will surely never forget his rendering of davening to the Six-Day War songs after 1967. He was a Zionist at heart and did not dissuade any of his children from choosing to live in Israel.

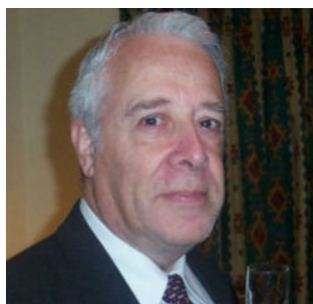
He had many talents besides singing and built up a central heating and oil supply business while remaining a chazan and after retiring from the Holy Law.

He also was very much involved with the more unfortunate members of the Jewish community.

Rivka said: "My siblings and I will never forget how strangers came to the shiva and told us about the food parcels he had sent them before every Shabbat.

"He was a most fascinating person, never complained or lost his temper, always speaking in a positive manner and showing great respect for those around him."

EDWIN GOT CHAZAN'S JOB WITHOUT SEEKING IT



EDWIN Ross became chazan of the Holy Law in 1982 . . . without ever seeking the job. It happened like this:

“Two years previously, I had attended an aufruf at the Higher Prestwich Synagogue,” he recalls. “And as their chazan was away, I was asked to daven musaf.”

He must have done well, too. For a few weeks later, he was offered the post of chazan of that shul.

“I was persuaded to accept, although I had never studied chazanut,” he says. “All my knowledge came from listening to tapes of great chazanim and hearing them at concerts.”

Edwin, a solicitor, remained at Higher Prestwich for 18 months before the opportunity to become chazan at Holy Law presented itself, succeeding melodious and respected chazanim like Warshavsky and David Gordon. All went well . . . until the Yomim Noraim came round.

“I was only used to the Sephardi nigunim from my early days in Didsbury,” says Edwin. “And this caused a huge problem for Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur.

“Not only were the tunes I knew different to the Ashkenazi ones but parts of the davening were, too.”

“For instance, a central theme of the Ashkenazi service, the emotive prayer Unasaneh Tokef, doesn’t even appear in the Sephardi liturgy.”

But Edwin learned the Yom Tov tunes quickly – thanks to three people in particular.

“I owe a big debt of gratitude to the late Dr Joe Jaffe, who was chazan sheni; to Martin Mann, the Baal Koreh; and to the late Bernard Quinn, who was at one time deputy lead violinist in the Halle Orchestra and who helped me enormously with the music,” he says.

Edwin remained at the Holy Law for 19 years until he resigned after developing what turned out to be temporary voice problems – something of a handicap for a chazan!

Then it was time for the next phase of his career. But first a little about his earlier life.

He was born during World War Two in the Manchester suburb of Gorton – not a known Jewish area but it was where his father Sol, a GP, had his practice.

In 1948 the family moved to Didsbury and because it was too far to walk to the Ashkenazi shul in Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield, Edwin joined the Sephardi minyan at the Spanish and Portuguese shul in Queens Road, Didsbury.

After studying at the London School of Economics and the College of Law, he qualified as a solicitor in 1968.

On his return North, he remained in Didsbury for four years before moving to Prestwich.

Edwin has many happy memories of his time at Holy Law and was awarded honorary life membership when he eventually left.

"I then found myself with the freedom to daven at any of the 20 or so shuls that were within walking distance of my home," he says.

He plumped for the Higher Crumpsall and Higher Broughton Synagogue, where he became deputy chazan as a result of his long-standing friendship with Chazan Avraham Hillman.

Edwin is still there to this day, with Chazan Hillman now spending much of his time in his native Israel.

"It's such a beautiful shul – a listed building," says Edwin. "In its heyday up to 40 or 50 years ago, people would have had to join a waiting list for a seat on joining the synagogue.

"But with the community having moved away, numbers have sadly dwindled significantly."

Edwin's greatest joy is his family. Married to Diane (nee Wacks), they have four children and 14 grandchildren.

Daughter Elisa lives in Karne Shomron in Israel with husband Menachem and their four boys and twin girls, aged 8-19; son Johnny lives in Modiin with wife Sarah (nee Shepper, from New York) and a boy and girl aged nine and five; son Jeremy and his wife Adele (nee Shapiro) have boys aged 13, 11 and seven in Prestwich; and son Martin and his wife Katie (nee Glass) of Prestwich have girls of seven and 21 months and a boy aged four.

BAAL KOREH MARTIN TAUGHT 300 BARMITZVAH BOYS



MORE than 300 boys owe their barmitzvah tuition to one man – Martin Mann.

“Teaching them maftir, haftorah and – if they were capable – the sedra always gave me great pleasure,” says the 76-year-old, whose association with the Holy Law spans 52 years.

He was the shul’s Baal Koreh from 1985-1999 – and to this day occupies the same position at Heaton Park Synagogue.

Martin learned to leyn for his own barmitzvah when the legendary Rebbe Jonah Balkind taught him the sedra Noach.

“That was in the old Kahal Chassidim shul in Waterloo Road, Cheetham, where our family were members,” he recalls.

“A few months later, in 1951, the rabbi of the shul died and the job of leyning fell to three people – Joe Jaffe, Peter Mann and myself.

“They gave me the short sedras to start with – but that didn’t last long! Eventually, I got to leyn them all.”

In 1960, the shul moved to Singleton Road, but Martin didn’t go with them. Instead he went to the Holy Law, where the Baal Koreh was none other than his old friend and uncle Dr Joe Jaffe.

Three years later, Martin married Pat (nee Wilkins), who later went on to become the Holy Law’s assistant administrator and then administrator for a total of 22 years.

“We became full members of the shul in 1963 and two years later I was elected to the council,” says Martin.

In 1967, at the age of 28, he became the shul’s youngest-ever warden – proposed for the role by president Michael Fidler, who was to go on to the great heights of mayor, MP and president of the Board of Deputies.

From then on, Martin occupied every executive position – honorary secretary, vice-president and, in 1977, president.

He took on the task of warden again in 1980 and was made life warden soon afterwards.

But his leyning skills couldn’t be suppressed. He leyned intermittently at that time when Dr Joe Jaffe developed health problems and, eventually, got the job in 1985.

His leyning was exemplary. “So how do you remember every sedra so expertly, week after week, year after year?” he was asked.

“With difficulty,” he smiled. “But it becomes easier with experience.”

In addition, Martin was often Baal Tefillah on Shabbos – and regularly on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur.

“And I’m still doing that at the Heaton Park,” he says.

Genial Martin was a founder member and chairman of the Holy Law’s Social and Cultural Group, arranging Chanukah and Purim socials, car rallies and other events to raise money for the shul.

The group’s activities ran from 1978 to the mid-1990s.

“At our Chanukah socials, we had old favourites like Julius Emanuel, Norman Pearlman and Cyril Baker to entertain,” he recalls.

“Morley Wolfson, Cecil Ashe, David Levene and myself were part of a group called the Holy Law Folk Four, which would sing ditties about the Holy Law to the tune of Waltzing Matilda.”

Among events Martin organised was a major concert at the Lesser Free Trade Hall in 1978 with world famous Cantor Joseph Malovany singing delightful melodies and a brains trust in the shul hall with Barbara Castle who served in Harold Wilson’s Cabinet in a number of roles, including Secretary of State for Employment

As if all that wasn’t enough, there’s another side to Martin, too. Since 1999, he has been activity organiser at Newlands care home, arranging quizzes, bingo, singalongs and lots of other entertainment.

“The residents enjoy it,” he says. “And it helps to keep me young into the bargain.”



A presentation for Dr Joe Jaffe from Jan Fidler who became the shul’s life-president in 2014. Left to right: Ian Epstein, Maurice Green, Dr Jaffe, Eleanor Jaffe, Jan, Frank Baigel and Martin Mann

BAAL KOREH DAVID KEEPS IT IN THE FAMILY



DAVID ROSE has clocked up nearly half a century as a baal koreh and is looking forward to many more years of enhancing services at Holy Law with his expertise, *writes KEVIN FEDDY*.

He took over leyning duties at the shul in 2002 when his predecessor Jonathan Cashdan and his family moved to Israel.

David says he is maintaining a proud family tradition, as all of his brothers leyn regularly and even their father still does so at the tender age of 93.

As well as leyning on Shabbos and Yom Tov, David undertakes a whole range of other duties at Holy Law, including reading the various megillahs during the year, davening on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, calling out the notes during the blowing of the shofar, and giving the occasional shiur.

David was born in 1954 – the year that Roger Bannister became the first man to run a mile in under four minutes.

He says there is no truth that the athlete's achievement inspired him to leyn at record speed!

"What is true is that my parents instilled in all of their children many fine attributes, and one of those is not to cause a tircha dezibura (burdening the public)," he says.

David was taught to leyn by Rev Shimshon Olsberg, his barmitzvah rebbe who was also his mohel and one of his father's many chevrusas (learning partners).

After leyning for more than 45 years, David is able to prepare for each sedra in a reasonably short amount of time.

"I'm often asked how long I need," he says. "It doesn't take very long but some sedras such as Vayikra require a good couple of hours.

"The biggest problem with my leyning is that I am my fiercest critic, and know when I have made a mistake in the trop (cantillation notes) even when no-one else realises.

"I've enjoyed some amusing moments on the bimah at Holy Law.

"Once, a visitor seemed to be spending an awfully long time trying to make his first brocha while I was busy looking over the next section in my tikkun.

"As he finished, we looked up at each other and I pointed to the starting point in the Sefer Torah for his aliyah.

"At that moment he said, 'I can't read that!'

"Trying to leyn while not corpsing (theatrical slang for unintentionally breaking character by laughing) is no easy feat.

"On another occasion, while calling out the notes for the blowing of the shofar, I was concentrating really hard and meditating, hoping that everyone at Holy Law would have their teshuva (repentance) accepted.

"For a split second, I thought it would be marvellous if Hashem would give us a sign that this indeed was going to happen.

"Out of the blue, someone's mobile phone rang. I thought how quickly G-d works nowadays!"

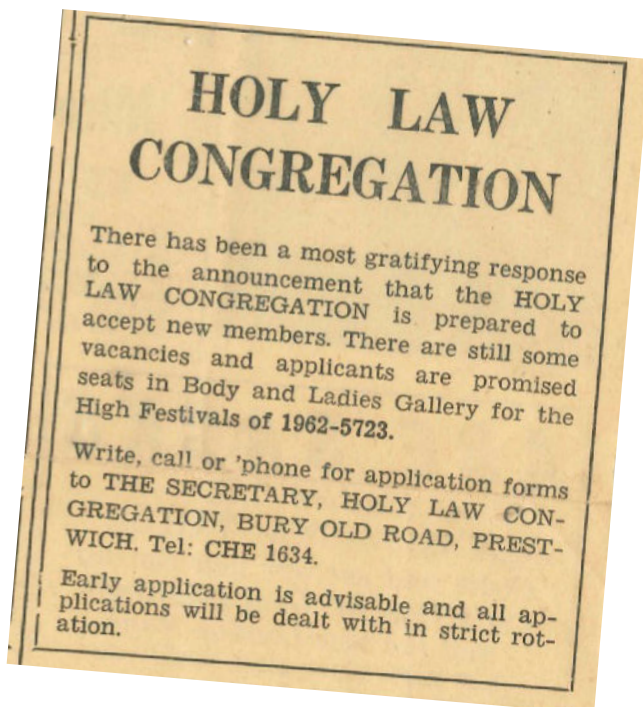
David says he feels a huge amount of respect and warmth for Rabbi Yossi Chazan, Chazan Zevi Neumann and Holy Law's members.

"They are the finest characters anyone could wish to be with," he says.

"Everyone is so friendly and warm, not only to me but also to each other.

"Davening in this warmest of atmospheres is a truly spiritual experience.

"May it continue for many more years."



CHAZAN ZEVI HITS A HIGH NOTE

THE Holy Law is fortunate indeed in having a chazan, Zevi Neumann, who is the envy of many other congregations.

He became the shul's youngest-ever chazan when, at the tender age of just 22, he began leading services in 2001.

"It was a tremendous honour and privilege to be appointed," Manchester-born Zevi recalls. "And a huge responsibility, too.

"This especially applies on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur when I feel I need to be on a special spiritual level to live up to my responsibilities."

When he became the shul's chazan, he was extremely conscious of the fact that he was succeeding the melodious and well-respected Edwin Ross.

"He led the services competently for 19 years and was certainly a hard act to follow," says Zevi.

Zevi inherited his love of chazonus – and his appealing and inspiring voice – from both sides of his family.

"My mother's great grandfather was chazan of the Baal Hatanya, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, in Lubavitch, Russia," he says with pride.

"And my father's father, Reb Faish Neumann, was vice-president of the Pressburg Jewish community in Czechoslovakia. He wasn't a chazan, but had a most delightful voice."

Zevi has been singing from a very early age.

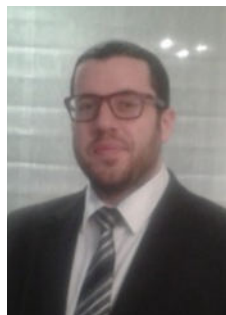
"It was always something I enjoyed," he says. "I was in choirs as a child, singing mainly in Hebrew at school and in concerts.

"But I never dreamed for a moment that I would pursue it as a career!"

He was educated in Manchester at the Jewish Day School and then the Mechina School. Next came two years at the Shaarei Torah Yeshiva in Upper Park Road, Salford, followed by a year in Israel at the Lev Aryeh Yeshiva, Yerushalayim.

However, he was always business-minded and knew that this was where his future lay. The 36-year-old now buys and sells residential and commercial property in the North-West.

His introduction to the Holy Law came via a circuitous route.



"I spent a year at Whitefield Synagogue, pending the arrival of the renowned chazan Yossi Muller," he says.

"It meant a four-mile walk there every Shabbos from my Broughton Park home – and, of course, four miles back!

"It wasn't easy, but my time at Whitefield gave me the opportunity to cut my teeth as a chazan.

"Then I received the offer of a position at a shul in South Manchester. But that would have entailed moving there, which I didn't want to do, or an even longer walk every Shabbos and yomtov which I certainly didn't want!"

Fortunately, it was at that point that the Holy Law stepped in.

Most of his nigunim are traditional, but every now and again Zevi introduces tunes that he has learned along the way.

"They may be tunes I was brought up with, but I am conscious of the fact that the congregation is used to the melodies they have known for decades," he says.

"The connection that I feel between the kehilla and myself is what I enjoy most about my post at the Holy Law."

The year 2003 was a momentous one for Zevi. For it was then that he met his delightful wife Shosh (nee Bermitz).

"We met over Shabbos lunch," he recalls. "And we just knew we were meant for each other.

"We were engaged three weeks later – and three months after that, we got married."

The couple's joy was complete when twins Tzvi and Hadassah were born six years ago.

"Tzvi has a lovely voice and comes to chassidic concerts with me," says Zevi.

"Who knows, he may well continue the family tradition."

STALWARTS WE HAVE LOST

OVER the decades, the Holy Law has lost many valued and irreplaceable members. And a distinguished quartet of shul stalwarts who passed away in recent times were high up among them.

Willie Zeider, Monty Turnberg, Nat Vasserman and Bram Khan had so much in common – a love of Torah and Yiddishkeit and a deep, deep passion for the Holy Law.

Cork-born Willie – a pillar of the shul – was a mainstay of the Dublin Jewish community before moving to Manchester in 1982.

He was life president of Dublin's chevra kadisha and was extremely active in the Jewish Home of Ireland.

But Ireland's loss was the Holy Law's gain. He soon became a shul favourite, lovingly attending regularly as well as being a meals-on-wheels volunteer. He also lovingly changed the paroches - Aron Kodesh and Sefer Torah coverings - into the Yomim Noraim alternatives.

Even in retirement, working in a local hardware shop, customers would come specially because he was so welcoming.



Willie Zeider



Monty Turnberg

Monty, who joined the congregation in the 1960s, had the ability to make anyone he met feel as though that person was the most important in the world. Monty's face radiated warmth.

Perhaps his years of service in the British army enabled him to cope with the many infirmities with which he suffered in later life.

Except when he was in hospital, he never let those problems prevent him attending shul every day and usually twice a day.

When he could no longer walk to the synagogue without the aid of a stick, he used a zimmer frame.

Monty had such trust in the Almighty that he accepted with a good heart and great fortitude whatever vicissitudes confronted him.

Truly an outstanding example to us all.

Nat has been termed “Mr Beis Hamedrash”. And never was a label more applicable.

In all types of weather and in all seasons – including the dark and inclement winter mornings – he would walk to the Beis Hamedrash, usually arriving an hour before Shacharis.

That was so that he could unlock it, put on the heating or air conditioning for those yet to arrive and ensure that the correct yahrzeit lights were switched on.

This unsung hero would also insert the appropriate cards in the notice board, indicating where any special prayers on that day were to be added or omitted.

And he did all this even in his 90s.

He undertook all these onerous tasks as a labour of love, without any expectation of gratitude from those who benefited from what he did.

All of which leaves an everlasting impression of Nat’s true worth.



Nat Vasserman

Bram – Avrohom ben Chaim ha Cohen – was the shul’s “kohen gadol”.



Bram Khan

Fiercely proud of his priestly obligations, he was the doyen of the kohanim.

A constant attender at services in the Beis Hamedrash on both mornings and evenings, he always ensured that any visitor was made welcome.

He would deliberately sit at the back with strangers and would make it his business to help them saying kaddish, etc.

And he always had a spare pair of tefillin in his seat if needed.

Rabbi Yossi Chazan recalled: “Bram took his priestly duties as a Kohen very seriously. Not only did he dispense blessings but he was a blessing by the inspiration he gave to others.

“On the morning of his death, he was the first in shul. And, after receiving an aliya, he and his wife Joyce were the last to leave the kiddush.”

Great men, all. We truly miss them.

WHEN MEMBERS WEREN'T ALWAYS ON BEST BEHAVIOUR

A PEEP into the minutes books of yesteryear shows that some members were not always on their best behaviour.

For instance, the committee of the newly-opened shul in 1934 had cause to expel a congregant for “grossly insulting” another member. However, a subsequent meeting agreed to rescind the expulsion after a full apology had been offered.

There was another incident the following year when the committee discussed the “severing of membership” of another member for “disturbances”. But it seems that wiser heads prevailed on this occasion and the incalitrant member was sent a sharp rebuke instead.

Pre-war problems, apparently, were not just confined to members. For the committee invited a rabbi of the shul to submit his resignation. His actual misdemeanour was not recorded, but the minutes refer to a “state of affairs that was damaging to the prestige of the synagogue”.

And we wondered which loose-tongued committee member provoked his colleagues into passing a motion in 1942 that “should any member of the committee be found to have abused the confidence of meetings by conveying the matters discussed to outside sources, he shall be expelled from the committee”.

On to the 1950s and this time it was shul officials on the receiving end of allegations. The council heard complaints that the president and treasurer, no less, had been guilty of “conduct not in keeping with the dignity of the synagogue”. Surely a situation that could not happen nowadays!

Then came an incident that actually made headlines in the local Jewish press. A shul official interrupted the Shabbat service to protest from the bimah before the Reading of the Law about the “playing of cards in the social hall”. It was decided to write to the official, “deprecating his conduct”.

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Advertisement in the Jewish Chronicle, 20th January 1967

## GALLANTRY IN THE WAR YEARS

IN the two world wars, members of the Holy Law Congregation responded to the call of king and country in gallant fashion.

A War Service Board which hangs in our synagogue honours more than 100 members who served in World War Two, testifying to the spirit of that brave and devoted band.

On the home front, the rest of our members and the ladies, too, devoted themselves to forces' welfare, the equipping of the fighting services and the sustenance of the war effort in general.

Servicemen of all nationalities were welcomed to the religious services and to the homes of Holy Law members.

The War Services Hospitality Committee, which provided for the welfare and entertainment of servicemen and women visiting the area, was served by the-then Reader of the synagogue, Rev Laurence Glickman, who was its honorary chaplain from 1939 to 1945.

At the conclusion of hostilities, the congregation gave special leave of absence to its Rav, Rabbi Joseph Vilenski, to spend three months in Belsen doing humanitarian work.

He applied himself to rescuing the pitiful remnants of our brothers and sisters whose liberation came with the Allies' victory.



## **MEMBERS' ROLES IN CIVIC LIFE**

MEMBERS of the Holy Law Congregation have played exemplary roles in civic life . . . and at least four became mayor or lord mayor.

Michael Fidler became the first Jewish mayor of Prestwich in 1957. Tavie Collins followed in his footsteps in 1959 and Morris Baker in 1960.

Three Jewish mayors of Prestwich in four years – and all members of our shul. What an incredible achievement!

Holy Law's Alderman Abraham Moss became Lord Mayor of Manchester from 1952 to 1953 – a tremendous honour in coronation year.

Another member of the congregation, Leslie Donn, proudly wore the chain of office of Whitefield Urban District Council.

Other esteemed members of that era who served as aldermen and councillors included Alderman Sidney Hamburger, Councillor Fred Balcombe, Councillor M Corwin, Councillor Dr Joe Jaffe and Councillor Abe Zolkwer. Councillor Dr Joe Jaffe was Mayor of Salford 1982 - 1983.

A revered Rav of the congregation, Rabbi Dr Julius Unsdorfer, served as chaplain to the three Jewish mayors of Prestwich and also served in 1964-5 as chaplain to the-then Lord Mayor of Manchester, Alderman Dr William Chadwick.

Sir Sidney Hamburger dedicated his life to fighting for the underdog.

He was involved in countless charities as well as being chairman of the North West Regional Health Authority.

The son of Polish refugees, Sir Sidney, who died aged 86, came from humble roots. He left Salford Grammar School at an early age, becoming an apprentice to an electrical contractor.

As part of this job, he travelled widely round Manchester and was struck by the deprivation he saw.

Some years later, he said: "I wanted a world with decent housing, good education and happier living conditions."

Sir Sidney was a Labour councillor and alderman for 25 years and worked hard to foster good relations between different religions. He was Mayor of Salford 1968-1969.

He was awarded a CBE in 1966 and he was knighted in 1981.

What a lot we have to be proud of.



The Prestwich Mayor's Ball in 1960-61 with Mayor and Mayoress Morris and Sylvia Baker together with chaplain Rabbi Julius Unsorfer and Rebbetzen Unsorfer



Prestwich Mayor and Mayoress Tavie and Mrs Collins at their civic ball with Rabbi and Rebbetzen Unsorfer



Mayor Sidney Hamburger & Mayoress Gertrude Hamburger in the Holy Law Shul on June 2nd, 1957



## OUR PROUD RECORD WITH THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES

THE Holy Law Congregation has a long and proud history with the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Just as the synagogue was founded to spread the bond and spirit of brotherhood and unity among its members, it believed that the very same bond should be applied nationally.

So as early as 1898, the Holy Law Congregation became represented on the BoD.

Of outstanding interest is the fact that our first representative, HSQ Henriques, became the Board's treasurer and vice-president.

And in 1922 he achieved the highest honour of all when he was elected president, serving until 1925.

It is a happy thought in our 150th anniversary year that the man first chosen to represent us on the Board went on to become its leader.

It is fitting also to pay tribute to another distinguished member of Holy Law, Alderman Abraham Moss, who for many years was a vice-president of the BoD and in 1964 was elected president. Sadly his tenure of office was very short as he tragically died not too long after his election, 3 years later in 1967. Michael Fidler was elected president and served in that office for 6 years.

Over the decades, many other great men have represented our interests on the Board. They include Moris Fidler, Louis Fidler, Tavie Collins, Alderman Sidney Hamburger and Maurice Libbert.

Our present representative is Russell Conn. Long may he continue the good work.



## HOW SHUL NEARLY GOT TWO-GUN COHEN'S CHAIRS

THE Holy Law almost became the proud possessor of two beautifully-carved and extremely rare high-backed Chinese chairs – courtesy of the legendary “Two-Gun Cohen”.

It happened like this:

“Two-Gun Cohen” (1887-1970) – so named because he could use two guns at the same time – was an adventurer who became the only Jewish general China has ever had. He was also for a time head of the Chinese Secret Service.



Born Abraham Morris Cohen in London to an observant family from Poland, he spent much of his early life involved with brushes with the law.

He was introduced to Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen, who was leading a revolt against the Manchu dynasty, trying to supplant it with a unified China.

Sun Yat-sen was having trouble securing arms and Cohen suggested that he could fully arm the revolutionaries. He was engaged to do so.

He then found himself aide-de-camp to Sun Yat-sen in the Chinese National Revolutionary Army.

Sidney Wilner, the Holy Law's administrator for 24 years from 1970, takes up the story: “In 1948, Sun Yat-sen went on a 4,000-mile walk across China gathering supporters in his struggle against the imperial army.

“Two-Gun Cohen was his bodyguard, and as a token of appreciation Sun Yat-sen gave him a gift of the two exquisite chairs.

“Two-Gun had no need of them in China and had them shipped to England, where he presented them to the South Broughton Synagogue in Sabrina Street, Bury New Road, Salford.

“That shul, of course, was eventually to merge with the Holy Law and I wanted very much to see those chairs moved to Bury Old Road.

“However, it was not to be. The chairs were stolen from the shul . . . and then the building burned down.”

“Two-Gun Cohen” is buried at Blackley cemetery. And Jews weren't the only ones to mourn the benefactor of the chairs.

For when Mr Wilner went there one Ellul with his wife Eve to visit family graves, he noticed some unusual visitors placing flowers on the grave of Sun Yat-sen's former trusted lieutenant.

They were Chinese, dressed in the uniform of chairman Mao Tse-tung. And it seemed they missed him, too.

Rest in peace, Two-Gun.

## SECRET TUNNEL RAN UNDER THE SHUL

FEW congregants realise that the site on which the Holy Law Synagogue stands once had an “Upstairs, Downstairs” ring to it.

It was in the days before the shul was built 80 years ago when a mansion called Howcaster stood there.

Some say it was a grand house inhabited by one of the area’s most well-to-do families. Others believe it was an outer gatelodge of Heaton Park.

Both theories are next to impossible to check out. But what is known is that while the posh residents lived a life of privilege upstairs, the servants were confined to a cellar below.

And that cellar is still in existence. Among its uses in recent times has been storage by the Manchester Jewish Soup Kitchen, which is still housed in the shul building, providing meals for the disabled and needy Jewish elderly.

In the dark days of war, the cellar doubled as an air-raid shelter. It had a tunnel, too, which was intended as escape route should, heaven forbid, the building ever have come under attack by German warplanes.

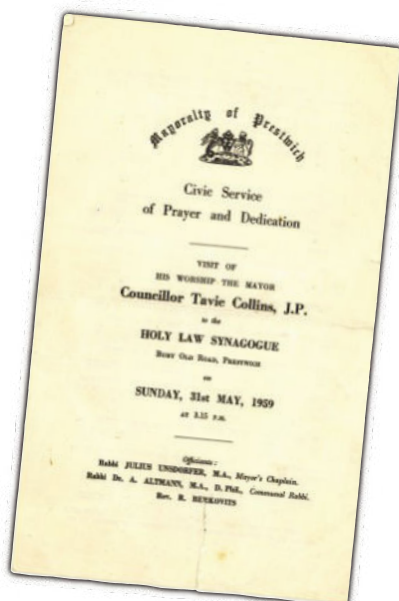
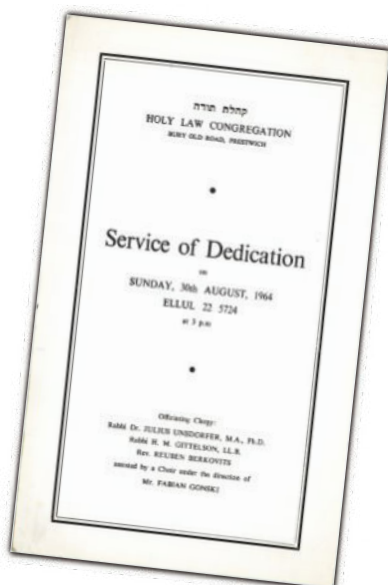
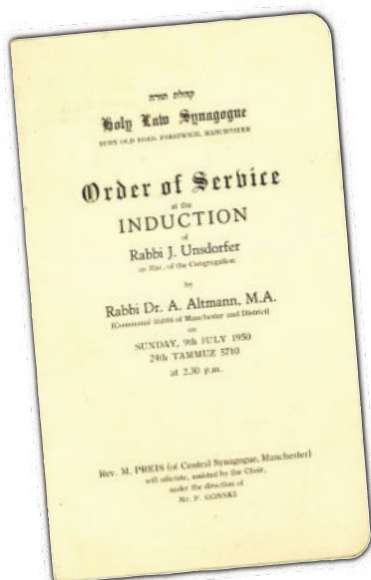
The tunnel led out into the street, although some older members believe it stretched as far as Heaton Park. However, this seems a most unlikely claim.

Years later the tunnel was bricked up on safety grounds when it was found that it was lined with asbestos.

There also used to be an iron spiral staircase in the old beis hamedrash when it was in an upstairs room, used among other things as a cheder run by the legendary Rabbi Jonah Balkind.

The only part of that staircase that still exists goes below ground into that very cellar which holds so many secrets.

## COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS 1950s/60s



## THE TOUCHY SUBJECT OF SERMONS

THE old handwritten minutes books of yesteryear give us some fascinating insights into shul life at that time.

One such entry was on the touchy subject of sermons!

Most of us feel, we hope, that our present revered Rov, Rabbi Yossi Chazan, pitches it just right – with a mix of the serious, the light-hearted, the historic and the modern.

However, there was a time back in 1940 when the shul committee of the day were not too happy with the calibre of drosha being delivered.

Indeed, discussion centred on a suggestion that “sermons be curtailed as they are at present too long”.

What’s more, committee members believed it a fact that “the only contact members have with Torah is on Sabbaths” so sermons should be “of an instructional nature and not of the type given to date”.

The minister’s reaction when the matter was taken up with him is not recorded!





Remembrance Day for war veterans outside the Holy Law  
with Rabbi M Gurdus, Dr Alexander Altman and Rabbi Julius Unsorfer



Mayor Tavie Collins at Manchester Cenotaph on Remembrance Day.  
His chaplain, Rabbi Julius Unsorfer, is on the far right





The first lady Mayor of Prestwich, Mrs Vera Dickinson, in 1953-54, with the executive members of the Holy Law



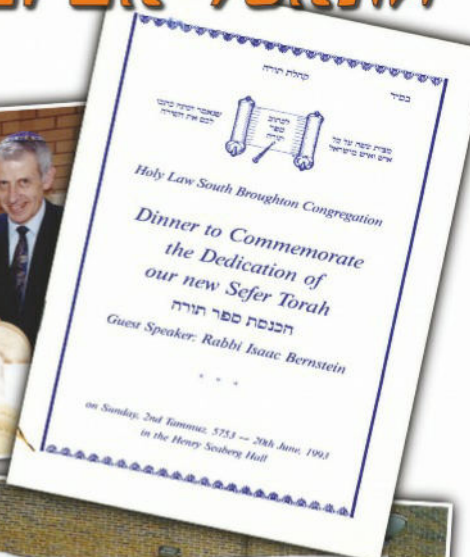
March 1949 - Rededication of the Shul

## COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS 1950s/60s



# A NEW SEFER TORAH

## JUNE 1993



## Holy Law South Broughton Congregation

שנאמר ועתה כתבו  
לכם את השירה



מצות עשה על כל  
איש ואיש מישראל

*In Deep Appreciation of the generous co-operation of those  
who participated in the writing of a Sefer Torah by  
defraying the cost of Sidrot*

|                               |            |                                  |         |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Greene          | אחר        | Mr. & Mrs. F. Baigel             | בראשית  |
| Mr. & Mrs. A. Noyek           | קדושם      | Mr. & Mrs. M. Mann               | נח      |
| Mr. & Mrs. A. Zatman          | אמר        | Dr. & Mrs. B. Wilkins            | לך לך   |
| Mr. & Mrs. I. S. Epstein      | בחר        | Mr. & Mrs. H. Hamburger          | וירא    |
| Dr. S. Baigel                 | בחקותי     | Mr. & Mrs. R. Susman             | חיי שרה |
| Sir Sidney and Lady Hamburger | במרכי      | Mr. & Mrs. E. Ross               | תולדות  |
| Mr. & Mrs. L. R. Portnoy      | נשא        | Mr. & Mrs. C. Gaffin             |         |
| Mr. L. Gordon                 | בהעלותך    | Mr. & Mrs. I. Baddiel            | ויצא    |
| Mr. & Mrs. B. Gouldman        | שלח לך     | Mr. & Mrs. M. Veeder             | וישלח   |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. Goldwater       | קרח        | Dr. & Mrs. P. G. Mann            | וישב    |
| Mr. & Mrs. D. Levene          | חקת        | Mr. & Mrs. D. Brown              | מקץ     |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Fidler       | בלק        | Mr. & Mrs. M. Wolfson            | ויגש    |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Bland           | פנחס       | Mr. & Mrs. M. Fine               | ויוחי   |
| Dr. & Mrs. L. Shuck           | מטות       | Family of the late Frank Jackson | שמות    |
| Mr. D. Parker                 | מסעי       | Mr. & Mrs. S. J. Shuck           | וארא    |
| Mr. & Mrs. G. Khan            | רברים      | Mr. & Mrs. C. Khan               | בא      |
| Mr. & Mrs. V. Haber           |            | Mr. & Mrs. R. Conn               |         |
| Mr. & Mrs. S. Haber           |            | Mr. & Mrs. D. Hamburger          |         |
| Mr. & Mrs. S. Lev             | ואתחנן     | Mr. & Mrs. B. S. Wallis          | בשלח    |
| Mr. & Mrs. I. Gilbert         |            | Dr. & Mrs. J. Golding            |         |
| Mr. & Mrs. S. Kushner         |            | Mr. & Mrs. P. Isaacs             | יתרו    |
| Mr. D. Men-Dell               | עקב        | Rabbi & Mrs. Y. Chazan           | משפטים  |
| Mr. C. Chalmers               | ראה        | Mr. & Mrs. A. Spieler            | תרומה   |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. Zatman          | שופטים     | Mr. & Mrs. N. Warens             | תצוה    |
| Dr. & Mrs. M. Crane           | כי תצא     | Mr. & Mrs. M. Corwin             | כי תשא  |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Clarke          | כי תבוא    | Mr. & Mrs. D. Fisher             | ויקהל   |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Simon           | נציבים     | Field Family                     | פקודי   |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Siess           |            | Mr. & Mrs. C. Gabbie             | ויקרא   |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. Davies          |            | Mr. & Mrs. A. Khan               | צו      |
| Dr. & Mrs. H. Goldwater       |            | Mr. & Mrs. M. Mason              | שמיני   |
| Mr. & Mrs. N. Berens          | וילך       | Mr. H. Cohen                     | תזריע   |
| Dr. & Mrs. J. R. Jaffe        | האינו      | Mr. & Mrs. C. Cohen              | מצורע   |
| Mr. & Mrs. B. Quinn           | ותאת הברכה | Mr. S. Gould                     |         |
| Mr. S. Brown & Mr. J. Brown   |            | Mr. & Mrs. B. Feingold           |         |
| Mr. & Mrs. S. Wilner          |            | Members of the Community         |         |
|                               | עצי חיים   | Mr. & Mrs. H. Mason              |         |

The Sefer Torah was dedicated

on 20th June 1993 — ב' דר"ח תמוז תשנ"ג





Holy Law Chazan Sheni, Dr Joe Jaffe, a former Mayor of Salford, ran the shul's children's service for many years. He is seen (second from left, middle row) at the 1987 prizegiving ceremony with his "helper" Joe Kuhillow (extreme right, back row). The picture was taken by "Holy Law photographer" Mervyn Berens, who covered all the shul's events of that era - a role undertaken in recent years by Jeffrey Gilbert



Children's Service siddur compiled by Dr Jaffe

## **‘UNCLE JOE’ WAS SO INDISPENSABLE**



THE name of Dr Joe Jaffe will loom large whenever the great men of the Holy Law Congregation are mentioned.

For he was the synagogue's Baal Koreh and Chazan Sheni for more than three decades.

For most of this time he also led and organised the children's services, thus immortalising himself among the Holy Law "indispensables".

No wonder former Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks said of him: "The rabbis teach that society rests upon three things – Torah, service and good deeds. All three were combined in the work of Dr Jaffe."

Lord Sacks added: "To bring words of Torah to one's fellows is a most important aspect of Jewish life.

"To be privileged enough to do this for one of the leading congregations of Anglo-Jewry and to continue it for so long and with such expertise is wonderful."

Dr Jaffe – or "Uncle Joe" as he was known to generations of children of the congregation – first began leyning at Holy Law back in 1964 when the previous incumbent, Hillel Gittleson, retired.

"As a Baal Koreh, there was no one finer," said Martin Mann, who succeeded him when Joe eventually stepped down through ill-health. "His diction, clarity and understanding of the text was par excellence.

"I always endeavoured to follow his wonderful example when leyning a sedra and it was Joe's advice that I sought before my first attempt at reading the Megillah."

In 1973, Joe became vice-president of the shul before assuming the mantle of president in 1974. Then, in 1991, the Holy Law honoured him with the office of life vice-president.

Throughout his years of synagogue – and civic – service, Dr Jaffe was admirably supported by his devoted wife Eleanor, whose parents Jennie and Mark Bloch were founder members of the shul on Bury Old Road.

No wonder he said at the time of a Holy Law dinner in 1994 to mark 30 years of service to the shul: "Eleanor is the person I most admire – for putting up with me all these years!

“She is certainly the biggest influence on my life. I admire her for her own achievements, too – as a senior magistrate and deputy chairman of Salford Magistrates Licensing Committee.”

Outside synagogal activities, Dr Jaffe was elected to Salford City Council in 1961. The pinnacle of his – and Eleanor’s – communal work came in 1982-3 when they were Mayor and Mayoress of Salford.

Dr Jaffe’s most well-known charitable work was for the Wallness Charity, which raised money for sick children and which he founded in 1976. And appropriate recognition came in 1987 when the Joe Jaffe Renal Unit was opened at Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital by the Princess Royal.

In a grand tribute to this wonderful man, Colonel Sir John Bradford Timmins, the-then Deputy Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, said at the time: “Joe Jaffe has made an outstanding and wide-ranging contribution to his community – a contribution which has involved personal sacrifice not only in terms of his time in a busy professional career but also, sadly, his health.

“Many have cause to be grateful for his public spirit, his energy, his enthusiasm and his dedication.”

Sadly, Joe died in 1995, leaving the world a poorer place.







Marriage Certificate (Ketuba) for Tilly Tynas and Marks Cohen  
which took place at the Claff Shul (Holy Law)  
Ellul 5660 - September 1900 - signed by Rabbi Dagutsky

(courtesy of the Manchester Jewish Museum)

## WHEN A CENTURY OF PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED

TRIBUTES galore have poured in to Holy Law as the shul celebrates its 150th birthday . . . just as they did in 1965 when the centenary was commemorated.

Back then, Chief Rabbi Dr Israel Brodie sent a message praising the founders for their "piety, devotion and love of our sacred Torah which stimulated them to form a synagogue for prayer and instruction".

He said that for 100 years, the voice of prayer had not ceased in the shul's various places of worship "in which study and the practice of good deeds had for ever been encouraged".

The Holy Law's then-Rav, Rabbi Dr Julius Unsdorfer, recalled that the Pinkus (charter) of the original Chevra Torah contained a prayer that the shul would "grow and develop to inspire future and successive generations".

It was a prayer that, thankfully, has been answered.

Life president Louis Fidler (his grandson Jan occupies the same position today) also told of the early days.

"I was married in the Holy Law Synagogue, Red Bank, to Golda Sherr in January, 1908," he related. "And it has been a source of pride and joy to me to have been active in the service of the congregation ever since."

He added: "From the handful who left Red Bank and joined forces with the few Prestwich Jewish families, I have been blessed to see the Holy Law Congregation rise to its greatest heights and become the largest congregation in the provinces."

The Holy Law president in centenary year, David Hamburger, wrote of the pride and humility he felt during "this very important year in our history".

He said: "The success of the congregation is due to the efforts of others who commenced their labours for the kehilla a century ago.

"Each and every current member is proud to count himself a spiritual heir of that devoted company who, although living as they did under a permanent cloud of financial problems, nevertheless were imbued with a spirit of comradeship under the canopy of the Torah."

David recalled that on its centenary, the Holy Law had a membership of over 1,250.

He and his wife Blanche made aliya at Chanukah, 1976, and the honour of life vice-president of Holy Law was bestowed on him.

This fine stalwart of the shul went on to become involved with many communal and volunteer projects in Netanya, including ones at Macdonald and Young Israel shuls.

And when it was time for his two daughters Ruth and Susan – now of Jerusalem – to wed, they returned from Israel so that they could be under the chuppah at the Holy Law!

## THE VITAL ROLE PLAYED BY WOMEN

OVER the decades, women have played a crucial role in the progress and success of the Holy Law.

Pat Mann, who was later to become the shul's assistant administrator and then administrator, recalls a very active women's group when she became a member of the synagogue with her husband Martin in 1963.

"There were hardworking women like Ada Unschorfer, Stella Abelson and Blanche Hamburger who did sterling work," she says.

Pat felt there was a need for young married ladies to play their part and became chairman when the Young Ladies' Group was formed.

Among its members, who raised funds for the shul and held social events, were Joyce Wolfson, Stephanie Bland, Frances Levene, Bettie Ashe, Barbara Cohen, Sonia Clyne, Felicia Pressman and Myrna Myers.

Next came a period when Doreen Wachmann was rebbetzen at Holy Law (from 1973-1990) – a time in which feminism and women's issues were the hot issues of the day.

"During that time, I was formulating my own response as to how certain aspects of feminism could be reconciled with Orthodox Judaism, how Orthodox Jewish women could better develop their spirituality and community involvement within a halachic framework," she recalls.

Doreen served three terms – a total of nine years – as chairman of the Holy Law Ladies' Group.

"When I joined the shul in 1973, there were two ladies' guilds – the Holy Law Ladies' Guild of more senior members and the Holy Law Young Ladies' Group," she says. "The two soon amalgamated to form the Holy Law Ladies' Group.

"As a rebbetzen, I felt it was my duty to use whatever leadership skills I had to lead this group, most of whose activities were the stereotypical female ones of catering for fundraising events like fashion shows, coffee mornings, etc.

"While I felt it important to continue to hold these traditional activities which the ladies obviously wanted, I tried whenever possible to raise the religious and intellectual tone of events by holding panel discussions around Jewish women's issues."

When in 1990 Lord Sacks, who was then head of Jews' College, held a London Traditional Alternatives Conference on Women in Orthodox

Judaism, some of the top women international speakers at the conference spoke at Holy Law.

"A few years later, when Chief Rabbi Sacks inaugurated his Review on Women in the Jewish Community, North Manchester meetings of the Review were held at Holy Law, where I later launched Jewish Women's Renewal which inaugurated the concept of women's Rosh Chodesh groups in Manchester," says Doreen.

A few years on, she led the weekly women's Tehillim group at the shul for several years.

Meanwhile, around 1990 other female members of the shul became involved in campaigning for women's synagogue voting rights and the ability to serve as council members, which they succeeded in gaining.

On to 2003 and another Holy Law ladies' group was formed. Calling itself Kol Isha, it has since raised several thousand pounds and contributed towards much-needed improvements to the shul, including new curtains and decorating in the hall and new flooring in the ladies' cloakrooms.

The current chairpersons are Janice Haber and Raiselle Gaffin. Lorraine Gouldman is treasurer and there is a committee of five.

One of the committee members, Barbara Paul, says: "A chat? A schmooze? Tea and a biscuit? Ladies who lunch? Sounds inviting!

"However, we Holy Law ladies were looking for something more meaningful. So, one autumnal evening in October, 2003, at the home of Raiselle Gaffin, Kol Isha was created.

"Its aim? To strengthen the bonds of friendship between shul members by organising social events."

Whether it was a Purim carnival, a melave malka, a Simchat Torah lunch or Shabbat UK, the Kol Isha ladies have been at the forefront over the years, ensuring the smooth and efficient running and catering of countless shul events.

Particularly memorable and well-supported were a "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" quiz and entertaining Murder Mystery evenings.

"We have enjoyed a variety of interesting visiting speakers, thanks to the warm hospitality of members," says Barbara.

"Topics have ranged from style and colour co-ordination to flower arranging and cut-fruit demonstrations. Many of these events have celebrated Rosh Chodesh and included a relevant Dvar Torah.

"Our rebbetzen, Mindy Chazan, has delighted us on frequent occasions with her cookery evenings, during which we have tried out new cheese cake recipes, baked challas and prepared beautiful salads.

"These events inspired the Kol Isha Salad and Pesach Recipe books, eagerly bought by cookery enthusiasts."

It is usually the Kol Isha ladies who arrive early to set out the Shabbat kiddushim.

Barbara adds: "We all enjoy socialising there and we are delighted to have seven rota teams.

"The ladies of Kol Isha are proud to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Holy Law and look forward to your continued support for many years to come so that we can together ensure the future success of our shul community. Mazeltov!"



Kol Isha co-chairpersons Janice Haber and Raiselle Gaffin are in the dough at a Challah Bake for ShabbatUK. With them is Janice's granddaughter Tali Haber.

SEPTEMBER 2015

ROSH HASHONA 5776



# The Bulletin

JOURNAL OF THE HOLY LAW SOUTH BROUGHTON CONGREGATION



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## FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR HOLY LAW'S COMMUNITY CENTRE



Holy Law member Lawrence Purcell has been round and about the community with his camera. Here are two of his candid shots with more on Page 17



**ABOVE:** An animated Rabbi Shlomo Miller, mashgiach in Yeshiva Knesses Yitzchok in Kiryat Sefer, Israel, is seen at Start Your Day The Torah Way in Machzikei Hadass Shul hall.



**LEFT:** A fair cop! Eight-year-old Nachman Rudzinski at a personal safety day at the Jewish Community Centre, Bury Old Road, Prestwich.

**AMBITIOUS plans are continuing apace to turn the Holy Law into a busy community centre.**

"The number of activities that already occur in the shul is significant," says president Laurence Ingley. "But we are not resting on our laurels."

"We have plans to further develop the building."

And the list of activities is now being used to support grant applications.

Laurence adds: "As with most communal organisations, our long-term survival is based on the generosity of its members."

"Most organisations have a legacy strategy where individuals leave a money value in their will for the benefit of the organisation."

"Indeed recently we received a legacy from the probate of a member's wife."

"We therefore ask you to consider an update in your will in favour of your Holy Law Shul community."

The shul has also announced a number of dedication opportunities.

Members are being invited to dedicate rooms and areas for 10-year fixed periods.

Among them are: The old



**BIG PLANS:** Laurence

social hall, children's library room, the foyer outside the main shul, foyer outside the Beis Hamedrash, kitchen, dedicating the outside sukkah area (so that it could be used all year round – for storage or as a room), upstairs Beis Hamedrash, Beis Hamedrash, downstairs ladies' cloakroom, upstairs ladies' cloakroom, men's cloakroom, foyer outside men's cloakroom, both large rooms to be built in the back seven rows of both the Manchester and Bury sides of the shul.

THE ROV, CHAZAN, HONORARY OFFICERS AND ALL THE STAFF WISH EVERYONE KETIVA VE KETIMAH TOVA

Mazel Tov! It's the Barmitzvah year of the Holy Law's magazine, The Bulletin, which began in 2002

## THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG STANDING MEMBER

### by JAN FIDLER - Life President

My first visit to the shul as a young boy cannot have been a memorable occasion, as I cannot remember when that was!

Although I knew of Rabbi Vilenski, I have no recollection of having come to shul when he was still the Rav of the congregation. That may very well be because I think he relinquished his position in 1946, when I was only four years of age.

I do, however, remember Rev Glickman, who was the chazan until he retired in about 1950.

I think that I must have started to come regularly with my father when I was five or six years of age and we always arrived at about 10.30.

That is a habit which many members who arrive after the commencement of the service still have today when they appear in shul at approximately the same time each week.

Barmitzvah of Jan S Fidler  
with his father Michael Fidler  
and also Rabbi Unsrdorfer



They obviously prefer to do some of the *davening* at home before they arrive!

Rabbi Unsrdorfer was inducted into office as the Rav of the congregation in 1951 and must have taken up his position some time before that.

He was born in Pressburg and, after coming to Manchester, married a member of the Jaffe family, Ada Jaffe (a sister of Joe Jaffe). All their children were born in Manchester and Malka (Edreyi), who has lived in Kfar

Chabad in Israel for very many years, has nevertheless maintained a very great affection for the shul and was able to produce a lot of memorabilia for the 150th anniversary, which brought back very many happy memories for me, as well as for her.

It is also worthy of mention that her niece Zahava (the wife of Daniel Taub, who until recently was the Israeli Ambassador to the Court of St. James) is the daughter of the late Paula Goldblum, who was the eldest of Rabbi and Mrs Unsrdorfer's daughters.

In the days when I started to come to shul, the congregation had two



*shamashim*, the senior of whom was Mr Isaacs, who, of course, wore a top hat and who was assisted by Mr Lewis, if my memory serves me correctly.

There are not many people around who are in a position to contradict me, even if I am wrong!

Until the shul was extended in the 1960s, the *bimah* was at the top of the shul in front of the *Aron Kodesh* and the executive box was at the foot of the *bimah*, with the members of the executive facing the congregation.

In those days, and right up until about 1988, a member of the executive, who was seated in the executive box, had to wear a top hat. By the time I became an executive member (at the same time as Dr Sydney Baigel) in 1970, Mr Gittelson was the *shamash* and soon afterwards Mr Wilner was appointed the administrator.

He, too, as well as Mr Gittelson, wore top hats in shul.

Today it is difficult to persuade members to join the executive or even the Council. I remember elections to the executive and council being fiercely contested.

My late grandfather, Louis Fidler, served on the executive for very many years and I distinctly remember his standing for re-election as president in 1955 and being opposed by Nathan Berkovitch. Each received an equal number of votes and my grandfather, as chairman of the meeting, exercised his casting vote in his own favour.

Amongst members of the congregation who were prominent when I first started to come to shul were Mr Herzog, Mr Pollak, Mr Samuel Shuck (Simon Shuck's grandfather), Simon and Celia Santhouse (the parents of Rabbi Moshe Santhouse, who grew up in the shul) and the Cohen sisters who lived on Ravensway and who always appeared dressed in white on Kol Nidrei.

Another prominent member of the congregation was Frank Jackson – the *bimah* in the present building is dedicated in memory of his wife, Dolly Jackson.

They lived in Ravensway and, at a time when few people had a *Succah* of their own, they had a *Succah* and it was deemed to be a great honour to be invited into it on *Succos*.

The *Selichos* book which I still use is one which was given to me as a present by Frank Jackson in 1957.

Frank Jackson served as president of the congregation from 1958 to 1961 and was appointed a life vice-president in 1962.

Other members of the executive whose names spring easily to mind

קהלת תורה

# Holy Law Congregation

## PRESIDENTS

## VICE PRESIDENTS

5661-9 LOUIS DAVIS  
 5663-8 ABRAHAM MEKENNEL  
 5668-75 SOLOMON MENDELSON ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5700  
 5675-5701 MORIS FIDLER ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5701  
 5701-04 LOUIS FIDLER 08.13-15 ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5708  
 5704-7 M. SHERMAN  
 5707 M. H. LIBBERT 12 ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5736  
 5709-10 M. FLACKS  
 5710-12 N. FROST  
 5715-18 N. BERKOVITCH  
 5718-21 F. JACKSON ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5742  
 5721-24 ISAAC GLICKMAN  
 5724-27 D. HAMBURGER J.P. 33-34 ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5740  
 5727-30 ALD. MICHAEL M. FIDLER J.P. ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5744  
 5730-33 E. PRIZANT 43-46 ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5740  
 5734-37 CLLR. Dr. J. R. JAFFE  
 5737-40 MARTIN MANN  
 5740-43 VICTOR S. COHEN  
 5746-49 BERNARD QUINN  
 5749-52 MORLEY Z. WOLFSON ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5748  
 5752-55 JAN S. FIDLER ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5748  
 5755-57 FRANK R. BAIGEL  
 5757-59 EDMOND ROSE J.P.  
 5759-62 SIMON SHUCK  
 5762-64 FRANKLIN R. KAYE  
 5764 IAN EPSTEIN  
 5764-67 CHARLES A. GAFFIN  
 5767-70 JEFFREY A. GILBERT ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5770  
 5770-73 ANTHONY HABER  
 5773 LAURENCE INGLEY

5661-8 LOUIS DONN  
 5668-75 MORRIS MASON 80-83  
 5675-80 MAX ROSEN 83-85  
 5685-7 HARRY LEVY  
 5687-8 PINCUS COHEN  
 5688-92 A. PRICE  
 5692-3 L. FIDLER 98-5701  
 5693-8 ISRAEL SUNLIGHT ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5708  
 5701-04 M. SHERMAN  
 5704-7 M. H. LIBBERT ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5718  
 5707-8 M. FLACKS  
 5708 N. BERKOVITCH 12-13  
 5710-12 F. JACKSON 17  
 5714-15 NELSON M. FRUMKIN  
 5715-16 LEONARD LUBIN  
 5716-17 DAVID HAMBURGER 21-24  
 5718-21 ISAAC GLICKMAN  
 5724-27 ALD. MICHAEL M. FIDLER J.P. ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5740  
 5727-30 E. PRIZANT  
 5730-33 MORRIS JACKSON  
 5733-34 CLLR. Dr. J. R. JAFFE ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5740  
 5734-36 MARTIN MANN  
 5737-38 PAUL RADNAN  
 5738-40 V. S. COHEN  
 5740-43 Dr. SYDNEY BAIGEL  
 5743-46 BERNARD QUINN ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5746  
 5746-49 MORLEY Z. WOLFSON  
 5749-52 JAN S. FIDLER 57-58  
 5752-55 FRANK BAIGEL  
 5755-57 EDMOND ROSE  
 5758-59 SIMON SHUCK  
 5759-61 MAURICE A. GREENE  
 5761-62 FRANKLIN KAYE  
 5762-64 CHARLES GAFFIN  
 5764-65 JONATHAN C. COHEN  
 5765-67 JEFFREY A. GILBERT  
 5767-70 RICHARD ADLER-73  
 5770-73 LAURENCE INGLEY

HOLY LAW SOUTH BROUGHTON CONGREGATIONS AMALGAMATED 5738 - 1978  
 SIDNEY EPSTEIN ELECTED LIFE VICE PRESIDENT 5738

are Maurice Libbert (the father of Sidney Libbert), Isaac Glickman, Emil Prizant, David Hamburger, Leonard Lubin, Ben Gordon (in whose name and that of his late wife Cissie "the Cissie and Ben Reception Suite" was named as a result of their generosity in leaving their house in Downham Crescent to the shul as a legacy following the death of the second of them to die).

They did not have any children but I recollect two nieces with whom doubtless they had little connection, one day arriving from South Africa and complaining about their generosity to the shul.

Two wardens who occupied office in my younger days were Joe Kinsky and Nathan Frost.

Nathan Frost was not a person who courted popularity but he gave many years of service to the shul and I was amazed to read in the minute books of the congregation pre-dating the building of the shul on its present site in 1935, that he, as a member and possibly the lone member of the council, had objected to the proposed siting of the *bimah* in "the wrong place".

It always irked me as a young boy that there were persons who refused to *daven* in the shul because of the position of the *bimah*.

Anyway, that situation was rectified when, in the 1960s, the shul was extended considerably and the *bimah* was placed in the centre.

The shul cottage is far older than the shul building and when I first started to attend the shul, the caretaker who lived in the cottage was Mrs Swan.

Another family that has long been connected with the shul is the Field family and Stanley, together with Geoff Kuhillow, has been actively involved in the compilation of this publication.

One of my failures in life was not being able to persuade Stanley to accept a more senior position on the executive than that of honorary secretary.

Amongst other honorary secretaries who gave yeoman service to the shul were Hershel Cohen and Cecil Ashe.

In the days when it was deemed an honour to be elected a member of the council, the two members who always polled the greatest number of votes were Sam and Charles (Charlie) Glancy.

Hettie Wilson/Smidman was for many years the chair (a modern expression which I have never favoured!) of the ladies' committee, as was Rose Levy some years later.

Persons who were paid officials of the congregation who I distinctly

תורה

קהל

# Holy Law Congregation

## WARDENS

## TREASURERS

5661-7 MORRIS MASON  
 5667-8 AARON ROSENBLUM  
 5668-83 LOUIS DONN ELECTED LIFE WARDEN 1943  
 5683-6 ISAAC GALANSKY  
 5686-8 ISRAEL LIBBERT  
 5688-92 P. GORDON  
 5692-5701 J.L. RUBINSTEIN ELECTED LIFE WARDEN 1943  
 5701-8 N. FROST 5717  
 5705-7 N. BERKOVITCH 19 ELECTED LIFE WARDEN  
 5709-11 I. GLICKMAN 15 ELECTED LIFE WARDEN 1943  
 5711-12 A. JACOBS  
 5712-13 J. KINSKY 5720-23  
 5714-15 B. GORDON  
 5723-27 E. PRIZANT ELECTED LIFE WARDEN 1943  
 5727-30 MARTIN MANN 5740-43 ELECTED LIFE WARDEN 1943  
 5730-33 JAN. S. FIDLER  
 5733-36 Dr. L. SHUCK  
 5736-38 V. S. COHEN  
 5738-40 MORLEY Z. WOLFSON  
 5743-46 MAURICE N. BLAND 5746-49  
 5746-47 IRVING BADDIEL  
 5749-50 JACK H. KAY  
 5750-53 DAVID LEVENE  
 5753-55 IAN S. EPSTEIN 5758-64  
 5755-58 SIMON SHUCK  
 5764-70 ANTHONY HABER  
 5770-73 KEVIN A. FEDDY  
 5773 SIMMY GOLDMEIER

5661-3 SIMON LEVENSON  
 5663-4 GEORGE LEVY  
 5664-6 A. LEWIS  
 5666-75 MAX ROSEN  
 5675-83 HARRY KARNOFSKY  
 5683-5 JULIUS TAYLOR  
 5685-6 ISRAEL LIBBERT  
 5686-7 HARRY LEVY  
 5687-93 ISAAC MENDELL } JOINT - TREASURERS  
 5697-8 L. FIDLER } 5693-7  
 5698-5701 S. B. STARK  
 5701-04 M. H. LIBBERT 5710  
 5704-5 H. FLACKS  
 5705-7 M. FLACKS  
 5707-9 F. JACKSON 15  
 5711-12 I. GLICKMAN 17  
 5712-15 LEONARD LUBIN  
 5718-21 DAVID HAMBURGER  
 5721-24 Ch. MICHAEL M. FIDLER J.P.  
 5724-27 Ch. TAVIE COLLINS J.P.  
 5727-30 MORRIS JACKSON  
 5730-33 Dr. SYDNEY BAIGEL 46-49  
 5733-34 J. RABINOWITZ  
 5734-36 P. RADNAN  
 5737-40 MAURICE N. BLAND 56.  
 5740-46 MORLEY Z. WOLFSON  
 5749-52 EDMOND ROSE  
 5752-55 SIMON SHUCK  
 5755. IAN S. EPSTEIN  
 5756-59 MAURICE A. GREENE  
 5759-62 CHARLES GAFFIN  
 5762-64 JEFFREY A. GILBERT  
 5764 SIMON TASGAL  
 5764-68 DANIEL J. MORRIS  
 5768-71 PAUL ISAACS  
 5771-72 ANTONY MILLER  
 5772-74 GORDON SINGER  
 5774 MICHOEL BASS

HOLY LAW SOUTH BROUGHTON CONGREGATIONS AMALGAMATED 5738-1978

remember are Bertie Cohen, Abe Freedman and Ralph Telzer, as well as Sidney Wilner and Pat Mann.

Some of the sons of congregants became rabbis. As well as Moishe (Michael) Santhouse, they include Arnold Saunders, Emanuel Levy, Clive Baddiel and Ben Elton, who has just taken up a position as Rav of the Central Shul in Sydney, Australia.

Past presidents with whom I enjoyed a particularly close personal friendship were Morley Wolfson and Edmond Rose and happily I am still able to enjoy the same relationship with another of our past presidents and now life warden, Martin Mann, who I followed into office as warden of the congregation in 1970.

Until Stephanie and Maurice Bland moved to Whitefield, Maurice was always very actively involved in the affairs of the congregation and Sydney and Frank Baigel have likewise given many years of service to the congregation.

The list of persons who I remember is endless and I realise that I am being too selective in naming anyone at all.

There are many more people who I would like to mention and who I remember with a great deal of affection, Bram Khan, Joe Jaffe, Willy Zeider, Nat Vasserman, Viv Freeman and Monty Turnberg, but I do not want this article to be simply a list of names.

When I was the warden, I remember Rabbi Unsdrofer telling me that I should write out a list of the minhagim of the congregation to avoid them being forgotten. How right he was.

He made a note of some of them and if it ever comes to light, it will be interesting to see how far we have deviated from them over the years.

Rabbi Unsdrofer had a very beneficial influence on me from the age of 12 and I shall always remain greatly indebted and grateful to him in furthering my religious growth.

Have things changed for the better or for the worse? I shall leave it to others who are in a position to express an opinion, to decide for themselves.

It is certainly true to say that there have been substantial changes over the years in the formality one used to find when coming to shul.

In my early days, it was unheard of for a child to sit in the executive box or for members to shower a *choson* with sweets from the ladies' gallery on the occasion of his *aufruf*.

I was asked to write an article about the part my family has played in the history of the congregation.



Rabbi Julius Unschorfer addressing the children on a Sunday





My grandfather, Louis Fidler, had an intense love for the shul, which to me, as a young boy, seemed to be far more important to him than his business.

It was he who inculcated in me a love of and devotion to a congregation which, as I grew up, was also to become an integral part of my life.

After serving in many executive offices, over many years, he was appointed life president of the congregation in 1958. That was a position which he held until his death in 1975.

My father, Michael Fidler, must have been inspired by his attachment to the shul to extend his interest to so many other spheres.

The fact that his business premises were compulsorily acquired in 1964 to enable the Irwell to be widened, enabled him to devote the rest of his life to local, national and international activities.

In 1967, he was elected president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and, having been elected as a Member of Parliament in 1970, it now seems inconceivable that he would have had the time or inclination to have assumed the presidency of the congregation.

Because of the demands on his time, I tried to dissuade him from accepting the presidency on completion of his term of office as vice-president but to no avail.

My father added considerable prestige to the congregation, as did many other members by their involvement in communal activities.

Names that immediately spring to mind are Abs Moss, Sir Sidney Hamburger, Tavie Collins, Morris Baker, Gerald Feingold, Norman Feingold and Joe Jaffe, but there were many more as well.

My father was elected life president of the congregation in 1984. That was a position which he held until his death in 1989.

It would also be appropriate to refer to the merger of South Broughton Congregation, of which Sidney Epstein was president for many years. That occurred in 1978 and was appointed a life vice-president of the congregation in the same year.

My own contribution to the welfare of the congregation cannot be compared to the contributions made by my father and grandfather, but I would like to feel that the intensity of my feeling for the shul has not fallen too far short of that of my father and grandfather.

Having occupied the position of warden from 1970 to 1973, I decided not to continue as a member of the executive in order that my children, Elliot, Julian and, until she was too old to do so, Abigail, could sit with me in shul.



I was persuaded to assume office as vice-president in 1989 and I was pleased that I did so as it enabled me to sit next to my father in the executive box as, in those days, the life president always sat in the executive box.

I went on to serve the congregation as its president from 1992 to 1995 and, having been appointed a life vice president in 2006 I received the immense honour of being appointed its life president in 2014.

It was not an office coveted by me, but I knew that in accepting it, I was doing something of which my father and grandfather would have been very proud.

In less than a month Lynn and I shall be going to live in Israel and I know that one of the things which I am going to miss most is my daily attendance at services of the congregation and the friendship that I have with so many members.



Family Dinner at Prestwich Town Hall, Scholes Lane, to celebrate the mayoralty of Michael Fidler as the first Jewish Mayor of Prestwich in 1956/7



*Holy Law members showed  
their lighter side when they  
donned Wild West gear for an  
evening of fun and revelry.  
Yes, you've guessed it, it was  
Purim*



Pictures: Jeffrey Gilbert

The authors would like to thank all who have given their time for interviews for this publication - and to apologise to anyone who may have been inadvertently omitted. They would also like to thank their wives for allowing them hundreds of hours entailed in its production.

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