

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October/November 2014

Cheshvan/Kislev 5775

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting

🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

For service times see page 2

14 & 15 November – 22 Cheshvan

🕒 Chayei Sarah

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:07

21 & 22 November – 29 Cheshvan

🕒 Toldot

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:13

28 & 29 November – 7 Kislev

🕒 Vayeitzei

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:19

5 & 6 December – 14 Kislev

🕒 Vayishlach

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:24

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It has certainly been a busy and eventful few months at Oxford. The High Holidays at Oxford were as meaningful and spiritual as always in our beautiful Shul. We had great attendances and the services were excellent. Sukkot was equally great.

Sheceiach to everyone who played a part from Rabbi, Chazan, Choir, Tanya (Youth Director), Colin Bliss, Gaboim, Lance Cohen (head of our CSO arm) and everyone who helped with security, Rivky who helped out with a lot of the catering, Belinda and last but by no means least Petrus, Chicco and Connie who really worked hard with all the brochures and meals

held over this period. Thank you to you all.

We held the special general meeting as advertised on the 28th October to discuss selling the Shul's house in Saxonwold. After a much relevant discussion a unanimous motion was passed to accept the offer of purchase. The sale process is now underway and again we need to thank Martin Lewison for all his time and effort in getting the Shul a great offer as well as everyone who took the time to attend and contribute to the meeting. It is most appreciated.

The plan forward is to move the Rabbi and family closer to the Shul in Killarney or Riviera, and to this end we have started looking at suitable properties in the area. The remainder of the proceeds from the sale of the house will be invested.

The water saga continues but we are getting there. Thanks to Stan Yankelson for all his time, effort and help in sorting out the issue.

Wishing you all a great November.

Hoping to see you all in Shul

Regards

Brian

RABBI'S MESSAGE

RABBI NM BERNHARD obm

Yizkor Sermon 5775

We live in times when everything is forgotten so quickly: we don't even try remember phone numbers or information any longer as everything can be easily googled or looked up on handheld devices. In this fast-paced world, that which was relevant a few minutes ago is no longer now. To be remembered has become ever so important.

In this light, Yizkor becomes both more challenging and more meaningful. Yizkor means to remember, as we recall the souls and lives of dear ones.

A man who will not easily be forgotten—in this community and well beyond—is Rabbi NM Bernhard obm.

I personally remember the first time I met him in October 1984, in Miami FL. He was the guest speaker at a programme I was helping to organise, in the infant days of the Aleph Institute (Aleph offer support to Jews in US Federal Prisons). He was the guest speaker at the opening night and I recall driving him to the airport the next morning, and every detail of our conversation during the ride.

Thus began a relationship that would last decades. I had not met Rivky at that point—in fact I was not quite sure

where exactly South Africa was on the map at that stage. By June of the following year I was married to a South African and discovered that the Bernhards were family friends when we celebrated Sheva Brachot at their home in Ersilworld Way.

A few years later I took up my first position as a pulpit rabbi and this is when I discovered that Rabbi Bernhard was the rabbis' rabbi. He gave me hours of his time before I ventured out to Cape Town, guiding and advising, and was happy to mentor me through challenging and difficult situations while leading my community.

He taught me how to get people's trust and their friendship which, he claimed, is the only way to succeed as a congregational rabbi. I knew that whenever in any kind of trouble, dialling 011-646-9607 would provide me with the answer on how to deal with the problem instantly. In fact, the first funeral I ever officiated at as a rabbi was that of a man who had requested to be cremated; Rabbi Bernhard gave me step-by-step guidance on how to deal with the situation and to ensure that the man was buried with all Jewish rites.

Rabbi Bernhard was a devoted Chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He met him on several occasions, sought and followed his advice on major life decisions and was fully dedicated to the Rebbe's institutions here in South Africa.

He was passionate about education and started the Menorah Oxford School on our premises. This school eventually grew to become the Torah Academy, a

network of schools from Nursery to Matric—Rabbi Bernhard gave his soul over to the school and was chairman of its management committee for decades—I am proud to be the headmaster of one of its departments.

He was also a man with a huge social conscience and was unafraid to speak out against apartheid, with the full knowledge that the Security Police were monitoring his every sermon, would visit him at his home and threaten to deport him. He started OSSAC, Oxford Synagogue's Social Action Committee, to do something proactive to assist domestic workers in this area with skills to improve their lot.

One late evening in November of 1999 he phoned me at home in Cape Town. "Are you asleep?" he asked and I assured him that it was not that late and that I was still wide awake. "Good," he continued, because what I want to share with you now will really wake you up!" The call did change my life, as he had promised. The following August I was occupying this very pulpit as spiritual leader of this community.

Rabbi Bernhard continued to influence the Oxford and Johannesburg community, well beyond his retirement from the pulpit rabbinate.

Here today, as we are about to start Yizkor, we ask ourselves, how do we want to be remembered?

"Yizkor Elokim," we say, for Hashem's memory is eternal, as is He. And it is our challenge to strive to lead our lives to the utmost, tirelessly and influencing as wide circle as we possibly can. So that, indeed, we shall be remembered.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I walked around my house with the man from the bank. He came to do a valuation. He walked around and took pictures. He noticed the peeling paint in the bathrooms – I heard the children playing in the soapy bath water. He looked at the loose floor tiles, I saw all the people sitting around our Shabbat table. He focused on the crack in the kitchen ceiling and the loose cupboard doors, I pictured all the hours we have stood in the kitchen, eating, cooking, laughing and creating. He saw a broken swimming pool – I felt the cool water and the hours of happy entertainment we splashed out there.

It's exciting to move home. We are looking forward to being nearer to the Shul P.G. Change always brings about some trepidation. The walk with the man from the bank made me full of gratitude for the love and laughter and warmth that happened in this home. It also made me keenly aware that it doesn't matter which place you are in, as long as you are ready to make it into your home.

We look forward, P.G. to creating a new home filled again with love and laughter and warmth.

Rivky

SHACHARIT (A.M.)	
Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00
MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)	
Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday	5:45
Shabbat	6:00
from 22/11	6:15

A STORY

ACTS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

*By Ruchoma Shain
(www.heritage.org.il)*

One hot summer day, a young couple and their four-year-old-daughter, Tzippie, were on their way to the mountains for a few weeks' vacation. Suddenly, a huge truck in the oncoming lane collided headlong into the family's small car. The couple was injured seriously, and little Tzippie sustained many fractures. They were immediately taken to the nearest hospital where Tzippie was brought to the children's ward, and her parents were taken to the intensive care unit. As can well be imagined, Tzippie was not only in great pain, but she was also very frightened because her parents were not nearby to give her comfort.

Martha, the nurse who was assigned to Tzippie, was a single, older woman. She understood Tzippie's fear and insecurity, and became very devoted to her. When Martha finished her shift, instead of going home, she would volunteer to stay with Tzippie at night. Of course, Tzippie grew very fond of her and depended on her for her every need. Martha brought her cookies, picture books, and toys; she sang songs to her, and told her countless stories.

When Tzippie was able to be moved, Martha put her in a wheel chair and took her to visit her parents every day. Miraculously they had survived and were also recovering slowly. After many months of

hospitalization, the family was finally discharged. Before they left the hospital, the parents blessed Martha for her devoted and loving care, and invited her to visit them. Tzippie would not let go of Martha, and insisted that she come to live with them. Martha also did not want to be parted from her little Tzippie, but her life was in the children's ward of the hospital, and she could not think of leaving. There was a tearful parting as the loving nurse and Tzippie said good-bye to each other. For a few months the family kept up a close relationship with Martha, through phone calls only, as they lived quite a distance from her, but when they moved to Israel, they lost contact with each other.

Over thirty years passed. Martha, who was in her seventies, became seriously ill with pneumonia one winter and was hospitalized in the geriatric ward of a hospital near her home. There was a certain nurse on duty who noticed that Martha had very few visitors. She tried her best to give the elderly lady special care and saw that she was a sensitive, clever person.

One night when the nurse was sitting near her elderly patient, and they were chatting quietly, she confided in her as to what prompted her to become a nurse. When she was four years old, she explained, and her parents had been injured in an automobile accident, there had been a wonderful nurse who had brought her back to health with her loving, caring

devotion. As she grew older, she determined that one day she, too, would become a nurse and help others--from the young to the old--just as that nurse had done for her. She had been living in Israel, she said, where she had gone to nursing school and had become a registered nurse.

After she graduated, she had met a young man from America, and when they married, they moved to the States. A few months ago they had moved to this city, where her husband had been offered a very good job, and she was happy to get a position as a nurse in this hospital. As the nurse's story unfolded, tears flowed from the elderly patient's eyes, as she realized that this must surely be her little Tzippie, whom she had cared for after the accident.

When the nurse had finished her story, Martha said softly, "Tzippie, we are together again, but this time you are nursing me!" Tzippie's eyes opened wide as she stared at Martha, suddenly recognizing her. "Is it really you?!" she cried out. "How many times I have thought about you and prayed that some day we would meet again!"

When Martha recovered from her illness, Tzippie--this time--did not beg her to come home with her and live with her family. Instead, she just packed up Martha's belongings and took her home with her, where she lives to this day. Tzippie's husband and children have welcomed her like a most special grandmother..

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

MARRIAGES

- Mazaltov to Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the marriage of their grandson, Netanel Moshel, in Pittsburgh, USA.
- Mazaltov to Theo Rutstein on the marriage of his son Mark.
- Mazaltov to Tzvi Gudelsky on his marriage to Tanya Kramer.

BIRTHS

- Mazaltov to Sonya Genn on the birth of a great-grandson.
- Mazaltov to Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great grandson in Jerusalem.

- Mazaltov to Michael and Chaya Mushka Chaikin and to Rabbi and Rivky Chaikin on the birth of a son and grandson in Melbourne.

BIRTHDAYS

- Sam Benard on his 80th Birthday on 27 October.
- Willie Wittert on his 88th birthday on 9 November.
- Freda Braude on her 70th birthday on 19 November.
- Roy Sable on his 88th birthday on 23 November.
- Sidney Abramowitch on his 91st birthday on 30 November.
- Stan Schroder on his 80th birthday on 30 November.

REFUAH SHLEMAH

We wish a Speedy Recovery to:

- Glenda Myers
- Lily Elsbach
- Gerd Elsbach
- Philip Gendel

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:

- Solly Burgin and Philip Jacobson on the loss of their wife and sister, Jessica Burgin.
- Natie Aremband on the loss of his brother, Leslie, in Haifa.
- Joan Bernhard and family on the passing of her husband Rabbi N.M. Bernhard.

May Hashem comfort them and their family among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and grant them long life.

SPONSOR A BROCHA

at the Shul on the occasion of a personal or family Simcha, to commemorate a Yartzeit, birthday or anniversary.

For details and bookings contact Belinda at the Shul office

