



JFS Newsletter

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Dear Parents

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Today is the annual commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day. Over the last week students from across the School have participated in special assemblies, marking this important day. As part of this assembly programme our Sixth Form were honoured to welcome two renowned speakers to their weekly assembly. Year 13 heard from Sir Eric Pickles MP (see details on page 3) and Year 12 heard from Douglas Murray the acclaimed writer, journalist and commentator. He was the director of the Centre for Social Cohesion from 2007 until 2012 and is currently the associate director of The Henry Jackson Society.

Earlier today the Jewish Education Department welcomed guests from a number of local non-Jewish schools to participate in our annual Year 10 Brent Holocaust Seminar. There is an ever increasing importance to sharing the horrors of the Holocaust alongside the increasingly important need to promote tolerance and social cohesion.

We ensured that our commemorations were not only an internal reflection of the lessons of the Holocaust for us as a Jewish community, but shared with our neighbours. The day was

a great success and the discussions that took place between our students and their peers, of varying religions and races, were extremely valuable and insightful. The JFS Year 10 students who participated in the seminar gained a great deal from the opportunity that today's seminar presented. In two weeks time the whole of Year 10 will come together for a special two-day seminar of their own. We hope that our students appreciate the importance of these programmes.

We were also delighted to celebrate Tu B'Shvat this week and were joined by a large team of Rabbis, Rebbetzins and Youth Workers from Tribe. They ran an interactive session for all of Year 8 and a special 'Lunch and Learn' programme for Year 9 Text students (see page 4). It was particularly pleasing that a number of the educators who joined us were themselves JFS Alumni who are now so actively engaged in educating the wider Jewish community.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Miller
Headteacher

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Students enjoying unusual fruit in school on Tu B'Shvat.

Record Breaking Oxbridge Offers

The UCAS process has been completed for this year and a staggering 21 JFS students have secured offers from Oxbridge, breaking our previous high record of 17.

These incredible results can only be attributed to the hard work of all those involved in the process. From the students themselves to the teaching and non-teaching staff who unstintingly provide expertise and reinforcement and of course our supportive parents.



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



Paramedic Saul Gaunt

JFS 'MedSoc' is a student-led society involving a group of passionate and committed students, from Years 11-13. These students are either considering studying Medicine or would like to immerse themselves in the world of Medicine. The regular talks held over previous years have always been an outstanding success with an impressive turnout. The guest speakers have included medical professionals from various fields, providing members of the society with an invaluable insight into the range of careers one can pursue.

JFS Alumnus and Paramedic, Saul Gaunt, who is currently stationed down the road at the Kenton Ambulance Station, was invited by the Medical Society to address students, providing first-hand information on a medical-related career.

Students attending the interactive talk with Saul heard about the various obstacles he had to overcome to pursue his dream of working in the medical field. Saul spoke about his daily life as a paramedic including examples of interesting and challenging cases that he has faced. He also brought equipment

that he utilises on a regular basis, providing an informative opportunity for students contemplating a medical career.

We hope to welcome many more fascinating JFS Alumni in the future. As Daniel, a Year 12 student said, "JFS MedSoc has given me the confidence and motivation to chase my dream in the field of medicine!"

Jasmine Mahgerefteh and
Jesse Anthony
(JFS Medical Society Presidents)

Sir Eric Pickles MP

The prominent Conservative MP, Sir Eric Pickles, who was formerly the Communities and Local Government Secretary, spoke to Year 13 students in an assembly last week. His speech centred on his switch from Communism to the Conservative Party. He then went on to answer questions from students.

Sir Eric described to students how he was born into a family of Labour and Cooperative Party supporters. He fascinated students with his early love of Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution, which he read comprehensively.

However, he related, "I think I am [now] a Conservative", telling the story of how the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "Like a yeti, grabbing you" encouraged him to apply to stand as a Conservative Parliamentary candidate in the 1992 election. He concluded that "I owe a lot to Margaret Thatcher" and "she won me over."

The MP for Brentwood and Ongar also explained that he did not regret Cameron's decision to move him on from his role as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. He claimed that sometimes, "You've had your chips and got to go."

Sir Eric stated that he is immensely proud of his work as Chairman of the Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI). Having addressed CFI's Parliamentary reception the night before, he referred to Israel as a bastion of liberty and democracy and a good ally to this country. He emphasised that our economy is extremely linked with Israel's and impressed students with the statistic that one out of six prescriptions in the UK is based on pharmaceutical knowledge from Israel.

Sir Eric further highlighted his most recent appointment as the UK's Special Post Holocaust Envoy. "Views of the Holocaust... are forever faced with contemporary politics," he said, adding, "There is a surprisingly large amount of Nazi loot floating around Europe now." Perhaps the most honest insight to his current role came when he described the use of "democracy, charm and damn-right bloody rudeness at times" to affect change.

He criticised people who want to rewrite their own history and the majority of people who obviously did not do anything. When similarly asked his views on the controversy over the Cecil Rhodes statue in Oxford, the Special Envoy said, "No we shouldn't [pull it down]... you can't re-write history." He added:



"It's like ISIS" smashing ancient artefacts in a museum in Mosul.

In response to a further student's testing question, the MP revealed he finds it, "Frankly... really difficult to take a relaxed [approach]... to small numbers [of migrants being welcomed in the UK]." He praised the major contributions of the Kindertransport [children] and the people who came from the death camps.

Jordan Freud 13AT



Student Council AGM

The Student Council Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place in the Conference Centre to begin the New Year with a newly elected Student Council. The meeting is the official ceremony to bid farewell to the old Head Boy and Head Girl Team alongside the previous Student

Council and, at the same time, welcome the new team into their new roles.

The proceedings began with members of the former Student Council giving an overview of their year followed by a handing over ceremony by the old Head Boy and Head Girl Team. A ceremonial 'passing of the gavel' then

took place as the transition was made to the new Head Boy and Head Girl Team.

Following on from that, the incoming Student Councillors spoke about what they propose for the future, sharing some of their new ideas and hopes for the year ahead.



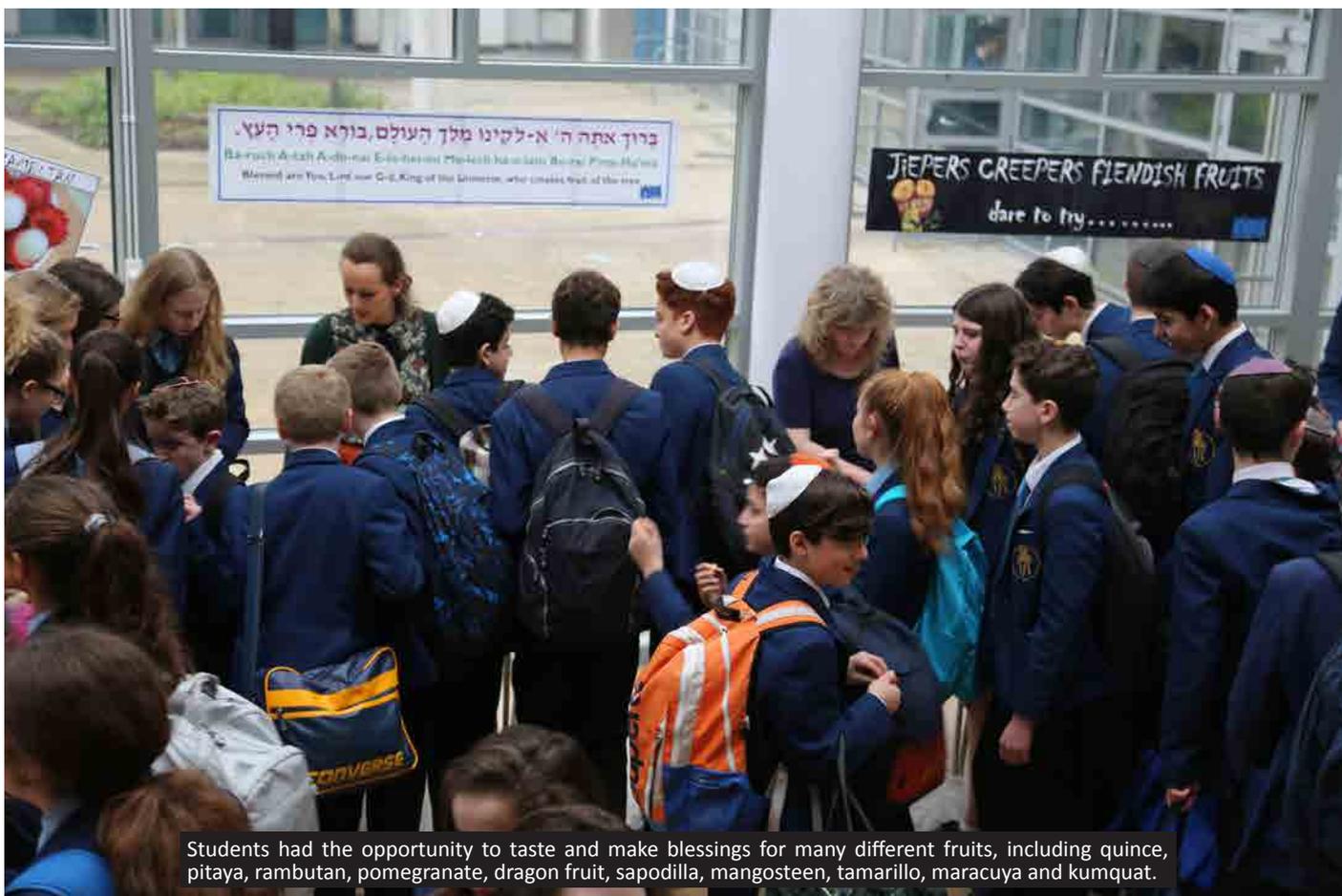
Mad Hatters' Tree Party

Tribe treated 300 Year 8 JFS students to a special Tu B'Shvat programme on Monday. With Tribe staff, as well as United Synagogue communal Rabbis, Rebbetzins and Youth Directors taking part during the day.

The educational sessions provided an opportunity for the students to learn about Tu B'Shvat in an informal environment whilst also creating a closer relationship with their local leaders.

Split into two sessions of 150 students each, Tribe's team hosted an inspirational 'Mad Hatters' Tree Party' with seven teams (one for each of the fruits of Israel). The groups had two tasks to prepare for in the one hour session; writing a team rap about their fruit and designing a team hat. Bonus points were given for including key buzz-words about their fruit. A student from each team then walked the 'hatwalk' to display their hat creation and a delegation from the team went up on stage to present their rap. The hat creations were





Students had the opportunity to taste and make blessings for many different fruits, including quince, pitaya, rambutan, pomegranate, dragon fruit, sapodilla, mangosteen, tamarillo, maracuya and kumquat.

extremely flamboyant. Some teams were very innovative with their rap, administering the help of dustbin lids and box crates to create a catchy beat.

There was also a special Lunch and Learn programme for Text students in Year 9, giving an opportunity for students to learn with the guest Rabbis and educators present.

Jonathan Miller (Headteacher) said, "We were delighted to welcome so many Rabbis, Rebbetzins and Youth workers into the School to enhance our Tu B'Shvat celebrations. We welcome

the opportunity for our students to engage with inspiring religious leaders from their local communities."

David Collins (Director of Young People and Young Families) commented, "We are passionate about providing the future of UK Jewry with tools and knowledge about Judaism. Tu B'Shvat, as one of the minor festivals, can often be forgotten and so we are delighted that, working with the staff at JFS, we have been able to educate and engage Year 8 students with our stimulating programme."



Stimulating Workshop

Mike Southern from STAGE-ed came in to JFS to run a workshop for the Year 10 Drama students on the West End musical Blood Brothers. The students are currently studying Blood Brothers and for their final assessment have to perform a scene from the show.

Mike played Sammy Johnstone in the West End production of Blood Brothers and has kindly come in a number of times to JFS to help us to augment our understanding of the topic. Mike really helped us grasp the roles of the characters and understand them better. The workshop was really enjoyable and educational.

The Drama students hope to do more workshops like this in the future and now look forward to watching the professional performance at the end of January, whilst applying the lessons they absorbed at the workshop.

Emma Sherrard 10B2
Drama Student



Georgia Lester

Year 13 students in the 'A' Level Theatre Studies class are currently in the process of devising a short performance piece. This involves writing and performing a full script that must be specific to a particular style of theatre.

Georgia Lester, a freelance scriptwriter, recently gave a talk to the Theatre

studies students which proved enlightening and instructive. Having worked on numerous successful TV shows such as 'Skins' and 'Made in Chelsea', Georgia recounted her journey from secondary school and how she went from volunteering during her 'A' Level studies to working on 'Skins' at the age of only 19.

Georgia also provided the students

with useful tips on scriptwriting which will become vital as they begin to devise their pieces.

For those students who had never considered, or never heard of, a career in scriptwriting this talk was especially interesting.

Jessica Ansell 13AT
Theatre Studies Student



Georgia Lester (front row second from left) with her brother Gabriel (Year 13 Theatre Studies student) on her right, together with the rest of the Theatre Studies 'A' Level group.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

The Duke of Edinburgh Award provides you with the chance to do something completely new and improve on things you are already doing. It takes you out of your comfort zone and into a place where you will push yourself and have amazing new experiences. It builds confidence, many new skills and helps form friendships. You will have a brilliant time doing it.

Why do it you may ask? Taking up the DofE challenge can be a life-changing adventure. Along the way, you engage in your own exciting and challenging programme of activities to help you reach your full personal potential. Employers, colleges and universities really value the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and know what it says about

someone who is an Award holder.

The JFS Duke of Edinburgh is run by JLGB which is the exclusive Jewish Licenced Organisation. They have a very good track record of providing training and assessments that meet the religious and cultural needs of over 800 Jewish young people each year.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is gaining more popularity as time goes on and you must be very committed to sign up for the programme.

The Bronze Award (for those aged 14 and above) requires three months of volunteering work, three months of physical work, three months of skill and two days/one night of camping experience. You also have to do 3 more months in one of the Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections.

The Silver Award (for those aged 15 and above) requires six months of volunteering work, physical and skills, one section for six months and the other section for three months and camping for three days/two nights.

The Gold Award (for those aged 16 and above) requires 12 months of volunteering, physical and skills, one section for 12 months and the other section for six months, camping experience is four days/three nights and undertaking a shared activity in a residential setting away from home for five days and four nights.

We have had an incredible start to the year with regards to DofE Completions, with 42 JFS students with awards between September and December. Well done to all involved.

James Cooper 9Z2
Student Journalist



Senior Basketball Triumph

Our JFS Senior Basketball team faced a new challenge this week when matched against Crest Academy.

We started strongly and completely outplayed our opponents from start to finish, as Crest struggled to keep up with our quick counter-attacking

style of play and accurate shooting. We established a comfortable lead early on and kept up the intensity throughout the game building up an insurmountable lead in the second half. The final score was 71 - 30 to JFS.

If our team continues to play like they did today, 'big things' are sure to follow. Our next opponents are Ark Academy, traditionally a tough

fixture. Let us hope the team can maintain their perfect run thus far.

The season climaxes with a fixture against the American School in London and the Maccabi Tournament where JFS will look to reclaim the title as London's best Jewish team.

Joshua Djanogly 13AT

GCSE Fair

Our annual Year 9 GCSE Fair took place recently to help our students decide which options on offer, are the right ones for them.

The event was run by the Head Boy/Head Girl Team, as well as Year 11 students who will soon be taking their own GCSE exams.

As all Year 9 students are currently choosing their GCSE options, they were encouraged by their tutors, to receive advice and inspiration from students who have already been through the experience of decision-making and who will soon be taking their exams.

Around the room, the Year 11 students created stands offering information

leaflets and advice to students about each subject. Speaking to some of the students who attended, they described the event as 'extremely helpful' and explained how they now feel more confident and ready to choose their options.

Eden Reyhanian 9A2
Student Journalist

Selected from our Student Journalist Blog...

(view our blog at: <http://jfsstudentjournalist.blogspot.co.uk/>)

Inspiring Against The Odds

You can be inspired by many things, for example people, books, films and nature. You know you have been inspired by something when it makes you think differently about it, or think about something you have never thought about before. Something that changes your behaviour, your attitude or your decisions for the future.

When you think about who inspires you, you are usually drawn towards someone famous or important. You can also be inspired by people who are not necessarily famous, but have done or are doing something good. Someone who devotes their life to helping others is inspiring.

At first I did not know what to write about. Perhaps a movie, a book, music or a famous person? When I really thought about it, nothing came to mind. Then I remembered that only recently, it was 'Back-to-the-Future' Day. A day people around the world have been avidly anticipating.

In 1985, the film 'Back to the Future' was released. It was about a boy travelling in a time machine invented by his crazy scientist friend 'Doc'. Towards the end of the film, they travelled into the future, to the date October 21, 2015. The movie was a huge hit and was followed by two more films in the series. To acknowledge this iconic date, October 21 2015 was commemorated as 'Back to the Future Day', as fans of the blockbuster trilogy, celebrated the movie milestone around the world.

When thinking about the movie, one thinks about the funny and the interesting parts, but there is actually a story behind the main actor that not many know about. I am referring to the Michael J Fox story of inspiration and not just his success as an actor.

At the age of 29, at the height of his career, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. This is a disease,



whereby the brain cells (called neurons) become damaged. This results in a person becoming slower, having a loss of balance, impaired speech and experiencing tremors. You can only imagine how this would affect a famous actor's career and daily life. There is no cure and no one knows how you develop the disease in the first place and yet one in every 500 people has it. That is around 127,000 people just in the UK.

However, it is not the fact that he has the disease that is inspiring, but the way Michael J Fox dealt with it, and what he has done in his life since then. At first, he was very depressed and turned to alcohol. He felt he should keep his disease a secret and took medicine so he could continue acting and cover it up. After seven years, with the support of his family, he decided to turn his life around. He had a goal in life and this was to find a cure to the disease. He is known as the person doing more than anyone else in the research of Parkinson's disease.

Michael's decision to tell the public

about his condition in 1998, gave those suffering from the disease a powerful voice. He has started a foundation (The Fox Foundation) bringing together the world's best researchers and providing funding for promising studies. In total he has raised over 300 million pounds for his charity. He regularly meets with other patients to give them emotional support and hope for the future.

I have found Michael J Fox's story inspirational, as he could have chosen to lead his private life dealing with his condition far from the public eye. Instead he chose to stand up and make a difference to the world as well as to people with Parkinson's disease. In one of his interviews, Michael was asked if he had a time machine and could go back to the past and change the fact that he has Parkinson's, would he do it. To which Michael answered, "No." I think that says it all...

Daniel Virin 8A1
Student Journalist



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