



## 2026 New Year Newsletter

May I start by wishing all members of BBUK along with your family and friends a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2026.



*Bondi Beach, floral tributes Chanukah 5786.*



*Heaton Park Synagogue. Yom Kippur 5786.*

When I look back on the last few months, I cannot help but feel a state of deep anxiety for the Jewish communities both in the Diaspora and in Israel. Antisemitism in the UK today is more visible, more organised and more normalised than at any point in recent memory. It has come as a very unpleasant realisation (not a surprise) that there are many people in our wider communities that wish us harm. They have no idea about the true meaning of Zionism or have any idea that the basis of Jewish faith is to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves and that we are taught to try to love our neighbours. I will not write about any perceived failure of the government or the police but say that I am glad that I belong to B'nai B'rith where at least we can stand in solidarity with our fellow members around the world and be there to offer our help and support as best we can.

The Bureau of International Affairs, led by Dr Jeremy Havardi, has been extremely active on our behalf and has leant support to many Anglo Jewish agencies. This is along with all the normal work of visiting foreign embassies in London and writing to MPs and the government about many matters affecting the community.

I was personally particularly moved, not only by the events at Heaton Park, as I originate from Manchester, but also with the mass murders in Australia where we have very many B'nai B'rith friends. Indeed, one of those killed, Edith Butman, was a Council Member of a Lodge in Sydney and I have corresponded closely with the New South Wales District to offer our support which has been much appreciated. They are in deep shock and distress.

Perhaps as an international organisation we could take a moment to reflect upon the new **Mission Statement** which has been sent to us from B'nai B'rith International, which reads:

**B'nai B'rith International, founded in 1843, is the world's leading Jewish organization with an unbroken legacy of service and impact.**

**We strengthen global Jewish life, combat anti-Semitism and stand unequivocally with the State of Israel. Through public diplomacy at the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, community engagement, education, and advocacy, we advance dignity, security and human rights for all.**

I would like to update everyone regarding our charitable work over the last few months.

## **Israel**

BBUK contributed £26,000 to B'nai B'rith Israel's Emergency Appeal which followed the Iranian rockets attacks. These caused more destruction and disruption that was at first evident and our fellow members in Israel did a fantastic job helping those who had been displaced losing their homes and their possessions.

In **Qiryat Gat** we have continued to assist the Food Bank and Distribution Centre, but we also launched a special **Chanukah Appeal** to raise funds, following a request from the Foundation, to supply much needed defibrillators to the larger schools in the town. The thinking behind our adoption of this project was to try to bring assistance to the widest number of people possible. The result was that we have so far raised just over £3,000 which will supply three defibrillators. I thank all members who made donations and all Lodges who also supported our efforts. Defibrillators will be purchased and full training given to staff within the next few weeks.

Many of you will remember the late Norman King z'l who was a member of First Unity Lodge and BBUK National Treasurer. His widow, Pamela has just made a generous donation, in the name of Norman, so that Yad La Banim House in Qiryat Gat can produce a Memory Art Wall. This will be a ceramic flower mosaic in memory of the town's fallen soldiers created together with bereaved families and become a human mosaic of connection and commemoration. It will honour Norman's memory who so wanted to promote art in the town.

## **Ukraine**

Whatever the situation in the UK we can be very thankful that we do not live in Ukraine. The condition for the residents there continues to deteriorate, from what was already a low point. The weather is currently freezing and electricity in **Kyiv** is only available for limited periods during the day. Miraculously, our **Medicines Programme** that supports over 40 elderly and very sick residents is continuing to operate and deliver the drugs prescribed by our doctor thanks to the amazing efforts of members of the B'nai B'rith Lodge of Kyiv. The Levitas family, in Kyiv, had asked if we could also support a Dental Project for their clients and of course, we agreed but the project has been postponed due to the great difficulty of supplying a dental service without any electricity. We should all salute the incredible and brave work that is being undertaken in Kyiv all of which is funded entirely by BBUK contributions. Thanks to BBUK Ukraine Portfolio lead Alan Silman for his efforts.

In the City of **Chernivtsi** where we support the B'nai B'rith Lodge, the situation is even worse. The Sadgora Synagogue which was used to accommodate refugees from 2022

to 2024 and had just been restored, was the subject of an arson attack on 28<sup>th</sup> November. The Aaron Kodesh, Bima, furniture and prayer books were destroyed. It now cannot be used for prayer.



Exterior Sadgora Synagogue



Interior Sadgora Synagogue 28th November 2025



The President of the B'nai B'rith Lodge of Chernivtsi, Vadim Kolotushkin, tells us that a mentally ill person has been arrested for the attack, but it is not known if he was actually responsible. The city is lawless and antisemitism abounds. We are helping them conduct services and to celebrate Shabbat and the festivals as best as possible. Without the support that BBUK supplies from donations by you, our members, life would be even worse.

On a more positive note, with the outstanding enthusiasm of Malcolm Factor, we were still able to support the **Tikva Children's Home** (formally in Odessa) now in Bucharest, Romania.

Here is a letter of appreciation, received on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

**I hope you are well.**

**I wanted to reach out with warm thanks once again for the incredibly generous £12,500 donation from B'nai B'rith towards our shoe programme. Your involvement in making this possible has had a direct and meaningful impact on the children in our care.**

**The support has already provided new, well-fitted shoes to those who needed them most. For many of our children, receiving something so simple and practical brings comfort, dignity and a sense of being looked after. It has brightened their days in a very real way.**

**Please share our gratitude with everyone at B'nai B'rith. We are truly appreciative of this partnership and of your personal role in helping bring it together.**

**With warm regards,**

**Deanna**

**Deanna Rosenthal**  
**Fundraising & Events Director**  
**Tikva UK**



## AJEX Remembrance Parade

On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November about 30 BBUK members assembled in Horse Guards Parade for the annual AJEX to join thousands of other from around the UK for what is a unique Anglo Jewish experience when we have the opportunity to stand together and to show our respect not only for our fallen comrades from the conflicts since 1914 but to show our respect for King and Country. Everyone who participated could not fail to be moved by the occasion.



## Rothschild Scholarships

Every year BBUK awards Scholarships to worthy Jewish engineering students and during 2025 we awarded four scholarships of £5,000.00 to both undergraduate and post graduate students. This was made possible by the legacy of the late Max Rothschild who was a Civil Engineer who had been helped by B'nai B'rith in the past. Much appreciated by the successful scholars. The appreciations will be shown at our AGM in June 2026.

## B'nai B'rith Europe

Those of you who have been following European developments after BBUK exited BB Europe five years ago to become an independent District within BBI will know that there has been much disquiet in Europe. The conclusion to this matter was that on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 the Lodges outside of France created the B'nai B'rith Alliance under the umbrella of BB Europe. They are divided up into several subgroups including Mediterranean, Balkan, German / Dutch speaking, Central European and Scandinavian which is a much looser, less regulated body. Watch this space to see how everything works out.

## BBUK Festival of Jewish Heritage 2025

Our theme for 2025, chosen by the European Days of Jewish Heritage and Culture was "The People of The Book" which presented our committee, lead by Valerie Bello, with many challenges. Not the least of the challenges was to get Jewish institutions to open their doors to the public during these most troubled of times.

We did however have a brilliant programme of Zoom speakers which included our main event with Anthony Julius and Rabbi Michael Pollock talking about Abraham, Rabbis

Miriam Berger, Jeremy Rose, author Jayne Wynick and Composer Malcolm Singer. All meetings were well attended and sincere thanks to our Heritage team who worked very hard to achieve success.

I would like to share with you some surprising feedback which we received after the Jayne Wynick talk on 2nd December, sent to us by an observer from the Christian Friends of Israel:

*"Firstly, I want to say what a privilege it was to see and hear Jayne! She was amazing and I am SO glad I was able to attend!"*

*However, what she said about her experiences in the Diaspora, specifically Leeds, was so hard to hear and actually quite heartbreaking and that is something we ALL need to hear, I knew it was bad...but.... I agreed with everything she said, and she is an excellent and very engaging speaker."*

Almost all the Zoom talks can be found on the BBUK website:

<https://www.bnaibrithuk.org/virtual-meetings-2025>

The theme for 2026 is "Love". Another interpretive challenge awaits!

## **BBUK Zoom Programme for 2026**

This is well in hand, and we recommence again at 8.00pm on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 when John Fieldsend will be sharing "Kindertransport: My Story" as part of our Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration.

I sincerely hope that everyone is managing to support their own Lodge programmes which forms the backbone of BBUK activities and that you found the above information of help.

We all stand together so that along with our fellow members across the globe, B'nai B'rith can continue to make a difference, improving the lot of those less fortunate than ourselves and standing to protect Israel and the Jewish people.

May I again wish you all a happy, healthy, safe and successful 2026 with lots of B'nai B'rith involvement.

*Alan Miller*

**National President BBUK**

31<sup>st</sup> December 2025