

Israel at 60 – Capturing the Thoughts and Memories of a Community

Howard & Gaby Morris



This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the modern state of Israel. Undoubtedly the news and current affairs programmes, magazines and in books, in blogs and across the internet this event, its origins, its justice and consequences will be analysed and debated. In the New West End Synagogue community each of us has feelings about this event but we don't intend to duplicate the argument and analysis that will go on elsewhere. Instead we want to understand and explore how the establishment of Israel, what has happened since has affected our lives; we want the personal thoughts and feelings of the members of our

community and we want to create a graphic record of those impressions.

We want to assemble a collection of the thoughts, memories and feelings of the NWES about Israel. We shall be setting up a website so that you can send us your views, by email, in an essay, a photograph with a caption, we don't mind. Or you can send or bring us your thoughts in writing or in photographs. We shall exhibit them in the Gold Cohen room. In short we want the NWES People's Israel exhibition.

Why not start, if you are old enough, by thinking back to where you were and what you were doing at the moment of Israel's establishment? Was it a welcome development? Was it something that you had been working for? Were you involved in the Zionist movement? What was it like being a British Jew in the years of the British Palestine Mandate? How did you feel about the activities of the Hagganah, the Irgun and the Stern Gang? If you weren't around 60 years ago, are there family memories that you can relate?

Many of us experienced profound thoughts and emotions on first visiting Israel. We would love to know them and to hear how your thinking has developed over the years.

How has Israel affected your life? If it is as a happy holiday destination, we want to know your memories. How has Israel changed for you? If you have thoughts about Israel's politics and its history we would be pleased to hear them. If you just have some ephemera, a bus ticket or a flag, whatever, it will help build up a picture of our community's relationship with Israel then and now, in the past, the present and for the future. Postcards, souvenirs and photographs will be welcomed.

And what of the future? Everyone has an opinion about Israel let's hear yours.

For the children there will be prizes for the best pieces of Israel related art and writing.

So spend a few minutes looking out those old photos. Find the old letter. Jot down why you care for Israel, what you think it gets right and where you think it goes wrong. What is your connection to the Jewish state, we would like to know.

Please send your information to the Shul office or by email to israel@newwestend.org.uk.