

A Fond Farewell

Estelle Salomon

Sunday 15th July marked the last day of term for the Cheder and the start of the summer holidays. It also marked my last day as head of the Cheder, having decided to retire, following six years at the NWES and a total of 19 years of Cheder teaching.

We organised a small prize-giving ceremony, which most of the parents attended as well as Rabbi and Mrs. Shisler and Mr. Lux. The children opened the ceremony with a selection of Shabbat and other songs, both in English and Hebrew, and then the children in the older class read out in turn what their favourite Cheder lesson or activity had been. Jordana had written about the Shabbat table we had laid at Cheder, Olivia wrote about the Chanukiot (menorahs) we made from clay before Chanukah, Jonathan wrote about how he enjoyed learning the story of Queen Esther, and Leah wrote about how much she enjoyed singing tefillot (prayers). The children seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves, an observation which Mr. Lux also made.



In my farewell speech I thanked the parents for their continued support in sending regular Tzedaka donations and I listed the many charities which have benefited as a result of their generosity. Mrs. Shisler then gave out the prizes.



The prize-giving over, Mr. Lux then got up and presented me with a beautiful silver photo frame engraved with my name and with thanks from the NWES, a gift which I will always treasure. I was very touched by the sincere and lovely words that were said about me. Our other very capable teacher Adi Gordon was also presented with a small gift as a token of thanks for her very dedicated work with the younger class this year. She too has left the Cheder to spend a year of a study in Israel before, hopefully, going on to study medicine.

I think it needless to say (but I'll say it anyway!) that as much as I relish the thought of having my Sundays free from now on, I will without doubt miss the children and look forward to hearing of

the their continued progress. If I have managed to instil in the children a love of Yiddishkeit, if the children come home happy from Cheder with a strongly developed sense of Jewish identity, if they can open a Siddur and read a prayer without much difficulty, if they know which Chag is celebrated at which time of the year then I will have succeeded in what I set out to do. I hope the Cheder will go from strength to strength in its new format.

Let me take this opportunity of wishing all members of the NWES a happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.