

**And a huge thank you
to our members,
past and present,
who are too numerous
to mention,
for all that they do
or have done
for our community
over the last 80 years**

**THE HISTORY OF THE
EDGWARE ADATH
YISROEL CONGREGATION
1939-2019**

Our First Decade

The origins of the Edgware Adath Yisroel Congregation can be traced to a small Shabbat minyan set up at the back of a house in The Drive in Edgware in late 1939, just as the Second World War was starting.

Mr Harris Chaimofsky was a tailor who was brought up in the East End of London. An observant Jew, he ran a tailoring workshop in Christian Street – a picture taken in 1910 shows him (far right) wearing a large kippah.

He was a Gabbai in the Commercial Road Talmud Torah shul and a delegate to the Federation Head Office and Burial Society. Harris Chaimofsky moved to Edgware at the beginning of the Second World War, and started a Shabbat minyan around



November 1939 in a large out-building in the garden of his house at 37 The Drive, a house bought for him by his son Lewis (Lew) who had become a very wealthy man. Lew subsequently changed his own surname to Cohen.

The minyan seems to have been made up mostly of Continental refugees, amongst whom was a Mr Henry Pels, who was a protégé of Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, presiding Rabbi of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (UOHC). The Union consisted of a number of synagogues with Adath Yisroel in their names, the first of which was founded in this country in the 19th century, mirroring the Adath Yeshurun shul set up by Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch in

Frankfurt.

In 1933 Rabbi Schonfeld became the rabbi of the Adath Yisroel Synagogue in North London, and also succeeded his father as principal of the fledgling Jewish Secondary School Movement (JSSM). He also became presiding Rabbi of the UOHC - also known as the parent Adath.

Rabbi Schonfeld was very active in pre-War rescue efforts in Nazi-occupied Vienna to bring Jewish children and young adults to England. In the case of the latter, he obtained visas from the British authorities on the basis that there were jobs waiting for them – and in the case of young rabbis, that there were

synagogues needing spiritual leaders. One of these young rabbis was Rabbi Ephraim Konigshofer.



With the assistance of Mr Pels, Rabbi Schonfeld took the opportunity to transpose Mr Chaimofsky's minyan into an Adath-supported shul with Rabbi Konigshofer as its rabbi. The parent Adath rented a house at 35 Broadfields Avenue to which the minyan moved in April 1940. It was given the name Edgware Adath Yisroel Congregation, and Rabbi Konigshofer became the Rav and moved into the upstairs of the building, with his salary paid by the parent Adath. Mr Chaimofsky brought a Sefer Torah borrowed from the Commercial Road Talmud Torah, while a second Sefer was later loaned by the Adath in Stamford Hill.

It is not known if there was a daily minyan at that time, but for the Yamim Noraim of September/October 1941 the shul rented a hall in Edgware to cope with demand, selling seats which raised nearly £70, plus £25 in donations (equivalent in total to £4800 in 2019). The shul also used the services of one of its members as a Chazan, a Mr Duboff (soon to be styled as Rev. Duboff), who was paid £20 for his services.

With the shul now established, a permanent location was considered desirable, and a detached house at 21 St Margaret's Road was purchased in March 1943, which became the home of the shul for the next 11 years. The cost was £2100 (equivalent to £100,000 in 2019) funded by a loan of £1675 from a local Building Society and a loan of



£321 from the parent Adath, with the remainder coming from a building fund set up by members. While the upstairs became the Rabbi's flat, the shul in the downstairs main room measured 30 feet by 24 feet, i.e. roughly 70 square metres. The maximum seating capacity for men and women in total would have been about 50.

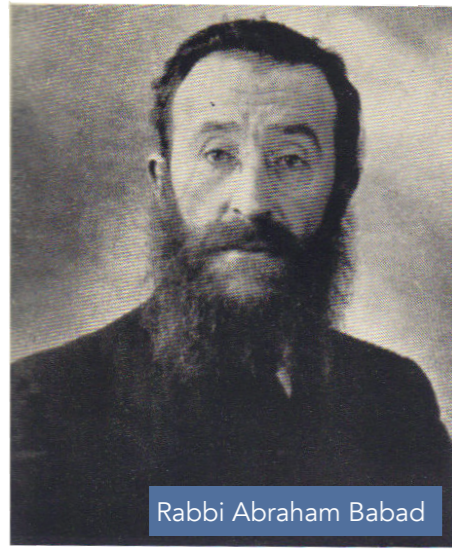
Although members wished to redecorate the house soon after moving in, this proved impractical because of the war-time shortages of materials.



1939-1949

1939-1949

By this time Rabbi Konigshofer had moved away to Stamford Hill and subsequently joined the recently established Kollel in Gateshead. In early 1943, Rabbi Schonfeld – together with Messrs Chaimofsky and Pels – appointed Rabbi Abraham Babad to replace him. Born in Poland into a well-known Chassidic family, Rabbi Babad had emigrated to England in 1936, and as well as becoming a communal rabbi in the East End, he also taught at the yeshiva in the East End set up by Rabbi Schonfeld for the benefit of young refugees rescued from the Continent.



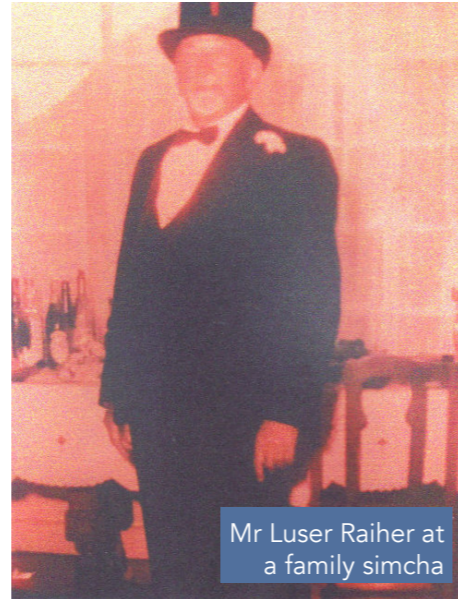
Rabbi Abraham Babad

In 1944 the shul formally agreed to be part of the then Adata Yisroel Foundation Scheme, and the parent Adata continued to provide grants to defray some of the running costs. Harris Chaimofsky acted as Gabbai, and by this time Mr Luser Raiher – who would become a key personality in

the shul for nearly 20 years – had joined the Governing Committee. This had been set up as a formal structure when the Building Society loan had been taken out, with a Chairman and Treasurer, and minutes of meetings.

Luser Raiher was the well-to-do owner of a hat factory in Luton and had moved to Edgware in the early 30s. With his sons running the business, he spent much of his time in learning, including having an occasional *chavruta* with Rabbi Schonfeld, with whom he was quite close.

By the mid-1940s a daily morning minyan had been well established, though there were problems at times in maintaining this. Rabbi Babad gave formal Shabbat Shuva and Shabbat Hagadol *drashot*, which were advertised locally beforehand. In December 1945 the shul celebrated the arrival of its first fully-owned sefer torah (mostly paid for by Mr Raiher, with smaller contributions by members), in a ceremony attended by Rabbi Schonfeld and Dayan Lazarus. Finance remained an ongoing issue for the shul throughout this decade, and the sale of seats to non-members for Yamim Noraim services (held in the local parish hall) was an important source of revenue. In 1946 a Ladies Guild was formed to help run functions to raise money for the shul.



Mr Luser Raiher at a family simcha

One of the attractions of the Edgware Adata at that time was its Hebrew Classes, established when Rabbi Babad took up office, which catered for children from ages 6 to 13. Jewish day schools were in their infancy, and for most parents this was the sole source of Jewish education available for their children. Non-members had to pay a premium for their children to attend. The garden at the rear of 21 St Margaret's Road was paved over to become a playground for the children of the Hebrew Classes. However, membership of the shul started to decline in the post-war period – at the 1947 AGM there were only 25 members, of whom only 9 turned up for the meeting.

In late 1946 Rabbi Babad announced that he had received a call to be Rav of the Sunderland Beth Hamedrash, and the post of Rabbi was advertised. The new Rav had to

have Semicha, with capability to preach in English and Yiddish, and be an experienced Hebrew teacher. The salary offered was £500 per annum (£21,000 in 2019 prices), with free lodging, heating and lighting. He should be “available every afternoon to give Hebrew classes and every evening for ‘balbatim’”, but “he should be free to accept additional work which would not interfere with his activities on behalf of the Kehilla”.

Applications were made by seven rabbis, and Rabbi Schonfeld put forward two further names, one of which was Rabbi Jacob Heshel. Rabbi Heshel was born in Poland, descended from a long line of Chassidic Rabbanim and his wife was a direct descendant of the Chortkover Rebbe. He had come to England in 1939 and worked for the youth organisation set up by Rabbi Schonfeld's father. It was agreed that four Rabbis would be invited to give a trial sermon, one of which was Rabbi Heshel. Rabbi Schonfeld offered to give full support to any rabbi elected by the Committee and any help (including financial help) necessary. At a meeting attended by 11 members in January 1947 Rabbi Heshel's appointment was agreed. He served the Edgware Adata as its Rav for the next 23 years.

Later in 1947 the Minutes of the Committee reported that the service on Shabbat was taking



Rabbi Jacob Heshel

too long, and it was decided that “on an ordinary Shabbos the service should begin at 9:30 am and end at 11:45 am.”

In 1948 the loan on the house at 21 St Margaret's Road was transferred to Lloyds Bank, and the title deeds were amended to name Rabbi Schonfeld,

Luser Raiher and a Mr S Reiss as Trustees (the latter two being members of the Committee).

Rabbi Schonfeld continued to take a close interest in the shul and its Hebrew Classes, and he is recorded as attending the annual prize-giving of the Classes.

Stewart Dresner remembers that at his bar mitzvah in 1949:

“I'd been at the Hebrew Classes regularly, but I received nothing from the shul at my bar mitzvah – no presentation at all.”

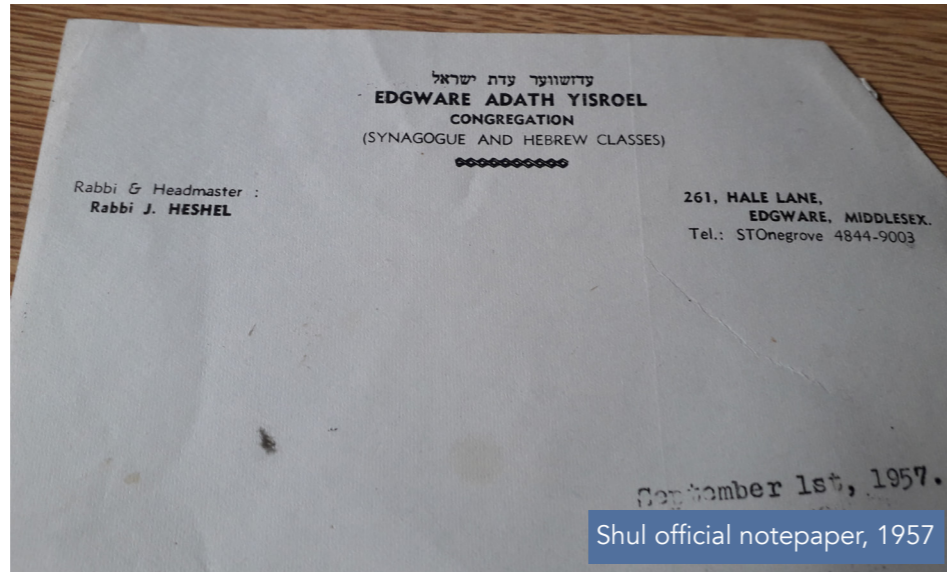
Ed: The tight finances of the shul may have been a factor.

The 50s

By the start of the following decade shul membership was on the rise again. In 1950 there were 62 full members recorded in the accounts.

Part of the reason for the growth was probably the success of the Hebrew Classes (Cheder). Tuition was now offered free to members - as part of the membership fees. Although the Classes were based in 21 St Margaret's Road where the community davened, in 1951 the Shul and its Hebrew Classes provided "daily religious instruction" to the Jewish pupils of Orange County School in Burnt Oak, as well as locating some of its own post-school lessons there. That school today is the home of both Menorah Foundation Primary School and Menorah Grammar.

The Cheder was in action six days each week, between 5pm and 6.30pm on weekdays, and for three hours on Sunday mornings, catering for children aged 6 to 13. Rabbi Heshel continued to act as Head Teacher. In order to provide more space for the Cheder (rather than because of any lack of room in the shul for davening - many members during this period only came three times a year!), in late 1953 an extension to what was then a conservatory was added



Shul official notepaper, 1957

to the house in St Margaret's Road. The shul notepaper in the 1950s emphasised that the Hebrew Classes - eventually to be renamed the Youth Classes - were of equal importance to the synagogue.

under the auspices of the Jewish Secondary School Movement (JSSM), and in conjunction with EAYC, when a suitable site became available. This plan was endorsed and approved by the shul at a special meeting in June 1951.

Peter Hartman has memories of the Cheder in the 50s:

“To me as a 7 or 8-year-old, Rabbi Heshel was very strict and stern, and very Polish in his ways. He was very religious, of course, and very learned. As a teacher he didn't stand for any nonsense.”

The presence of so many families seeking some sort of Jewish education for their children encouraged Rabbi Schonfeld to inform the shul that he intended to open a Jewish day school in Edgware

However, it took another three years before a site became available.

The need to fund the Rav, a Chazan, additional Cheder teachers, as well as maintenance

of the premises, proved to be a major drain on the finances of what was still a very small community. Surviving documentation shows that various fundraising activities were undertaken in the early 50s. A variety 'Revue' was put on at the Express rooms in Edgware (close to where Argos is situated today) in 1951, specifically to support the Cheder. The Ladies' Guild was reconstituted in early 1954, and they suggested putting on a fundraising dance. Rabbi Schonfeld was quite adamant that this could not happen, as "the Adath Movement was founded on the basis of the Shulchan Aruch". He wrote to the shul that the sort of functions that could go ahead included dinners, films, theatre, variety shows(!), boxing tournaments(!) and whist drives without gambling.

The boxing tournament idea was apparently one favoured by Rabbi Heshel. There were a couple of tournaments organised on behalf of the shul - all bouts were under the supervision of the British Boxing Board of Control to whom a levy was paid. A boxing event held in May 1954 yielded a profit for the shul of £307 3s 10d (equivalent to £7400 in 2019). However, another bout in October 1954 only raised £16 12s 6d (equivalent to £400 in 2019) - the organisers had forgotten that the date of the event fell during Asseret Yemei

A great grandson of Luser Raiher reported:

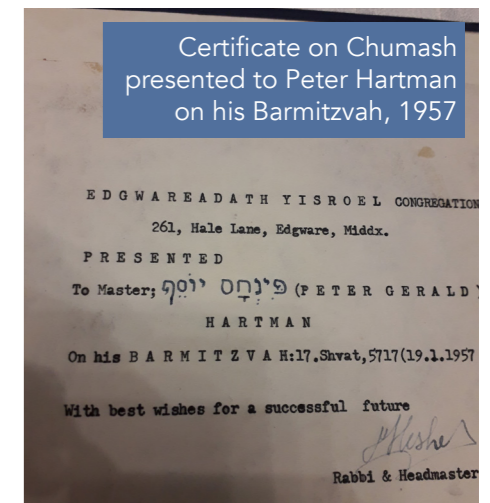
“At any family simcha Luser Raiher would take the microphone and start giving a financial appeal on behalf of the shul. On one occasion he arranged a fundraising tea for the shul, but when people arrived there was no food or drink as he did not want to waste the shul's meager financial resources!”

Tshuvah, and as a result the tournament went ahead with not many attending!

There were also moves to save money by dispensing with the need for a Chazan. It was noted in July 1952 that Rev Duboff had never been officially engaged, but he had started officiating when the shul was founded, and therefore had a *chazokoh*. There had also been occasional friction in the relationship between Rev Duboff and the shul. Eventually Rev Duboff was appointed 'Chazan Emeritus' in November 1954. He continued to teach bar mitzvah boys at the shul and Hebrew Classes for another couple of years before giving up due to ill health.

In 1952 the JNF offered to present to bar mitzvah boys of the Hebrew Classes trees planted in their names in Israel. This was the start of the tradition of making a

presentation to bar mitzvah boys. Later in the 50s, at Rabbi Heshel's instigation, bar mitzvah boys were presented with a chumash.



An official milestone for the shul was the receipt of a formal letter from the Board of Deputies in August 1953 that the Chief Rabbi's Office had certified Edgware Adath as a Jewish Congregation, and therefore it could apply to send a Deputy

1950-1959

1950-1959

to the Board and could now become a Secretary for Marriages. The letter was signed by Clerk to the Board, N. Levy (Judy Abeles' father). However, it would be more than a decade later before the first marriages under the auspices of the Edgware Adath took place.

In 1954 the shul formally renewed its ties to the parent Adath Yisroel Deed of Trust, including its continuing membership of the Adath Yisroel Burial Society.

At various times during this period there were problems in maintaining the daily minyan, and at one point in 1952 a rota of members was put in place. There were even problems sometimes with the Shabbat morning minyan.

Rabbi Heshel certainly put his stamp on the shul. Building on the foundations made by Rabbi Babad, he introduced a number of Chassidic minhagim which have continued to the present day. These included the saying of *yotzrot*, *hakafot* on Shemini Atzeret evening and shofar-blowing during the private Amidah on Rosh Hashana. However the main nusach of the shul was Ashkenaz, in line with the Singer's Prayer Book, and the 'Sefas Emess' siddur.

A very significant date in the history of the shul was 18th

July 1954. An Extraordinary General Meeting of members was called to hear a proposal from Rabbi Schonfeld. Together with Mr Sidney Hartman who was then the Chairman of EAYC (father of Peter Hartman), they had identified a property at 261 Hale Lane, consisting of a large house, "Highfields", with a detached double garage, which was for sale for £7650 (equivalent to £200,000 in 2019). There was also an additional two acres of land for sale to the rear of this site stretching down to Penschurst Gardens. This consisted of four tennis courts

with a wooden pavilion and was available for an additional £1000 (equivalent to £27,000 in 2019). Rabbi Schonfeld's plan was for the purchase to be made jointly by the shul and JSSM, for the purpose of developing the site into a new school as well as for a shul building. The land would be held on an equal basis, with subsequent sharing of all day-to-day expenses. Minutes of the meeting record that members approved of the plan after a lengthy discussion. There was in any case some pressure from the local authority to cease using 21 St Margarets Road as a shul –

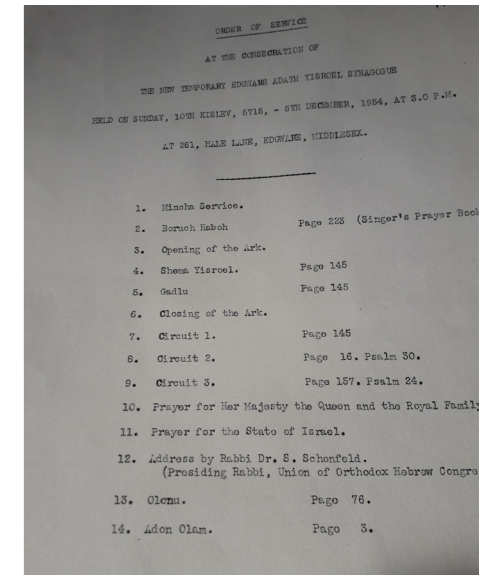
there had never been planning permission granted (nor probably sought) for such activity in a domestic dwelling.

To raise its share of the purchase price, steps were taken by the shul to sell the house at 21 St Margaret's Road, and in the meantime a bridging bank loan was arranged for joint borrowing (EAYC and JSSM) for the deposit on the purchase of the 261 Hale Lane site.

On the conveyance of the properties, dated October 1954, the Trustees as new owners were shown as 'Dr' Schonfeld, Luser Raiher, and Fred Weil (an associate of Rabbi Schonfeld from N16).

Shul services were first held on the new site on the ground floor of Highfield House on 6th November 1954, but the

permanent location for the next six years was to be the tennis pavilion, where the shul moved in December 1954. The shul in its new location was consecrated at a service conducted by Rabbi Schonfeld.



Order of service led by Rabbi Schonfeld at consecration of new shul premises in the former tennis pavilion, December 1954



Front entrance to Highfield House - picture taken in 1990s



Side entrance to Highfield House

Peter Hartman remembers:

“On Shabbos morning they would say we need a minyan to start, so my father would take me along, I was 12 years old and I had a chumash under my arm and I made up the minyan. Wouldn't do that nowadays!”

The tennis pavilion was a rather dilapidated wooden-framed building further back than the subsequent shul brick building, and closer to Heather Walk, with access both from an overgrown path from Penshurst Gardens, and from the Hale Lane entrance. Although no pictures survive of its appearance, there are memories of the outside being black, while the original white internal walls were yellowing with age. It held no more than 40-50 congregants.

Alan Weisrose, amongst others, remembers:

“the roof leaked and there were buckets placed at various spots on the floor in the shul to catch the rain”.

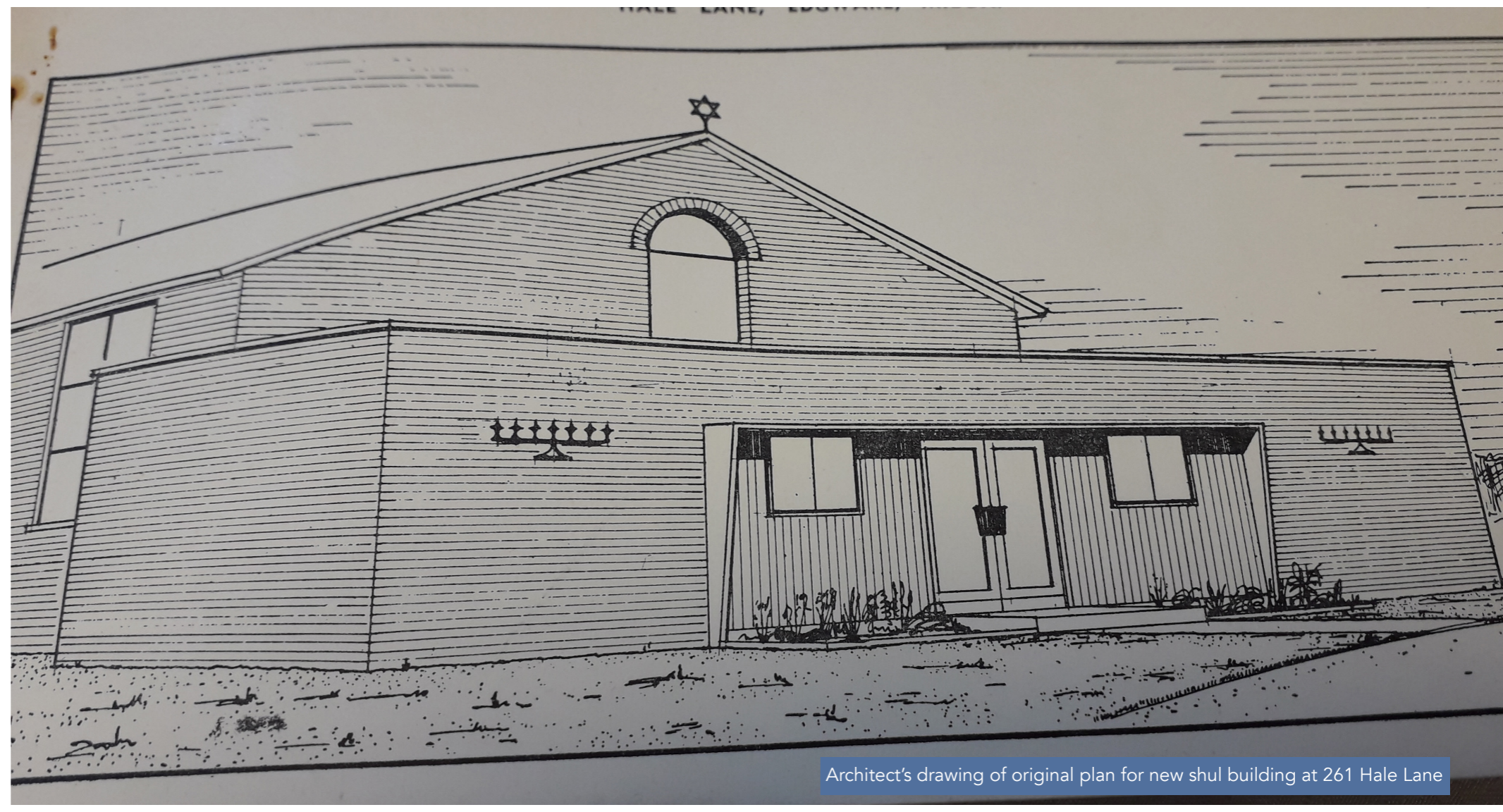
A news report on the purchase of the site carried in the Jewish Chronicle, including mention of the plan to start a new school, alerted some of the site neighbours who were clearly not happy with a school overlooking them. As a result the Planning Department of Hendon Borough Council (the local authority at the time) stepped in to query what was

going on. They acknowledged that there was planning permission for a religious building at that address granted to Worldwide Advent Church in 1953, and even permission for a synagogue granted in 1950 (the organisation responsible for securing this remains unknown), but it would require further permission for a primary school.

Ignoring this, the Edgware Hasmonean Preparatory School (EHPS) opened its doors in January 1955, located on the ground floor of Highfield House. Rabbi Heshel, his wife and daughter occupied the flat on the first floor of the building, and this remained his home for the next 15 years.

The tussle with the local authority continued for nearly two years, with objections also being raised to the shul use of the tennis pavilion, including the issuance of Enforcement Orders. However, Rabbi Schonfeld ultimately used his contacts with influential people in the wider Jewish community to secure approval in June 1956, on appeal to the Minister of Housing, for use of the site as a shul and a school, though the latter was not to exceed 50 pupils.

Plans for a new building at 261 Hale Lane were put to members at a special meeting on July 4th 1957. The shul would have a hall and seating for 150



Architect's drawing of original plan for new shul building at 261 Hale Lane

men and 100 women, and there would be a number of additional classrooms attached for the school.

Fundraising for the Building Fund started almost immediately, ranging from the sale of raffle tickets to approaching wealthy potential donors. However, building work on a much smaller structure did not commence until September 1959. It is not clear exactly why there was such

a delay, and why the plans changed so radically. A major factor seems to have been a failure to raise sufficient funds, but objections by the local authority to the scale of the development was also an important consideration.

Stuart Stern remembers:

“In the 1950s the membership was primarily non-observant, e.g. on Friday nights in the winter it was often difficult to get a minyan, but all were very supportive of Rabbi Heshel”.

1950-1959

Looking back on the decade, there were a number of personalities in the synagogue who gave it a very special character.

Rabbi Heshel was welcoming to all who wished to join the shul, irrespective of their level of observance. All those who remember him agree that he exuded warmth, but he was a very strong character, especially speaking out in broken Polish-English for observance of kashrut. He didn't allow talking in the shul, particularly during *kriyat hatorah*.

Rabbi Schonfeld remained a committed supporter of the Edgware Adath, even walking over on Shemini Atzeret from Highgate to daven in the shul and deliver a sermon, before then walking to Stamford Hill for hakafot there. The records show that Rabbi Schonfeld attended the shul's mid-

night selichot service in 1957. Nevertheless some members resented the influence of Rabbi Schonfeld and the parent Adath, to the extent that they wanted to change the name of the shul from Edgware Adath to The Hale Lane Synagogue once the shul moved to the new site. Luser Raiher continued to

support the community financially, and at one stage, in 1957, he took over from the then Chairman and Committee as Trustee "entrusted with the finances of the Synagogue".

Archie Marks was part-owner of the Deansbrook garage working in sales and he used his skills as a salesman to help raise money for the shul; on Kol Nidrei night at that time they used to auction off the mitzvot. He conducted the auction for four or five years and using car salesman techniques, introduced spurious bids in order to increase the amount raised.

Sidney Hartman was the Chairman for five years during this time, working closely with Rabbi Schonfeld to find a new site for the shul and school in Edgware, and then helping to produce plans for the site development.

After Rev Duboff's retirement, members felt the need for a replacement Chazan, and in 1955 at Rabbi Schonfeld's suggestion, the shul appointed Chazan Alter Roth in his place. He was a Holocaust survivor originally from Czechoslovakia, and a trained shochet. As part-time Chazan, he served the shul for the next 11 years.

He is remembered as a man of great piety, though apparently with a fiery temper, with a strong bass-baritone voice, wearing a

1950-1959

cantorial cap but no gown. He also acted as baal koreh and baal tekiah.

Nachman Schlagman, who came originally from Poland and was a Holocaust survivor, joined the shul when he moved to Edgware in 1948. He became Gabbai in 1952 on Harris Chaimofsky's retirement and remained in this role for the

next 22 years. In addition he was the shaliach tzibbur on Yamim Noraim for Shacharit, and also read Maftir Yonah.



Chazan Alter Roth



Mr Nachman Schlagman in 1950s

Jack Schlagman remembers:

“I do remember Yamim Noraim. Rabbi Heshel wore his white kittel, he had the most beautiful gold belt and gold kippah. He used to go walking in Edgware on Shabbos or Yom-tov to try to dissuade Jewish people from going into shops.”

The 60s



View of new shul/school building just prior to completion, March 1960

This decade saw a major transformation of the Edgware Adath in many ways.

In 1960, the new building to house the shul, together with classrooms for the school (EHPS) was completed at 261 Hale Lane, on land to the south of Highfield House. The old tennis pavilion, where the shul had been housed for six years, was pulled down at the end of the building works.

Roughly half the building

was designated as the shul, encompassing the porch entrance, and with three classrooms for the school in the other half.

It became obvious after a few year's occupation, that the building had been erected to a very poor specification: the flat roof was poorly insulated, with no gap between ceiling and roof; there were no cavity walls – the walls consisted of a single layer of bricks; and so congregants were subject-

ed to extremes of heat and cold. There were eventually frequent leaks of water into the building when it rained. It is presumed that there was an imperative to keep the cost of construction of the building low, both for the EAYC and the JSSM. There is a lack of evidence as to whether, or how, the local authority could have approved such a construction, even under the looser building regulations in place at that time.

The interior of the shul was

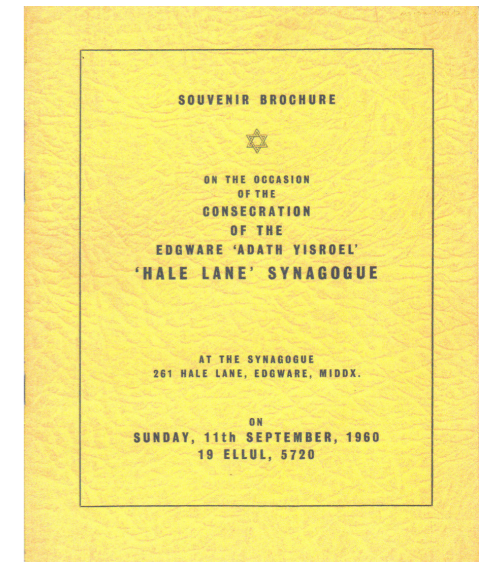
large enough to accommodate approximately 60 men and 30-40 women.

One striking feature of the interior was the stained glass windows. These were designed by Mr Raphael Rothschild who was Art Master at Hasmonean Boys School at that time, and well-known to Rabbi Schonfeld. There was a chandelier positioned directly over the Bimah. This often got in the way during *hagbaha*, and as a result it was soon the case that whenever *hagbaha* occurred the cry "mind the lights!" would go out.

The premises were first used for

services in April 1960. At first the men's shul only had free-standing chairs, which had been the case both in the 'tennis pavilion' and in 21 St Margarets Road, but a Mr Goodman, who was a member and in the furniture trade, turned up one day in late 1960 with pews which he donated to the shul. Women sat behind a curtain on chairs. If there was a kiddush or a meeting, this took place in the women's section.

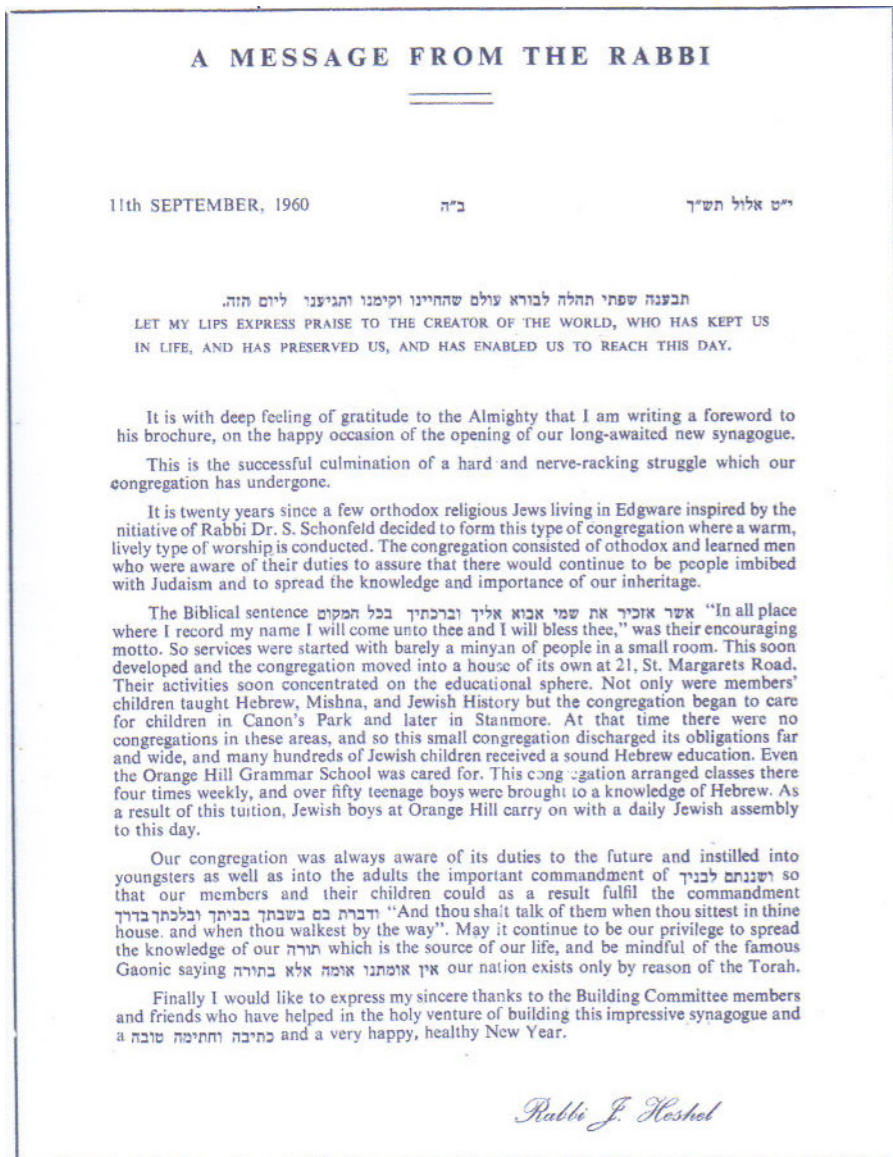
The shul held a consecration service in September 1960 in the new premises, presided over by Rabbi Schonfeld.



Front of Souvenir Brochure at consecration of new shul building at 261 Hale Lane, September 1960



View of interior of new shul in 1961



Message from Rabbi Heshel included in Souvenir Brochure

The order of service closely mirrored the event that had taken place six years previously in the old 'tennis pavilion', but with an important exception: the shul building was now officially opened with a special ceremony, by Mr 'Lew' Cohen, the son of Harris Chaimofsky, the shul's original founder. Mr Cohen, according to his son, gave a substantial amount of money to the Building Fund in memory of Mr Chaimofsky, and

was also co-opted temporarily as a member of the Board. As well as being presented with a ceremonial key, there was an inscription secured to the side wall of the vestibule stating that the Synagogue building was opened by Mr Lewis Cohen in memory of his father. This was later removed, but a plaque in memory of Harris Chaimofsky was placed inside the shul and stayed there until the building was demolished in 2009, but is



Key and inscription presented to Lewis Cohen at consecration of Synagogue, September 1960

still kept safely in storage.

Further change came to the Edgware Adath, not because it now had the semblance of a proper synagogue building, but due to changes in the religious life of the community in Edgware and because of the influence of some key personalities during this decade.

In the first few years of the 60s, membership had slowly increased – a total of 98 members were recorded in 1963. Many members were still not particularly shomer shabbat, as had been the case in the previous decade: they were attracted to the shul because the fees were low, they had access to the Cheder for their children and they liked Rabbi Heshel. On a Shabbat morning there might only be 20 men davening, but on Yamim Noraim the shul would be full. The morning minyan was supported, even if it sometimes required knocking on doors

in the local vicinity, but the convening of an evening minyan was more problematic. The minutes of an AGM in 1963 record that one of the members suggested putting up a sign "not to carry on Shabbos", however the suggestion was rejected.

Michael Steel remembers
“The Shabbat of the 1966 World Cup semi-final, England was playing. They just about got a minyan when suddenly, at the end, everybody ran out of the shul. Rabbi Heshel, asking in Yiddish, wanted to know where they were going.. The reply was -‘100,000 people are off to Wembley!’

The arrival in Edgware of Rabbi Getzel Ellinson, who served as Rav at the Yeshurun from 1958 until 1964, had a dramatic effect not only on his own kehilla, but more especially on youngsters in the district, with far-

reaching consequences for the Edgware Adath. Originally from Gateshead, he had already had a major influence on young people in Golders Green, as Youth Rabbi at 'Munk's'. Within a few years of his arrival, succahs were being built, lulavim were in abundance, and he put a stop to the annual dinner dance at the Yeshurun. He was a very controversial person but with extraordinary charisma and he attracted young people around him to become more observant. The youth group 'Chevron' had just started in Edgware at the time of his arrival and he had a great influence on it and its young members, many of whom came from less observant families.

Soon there was a nucleus of observant youngsters who were looking for a shul to daven in where they would feel comfortable, and the Adath became their shul of choice. Some were the children of Adath members but others came from the other two Orthodox shuls. Not only was it felt that the other shuls were too formal and not welcoming enough, but

also the Adath was centrally located which made it a convenient location for most. It was, in any case, a familiar location because Chevron meetings had often been held in the Adath over the years.

These young people were made very welcome at the shul by the Gabbayim, in particular by Mr Moshe Bornstein, who had moved to Edgware from Letchworth and had joined the shul around 1959. Within a year he had become a Gabbai and Trustee (replacing Luser Raiher who died in 1960), and for the next 20 years or so he was the effective lay leader of the kehilla, though he never took on the office of Chairman.

Moshe Bornstein was extremely fond of Rabbi Heshel, and felt



Mr Moshe Bornstein

1960-1969

1960-1969

that Rabbi Heshel deserved a better and bigger community. He therefore took active steps to grow the community as fast as he could by welcoming and encouraging these observant young people to the Adath. He made them feel important, in contrast to other shuls where they felt they didn't count; for example, he gave the young men aliyot, or invited them to act as shaliach tzibbur.

As they became adults, got married and looked to settle in Edgware, a number of these young people took up membership in the Adath and formed a new, and young core of a more obviously observant kehilla. This in turn made Edgware, and the Edgware Adath as a suitable shul to join, an attractive alternative for observant young couples from other parts of North West London who were seeking less expensive properties than, for example, in Hendon/Golders Green. By the end of the 60s membership numbers were growing, with a significant increase in the proportion of members who were shomrei shabbat.

Although Chazan Roth left the shul in 1966 (eventually making Aliyah), there were now a number of members able to lein and daven. Later, in 1968, Lionel Rosenfeld, who had recently moved into the district, was appointed Chazan, and

he officiated for the next five years for the princely sum of £5 per week (equivalent to £80 in 2019).

Another individual who gave the Edgware Adath its particular quality was Reb Dovid Moshe Friedman.



Dovid Moshe Friedman

The son of the Chortkover Rebbe, Dovid Moshe was brought up in Vienna and escaped to England in 1939 through the rescue work of Rabbi Schonfeld. Although an exceptional talmid chacham, and the presumptive successor of his father as the Rebbe, Dovid Moshe was a very modest man who felt he was not worthy to do so. He studied economics at the London School of Economics (LSE) and became a senior civil servant in HM Treasury, doing such sensitive work that he had to sign the Official Secrets Act. As Rebbetzen Heshel was his first cousin, he moved to Edgware and joined the Edgware Adath in the mid-50s at the invitation of

Rabbi Heshel, in order to be close to the Heshel family and to bring some authentic East European 'yiddishkeit' to the Adath. He was constantly honoured by Rabbi Heshel and became the baal makrei on Rosh Hashanah for nearly 30 years. He was looked up to by the newly arriving observant young couples for his piety and unassuming air.

During the 60s, Jewish day school provision was expanding and becoming more successful, which impacted the Adath; the shul Cheder was closed down in 1965 because of the lack of pupils - children were now receiving Jewish education by attending Jewish schools, and parents saw no need for any additional classes.

The Edgware Hasmonian was also decreasing in numbers of pupils. At the start of the 1960s the school had approximately 90 pupils aged 3 to 11, although one third of pupils were in the nursery. The school used the back three classrooms in the new building, as well as the downstairs of Highfield House, and Rabbi Heshel taught limmudei kodesh at the school. Most of the children came from non-observant families. Demand for the school, especially for the older classes, started to decline in the latter part of the 60s, mostly due to competition from state-aided schools such as

Rosh Pinah (EHPS was fee-paying). By 1969, the school largely catered for pupils aged only 3 to 7, i.e. a nursery and infants school only. As a result, the JSSM and Rabbi Schonfeld became less interested in the school, but became more aware of the asset value they held in the Edgware site.

The site had increased in area in 1964 by the purchase of the adjoining bungalow and land at 263 Hale Lane (up to the corner with Heather Walk). The bungalow owner had earlier claimed a considerable sum in damages for the harm done by the impact of the roots of trees growing on 261 Hale Lane on the bungalow. Rather than settle the claim, the shul together with the JSSM bought out the owner for the sum of £10,500 (equivalent to £200,000 in 2019), raising a mortgage of £8,000 from Lloyds Bank. However, the consequence of this purchase became an additional element in a growing estrangement between the shul on one side and Rabbi Schonfeld and the JSSM on the other.

With the bungalow demolished, the shul started to draw up plans to develop the whole site. This was masterminded by Mr Bornstein together with Mr Morris Rabin, who became Chairman and Treasurer of the shul in the early 60s, and held these posts for most of the decade.

Michael Rabin, Morris Rabin's son, remembers:

“ I have a vivid memory of my parents' lounge in the late 60s, with plans for the site drawn up by Ronald Rabson and laid out on the floor. They were trying to make something better of the site. Messrs Bornstein, Schlagman and Rabson, with my father, were getting excited about the plans, based on what a developer was planning to do.”



Mr Morris Rabin

By this stage it was clear that the current 'new' shul building was of poor design and construction - cold in the winter and extremely hot in the summer - and with inadequate sanitation. The plans envisaged selling the whole site to a developer who would build a block of flats, a purpose-built shul and a small school. However, planning permission for such a scheme was refused, and no further agreement could be reached with Rabbi Schonfeld and the JSSM. Relations between the two parties had already become strained, with the shul looking for independence from the Union. A new constitution for the shul was agreed by members in 1967 which specified that the ultimate halachic authority of the Edgware Adath would be the Court of the Chief Rabbi, i.e. the London Beth Din, and not the Union Beth Din.

In 1969 the JSSM simply defaulted on its mortgage, and all of the land at 263 Hale Lane was taken over by Lloyds Bank (except for footpath access to Heather Walk) and sold to a developer who eventually built Kenlor Court on the site. This caused much annoyance in the shul and was the source of some community bitterness which carried over into the next decade.

The community was heartened toward the end of the decade by the marriage of Rabbi Heshel's only daughter Thena. The chupah was only the fourth held under the auspices of the Edgware Adath.

The 70s

At the beginning of this decade, the kehilla were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Rabbi Heshel, on 31st December 1970, at the age of 67. Right up till the time of his death he had been popular with all members, irrespective of their level of observance, through the warmth of his personality, his personal integrity, and his learning. Among the many tributes paid to him was that he could attract and hold the attention of the kehilla during his Shabbat sermons by always adding in a Chassidic story. To this day, he is remembered with much fondness and respect.

For some time after his death there were no moves to recruit a successor. According to Moshe Bornstein's daughter Stella, her father in particular felt that Rabbi Heshel was irreplaceable. The shul had Dovid Moshe Friedman to give a shiur, and Rabbi Lopian at the Yeshurun made himself available to answer *she'elot*. There were also a number of guest Rabbonim who would visit, including Rabbi Miller from Gateshead who once gave a shiur between mincha and maariv wearing a top hat (!).

However, by the beginning of 1972 pressure built up from the members to search for a new Rabbi, and this task was entrusted to the Committee,

effectively in the hands of Mr Bornstein and Mr Schlagman. The post was to be part-time, since with a membership of barely 80 families a full-time position was clearly unaffordable.

With the approval of members, Rabbi Refoel Kahan was appointed to succeed Rabbi Heshel and he took up the position in October 1972, serving as Rav for the next 16

years. Rabbi Kahan, aged 35 at the time of his appointment, had been born and brought up in Gateshead and was an alumnus of Gateshead and Ponevezh yeshivot. Prior to his appointment at EAYC, he was a teacher with posts at schools in Manchester and Sunderland and latterly held the position of Rabbi at the United Synagogue shul in Sutton, combined with a teaching post at Hasmonian High School.



Rabbi Refoel Kahan

The influx of young-married observant couples to the shul continued during the 70s. Although numbers were still small, by the mid-70s it was estimated that 90% of members were shomrei shabbat.

Stuart Stern remembers:

“the Adath changed from being the ‘poor neighbour’ of the other two shuls [Edgware United and Yeshurun], to being a major player in Jewish life in Edgware - a kehilla providing a frum environment and a magnet for observant families coming into the area.”

However, the strained relations with Rabbi Schonfeld and the JSSM continued to worsen. After Rabbi Heshel's death there was a bitter disagreement about ownership and usage of the 261 Hale Lane site. Although attempts were made to settle matters by recourse to Beth Din,

eventually these issues were dealt with by litigation through the English courts over a number of years.

The dispute was ultimately resolved in July 1977 in the High Court by what became known as Master Heward's Order (after the name of the judge). This ruling confirmed that the Edgware Adath and the JSSM had an equal share in the equity of the site, and were entitled to equal usage, with a joint management committee to be set up with an independent chairman to resolve problems. It was also confirmed that the shul was entitled to make and change its own rules and regulations, provided it did not change its name, and "it remained orthodox in the Adath Yisroel sense". The independence of the Edgware Adath was further officially confirmed in 1979 with the agreement of the Charity Commissioners.

The lay leadership of the shul was heavily involved in these legal processes over more than a decade, fighting to retain the shul's very existence at times. In addition to Morris Rabin (whilst Chairman in the 60s) and Moshe Bornstein (as Trustee throughout the whole dispute), who acted as champions for the rights of the shul, the kehilla would not have succeeded without the professional assistance of one of its members, Nat Miller. He was

a solicitor, originally from South Africa, and he joined the shul when he moved to a house in Heather Walk. He acted for the community selflessly and for almost no payment (the shul could never have afforded the sort of legal fees that would have been payable over such a lengthy dispute) and gave of his time and expertise wholeheartedly.

The religious development of the shul carried on despite this lengthy troubled episode. When Rabbi Kahan arrived there was no regular minyan for mincha/maariv anymore, so he immediately instituted a rota of members to support it. Lionel Rosenfeld made Aliya in 1973, at which time Rabbi Kahan took over as baal tefilla on Yamim Noraim alongside Nachman Schlagman, and he also acted as baal tekiya. Leil Shavuot learning was instituted, with the Yeshurun invited to participate, and in 1978 Rabbi Kahan was instrumental in organising the first Yom Limmud in the shul over a Bank Holiday, open to the whole Edgware community. Also in 1978 the shul built a kelim mikveh in the grounds, which was also open to the whole Edgware community.

Rabbi Kahan instituted an annual Mishna Siyum on the second day of Shavuot, centred on the boys in the shul, to

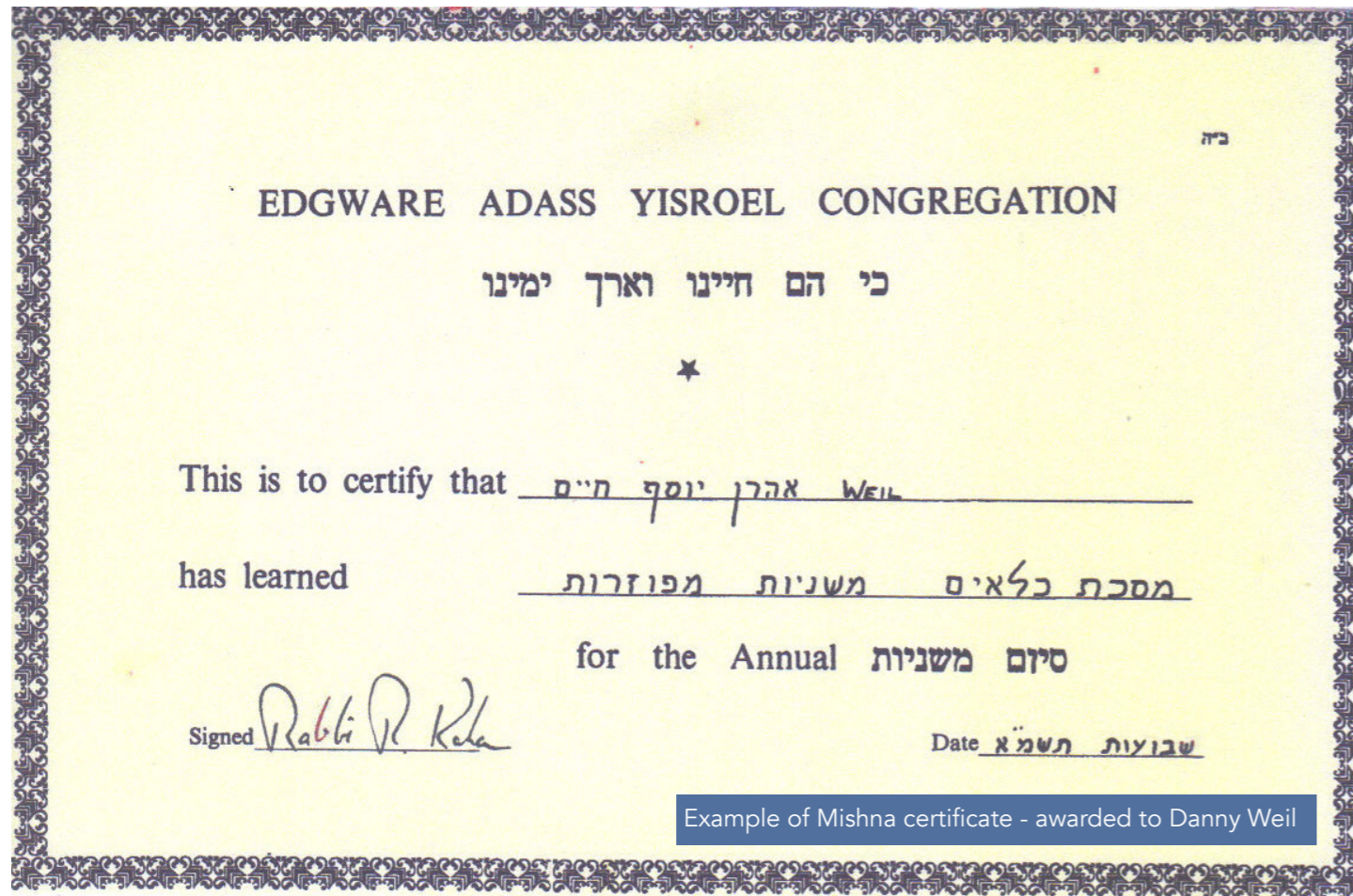
1970-1979

encourage them to learn. Although at first the number of boys involved was quite small, in line with the demographics of the shul in the mid to late 70s, the participation and popularity grew over time. Boys would say

a Mishna *be'al peh* and were given a certificate.

The daily weekday minyan strengthened over the decade in line with the increase in the number of observant members,

particularly for shacharit. One of the features of this minyan was its punctuality and its brevity. Starting at 6:50am on a Monday and Thursday, and at 7:00am on other workdays, it would invariably finish by 7:30am.



Example of Mishna certificate - awarded to Danny Weil

Akiva Kahan, son of Rabbi Kahan, who grew up in the shul in the 70s, recalls:

“ I remember there was a lovely atmosphere in the shul, as I grew up, a camaraderie. I have fond memories of that time.

On Cup Final day, my father always used to give a sermon and make a prediction which team was going to win, to discourage members from trying to find a TV to watch in the afternoon.”

1970-1979

One of the stalwarts of the minyan who made sure this was the case was Mr Sholem Minsky. Although living in Mill Hill and not a full member of the shul until much later, he loved coming to the Adath to daven twice a day, and had been doing so since the 60s. He and Mr Bornstein would be there first thing in the morning to open up the shul and, ready in tallit and tephillin, he would famously knock on the desk when it was time for the service to start. The speed of the shacharit service would often be boosted by the omission of *tachanun*. This was sometimes because Moshe Bornstein would announce that it was the *yahrzeit* of a particular Rebbe that day – of whom often nobody else had heard! At other times it was because Harvey Brown, who was one of the regular attendees and a mohel, would be performing a *brit* that day. Harvey had been one of the original ‘talmidim’ of Rabbi Ellinson and joined the shul in the early 60s. He was later to become Chairman of the Committee for almost 10 years.

Towards the end of the decade, under the Chairmanship of Tony Brown (Harvey Brown’s brother and also one of the original ‘talmidim’ of Rabbi Ellinson), it was decided to replace and augment the original men’s pews from 1960, which had become dilapidated and

increasingly irreparable, with new pews. Because finances of the shul were still very tight, this refurbishment was to be funded by individual members who ‘purchased’ a pew. Although the pew was now ‘owned’ by the member, an important principle was established at that time; namely that the ownership of the pew only gave the right to sit on it on Yamim Noraim, but at all other times there would be no fixed places as such – anybody could sit anywhere in the shul.

The 70s also saw the beginnings of community welfare services. A Gemach loan fund was established with two independent Trustees,

from seed money raised from members. Its purpose was to lend money on a completely confidential basis to members who needed interest-free, repayable, short term finance. This was a separate endeavour from the *tzedakah* funds administered by the Honorary Treasurers, raised from the ‘pushke’ box in shul - a feature of the *kehilla* going back to the early days of Rabbi Heshel. The shul also raised a large sum for the emergency appeal for Israel at the time of the Yom Kippur War, and the early 70s also saw the start of the Kol Nidrei Appeal being devoted to the Shaarei Zedek hospital in Jerusalem.



Recent photograph of Harvey Brown and Tony Brown, both former chairmen of EAYC

The 80s

At the start of the new decade, now that the dispute with the JSSM had been settled, the Committee turned its attention once more to the redevelopment of the 261 Hale Lane site. Not only was the shul building perceived as an increasingly uncomfortable environment, but there was also now pressure on seating space, both for men and women. There continued to be a slow but steady influx of young couples to the area and to EAYC in particular. The shul was almost as full on a normal Shabbat as it was on Yamim Noraim.

Plans were re-drawn by Ronald Rabson, similar to those considered fifteen years previously, based on the sale of the whole site to a developer who would build a block of flats, a purpose-built shul and a small school. The plans were less ambitious than before due to the loss of the land at 263 Hale Lane. An additional complication was that there was no vehicular access to the site from Heather Walk and, as a result, the local authority turned down the planning application.

Around the same time, the Edgware Mikveh Committee put forward a proposal for a new Edgware communal mikveh to be built at the southern end

of the 261 Hale Lane site, with pedestrian and vehicular access from Penschurst Gardens. Although the Shul Committee was very much in favour of the idea, planning consent proved elusive, and the JSSM in any case rejected the idea because of its potential impact on the future market value of the site.

As a result of these setbacks, a much more limited scheme was formulated with Ronald Rabson for an extension to the main shul building to create more space. This would be a simple, prefabricated construction on the grass area between the shul building and the original detached 'garage'. The aim was to provide a new shul hall for functions which would double as an enlarged women's section, plus new kitchens and toilets. It would also then allow

the men's section of the shul to expand backwards into what had been the women's section. The total cost would be £40,000 (equivalent to £130,000 in 2019). Members agreed to this plan in September 1982, and the building project was completed in February 1983. At a Chanukat Habayit service in March 1983 the new hall was named The Rabbi Jacob Heshel Hall.

This entrance to the hall also led to the ladies seating area.

The hall was built adjoining the shul building, with a secondary exit for ladies within the vestibule, which remained the men's entrance.

The windows and much of the masonry had been removed from that part of the original building, to allow the women



View of entrance to Jacob Heshel Hall



View of men's entrance, with new hall in place



View of mechitza between men's and ladies sections, with hall partition in place

to have as full a view of the shul as possible. The mechitza was made of curtain material, and over the coming years there were often wrangles relating to its thickness and height. The hall was built with a partition so that the shul could be closed off from the hall. There was also an internal partition within the hall to close off the ladies section from any other activities taking place.

The men's seating area was initially supplemented by additional seating on chairs at tables in the former women's section, but within a few years three extra rows of pews were installed to replace some of the tables and chairs. This view of the shul also shows the location of the mechitza in front of the women's section, on the upper left side of the picture.

To fund the building project, a mortgage was taken out with the Bank Leumi branch then operating in Edgware, with the

security of personal guarantors from within the shul. A small fund-raising committee was set up to approach all members for contributions to the Building Fund, and there were also a number of fundraising functions held: on one occasion an outing to a film that (unbeknown to the organisers) proved to be not quite in-line with the shul's

ethos! With the full support of members, within five years the mortgage had been repaid.

The building of the kitchen – even if rather limited in size – meant that proper functions could now be catered in the hall, and a Ladies' Guild was recreated to take charge accordingly. However, the preparation of kiddushim soon



View of the men's seating area in 1990s

became the preserve of men, who took on this responsibility.

Rabbi Kahan continued to introduce innovative learning ideas in the shul. One such innovation was a Daf Yomi shiur, which began in October 1983. Rabbi Kahan took the role as maggid shiur for about a month, and then handed the task to Rabbi Yonason Royde, who has continued running the shiur, so far for 36 years - right up to the present day!

On Purim, Rabbi Kahan used to invite the entire kehilla for a themed event after Megillah at his home.



Rabbi Kahan at a children's Chanukah party

a very lively affair in the shul. One *chattan torah* recalls that in a 24 hour period - starting with the chattanim's reception on Shemini Atzeret afternoon (a tradition instituted in the days of Rabbi Heshel) - at least 25 bottles of whisky were consumed (there were no more than 100 members at that time!).

There was also an auction for *Ata Hareita* before *hakafot* each year, with proceeds devoted to various charities, conducted with much humour and raising large sums from somewhat intoxicated members.

A number of distinguished personalities visited the Adath during the decade, including Chief Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, and Dayan Michael Fisher was a regular *mispallel*. One of the members for a short period in the 80's was Dov Zakheim, who was

living in Edgware with his wife and family while conducting research at the London School of Economics. He had obtained semicha in his native United States, and occasionally gave shiurim in the shul. On his return to the United States he worked in various Department of Defense posts, and was eventually appointed Undersecretary of Defence (Comptroller) in the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Towards the end of the decade a further addition to the site was made - a Portakabin-type building was erected to the rear of the classrooms, donated by the Gross and Freud families. Although the purpose was primarily to increase accommodation for the Edgware Hasmonian school, it was also to be made available as additional space for the shul to use.

Also at this time, the two stalwarts of the kehilla who had guided and overseen the radical change in the religious make-up of the community - Messrs Moshe Bornstein and Nachman Schlagman - retired from active involvement in shul affairs, leaving matters in the hands of a younger generation.



Moshe Bornstein and Nachman Schlagman at a shul event in the mid-1980s

Weddings solemnised under the auspices of the Edgware Adath were relatively infrequent events, and even more rarely took place on the shul site because of the very limited facilities for such an occasion. However the 80s saw three weddings at the shul: in 1981 that of Lynette, Nat Miller's daughter, in 1985 Elisheva, Rabbi Kahan's daughter, and Dr Charles Morrison in 1987. In the two latter cases the chupah was held outside in the grounds of the shul.

In late 1988 Rabbi Kahan informed the kehilla that he would be relinquishing his

post and moving to Hendon. An AGM of members on 4th January 1989 passed a resolution that the synagogue seek the appointment of a new rabbi. A selection committee was appointed tasked with presenting a shortlist of suitable candidates to the main Committee and kehilla. The selection committee consisted of Martin Moser (Chairman), Eli

Abeles, Alfred Birnbaum, David Marks and Peter Rabin. This committee reported in July 1989 that, after lengthy in-depth interviews, only one candidate met all the criteria, namely Rabbi Zvi Lieberman. Rabbi Lieberman and his wife were invited to spend Shabbat Noach, 4th November 1989,

with the kehilla. At a special meeting held on Monday 6th November members approved

his appointment as the new Rav. Rabbi Lieberman was born in Chicago and learnt in yeshivot in Philadelphia, Israel and Montreal. He had moved to England in 1985 when he married, and was then Rabbi of the Kingston, Surbiton and District United Synagogue.

He would take up office after Pesach in April 1990.

During the gap between the departure of Rabbi Kahan and the arrival of Rabbi Lieberman, the shul was fortunate to be able to call on the services of Dayan Michael Fisher and Rabbi Raphael Cymberg (formerly Rav of Cockfosters shul, whose daughter Shirley Shebson was a member of the Adath) as well as Dayan Gershon Lopian of Edgware Yeshurun and Rabbi Leivi Sudak.

Akiva Kahan, his son, recalls:

“My parents used to get dressed up, and my uncle once came in his kilt and his bagpipes - much to the amusement of the kehilla.”

Rabbi Kahan was very popular with the children of the kehilla, including the older ones whom he also taught at the Hasmonian School.

In the 1980s, Simchat Torah was



Chupah in shul grounds at wedding of Charles and Evelyn Morrison, December 1987

The 90s

Rabbi Lieberman, then aged 30, together with Rebbetzen Feigy Lieberman and family, moved into Edgware and he took up his post as Rav on Parshat Tazria-Metzorah in April 1990.



Rabbi Zvi Lieberman on taking up his post as Rav of Edgware Adath

Portakabin to the rear of the building. This was followed in 1991 by an early (6pm) Shabbat mincha in the summer season. A second, midweek, shacharit at a later starting time (8am) was introduced in 1994. All three of these new minyanim soon thrived and remain a valued feature of the shul to this day. These minyanim, which might have been seen as detracting from the main minyan, had the positive support of Rabbi Lieberman. The fact that they had little negative impact was also mainly due to the ongoing growth in membership – there were now more than 130 full members.

At this time also, the Adath was strengthening its appeal as a kehilla. A weekly newsletter, edited by Rabbi Lieberman, was



Rabbi Dovid Moshe Lieberman speaking at Siyum Hashas. Seated from the left, Dayan Fisher, Rabbi Z Lieberman, Rabbi Royde

established and sent out to all members almost immediately on his arrival. He also organised the very first family Shabbaton, held on Shabbat Chanukah 1990 with guest speaker Dayan Yisroel Lichtenstein of the Federation. In the two subsequent years, guest speakers were Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and Rabbi Dovid Roberts. The popularity of these events was such that the numbers wishing to attend could no longer fit into the modest shul hall, so rather than turning families away, the Shabbaton idea was suspended.

The summer of 1991 saw the first of the annual car rallies and barbecue, usually taking place in the three weeks - an event that was so popular it continued for more than a

decade. Also during Summer 1991 a Mothers and Toddlers group was started by Rebbetzen Lieberman, meeting in the shul hall.

The Rebbetzen was also involved in setting up a 'Baby Gemach', lending out suitable equipment to young mothers as necessary, which continued until 2019.

A major social event for the shul was the celebration of its 50th anniversary (albeit more than two years late!) at a festive Melava Malka in January 1992 with 300 participants, held in the Mill Hill shul hall. The guest speaker was Rabbi Isaac Bernstein.

It was at this time that the Jewish environment in Edgware was changing. Rabbi Eliezer Schneebalg had opened a Chassidic 'shtiebel' in a house in Edgwarebury Lane in the late 80s, but in 1991 found it necessary to seek new premises. In the same year a number of local Sephardi residents, who had long been members of the established Ashkenazi shuls, decided to form their own independent minyan. Both of these start-up minyanim now looked to the Edgware Adath for assistance with premises, which was readily given.

The Committee looked into whether an additional Portakabin could be erected



Rabbi Lieberman attending the Mothers and Toddlers Group meeting in 1991

Edgware Adath Yisroel Congregation
261 Hale Lane, Edgware, Middx.

Souvenir Brochure

50th Anniversary
Melava Malka

Motzei Shabbat
18th January 1992

Brochure produced for the 50th Anniversary Melave Malka

Guest of Honour Rabbi Isaac Bernstein
Guest Chazzan Lionel Rosenfeld
Musical Accompaniment Ben Zion Morris

1990-1999

on shul grounds to house the Sephardi minyan and for the minyan then to become part of the shul. In the interim, the Sephardi minyan started to use the upstairs of 'Highfields' on Shabbat mornings. The Machzikei Hadass (the formal name of what is still sometimes referred to as 'the shtiebel') started to use the classrooms in the Portakabin at the back of the shul on Shabbat. They also set up an independent Cheder in the main shul building on Sunday mornings, which was mostly patronised by 'shtiebel' children. However, at the end of 1993 the Machzikei Hadass secured use of permanent premises, and offered the Sephardi minyan a separate self-contained home on their site. The Sephardim accepted the offer because Edgware Adath could not guarantee their minyan could continue with separate facilities at 261 Hale Lane because of the JSSM interest in the site. It would be another 20 years before a different Sephardi minyan would be davening with the Edgware Adath.

In July 1992 the JSSM Trustees decided to close down the Edgware Hasmonian, as the school was only catering for children under the age of 5, and the JSSM saw little synergy with its objectives. With the building now empty during the day, the shul allowed Kisharon Special Needs School

to use our premises during the week, and they paid much needed rent. This arrangement continued for a number of years.

In 1994 discussions began with the Trustees of the JSSM about the future of the site now that there was no school, and it became apparent that the JSSM would be amenable to selling their half-share interest. They appointed a valuer who reported in November 1994 that their share of the site was worth £500,000 (equivalent to £1million in 2019). There was certainly no prospect of the shul raising that amount of money, so thoughts turned to selling the whole site to a housing association who would buy out the JSSM and build housing as well as a new shul for the Adath. Negotiations continued intermittently with the JSSM for another two years, with the added complication that, for a while, the Sephardi minyan expressed an interest in a

possible joint development with the Adath of the site. However, no agreement was reached between the parties and matters lapsed for another 20 years.

In the meantime the day-to-day business of the shul carried on much as before. Rabbi Lieberman expressed concerns about the decorum from time to time, and the ladies complained about the thickness or height of the mechitza from time to time. The Committee also decided that an aliyah would only be granted on Shabbat to men who were in shul by *barchu*. On Yamim Noraim Rabbi Lieberman now acted as baal tekiah and the Yamim Noraim services, now led by Alfred Birnbaum were extremely well received by the kehilla.

In 1997 Rabbi Lieberman started a Sefer Hachinuch shiur between Shabbat mincha and

maariv in the summer months, a tradition still going strong after 22 years.

After the Hasmonian School vacated the premises, extra pew seating was installed providing more rows for men, plus the addition of more tables and chairs. The shul could now accommodate more than 150 in the men's section, and by using the whole of the shul hall, more than 150 women.

The 90s also saw the development of organised childrens' services on Shabbat mornings. This was spearheaded by Benzion Morris, an experienced teacher who had recently joined the shul, and who had been invited to take over a fairly informal arrangement that had previously been set up by Alan Goldman. He led primary-school-aged children in a singing tefilla in the Portakabin at the back of the shul, followed by a Kiddush. It was challenging because children were of all ages, and different standards, both boys and girls together. By the end of the decade about 20 children regularly attended these services. Some children when they reached teenage years moved on to the youth service at Edgware United, where they took the service there.

Shul membership peaked at 140 in 1996, and declined slightly

1990-1999

after that.

The move of young couples from places like Hendon to Edgware slowed as the prospect of an Eruv in North West London became ever closer, making Edgware seem a less attractive alternative.

At an AGM in January 1992, a resolution was passed "expressing its support for any steps the Rabbonim may take towards the creation of an Eruv in Edgware". No particular action was taken at that time, but a few years later Rabbi Lieberman conducted his own study of the district to see whether an Eruv could be constructed in Edgware to meet stringent halachic requirements. In 1998 Rabbi Lieberman, realising the negative impact that an Eruv in North West London might have on the future of the Edgware Adath, called a meeting for those interested in taking this further, based on a preliminary plan he

had created. As a result an Eruv Committee was formed, with Harvey Brown as Chairman, to progress this. However, it would take another 8 years before the Eruv became a reality.



Benzion Morris, leader of the Childrens' Services

Judy Abeles remembers:

“ There was a ‘wow’ factor the first year Alfred Birnbaum davened Yamim Noraim. We had never heard anything like this before, and in the following years we knew we were in for a davening experience. His niggunim were both inspiring and uplifting, and we all came out humming them all the way home from shul, and for days afterwards.”

As Stuart Stern recalls:

“ As time went on into the 80’s and 90’s and beyond, the Adath was the ‘go to’ shul if you were observant and considering moving to Edgware. In fact, the Adath became a staging post for those who then moved on to found or join other new frum minyanim which started up in Edgware.”

The New Millennium

Rabbi Lieberman's initial plan for an Eruv in Edgware, using existing walls and fences wherever possible, required a very limited number of pole structures, thus minimising the cost and potential for objection. Both he and the Committee were aware of the ongoing controversy at that time, both halachic and civic, surrounding the 'Hendon' Eruv and were determined to avoid any such disputes in Edgware.

Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu, a recognised halachic authority in these matters, was invited to inspect the plan and to give his approval. The first inspection took place in summer 2000, and he made several suggestions for improvements. Considerable time was taken by the Committee to work through these suggestions and to seek the support of the other shuls in the Edgware community – both their rabbis and their lay leaders.

It became clear that the Eruv would gain greater acceptance if the initial scope could be extended westwards to encompass where all of the Adata members lived as well as most Edgware Yeshurun members, even though this would involve more pole structures. It was not until early 2004 that the Committee was in a position to submit a revised scheme

to Barnet Council, with the backing of all the shuls and their Rabbonim, and with the approval of Dayan Ehrentreu. Because of the public controversy relating to the North West London Eruv, the Local Authority was very cautious in granting planning permission and in negotiating terms and conditions.

Harvey Brown recalls:

“ We had to get all the rabbis to agree. Some wanted much stricter requirements. I also spoke to the local Reform rabbi and he said it was a good idea!”

Construction of the eruv could not start until late 2005 and was finally completed in summer 2006. In preparation for the launch of the Edgware Eruv, the whole Edgware community was invited to a public shiur given by Rabbi Lieberman on the *dinim* of using the Eruv which took place on Chol Hamoed Succot 2006.

The Eruv went 'live' on Shabbat Bereishit. Although the Edgware Eruv had been very much a project of the Edgware Adata, responsibility for its maintenance and financing then passed to a cross-community body, with Rabbi Lieberman remaining the halachic supervisor.

However, well before the actual launch of the Edgware Eruv, knowledge that such an initiative was a firm prospect renewed the attractiveness of Edgware to observant families in other districts, and Adata membership started to grow again. This was particularly noticeable in the growth in attendance at the children's services. By the time Benzion Morris moved away from Edgware in 2008 there were more than 100 children on a typical Shabbat morning. Children were divided into age groups for services, which were administered by a group of talented teenagers and parents. Services took place in the Portakabin and in Highfield House.

Typical of other activities for the kehilla's children at this time were the annual megilla reading and Purim party.

The shul also started a Horim VeYeladim programme on motzei Shabbat in the winter, encouraging parents and



Purim 2007 Megilla reading for children at Edgware Adata

children to learn together in a fun environment in the shul hall.

As the membership numbers grew, administration of the shul which had always been done voluntarily became an increasingly burdensome task for the Honorary Officers. In October 2006 Mrs Vicki Green, a member of the shul, was employed as Synagogue Administrator. The shul office was located first in the 'garage' next to Highfield House and latterly in one of the upstairs rooms in Highfield House.

By this time the shul also had a thriving nursery. It was founded

in September 2000, as a result of an initiative by Rebbetzen Lieberman, together with Rachel Feinmesser, to restart a small play group for 2-year olds. This idea then developed into a plan to form a proper nursery in

Highfield House under Edgware Adata auspices, primarily for the children of shul members. Helen Selig, also a shul member, was appointed Head Teacher. OFSTED approval was obtained and the nursery was established



Horim VeYeladim in the Jacob Heshel Hall

with 8 children. It grew quickly to accommodate 30 children in two classes and eventually needed to use both floors of Highfield House as well as the Portakabin.

To help fund the nursery over and above parental fees, the nursery Governors arranged fun days and fundraising evenings, and a shul calendar was produced under the stewardship of Esther and Russell Donoff.

Adult education was also a particular focus at this time. Apart from regular shiurim taking place in the shul during the whole week, winter holiday learning events – under the title of ‘Texts’ - were organised over a number of years attracting speakers and presenters from outside.

In early 2005, a small group of Adath members foresaw that the existing Jewish primary school system would not be able to accommodate their children in suitable schools in the following academic year due to the high demand on places, so they formed a committee to discuss the establishment of a new school in Edgware. They were like-minded people with a diverse set of skills, including marketing, education, finance and PR. Senior members of the Adath put the group in touch with the Trustees of the JSSM, who agreed to support this initiative.



Edgware Adath Nursery children outside Highfield House 2006

The initial plan discussed with the JSSM was to house the school, together with the shul and its nursery on the 261 Hale Lane site with the intention that the site would be redeveloped accordingly. At the shul AGM in 2005, shul members agreed to this idea in preference to an alternative site redevelopment proposition put to them: to sell the site to the Industrial Dwelling Society, buy out the JSSM, and build sheltered housing for the Jewish community to the front of the site, and a new shul towards the back.

With the backing of the JSSM, plans for the joint shul and school redevelopment were drawn up and submitted to Barnet Council, including a proposal to erect three temporary Portakabins at the back of the site as a

temporary home for the school while the redevelopment took place. Planning permission for the Portakabins, and then for the whole redevelopment scheme, were both refused in July 2006. The school then applied to OFSTED for permission to open in the shul hall with nursery and reception classes, using the existing partition in the hall to separate them. This permission was granted, and the school opened with 30 pupils in September 2006 as the Edgware Jewish Primary School or EJPS (subsequently re-named Beit Shvidler Primary School, or BSPS, in 2012).

Rabbi Lieberman had been appointed as Principal of the school, and he is shown here with the Reception class.

Over the next few months it



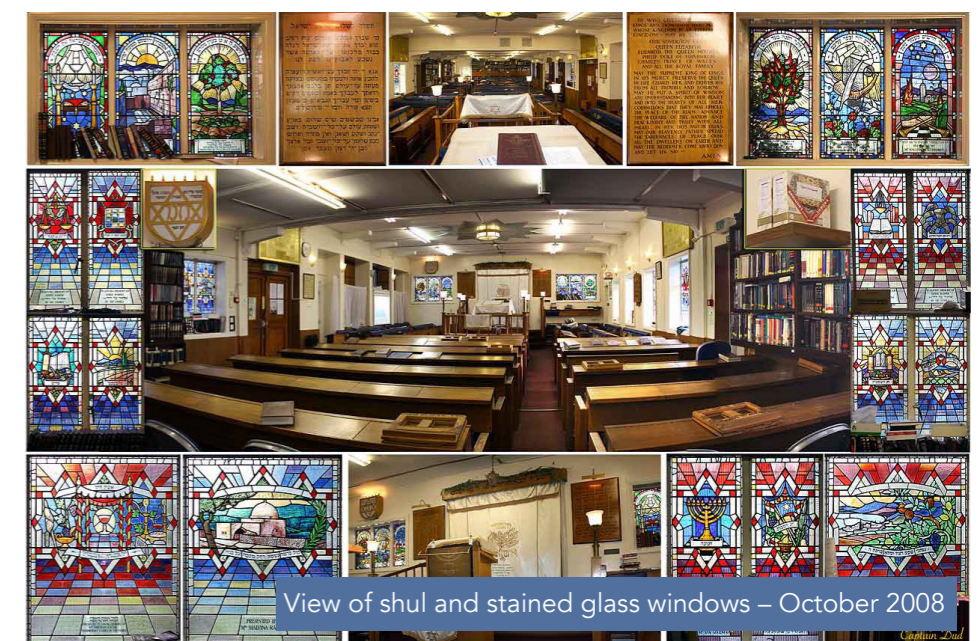
Rabbi Lieberman with EJPS pupils

became clear, after further discussion with Council planners, that the site would never be large enough to adequately house both the shul and the school. Subsequently the JSSM proposed that if they were to purchase St James Church at 265 Hale Lane (facing Heather Walk), which was derelict and available for sale, EAYC should consider a land swap. EAYC would give up its half-interest in the site, in exchange for the freehold title of the new site, plus certain sharing rights in the new school once built on the old shul site. This proposal was approved by the community in principle at an AGM in early 2007, and the JSSM then took steps to acquire the new site. At an EGM in July 2007 members approved a formal resolution to agree the land swap.

In the meantime a shul Building sub-Committee had been set up, with Eli Abeles acting as General Secretary, and including David Stern - a member with a Civil Engineering and local authority background – who would act as the shul’s professional expert. This committee was charged

with evaluating the most effective way to refurbish the new site at 265 Hale Lane to meet the shul’s long-term requirements, and to oversee the construction. Members were consulted on different options and an overall scheme was agreed in principle in early 2008. Building work finally commenced in October 2008.

Amongst the specifications for the new shul were that the stained glass windows from the old shul (shown individually below, together with a view of the how the shul looked on the final yamim noraim before it was demolished) should be saved and brought in as an integral part of the ambience of the new shul. In addition, much thought was given to the design of the mechitza, and an ingenious technological solution was found to allow the women’s section to have full



View of shul and stained glass windows – October 2008

vision and sound, while appearing opaque from the men's side.

It took many months to refurbish and extend what had been a derelict church built in 1924, and convert it into a structure and environment to fit a 21st century community's needs and expectations.

In November 2008, a small ceremony was held inviting children of the community to enter the building and sign their names, together with a message, on the breeze blocks which would be used to build the new Aron Kodesh.

After a number of unavoidable delays, including the discovery of asbestos in the original structure, and the hardest winter for more than a decade, the project was finally completed in the following August, and the shul took up residence on 16th August 2009.



Interior of 265 Hale Lane during refurbishment



Building work on exterior of 265 Hale Lane

just at the time when bank lending was proving to be difficult because of the global financial crisis. However, thanks to the relationship that one of our members had with NatWest, this was approved, with the security being the land and building.

One of the last events to be held on the 261 Hale Lane site was on 8 April 2009 – which was also Erev Pesach: a ceremony for Birkat Hachama - a rare event blessing the sun on completion of its 28-year solar cycle.



Children signing on breeze blocks for new Aron Kodesh

There were two Chanukat Habayit celebrations held on Sunday 6th September 2009. The first involved the community's children, who took part in a mezuzah - fixing event. This was followed by a formal event in the new shul in the presence of distinguished guests including local Rabbis, the Mayor of Barnet and local Councillors. The Guest Speaker was Rabbi D M Lieberman.

The total cost of the renovation, which also provided the kehilla with a Bet Hamedrash, library, large function hall with kitchen and other multi-purpose rooms, came to £1.2 million. A Fundraising sub-Committee had been established under the chairmanship of Robert Zysblat, and by the end of 2009 more than £500,000 had been collected towards the costs from members. A substantial mortgage was also required



Birkat Hachama 2009 at 261 Hale Lane

The Present Decade

Now that the community was established in the new building at 265 Hale Lane, new opportunities presented themselves. There could be parallel minyanim in the spacious and purpose-built Beit Hamedrash Heichal Moshe, or in the new Leo Herszafit Library. There was a proper office for the Rav and for the shul administrator, and the Jacqueline Donoff Hall could accommodate over 350 people for a communal Kiddush, and 130 people seated comfortably at tables for a simcha. There were no leaky roofs, the plumbing worked (!), and members expressed huge satisfaction with the new site in contrast to the site they had left behind at 261 Hale Lane.

The main women's section of the shul was furnished with fixed pews in a tiered configuration but the rest of the main davening area for men and women was kept flexible, with easily moveable tables, chairs and bimah. This allowed for the entire floor space to be cleared, enabling events to take place in the main shul davening area. Almost immediately, members took up the opportunity to hold their smachot in the main davening area, including a chuppah for 300 guests and a bar mitzvah dinner for 160 people. After a consultation with members in 2013 it was decided to retain



Main Davening Area at Edgware Adath

this flexibility in the main shul indefinitely, and not introduce pews (which some members had thought more fitting for the main davening area).

The forecourt was also large enough to continue the unusual custom of the shul (necessitated on the old site by lack of space) to hold kiddushim outside in the open air when the weather was favourable.

The EJPS school continued to occupy the old shul building for a year after the Adath had moved out, but by October 2010 the demolition of the building was complete. The then Secretary of State for Education, Mr



Main Women's Section at Edgware Adath

Michael Gove, attended a Ground Breaking ceremony for the new school building foundations.

In this photograph, behind him can be seen the crushed masonry and stone from the old shul that was used as the foundations for the new school building.

The building work was completed at the end of 2011, and the school moved into their state-of-the-art new premises in February 2012.

In the agreement made with the JSSM as part of the site swap, it was arranged that on completion of the new school building, the shul would have access to three classrooms on Shabbat mornings for children's services, plus reasonable access to the school hall for kiddushim or other shul functions. The relationship between the shul and the school - renamed Beit Shvidler Primary School (BSPS) when it moved into its new premises - and as envisaged and embodied in the original agreements, remains a close one. The shul has the right to nominate one of the school Governors, and a representative of the school sits on the shul Committee. Many children of shul members attend the school, and Rabbi Lieberman acts as the school Principal. The shul has made good use of its rights to enjoy facilities of the school over the years, including the classrooms for children's services, and the school hall for its youth services, kiddushim, and annual melava



Secretary of State for Education speaking at EJPS Ground Breaking ceremony

malka. The shul, together with the school parents association, have also worked together on adult educational programmes.

In this decade there have also been several initiatives organised by the shul Education sub-Committee. Distinguished speakers have been brought over from Israel and from the United States, usually spending a Shabbat with the community, thanks to the generosity of a few members. A full learning programme has taken place over Shavuot for a number of years. EAYC members instigated 'Yom Valayla', a learning guide for Shavuot that brings together many of the Edgware kehillot to encourage members of different shuls to attend learning opportunities across the community. Regular shiurim continue to take place at the Adath throughout the

week.

The new shul building has continued to be a source of pride for the community - however there were some minor teething problems. On a shabbat morning in the summer, the main davening area became extremely hot and members were upset that air conditioning had not been fitted during the refurbishment. So in 2014 this was rectified and three air conditioning units were installed, with costs met by some concerned individuals. Needless to say, the next summer proved to be one of the coldest and wettest for decades!

The Edgware Adath saw a growth in membership from around 180 at the start of the decade to 230 members

by its end, with around 280 children under the age of 18. There are currently four minyanim every weekday morning (including an early bird minyan) and four minyanim on Shabbat morning. One of these is the youth minyan.

Recognising a large, new demographic in the shul, Simon Dryer and Jonny Feinmesser, with the full support of Rabbi Lieberman, felt the need to create a serious *makom tefilah* for both girls and boys that was a warm, collegiate environment whilst also giving boys the space to learn to become Gaboyim, baalei keriah and baalei tefillah.

The EAYC Youth Service began in 2009 and today, the EAYC youth minyan is one of the most active in the UK. There are 60-80 young people who attend the minyan on shabbat each week and has grown to employ a part time youth couple, and

now in partnership with Mizrahi UK, provides our youth with their own inspirational Rabbi, Rabbi Eliyahu Silverman (along with his wife and family).

The annual Simchat Torah dinner attracts 130+ teenagers and is known to be the largest youth minyan event in the country. Other regular events include Winter Learning Oneg every two weeks and Aduva Learning Afternoons and youth seuda shlishit in the summer months. There is also a hugely popular Tikkun Leil on Shavuot, attracting 100+ youth to learn throughout the night, Purim and Chanukah events and for the first time in February 2019, the youth held a residential Shabbaton.

With the growth in membership and, in particular, the growth in number of children in the kehilla needing seats on Yamim Noraim, a parallel minyan in the BSPS hall

on those days was established. There was space for parents to sit together with their children, and they were encouraged to do so in this minyan. In addition, the hashkama Yamim Noraim minyan could now comfortably be accommodated in the Jacqueline Donoff Hall. In 2014 Alfred Birnbaum announced that he was making Aliyah to Israel and could no longer be baal tefillah for Yamim Noraim in the main shul. At Rabbi Lieberman's suggestion, Rabbi Yoel Orgel was invited to take over this role.

In 2015 Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis founded Shabbat UK to encourage the communal celebration of shabbat. The shul joined in with these celebrations by hosting giant challah bakes, Friday night Oneg programmes and musical havdallah celebrations followed by activities such as laser light shows, fire eating, group drumming and fireworks.

As EAYC was growing substantially, members recognised that they didn't have the opportunity to get to know other members. So, Rebbetzen Lieberman began initiatives

including the annual 'street kiddush', encouraging members living in the same streets to get to know each other better, and together with Rabbi Lieberman hosted evening events in their home for people who shared the same professions.

The EAYC Women's Rosh Chodesh learning committee was established by Rebbetzen Lieberman and speakers were brought from across London, for monthly shiurim and initiatives such as the Women's Summer Shabbat Learning Programme. The

Women's social committee was also very active, organising the annual melava malka with speakers including the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis in December 2017, as well as other women-only events including dessert tasting evenings, fruit sculptures, table scaping and women's health seminars. The most recent women's learning initiative is a WhatsApp Hilchot Shabbat learning group in-keeping with 2019 technology!

The shul developed further as a caring kehilla for its members during this time,



Shul Melava Malka 2017



Shabbat UK - havdallah celebration at EAYC in 2016



Hachnassat Sefer Torah 2015

with more resources given to support for members facing illness or other difficult times, to supplement the pastoral care provided by the Rav and Rebbetzen. In addition, meal rota arrangements were put in place for families suffering bereavement, or for new mothers.

Not long after the move into the new building, the shul welcomed a Sephardi minyan into the community as an integral part of EAYC. This nusach Yerushalmi minyan had started some years previously as a Friday night event only, but then became a regular

Shabbat minyan with the appointment of Rabbi Doniel Karp as its spiritual leader. In 2011, with Rabbi Lieberman's encouragement, the minyan took up residence on EAYC premises, initially in the Leo Herszafit Library and eventually moving to the Bet Hamedrash Heichal Moshe as numbers grew and provision was made for women as well. This minyan continues to expand, with 40 men and 15 women attending on a normal Shabbat, and on Yamim Noraim tefilla takes place in the Jacqueline Donoff Hall, with up to 70 men and 50 women. A midweek daily morning and

evening minyan was established in 2019. A number of regular mitpallelim at the Sephardi minyan have become full members of the Edgware Adath, and a representative of the minyan has a seat on the shul Committee.

The shul buildings are used intensively every day, for minyanim, shiurim and by the shul nursery, which now brands itself as 'Yeladenu'. Although the JSSM had committed to build suitable accommodation to house the EAYC nursery on their site as part of the land swap agreement, in the event they were unable to fulfil this

part of the bargain due to financial constraints, and the shul was compensated accordingly. The EAYC Nursery therefore remained in the shul midweek, primarily in the Jacqueline Donoff Hall, which is where it has been in operation since 2009. The nursery can accommodate up to 35 children, starting from their second birthday and can stay until the year of their fourth birthday. Full day provision

started in January 2018 to meet the changing nature of the EAYC community, with young families increasingly needing a nursery that could offer extended hours. The nursery was reviewed by Ofsted in 2016 and 2018, and was rated "GOOD" on both occasions.

The kehilla should be able to reflect with pride on its achievements over the last 80 years and look forward to the future with great optimism.



Challah Bake 2017