



The story of Passover is told through the Seder Service, and this year is celebrated between the 8th and 16th April. By way of introducing this Passover Edition of our newsletter, we open with a picture of Jewish soldiers collected for Passover at Sialkot, N.E. Punjab, March 1918.

One of the unique aspects of acknowledging Jewish contributions to the First World War is the recognition that Jews from all the countries in which they were citizens volunteered to do their bit. In some countries, they were also conscripted.

In excess of 100,000 Jews served for Germany, with many thousands more serving in the Austro-Hungarian forces. Like those in the British forces they were proud of their religion and attempted to preserve their faith during those trying times.

SPOTLIGHT ON STOKE ON TRENT

Closer to home, one of the remits of the Heritage Lottery grant for *We Were There Too* is to take the project to small Jewish Communities. With the help of Ed Horwich, Director of JSCN (Jewish Small Communities Network), in November 2019 WWTT visited the very small Stoke Jewish Community for a Sunday Bagel Brunch and the opportunity to talk about the project.



Fixed proudly to the wall of the Synagogue Hall is the Memorial Board listing all of the members of the Stoke community who served during the First World War, 4 having been killed in action. One of our volunteers, Belinda Black, has been researching the names on the board and has so far unearthed information on 5 names, one of which is that of Maurice Morris.



Memorial Board at Stoke Synagogue

MAURICE MORRIS

Maurice was born in Poland in 1883 and, at the age of 14, decided to leave for Britain, learning his trade of tailoring along the way. Finally arriving in Liverpool in 1899, Maurice gave his name to the Immigration Officer, who could not understand his strong Polish accent. The story goes that Maurice said 'same name as him!' and pointed to the man in front, whose surname happened to be Morris, which is how he became Maurice Morris.

Maurice later moved to Manchester, before eventually opening up his own tailoring business in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, which is where he was living when the First

World War began. He enlisted with one of the Jewish Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers in 1918. To find out more about his story, visit Maurice's [Personal Record](#).

During the remaining eight months of this project, we hope to be going to other very small communities and using the same successful template for Stoke to find and research stories which are in danger of being lost.



Maurice in the Royal Fusiliers (seated middle row, right)

WE WERE THERE TOO EXHIBITION, 'THE CHICKEN SOUP LEGACY' AT THE FUSILIER MUSEUM, BURY 24-27TH FEBRUARY 2020

One of the highlights of WWTT in the North West has been the exhibition held in the Normandy Suite at the Fusilier Museum, Bury.



Pupils from Philips High School learning from our exhibition boards

Over the last 15 months WWTT has been visiting luncheon clubs, residential homes and schools, the majority of which have been in North West Jewish communities. The richness of stories and artefacts uncovered plus the participation of schools has been and will continue to be the main way in which the project interacts with people of all ages. An integral part of our Heritage Lottery Fund application was to raise awareness of the Jewish community's contribution during the First World War period to a wider audience.

The Metropolitan Borough of Bury has a Jewish population of nearly 12,000, one of the largest Jewish communities outside of London, so when the Fusilier Museum in Bury offered WWTT the opportunity to showcase the project we were delighted to accept their offer.

Set in the picturesque Normandy Suite the exhibition was launched in the evening of Monday February 24th with a VIP reception attended by over eighty people.



North West Project Manager Rodney Ross thanking guests for attending the launch of the WWTT exhibition at The Fusilier Museum

The work of *We Were There Too* was displayed through a series of banners and cases showcasing some of the artefacts local people have shared with us, and were kind enough to lend us for the purpose of the exhibition.



Pupils from Philips High School learning about some of the artefacts on display at the exhibition

As an introduction to the event, an extract from an editorial in the Jewish Chronicle from the 7th August 1914, which pledged the Jewish community to the British war effort, was read by an 11 year old King David High School pupil, after which Alan Fell and Paula Kitching introduced the *British Jews in the First World War - We Were There Too* project, and the work in the North West.

All of the above was videoed by Bob Usher Content Manager for the London Grid for Learning and can be viewed at www.wwt2tv.lgfl.net.



Natasha Britstone introducing the launch event by reading an extract from the Jewish Chronicle

DISCOVERY EDUCATION

For the last few months the WWTT team have been working with Phil Birchinall, Senior Director of Immersive Content at Discovery Education UK to tell the stories of Jewish men and women who served in the First World War. Voiced over by WWTT volunteers Barbara and Merton Paul, six personal stories have been brought to life by Discovery Education and over the next two days of the exhibition over a hundred pupils from three schools were able to see first-hand how Augmented Reality can tell stories in a new and excitingly innovative fashion.



Second Lieutenant Marcus Segal captured in Augmented Reality

LEARNING THROUGH THE STORIES OF INDIVIDUALS

So far 2233 [Personal Records](#) have been added to the site. These records tell the stories of individuals who lived through and experienced the war, whether that be as a member of the armed forces, in a nursing corps, on the Home Front or in any number of ways. The project uses these stories, as well as the 52 [History Windows](#) that have so far been uploaded, which give more context to the experience of Jewish men and women through various events in the 1910s, to engage pupils of all ages when learning about the First World War.

One of these stories which we told at the exhibition at The Fusilier Museum was that of Isaac Flacks, who served with the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. This really interested the pupils, as Isaac's son Joe through his work with AJEX (Jewish Military Association) helped in setting up the exhibition and actually lent us the photographs and medals to display. Having that personal connection helped the pupils to understand and appreciate the legacy of the First World War.



Pupils from Bury and Whitefield Jewish Primary School learning about Isaac Flacks

ISAAC FLACKS

Private Isaac Flacks was born in Russia, and therefore was required to register as an alien with the Manchester City Police in 1916. This meant having certain restrictions placed on him, including having to visit the police station each week.

In November 1917 Isaac joined one of the newly created Jewish Battalions, the 38th Royal Fusiliers, and served with the British Army in Palestine. On his return, he applied for naturalisation, which required letters and documents to be sent in support of his character. The only mark in his record is an instance in which he did not appear to register at Salford Police Station, which family legend says was because it was Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest.

To find out more, visit Isaac's [Personal Record](#).



Private Isaac Flacks

Since our last Project Update at the beginning of this year, we have engaged with a further 110 people at two Roadshows; one at The Fed, Heathlands Village in Manchester and one at the MJCC Luncheon Club, Allerton Synagogue in Liverpool. These events have produced many fascinating stories and artefacts, including a collection of perfectly preserved German 'Papiermarks' from 1917-19. These stories will appear as Personal Records on our site soon.

Thanks for reading, make sure to visit the website [jewsfww.uk](https://www.jewsfww.uk) to upload your family stories, and to learn more about our project.

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