

Hampstead Highgate Express



Charity calls for records of Jewish WWI servicemen before they are lost

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Anna Behrmann



Alan Fell, We Were There Too, Brian Bloom RNR, AJEX, Michael Marx, LJCC, The Lord Sterling of Plaistow, Neil Martin, JLGB. Credit: David Ruback

Anyone who had a Jewish family member in London between 1914-1918 is urged to help preserve the stories of London's Jewry in the First World War



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The “We Were There Too” project hopes to create a digital record of the lives of Jewish men, women and children, in the military and on the Home Front, during 1914-1919.

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Organisers from the London Jewish Cultural Centre, which merged with JW3 in 2014, secured £408,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

They have already collected a wealth of moving personal records.

One entry preserves the memory of Richard Aarons, born in Poland and married in Bethnal Green.

It says: “He was very upset not to have been able to go in the army because he was born abroad, (he arrived in UK aged three months old). He put on one of his brother’s uniforms when they came home on leave and proudly had his picture taken in it.”

Artist Lehmann Oppenheimer, or “Opp”, who died from an illness following on from gassing at the Cristol Military Hospital, Boulogne, stars in another record.

Charles H. Pickstone wrote an appreciation of “Opp”, who enlisted despite his advanced age.

“[Opp] told me he had got tired of waiting for a Commission, and had the previous evening made up his mind to enlist right away and take his chance of earning it.

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“But’ said I ‘What about your age, you are forty-six if you are a day?’ ‘That may be so this morning’ he replied, ‘but I was only thirty-six last night at the recruiting station.’

Mr Pickstone adds: “I question if the war has produced a more striking example of self-sacrifice.”

Michael Marx, Chairman of LJCC’s Trustees said: “Our community played a very significant part in the First World War, and it is often overshadowed by the Second World War and its terrible events. It is now a race against time to collect second generation stories of this period.”

“We Were There Too” is inviting people to share stories and learn more. Join them on November 13, 2.30-4.30pm at New North London Synagogue. RSVP to contactus@jewsffw.london or turn up. Visit the website: jewsffw.london.



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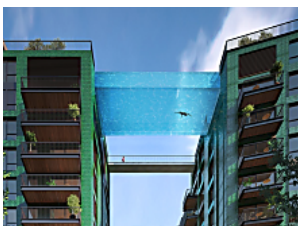
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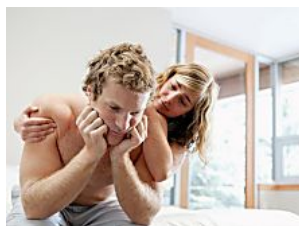
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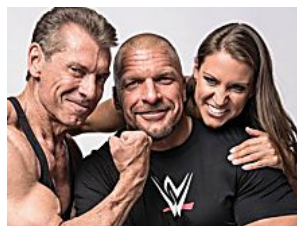
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