



Welcome to this Passover edition of the WWTT newsletter.

One description of Passover is of a Festival of Freedom. For Passover 2022 this is especially apt. The involuntary exodus of millions of people from the Ukraine and possibly as many internally displaced from their homes, is heart wrenching. They will be in our thoughts and prayers at the Passover table.

NEW COLLECTION THANKS TO HULL HISTORY CENTRE

During the First World War, those who didn't go off to fight were left behind to keep society running in very difficult and unusual circumstances. As a social history project, we are interested to discover what life was like for those left behind, and the activities they were involved in.

Thanks to a collaboration with Hull History Centre, you can now view the [minute book of the Hull Old Hebrew Congregation Council December 1915 - November 1917 as a Collection Window](#) on our site. The council met monthly, and were responsible for all of the administrative affairs of the synagogue. The minute book therefore gives us an insight into what sort of issues arose during wartime, and what decisions the committee made to find solutions.

To find out more about the history of the Jewish community in Hull, and what we have learnt from the minute book, visit our [History Window 'Hull Jewish Community and the Old Hebrew Congregation'](#).



Hull Old Hebrew Congregation Osborne Street, from 'Lost Churches and Chapels of Hull' by David Neave, 1991

THANKS TO COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION VOLUNTEERS

Back in February, new WWTT volunteer Gary Stevenson, who also volunteers for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, put out a call for photographs of headstones of Jewish war dead, and the response has been fantastic.

Many of the photographs are of individuals whose stories we already have on our site, and the addition of photographs of headstones enhances the Personal Record. For example, the photograph below by Marcel Gouw of the headstones of Privates [Simon Levine](#) and [Harry Furman](#) in Bazentin-le-petit Military Cemetery, France. The pair were friends from Hull, and fought in the 4th battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment. Simon was killed in action on 15th January 1917, and the story goes that Harry lost a leg trying to rescue his friend, and died of his wounds the following day. It is therefore poignant that we now have a photograph of the two men buried side by side in their final resting place.



Headstones of S Levine and H Furman in Bazentin-le-petit Military Cemetery by Marcel Gouw

Other photographs however, Gary has been able to research what happened to the individuals and create new Personal Records, such as [Harry Lewinstein](#). Harry was born in London in 1880, the son of Lewis and Fanny Lewinstein. He joined the Coldstream Guards as a professional soldier in 1908, the 1911 census showing him living in barracks in London. With the outbreak of the First World War, his unit was mobilized rapidly for deployment to France, landing at Le Havre on 14 August 1914. Harry was proving himself to be a good soldier and had achieved the rank of Sergeant in the Coldstream Guards, by 1916. This was further evidenced by a report in the London Gazette indicating he was to be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) on 21 June 1916. Sadly though, he was to die after only one month as an officer in his new regiment. He was killed on 22nd July 1916, during a British attack at High Wood, part of the Battle of the Somme. He is buried at Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, France.



Headstone of Harry Lewinstein at Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

During March we celebrated Women's History Month by highlighting some of the stories of Jewish women during the First World War on our social media accounts.

One of those stories was of [Helen Caroline Bentwich](#), who began the war working as a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse in a hospital in Aylesbury, before transferring to a hospital in Cairo where her new husband [Captain Norman Bentwich](#) (who was also an important figure in Anglo-Jewish history) was stationed. The couple would regularly meet with [Florence Oppenheimer](#) (later Greenberg), who was working as a nurse on hospital ships in the area.

In 1916 Helen returned to England and began working as a forewoman at Woolwich Arsenal, where she attempted to form a trade union and was forced to resign. She then became the organiser of the Women's Land Army in the home counties. After the war, Helen and her husband moved to Palestine, where she started a troupe of Girl Guides, set up a craft centre and schools for Jewish and Arab children, and worked as the Honorary Secretary of the Palestine National Council of Women.

You can read more about Helen on her Personal Record [here](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) @jewsffw for more stories from our site, and keep up to date with our online and in-person events.



Photo of Helen Bentwich, captured by Elliott & Fry photographers. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RAF

April is the anniversary of the [Royal Air Force \(RAF\)](#) coming into being. The bill enabling the creation of a separate flying force had been passed through Parliament the previous autumn specifying 1 April 1918 for the new military force to begin.

The creation of the RAF indicated the new and important role that air power was having in the war. Jewish servicemen were some of the earliest members of the RAF and approximately 2,300 Jewish men and women were part of the RAF by the end of the First World War, many risking and losing their lives in the service of their country.

Next month Dr Ronnie Fraser will be presenting some of the stories of those that served in this fledgling organisation.



Photograph taken by Gordon Hyams D.F.C. in Egypt during 1917. c/o Jewish Museum London/Jewish Military Museum

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Since our last newsletter, we have held successful in-person events in Sheffield and Leeds.

We returned to Sheffield Jewish Community Centre to meet with those who joined us in December so they could tell us more about their First World War stories. Edward Patnick told us all about his father [Aaron Patnick](#), a junk dealer whose passion for buying and selling at the rag market was interrupted by war service.

Leeds Jewish Housing Association welcomed us to present our project, and we look forward to returning to hear more about some of the fascinating stories residents shared with us, including that of a woman who filled shells in the first national shell filling factory in Barnbow, Leeds.

We also look forward to holding an event with the Bradford Jewish community after Passover, and we are delighted to say we have been invited by the North East Lincolnshire Archives to host a 2-day event in Grimsby as part of their [Streets and their Stories project](#). During this event we will be telling the story of the Jewish community in Grimsby and how they were affected by the First World War. Watch this space for more information coming soon.



Presentation at Leeds Jewish Housing Association

Thanks for reading, we hope you enjoyed! Make sure to visit the website jewsffw.uk to upload your family stories, and to learn more about our project.

To get in touch, email contactus@jewsffw.uk or you can find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @jewsffw

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