

**WE WERE THERE TOO BRINGS PREVIOUSLY UNSEEN
FIRST WORLD WAR ARCHIVE INTO PUBLIC VIEW**

**A unique insight into the First World War years through the eyes of
London's Jewish Children.**

The *We Were There Too* project has enabled two bound manuscripts of stories, essays, poetry and drawings, compiled by children and young people from The Liberal Jewish Synagogue (LJS) Religion School during 1915 and 1916, to be preserved online and made available to the community and wider audiences for the first time.

The two rare volumes, kept for over a century in secure boxes hidden from view, show how the war influenced Jewish children and young people of the period.

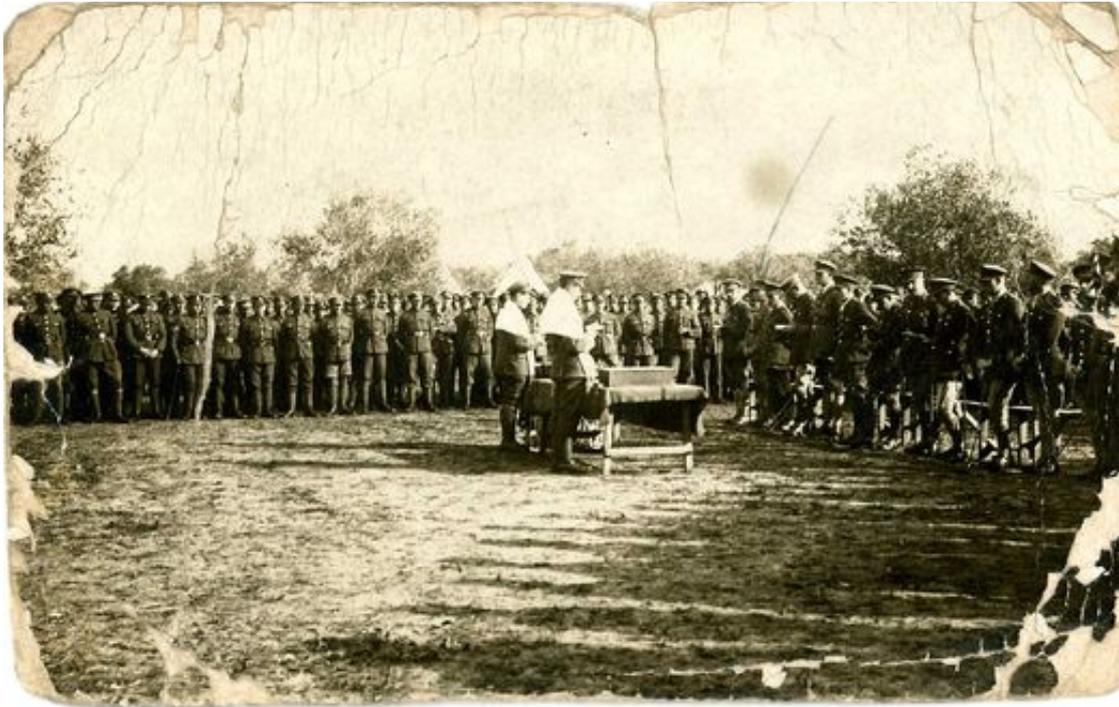
Alan Fell, Project Director said: 'This discovery exceeded all our expectations and we feel privileged to be able to provide the vehicle to bring it to public view'.

The books are part of an archive at LJS which, in 2013, the National Archive at Kew deemed 'of exceptional importance. [...] a crucial source for the history of modern Judaism in London, the United Kingdom and internationally'.

Stuart Hopley, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: 'It is very rare to get an insight into what children thought, felt and experienced during the First World War, and this archive opens a window into how the war affected the lives of young Jewish people. It is great to see such interesting discoveries coming about thanks to the support National Lottery players have given this project'.

The books can be seen at www.jewsfww.london. Click on 'The First World War through the eyes of Jewish Children' to visit the History Window describing the volumes and scroll down to view the children's work.

We are delighted that the Jewish Chronicle (10th February, pages 10-12) featured the Archive and the project in a 3 page special feature last week, flagged on both the front and back pages of the paper. [Click here](#) to read the JC article online. The Archive also features on the front cover and page 8 of this week's Ham & High (16th February).



Outdoor service for the Jewish Battalion in Ludd Palestine, 1918. ©Jewish Museum

FIRST WORLD WAR SERMONS

Another recent discovery has resulted in the *We Were There Too* website being able to offer a link to a remarkable archive of First World War sermons:

www.religionandwar.org

Professor Marc Saperstein, Professor Emeritus of Jewish History, George Washington University and Professor of Jewish History and Homiletics, Leo Baeck College has provided us with a new History Window, which describes some of these sermons. Our thanks to the Editorial Board of European Judaism and Berghahn Books for allowing us to append two articles from their publication.

As Professor Saperstein says: ‘Such sermons exemplify the often painful dilemmas about what to say in critical moments when the preacher’s country is at war, dilemmas that usually applied to Christian as well as Jewish clergy. [...] Chaplains and religious leaders across Europe brought comfort, raised morale, and offered a religious perspective to world events: how belief in God can be reconciled with the unprecedented slaughter, the efficacy of prayer from opposing sides, magnanimity in victory and courage in defeat.’

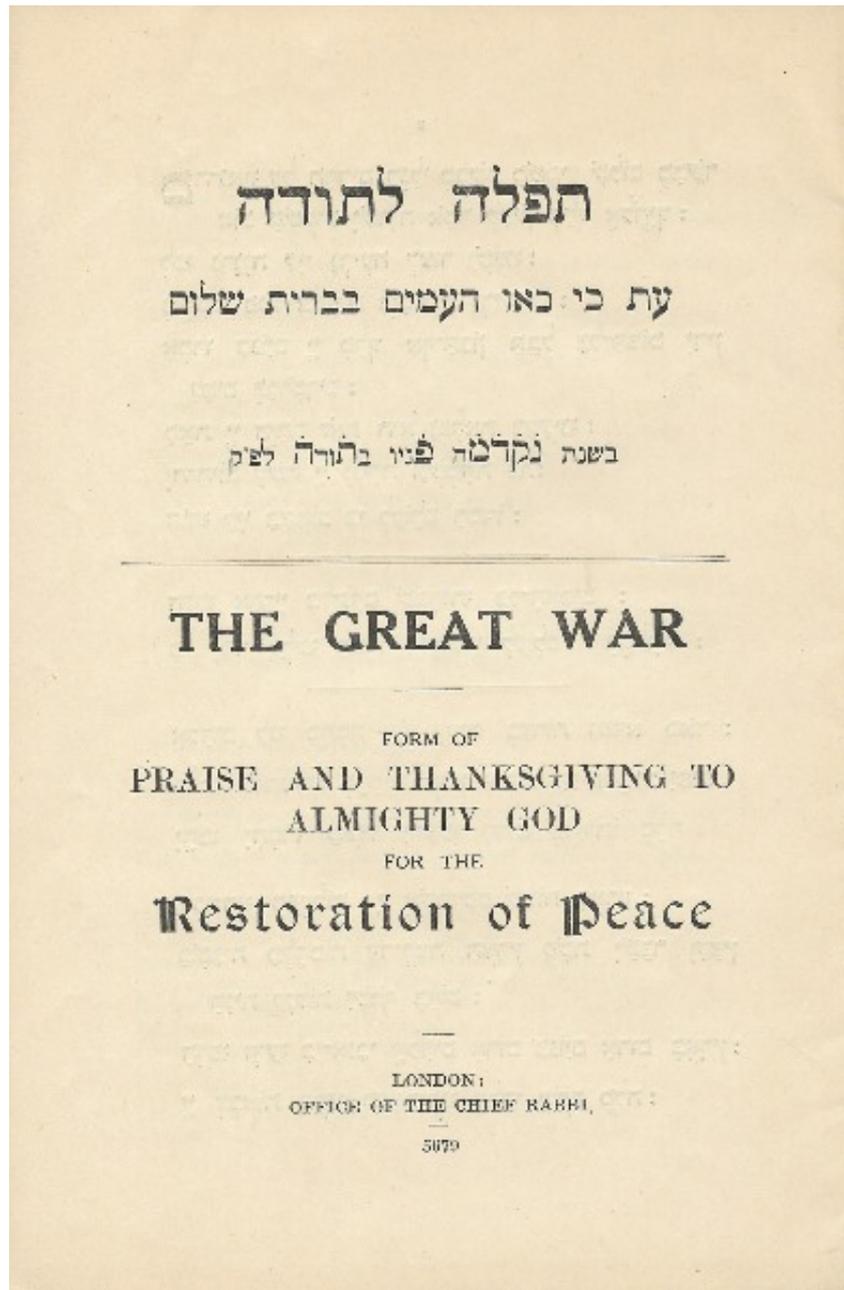
To access the History Window and two accompanying articles, click on the links below.

[First World War Sermons](#) History Window by Marc Saperstein

[Joseph Hertz: A Chief Rabbi at War](#) by Colin Eimer

[Morris Joseph and the West London Synagogue in the First World War](#) by Marc

Saperstein



Restoration of Peace. Office of the Chief Rabbi. 1919

SPECIAL ORDERS OF SERVICE

Former Chair of the Jewish Historical Society, David Jacobs, alerted the *We Were There Too* team to another interesting collection preserved in his own personal archive. Special Orders of Service were issued by The Chief Rabbi's Office throughout the war. The Chief Rabbi at that time was Joseph Herman Hertz who had been elected to office in 1913.

The collection runs from 'A Prayer of Supplication' after the outbreak of war to a booklet of Prayers as a form of thanksgiving to Almighty God, 'Consequent on the

Cessation of Hostilities’, and a more substantial 12-page service booklet, which serves as a form of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the ‘Restoration of Peace’. It contains the National Anthem in both English and Hebrew.

Our thanks to David for allowing us to scan the booklets and upload them onto the website.

To view the History Window and collection [click here](#).



Community event, 15/12/2016. Jewish Care, Brenner Centre, Stamford Hill.

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Since the start of November 2016, the *We Were There Too* team, assisted by an increasing number of volunteers, have been moving around London, engaging with a wide variety of community groups.

Our thanks to The New North London Synagogue, the University of Roehampton, The Sephardi Community, Lauderdale Road Synagogue, Sinclair House, Nightingale House, School Fairs, Chaps that Chat, B'nai Brith, JLGB and more for welcoming the team and supporting our events.

Some extraordinary family stories, photographs and memorabilia from the period have emerged which, over the next few months, will be uploaded into the Personal Record section of the website.

110 Personal Records have already been created, bringing Jewish lives into focus, with new ones being added every day.

More open events are planned in the coming months in addition to visiting more Friendship Clubs and youth groups:

- **5th March at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood, 2.30-4.30pm**
- **19th March at Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue, 2.30-4.30pm**
- **21st May at Edgware Reform Synagogue (tbc)**

Please tell your colleagues, family and friends. Everyone is welcome.



Menin Gate Memorial for the Missing

FIRST WORLD WAR BATTLEFIELDS TRIP

3rd-5th APRIL 2017

£390 PER PERSON*

The complexity, scale and changing nature of warfare that took place on the fields of Flanders a century ago, can only be fully appreciated by visiting its sites and cemeteries in person.

Paula Kitching, project historian and battlefields expert, will lead our *We Were There Too* tour to the key sites and memorials of Ypres to honour those Jews who made the ultimate sacrifice. We will learn about the war through stories of some of

the Jews involved, how they maintained their religious practices and the changes that resulted from the impact and experience of war.

We will witness the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate and say aloud some of the names of the fallen, in cemeteries where the Magen David appears on headstones. Join us to walk in the footsteps of Jewish heroes and pay tribute to a generation that answered the call.

** Cost includes all coach travel, hotel accommodation with breakfast and museum entry. Other meals are not included. A coach will leave from London early on Monday 3rd April and return on Wednesday 5th April.*

For a full itinerary and booking form, please email slgluckstein@hotmail.com or download the information from our [Events](#) page on the website.

Alan Fell

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