

## Travelling Chassidim Inspire Kenton Community

The Travelling Chassidim of U.K. with their families have just returned from a most uplifting and inspiring Shabbos in the Kenton community, where they were warmly welcomed by the *kehillah* members, Rabbi Yehuda Black and President Roy Block.

The trip began with a visit to the local care home, where residents were treated to an impromptu Erev Shabbos concert. The smiles that lit up their faces were immensely rewarding and gave the Travelling Chassidim the feeling that this Shabbos was off to a great start.

After an introductory *drashah* by one of the Travelling Chassidim, *davening* by singer Moishe M. Meislik was full of emotion and spirit, ending with the *mispallelim* bursting into heartfelt song and dance.

This was followed by special Shabbos *seudos*, hosted by the community and Rabbi Black. Great food, spirited *zemiro*s and friendly chatting meant that no one was ready to leave when the meal was done! The community members stayed in the shul hall after Shabbos lunch, conversing with the Chassidim all the way through to *seudah shelishis*.

Motzoei Shabbos was indescribable — the Chassidim sang the *tefillah* of the Berdichever Rav, after explaining its meaning, followed by a musical *Havdalah*. After *Havdalah* the Chassidim danced for



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Members of Travelling Chassidim UK and Kenton Synagogue dance together after the Shabbos that TCUK spent in Kenton.

over an hour with the entire community. “No words could describe this longest, most beautiful Shabbos since Kenton’s existence,” said Roy Block.

“I don’t know what you gained from this, but what I can say is, you’ve given the Kenton community a spiritual face-lift, and I think we will remember this forever,” said

Mrs. L. to one of the wives of the Travelling Chassidim, as the singing wound down on Motzoei Shabbos.

TCUK, a branch of the original Travelling Chassidim in America, is the brainchild of Rabbi Aryeh Royde of Monsey — formerly of Manchester. The American group travels across North America, from Texas to Washington, D.C., and beyond. The Travelling Chassidim’s mission is to spread *simchah* and *kedushah* in small Jewish communities around the world.

The U.K. group is constantly growing, with more requests for a visit being received on a regular basis. One very special feature of both the original American group and the English one is that they are not-for-profit groups; the host shul’s only expenditures are the travel and sometimes accommodation costs. Menasche Scharf, one of the directors of TCUK, stresses this fact as the trump card for anyone in the United Kingdom to have the Travelling Chassidim over for Shabbos: “So many communities who would theoretically like to invite us hesitate because they assume we will be too expensive for their shul’s budget. However, we are more than happy to visit any community who invites us, with any extra costs being covered by the Chief Rabbi’s Centre for Community Excellence, whose intervention made many a memorable Shabbos a dream come true.”

## Federation Launches New Oven Indicator Light Kit

FedTech, the Federation Beis Din’s department for technology and *halachah*, has launched a custom-designed “indicator light kit,” a small device that has been manufactured with the specific goal of resolving the *shemiras Shabbos* concerns inherent in many modern ovens.

Rabbi Yisroel Moshe Guttentag, who oversees FedTech, explained the need for the device. “Many ovens have recently made their way to the general market, sporting a designated Sabbath-setting feature,” he said. “These Shabbos modes do not necessarily resolve all of the *she’eilos* involved in opening the oven door on Shabbos. In the past, many people

would set a timer and remove food only after the timer had gone off. When the oven is working, opening the door will potentially cause the heating element to come on sooner. The way to avoid this *she’eilah*, as advised by Rav Neuwirth in *Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchasah* and other leading *poskim*, is to open the door only when the heating element is already on.”

Mr. Dovid Gurwicz, a noted engineer in Gateshead, has acted as FedTech’s consultant engineer on this project. Mr. Gurwicz has provided expert advice on a vast range of technological issues, and the current device is his brainchild. He said, “The device has been designed to light

up every time the oven’s heating element is turned on. It is really a very simple design.”

Mr. Gershon Morris of Manchester, a systems engineer known best for his MadeSafer hot plate, has further developed the design; it is his company that is manufacturing the new device. This has been done in a manner that ensures the oven’s warranty is not affected.

Rebbetzin Yael Hamer, of Finchley Central Federation shul, volunteered her oven for the first prototype fittings. She commented, “I was disappointed not to be able to use the Sabbath setting on my oven. Now that the indicator has been installed,

I can use the oven easily. It is neatly fitted and inconspicuous and I can use it for both Friday night and Shabbos day.”

FedTech recommends that members of the public get in touch before deciding which oven to buy, as some ovens have been manufactured with design flaws that seriously affect *shemiras Shabbos*. In some cases, the heating element switches off as soon as the door is opened, and the new device will not assist in preventing this.

Initial interest in the indicator kit has been on an international level, and the Federation hopes to take its concept and knowledge to as wide an audience as possible.

## Manchester Mosdos Impress Director of Hackney’s Child and Adult Service

In a successful effort to broaden understanding of the Orthodox community, a number of *mosdos* in Manchester were recently paid a visit by Ms. Anne Canning. Ms. Canning is Hackney Council’s group director for Children and Adult Services and is known to maintain a positive attitude and strong engagement with the *chareidi* community. Accompanying the distinguished guest were representatives of Interlink, through which the visit was arranged.

Interlink’s LinkEd project director and Chinuch UK representative Rabbi Aharon Pinczewski arranged a walkabout of Bnos Yisroel schools, Ohr Torah-Belz *yeshivah ketanah*, Beis Hatalmud and Yesoiday Hatorah School.

Each school made a very positive impact, leaving Ms. Canning deeply

impressed by what she saw. Bnos Yisroel schools presented a striking example of well-ordered classrooms, creative and innovative wall displays and well-mannered girls who answered her questions with clarity and intelligence. In Yeshivas Ohr Torah, the visitor was given a glimpse of exemplary peer learning in one of the *shiur* rooms with a *bachur* explaining a difficult concept to a group using the whiteboard and carefully constructed arguments, with the participants fully engaged and clearly enjoying the learning. The boys also demonstrated academic work of a high calibre, with a representative displaying exercise books, which also showed how *yeshivah* learning is not rote or enforced but something that requires complex cognitive skills. Her guides explained that

*Gemara* learning comprises case studies with diverse factors that may apply.

A quick tour of major communal facilities provided further insight into *chareidi* life and its strong values.

Ms. Canning witnessed the sight of quiet hallways and happy, well-presented, fulfilled and attentive teenagers, reinforcing the fact that *chareidi mosdos* provide a strong, disciplined and well-rounded education, preparing children for life in contemporary Britain.

Another eye-opener was that Beis Hatalmud provided an awareness into a secondary school with a predominantly learning filled day with a short but intensive and highly condensed *chol* programme.

The visit concluded with a walk-around in Yesoiday Hatorah School.

Rabbi Yodaiken showed Ms. Canning around the school, particularly focussing upon the delivery of the general studies curriculum and that of *middos* and personal development. In addition, a focus was placed upon the cross curricular input from the *kodesh* curriculum into so many facets of pupils’ development. In a roundtable discussion after the tour, issues discussed included creating a positive learning environment, high standard of writing and staff training, as well as the importance of a holistic approach to delivering the curriculum.

Rabbi Yodaiken also shared the good outcome of the school’s recent Ofsted inspection and described the school’s comprehensive self-evaluation and school improvement process.