

# Holocaust Memorial event at the Suburb Library



The Suburb's Community Library marked Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27 in two ways:

- A fortnight's display of posters and available books, a majority of which were borrowed during the period.
- A talk on January 31 by Anita Peleg – Suburb resident and Trustee of the Government-funded Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) – about her mother, Naomi Blake, holocaust survivor and member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors, currently living in Muswell Hill.

The library was packed to capacity for the talk. Anita gave the audience a unique, as well as inspiring, experience. The factual background on the effect of the Holocaust on her mother's town and of the 'death marches' of 1945, briefly but graphically illustrated by the black & white photos of the time, combined with her mother's personal story, from happy schooldays through to the death march and then escape, gripped the audience;

with that grip strengthened by the maintenance of her belief in the possibility of goodness, and her subsequent artistic growth to a huge oeuvre now visible in so many public places.

The story brought hope that humanity can be kind as well as ghastly, and that art and nurture can save one's spirit. Her mother always believed in a 'Glimmer of Hope', the title given by Anita to one of her books about her mother, now in the library.

After the war Naomi journeyed to British-ruled Palestine, staying for the establishment of the State of Israel, until she married her London-based husband, who had escaped Nazi Germany. After enrolling at the Hornsey College of Art she eventually became today's renowned sculptor, with works in cathedrals, churches, synagogues and parks across the country, as well as abroad.

The chairman's introduction mentioned to those present three other things. Firstly the originating effect in 2016 of the HMDT

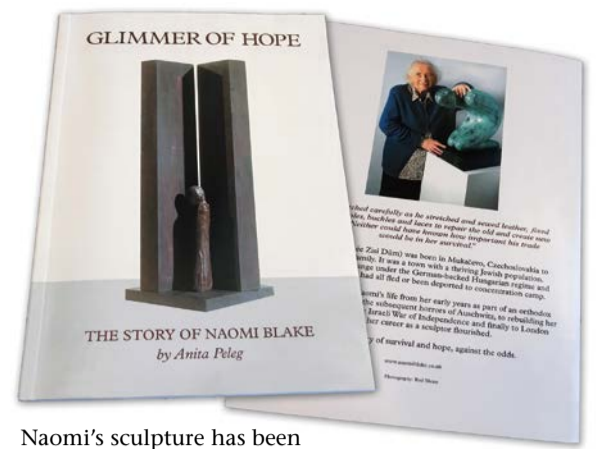
invitation to the library trustees to a workshop, which resulted in the library displays for Holocaust Memorial Day in 2017 and 2018.

Secondly the information received at the workshops about local boroughs' Community Engagement Officers, which led the trustees to research and then attend Barnet's impressive (but poorly publicised) Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Hendon on Sunday January 28 this year.

Thirdly he drew attention to the information from HMDT that the post-war genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur, like the Holocaust, were planned and carried out in the stages illustrated by the key poster in the library; the lessons are still there to be learned, and the signs need to be recognised.

He pointed out that in these days of 'fake news', the testimony of the historical record needs to be remembered, and the annual HMD is an opportunity to bring this to mind.

Naomi Blake had survived Auschwitz and, after being caught up in the international chaos following World War II, she finally made her home in North London. Much of her sculpture has focused on the expression of her experiences – but her work also promotes a principally optimistic vision for uniting faiths, building understanding and hope. "An artist is a mediator, a channel through which motivations of the past... hopes for the future are subconsciously transmitted into forms and lines" and so her art affirms enduring human values.



Naomi's sculpture has been extensively exhibited and collected. Her sculptures are permanently exhibited at over fifty public sites including Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, Fitzroy Square,

Great Ormond Street Hospital, Bristol Cathedral, the Holocaust Centre, Nottingham and Tel Aviv University.

JONATHAN SERES

PHOTOS: MARC HULL

## Saving Suburb seats

We are fortunate in the Suburb to have many benches for residents to use to watch the world go by or for rest if they have mobility problems, whether caused by respiratory disease, which, given London pollution levels, are often in the news, or simply old age.

Many of our benches are the result of bequests by residents, or memorials funded by the RA, and others have been installed by Barnet.

The passage of time and the ravages of the elements can have a destructive effect on these useful pieces of street furniture and, as our photo demonstrates, they can become virtually unusable.

There is an RA initiative that tries to rectify the dilapidation of benches. So please report any broken benches by e-mailing,

with the location and preferably a photo, to Harry at [rabenches@hgs.org.uk](mailto:rabenches@hgs.org.uk) and the RA will try to have them fixed or replaced.



## Post Office raided by thieves



There has been a worrying spate of burglaries recently at some of our local shops including a serious theft from the post office in Market Place.

In the early hours of February 25 the popular W H Smith newsagent and sub-post office run by Jitendra Dave was raided and a large quantity of cigarettes was stolen. Cash was

also taken from the till. CCTV footage of the burglary shows three men arriving by car at 2.30am. With faces covered they can be seen forcing open the protective metal shutter covering the shop front and then smashing the glass door to gain access.

Police were alerted by a neighbour who heard the noise

of the forced entry, and who assumed there was a fight taking place on the street. Unfortunately the thieves had made their getaway before police arrived on the scene. The shop front was so badly damaged that the newsagents could not open for business the next day.

Mr Dave said, "I'm astonished that the men were able to force open the shutter, which was meant to be burglar-proof."

The police are examining CCTV footage but the car used for the burglary is thought to have been stolen. There were no clear images of the men's faces in the recording and few eyewitnesses to the event. At the time of writing there have been no arrests.

Several shops in Temple Fortune have suffered similar recent raids so it seems likely that a gang is targeting local businesses.

GARY SHAW

## Trust grant giving

(continued from front page)

the Trust Council on its grant giving. The Committee usually meets twice per year to review applications submitted by organisations and to make recommendations to the Trust Council, who make the decisions on all grants.

Over recent years the Trust has given grants to bodies such as Fellowship House, the Orchard Housing Society, Abbeyfield House, Proms at St Jude's, Garden Suburb Theatre, HGS Archive Trust, St Jude's Church, the Free Church, Resources for Autism, Alyth Synagogue, the Youth Music Centre and Northway Gardens Organisation.

Amongst other things the grants have contributed towards performing plays, replanting important communal gardens and refurbishing a playground open to all on the Suburb, preserving historic Suburb archives, taking elderly residents on outings, the repair of important Suburb buildings, improvement to communal facilities for elderly residents, providing communal dining for residents and the staging of an international quality series of Proms events.

The annual amount granted by the Trust has risen from under £3,000 in 2006/7 to an anticipated £29,835 in 2017/18 (the final accounts are being prepared at the time of writing).

To raise awareness of these activities, the Trust publicises grants in the Annual Report & Accounts and Trust Gazette, which are sent to freeholders and members of the Trust each year. Copies of each are available on the Trust's website [www.hgstrust.org](http://www.hgstrust.org)

Following the publication of last year's accounts some members contacted the Trust about a grant that had been given to a member of Trust staff, correctly pointing out to the Trust that such a grant was not allowed under the Trust's Memorandum.

It was agreed that grant would be repaid and subsequently the Trust Council asked the Grants & Amenities Committee to review the Trust's procedure for future grants. The Committee did so, also reviewing the recently published Charity Commission Guidance on grants to non-charities, recommending that each meeting be provided with a summary of the relevant parts of the Trust's Memorandum and the Commission guidance, to ensure compliance with the Trust's obligations.



Any resident with a query regarding the Trust's grant giving is invited to contact me, the Trust Manager, via the Trust office.

NICK PACKARD

DAVID JOHNSON



Trust grant recipients: Orchard Housing Society (top), Proms at St Jude's (above)

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