

Friendships made at Alyth Shalom Suppers



For the past eight years Alyth has hosted six or seven Shalom Suppers each year, and the HGS Trust has kindly helped fund this project over the last four years. This project provides a Friday night meal for people of any faith, who have mental and physical health problems. In some cases they come with their carers.

There are many such people in the local area. They are often left on the margins of society and our aim is to make them feel more included in our community at large and also in Synagogue life. It is important that people in this situation have hearty meals and we aim to provide them with a tasty three-course meal cooked by volunteers.

We welcome anyone who feels part of this group. Many of our guests, both Jews and non-Jews, have no experience of a Shabbat Friday Evening. For many of them the highlight is coming first to the Synagogue service

before sitting down to an evening of socialising, food and entertainment in a safe environment.

Many of our guests possess qualities and have skills, which we can all enjoy and appreciate. Contributions from guests at these suppers have included poetry reading by a published author, singing, violin recital and piano playing. We also provide outside entertainment.

It takes some planning to arrange these evenings and we rely on the support of the Synagogue, and all who help voluntarily to purchase the food, lay the tables, prepare the meal, decorate the Synagogue and arrange transport.

We have a core of dedicated helpers from Alyth and the local area and anyone is invited to come and join us at these evenings and engage in conversation with our regular guests and remove the social barriers for those with such difficulties. We also like to

encourage teenagers to come and help so that it becomes inter-generational.

Heart-warmingly we have found that friendships have developed, and groups formed, as a result of these suppers and guests are getting together on other occasions. One small group has even formed a band.



SARAH LANGSFORD

One participant recently said, "I never go out in the evenings. This is the first time in 15 years that I have got up the courage and accepted the invitation. Now I can't wait for the next one."

And one of our teenage volunteers said, "I love going to the Shalom suppers. It's helped me understand how difficult it is for some people to find a place in society. It's really sad. Yet on these Friday evenings people relax and enjoy themselves so much. We are all friends together, and because so many of us are local we even bump into each other on the street sometimes."

Since their inception Alyth's Shalom Suppers have proved enormously popular and provide a real focal point in many of the participants' lives. They have gone from strength to strength and we are extremely grateful to the Synagogue and the Trust for their continued support.

Does the way musicians quell their nerves strike a chord?

Clammy hands, dry mouth, heart pounding, feeling sick and the palpable terror that your mind is about to go blank... do the symptoms sound familiar?

Whether it's a solo at the Royal Opera House, a job interview, an appraisal with your boss, or preparing for a presentation, our ability to press our own self-destruct button can debilitate our performance.

Sir Laurence Olivier, Maria Callas, Helen Mirren, Robbie Williams and Lady Gaga have all apparently suffered. Adele said in an interview for Vogue, "I puke quite a lot before going on stage but never actually on stage."

When I used to help teach the Alexander Technique to students at the Royal College of Music in South Kensington I wondered how they learnt to deal with their performance anxiety. Particularly intriguing was the purpose-built virtual reality space – a 3D projection with a choice of scenarios including an audition panel and an audience coughing and fidgeting.

Fired up with adrenalin and ready to face imminent danger is handy if you spot a lion lurking behind a bush. Less useful if you are about to play a sonata or go into a business meeting.

Judith Kleinman teaches the Alexander Technique at the Royal College and remarked, "If you are anxious, you will be interfering with your coordination. It's like waiting years to go on a date

with someone and you're so nervous you knock the orange juice over. If we're feeling fearful, we fix like a scared rabbit in the headlights. We particularly fix in the head, neck and shoulders as well as the stomach and we stop breathing. And immediately we stop breathing we stop seeing." Literally a blind panic.

By helping us recognise our own particular symptoms of nervousness rather than trying to ignore them or hope they'll go away, the Alexander Technique can help us feel calmer and able to cope with whatever comes up.

The incessant and normally critical internal mental chatter that you're not good enough is best ignored. And what about the dread of your mind shutting down and standing in front of an audience completely tongue-tied?

"Confident people don't expect it to go wrong so it doesn't go wrong," says Judith, "It's like walking a tightrope. If you are thinking you are going to fall off, you probably will."

The truth is your body language is communicating something from the moment you step into the audience's vision – whether that audience is in a theatre, a classroom, your future employer, or a potential business client.

If you can succeed in being unruffled, you will come across as confident and therefore far more effective.

ELIZABETH ABRAHAMS

Letters to the editor

Hampstead Gardens, NW11

Sir,
I enjoyed reading Peter Falk's article about Louise Scheuer (Suburb News Summer 2016). However, I don't know whether it was Louise herself being typically modest, but there was no mention of her many years of dedicated service as a Community Governor of Henrietta Barnett School. Louise brought infinite wisdom as well as common sense to the role. She worked hard to help ensure that the school maintained its standing as one of the best of its kind in the country. But she also took a close interest in the pastoral side of the school, both with pupils and staff and I'm sure there are many who will recall with gratitude the care that Louise manifested. I saw for myself, both as a fellow Governor and when I was a councillor for Garden Suburb, this aspect of Louise's

contribution to our community and I feel it ought not to go unremarked.
Yours
Andrew Harper

From the editor: I thanked Andrew for his letter and admitted to him that it was my editing which removed this aspect of Louise's contribution to the Suburb from the original text. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to correct the edit.

Raeburn Close, NW11

Sir
Is the Trust facing bankruptcy? As freeholders will be aware, under the Scheme of Management approved by the High Court, they are required to pay to the Trust an annual management charge. This is defined as being an appropriate part of 'the expenses of operating the

Scheme in an economical, efficient and consistent manner as certified by the Trust's auditors.' However for some years, the Trust Council has demanded payment of the management charge but has not obtained that certificate from the auditors! The auditors have merely carried out a financial audit and confirmed that in the course of it nothing has come to their attention that would indicate that the Trust or its operation of the Scheme of Management has been run other than in an economical, efficient and consistent manner. Bravo! Obviously this falls miles short of what is required under the Scheme. A member of staff might, for example, be working wholly inefficiently, but this would not come to light on a blinkered financial audit. And since the number of staff has roughly doubled over the last decade despite the introduction of new technology in the office, the importance of getting the auditors to investigate the efficiency of the Trust each year as required by the Scheme is self-evident.

Although there was a non-binding tribunal decision in favour of the Trust, a barrister, who was recently consulted was of the opinion that the management charge might well not be recoverable. Even on the most favourable view of the matter for the Trust, the position is at best uncertain. That is entirely unsatisfactory. At present the Trust Council is in a total state of denial that there is even a problem, and clearly intends to get the auditors to issue yet another blinkered certificate next time.

A special meeting of the Trust company to discuss the present state of affairs is urgently needed.
Yours
David Iwi

Finchley Road, NW11

Sir,
You have given the Trust the opportunity to respond to Mr Iwi's letter to Suburb News.

He contends first that the Trust is inefficient and that therefore the management charge is too high, and secondly, that the auditor's certificate is inadequate and the charge is therefore not recoverable. The Scheme of Management contains well defined rights to challenge the charge. If Mr Iwi wants a public meeting, he need only persuade enough members of the Trust to do what is necessary to call a meeting. The articles of association make clear provision to allow this to be done. I should point out that Mr Iwi is not currently a charge payer but has raised a number of complaints against the Trust in the past.

We take Mr Iwi's assertions seriously, but believe he is wrong. In any event, the Scheme of Management gives charge payers the right to challenge the charge but they have not done so for some time. The charge has risen modestly over the last 10 years. Against the background of rising standards and volume of the work of the Trust, we believe this is a fair indication that the Trust is efficiently run and the Trustees are careful to assure themselves regularly that this is the case. Mr Iwi, stating his belief that the Trust will "get the auditors to issue yet another blinkered certificate...", ignores the professional independence of a large, respectable firm of accountants who have nothing to gain by not doing their duty to members of the Trust or failing to meet the standards expected of them by their profession. The counsel's advice to which Mr Iwi refers has not to date been seen by

the Trust and I believe was procured by Mr Iwi on his own instructions.

Mr Iwi is a little unclear in describing the previous decision of the Tribunal as being non-binding. Although it is true that the decision would not bind a later Tribunal or court, it was binding on those who

participated in the action. A later Tribunal or court may well also find the judgment persuasive and there is no reason to suggest it would come to any other conclusion.

Yours
Richard Wiseman
Trust Chairman

Proms at St Jude's Open Meeting

Around 50 people turned out for the first ever Open Meeting of Proms at St Jude's, held at Fellowship House on September 27. Some great creative ideas for enhancing and broadening the appeal of the annual summer music and arts festival were put forward.

"Half our audience lives within a mile or two of St Jude's," said Richard Clegg, Proms Chairman,

"and we really want to ensure that Proms offers what they will enjoy. As 2017 will be our 25th Season, we're determined to make it special."

The 2017 Festival will run from 24 June to 2 July. If you'd like to volunteer to help with anything from IT to sponsorship or publications, or would like to contribute your thoughts, please contact Keara Connolly at Keara.connolly@promsatstjudes.org.uk.

Do you struggle with back, neck or shoulder pain, a repetitive strain injury, a slipped disc or sciatica?

Find out how the Alexander Technique can help you:

- recover from illness, injury, surgery or chronic pain,
- stop feeling tense, tired and uncomfortable,
- improve your posture and feel more at ease whether you are working at a computer, giving a presentation or playing an instrument.

Please do get in touch to find out more

Elizabeth Abrahams

Phone: 07787 904 315 to book an appointment

Web: the-alexander-technique.co.uk

Appointments at Temple Fortune Health Centre

Keep the noise down!



For many residents the noise of petrol-driven leaf blowers is almost unbearable. This autumn please help preserve the peace of the Suburb by clearing leaves with a rake or brush (or ask your gardener to do so). Thank you.

