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The Jewish community in modern-day Bradford
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PUBLIC HISTORY FORUM

The Jewish community in modern-day Bradford

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As was discussed in my previous article in *Transactions*, volume 49 (“Bradford’s Jewish History: A Reconsideration, Part One”), the Jewish community in Bradford contributed a great deal to the development of the city and one could argue that they were largely responsible for the city’s prosperity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, in the years following the Second World War to the present day there has been a noticeable change not only in the fortunes of Bradford as a whole, but also in the Jewish community. There has been a significant decline in the number of Jewish people living in Bradford in the past few decades and, increasingly, individuals raised in the faith have shifted towards a less observant way of life; this is more of a trend among those born post-1970. Rabbi Heilbron noted that by the mid-1970s Bradford had become “a fairly elderly community” because “many of the young people go away to college or university and do not return.”¹ This remains the case today, as the majority of the Jewish population in the city are over sixty years old.

Many individuals who grew up in the community in the postwar years recall a fairly observant and religious childhood, for example, Suzanne Korn, whose experiences will be discussed in further detail below. The appendices here record interviews conducted by email in 2015 with those quoted in this article. Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild, a rabbi for several Jewish communities in Germany, is one such individual. His family were “quite observant and active” within the community, “went to the [Reform] synagogue service almost every Friday evening” and “had Shabbat and Seder at home” (Appendix F). It is clear from Rabbi Rothschild’s recollections that Judaism and being active within the community were of great importance to his family. His father held a number of positions on the executive of the synagogue such as Secretary, Treasurer, and later

1 Rabbi M. R. Heilbron, *Jews and Judaism in Bradford* (Bradford: Bradford Metropolitan District Community Relations Council, 1974), 3.

Chairman, and his mother took part in the Ladies Guild. For a time Rabbi Rothschild was responsible for the Bradford Jewish community while being the Rabbi for the Sinai Synagogue in Leeds from 1984 to 1994 and then for an additional two years afterwards (Appendix F). This occurred at a time when the community had no real leadership. Rabbi Rothschild would “cover . . . the whole region for certain issues such as funerals and all beit din matters” (Appendix F). This situation became noticeable while Rabbi Rothschild was a child: he recalls that the number of children became so few in the community that for Sunday morning classes they were “collected by minibus and taken to join the classes in Leeds” (Appendix F). The numbers may have been on the decline but it is clear to see that those involved with the community were committed to keeping it going in whatever way they could and this spirit is still evident among those in the community today.

Rudi Leavor, Chairman of the Bradford Reform Synagogues, came to Bradford in 1937 as antisemitic incidents in his home city of Berlin became more and more commonplace (Appendix E). On arrival in Bradford his family were keen to assimilate into the community, they “did not speak German outside of the house”, and later anglicized their surname from Librowicz to Leavor (Appendix E). Leavor describes a childhood similar to that of Rabbi Rothschild’s, although his family were more hesitant in their religion. He became involved with the Reform Synagogue through his parents, who joined after receiving pressure from members who informed them that if they did not do so the Synagogue would “have to fold”. Leavor initially did not want to join the Reform Synagogue and instead showed a preference for becoming a member of the Orthodox congregation. However, he did not want to leave his parents so he decided to attend the Reform. It was a good decision, as he has been elected Chairman of the Reform Synagogue several times. Leavor also often leads burial services and is much involved with the choir and “almost singlehandedly” keeps the community going. Like Rabbi Rothschild’s family, his own parents would go on to be heavily involved with the synagogue; his father, a dentist by trade, “offered . . . weekly post-Bar Mitzvah classes for a while at his home” and he served as Chairman. He has also recognized the impact of the dwindling membership figures, commenting in 2004 that “in ten, twenty years time, I think both synagogues will no longer be here.”² Of

2 Rudi Leavor, interview, no. 49, 12 Feb. 2004, “Refugee Voices: The AJR Audio-Visual Testimony”, Wiener Library, London.

his own relationship with Judaism Leavor has commented that while “Judaism plays a large part in [his] life” it is “mainly (now) in struggling to keep the synagogue alive because of so few members” (Appendix E). However, it is this commitment to the Jewish community that, it could be argued, continues to keep it thriving in the twenty-first century.

According to the Constitution of the Reform Synagogue, in the event of closure much of the power and control, including that over the Reform section at Scholemoor Cemetery, will revert to Sinai Synagogue in Leeds “until such time as a Reform Synagogue can be re-established in Bradford.”³ There have been real concerns in the past few decades that this may occur. Services now take place once a month and the last wedding held was between Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild and Martin Fischer in 1982, which highlights how aged the community has become.⁴ They have managed to avoid closure by receiving funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, first in 1998 and again in 2013.⁵ This has enabled considerable amounts of conservation work to be carried out. The question that arises is what will become of the Reform Synagogue when there is no one left to run it. In her 2001 study of synagogues in Britain and Ireland, Sharman Kadish has noted that as membership decreases or becomes non-existent, particularly in provincial communities, synagogues are often converted into other institutions. Some have been transformed into cinemas, while London’s Spitalfields Great Synagogue, which was originally a chapel, has been converted into a mosque, in what Kadish has described as “the best example of the recycling of a place of worship.”⁶ As the Reform Synagogue in Bradford is a Grade II listed building it cannot be demolished, so another use will have to be found. In comparison, the former Orthodox Synagogue in Spring Gardens was turned into a Muslim education centre after the congregation moved to a larger property in Springhurst Road in 1970, so repurposing is a viable option.

The size of the Reform community was of such great concern that it became the subject of the synagogue’s newsletter, *The Star*, in October 1982. In an article titled “The Significance of a Small Community,” the

3 Constitution of the Bradford Synagogue, WYB547, Bradford Reform Synagogue Papers, West Yorkshire Archives, Bradford (hereafter, WYA).

4 “A Unique Wedding at the Bradford Synagogue”, *The Star*, Nov. 1982, *ibid*.

5 Bradford Synagogue, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 16 Dec. 1998, *ibid*.

6 Sharman Kadish, “The Jewish Built Heritage in the United Kingdom and Ireland: Report on a Survey, 1997–2000”, *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 34, no. 2 (Autumn 2001), 16.

author questions if they “have a role to fulfil within the ambit of Judaism” any more. However, the author encourages members not to dwell on the fact that they are small in number, but to act as an example for other congregations that have found themselves in a similar position. Most importantly, their size means that all members know one another. He writes that in “trying to keep going in hard climates” it has “enriched [their] regard for each other” and enabled them to “enjoy unique identity with each member.”⁷ Seeing the positive side was important for the community in order for them to keep up morale and to ensure that those remaining in the congregation continued to attend services.

The leadership voiced concerns too. In an impassioned letter to the members, Roy Stroud, Life President of the Synagogue and the son of Oswald Stroud and grandson of Rabbi Strauss, calls for greater attendance and participation. He writes that while they are “committed Reform Jews and proud members of a Congregation well respected in the greater Bradford community”, with “a beautiful and historic Synagogue,” their “presence at Services on a more regular basis” would be greatly appreciated. He goes on to urge them “to put aside a couple of hours, at least once a month, to come to a Saturday morning service.”⁸ Stroud’s fears over attendance and membership highlight the decrease in the Jewish population of Bradford and show a shift towards a more secular way of life.

Recently, the Reform congregation has developed a friendship with the local Muslim community. Indeed, just as Rabbi Strauss worked to foster good relations with his Christian neighbours in the late 1800s, so too have the Jews and Muslims in the twenty-first century. This relationship began when the Muslim community learnt that the Reform Jews had been struggling for some time with the upkeep of the synagogue. They first donated money in 2010 when Action for Business, a social enterprise company, gave £500 towards upkeep.⁹ This helped somewhat but by 2013 more and more repairs were needed and the synagogue’s forty-five members were unable to contribute enough money to pay for this. Leavor, by then the President, “reluctantly proposed the nuclear option”, to sell

7 “The Significance of a Small Community”, *The Star*, Oct. 1982, WYB547, Bradford Reform Synagogue Papers, WYA.

8 Roy Stroud, “Letter to Members of Bradford Reform Synagogue”, *ibid.*

9 Hannah Baker, “City Muslims help Jewish Community save Bradford Reform Synagogue”, *Telegraph & Argus*, 15 Oct. 2010, www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/8452994.print (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

Bradford Reform Synagogue, bringing an end to the Reform presence in Bradford completely.¹⁰ After learning of their struggles, Zulfi Karim and the Bradford Council for Mosques intervened. Along with a donation of £1,400 from the businessman Khaled Pervais, contributions of the local restaurateur Zulifar Ali and the Carlisle Business Centre, initial repairs were carried out. This has ensured to date that the Reform Synagogue can remain open.

It is also important to consider the implications of this friendship in terms of Muslim–Jewish relations, which are tense elsewhere in the world. Indeed, the situation in Bradford is so unique that it caught the attention of the both the national and world press – an interview between Karim and Leavor was featured in *The Guardian* as one of their top stories of 2013.¹¹ When one considers the difficult relationship that exists between Jews and Muslims in other countries, the situation in Bradford appears all the more remarkable. As Karim himself has put it, by “working hard to bring people of different faiths together” it has become possible “to support one another as good neighbours.”¹² It breaks down pre-existing barriers, allowing people of different religions to co-exist peacefully, and enables a small community to continue to exist in the city. Leavor has commented that Bradford shows that “the two religions and communities can and will stick together.”¹³ Indeed, Bradford should serve as a positive example for other communities across the world. The interfaith relationship is of great importance in the survival of the Jewish community and fostering that is perhaps one way in which they can ensure they remain a part of modern Bradford.

Evidence of the close relationship is apparent in the fact that the Muslim community as a whole continue to be involved with the Reform synagogue. In September 2014, Karim delivered the sermon at the service for Rosh Hashanah where he spoke about a trip he and his brother had taken to Mecca and Medina. In an article for the *Telegraph & Argus*, Leavor described the occasion as “a first anywhere” and remarked that it “should

10 Helen Pidd, “Bradford Synagogue saved by City’s Muslims”, *The Guardian*, 20 Dec. 2013, www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/dec/20/bradford-synagogue-saved-muslims-jews (accessed 12 Feb. 2019).

11 *Ibid.*

12 “Community Groups rally together to save Bradford’s Historic Synagogue”, *Telegraph & Argus*, 5 May 2013, www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/10265898.print (accessed 30 Jan. 2019).

13 Rosa Doherty, ‘Interfaith boost as Bradford Synagogue recruits Muslims’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 Jan. 2015, www.thejc.com/print/129013 (accessed 30 Jan. 2019).

be celebrated as another step forward in intercommunity relations in Bradford.”¹⁴

This was not the end, however. In demonstration of their close relationship, Jani Rashid, the Head of Diversity and Cohesion at Bradford Council’s Child Services, was given a place on the Bradford Synagogue Council in 2015. Leavor has said of Rashid that he “has been a long-term ally and significant supporter of the synagogue for some years now” and “an unfailing partner in the fight to keep the building open and flourishing.”¹⁵ The decision to bring Rashid onto the board “passed unanimously.”¹⁶ It was well received by Reform Jews too: for example, Tony Yablon has described it as a “wonderful” development (Appendix C). It is yet another signifier of the close relationship that has developed between the Muslim and Jewish communities in the city.

It is important to consider the Orthodox community at this stage too. In the postwar years attendance had remained steady at Bradford Hebrew Congregation, with slightly higher numbers than the Reform. Indeed, the move in 1970 to a new synagogue was because their place of worship could no longer accommodate the growing membership.¹⁷ That being said, they were by no means a huge congregation. Suzanne Korn attended the synagogue with her family as a child and a young adult. Born in 1960, into what she describes as a “traditional family”, she attended *cheder*, her brother had a bar mitzvah and the family kept kosher. She describes the community as “very tolerant . . . in many ways” but that it also maintained “some old-fashioned traditions which it never shook off” (Appendix B). This last is something that has affected Korn’s relationship with Judaism ever since.

Korn has also remarked on what it was like growing up in an increasingly small community. Much like the article in *The Star*, she portrays it as advantageous, noting that “everybody was considered important and had a part to play.” It is clear that it fostered a strong sense of community

14 Rudi Leavor, ‘A First for Cross-Faith Relations,’ *Telegraph & Argus*, 26 Sept. 2014, www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/opinion/tafeaturesletters/11498521.print (accessed 3 Jan. 2019).

15 Rob Lowson, ‘City’s Synagogue Council appoints First Muslim Member,’ *ibid.*, 27 Jan. 2015, www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/11750978.print/ (accessed 3 Jan. 2019).

16 *Ibid.*

17 Julie Tickner, “Shipleigh Synagogue is forced to close as Congregation dwindles”, *Telegraph & Argus*, 19 April 2013, www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/10367980 (accessed 31 Jan. 2019).

among the Orthodox Jews. Although Korn moved away from Bradford, she states that she “was very proud to be a member of the Bradford Hebrew Congregation” (Appendix B).

Tamar Yellin, an award-winning writer from Haworth, was involved with the running of the synagogue. She was born in Leeds and raised in the Orthodox community there. From the age of five she was taught Hebrew by her father, attended *cheder* and regularly attended synagogue. Despite this, she has remarked that she “never really felt part of the Leeds Jewish community.” This feeling intensified after her parents passed away and she “became detached from the Jewish community and alienated from Jewish religious practice.” She also married outside the faith, which compounded her sense of being an outsider. However, she began teaching Muslim children and this made her “more aware of [her] Jewishness” (Appendix D). This is something that Yellin has reflected on in her own writing. In her short story collection, *Kafka in Bronteland* (2006), the title story looks at the way in which people identify with their heritage. The female protagonist learns Urdu from a Muslim woman while she teaches her English, and during one lesson the Muslim woman’s children are preparing to go to the mosque, at which the narrator remarks that she is “filled with nostalgia for something [she] never had.”¹⁸

Yellin was initially reluctant to become involved with the Bradford Orthodox community because of her decision to marry a non-Jew. However, with her growing sense of Jewishness and need to reconnect to her heritage, she decided to do so after the Bradford Orthodox community reached out to her in 2005, just after her novel, *The Genizah at the House of Shepherd*, had been published. They invited her to come to the synagogue and she soon became a regular attendee. Her fears were unfounded and she describes them as “very friendly, relaxed, and open”, and her husband “was invited to celebrations and important services.” Yellin went on to work as the secretary for the Synagogue for many years and also gave tours to school groups (Appendix D).

This did not last, however. As more and more of the younger generation moved away from Bradford and turned away from Judaism, and as the number of elderly people declined, attendance and membership at the synagogue decreased significantly. By 2013, they could not even draw together the ten men needed for a *minyan*. In fact, Leavor often attended the services in order to make up the numbers for this (Appendix E) and

18 Tamar Yellin, *Kafka in Bronteland* (London: Toby Press, 2006), 17.

Rabbi Rothschild recalls that the rabbi at the time “would drive round at 7am picking people up in the (often vain) hope of getting a minyan” (Appendix F). Albert Waxman, who had served as President for twenty-five years, decided to retire from the position and there was no one to take over the job. All these factors combined meant that the Bradford Hebrew Congregation was forced to close in 2013.¹⁹ The last service, the deconsecration ceremony, was given on 7 April 2013. The Five Scrolls that were housed in the synagogue were given away to various communities, including one in Krakow. Rabbi Anthony Gilbert, who led the ceremony, urged those present to “leave . . . today with positive thoughts and feel enlightened . . . not saddened.” He reminded them that they “will be living on in other communities” through the Five Scrolls, which “will be used every Shabbat and Yom Tov.”²⁰ Furthermore, Yellin had “the sad task” of acting as “secretary to the winding up committee” and had to attend synagogue in Harrogate despite its distance (Appendix D). The building is still owned by the congregation but no longer serves as a synagogue, and, like Yellin, the remaining Orthodox Jews in Bradford have to look further afield to continue to practise their religion.

It is more and more common to find people from Bradford of Jewish heritage who no longer identify with the religion. Diane Fairfax is a key example of this. She was born in Bradford in 1958 and has continued to live and work in the city ever since. Her father came to England on the Kindertransport in December 1938 but was not placed in the Bradford Hostel. He first worked as a tailor, then fought during the Second World War, and afterwards became an engineer. Fairfax’s mother was born in the city and was a homemaker while her children were growing up. She later worked as a local government officer. Fairfax has stressed that her family “was not religious at all”. Indeed, her father “consciously left Judaism with the Nazis”, although he did return to it later in his life. She notes that she and her siblings were “encouraged to believe whatever [they] wanted to”, and Fairfax herself “flirted with religion”. For a time she attended Sunday school at a church, but only so that she “could be Mary in the Nativity play”. Instead of Judaism, it seems education and other pursuits were encouraged. Fairfax writes that her parents were “intellectuals with a love of literature, politics, music, and the arts” and, rather than requiring their

19 Tickner, “Shipley Synagogue”.

20 Rabbi Anthony Gilbert cited in John Fisher, “Brought to a Close in Bradford”, *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 April 2013, www.thejc.co.uk/community-life/105852/brought-to-a-close-bradford (accessed 20 Dec. 2018).

children to receive a Jewish education, they encouraged them to pursue other interests. Today, Fairfax identifies as “a cultural Jew” although, in a similar way to Yellin and her “broken history”, she does have “artefacts about the house” such as “menorah candles and a mezuzah on the door” but “that’s as far as it goes” (Appendix A). They serve as reminders of her heritage although they no longer serve any purpose in her daily life.

Fairfax has little connection to Judaism as she was not raised in a household where it was practised or given particular importance. However, many second-, third-, or now even fourth-generation Jews leave the religion despite their heritage and the fact that they were raised in a Jewish household. This could be caused by two factors: first, the impact of assimilation into a country where the main religion has been Christianity and, second, and one could argue most importantly, it is a part of a wider trend of increased secularization in the UK as people shift away from religious practice generally, many feeling it is no longer applicable to their lives. Leavor’s children, for example, no longer identify as Jewish. They were taught Hebrew for a time at the Reform Synagogue but little “stuck with them”.²¹ His four children also married outside Judaism, which he believes is the reason why they do not identify closely with the religion. He notes too that one of his children told him “that religion no longer plays any part in their lives” and all four attend synagogue only on some High Holidays, “but”, states Leavor, “only because I ask them to.”²² It is the same for Tony Yablon’s children, one of whom “is married to a Jew” but does “not even belong to a synagogue” and “the other is married to a non-Jew” (Appendix C). It has become more and more common for members of the Reform Synagogue to attend services only on special occasions, rather than regularly coming. This had been addressed in *The Star* in a 1982 article titled “The Once a Year Jew”, demonstrating that fears over attendance have long been a cause for concern, particularly as regards the younger generation.²³

Even those raised in observant households have begun to question their relationship with Judaism. Indeed, Yellin has addressed the issue of marriage and marrying outside the faith in her work, as noted earlier. In one of her most poignant stories, “The Girlfriend”, she addresses the impact of a family member marrying out. The brother of the narrator is

21 Leavor, interview.

22 Ibid.

23 “The Once a Year Jew”, *The Star*, Sept. 1982, WYB547, Bradford Reform Synagogue Papers, WYA.

in a relationship with a non-Jewish woman. This causes a great deal of friction among family members, particularly the narrator's grandmother and mother: the former does not want him to be with "a shiksa" (Gentile woman) while the latter thinks it is "better a shiksa than some Yiddishe bitch!"²⁴ This indicates the generational differences and shows, arguably to an extreme, how attitudes have changed. The narrator's grandmother maintains a strong attachment to her Jewish roots, keeping a picture of the Negev taken from a Jewish National Fund calendar on her wall above "the brass candlesticks she brought from the shtetl."²⁵ Her granddaughter, however, notes that they are merely there for show, perhaps even simply for reasons of nostalgia, as "she never lit them" and "she couldn't even say the proper words."²⁶ The narrator's mother, in contrast, is well-educated, a modern second-generation Jew, who does not strictly observe the traditions of Judaism. As noted earlier, Yellin herself married a non-Jewish man, so this story is perhaps representative of her own fears regarding how her husband would be accepted by the broader Jewish community, apparent in her reluctance to join the Orthodox community of Bradford.

Yellin's sense of being an outsider is present in many of her stories. There seems to be a tension between identifying as Jewish and identifying as British, as well as differences in levels of observance between the generations. As one reviewer has noted, she has a "fascination with identity and belonging."²⁷ Yellin has had difficulty reconciling her relationship with Judaism with her sense of being British. In an article for the *Jewish Quarterly*, she has written about her fascination with the Brontë sisters and how she wished to be like them as a teenager. However, the barrier for her was her religion because, "to be Jewish and explore English literature is to stumble periodically into mantraps which recall to you that you are an outsider", as reflected in the "casual insults and stereotypes" of Jewish people that appear throughout the literature, including that of the Brontë sisters.²⁸ Yellin notes too that this sense of existing on the periphery may have been influenced by the attitude of her parents. She recalls an incident where she was looking at the moors with her mother and Yellin remarked "isn't it beautiful!" to which her mother "mournfully replied, 'Aval zeh lo

24 Tamar Yellin, "The Girlfriend", *Kafka in Bronteland*, 45.

25 *Ibid.*, 38.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Tania Hershman, "Kafka in Bronteland", *Short Review*, 2009, www.theshortreview.com/reviews/TamarYellinKafkainBronteland.htm (accessed 30 Jan. 2019).

28 Tamar Yellin, "A Jew in Bronteland", *Jewish Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2007), 68.

shelanu. But it isn't ours.'"²⁹ For Yellin, this only seemed to pull her further away from the Jewish community. Despite her distance from them, she found that joining the Bradford Hebrew Congregation made her feel "genuinely . . . part of a Jewish community," which perhaps demonstrates that her fears of being an outsider were unfounded (Appendix D).

Unlike Yellin, Suzanne Korn has seemingly been rejected by the Orthodox community for never marrying or having children. Although she was brought up in that community and remained observant throughout her adult life, Korn says that as a single woman she feels she has little role in the Jewish community. Korn never had children and strongly suggests that this has led to unfair treatment of herself and others in the same position among the Orthodox. She feels that "single women have no place whatever in Jewish life if they do not get married both from a social and spiritual point of view." As a consequence of this attitude she finds herself "questioning what Judaism really means if you don't have a family", coming to the conclusion that "without [it] Judaism has little to no meaning." She adds too that "the only time the religion may notice I existed is at my funeral" (Appendix B). This is significant for a number of reasons: it shows how traditions have become a barrier for modern-day Jews and their practice of religion; they have come to feel excluded from Judaism because it does not allow them to adapt its conventions for their own way of life. It is interesting to consider the fact that although Yellin has married a non-Jew, she is still wholeheartedly welcomed into the community, whereas Korn, who is unmarried, is seemingly shunned and pushed to one side. Could it be that the community is just glad that Yellin is married? It is interesting to consider how she would be treated if she were not.

Conclusion

It is fair to suggest that the Jewish community in Bradford is different in 2019 from how it was in the mid-1800s when those first German-Jewish immigrants came to the city. The shift has been drastic and as the years pass their presence in the city can be less easily felt. The size has greatly altered, and this has changed the character of the city. Writing in 1934, when most of the German-Jewish businesses had closed or moved to different parts of the country, J. B. Priestley noted how different the city was without the Jews: "I like the city better as it was before, and most of

my fellow Bradfordians agree with me. It seems smaller and duller now. I am not suggesting that these German Jews were better men than we are. The point is that they were different and brought more to the city than bank drafts and lists of customers.”³⁰ Their disappearance was keenly felt by all, although it is fair to suggest that nowadays many Bradfordians may not know that the Jewish immigrants had been such an important part of the community. Jacob Behrens and Jacob Moser were two key figures in Bradford and demonstrate how important the German-Jewish immigrants were to the development of the city. What is most interesting now is their relationship with Judaism and how it has changed over the years. These first immigrants were largely secular and many had little or no attachment to Judaism. Indeed, it was a struggle even to bring together a congregation. Eventually they managed to do so and the Reform community is still present in Bradford to this day.

Secularisation of the Bradford Jews from the First World War continued into the Second World War, when the shift away from religious practice truly began. Humbert Wolfe and William Rothenstein are notable examples of this change. Bradford’s Hostel, set up during the Second World War, demonstrates that while the Bradford Jews may have been estranged from religious practices, they were deeply committed to helping those facing persecution in Nazi Germany. The refugee boys who lived at the Hostel were given a Jewish education, although they were encouraged to acculturate to English life as quickly as possible.

What of the community today, then? Sadly, the Jewish community in Bradford continues to dwindle in size. Leavor notes that “it is a struggling community which in a few decades may well be extinct” (Appendix E). Similarly, Rabbi Rothschild has noted that the Reform community “is a shadow of what it once was” (Appendix F), due in large part to the departure of the younger community who have moved elsewhere.

It is not all negative, though. The community gather regularly for the High holidays, most recently for Hanukah, where dignitaries from the city and those from the community have gathered together to celebrate. Leavor comments that they “have a Shabbat service once a month” and “all four High Holiday . . . services” too (Appendix E).

30 J. B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London: Heinemann, 1934), 125.



Hanukah at Bradford Reform Synagogue, 2018:
 from left, back row Imran Hussain, MP Bradford East; Marcus Thompson, Mayor of Calderdale; Zafar Ali, Lord Mayor of Bradford;
 front row Mayoress of Calderdale; Judge Laurence Saffer; Rudi Leavor, President of the Synagogue; Naz Shah, MP Bradford West; Sue Baker, Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire; Manoj Joshi, Hindu Community
 (Photograph Nigel Grizzard)

Efforts are being made by a local historian, Nigel Grizzard, to draw attention to the history of the Jewish community in Bradford. He leads walking tours of Jewish Bradford and published a pamphlet with Benjamin Dunn, called *The Bradford Jewish Heritage Trail*, which provides a detailed historical account of the Jewish community in the city.³¹ Such work is important in drawing attention to the city's Jewish history and encouraging people to look into how great a part of the city Jewish people once were.

Many who grew up in the community but now live elsewhere still feel connected to the city. Despite now being based in Berlin, Rabbi Rothschild “remains a member” of the synagogue, “pays for the JJBS Burial Insurance

³¹ Nigel Grizzard and Benjamin Dunn, *The Bradford Jewish Heritage Trail* (Bradford: HandcartMedia, 2013).

scheme for myself and all three children”, and plans to be buried in Scholemoor Cemetery (Appendix F).

While Bradford no longer has a Jewish identity, or is a Jewish city, efforts can still be made to ensure that people are aware of their contribution to it. Of course, life in smaller, more rural Jewish communities differs from the larger, urban counterpart discussed here, but that is a matter for further research. The Reform community in Bradford have fostered good relations with their Muslim neighbours, who had helped save the synagogue. Leavor has commented that in the context of “interfaith” relations the Bradford Jews are “highly respected.” (Appendix E). Grizzard similarly comments that Jews and Muslims exhibit a “harmonious” relationship, and they continue to be close to this day; a further study of this particular relationship and Muslim–Jewish relations in the city would be of great interest. The Orthodox community was initially somewhat larger than its Reform counterpart and many, such as Suzanne Korn, have fond memories of it.

Those of Jewish heritage who live in Bradford are more commonly found to hold no religious beliefs whatsoever any more. Diane Fairfax is a prime example of this: her parents placed greater importance on other pursuits, although she maintains some connection to her Jewish roots through objects she has in the home, such as several menorahs. Even those who were raised to be observant have found themselves becoming distant from Judaism. Tamar Yellin demonstrates the difficulties of balancing Judaism with being British and shows how this can make one feel like an outsider. She did become an active member of the Bradford Hebrew Congregation, however, and found her fears to have been groundless.

Now all that remains are the fragments of “broken history” in the city. The Jewish community in Bradford is representative of many that have come before it, and will undoubtedly come after it.

Appendices: Interviews conducted in 2015 and 2019

Appendix A – Diane Fairfax (June/July 2015)

1. Could you give your full name and/or your Hebrew name if you have one?

Diane Ruth Fairfax (as an aside, my siblings and I were each given an English name and a Jewish name).

2. Where and when were you born?

Bradford, UK, on 11.09.58 so I am 56 years old.

3. Where did you grow up? Could you describe your childhood? If you were born in another country, what was your experience of coming to the UK? How did you end up in Bradford? How did you adjust to the way of life in England? In what ways does life in England differ from life in your home country? Did you ever encounter any racism?

I was brought up in Bradford and still live there although I have travelled quite widely and worked in other places. I had a very happy and loving childhood and I believe benefited from my father's experience of a disrupted childhood in that to him family was everything. We did everything together and my parents were both very community-spirited so were always involved in wide-ranging activities.

If I were to answer this question for my father the answer would be different so I'll do that briefly but he did do a Steven Spielberg Shoah testimony so you can see his story on that.

He came in December 1938 on the first Kindertransport, landed at Dovercourt and was then placed in the boys' hostel in Leeds. He ended up in Bradford when he married my mother who was from Bradford. They were looking for places to rent in both Leeds and Bradford and my mum found one first. I think his experience was ok: he always said he was glad he came with his elder brother and he wished he'd concentrated more in English classes when at school as he found the language difficult.

He always kept his strong German accent. I am not aware that he encountered much racism.

4. Did you ever experience any antisemitism as a child? Have you experienced any as an adult?

I recall only one incident of racism while I was at school which involved another pupil writing "Diane is a Jew bag" in the condensation on the

window. I got up, wiped it off, and then told the teacher to deal with the perpetrator, which they did.

There was a second incident which I think is relevant but not racist. When aged about fourteen and studying the Second World War we had to watch a video of the Concentration Camps, you know the usual stuff, skeletons, mass graves, etc. I was aware that with three exceptions the whole of my father's family had been wiped out but watched it as part of my education; after all, none of it was a surprise to me but nonetheless it was upsetting. A couple of weeks later our teacher was absent so they decided we should watch it again. At this point I intervened and said I was able to sit through it once but had no intention of inflicting it on myself a second time. It was agreed that I could go and study in the library!

As an adult I have witnessed a lot of racism but none directed at me personally. I have also witnessed antisemitism in Bradford, unfortunately mostly from the Muslim population post-9/11 and 7/7.

5. What are your parents called? Where did your father come from and what was his profession? Where did your mother come from and what was her profession?

Father Richard Isidor Fairfax (it was Feiweles but he had to change it when he joined the British Army). Mother Mabel Singleton Fairfax (nee Lawton). He was born in Breslau, Germany, in 1924. It is now known as Wrocław and is in Poland as it was handed back after the war. My mother was born in Bradford.

He started out as a tailor in Leeds for Burton's, then joined the army and after the war became a semi-skilled engineer and very active trade unionist. My mother was a homemaker until we were teenagers and she returned to work as a local government officer. Prior to having a family she worked in an administrative capacity for a trade union.

6. Do you have any siblings? What are their names and what are their professions?

I have two brothers: David Robert Fairfax (aged 60) who was a nurse but is now retired and living in Hungary with his wife and son; and Mark William Fairfax (aged 54) who is a local businessman running a very successful pallet business.

7. How religious/observant were your parents and your family as a whole?

The family was not religious at all while we were growing up. We were encouraged to believe whatever we wanted so some of us flirted with

religion. For a time I went to Sunday School at the local church but only so I could be Mary in the Nativity Play! My parents would probably identify themselves as agnostics at best and more likely atheists. My father consciously left Judaism with the Nazis although he did begin to flirt with it a little as he got older and Kaddish was said for him at his funeral. We never observed high holidays, Passover, etc, though I know my dad did observe such growing up in Germany.

8. Can you describe your experience of life in Bradford (if you have not already done so in question 3)?

We were a working-class family and lived in a council house until I was thirteen when my parents bought their first home. Despite being working-class they were intellectuals with a love of literature, politics, music, and the arts and they were adamant that these pursuits were not the reserve of the middle or upper classes. They were keen educationalists and we were all encouraged to do well at school and supported in whatever activities we undertook. My elder brother was a competitive swimmer and I was heavily involved with drama. We were all involved in a voluntary organization called the Woodcraft Folk (a mixed version of the Scouts and Guides linked to the Co-operative movement and still going): we attended weekly meetings, camped with them at holiday times and went out hiking in the hills at weekends.

My mother was actively involved with the Labour Party and my father with his trade union so it was a very busy and active household. We also spent a lot of time with our cousins, particularly on my father's side and the uncle who came with him on the Kindertransport. They remained extremely close and were season-ticket holders at Leeds United for over fifty years.

9. How do you feel that your experience of growing up/living in Bradford has shaped or influenced you, if at all?

I was definitely shaped by the political discussion I was around but also by my father's dedication to his family and to giving something back to the country that saved him. Since I was seventeen I have always been a volunteer of some kind, whether as a youth worker, staffing the HIV helpline, or as a school governor. That is undoubtedly down to my parents.

10. What role does Judaism play in your life?

None at all – I have artefacts about the house – menorah candles and a mezuzah on the door, for example, but that's as far as it goes.

11. Do you identify as Jewish? If yes, in what ways do you identify as Jewish? Has your religion influenced your path in life?

I identify myself as a cultural Jew and second-generation Holocaust survivor but not as far as religion is concerned because it was never practised in my house. I guess I look Jewish and don't deny it as part of my heritage.

12. Do you feel that your religious beliefs have changed over the years?

My religious beliefs have not really changed as I've never really had any. I appreciate the fact that many people are comforted by their religion but then when I see what is happening in this world I struggle to believe in a higher force. Religion is at the heart of so many of today's struggles and issues.

13. Do you go to Bradford Reform Synagogue at all? If yes, how often do you go in and in what capacity? What is your level of involvement with the synagogue and how did you come to be involved with it? How large was the community when you joined and what is it like now? If no, could you expand upon why you do not go or do you go to a different synagogue?

I have only ever visited the Bradford Synagogue for events but I know people who are active there and I am aware of the major fund-raising efforts undertaken to save it. I don't go because I am not religious.

14. How would you define your nationality?

I define myself usually as white mixed/other because I am white and think I need to own that. I say mixed because to state UK or English would be to deny my father's heritage; he was German so if mixed European is an option I would go for that.

15. How do you think Jews have influenced Bradford? In what ways have they contributed?

There is a strong history of Jewish wool merchants coming to Bradford and setting up businesses here. I am no expert on this but the area of the town centre known as Little Germany was named after these Jews. I believe there was a strong influence both pre- and post- the Second World War. Recently there was an exhibition curated by Nigel Grizzard on the history of the Jews in Bradford. It would be worth checking this out. I visited it in London and it was very good.

16. Would you consider Bradford to be a Jewish city now?

I would not consider Bradford to be a Jewish city now and don't think it has been for a very long time. In this region you would associate Leeds and Manchester with being Jewish but not Bradford. The community has not managed to sustain two synagogues so in my view there is a very small and dwindling Jewish community.

If there is anything that you would like to add or feel that I have not covered in these questions, please feel free to add any additional remarks or comments below.

Appendix B – Suzanne Korn (June/July 2015)

1. Could you give your full name and/or your Hebrew name if you have one.

Suzanne Barbara Korn. My Hebrew name is Shlomit bas Eliezer.

2. Where and when were you born?

14.08.1960 in Bradford.

3. Where did you grow up? Could you describe your childhood? If you were born in another country, what was your experience of coming to the UK? How did you end up in Bradford? How did you adjust to the way of life in England? In what ways does life in England differ from life in your home country? Did you ever encounter any racism?

I grew up in Bradford in a traditional Jewish family. My mother was born in Bradford and my father came from London. I went to a local prep school in Shipley and then moved to a small village school which was Church of England, in Hawksworth, until I was eight. I do remember being physically forced to join in a nativity play at this school when I refused to do so because I was Jewish. I can still remember this very clearly. I then went to Bradford Girls' Grammar School which had a small number of Jewish girls throughout the school. We had our own Jewish prayers in the morning and did not join the main school for daily worship. There was one teacher who was consistently antisemitic but was unfortunately supported by the head teacher of the time. She would have me stand up in the middle of her class saying that my middle name was Barbara and that meant I was a barbarian; did I realise that Hitler killed barbarians? As I was only ten at the time I did not understand what she was talking about – but thought perhaps maybe I had been naughty and that was why I was being made to stand up in front of everybody yet again. I never understood what it was I

had done wrong. No other teachers ever behaved in such a manner. Later, long after I left school, I discovered that there had been complaints about this teacher from other students and parents but nothing was ever done about it. One of the things I very much value from this time, however, is that I learned to live with and understand people from other faiths and traditions. I continue to be grateful for the excellent education I had.

4. Did you ever experience any antisemitism as a child? Have you experienced any as an adult?

Apart from that described above the only other time I have experienced antisemitism was in a London university where I was confronted by another student suggesting in public that I should die because I was Jewish. They were unwilling to explain why they thought this or even to talk about their own beliefs. Among other things she was screaming that everybody should boycott M&S because they employed Jews on the management board. When I asked her if she had done a company search to tell me who exactly she was talking about she became less confident but did not desist in her demands. Interestingly, nobody [else] got involved and the situation ended without any further problems.

5. What are your parents called? Where did your father come from and what was his profession? Where did your mother come from and what was her profession?

My father is called Leonard Korn and came from London. He was the managing director of a plastic sheeting company. My mother's name was Betty Korn and she was born in Bradford. Before she had children she worked as a radiographer.

6. Do you have any siblings? What are their names and what are their professions?

I have one brother called Phillip and he runs his own business selling janitorial supplies.

7. How religious/observant were your parents and your family as a whole?

I would describe my family as traditional. We went to *cheder* and my brother was bar mitzvah. I did not have a bat mitzvah or *bat chayil* as I was the only girl in my age group and it was not a particularly common thing to do in those days. I was and still am happy I didn't have to go through all that speaking in public! My mother bought kosher food and we did not have

meat and milk in the same meal. I remember her cleaning the house from top to bottom at Pesach time. When we were small there was a kosher butcher in town which eventually closed so that kosher meat had to come from Leeds. This I suppose reflected the dwindling numbers of the Jewish community in Bradford.

8. Can you describe your experience of life in Bradford (if you have not already done so in question 3)?

There were many advantages of growing up in a small community. Everybody was considered important and had a part to play in the community – unlike larger Jewish communities where this is just not possible and people get left by the wayside. Bradford was very lucky to have several individuals who were prepared to devote a lot of time and effort into keeping the community going and who did so for many years – I wonder how many Presidents of the synagogues are still serving in their late eighties! Also, as many people came to Bradford from the Continent we had a wonderful mixture of backgrounds and cultures, which became part of Bradford. Because so many members of the communities were refugees in one way or another it gave rise to a strong sense of belonging and community. It was a very tolerant community in many ways as a result, but also brought with it some old fashioned traditions which it never shook off.

9. How do you feel that your experience of growing up/living in Bradford has shaped or influenced you, if at all?

I think Bradford has influenced me very much. Growing up in Bradford, [there] was a real community/family. If there was a family celebration you just invited everybody. Everybody knew everybody else and there was a great sense of community and [we] helped each other in adversity and celebrated when something good happened. When my mother was unfortunately ill nearly every member of the synagogue pretended they were just happening to pass our house and between them they taught me all I needed to know about how to run a house. That was something which will remain with me for the rest of my life because it was done with such kindness and care. I have tried to take these kind of values forward into the rest of my life.

I still consider my home to be Bradford even though I have not lived there for some time.

I was very proud to be a member of the Bradford Hebrew Congregation

and still am even though it has now unfortunately closed due to lack of numbers. Bradford Hebrew Congregation was independent and as such was not a member of the United Synagogue. This was very important to me in later life as I realized [that] instead of just doing as we were told or what other people did, we could shape our own future.

10. What role does Judaism play in your life?

Until recently I would say that Judaism was a very strong influence in my life. I cannot deny I am Jewish and have always kept kosher. This reminds me of who I am and what values I stand for. Until recently I mostly mixed with Jewish people and wanted to play a part in synagogue life.

11. Do you identify as Jewish? If yes, in what ways do you identify as Jewish? Has your religion influenced your path in life?

I do still identify as Jewish but am nowhere near as observant as I used to be. I still keep kosher but almost never attend synagogue nowadays. Being Jewish definitely influenced the kind of career I had. There were certain jobs that Jewish girls didn't do and some they did. I was expected to have a career until I got married and had children. Education was key, as with most Jewish families, and it was expected that I would go to university before marriage. I could be a solicitor, accountant, doctor, etc but certainly not something like say a hairdresser or air hostess, for example. It just wasn't done. Being a secretary as I became was only something you did until you got married – it was not considered a “real career” and was looked on as being second class.

I always felt that I should not have any relationships outside the Jewish faith nor marry outside the faith.

In my early career I was explicitly denied promotion because I would not go out on a Friday night with my work mates – this did not bother me as I simply moved firms, as clearly this kind of attitude was not acceptable. It taught me a lot about discrimination and how much I detested it from many angles – not just being Jewish.

12. Do you feel that your religious beliefs have changed over the years?

My religious beliefs have definitely changed over the years as I have gained more knowledge both from a Jewish point of view and life in general.

Recent conversations with the Chief Rabbi have shown me that Judaism is a male-orientated religion where men may behave in any way they like towards single women without any consequences. Single women have no

place whatever in Jewish life if they do not get married, both from a social and spiritual point of view. In my own case and no doubt in many other cases, I was given a Hebrew name when I was born, but as I did not have a bat mitzvah, did not get married, etc, the only time the religion may notice I existed is at my funeral. This discriminatory attitude is held by most communities (including my own) although they will of course deny this. Many single people just disappear and give up because of the treatment they receive. I was unable to become a member of my synagogue in my own right purely because I was single until I “had words” with a member of the Executive. This is unlikely to happen today but nevertheless single people are usually required to pay considerably more than half of the amount charged to a couple in most communities. Despite these issues I have always been good friends with and admired many of the members of the congregation who did all kinds of good work.

It is very difficult to call the leaders of the Jewish community in general men of God when they push aside such a large group of people without even a second thought. The United Synagogue recently held a course all about women’s issues – yet they insisted on sending male rabbis to run the discussions and the extremely well-educated women who took part were mostly married and acquiesced to this even though the course is about women’s issues!

I could describe many humiliating experiences in various synagogues because I am not married, particularly in London. If that is Judaism, it is difficult to know whether it is worth believing in, especially as the majority of United Synagogue membership is female.

As a result I find myself questioning what Judaism really means if you don’t have a family. I am slowly coming to the conclusion that without a family Judaism has little to no meaning. There are many other beliefs which advocate behaving kindly towards others, not cheating, looking after others, etc – not specifically Jewish.

13. Do you go to Bradford Reform Synagogue at all? If yes, how often do you go and in what capacity? What is your level of involvement with the synagogue and how did you come to be involved with it? How large was the community when you joined and what is it like now? If no, could you expand upon why you do not go or do you go to a different synagogue?

I never went to the Reform Synagogue only because we were members of the Orthodox community. I had little understanding as a child of what the differences between the Reform and Orthodox really were – only that

the two did not mix, which always seemed a shame to me. I would have had no objection at all about going to the Reform Synagogue but you can't be in two places at once. As a child I remember a large vibrant Orthodox community which especially on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah filled the whole *shul*. Sadly, the Orthodox synagogue has closed and as far as I am aware the Reform Synagogue has very few members now.

14. How would you define your nationality?

British.

15. How do you think Jews have influenced Bradford? In what ways have they contributed?

Jews have made substantial contributions to Bradford through business, charity, and community work, to name but a few areas. During the war, Bradford Hebrew [Congregation] set up a home and took in boys who had come to the UK on the Kindertransport. All the boys who lived there went on to become successful in a variety of careers and give back to the community who looked after them. One of those boys was my much loved uncle, who went on to work in the textile trade – had Bradford not taken him in he would never have met my Aunt, so there is much to be grateful for generations down the line.

It is only recently that it occurred to me to ask why they did not take any girls but I suppose there were obvious answers.

Other members of the community went on to do amazing work for Bradford as a whole. Another uncle raised millions of pounds towards setting up a research chair at Bradford University to help find a cure for cancer.

Other members of the community served on Bradford council as mayor and as councillors.

16. Would you consider Bradford to be a Jewish city now?

Not at all.

If there is anything that you would like to add or feel that I have not covered in these questions, please feel free to add any additional remarks or comments below.

Appendix C – Tony Yablon (July/August 2015)

I was born in Ilkley in 1940 and lived in Bradford from 1943 to 1953. I then went to boarding school (Rugby) and we moved our family home to London in 1958 just as I left school. I read law at Oxford from 1959 to 1962 and never returned to live in Bradford. However, my heart is still in Yorkshire in many ways.

Ralph Yablon was my father. We were members of the Reform Synagogue. I am in close contact with Rudi Leavor, who now runs that synagogue on his own; and also with members of the Stroud family. Roy Stroud was my much loved godfather. Amazingly, I remember meeting the widow of Rabbi Strauss – who was appointed as the Rabbi of the new Reform Synagogue 142 years ago! He was Roy's grandfather.

I am sure that you are aware of the close relationship with the Muslims in Bradford enjoyed by Rudi and his tiny band of members. It is very important.

From the age of 8 to 13 I was a pupil at Bradford Grammar School.

...

In my life I have not experienced any antisemitism. At Rugby School I was one of only 8 Jews out of 700. Many pupils there had never met a Jew before. The Headmaster made every effort to have more Jewish boys and after a few years there were 35.

In the 1960s several of the leading London law firms had a firm policy not to employ Jews. All those firms now have many Jewish members.

You will learn from Rudi [Leavor] and other Bradford Jews of the involvement of Muslims and Christians in the life of the synagogue. Rudi has sung and said prayers in the Cathedral and the Bishop of Bradford will this year give the sermon on Kol Nidrei. A Muslim now sits on the synagogue Council and his coreligionists provide all sorts of help and financial support. Isn't that wonderful?

I firmly believe that a great deal of what is today called antisemitism is in fact the result of antagonism towards Israel.

My father's parents arrived in England from Lithuania and Latvia in the 1880s. My mother's grandparents arrived in England from eastern Germany around 1850. My father was a solicitor in Bradford until 1958 and then became a public company director. He was a philanthropist and was honoured to receive Honorary Doctorates from three universities, Leeds, Bradford, and Buckingham.

My grandparents were so-called Orthodox Jews. My parents were

Reform. My wife and I are members of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. Although I was on the Council and Treasurer for several years, we are less religious/observant than our forebears. We have a daughter and son: one is married to a Jew but they do not even belong to a synagogue, while the other is married to a non-Jew. We have many Jewish friends but we feel we are British first, Jewish second, and Israeli not at all. I believe that this trend will continue in the country at large.

Bradford is in no sense a Jewish city but is something in a sense better than that!

Appendix D – Tamar Yellin (June/July 2015)

My name is Tamar Dafna Yellin. I was born in Leeds in 1963. My father was Arie Yellin. He was born in Jerusalem in 1913 and came to England in 1938, where he met my mother, Edna Shatz, who was born in Leeds in 1920. Her mother immigrated from Poland at the age of twelve and her father was originally from the East End of London.

My father came here to study either medicine or engineering but because of the outbreak of war he never entered university. He joined my maternal grandfather's furniture manufacturing company after the war and eventually set up his own furniture company, of which my mother was joint director. In 1969 he retired from this and became a Hebrew teacher.

I am the youngest of four. I have two sisters and a brother. We had a prosperous childhood and attended private school. My father taught me Hebrew from the age of five. We didn't keep kosher or observe Shabbat but did light candles on Friday night. We held a *seder* on Passover and attended synagogue on the High Holy Days.

When I was eleven we moved to the Jewish area of north Leeds. I began to attend *cheder* classes after school from Monday to Thursday and on Sunday mornings. I loved studying the Hebrew Bible and took 'O' and 'A' Level [Hebrew]. I went on to study biblical Hebrew with Arabic at Oxford. However, I never really felt part of the Leeds Jewish community, partly because we were not very religiously observant and partly because I am by nature a bit of an outsider.

My father died when I was fourteen and my mother when I was eighteen. My father had a large family still living in Israel whom we visited regularly, but we had no relatives in England. After my parents' deaths I became detached from the Jewish community and alienated from Jewish religious practice.

I came to live near Haworth, ten miles outside Bradford, when I was

twenty-one, because I loved the Brontës. I trained as a primary school teacher at Bradford College and taught in Bradford schools for several years. My interaction with children from the Muslim community made me more aware of my Jewishness. I began working for the Interfaith Education Centre as a Jewish Faith Tutor, teaching children about Jewish beliefs and rituals.

However, I did not seek to become part of the Bradford Jewish community because I had married out and felt that I would be ostracized. I sometimes attended High Holy Day services in Leeds but took care not to get into conversation with anyone in case I was asked awkward questions. It would not have been such a problem if I had attended the Reform synagogue, but I had been raised in the Orthodox tradition and disliked the Reform services, which were largely in English.

In 2005 I published a novel, based in part on my family history, which won several literary awards. The president of the Bradford Orthodox synagogue wrote to me after seeing an article in the *Jewish Chronicle*, inviting me to meet him and his wife.

After this I began attending the Orthodox synagogue in Shipley and eventually became a member and secretary to the synagogue committee. I started giving tours of the synagogue to school groups.

I found the Bradford Orthodox community to be very friendly, relaxed and open. There was no awkwardness about my having married out, in fact my husband was invited to celebrations and important services and was always made welcome at the synagogue. For the first time in my life I genuinely felt part of a Jewish community.

However, it was a community in decline, shrinking and aging. Within a few years our synagogue had to close. I have since been secretary to the winding-up committee, which has been a sad task although it kept me in contact with former members of the congregation.

I have a strong sense of there having been a thriving and diverse Jewish community in Bradford with a proud history and active role in the city, but of this now being in the past and the community doomed to disappear. I am aware that the Reform synagogue continues to hold services and would like to support these but when I do go to *shul* it tends to be the Orthodox synagogue in Harrogate. This is over an hour's drive away so I don't go very often.

The Jewish traditions are important to me and connect me with my past, my heritage and my identity. I am not conventionally religious – I would identify myself as a spiritual freethinker – but I derive comfort and uplift from the Hebrew prayers, melodies and rituals.

Appendix E – Rudi Leavor (January 2019)

1. Could you give your full name and/or Hebrew name if you have one.

Rudolf Oscar Leavor Refoel ben Zvi

2. Where and when were you born?

b. Berlin 31.5.1926

3/8. Where did you grow up? Could you describe your childhood? If you were born in another country, what was your experience of coming to the UK? How did you end up in Bradford? How did you adjust to the way of life in England? In what ways does life in England differ from life in your home country? Did you ever encounter any racism?

Grew up in Berlin till November 1937. Happy childhood. Excitement at travel, new country, leaving relatives and friends behind. No central heating, foreign language, driving on left, drinking tea and with milk. No racism encountered but we did not speak German outside the house because we were classed as “enemy aliens”.

4. Did you ever experience any antisemitism as a child? Have you ever experienced any as an adult?

Yes, I did experience antisemitism as a child, but not as an adult.

5. What are your parents called? Where did your father come from and what was his profession? Where did your mother come from and what was her profession?

Dr Hans Librowicz (I changed my name in 1959). Luise née Schwab. He was a dentist, my mother a housewife. Father b. in Inowrazlaw, Polish Corridor [Danzig/Gdansk Corridor], mother in Munich, Germany, grew up in Frankfurt-am-Main.

6. Do you have any siblings? What are their names and what are their professions?

Sister Lore Erwine Fleming, was physiotherapist, changed direction to become head conservator of Far Eastern artefacts at British Museum.

7. How religious/observant were your parents and your family as a whole?

Household was moderately Orthodox/kosher. Kept all the festivals and Shabbat.

9/10. How do you feel that your experience of growing up/living in Bradford has shaped or influenced you, if at all? What role does Judaism play in your life?

Following my grandfathers' and parents' way of Jewish life, I did the same; we changed from the Orthodox synagogue in Bradford to the Reform one in 1950s. Growing up in Bradford per se has not influenced my life. Judaism plays a large part [in] my life, mainly (now) in struggling to keep the Synagogue alive because of so few members. Active in interfaith relations.

11. Do you identify as Jewish? If yes, in what ways? Has your religion influenced your path in life?

Yes, I identify as being Jewish but don't proclaim it from the roof-tops. Casual acquaintances would not know my religion. I don't think being Jewish has influenced my path in life – I would possess whatever qualities I possess whatever my religion.

12. Do you feel that your religious beliefs have changed over the years?

Is there a God?

13. Do you go to Bradford Reform Synagogue at all? If yes, how often do you go and in what capacity? What is your level of involvement with the Synagogue and how did you come to be involved with it? How large was the community when you joined and what is it like now? If no, could you expand upon why you do not go or do you go to a different Synagogue?

Yes. We have a Shabbat service once a month when I always attend. We have all four High Holiday and Hanukah services which I attend as chairman and cantor. When I joined in 1953 there will have been 250 individuals (some as couples), now 45 individuals and 90 Friends. There were few people willing to take on responsibilities or I was cajoled. The Orthodox synagogue also had membership difficulties and also had Shabbat services only once a month. If they did not clash I used to go there to make up their *minyan*.

14. How would you define your nationality?

I have British nationality and acquired German nationality circa 15 years ago and renewed it recently when Brexit loomed, as a form of protest.

15. How do you think Jews have influenced Bradford? In what ways have they contributed?

Jews had a profound effect on Bradford as you yourself have described, but not any longer except for Interfaith where the Jewish community, small as it is, is highly respected.

16. Would you consider Bradford to be a Jewish city now?

Bradford is no longer a Jewish city.

17. How would you describe the Jewish community in Bradford in the present day? What are your hopes for the future of the community?

It is a struggling community which in a few decades may well be extinct.

Rudi Leavor addendum

One day in the middle of a service two men in civilian clothes entered the Synagogue, whispered something to the rabbi (presumably that they were from the Gestapo [Geheime Staatspolizei – secret state police]) and took him away. His two daughters saw what was happening and rushed from the ladies' gallery to see him being driven away in their car. All they could think of was to shout after him that he should know that he should not drive (or be driven) in a car on Shabbat. Some months later he re-appeared in the middle of a service and everybody stood up as one. The family emigrated to Los Angeles, USA where, after a few years he was knocked down by a car and killed. The driver was prosecuted but got off on a technicality. Many years later I was briefly in touch with the daughters. Their brother Bährchen with whom I was quite friendly, attending his bar mitzvah, became a rabbi in New York, but succumbed to a virulent bout of influenza.

Two mild anti-Semitic incidents come to mind. I was sitting at the hair-dressers when another client came in and happened to stand just behind me when he gave the hitler salute which was compulsory instead of "good morning" etc. In the big mirror it looked as if he gave it with his left hand when someone remarked that only Jews would give the salute with the left hand. Another time when I went to the Jewish secondary school there were no lessons on Saturdays, but instead there were lessons on Sundays. I went through the ticket barrier for the train with the satchel on my back showing my weekly pass. The ticket man called me back. I knew exactly what would follow and it did. He said "where are you going?" I said "to school." He replied "only Jews go to school on a Sunday." This ties in with Ulli where I explained that the media would infect the population with anti-Semitic sentiments, later to grow to obscene consequences. (Note: I always spell the dictator's name with a lower case initial letter.) A more sinister experience was when we went, as we often did, to the open-air swimming establishment at the Wannsee lake in Grunewald. At the ticket office there was a large and unmissable sign which said "Hunde und

Juden unerwünscht” (dogs and Jews unwelcome). That Jews were (now) prohibited we expected as a sign of the advancing antisemitic times. What was interesting was the order of nouns – dogs came before Jews. Of course we returned home. It was this Wannsee where a villa was used in ca. 1941/2 as the venue for a meeting of the higher echelons of the Nazi party to formulate a programme for the total destruction of the Jews. It was the so-called Wannsee Conference. The villa is now a museum commemorating the Holocaust.

My Father had travelled to “England” five times, my Mother three times trying to obtain an entry visa. When eventually they had it he then had to get permission to work. When the clerk handed him the certificate enabling him to do so he said he could work anywhere except London and Manchester. My Father said “where can I work?” The clerk metaphorically stuck a pin into a map of England and as Bradford lay fairly central he said “go to Bradford”. My father jumped on the next train there where fortunately there was a distant relative of my Mother’s, who introduced him to a wool merchant, Harry Kramrisch, who did a lot of trade with Yugoslavia. They made him Consul which enabled him to have access to diplomatic bags which, when sealed, could be transported across country borders without being opened by the customs. He suggested to my Father that he should place valuables in a parcel, take it to the Yugoslav embassy in Berlin with the request to send it to the embassy in London, which he did and which they did. On his next visit to London he went to the embassy and collected his parcel. When we eventually arrived in Bradford my first friend was Fay Kramrisch, granddaughter of Harry and at 93 she is still my friend. As she now lives in a care home and can only get out if someone takes her out, I do that once a week. I would do it anyway but if ever there was a realisation of the proverb “one good turn deserves another” this would be it, albeit after an interval of 82 years.

Appendix F – Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild (January 2019)

I. Could you give your full name and/or your Hebrew name if you have one?

Rabbi Dr Walter Louis Rothschild. Yossl Lavan ben Avraham v’Esther. (This is the name I know and use; apparently it is partly the result of a misunderstanding or a misreading of a letter . . . but that’s another story. . .)

2. Where and when were you born?

Born in a clinic or nursing home in Walmer Villas off Manningham Lane, 20 March 1954.

3. Where did you grow up? Could you describe your childhood? If you were born in another country, what was your experience of coming to the UK? How did you end up in Bradford? How did you adjust to the way of life in England? In what ways does life in England differ from life in your home country? Did you ever encounter any racism?

I was brought up in Bradford . . . We lived at 17 Moor Park Drive, Bradford 3, tel. 65663 (it is amazing what sticks in the brain! Later another 6 was prefixed). My father worked for a while as a draughtsman at the English Electric Phoenix Works not far away at Thornbury; I went to Thornbury Infants School next to the church at the corner of Upper Rushton Road . . . Bradford Moor Park at the other end of the street. Later I moved to what was then Hanson Junior School where my mother also taught. We moved from there (the building is now a private Muslim educational trust). Girls in one half of the playground, boys in the other! In 1966 I moved to Bradford Grammar School (BGS) on Keighley Road and a year later we moved to 24 Heaton Grove BD9 4DY where my father largely rebuilt the interior of a large Victorian chalet-style house. From Bradford Moor I had been able to take the trolley bus to Hanson school (1d fare) or walk . . . to Bradford Grammar it was a bus ride through town, a 23 or 24 (Crossflats) or 25, coming back to Thornbury it was a 30 . . . and went up Leeds Old Road. By moving to Heaton I had only a ten-minute walk to school. I left school in December 1972, worked at Boots in Broadway in the town centre (all long gone) for three months, then my father through a friend of my grandmother found me a place as a trainee on the German railways in Hamburg . . . till I started studies at Cambridge (Theology – Fitzwilliam College, 1973–76 plus a one-year PGCE based at the University's Department of Education till summer 1977.) Then I taught RE for a year at Grove Hill School, St Agnell's Lane, in Hemel Hempstead and lived in a council-owned flat in Apsley (201 London Road), so when I began studies in Leo Baeck College, which at that time was based at the West London synagogue, I had a daily commute from Apsley to Euston, then Northern Line then Central Line to Marble Arch . . . Later, when the College moved to a former convent school in Finchley, I moved into a small room there. I was ordained in summer 1984 and took up a post at Sinai Synagogue in Leeds, which meant also being responsible for Bradford and Hull communities.

4. Did you ever experience any antisemitism as a child? Have you experienced any as an adult?

At Junior School one of my teachers once snapped at me something about “You People always think they know everything!” which was rather out of character. Later when I was at the Grammar school I was once set upon by three lads in Manningham Park while walking back from synagogue on a Saturday lunchtime. At school there was very little because there were in fact at the time about twenty to thirty Jewish pupils – one was not isolated.

5. What are your parents called? Where did your father come from and what was his profession? Where did your mother come from and what was her profession?

My father: Edgar Herman Julius Rothschild, born in Hannover. He became in due course a Maths teacher but not always a very happy one! So he took early retirement when the opportunity was offered. My mother: Esther Rothschild née Bergson-Brown, born in Bradford – her father Herman from near Riga, her mother Margaret from Vitebsk. She was also a teacher, in junior schools.

6. Do you have any siblings? What are their names and what are their professions?

Two younger sisters, Joyce and Sylvia. (I have forwarded the questionnaire to them too.)

Joyce was a Music teacher, later an Adviser on Music Teaching in schools; since retirement she has also become a magistrate.

Sylvia was a social worker and then also became a rabbi, serving many years in Bromley and in Wimbledon Reform synagogues [south London].

7. How religious/observant were your parents and your family as a whole?

I think quite observant and active. It just seemed “normal” and it is now, when thinking back, that so much appears in my memories. We went to the synagogue service almost every Friday evening, by car of course but we learned it by heart as kids, and had Shabbat and Seder at home, Hanukah candles, etc. My mother would not allow pork in the house but for lack of a local kosher butcher in Bradford we did buy “normal” meat – beef, lamb, chicken. We went to the classes on Sunday mornings – later the children from Bradford were so few that we were collected by minibus and taken to join the classes in Leeds. We all had bar and bat mitzvah and Mr Hans Librowicz, a retired dentist (the father of Rudi Leavor, who also became a dentist) offered also weekly post-Bar Mitzvah classes for a while at his

home. Though few in number there were attempts to get some form of youth club started and we were also subsidized and sent to the two-week summer camps of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain each summer (Frensham Heights near Farnham, Surrey). My father was active for many years on the Executive as Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and later Chairman, my mother active in the Ladies Guild. After our Bar and Bat Mitzvahs we quite often led Shabbat services; in turn (depending on the state of our voices or whether we had left for studies) we would stand in that balcony at the back and lead the singing at services. Since my father was Hon. Sec. for many years we used to address big A4 manila envelopes (sometimes with big metal printing plates, sometimes by hand) each month and then even “earn” the postage by walking around delivering a lot of them by hand in the local area. So we learned the entire membership list by heart! There were also sometimes Executive meetings at our house. For many years it seemed that my father, Bob Ellinger, Arnold Brodie, Roy Stroud, and Rudi Leavor just took turns in different positions, rotating them round. . . .

8. Can you describe your experience of life in Bradford (if you have not already done so in question 3)?

Most is already above. Bradford was classed as “the largest village in the world”: one could barely go into the city centre without bumping into someone. I used to work regularly at the Central Library which had its history section on the fifth floor: I would go there after school, sit at my homework until it closed at 9pm then often walk home (it took exactly forty minutes.) At the Library there was a regular “crowd” and we would break for tea at the café on the second floor – and here there was a Sikh chap (“Paddy”) in a turban, and various others, Pakistani kids and so on and all was fine. On Saturday mornings very early there was a Bible Reading group at the Bradford Cathedral (CPV, Christian Point of View) with a breakfast of baked beans on toast afterwards and often I would walk early into town, take part, argue and discuss, then get a bus to Saturday morning school at BGS. I must confess that one main reason was that a certain young lady (and others) from the Girls Grammar School attended and since I went to an all-boys school . . .

9. How do you feel that your experience of growing up/living in Bradford has shaped or influenced you, if at all?

Enormously, I was always happy not to be a Londoner.

10. What role does Judaism play in your life?

Well, since I am a rabbi I don't feel I need to add much to this.

11. Do you identify as Jewish? If yes, in what ways do you identify as Jewish? Has your religion influenced your path in life?

Ditto!

12. Do you feel that your religious beliefs have changed over the years?

Yes, partly due to closer contact with the Holocaust and its effects in Europe where I work. "Second Generation" symptoms. Deeper depressions about declining numbers and the difficulty of building or maintaining viable communities.

13. Do you go to Bradford Reform Synagogue at all? If yes, how often do you go in and in what capacity? What is your level of involvement with the Synagogue and how did you come to be involved with it? How large was the community when you joined and what is it like now? If no, could you expand upon why you do not go or do you go to a different Synagogue?

Although I live abroad I remain a member, pay for the JJBS Burial Insurance scheme for myself and all three children, plan eventual (!) burial at Scholemoor and through this membership was also enabled to send my children from Germany to the Reform Synagogue Youth Shemesh camps. . . . While at school I also attended the Orthodox synagogue quite regularly for the weekday morning services organized for some years by Rev. Barry Lent who would drive round at 7am picking people up in the (often vain) hope of getting a *minyan*; afterwards we would have breakfast at his home, prepared by his wife Hilary (a pharmacist) and then go to my school where he would lead the "Jewish Prayers" in a separate room during the main Assembly. (Afterwards the Jewish boys would march in together with any late boys to hear the Announcements.) So I learned the Orthodox style of services as well and can *davven* quickly with the rest of them. But I have never felt influenced to believe that the Orthodox style was somehow the real or authentic or better style of Jewish life. . . . I could see myself the difference between theory and reality. I was quite happy to be who I was, did not feel tempted to become a *Baal teshuvah*. This attitude has remained with me until now and has been important in my career as a Reform rabbi.

14. How would you define your nationality?

Thanks to bloody Brexit I have just acquired a German passport as well!

15. How do you think Jews have influenced Bradford? In what ways have they contributed?

Your article describes it pretty well but that was of course at a different phase of history.

16. Would you consider Bradford to be a Jewish city now?

No. There are just a few individuals.

17. How would you describe the Jewish community in Bradford in the present day? What are your hopes for the future of the community?

It is a shadow of what it once was. I simply hope something can be kept going in a viable manner. . . . The building is beautiful and does act to hold things together but at the same time it is a financial liability. Rudi Leavor has, almost single-handedly, kept a lot of activities going (newsletter, visiting the sick and elderly, leading funerals, interfaith representative work, etc.) for many years but is not immortal.

Appendix G – Nigel Grizzard

1. Could you describe your experience of growing up in Bradford?

I was born in East London and moved to Leeds in 1976 aged twenty-three and worked in Bradford. I did not live in the City.

2. When compared to Bradford in the present day would you say the city was as multi-cultural and diverse then as it is now?

Bradford has always been a multi-cultural city – back in 1976 it was very diverse – now it is even more diverse with large communities of minorities not just from the Asian sub-continent, but from Eastern Europe, Syria, and other centres.

3. How did you become involved with the Jewish community in Bradford?

I was always interested in Jewish history and Bradford had in 1976 two synagogues and a thriving Jewish community.

4. What drew you to the history of this community? What motivates you to continue to conduct research on and write about the history of the community?

I always look for Jewish history wherever I go, in Bradford I found it and it found me!

5. How would you describe the level of interest in the Jewish community in Bradford?

Great interest judging by the number of requests I get from all over the world, from those whose families lived in Bradford, and others interested in the social and cultural mix of the city.

6. What are your thoughts on smaller Jewish communities in the UK versus the larger ones, say in larger cities like London and Manchester?

Smaller Jewish communities in the UK are having it tough as young people have left and their parents have followed. Bradford has perhaps 300 Jews living in the District, many living on their own and not as part of a Jewish community.

7. What is your opinion of the community as it currently stands and what are your hopes for the future?

The Bradford Synagogue carries on – it is a miracle but it survives!

8. Do you attend the Reform Synagogue?

No.

9. How would you describe the Jewish presence in the city from the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth? What do you think is the greatest mark/impression that the Jewish community has made on the city? How would you describe the Jewish presence in the city today?

The Jews have been part of Bradford from the early nineteenth century. They helped build Bradford, the great Victorian City, the Wool Capital of the World. Bradford has been good to the Jews and the Jews have been good to Bradford.

10. How would you describe the relationship between the Jewish community and other ethnic and religious groups in the city?

Harmonious – you should come to Holocaust Memorial Day in City Hall on Friday at 11.00 to get an idea of how the city functions.

11. Twenty-first-century Bradford is considered to be multi-cultural and diverse: do you think this is an accurate word to describe the city?

Definitely!