

*Report by Ernest Simon*



At the Annual General Meeting of B'nai B'rith UK on Sunday, 13th May 2013, Eve Swabe was elected President in succession to Jean Etherton who now takes over the role of Monitor. The meeting opened with the candle lighting ceremony, a reading of the mission statement, long service awards and an In Memoriam reading of the names of members who had passed away during the previous 12 months.

Jean Etherton's Presidential report highlighted some of the major achievements of the past 12 months. She was particularly pleased with the results of the B'nai B'rith Europe Young Jewish Adult Forum held in London last November. The presence of Gilad Shalit helped to attract some 180 delegates from 20 countries of Europe. Two important things were achieved, according to Jean, it provided access to 50 young adults based in the UK who had tasted a little of the ethos and work of B'nai B'rith and it provided a launch platform from which to introduce a younger generation to our organisation.

Jean spoke of the success of the Heritage Days project under the guidance of Valerie Bello and Barbara Nathan and managed by Lydia Drukarz, of the work of the LBIA and of the launch of BB 2545, the London based international group for young people aged between 25 and 45.

Tony Etherton's presentation of the financial situation showed that there has been a small improvement in 2012 compared with 2011. The AGM also approved an increase in annual subscriptions of £2 per person as from 1st January 2014.

Sylvia Lewin, a Past President of B'nai B'rith UK at the time when it was District 15, installed Eve Swabe as the new President of B'nai B'rith UK. One of the main themes of Eve's acceptance speech was the need for lodges to be closer to the centre and not be content simply with "doing their own thing". She stressed the importance of communication, on the one hand between lodges and on the other between the centre and the lodges. Among her personal objectives she emphasised the need for B'nai B'rith to have a more prominent profile in the wider Jewish community, to engage with the younger generation and to modernise ourselves. A member of Yad b'Yad lodge for some 25 years and its President on a previous occasion Eve has just been President of Yad b'Yad Lodge for the last couple of years where she demonstrated leadership and vitality, to the extent that Yad b'Yad is currently the fastest growing lodge in England with some 100 members. These are qualities which will stand her in good stead in her new responsibilities. We wish her well.



A Presidential quartet – past and present  
Eve Swabe, Jean Etherton, Sylvia Lewin and Toni Port