



## **Association of Jewish Refugees**

SERVING HOLOCAUST REFUGEES

AND SURVIVORS NATIONWIDE

[www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)

**PRESS RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 15 JUNE 2011**

### **ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES (AJR) CENTRE RELOCATION**

**The Paul Balint AJR Centre will be re-launched at the Belsize Square Synagogue, Belsize Park, in January 2012. The relocation follows the decision of the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) Charitable Trust to close down the Centre in Cleve Road, West Hampstead and, in due course, sell the premises.**

The Centre, which will open on Mondays and Thursdays, provides a warm and friendly setting for Holocaust refugees and survivors to meet and socialise, and enjoy entertainment and to hear from guest speakers.

As at Cleve Road, the AJR Centre will arrange for transportation for AJR members to and from the Synagogue and offer a wide range of activities for AJR members including the Music and Movement, Keep Fit and Thai Chi classes as well as a card club and an art class. Visitors to the Centre can also play bridge and chess and the Centre will arrange for the services of a chiropodist and a manicurist.

Amongst other functions, the Centre will continue to host the monthly Kindertransport and Luncheon Club gatherings combining lunch with guest speakers and musical performances and will arrange Chanukah parties and a Model Seder to celebrate Pesach.

As part of the decision to relocate the AJR Centre, AJR Meals-on-Wheels will be replaced by a wide-range of kosher Hermolis meals. Members will be able to order from an excellent menu and the AJR will continue to deliver to the North West London area. Hermolis will also provide the non-meat catering for the Centre's lunches at Belsize Square.

Announcing the move AJR Chairman, Andrew Kaufman, said: "After almost a quarter of a century it is with a heavy heart that we leave our wonderful home at Cleve Road where our members enjoyed so many good times and built enduring friendships with each other and our dedicated staff. Through the extremely generous support of the Paul Balint Charitable Trust and endeavours of our inspirational President and former Honorary Treasurer, Ludwig Spiro, we were able to create a bespoke atmosphere for AJR members that reflected the

culture and heritage of the refugees. By moving to Belsize Square Synagogue we will be able to preserve the unique refugee spirit and continue to offer our members their own distinctive setting and place to meet and to enjoy each other's company."

Details of the farewell party to be held at Cleve Road later in the year will be announced in the coming months.

- Ends -

For further information please contact Michael Newman:

Tel: 020 8385 3074

Fax: 020 8385 3080

Email: [mnewman@ajr.org.uk](mailto:mnewman@ajr.org.uk)

Website: [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)

#### Notes and background information about the AJR Centre:

The **Paul Balint AJR Centre** at Cleve Road, West Hampstead opened in June 1987 (the official opening was on 15 September 1987). AJR President and former Honorary Treasurer, **Ludwig Spiro**, oversaw the project to establish the Centre following a wide consultation with AJR members that began in 1984 about the need and desirability for a dedicated AJR Centre.

Work to adapt the premises at Cleve Road to the new requirements, including the creation of eight flats for AJR members, began in November 1985 following receipt of a generous donation from the Paul Balint Charitable Trust established by **Paul Balint** (1900-1978), who was born in Hungary and was awarded the OBE in 1974 for services to export and scientific innovation. He set up the **Paul Balint Charitable Trust** in 1977 for the benefit of deserving causes giving freely to Jewish charities, including the Jewish Welfare Board, the Blind Society, Old Age Homes as well as schools and hospitals in Israel. He also gave donations to national hospitals, medical research and institutions such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

The AJR Day Centre ran briefly, from January 1986 to April 1987, at the **Belsize Square Synagogue**, which was founded in 1939 by the Jewish refugees who escaped Nazi oppression and settled in Britain.

#### Notes on the AJR for Editors:

The AJR is the leading national charitable organisation exclusively delivering social and welfare services, including financial assistance, to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression as well as their dependants and descendants living in Great Britain. The AJR Charitable Trust supports Holocaust education and research projects and initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust.