

A Centrepiece of Memories

Rabbi Solomon explains how the AIDS quilt was created as a memorial to those who died because of HIV/AIDS:

“The AIDS Quilt was part of the Names Project, which started in the early 1990s, to create a memorial in cloth for people who died as a result of HIV/AIDS – mainly in the United States, but also in Britain.

Every year, when we start the World AIDS Day service for the Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group, we unfold the quilt. It is a bit of a ceremony of unfolding it from each corner as you go around, and then we sit in a circle and have our Chavurah, our fellowship service, so that it becomes the centrepiece for our memories, our prayers and hopes.

One of the most moving bits about the quilt is the fact that it is a kind of irregular patchwork of all sorts of torn bits of cloth in different colours. It symbolised peoples’ lives that had been ripped apart by AIDS, and the loss and the grief. The fact that all these torn bits can be put together to make something of beauty is a beautiful way of remembering peoples’ lives.”

This clip was produced in June 2013 in collaboration with University of Portsmouth, Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries.



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A Purim Spiel

The annual Jewish festival of Purim recalls the events of the Book of Esther, featuring characters whose identities are hidden or obscure.

Celebrations of Purim involve informal staged productions known as “Purim spiel” (“spiel” meaning “game” in Yiddish). It is the only holiday when even traditional Jews are invited to dress up, sometimes in drag – in clothes traditionally worn by the opposite sex.

In this recording, the Jewish Gay Group presents A Purim Spiel – a Smash Hit Musical in Drag at Golders Green, 17 March 1984.



Images from the performance.
This recording is approximately 10 minutes long.



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Rainbow Jews Oral Histories

The Rainbow Jews project collected over 40 oral histories from members of Britain's LGBT Jewish community. These recordings are taken from the interviews.

- Rabbi Lionel Blue on hearing the term 'feygele' (a Yiddish expression for a gay person, often derogative).
(approx. 45 s)
- JGLG President Peggy Sherwood on combining two parts of her identity.
(approx. 40 s)
- Judith W. on what it feels like being Jewish and gay.
(approx. 45 s)
- Alison Rees talks about marriage equality.
(approx. 50 s)

To explore more of our colourful stories visit Rainbow Jews online archive or our partnering archives: www.rainbowjews.com.



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A Kaleidoscope of Identity

This video recording features extracts of filmed oral history interviews produced in partnership with the University of Portsmouth.

Interviews are drawn from two oral history projects:

Now and Then

An intergenerational conversation with eight Jewish people sharing stories about their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lives in Britain from the 1950s to today. The group interviews were hosted by Media Production, Faculty of Creative & Cultural Industries and filmed at the Rotunda Studio in September 2013.

Rainbow Jews: Pioneers and Milestones

Seven interviews with diverse members of Britain's Jewish LGBT community, including Rabbi Mark Solomon, Russell Vandyk, Benjamin Cohen, Esther, Searle Kochberg, Bella Segal and Nick Jackson.

This video runs for approximately 15 minutes.



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