



A recent Manchester Community Mikva Vaad Horabbonim meeting (L-R Rabbi Sofer, ybl'ct Dayan Westheim zt'l, Rabbi Warfman, Rabbi Weiss, Dayan Steiner, Rabbi Levy).



Badatz Manchester — Manchester Beis Din

The heartbeat of Jewry in Manchester and beyond

Manchester Beis Din is one of Europe's leading *kashrus* authorities, but besides that role it also does an immense amount of other work for the community.

Our history can be traced back nearly 130 years and we are still the only all-encompassing *beis din* in the region. The organisation began life in 5652/1892 as the Manchester Shechita Board headed by Rabbanim of the larger synagogues in the city.

The first communal *beis din* in Manchester was founded in 1902. It was the first time the Manchester community had a *beis din* whose *Dayanim* took responsibility for *shechitah* and supervision of the local Jewish bakeries and other kosher retailers, as well as all the other *beis din* services such as *dinei Torah* and *gittin*.

Following the passing of Dayan Rivkin, z"l, in 1948, with Dayan Isaac Golditch, z"l, and other communal Rabbanim at the helm, the hunt for a world-class figure was undertaken to raise the bar and prestige of the MBD. Unanimously, the Poland-born Harav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, zt"l, was appointed senior *Dayan* of the MBD.

Within a short period of time, a new era was born. The *Minchas Yitzchak* (the name of the famed set of responsa written by Dayan Weiss) became a beacon of light for Manchester Jewry. The influence Dayan Weiss had on Manchester, on England and beyond knew no bounds, and even today the high standards he laid down permeate the walls of the MBD and are upheld with much pride.

Following the bombing of the Broughton *mikveh* during the Blitz in 1940, Dayan Weiss and Dayan Golditch led a campaign to build what would become the first communal *mikveh* in the postwar period.

With much sweat and perseverance, and following months of planning, fundraising and pride, the Tetlow Lane *mikveh* was built and it opened in 1954.

Dayan Weiss departed MBD in 1970 to become the *Av Beis Din* in Yerushalayim, but he left behind a rich legacy. Even today, if one walks in to the Eida Hachareidis offices in Yerushalayim and mentions the Tetlow Lane *mikveh*, there will be smiles on many faces, praising the *chumros* and calibre of the *mikveh*.

The Tetlow Lane *mikveh* became the blueprint for many of the world's *mikvaos*, all of which look to replicate the standards that Dayan Weiss demanded and put in place in the jewel he left for the Manchester community.

Following in the footsteps of the previous *Dayanim*, and building on the highest of standards in *shechitah* and kosher certification, Dayan Krausz, *shlita*, who joined in 1965, built up the MBD's kosher certification services.

Dayan Krausz was extremely active, ensuring that the many butchers, bakers and other licensees were upholding the requirements of their *beis din* license. He was, until recently, the main *Dayan* who took care of all *gittin* in Manchester. Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu, *shlita*, was the *Rosh Beis Din* for six years before moving to London.

In 1976, following the guidance of the Manchester Rosh Hayeshivah Harav Yehuda Zev Segal, *zt"l*, Rabbi Yehuda Brodie, *z"l* (then known as Jeffrey) took office at the MBD as registrar. With a law degree coupled with great wisdom, devotion, expertise and proficiency in Torah and *Halachah*, he enabled the MBD to further develop into the communal organisation it is today.

Rabbi Brodie became the Jewish representative, liaison and voice of the community for the many organisations needing guidance in our religion, including the public services, the police, ambulance and fire services, hospitals and other institutions. He built bridges between them all and the Jewish population in Manchester.

Rabbi Brodie featured many times on the radio and in other media, promoting religious Jewish life, the integral work of the Manchester Beis Din and what it represented to people from all walks of life, as well as giving many *shiurim* to the public on numerous interesting topics that came across his desk.

He was the first port of call for the many individuals seeking arbitration, mediation and divorce through the Beis Din. His compassion, professionalism and understanding for all parties was legendary.

Rabbi Brodie was ably assisted by his PA *tbl"c*, Jayne Simmonds, who continues to be the first point of contact at the Beis Din and the PA to the *Dayanim* and Rabbanim.

Rabbi Brodie's early passing in 2015 left a huge void. Since 2016, *ybl"c* Rabbi Yehoshua Aharon Sofer has taken on many of the tasks Rabbi Brodie had dealt with, in particular the Conversion, *Gittin* and *Dinei Torah* departments.

Dayan Osher Yaakov Westheim, *zt"l*, whilst at the MBD, was instrumental in the further development of the MBD's kosher certification services, expanding these worldwide.

This work has been steadily continued by Dayan Steiner, *shlita*, the senior *Dayan* who now spearheads the KCS (kosher certification service), and Rabbi Hillel Royde, an expert in ingredients and *Halachah* with more than 30 years' experience in the field of kosher manufacturing. Over the

years, the MBD has gained a global reputation.

The MK logo, which is displayed on some of the world's most recognisable and prestigious products, such as Kellogg's, Heinz and Typhoo tea, bears testament to the high standards it has in the world of kosher food.

If someone were to get just a small peek into the vast amount of work undertaken by the dedicated team before granting kosher certification to any food company, he would be amazed. The MBD isn't looking to become the largest kosher agency in the world, Europe or even just the U.K., but is dedicated to ensuring that any product bearing the MK logo is of the highest kosher standard, which the most discerning consumer would expect.

With the incredible experience, knowledge and halachic proficiency of Dayan Steiner, nothing is compromised. The MBD certifies raw materials, oils, enzymes, fats and retail products, from breakfast cereals and confectionery to sauces, condiments and alcoholic drinks. With a close working relationship with every company, constant correspondence and visits, each one respects the level of kosher requirements we demand.

The MBD's 'We will grow with you' approach means we are very competitive within the certification market and, with a close relationship forged between ourselves, the Badatz Eida Hacharedis and the Rabbanut of Yerushalayim, MK products in Eretz Yisrael are held in high regard. Over the years, exports to Israel have become a huge part of the MK Kosher certification income.

The senior *kashrus* staff are ably assisted by Rabbi Yaakov Pines and Rabbi Reuven Chevins, an extremely dedicated duo who have been involved with the department for many years.

Dayan Yitzchok Berger, *shlita*, brought his internationally acclaimed genius and knowledge of Jewish law to the Beis Din when he joined in 2003, attracting many high-profile Jewish court cases to its offices and raising the organisation's profile even further. He also took a keen interest in *shechitah*, implementing even more stringencies in this area, which continue to be the yardstick for our standards today.

Currently the MBD *shechts* in multiple abattoirs all within close proximity to Manchester, ensuring the *Dayanim* and Rabbanim are always available and just a short car journey away. Local *shechitah* is something the MBD has always promoted and encouraged. Alongside this, we have also certified many *shechitas* abroad, supplying communities in Europe and Israel with the highest standards of poultry and cattle. With the growth of Manchester Jewry, we likewise see a growth in meat sales.

Recently, Zevi Brodie, son of the late Rabbi Yehuda Brodie, *z"l*, was appointed by the directors and trustees of the MBD as head of operations, ensuring all departments and services are administered in the best possible way.

The community can be spoilt for choice for eating out in Manchester, with a growing number of takeaways, delis and restaurants under MK supervision. All licensees benefit from either *hashgachah temidis* or *yotzei v'nichnas* many times a day.

The dedication and detail the MBD's *mashgichim* put into their jobs is incredible. From as early as 5 a.m., they visit bakeries, school kitchens and restaurants, and spend their days and nights toiling in the kitchens to ensure the highest standards of *hashgachah* are observed.

The protocol expected from our licensees is very demanding and *b"H* we see the eateries full, from all sections of the community, from the less observant looking for a decent shwarma or pizza to the "black hatter" looking for a comfortable place to eat out, confident in the standards we uphold.

We are here for the entire community to service the needs of every household, from birth onwards. The MBD is responsible for the communal burial board ensuring that all members of the communities are buried according to the *Halachah* and it led the £2m-refurbishments to Manchester Jewish Cemeteries, working alongside the NMJCT to ensure the cemeteries are refurbished and preserved.

We have produced a detailed and comprehensive *Bedikas Tola'im* booklet, which is available to the public. We also offer a free *hafrashas terumah* and *maaser* service for the public. People from throughout the community know the MBD is the place to call if they have a question, ranging from translating documents to confirm their Jewish status if they are making *aliyah*, to assisting with *dinei Torah* and everyday matters such as querying the kosher status of a particular sachet of Heinz ketchup or the make of an ice lolly they have just discovered or any other *kashrus* query.

We are always happy to help in our role as the heartbeat of the Jewish community in Manchester and beyond. ■



Rosh Beis Din: Dayan Gavriel Krausz (C.); Senior Dayan: Dayan Yehuda Osher Steiner (L.); Director of Kashrus: Rabbi Hillel Royde (R.).



(L-R) Dayan Berger, Dayan Krausz, Dayan Steiner, Rabbi Royde, ybl'ct Rabbi Brodie z"l.