

Worksheet: Religious life of Jewish refugees in Wales

TASK 1

Jewish dietary laws (kashrut) govern the food which Jewish people are allowed to eat. Food that is permitted is known as kosher. Pork and shellfish are forbidden, as is mixing meat and milk. Any meat must be ritually slaughtered by a schochet.

Take a look at these popular Welsh dishes. Do you think they would be deemed kosher?
Write your answer next to the image.

Welsh cakes



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*Closeup of Welsh cakes.*¹

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Image author: <https://www.flickr.com/people/28576278@N03>.

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Welsh faggots



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*Faggots from Felinfoel.*²

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Image author: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=114584702>.

¹ Wikimedia Commons, *Closeup of Welsh cakes*, February 2009

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Closeup_of_Welsh_cakes,_February_2009.jpg> [accessed 20 July 2022].

² Wikimedia Commons, *Faggots from Felinfoel*, January 2022

<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=114584702>> [accessed 22 July 2022].

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Glamorgan sausages



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*Glamorgan sausage.*³

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Image author: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/57505599@N00>.

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Cawl with Caerphilly cheese



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*Cawl Cymreig.*⁴

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Image author: <https://cy.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defnyddiwr:Rhyshuw1>.

Creative commons licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>.

³ Wikimedia Commons, *Glamorgan sausage* (2007) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Glamorgan_sausage.jpg> [accessed 20 July 2022].

⁴ Wikimedia Commons, *Cawl Cymreig* (2009) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cawl_Cymreig.jpg> [accessed 20 July 2022].

Conwy mussels



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*Cooked mussels.*⁵

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Image author: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:David.Monniaux>.

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Fish and chips



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*Fish and chips.*⁶

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Image author: Matthias Meckel.

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TASK 2

Religion was an important part of life for many Jewish refugees in Wales. Many attended synagogues or cheder (religious schooling).

a) Read the short biographies of Herman Rothman and Julius Weil, Jewish refugees, who fled to Britain on Kindertransport in 1939, and the information about children's religious life at Gwrych Castle.

⁵ Wikimedia Commons, *Cooked mussels* (2004)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cooked_mussels_DSC09244.JPG> [accessed 20 July 2022].

⁶ Wikimedia Commons, *Fish and chips*, Blackpool (2018)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fish_and_chips_blackpool.jpg> [accessed 20 July 2022].

Herman Rothman was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1924 to Polish Jewish parents. He arrived in Britain as a refugee on the Kindertransport in August 1939 and went to the *hachshara* (agricultural training centre) at Gwrych Castle, Abergele. He later joined the British Army, serving in Western Europe, and was the first person to translate Hitler's will after it was discovered hidden in the shoulder pad of a leading Nazi. He later became a lawyer in London.

At Gwrych Castle, refugee children studied Hebrew and the Torah, and learnt about Palestine to prepare themselves for a life in 'Eretz Yisrael' (the land of Israel). One teacher noted that their aim was to "give the whole Hachscharah the atmosphere of a Jewish 'Home', and above all, to deepen the religious feeling, so that it should become a real and active force".⁷

Julius Weil was born in Dortmund, Germany in 1925. He lived in Köln with his parents and younger brother Arnold until 1938. On 9-10 November that year, his school was destroyed in the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. Julius' headmaster successfully organised to get the whole school transferred to London. Julius was on the first Kindertransport train to leave the country. He never saw his parents or brother again. With the outbreak of war, Julius was sent to Bedford, where he was billeted with a non-Jewish family. In 1956, Julius was invited to go and work at the Standard Box and Carton Company, in Pentrebach, near Merthyr Tydfil. He died in February 2021.

b) Listen to [Herman's](#) and [Julius's](#) testimonies describing their religious life in Wales.

c) Working in pairs or individually, answer the following questions:

1. How important was religion to Jewish refugees in Wales?
2. Why might religion be important for refugees fleeing to a new country?
3. Why should we respect the religion of other people?

TASK 3

Write a short paragraph (about 150-200 words) about something that is important to you, something that you enjoy, or provides stability for you, or gives your life structure and meaning, e.g., a belief system, a hobby, a relationship, a regular event. How would you feel if you were suddenly transported somewhere where you could not engage with these things? Do you know anyone this has happened to?

⁷ Erwin Seligmann, *Our Cultural Work*, Gwrych Castle Yearbook 1939/40 (Wiener Holocaust Library, OSP3600), p. 14.

