

# What's in a Synagogue that Makes it Special?

(Created by Sarah Bronzite, with thanks to Gemma Peck for the idea and the format)

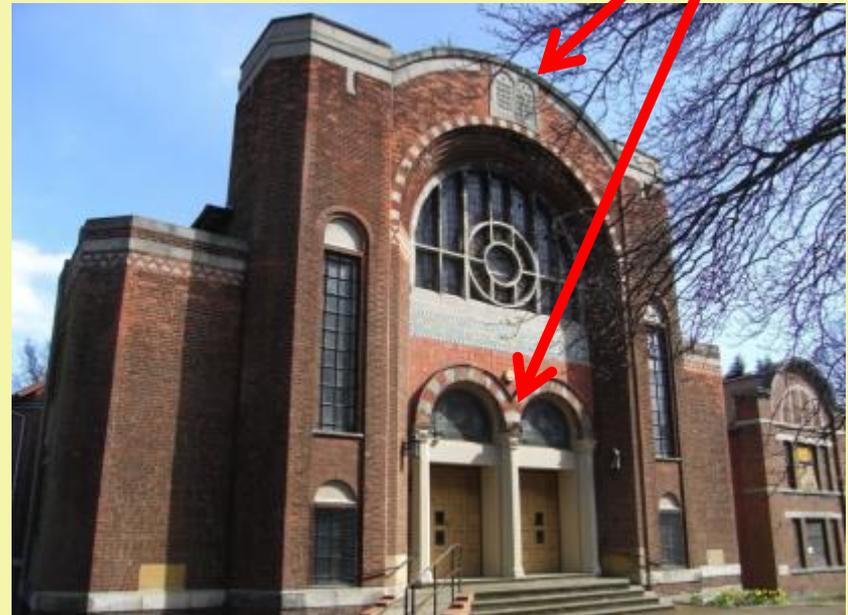
# Different British Synagogues



Glasgow



London



Sunderland



## *The Sefer Torah* (‘Bible Scroll’)

בארץ נשן ויאחזו בה ויפרו וירבו  
מאד ויחי יעקב בארץ מצרים  
שבע עשרה שנה ויהי מי יעקב  
שני חייו שבע שנים וארבעים  
ומאת שנה ויקרבו ימי ישראל  
למורת ויקרא לבנו ליוסף  
ויאמר לו אם נא מצאתי  
רחן בעיניך שים נא ירך תחת  
ירכי ועשית עמדי חסד ואמת  
אל נא תקברני במצרים  
ושכתי עם אבתי ונשארתני  
ממצרים וקברתני בקברתם  
ויאמר אנכי אעשה  
כדברך ויאמר השבעה  
לי וישבע לו וישתחוו  
ישראל על ראש המטה

The ***Torah*** is the word of God. It is written by hand in Hebrew on a parchment scroll and read in synagogue every week. It is permitted to print and translate it; and to study it in another language.



mantle (covering)



crown (or *rimonim*)



breastplate



*yad* ('hand')



The Torah Scroll is dressed with symbols of the clothing worn by the Jewish High Priest when there was a Temple in Jerusalem.



## The Holy Ark

Torah scrolls are kept in the *aron kodesh*. The ark is positioned on the wall that faces Jerusalem.



## The *Bimah*

(elevated platform/podium)

The *bimah* is the place in a synagogue where the *Torah* is read. People also stand here to lead prayers and to give sermons.



## The *Ner Tamid* (‘eternal flame’)

There is a *ner tamid* above the ark in every synagogue. It is never turned off. It is there as a reminder of continuously-burning incense altar which stood in front of the ark in the Temple; and as a symbol that God is always there.



## *Tallit*

(‘prayer shawl’)

A *tallit* is worn during morning prayers. It is also worn by anyone called up to the *Torah* for a blessing. In many communities a man will wear a *tallit* at his wedding, and when he is buried. A *tallit* always has tassels on each of its 4 corners.



## Stained Glass Windows



Stained glass windows honour God by making the synagogue look beautiful. They will often contain images of Jewish symbols, of plants, and of animals; but NEVER people.



## *Siddur* (‘prayer book’)

Jewish people mostly pray in Hebrew. A ***siddur*** will often print prayers in Hebrew and also the worshipper’s main language.