

A Thriving Community

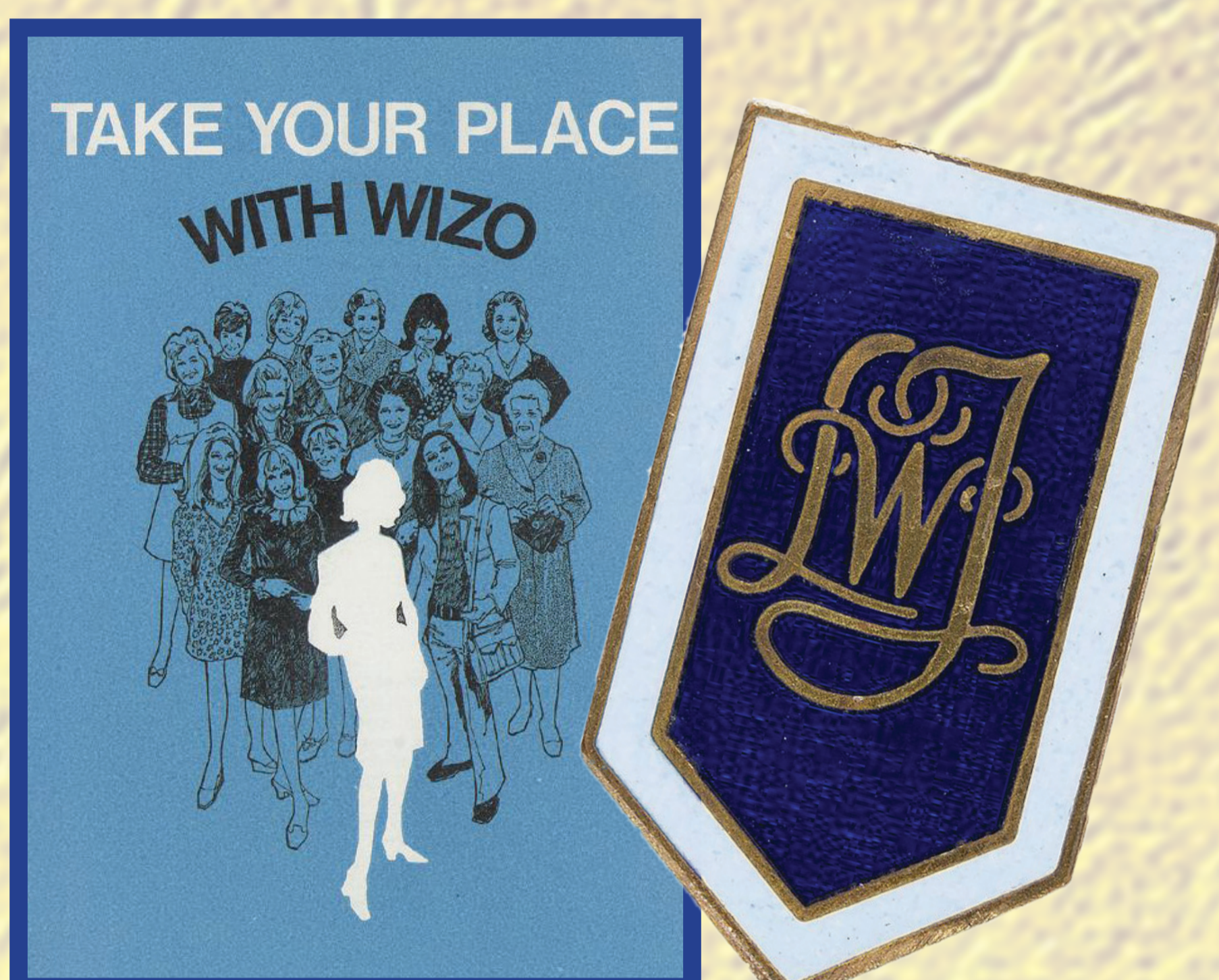
From the 1970s Redbridge boasted one of the largest Jewish populations in Europe of 30,000. Redbridge was perceived as an upmarket and aspiration borough to move to in the 1960s. By the 1980s, synagogues, Kosher grocers, Israeli Banks and schools were thriving in the borough.



Seder in London, 1974.
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.

“Redbridge in 1965 was much more countrified, much prettier... if you came and sat in here you would see cows walking up and down the road here and they came in from the fields at Wanstead. On Sunday morning you’d have the horse riders going by so it was very much a rural community then and it was very much a Jewish community”
(Maureen)

“Why did we pick Redbridge? I think mainly because there was an established Jewish community. And of course, it was known as Greenbadge Valley. Every other house had a taxi outside. And I just felt at home”
(Alan)



Left: A WIZO leaflet 1960-80 and a League of Jewish Women badge.
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.

Many Jewish women joined WIZO (The Women’s International Zionist Organization) or the League of Jewish Women. Committee meetings and special events became part of the social life for many Redbridge Women.



Leaflet for 100 years of Grodzinski Bakers, c.1988
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.

Socialising helped play a part in forming a close community. Eating out at restaurants were often reserved for special occasions. Coffee evenings playing games like Kalooki became a popular pastime.



Jewish Family Celebration, late 1970s.

“Somehow [Brownstein’s] was the place to go, you didn’t really need to buy the [Jewish Chronicle], because you went there on a Friday and you heard all the hatches, dispatches, matches and everything else, and then on the Sunday you heard the rest of the stories and it was, to a certain extent, it was like a club, but everybody knew that if they bought from Brownstein’s their salmon was fresh, their bread was fresh, their herrings were cut beautifully, the salmon was... You could see through the salmon more than you could see through my net curtains...”
(Myrtle)



Ilford Kosher Meats, Closed in 2008.

Opening of the West Ham Youth Synagogue, 1958.



An Eastside Community Heritage Exhibition. Visit: www.hidden-histories.org.uk