chanukah, the festival of lights was marked at clifford's tower, the site of the 1190 massacre of 150 jews and one of the darkest events in york's history, followed by a historic commemorative first lighting at jewbury, york's medieval jewish cemetery, where those 150 are buried.

and out of darkness came light. throughout the week of chanukah, york's jewish community has lit candles in reflection of its history and to bring hope and prayers for peace in these dark times.

**York Liberal Jewish Community** lit its 1st night candles within the walls of clifford's tower, the site where in the pogrom in 1190 over 150 jews took their own lives rather than renounce their faith. and in these current subdued times for the jewish community worldwide, gathered again on the 8th (last) night to light memorial candles and its chanukah lights at jewbury, the medieval jewish cemetery set up in the 1170s, where the 150 bodies of those who died at clifford's tower are believed to have been buried in haste.

it is believed that this is the first time that kaddish – the traditional jewish prayer for the dead - has been said and memorial candles lit at this historic jewish cemetery for those who died at clifford's tower. candles for lighting these 150 memorial candles were passed around by special guests the archbishop of york and his chaplain, the deans of york minster and of ripon cathedral, the lord lieutenant of north yorkshire and york's lord mayor's and sheriff's Consorts. these flames were then used to light the full set of candles on the main chanukiah, as well as those of members of york liberal jewish community's own chanukiah.

prayers for the dead were led by rabbi elisheva salamo, newly appointed rabbi of york liberal jewish community. chanukah is usually a joyous festival, celebrating freedom after the overthrowing of the syrian oppressors and the re-cleansing of the temple in 165 bce. but at both clifford’s tower and at jewbury - yet again in a world where another country, ukraine, led by another jewish leader, is still fighting for its freedom, and now the horrendous conflict in the middle east in both israel and palestine – we gathered to remember the atrocities that once took place here, to shine the chanukah lights on the darkness around us, and to pray for a better world and peace for all.

rabbi elisheva led the memorial service saying:

‘in this time of great darkness, it is so important to be able to share light with other people. sometimes, the greatest steps towards peace and well-being for all humankind come from the deepest places of sadness, fear, and persecution. as we pray for those jews buried hastily after the massacre at clifford’s tower, we honour those who suffered, and then use our desire for none to suffer again to creating hope, dialogue, and connection. had i died at clifford's tower, i would want to know that centuries later, the light of my soul could illuminate the candles of rededication.’

speaking about the inspiration found in the hebrew scriptures where people’s faith gave them resilience and hope in times of suffering, the archbishop of york, stephen cottrell, spoke about his own hopes and prayers for a better world. reflecting on the event, he said ‘it is good that
people of different faiths can come together and seek peace - with each other and for the world.”

The ceremony at Jewbury took place in the Council's undercroft public car park, known to have been built above the Jewish Cemetery, together with the Sainsbury's supermarket, in the 1980s. It is thought that circa 500+ Jews continue to lie undisturbed under the combined Sainsbury's parking area. It is hoped that one day a more suitable memorial will reflect the sanctity of the Jewish cemetery here, as has been undertaken at Clifford's Tower by English Heritage.

Despite the freezing December weather, both events were each attended by circa 60 guests from across Yorkshire. In York, there is a community Faith spirit and it is usual for us of all faiths and none to stand together in this City Of Sanctuary. All at the Jewbury commemoration agreed that it is imperative that nothing should undermine that solidarity, as we all lit the Chanukah candles, sang Chanukah songs and prayed for long-term peace for all.