



## SEASON OF PAINFUL MEMORIES – AND HOPE

Shalom Chaverim,

This is a unique time in the Jewish calendar, with such a variety of emotions, memories and experiences. During these next two months we will be marking Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzma'ut and Shavuot.

**Yom Hashoah**, 2 May – the oldest established day for remembering the Shoah and the memory of the six million. It is 74 years since the end of World War Two when we began to count the numbers of Jews murdered. As our survivors disappear from among us, we have an ever-growing obligation to keep their memory alive so that such a Shoah never happens again.

It is almost incomprehensible that within so short a time since the greatest mass murder in world history, the first attempt to exterminate an entire group of people – men, women and children, all Jews – no matter where or how they lived, today, before our very eyes, over the last year and more we have seen a vast increase in Shoah denial and massive ignorance about the fate of Europe's Jews. That phenomenon, in addition to the appalling increase in antisemitism in this country and throughout Europe, should make us all aware of the need to let the world know what happened only a few decades ago.

That is our sacred obligation to those who have no one to narrate their horrific story, and to honour those non-Jews who sacrificed their own lives for the sake of saving Jews during the Shoah. Their heroism must never be forgotten.

Those memories lead to the second major calendar event of the coming

months, **Yom Hazikaron** (Remembrance Day, 8 May) which precedes **Yom Ha'atzma'ut** (Independence Day) the following day. Yom Hazikaron commemorates over 25,000 Israelis who gave their lives in combat or were victims of terrorist attacks. Yom Ha'atzma'ut on 9 May marks Israel's 71st anniversary.

With declining Shoah memory and an increase in vile antisemitism, our support and love of the State of Israel and what it means to every Jew in the world must never be forgotten. Israel is our beacon of sanity in an insane world, a place of hope for every Jew seeking his or her home, a miraculous prosperous Jewish state that rose literally from the ashes of the Shoah.

No matter what our political views are regarding Israel and her recent election, we all know that Israel's viability and safety is vital not only to Israel's future but to our own security, safety and future living in the Diaspora. May this be a year of celebration for what Israel has accomplished, its wonderfully creative population and its diversity of peoples, with Arab Muslims, Arab Christians, Druze, Circassians and students from all over the world, who come to study in Israel, to live and be a part of the greatest miracle of the 20th and 21st centuries, a *tikvah*, a hope for everyone.

We will continue our solidarity with the State of Israel at our annual Israel Dinner at the Synagogue on Thursday 9 May. Thanks to everyone who makes this celebration possible each year.

Then comes **Shavuot** (9-10 June) the

celebration of *matan Torateinu*, the giving of our Torah at Har Sinai, starting this year with evening service on Saturday 8 June. I hope you will join us for our successful annual *Tikkun Leyl Shavuot*, our evening study sessions. It will begin at 7:30pm after our *ma'ariv* (evening) service that ushers in the festival.

This year our theme is Relationships and, as I write this address to you, the schedule is still being finalised. But we will be covering the relationship of Diaspora Jewry to Israel, past and present; our relationship to Judaism's sacred texts (Midrash, Talmud and Maimonides' Mishneh Torah); our relationship with other religions; our relationship today to the Jewish past; our relationship to music on Shabbat; our relationship between Jewish law and secular national law...and more!

Certainly, Shavuot is a reminder of the preciousness of study, of discovering each day more of our Jewish heritage and compelling tradition. Pick up a good Jewish book and share it with others! And *kol hakavod* to all our many Sunday morning attendees at the Discussion Class. This year we have delved into the history of Ancient Israel and made the Bible come alive.

To remember, to learn, to think, to commit, to act – all these components form part of our months ahead. May they be fruitful and uplifting months for each and every one of us.

My wishes for Shalom and Brachah as always,

**Rabbi Altshuler**

### SHAVUOT SERVICES & STUDY

**1st Eve:** Saturday 8 June at 6.45pm  
Followed at 8.00pm by study session, Tikkun Leyl Shavuot  
**1st Day:** Sunday 9 June at 10.00am  
**2nd Eve:** Sunday 9 June at 6.45pm  
**2nd Day:** Monday 10 June at 10.00am including Mazkir

**Tikkun Theme: Relationships**

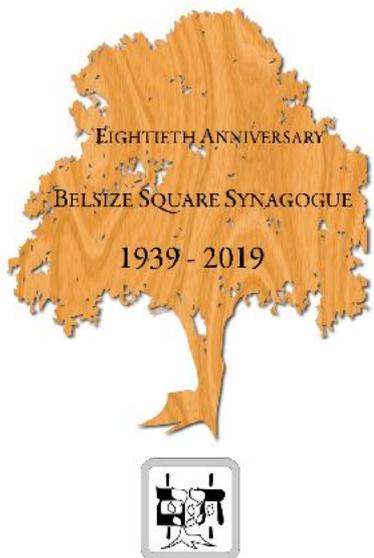
#### SHAVUOT OFFICE HOURS

The office will close on Friday 7 June at 2.00pm and re-open on Tuesday 11 June at 9.00am

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The front cover of our 80th Anniversary Brochure with its specially commissioned oak tree



The Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue Youth Choir at the Science Museum



Jeff Salmon takes shots of our Berlin visitors' last goodbyes before boarding coach home

Purim photos, from top to bottom

Pirate and Parrot

Salt and Pepper, otherwise known as Caroline Loison, head of Cheder, and youth leader Lucy Bergman

Giant masks & mouths made by Cheder pupils

The royal family of Ancient Persia on Belsize Square stage

Mordechai has an important message for Vashti

Would you have guessed this is our Cantor?



A VERY BELSIZE PURIM – THE 2019 PURIMSPIEL PROGRAMME  
A Semi-Modern Comic Purimspiel in short scenes by Miles Jacob D'Cruz

The News Host

Host of Shushan News, Persia's only news network

The Special Correspondent

A travelling journalist collecting the Royal Chronicles and reporting back to the News Host

Children of Persia

Infants, representing the true feelings of the audience

Vashti Fans 1, 2, & 3

Militant teens & 20-somethings who worship Vashti's social media presence

Achashverosh Fans

Fan-boys of King Achashverosh's YouTube Channel

King Achashverosh

Undisputed, unrivalled King of Persia

Judges 1, 2, & 3

Piers Morgan and Simon Cowell-esque characters commissioned by the King to select a new Queen

Mordechai

The King's most trusted civil servant

Informants 1 & 2

Mordechai's trusted informants and hired hands

Criminals 1, 2 & 3

Private citizens who devised a not-so-sophisticated way to usurp the throne

Advisors 1 & 2

Advisors and Guards of Court serving whoever the King gives authority to

Esther

Virtuous adopted daughter of Mordechai who is destined for the throne

Haman

Horrible oppressor of the Children of Israel & genocidal maniac

Zeresh

Haman's evil wife

The Crowd

A Generic Entity with no given form

Lily Wantman

Max Chalfen

Celeste Livingstone

Benjamin Loison

Zoe Loison

Zoe Cutner

Alice Salmon

Celia Krikler

Cast & Choir Members

Nina Freudenheim

Zoe Cutner

Alice Salmon

Celia Krikler

Sonny MacDonald

Abi Taub

Lily Wantman

Zoe Cutner

Alice Salmon

Celia Krikler

Abi Taub

Lily Wantman

Ruby Keve

Poppy Spencer

Zoe Cutner

Purimspielers,  
Choir Members  
& Miscellaneous Cast  
Members



# OUR 80TH "OAK" ANNIVERSARY

March 2019 was a very busy month. Our 80th anniversary started with a Friday Evening Service on 1 March which coincided with the nationwide Shabbat UK celebration. Did they know it was extra special for us?

The service took place in the hall, normally only used for this purpose for the Children's High Holyday Services. This time the post-service dinner needed the full space of the synagogue and kiddush room. It was a delightful meal and atmosphere. Our chairman Jackie Alexander welcomed everyone in both German and English, followed by a few words from Rabbi Altshuler.

The following morning's Shabbat service was enhanced by our visitors, the 17-strong Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue Youth Choir led by Regina

Yantian, and their ministers, Rabbi Jonah Sievers and Cantor Yitzhak Sheffer. The children were hosted by families of the congregation and enjoyed a weekend of treats.

Meanwhile, we all received a copy of the 80th Anniversary Brochure, produced by Michael and Kitty Brod. Its cover is graced with a magnificent carved oak tree, which is apparently the symbol that follows silver, ruby, gold, platinum and diamond. (Who knew? But then few marriages make it that far, so we are excused.) It contains a wealth of fascinating articles on aspects of our history, artefacts, memories and activities. A worthy addition to our synagogue's literature.

Purim was perfectly fitted to the occasion and certainly rose to it. The

costumes and Purimspiel were of a high standard and enjoyed by all.

The Civic Service weekend of 23-24 March brought the celebrations to a peak. The Shabbat morning service was dedicated to honouring our past Honorary Officers. Sunday afternoon included dignitaries from the Borough of Camden, including the mayoress and several councillors, the top police officer covering Camden and Islington, and representatives of the embassies of Israel, Germany and Austria.

Our congregation held its first service (a Friday evening service) on 24 March 1939 in the Montefiore Hall, St John's Wood Liberal Synagogue. The "oak anniversary" service was a worthy successor – including the reception which followed.

## PURIM SERVICE

As ever, Purim was celebrated with good humour and talent. On Wednesday 20 March the shul was full of unicorns, astronauts and princesses – as well as a wonderful pair of grown-up salt and pepper shakers!

The evening began with a delicious falafel and ice-cream feast. The reading of the Megillah was given by talented mostly young congregants – frequently interrupted, of course, by enthusiastic gregger-rattling at every

mention of Haman and whooping for our hero Mordechai. The Megillah reading was interspersed with a brilliant Purimspiel, with an entertainingly contemporary take.

As Vashti amassed followers on Instagram, the king's advisers looked for alternative queens for him by swiping right. When Haman set out his plan for destruction of the Jewish people, the King was too busy playing Fortnite to pay attention. Of course,

thanks to Queen Esther and her uncle Mordechai, all is well in the end. Congratulations to the youth choir members who performed this spiel so well and to their choir master, Miles D'Cruz, who wrote it, and youth leader, Lucy Bergman, who co-directed.

**Alex Antscherl**

*Well done and thank you to all involved in the Family Service. We missed Michelle Samson who was unable to join us due to the death of her father.*

## THE BERLIN YOUTH CHOIR VISIT

### A PARENT'S VIEW: Alex Antscherl

The now-annual visit of our friends from the Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue in Berlin began with the Friday night service on 1 March, where the two youth choirs sang together. We then enjoyed a very convivial communal dinner, with all tables hosting a mix of Belsize members and Berlin visitors.

We enjoyed meeting Katrin and her two youngest children, who had hosted Talia in Berlin last year, as well as two other Pestalozzistrasse members. Their fascinating life stories – including

growing up variously in East Germany and Russia – made for stimulating conversation. We were also happy to return Katrin's hospitality by having her eldest daughter and friend to stay.

After another lovely service with both choirs on Shabbat morning, the young people enjoyed an afternoon out at the Science Museum with youth leader Lucy Bergman. They also went to the IMAX Cinema and had a pizza supper.

The following day they had some free time before their afternoon flight home,

which our guests were very happy to use for a well-deserved lie-in, followed by a trip to Camden Market! Eager to use their time in London to the full, they managed a quick trip into town to see Buckingham Palace before returning to Belsize for the coach to the airport.

A huge thank you to Lucy Bergman, Simon Cutner and all who organised the visit and made it run so smoothly, ensuring all our visitors and our own choir had a great weekend. We're already looking forward to meeting our Berlin friends again next year.

### ... AND FROM OUR YOUNGSTERS:

#### Max Chalfen (year 6, age 11)

It was nice to see my friends and we all had lots of fun. The Berliners are so nice as a group. The banter was constant. The girls tried to be annoying but really they were just fun and funny.

#### Alice Salmon (year 7, age 12)

Last weekend started with a service when we were all sooooo shy and awkward but it got better when they arrived at our house. The next day ... another service .... ughhh! Later on we went to the Science Museum. We may have got lost a few times but that's all

part of the experience, isn't it?

Sunday came around too quickly, and we were all quite upset knowing that all the fun had come to an end. When we said our goodbyes to each other, we knew it wouldn't be for too long. We just have to wait for next year!





# OUR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS UNDER NEW DIRECTOR

## Peter Bohm takes up the reins

In February, the Synagogue again hosted *Lessons from History*, its annual Holocaust education programme for schools. More than 900 pupils in years 9 and 10 (ages 13-15) attended from seven state schools in Camden, Islington, Maida Vale, Hendon and Enfield.

More than 30 hard-working and enthusiastic volunteers contributed to an extensive programme, designed to teach these pupils about the rise of the Nazis and the events of the Holocaust, whilst also introducing them to the Synagogue and Judaism and giving them the chance to hear at first hand from Holocaust survivors.

Each programme lasts for three hours, beginning with a session in the Synagogue when the children view displays relating to key events in the Jewish calendar and the Synagogue. They then hear a general introduction given by one of the Rabbi, the Cantor, Rob Nothman or Jackie Alexander. The highlight of this section is invariably the opening of the beautiful Synagogue ark, which regularly results in an audible intake of breath from the audience.

Next comes an audio-visual presentation of *Herbert's Story – Life in Nazi Germany*, telling of events in pre-war Germany through the story of our late member, Herbert Levy, who died in 2015. This is presented primarily by Herbert's daughter, Hilary Solomon, and sometimes by Rob Nothman or me. It is updated by noting the rise of extremist parties in some European countries and racism in the UK today.

Pupils are then divided into four groups to watch two films. The first, *Edek*, was shown at last year's Jewish Film Festival and tells the story of Janine Webber, a Holocaust survivor from the Ukraine. It is related not only by Janine but also by a black American rap artist called Kapoo, as a novel and effective way to engage the interest of teenagers, who come from diverse racial and religious

backgrounds (very few being Jewish). The film ends with a message of tolerance and statement that "we are all human beings".

Our presenters use the film to engage the pupils in discussion on what they understand about the Holocaust, how it came about and whether individuals can influence things. The second short film, *No Bystanders*, produced by Stonewall, explores how verbal insults to individuals from minority groups can escalate and ultimately result in violence. Again, we seek to convey the message that every student can make a difference by refusing to be a passive bystander to racist or other offensive behaviour.

The four groups then listen to one of our remarkable band of survivors. Nowadays these are refugees who came on the Kindertransport and some second generation volunteers, who are dedicated to telling their often harrowing stories to young people.

These sessions are always very moving and invariably have a marked effect on the children. Their feedback indicates they are incredibly effective in bringing home the reality of these shocking events. Special thanks to our Synagogue members who make such a valuable contribution to this part of the programme.

On that note, everyone returns to the Synagogue for a closing ceremony. Six candles are lit on the Synagogue's beautiful memorial candelabrum by both survivors and representatives of the schoolchildren, in memory of Jewish and other victims of the Holocaust and the victims of other

genocides around the world.

On the final day, we were fortunate to be joined by Olivia Marks-Woldman, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, who wanted to see our programme in action. She told the children how privileged they were to hear at first hand from people who actually lived through the Holocaust and said that one day they would be able to tell their children about this and give the lie to any suggestion that these events had not happened.

Evidence of the high regard in which our programme is held is provided by the fact that the schools return annually, without question. We may consider reaching out to more schools but there is clearly a limit to the availability of our wonderful volunteers in order to expand the programme.

I would like to pay tribute to Henny Levin and Sue Leon for laying down such solid and important foundations. They held the first sessions in 2005 and stepped down after February 2018. The work involved should not be underestimated. I and, I believe, every participant gains huge satisfaction from the privilege of involvement in the programme. It has relevance on so many levels.

This year, several volunteers participated for the first time, including a few younger ones, and I would like to thank them and our regulars for their fantastic efforts in presenting the programme with such energy and diligence, supported by the Synagogue's hard-working backroom team. Between us, I believe we really can make a difference and there is still huge scope for development!

We would like to recruit more volunteers. Anyone with a teaching or training background would be extremely welcome but we'd be delighted to hear from anybody who wishes to contribute ideas or generally lend a hand. Please contact me:

[peterbohm29@gmail.com](mailto:peterbohm29@gmail.com)



*Year 9 pupils from St. Aloysius' RC College, Highgate, in the Synagogue to mark the programme's last day. They heard at first-hand from 96-year-old Selma van de Perre (3rd from left), a Jewish member of the Dutch resistance who was captured and sent to Ravensbrück. Behind her is Olivia Marks-Woldman, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Selma holds the arm of volunteer Peter Summerfield. Peter and his wife Marianne (3rd from right) came to Britain separately as small children with their parents. Gerald Cranston (far right), also a survivor, sailed on the ill-fated ship, the St. Louis.*

# CHEDER NEWS: From Frank Joseph

It's been a term of hard work and fun at Belsize Cheder. Caroline Loison, our new Head Teacher, has carried on many of the traditions of Belsize Cheder whilst adding several new twists to our Sunday mornings. I have now become involved as chair of the Education Committee since last September. We started work this term.

Cheder now starts with a Pre-Assembly task. This term the children have produced Hebrew letters out of lollipop sticks, *Mishloach Manot* (literally "sending of gifts") holders, a page of artwork for the 80th anniversary brochure, straw shapes of biblical structures and other amazing things. This new way to start Cheder allows children to sit with friends and teachers and enjoy a relaxed (and educational) start to Sunday mornings.

Our Jewish Studies lessons have covered a wide range of topics such as Shabbat, Brachot (Blessings), Israel, Jewish symbols, Peace and Mitzvot. After break, Hebrew takes centre stage with the introduction of the Aleph Champ programme.

The children work in mixed age groups, and progress through the Hebrew stages, earning wrist bands along the way. Both kids and teachers seem to

have bought into this programme, with its use of colour coding to mark progress along the learning ladder. There has been a real "buzz" whenever the coloured table cloths come out and Work books and Reading books are seen on the tables.

Cheder finishes with Clubs. The children can learn Israeli dancing, create their own BSS Monopoly game and sew matzah covers. We are always looking for members of the community to come and share a skill with children, so please get in touch with our Head Teacher, Caroline, if you would like to help out.

As regards special events, Purim at Cheder was full of costumes and fun activities. Caroline organised a Purim Fair where everyone had a great time making Hamentashchen, pinning the crown on Queen Esther, making noisemakers and candy Megillah scrolls and various other activities. There may even have been a few sweets eaten here and there!

But the real highlight of Purim@Cheder morning was when the whole Cheder walked down the street in fancy dress behind Richard Pollins on the final leg of his incredible 40km walk in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association.



*Mishloach manot (gifts) created by and at Cheder*

Other highlights were our Inclusion Day, following the Synagogue's Inclusion Shabbat, when the Cheder welcomed a guest speaker at Assembly on 10 March to learn about the Langdon community, which helps Jewish people with learning disabilities. Earlier, in January, the children marked Holocaust Memorial Day by sending postcards to Holocaust survivors.

Next term many of our great teaching assistants will take time out to prepare for their GCSEs and A levels so we need members of the community to fill their shoes. Can you spare an hour on Sunday mornings to read Hebrew with our kids? It is a great opportunity to see what goes on at Cheder!

Please contact Caroline Loison on [caroline@synagogue.org.uk](mailto:caroline@synagogue.org.uk) or call the Synagogue Office for more details.

## WALKING THE WALK

Congratulations to Richard Pollins on his successful and idiosyncratic fund-raising four-day walk from Thursday to Sunday March 14-17 to raise money for research into motor neurone disease from which his mother Vera, our former Hon Secretary, suffers.

Richard, who was born without legs but works wonders with prosthetic legs and crutches, leading a normal life with a family and job, walked 10km a day. He started in Denmark Hill, South London, where he first visited the King's College laboratory that researches into motor neurone disease and was waved off by its staff. His first day's walk took him past Kennington Oval and finished at the Shard in driving rain.

Day Two saw him visiting London Bridge, Borough Market and the Millennium Bridge. He crossed north at Westminster Bridge and finished at Trafalgar Square. This time the weather produced a gale but his spirit would not be dampened

Day Three started from Trafalgar

Square and headed north-west, taking in Buckingham Palace, the Serpentine in Hyde Park and two well-known landmarks of St John's Wood: Lord's cricket ground and, further east, Oslo Court Restaurant at the bottom of a block of flats where time has not changed the style of cooking or service, making it a much loved haunt of Belsize Square old-timers. The day ended at London Zoo in the walk's best



*Richard and wife, Sara, brave the terrible weather...and that was just the first day!*

weather – which is not not saying much.

Finally, Day Four was a tramp north along Finchley Road, stopping off at Belsize Square to greet the excited Cheder kids and then on through Temple Fortune and Finchley to the parental home in Woodside Park. And the weather? A hailstorm.

So how did our intrepid walker feel? "Elated and overwhelmed at the end. I was more tired just before the end but the adrenalin kept me going. It was good exercise and my training beforehand helped me walk faster. I felt it more the next day." Richard also got blisters on his hands and had to have his artificial knees replaced but that did not bother him.

Far more important was the financial outcome. "I turned 40 and aimed to raise £40,000. In fact, the walk raised £64,000, excluding gift aid. There were over 1,300 individual donations."

**Ruth Rothenberg**





# ECO SYNAGOGUE

## Paul Fraylich on our part in this initiative

A cross-denominational initiative was set up in January 2018 to reflect the concerns many people have about our impact on the overall environment both now and for the future. Its generic name, Eco Synagogue, partners the project launched at St Paul's Cathedral in January 2016, itself a successor to Eco-Congregation, which started in 2000 or 2001. An Eco Mosque has also been established.

Eco Synagogue's launch took place at New North London Synagogue under an enthusiastic Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, grandson of our founding rabbi, Dr Georg Salzberger, and was addressed by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams (now Lord Williams of Oystermouth). It follows the Eco Church pattern of three levels of attainment signified by Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. Having always been interested in the environment, I enthusiastically attended the event.

Backed by our chair, Jackie Alexander, I represented BSS at an open planning meeting of interested synagogues in early summer 2018, held at Alyth Gardens. We set out our intent and discussed issues in which we all could have an impact, such as sustainability, alternative sources of energy and energy reduction, and having a positive impact on the environment.

Last June's AGM address from our chairman announced that we were registering our participation in the Eco Synagogue project. I was to champion our efforts, supported by the Facilities (formerly Building) Committee, together with our chief executive, Lee Taylor and caretaker, Gordon Larkin.

We completed an initial assessment and registration to see the areas where we could improve: teaching, the building, the land we occupy, community and lifestyle. The Facilities

Committee explored possibilities, with Peter Leon looking into solar panels as part of our energy supply.

Unfortunately, this is not viable as our hall roof cannot take the weight of panels and additional structures. Lee and Gordon investigated methods for reducing our environmental impact from waste and cleaning products. I took on ways to improve the ecological use of our land and to serve as Belsize Square representative at Eco Synagogue meetings.

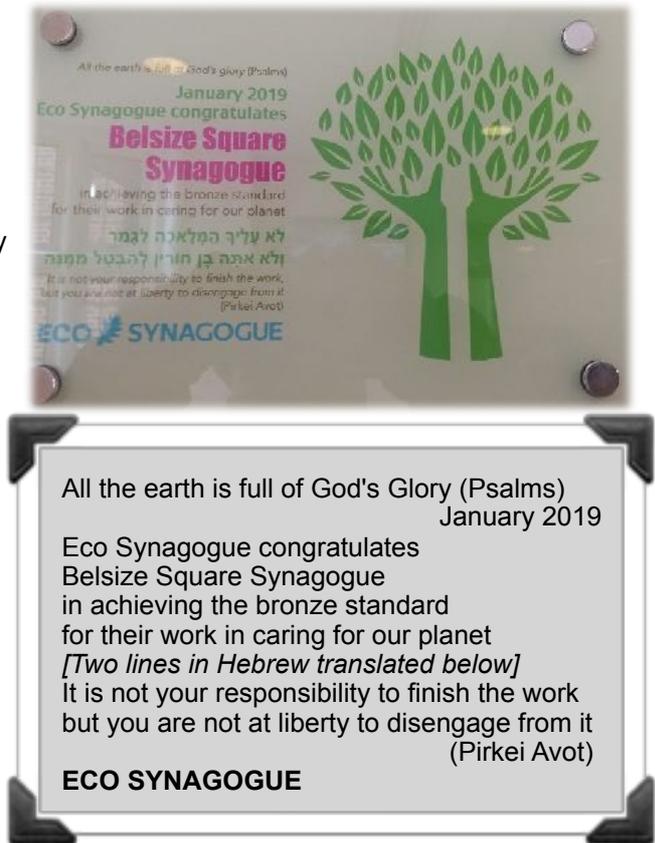
The first anniversary of Eco Synagogue was held at New North London on 29 January, when we were due to be addressed by Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Gove. Sadly, he was unable to attend, due to the small, trifling matter of Brexit. Despite this setback, we were addressed by a number of key movers and shakers.

The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtman, the Church of England's lead bishop on environment, talked about spirituality and the environment, and his early interest in the subject. Malini Mehra, Commissioner to the Mayor of London on sustainability, explained London-wide initiatives and how to get local information. Dr Joanna Setzer of the London School of Economics spoke on litigation with respect to missing environmental targets. Dr Michal Nachmany, also of LSE, discussed climate change policy and how to get your voice heard.

Robin Clark, Director of Partnerships at Just Eat, a takeaway food delivery

service, told us about the development of biodegradable packaging and how his company is working with its partners towards goals such as replacing plastic sauce sachets with "green" alternatives. Focus sessions followed on the many issues involved. The event concluded with an address from Edwin Shuker, Vice President of the Board of Deputies, who declared the Board's pride in being an active participant in Eco Synagogue.

This celebration closed with an awards ceremony for participating communities. Five synagogues received awards of merit and two communities gained a Bronze Award – New North London Synagogue and our very own community, Belsize Square (as noted in our previous issue). I hope you all will look with pride at the beautiful plaque in the Kiddush Room near the window. All we now have to do is work at changing this award to the next step, silver!



## B'NEI MITZVAH AND CHEDER SHABBAT

Saturday 2 February saw the annual B'nei Mitzvah Anniversary Service, where the previous year's Bar and Bat Mitzvah pupils partake in the service – whether leyning, chanting maftir and haftarah, reading prayers for the Royal Family and State of Israel or opening the Ark for *Anim Zemirot*. Started by Rabbi Altschuler, this has proved a popular event. This year for the first time, it was decided to include the whole Cheder, which enabled each class to lead a part of the Service. So **Year 5** (age 9) led the Shema, chanting it beautifully. **Year 1** (age 5) had the mitzvah of Geliilah before they went off to their Kikar Kids service. **Year 2** (age 6) led Kiddush for the Community, which they had been learning at Cheder in the weeks before.

Our post-Barmitzvah pupils, aided by staff members, leyned the Sidrah expertly. Head Teacher Caroline Loison and her staff were honoured with an Aliyah. Joe Hacker chanted maftir and haftarah wonderfully. Frank Joseph, our Education Committee Chair, was honoured with an Aliyah, accompanied by all the children. **Year 6** (age 10) led *Ein Keloheinu* melodiously. Towards the end of the service, all the children ascended the bimah for *Anim Zemirot* and a sweetie, which rounded the special service off perfectly. Preparations are already in place for next year. Look out for details.

Adam Rynhold

On 2 March an extraordinary Torah gift to our synagogue was celebrated when the miniature scroll was carried round the congregation by one of the young visiting choristers from Berlin's Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue. Their cantor, Yitzhak Sheffer, also leyned a passage from it, albeit with the help of an adjacent script, since the tiny handwriting needs good eyesight. The scroll is only 20cm (8 inches) high, a third to a quarter of a standard size Sefer Torah. Its tale is told by **Ruth Goodwin**.

## HOW THE GRODZIN-JOSEPHSON TORAH CAME TO BE DONATED TO BELSIZE SQUARE

Soon after the death of my father, Gerald Goodwin, on 4 November 2018, we invited our Cantor, Paul Heller, to come to our home to collect a family Torah which we wished to donate to this synagogue. When Paul saw this small, well-preserved object, his eyes lit up. He rushed as politely as he could towards it and picked it up like a precious baby.

Over coffee we talked about the Torah and how it came to be in our family. All the while Paul's hand was resting on the Torah. I could almost see them bonding. I sensed the Torah had finally come home.

Much of this Torah's history remains a mystery though we now know, thanks to Paul's reading, that it came from the maternal (Josephson) side of my father's family and not the paternal side (Grodzin, before it got changed to Goodwin in this country), as we had always assumed. The embroidered Hebrew lettering on the cover says Nathan Josephson plus the Jewish year equivalent to 1894-5.

Other questions are trickier. How did this quintessentially Jewish object survive in Nazi Germany? And what to make of the coincidences which led to my family recovering a Torah we never knew existed?

We know that my father's maternal uncle, Felix Josephson, found a safe home in Berlin in 1939 for various papers, photographs and objects of the Grodzin-Josephson family. (Gerald's mother, Cilli Josephson, died when he was eight.)

He entrusted these to Professor Ernst Grumach, a Jewish literary scholar, married to a Gentile, who survived the war in forced labour in the library of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Imperial Security Head Office), where he catalogued Jewish cultural assets which the Nazis had plundered from private and public libraries and institutions.

We don't know how Professor Grumach, no doubt at great risk,

kept the collection hidden. I doubt it was linked to his official Nazi work as there was nothing of value in our archives and also because in 1985, the next stage in the Torah's odyssey, it was Grumach's widow, Renate, who took the initiative.

She donated the documents to the Leo Baeck Institute in New York and the objects to Herbert Strauss, director of the Centre for Research on Anti-semitism in Berlin. Presumably, after her husband's death in 1967 she kept our archives in the hope that someone would one day knock on her door to collect them. We never did as none of us knew of their existence.

The next step on the Torah's journey back into our family is completely serendipitous. My father's family left Germany in 1939. My Dad, Gerald, came to England on the Kindertransport. His father, my grandfather Arthur Grodzin, sailed to Shanghai where he remarried and died before the end of the war.

In the 1980s China slowly opened up to the outside world and the odd intrepid tourist was able to visit the country, though not without a lot of administrative palaver. As it happens, my parents are intrepid. They booked a China tour which included Shanghai so that they could look for traces of my

grandfather's last years.

Just before they were due to leave, my mother Anne (née Asch) came home from work – at the Wiener Library here in London – with a copy of that month's Leo Baeck Institute Journal. The librarian there had noticed that the Journal included an article about the Jews of Shanghai during the Second World War and of she correctly thought this would be of interest to my parents.

But the Journal contained some even more interesting information. I can still remember the look of disbelief on my father's face when he came across the announcement of the donation of the Grodzin-Josephson Archives by Frau Renate Grumach to the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. Who was Renate Grumach and what were the Grodzin-Josephson Archives?

So after their fascinating visit to Shanghai, my parents organised a trip to New York, where they were able to explore and recover some of the family papers and photos which had miraculously survived the war. Soon afterwards, the Torah and other objects held in the Berlin Centre for Research on Antisemitism were also returned to our family home in London.

In 2005, with the Berlin Jewish Museum becoming a major heritage site, my father wished to loan the Torah and various family photos and objects to this important institution. For many years they were displayed in a vitrine in the passage to the Holocaust Tower.

I remember visiting the museum with my parents and how moved we were by the display and the interest shown in my father's story by several young visitors who leapt at the chance to talk to someone so closely linked to what, to them, was history.

After some years, the display changed and the Torah went into safe storage. Recently, my family felt it made more sense for the Torah to live in this synagogue community where it will be cherished and used.



*The miniature scroll next to its full-sized brethren*





## SO, WHAT DOES THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES DO?

*Our synagogue sends three deputies to the Board of Deputies of British Jews: the long-serving Robert Sacks, Deborah Cohen and "new girl" Carol Cohen who, as Carol Laser, was a senior figure in the CST (Community Security Trust). To answer the question of what the Board is there for, it recently sent out the following work description:*

Until recently, it would not be unusual for community members to be somewhat hazy about the activities of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The antisemitism crisis in Labour has changed all that. In recent months, the Board of Deputies has figured as the lead item in national news bulletins, the President (Marie Van der Zyl) and honorary officers have been interviewed all over the national media, and the *Enough Is Enough* campaign of March 2018 has been applauded not only by the Jewish community but by parliamentarians of every party.

However, there is far more to the Board of Deputies than antisemitism, as its recent activities demonstrate. Going back nearly two years, a joint initiative of the BoD and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland resulted in *Invest For Peace*. The project brought two peace activists together – one Israeli and one Palestinian – who spoke about their hopes for reconciliation to packed audiences in churches and synagogues in Cardiff, Bristol, Oxford, St Albans, Bushey and Woodford.

This January it published a report jointly with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, showing that the number of Jewish pupils enrolled in Jewish schools has been steadily climbing. In the academic year 2017/18 there were 34,547 Jewish children studying in Jewish schools. This represented an increase of 3,633 children, or 11.8%, since the last figures were published for the academic year 2014/2015.

The Board of Deputies also works hard to educate non-Jewish children and adults throughout the country. The latest stop for its travelling exhibition, the *Jewish Living Experience*, was Norwich, where it spent a fortnight in January and was visited by hundreds of schoolchildren. The exhibition has also been displayed at the Department

for Education, where it was viewed by civil servants and praised by Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds.

Children are not the only people being educated about the Jewish community. Last November the Board of Deputies, in conjunction with the Jewish Leadership Council and London Jewish Forum, held its largest ever seminar for local councillors. It was attended by more than 120 representatives from almost every London borough plus a significant number of council leaders and cabinet members.

Many Labour councillors said that they felt it particularly important to attend in solidarity with the Jewish community, in the light of current tensions between the Labour Party and British Jews. The wide range of issues included antisemitism, Israel, education, social care, the Charedi community and social action, which were addressed by experts from different parts of the Jewish community.

Earlier, at the end of October, the Board of Deputies had the sad duty of arranging a vigil for the victims of the Pittsburgh massacre. At 24 hours notice, we and the JW3 Centre put together an event attended by almost 500 people and livestreamed to other locations. We were addressed by the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Home Secretary Sajid Javid, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and other denominational leaders: Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner of Reform Judaism, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg of Masorti and Rabbi Danny Rich of Liberal Judaism. Hannah Rose, president of the Union of Jewish Students, also spoke, as did Ambassadors Woody Johnson (US) and Mark Regev (Israel).

A week later Sadiq Khan was the guest of honour at the Board of Deputies President's dinner in central London, where he told a packed audience

that "the Labour leadership needs to make a concerted effort to rebuild the relationship with the Jewish community". The 450-strong audience included Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick, actor Tracy-Ann Oberman, parliamentarians from across the political spectrum, ambassadors, representatives of different faiths and the Jewish community's senior rabbinic and lay leadership, covering Orthodox, Reform, Liberal, Masorti, Sephardi and Charedi.

Shortly after, more than 50 GCSE Religious Education teachers and professionals from around the country attended a *Teaching Judaism* conference, organised by the Board of Deputies and Partnership for Jewish Schools (PaJeS) at Western Marble Arch Synagogue, to learn about all facets of Jewish life. After introductions by Board of Deputies Vice President Edwin Shuker and PaJeS Executive Director Rabbi David Meyer, the teachers heard an inspirational talk by Western Marble Arch Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld on the rituals of Judaism in the synagogue. Workshops followed on Shabbat and festivals, kashrut, the nature of God, the cycle of life, life after death, the Tanach and Talmud, moral principles and the concept of the Promised Land.

This work is done by staff and committees at the Board of Deputies. It is separate from the monthly meetings attended by representatives of all London and, theoretically, provincial synagogues, which tend to centre around more local and, indeed, parochial issues – but have the merit of forming a broad democratic base for the board's work.

The number of each synagogue's representatives, or deputies, is determined by the size of membership. We used to have two but since the 2018 AGM the number is now three.



Deborah Cohen



Robert Sacks (right) with Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis at a Board reception in 2018



Carol Cohen (Photo by John Rifkin)

Dear Fellow Members

It has been brought to my attention that my ridden English is not always as perfect as it should be. I have therefore excepted the kindly services of Frau Professor Ilse Grosshuhn an inmate of Abernein Mansions, to assist me in providing only articles that are up to snatch. Her crudentials are that she has better than second rate languish skills, having spent much of her live in Argentina. Despite her failing eye side she has agreed to cheque out my kolumne for the occasional mistakes before it goes up to the editor, Ruth Rosenburger und then into print. In this way we have become a riding partnership whereby from now there will be no more eras.

I was particular pleased to attend the eighteenth anniversary service und dinner on the forst of March. Both the Rabbi und Cantor from Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue spoke und sang charmingly und blended very much with our own ministers. The meal was really first class und the combined use choirs from both hour und the Berlin synagogue gave us wonderful concert under the enthusiastic hospices of Mr Miles Tom D' Cruize. Then nearly at the end of the month I among everyone else was especially invited to a further celebration of a Sunday service und tea. The communal und use choirs were in great vibration und the synagogue full to the rafters with members und it was good to see so many with old faces und also quite a number of unnamed dignitaries. At the wonder fully catered tea I personally met the worshipful majoreess of Camden, a very charming lady but wearing a frankly quite ridiculous ostentatious necklace.

Unfortunately Mrs Klopstick was unable to attend neither of



the ceremonials. She spent the hole from March on the island of Portaventura at there triathalong training camp. I am pleased to say that she is now back in Old Blimey for a change, but with much expanded sighs. As you properly know both I und she are very much Breainers, but still very astonished that nothing has been sorted out yet with the UE. We have become the laughing stick of Europe.

So many worries. How will the eco-no-money be in the UK if we leave with no deal, or even if we leave with won? Who will take over as Prime Minister?

Boris, Michael, Truss oder Jacob Reace Mock? None from these six I hope. Und above all the ugly face of anti-semitism is creeping through yet again. Of cause the situation with Nathan Yahoo, how he is deepicted in the news, doesn't help. Und some of his statements about fencing sentiments in the West Bank are for some quite unnecessary inflaming. Us olden goldies who have only a few decays left have seen this all beforehand, but I was hoping that in this mouldy-cultural society of today such prejustice und scrapegoating was a thing of the passed.

I am riding this kolumne just below two weeks from Pesach. Already there is much activity in Abernein Mansions. Everyone is shaking out the matzo crumps from there Hagadas in preparationess for the festivity. This year the Manishtanu will be read out by Mr und Mrs Goldfahrt as they at both being eightytwo are the youngest here. On behalve of Mrs Klopstick I wish you a very happy time over Pesach und well over the plaques.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick

Notice is hereby given that the

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE**

will be held in the Synagogue Hall,  
51 Belsize Square, London NW3

on

THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2019 at 8.00pm  
(to be followed by refreshments)

**A G E N D A**

1. Introduction and Report by the Chairman
2. Financial Report
3. Appointment of Auditors
4. The election of Jackie Alexander as Chairman for a period of three years
5. Election of members to the Board
6. Discussion on Annual Reports
7. Any Other Business

**Candidates for Election to the Board**

John Abramson\*; John Alexander\*; Carol Cohen; Deborah Cohen; Keith Conway\*; Suzanne Goldstein\*; Joe Hacker\*; Richard Pollins\*; Jimmy Strauss\*; Dilys Tausz\*; Justyn Trenner\*

\* Members of the present Board  
Resignations from the Board - None

Under clause 17(c) of the Constitution, every member of the Synagogue not being in arrears with more than one year's subscription shall be entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting. Voting is by secret ballot of those present at the AGM and entitled to vote.

**Shabbat Candle Lighting**



Friday 3 May	Emily Bilefield
Friday 10 May	Michelle Beckwith
Friday 17 May	Garnet Fischer
Friday 24 May	Diane Charles
Friday 31 May	Sally Goodman
Friday 7 June	Carol Cohen
Saturday 8 June	Tessa Rajak
Sunday 9 June	Kathy Cohen
Friday 14 June	Dianne Rose
Friday 21 June	Jessica Wantman
Friday 28 June	Elisabetta Winston



Remember Belsize Square Synagogue in your Will  
and help secure the future of your community



Although the community continues to grow and attract new members, we cannot flourish on membership fees alone.

We depend on the generosity of you, our members, to provide the inspiring religious services, a wide variety of education for adults and children, social events, burials and pastoral care for all members of our community and also to preserve our unique musical heritage.

Any legacy, large or small, will make a difference!

Any questions? For a confidential discussion please call Lee Taylor on 020 7794 3949





# Community News

The copy deadline for the next issue of *Our Congregation* is Friday 7 June

## NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:  
Dennis & Irene Lester  
Guilloume & Julia Soule  
Amos Jackson  
Gabriel Freedman  
Laura Turner  
Helena Roberts

## BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations and best wishes to:  
Mrs H Kissen (82) on 8 April  
Mr R Auerbach (82) on 15 April  
Mr P Oppenheimer (81) on 16 April  
Miss H Nyman (84) on 25 April  
Mr A Markson (82) on 27 April  
Mrs A Goldstein (101) on 8 May  
Mrs O Herman (88) on 12 May  
Mrs J Lake (81) on 18 May  
Mrs C Fraylich (92) on 25 May  
Mr A Godfrey (75) on 27 May

## DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of:  
Dr Geoffrey Radford on Saturday 2 March



## TEFILLIN CLUB

Teaching boys studying for their Bar Mitzvah and anyone who wants to learn how to lay tefillin. Next term-time session: 9.30am on Sunday 5 May

## Forthcoming Services

### TISHA B'AV SERVICE

Erev Tisha B'Av Service will take place on Saturday 10 August at 9.00pm. We will be joined by members of New London Synagogue for supper and discussion beforehand. The service includes the reading of Eicha (Megillah of Lamentations) and Kinot (Dirges)

For catering purposes please book supper places through the Synagogue Office

### ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE CHEVRAH KADISHA

The annual service of the Chevrah Kadisha at the Liberal Jewish Cemetery, Pound Lane, Willesden, NW10 2HP, will be held on Tisha B'Av, Sunday 11 August at 11.30am.

The Service will be conducted by Cantor Heller and is an opportunity for members of the congregation and friends to observe the yahrzeit of dear ones who died during the Holocaust and whose date of death is unknown.

It is hoped that all who wish to pay tribute to the martyrs of their family will avail themselves of this Service. There will be a chance to visit the graves of family members buried at the Cemetery after the Service.

### SAVE THE DATE – SUNDAY 16 JUNE

### 80TH ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY BARBECUE

Details to come

## REGULAR SERVICES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm & Saturday mornings at 10.00am

### Kikar Kids

**Saturday 4 May, 1 June, 6 July**

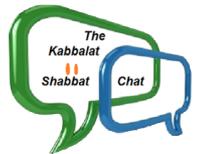
Under-5s Service in the Crèche (Crèche opens 10am)  
Junior Service for 5-9 year-olds in the Library  
11.30am – Kids' Kiddush  
Often followed by a Pot Luck Lunch  
Contact Frank Joseph on 020 7482 2555 to bring a dish

### Religion School

Sunday mornings: 9.30am-12.30pm  
**Half Term: Sunday 26 May & 2 June**

## CANTOR HELLER'S KABBALAT SHABBAT CHAT

An invitation and opportunity for Bar Mitzvah class pupils to make Kiddush, sing Lecha Dodi and learn the lessons of the Parsha. On the second Friday of the month 5.30pm in the Library  
**Next sessions: 10 May, 14 June**



## NW3 LUNCHEON GROUP

Giacomo, 428 Finchley Road, London, NW2 2HY  
**1.00pm on Wednesday 15 May & 19 June**  
Please call Judy Field (020 8455 0614) if you wish to attend

## SUNDAY MORNING ADULT DISCUSSION

**5 May** 10.00-12.30 Professor Jonathan Price, Lessing Professor of Ancient History at Tel Aviv University: Ancient Synagogues in Judea/Palestina: Community and Language

**12 May** 10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: History of Ancient Israel - Alexander the Great & Hellenism  
11.15-12.30 Dr Alan Mendoza, Founder and Executive Director Henry Jackson Society (British Foreign Policy Think Tank) on Brexit and British Parliament.

**NO ADULT DISCUSSION** on  
**19 May** Prague trip      **26 May** Half term  
**2 June** Half term      **9 June** Shavuot

**16 June** (Rabbi Altshuler away) 10.00-11.15 Barry Cohen, author of *Opening The Drawer*, on the hidden identities of Polish Jews (TBC)  
11.15 - 12.30 TBC

**23 June** 10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: History of Ancient Israel - The Maccabean Uprising and Hasmonean State /Book of Daniel /Apocalyptical Literature  
11.15-12.30 Jamie Susskind, barrister and author of *Future Politics: Living Together in a World Transformed by Tech*

**30 June** 10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: Biblical Ethics and Theology  
11.15-12.30 Emma Fox, Research Fellow in the Centre on Radicalisation and Terrorism: UK extremist networks within Higher Education

## SAVE THE DATE – SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

A Night to Remember – Belsize Square Synagogue's superb Dinner & Entertainment Team for a good cause: synagogue activities, especially Holocaust education for the young, as well as the non-denominational charity, Rays of Sunshine, which provides events and grants wishes to seriously ill kids.

Tickets £75, to include all food and drink

# CIVIC SERVICE



**Photos clockwise from top:**

*Rabbi Altshuler reads from the Torah, flanked by Rob Nothman (left) and Adam Rynhold*

*The Professional Choir under its director Ben Wolf (left) up in the choir loft  
Cantor Paul Heller at the bimah*

*Ministers in mufti – Rabbi Stuart Altshuler (left) and Cantor Paul Heller*

*Cantors father and son, Paul (left) and Yohel Heller*

*A crowded congregation*

*Full house in the hall for tea*



## B<sup>2</sup> THRILLS AND SCREAMS SUMMER BONANZA!

(School years 7+ only)



**Child (11-15yrs)  
only £18**  
**Adult (16+ yrs)  
£23.50**

**£22  
per child**

For more information please contact Lucy Bergman:

[lucy@synagogue.org.uk](mailto:lucy@synagogue.org.uk)

020 7794 3949

Belsize Square Synagogue

## Israel Celebration

“Looking to the Future”

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019 | Yom Haatzmaut 5779

Reception from 6.30pm  
followed by Dinner & Israeli dancing

Guest Speaker

**Michael Grade, Lord Grade of Yarmouth CBE**

Appeal for our chosen Israeli charities

Assaf

Yemin Orde Children’s Village

Jaffa Institute

Tickets £60

Lounge Suits

51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX





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info@lexingtons.com

**SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES**

**THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE**

51 Belsize Square, London, NW3 4HX

Tel: 020 7794 3949

Email: office@synagogue.org.uk

**SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS**

9.00am - 5.30pm

Fridays: 9.00am-2.00pm

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Lee Taylor - 020 7794 3949

**CHEVRA KADISHA**

Chairman: Rabbi Stuart Altshuler

Joint Vice Chairs: Helen Grunberg - 020 8450 8533

Cantor Dr Paul Heller

**COMMUNITY CARE CO-ORDINATOR &  
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE**

Contact Eve Hersov on 020 7435 7129

or email eve@synagogue.org.uk

or call the Synagogue Office for a leaflet

**FUNERALS**

During Synagogue Office hours phone 020 7794 3949.

Evenings/weekends phone Calo's (Undertakers)

020 8958 2112

**JUDAICA SHOP**

Open during office hours and on Sunday morning during  
term time only

**KIDDUSH**

Rota enquiries to Jennifer Saul in the Synagogue Office  
(not Thursdays or Fridays)

**LIBRARY**

Open Wednesdays 10am - 12 noon

At other times please check first with the office

**CHEDER**

Enquiries to the Caroline Loison, in the Synagogue Office  
or email caroline@synagogue.org.uk

**PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

Chairperson: Frank Joseph - 020 7482 2555

**YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

Email: youth@synagogue.org.uk

**EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR CONGREGATION**

Emails to: office@synagogue.org.uk

or to the Editor: ruth@famrothenberg.com

**LAYOUT AND DESIGN**

Philip Simon: www.philipsimon.co.uk

**CHAIRMAN**

Jackie Alexander

chairman@synagogue.org.uk

**RABBI**

Rabbi Dr Stuart Altshuler

rabbi@synagogue.org.uk

**CANTOR**

Cantor Dr Paul Heller

cantor@synagogue.org.uk

**EMERITUS**

Rabbi Rodney Mariner

rodmariner@aol.com / 020 8347 5306 / 07956 352267



Charity Number 1144866

Company Number 7831243

The Belsize Square Synagogue

**SKEET IS BACK!!!**



Get in early and secure your  
place for Skeet Weekend  
2019!



Activities for the weekend include:

- Swimming!
- Arts and Crafts!
- Outdoors Activities!
- Obstacle Course!
- Tennis!
- Skeets got Talent!
- Leadership opportunities!
- Making new friends!
- + More!

Friends from outside Belsize are welcome too!

Please contact youth leader **Lucy Bergman** for more info or to book your place:

✉: lucy@synagogue.org.uk

☎: 020 7794 3949