



Our Congregation



News and views from Belsize Square Synagogue

FOR THE LOVE OF ISRAEL

Shalom Belsize Square Synagogue,

I am writing this message while still in isolation due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and hope that perhaps during the span of this *Our Congregation*, we will be able to return to our normal routines, open the doors of the synagogue and share time together.

In the next two months we mark some crucial historical moments in the life of the Jewish people, beginning with Yom Hazikaron (Day of Remembrance for the fallen soldiers of the state of Israel and victims of terror) and Yom Ha-Atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day). Those are followed by Yom Yerushalayim, the celebration of the capital of the Jewish people since the time of King David. This year we celebrate on 22 May. The reunification of the city enabled our people to rebuild the Jewish Quarter in the Old City and tear down the barbed wire and barriers that kept us from the Kotel (Western Wall). Now the city is home to all three monotheistic faiths, a city undivided and free.

Finally, on 28-30 May, we will be celebrating the holiday of Shavuot, Matan Torateinu, 'Giving of the Torah'. The purpose of the Exodus from Egypt was to enable the Jewish people to receive the Torah from God and become a 'light unto the nations' (2nd Isaiah).

I have had some memorable opportunities these past few weeks while in isolation to engage in some interesting discussions regarding the state of Israel. Thank you to those of you who wrote me such wonderful notes

on the subject. I want to let you know why I am a passionate Zionist and devoted to the cause of 'ahavat Yisrael', the love of Israel. I was raised in a wonderful Jewish home in Los Angeles, where Israel was core to our very existence. My parents were very involved in Zionist causes. My mother was president of her Eilat Hadassah group for more than 20 years; my father was involved in every Zionist organisation in the Los Angeles area.

My great-great-uncle Samuel Altshuler in Kaluga, Belarus, was among those early halutzim (pioneers) to go to the malaria-infested, Ottoman Empire-controlled Eretz Yisrael in the 1880s. After the great pogroms unleashed by the assassination of Alexander II, and the publication of *Auto-Emancipation*, a pamphlet by Dr Leo Pinsker arguing for Jewish self-determination, the Zionist movement began to form in this region. Samuel went with four other families and were the first settlers in a place they named Rehovot, today a city of 135,000 people. Mr Altshuler bought land that no one else wanted, paid a steep price to corrupt Ottoman absentee landowners, and planted orange trees there. Those orange groves still exist today.

According to our family history, when Theodor Herzl visited the area on his only visit to Eretz Yisrael in October 1898, he heard Hatikvah for the first time, sung for him by none other than Samuel Altshuler. Herzl loved it and immediately adopted it as the Zionist movement's anthem. I still get chills each time I sing Hatikvah.

on having only one suit, one pair of trousers, one pair of shoes: 'That's all I need, that's all we needed, we were building a nation.'

Nakdimon's son, Gideon, and Rutie and their five daughters showed me what a miraculous place Israel is and the sweat and labour that went into building it. My cousin Mor Altshuler was a scholar of Jewish Thought. My cousin Gideon, a highly decorated veteran of Israel's wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973, was Ariel Sharon's second in command, putting into action all of General Sharon's orders, including the daring surrounding of Egyptian troops that brought an end to the Yom Kippur War in 1973. I will never forget this bravery and it is embedded in my soul to this day.

My daughter Elana Rahel was born in Jerusalem, probably the first Altshuler from our side of the family born in Israel since our family left Judea in 70CE. My son Eitan Meir lived in Israel for seven years and now, having received his Master's degree in the US, is moving back. By the way, on my daughter's birth certificate issued by the United States Consulate in 1978, the location of her birth was given as 'Jerusalem' only – at that time, the US did not recognise that Jerusalem was a part of Israel. It still hurts, but thankfully as we celebrate Yom Yerushalayim this year, not only does the US recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, it now has not a Consulate in Jerusalem but its Embassy.

Yom Ha-Atzmaut Sameach to all of us. Israel's birth, and her incredible story of existence, is perhaps the greatest miracle of all Jewish history. I cherish it and wanted to share why. I hope you are staying well during this coronavirus plague and that we will be back together as a community in our beautiful synagogue soon.

Yours in shalom,

Rabbi Altshuler

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My cousin, Nakdimon Altshuler, was born in 1886, in Rehovot and continued the work of his father in planting orange trees. I had the chance to meet the elderly Nakdimon when I was a rabbinical student in 1977, and what a character he was! He prided himself





Purim Celebrations

Purim was celebrated at Belsize Square in our usual lively manner. The festival kicked off on 8 March with a Purim fair at cheder. Erev Purim, Monday 9 March, was marked by a delicious falafel supper and a lovely costume parade with our youngest members. In the service itself, children from cheder Years 1 and 2 sang Purim songs led by Stephen and Melanie Wiener, before the megillah reading. This was followed by an excellent *Purimspiel* (Purim play), adapted by Lucy Bergman and expertly directed in drama club by teaching assistant Susanna Freudenheim and teacher Susannah Alexander. Susanna called on the vocal talents of her younger sister Nina to narrate the story, supported by cheder's finest young actors.



Photos, clockwise from top left:

Lily and Ruby from Year 7 packing mishloach manot (Purim food gifts)



Bella (Year 6) with spoon puppet and her gregger (rattle)

Jonah (Year 3) with his teacher Benji

Hava (Year 5), Nina (Year 8), Dash (Year 3) and Mimi (Year 5) crafting with buttons

Benji (Year 2), Melissa (Year 2), Aiden (Year 5), Jojo (Year 7), Reuben (Year 7), Sam (Year 5) and Jonah (Year 3) with Caroline (Head of Cheder) enjoying the Purim buffet

Purimspiel starring Hava (Year 5), Ellen (Year 4), Benji (Year 2), Hetty (Year 5), Alice (Year 8) Celia (Year 8)

Benji and Celeste (Year 2) with Victor

Playing 'Pin the Crown on Queen Esther'



HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAMME

by Peter Bohm

In February, the synagogue once again hosted its annual Holocaust education programme for schools.

This year, seven schools participated – Hendon School, Saint Aloysius' College, La Sainte Union Catholic School, Saint George's Catholic School, South Hampstead High School, Chace Community School and UCL Academy. Approximately 1,000 pupils aged 13-14 visited the Synagogue with about 40 teachers.

Each half-day programme comprises several sessions. On arrival, the pupils tour a collection of exhibits, ranging from shabbat candlesticks to a shofar and from a box of matzot to a chanukiah. Our team interact with the pupils, allowing them to see and feel and learn a little about shabbat, the festivals and the synagogue. This is followed by an introduction from Rabbi Altshuler, Rob Nothman or Jackie Alexander, when the highlight is the opening of our beautiful ark which often provokes a collective gasp from the pupils.

The next session is an audio-visual presentation entitled 'Herbert's Story', originally conceived (and sometimes presented) by Hilary Solomon and based on the experiences of her late father Herbert Levy who came to England on the Kindertransport. This serves as a historical introduction to the rise of the Nazis, the outbreak of the Second World War and the implementation of the Final Solution. The students learn about the murder of 6 million Jews and many others and about subsequent genocides, with a strong message that this is not just a history lesson but that anti-semitism and prejudice against others is still very much alive and relevant today.

The pupils are then divided into groups for an interactive session based around a short film called 'Edek' featuring Janine Webber, a Holocaust survivor from Poland who tells her shocking story in conjunction with Kapoo, an American rap artist, delivering the message in a hip-hop style designed to



Deputy Mayor of London, Debbie Weekes-Bernard, addresses pupils from La Sainte Union

engage teenage pupils. The film is available on the internet at www.edek.film. The interactive exercises around this material benefited hugely this year from the results of hard work by three teacher members of our community – Deborah Blackburn, Caroline Loison and Shelly Masters, to whom particular thanks are due.

The climax of the event is talks from survivors who either experienced the camps or were hidden in Europe or came to this country with the Kindertransport, or sometimes from their second-generation descendants. It is clear from feedback received from pupils that they are often greatly moved by these talks and really value the opportunity to meet people who lived through these terrible events and to ask them questions.

The programme concludes with a ceremony where survivors and pupils light six memorial candles in memory of victims of the Holocaust and other genocides and a prayer is recited, enhanced by the inspirational singing of Cantor Paul Heller.

This year we were honoured to be joined on different occasions by Debbie Weekes-Bernard, a Deputy Mayor of London, and Lord Alfred Dubs, former Labour MP, who was one of the 669 children who came to

England on one of Nicholas Winton's Kindertransport trains from Prague in 1939. Both of them observed part of the programme and each gave an inspiring address to the pupils.

The recurring theme of our programme is that by learning from history, each pupil should understand that he or she has a role to play in trying to ensure that no group of people, whatever their religion, race or ethnicity, should have to suffer discrimination. Very few of the pupils are Jewish and we believe that visiting the synagogue is an invaluable experience for them.

The programme is staffed entirely by about 40 volunteers, mainly from the community, and it would be absolutely impossible to present it without the remarkable support, involvement and effort of each one of them, for which I take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you, as well as to the dedicated staff of the synagogue. We also wish to thank several benefactors for their generosity at last year's Auction of Promises, which has put the programme on a secure financial footing for the foreseeable future.

The event takes place on weekdays and it is therefore not easy to find people who are able to give up their time. We are always looking for new volunteers who can contribute in any capacity. For further details, please do not hesitate to contact me: peterbohm29@gmail.com.



Closing ceremony with UCL Academy





VE DAY MEMORIES

As we approach the 75th anniversary of VE Day, 8 May 1945, which marked the end of the War in Europe, we asked some of our members to recall their memories of that day.

Susan Antscherl:

I was about four-and-a-half at the time, and Mummy had made me a special VE Day outfit. I remember a red dress with blue rick-rack braid on the skirt, worn with a little white puff-sleeved blouse. We were living in Wallasey at the time and had planned to go to the restaurant at the end of the pier for lunch. However, we arrived too late and everything was finished except for sausages, which of course were not acceptable. So home we walked, hungry.

George and Peter Summerfield:

The day victory was declared on 8 May 1945 will always remain in our memories. We heard Churchill's announcement, and rushed from our flat into our street, Belsize Grove. We waved our Union Jack flags with real pride. As Jewish children in Germany we had been forbidden to have flags. Now we were celebrating the end of the war which had dominated our lives from the age of 6 to 12.

Our thoughts on that special day went back to the main events that had made such an impact during our wartime years. The gas masks and torches –

the first presents given to us in London a few days after our last-minute escape with our parents from Berlin in late August 1939; the air raid sirens, the sound of which still gives us shivers; the cold and wet Anderson shelter in our garden for refuge from the Blitz; the four months sleeping nightly in Tottenham Court Road Tube station as the bombings intensified; the letters received from our father, who was safe but interned for eight months in the Isle of Man as an 'enemy alien'; looking forward to the weekend socials at our synagogue in Buckland Crescent (at



Twins George and Peter Summerfield on VE Day, aged 12

that time called the New Liberal Synagogue); escape from the noisy drone of V1 flying bombs (doodlebugs) by diving under the dining room table or into the corridor; the scare of V2 rockets that gave no warning before they exploded, which forced us to evacuate to Disley, near Stockport, for five months; the need to be ready at all times in case of air raids, even

while in the cinema.

With the war ended, we looked forward to a complete change in our lives. We longed for the end of food rationing, especially of sweets and chocolate. Within a month we would be

teenagers, within four months to move to a new school, within a year to celebrate our Bar Mitzvah. No wonder that VE Day will always remain a landmark in our memories.

Marianne Summerfield:

I have an extremely vivid memory of VE Day even though I was only six years old at the time. In contrast, my recollection of the war years is somewhat sparse. During the Blitz, I recall asking my parents whether the planes dropping the bombs were ours or the enemy's! I remember the public shelters and particularly sleeping suspended in mid-air in Anderson and Morrison shelters, which was great fun.

But VE Day is fully preserved in my memory and for good reason. I spent the day with a friend in Faber Gardens in Hendon and the street was crowded with people, in high spirits at the news of the end of the war. A man was playing all the favourite wartime songs and other hits on a rickety piano that had been brought out onto the street and people were milling around, singing, dancing and jumping up and down in total abandon. It struck me as a carefree outpouring of sheer joy such as I had never seen before. Everyone was going around kissing and hugging each other and acting out such songs as 'Knees Up, Mother Brown'. I became thoroughly involved and, looking back, will always judge this day to be one of the happiest of my life.

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS ONLINE

Belsize members have it in their DNA to adapt. Our current challenges are still significantly less difficult than those that some have faced in the past. While we can't congregate, we can still celebrate, as some recent online occasions have shown.



Joey Sanders' Bar Mitzvah

Joey, youngest son of Karen and Sam Sanders, was Belsize's first online Bar Mitzvah on 28 March. A video recorded at home of Joey giving his d'var Torah and reading his haftarah was inserted into the broadcast of the shabbat morning service on Belsize Live. Congregants and guests could log on and view it all seamlessly edited together, with the Rabbi's sermon too. Sam and Karen even hosted an online kiddush, via video-conferencing, after the service. Mazal tov to the Sanders family!

Children's mock-a-choc seder

Belsize cheder's mock-a-choc-a seder was on 29 March and forty families tuned in for shared singing, asking and answering questions and, of course, eating chocolate.

Helen Grunberg and Sue Arnold report on a successful seder hosted by Jewish LGBT+ (Jewish Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) with Beit Klal Yisrael (an all-embracing Liberal Jewish community):

Student rabbi Anna Posner led 90 participants, who all had downloaded the same haggadah. Many had been allocated readings and everyone was 'unmuted' for the blessings and shared singing. It was an amazing achievement and well worth the effort everyone put in. Next year in Jerusalem - or anywhere not in isolation!

OUR CENTENARIANS

Belsize Square is privileged to have more members aged 100+ than any other synagogue. Two more members recently celebrated this landmark.



Marion Stenham

Marion (Min) Stenham, who turned 100 on 4 March 2020, has had what she describes as a 'magical life – lived to the full'. In her early years in Dresden she enjoyed music, travel, visits to the mountains and skiing – and these passions persisted, with Min last taking a ski trip aged 82. The family's escape from Germany in 1938 was ingeniously under the cover of a Thomas Cook world tour. This meant that 18-year-old Min, with her parents, sister, grandmother, aunt, uncle and cousin visited Egypt, Palestine, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), China, Japan, Canada and the US, before eventually coming to settle in England. In London, Min studied at art school and subsequently worked illustrating

children's book covers, jigsaws and, later, decorative goods for Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason. She had a painting studio in Camden Lock during the 1970s and her youthful love of music continues to this day. Her other great joy is her five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren, pictured here at her recent birthday celebration.



Brigitte Flynn

Brigitte also celebrated her 100th birthday in March, with her daughter Edith and friends. She was born in Germany, near the Dutch border and came to England in her late teens, before the war. Her parents made it to Switzerland and her younger brother, aged 16, went to Australia and worked as a farm-boy. After the war, her parents left Europe on a ship bound for Palestine but sadly her mother died of typhus on the voyage.

When she first arrived in the UK, Brigitte lived in a boarding-house for Jewish girls in Baldock, Hertfordshire and she distinctly remembers that the landlady was not very house-proud. She met her husband Arthur during the war when he was in uniform and it's said he proposed to her in order to get an extra two days' leave from the army! They got married in his parents' front room. In later years, Brigitte and Arthur ran the family business in East London, manufacturing children's shoes.



News from Abernein Mansions

Dear Fellow Members

All thou I am re-tyred now, I have been revived to try to lift you up in spirits. There hat been much happenings this weak in Abernein Mansions. Old Mrs Enghosen wanted to have the clap for the care workers, but got her timing wrong. She started banging a souce-pan with a wooden spoon on her balcon at two in the morning. She got a way with a police worming.

Dr. Krumbein managed to orainge a delivery slod with Waitrose. His wive then placed an order for the hole of us, but she made sum mistakes. Instead of a box of sanitisers we got sanitary ware in the form of towels. Also in this delivery in plaice of pickled herring we got a packet of hearing aid batteries und for our hauskeeper, Mrs Hooligan, she ordered a bag of walnuts, but she needed picture hooks.

Without our usual communion Pesach here, the first night passed over more like any other night. Still we head our traditional pastil lamp in the form of schicken und with each of us reading from different hagadas in soldetry confinement. Mrs K read the Manishtanu und I answered und she disagreed.

As you must now by know Mrs Klopstick is miserly to be indoors. She is happiness when outside in the oban air. At this moment she is trying to volunteer as a foreign fruit picker. I have told her that she will have to limit it to this aria only, Hampstead, Swiss Cottage, West Hampstead und maybe a bit of St. John's Wood.

For my part I have taken up with yogurt und I am all ready feeling the benefits. As far as I can see it is mostly sitting in the locust position. With my Arthur rightis I can't do this, so I shoes my favourite chair und have a power schluff in stedt. I sorrowly recommend it.

Sins riding these phew worts the prime Minister Boris Johannsen has survived Corbid-19 und Sir Kia Sturmer has become leader of the apposition. So live goes on. Keep washing your hans und remain encllothed in doors. Mrs Klopstick passes on her safety lessen of the weak. She keeps a tape measure on herself all the time to make sure I am always too meters apart from her. That was even before this pantdemic.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick





Community News

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:

Sarah Weitzmann

Ruth Sands

Lynda and Ben Labi with children Micah and Cianna

BIRTHS

Mazal Tov to:

Ashley & Eddie Sternberg on the birth of their daughter Thea Marcella

Alice & Josh Temkin on the birth of their daughter Eliana

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Mazal Tov to:

Daisy, daughter of Karen & Chris Kidson, on 6 June

Nina, daughter of Victoria & Adam Freudenheim, on 20 June

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of:

Anthony Batkin, on 31 January

Anneliese Winter, on 2 February

Henry Brook, on 12 February

Jeffrey Danziger, on 11 March

Helen Kissen, on 24 March

Margot Kinstead, on 27 March

John Gewirtz, on 15 April

William Howard, on 16 April

Alan Cohen, on 17 April

SERVICE TIMES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm

Currently a live stream service led by Cantor Heller

Click on the Belsize Live button on synagogue.org.uk to view

Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Currently a recorded version of a live streamed service.

With a new sermon from Rabbi Altshuler every week

Kikar Kids

Saturdays at 11am on 2 May, 6 June, 4 July

Currently meeting via Zoom video call.

Contact Richard (rgpollins@gmail.com) for more information

SHAVUOT SERVICES

Thursday 28 May at 6.45pm

Friday 29 May at 10.00am

Friday 29 May at 6.45pm

Saturday 30 May at 10.00am including Mazkir

NW3 WEDNESDAY LUNCHEON GROUP

Giacomo, 428 Finchley Road, London, NW2 2HY

Wednesday 24 June

Please call Judy Field (020 8455 0614) if you wish to attend

TISHA B'AV SERVICE: Wednesday 29 July

We will be going to New London Synagogue for supper, a discussion and service, including the reading of Eicha (the Book of Lamentations) and Kinnot (elegies). For catering purposes, please book places through the Synagogue Office.

SYNAGOGUE AGM

After taking advice from the Constitution Committee in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic the Board has decided to postpone the Annual General Meeting from Monday 1 June to Monday 2 November.

The copy deadline for the next issue of *Our Congregation* is Friday 12 June 2020

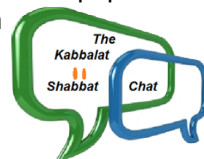
CANTOR HELLER'S KABBALAT SHABBAT CHAT

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 session: 12 June



ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE CHEVRA KADISHA

Sunday 26 July at 11.30am

Liberal Jewish Cemetery, Pound Lane,
Willesden, NW10 2HP

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 is unknown. All who wish to pay tribute to the martyrs of their family should avail themselves of this service. There will be a chance to visit the graves of family members buried at the cemetery after the service.

Adult Discussion Group

Until the synagogue reopens all meetings will be on Zoom.

For Zoom meeting IDs and passwords please check our News From The Square emails on a weekly basis.

Sunday 3 May 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: Prayer - Aleinu
11.30 - 12.45 Luke Akehurst, Director of We Believe in Israel and Secretary of Labour First: What does Keir Starmer's leadership mean for Labour's stances on Israel, Jews and Antisemitism?

Sunday 10 May 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: The Amazing Lives of Heinrich Heine, George Eliot and Charles Dickens.
11.30 - 12.45 Jonathan Charles, Director of Communications, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development: How Coronavirus will Change our Economy and our Lives

Sunday 17 May 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: Prayer - Yigdal
11.30 - 12.45 Jonathan Paris, Journalist and Political Analyst: Why the World needs to worry about the Expiration of the Iran Arms Embargo in October 2020

Sunday 24 May 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: The Amazing Lives of Samson Raphael Hirsch, Sarah Bernhardt (Bizet and Carmen), Marcel Proust.
11.30 - 12.45 Mor Altshuler (from Israel), Scholar of Hassidism, Kabbalism and Jewish Messianism - Title of session TBC

Sunday 31 May 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: Prayer - Ashrei
11.30 - 12.45 - TBC

Sunday 7 June 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: The Amazing Lives of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, Emma Lazarus, Solomon Schechter and Herzl
11.30 - 12.45 Dr Annette Boeckler (from Switzerland), Rabbinical Student, former Chief Librarian Leo Beck College - Session TBC

Sunday 14 June 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: Prayer - Kaddish
11.30 - 12.45 TBC - David Collier, undercover researcher into Antisemitism: Fighting Hatred online - Part 2.

Sunday 21 June 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: The Amazing Lives of Freud, Irving Berlin, Arnold Schoenberg, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein
11.30 - 12.45 - Speaker and title TBC

Sunday 28 June 10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler: Prayer - Lecha Dodi and Kiddush
11.30 - 12.45 Speaker and title TBC

J-POD AT BSS CHEDER

by Caroline Loison, Head of Cheder and Youth

Sunday 1 March saw BSS's Cheder second J-POD (Jewish Practical Open Day) of the academic year. The idea behind our termly J-POD is to give children and adults the chance to 'have a go' and practise (or perfect) their practical Judaism skills. There were six activities set up around the shul and cheder children, parents and staff, as well as other members of the congregation, came together for a wonderful morning of 'learning and doing'.

We were very lucky to have several board members to lead some of the activities and rabbinical candidate, Rabbi Botnick, also joined us for the morning. John Alexander led the aliyah activity, showing everyone what to do when they are called up to perform an aliyah at the Torah. Explaining which side of the bimah to go up and down and what to do after you have performed an aliyah may seem obvious to some members, but there are many people who don't attend services on a regular basis and everyone really appreciated learning all of this and more valuable information from John.

Dilys Tausz led the Purim activity, teaching everyone the three brachot (blessings) that we recite before and after we read the megillah. She also oversaw some very serious mask decorating in preparation for the festival and had a tough time judging the best one! Justyn Trenner, assisted by Rabbi Botnick, led the tefillin activity, modelling how to lay tefillin and explaining the various aspects of

symbolism that surround this practice. 'Tefillin Barbie' was mentioned several times during the course of the morning and I am sure many of our pupils went home to look her up!

Deborah Cohen led our brachot activity which was one of our most popular activities EVER, thanks to there being various foods to eat! Deborah taught everyone the bracha that we recite before we eat the fruit from a tree, a vegetable from the ground, a food made of grain and all other foods, as the adults and children noshed on satsumas, carrots, muffins and candy rolls. Joe Hacker led our Birkat Hamazon activity, teaching everyone what 'benching' is and why we do it. He then went on to teach participants a very abridged version of Birkat Hamazon which included a lot of banging on the table and the popping of a champagne cork at the end!

Last, but by no means least, Adam Rynhold led the Omer activity, explaining what the Omer is and why we count it from second seder night. He then shared the bracha that we say each day of the Omer and also taught everyone how to count to 49 in Hebrew, which was no mean feat! Once again, as I wandered around the shul throughout the morning, it was wonderful to see such fabulous examples of practical Judaism and adults and children learning together. Next term's J-POD @ BSS Cheder is



Lily (Year 7), Alice, Daisy, Nina and Joey (all Year 8) with Peter (BSS Teacher) and Deborah Cohen leading the Brachot activity

planned for 14 June. Please put this date in your diary and join us for another informative and enjoyable morning of Practical Judaism where we can learn, practice and perfect our skills together as one Belsize Community.



Rabbi Botnick and Justyn Trenner demonstrating how to lay tefillin



Hector, Mimi, Sevie and Bella (all Year 5) with Dilys Tausz leading the Purim activity



Joey (Year 8), Max and Jack (Year 7) with John Alexander leading the Aliyah activity





A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO RUTH ROTHENBERG

This is the first issue of *Our Congregation* to be produced since Ruth's retirement as its editor and the right moment to say a huge thank you for her untiring, professional and excellent work on our newsletter.

Ruth has singlehandedly done all the editorial work for the last five years and did an even longer stint as editor from 1975-1988. Thank you, Ruth, and we look forward to the time when we can say it in person.



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SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES

Please note that although the synagogue office is currently closed, the phones are redirected and our staff are still available

BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square, London, NW3 4HX

Tel: 020 7794 3949

Email: office@synagogue.org.uk

Website: www.synagogue.org.uk

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

9.00am - 5.30pm

Fridays: 9.00am-2.00pm

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CHEDER AND YOUTH

Caroline Loison

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CHEDER PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Frank Joseph

020 7482 2555

COMMUNITY CARE CO-ORDINATOR & BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

Eve Hersov

eve@synagogue.org.uk / 020 7435 7129

CHEVRAH KADISHA

Chairman: Rabbi Stuart Altshuler

Joint Vice Chairs: Helen Grunberg - 020 8450 8533

Cantor Dr Paul Heller

FUNERALS

During Synagogue Office hours phone 020 7794 3949.

Evenings/weekends phone Calo's (Undertakers)

020 8958 2112

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR CONGREGATION

To the synagogue office or to alexantscherl@me.com

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Philip Simon: www.philipsimon.co.uk

THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

Charity Number 1144866

Company Number 7831243