



# Our Congregation



News and views from Belsize Square Synagogue

## A TIME FOR REFLECTION

**Shalom Chaverim,**

Despite the darkness of these Covid-19 days, with the quiet, the isolation, the uncertainty and the fears that I have along with all of you, they have given me a chance to reflect on my ten years with the congregation, as my family and I prepare to leave Belsize Square Synagogue by the end of June this year.

I am most grateful for the many friends we have made during these years, bonds that will come with us when we leave for the next part of our journey. I have tried to make this synagogue a centre of pride for the whole of our community, a place that is noted for its learning, Jewish commitment, idealism, warmth and vision. In trying to remember the things of which I am most proud, I have assembled the following:

1) Moving the congregation past its noted split on the issue of women's participation in ritual and liturgical matters was a monumental development that was settled peacefully, despite the many warnings that it would lead to an irreparable breach in the community. That did not happen. In fact, it has accomplished the opposite — it has led to an increased enthusiasm, participation level and ideological consistency that had long eluded the congregation.

2) Since I arrived, our adult education offerings have not been matched by any other congregation. Our sessions on Sunday mornings have covered a vast array of subjects from Talmud to the History of Ancient Israel and seen the visits of many distinguished speakers along the way.

We continued our annual class with our neighbours at St Peter's, led by

Reverend Paul Nicholson, and over the past few years we added the participation of Imam Mehmed Stubbla. These opportunities for interfaith learning and dialogue are critically important for *darkei shalom*, the making of peace and better relations within our community. In the earlier years we enjoyed Lunch 'n' Learn and have seen a steady growth of our annual *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, a true highlight of the year.

3) Belsize Square Synagogue now has one of the largest conversion programmes in the London area, if not the largest. Our Jews by Choice have become integral parts of our congregation, three have made Aliyah and the others who had to leave the area for personal reasons have continued to be in touch with me as they all have continued their commitment to Jewish life. This outreach is critically important for the continued growth of the congregation. It has been a privilege to practice the mitzvah of *keruv*, of bringing newcomers to the Jewish people with warmth and with full hearts.

4) I am very proud of all our B'nei Mitzvah through these ten years. I have tried to make sure that each and every one had a positive experience, highlighted by their growth in Torah and their embracing and understanding of what it means to be a Jew in the future. Each young man and woman has been given personal attention, with the knowledge they have a home in the Jewish world, a sense of family and pride.

5) Liturgical changes: I am pleased that we formalised our annual reading of the Torah to ensure that the entire Torah was to be read over the course

of a three-year period with no gaps at all. I have also tried to ensure that leyning is always done directly from the Sefer Torah itself, without the aid of a Chumash. Our services are filled with beautiful music on a weekly basis because of the wonderful guidance of our Cantor, Musical Director and choir, and I have tried to make sure that our services run smoothly, at a good pace, and always filled with learning and perhaps some inspiration as well.

In the next *Our Congregation*, I will touch upon some other areas — leadership, Cheder, Life Cycle, social action and others — that I believe need more attention: projects still unfinished.

I have purposely not mentioned any names because once you begin that process someone is inevitably left out, but I will compile all my appreciations before leaving. There are just two people I want to thank now, who rarely get the attention that they deserve: Gordon Larkin and Paul Rowland, our caretaker and assistant caretaker. These two gentlemen have been gifts to me and to the entire congregation since I arrived. They serve us way beyond the call of duty and I am grateful for all the assistance they have given to me personally, while also meeting many demands from the entire congregation. Thank you, Gordon, thank you, Paul!

I hope these two months are times of healing and health, for looking forward to better days and for enjoying the blessings of our Shabbats, families and friends.

B'shalom,

**Rabbi Altshuler**

## RABBI ALTSHULER'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY

**A message from our Chairman, Jackie Alexander**

Rabbi Altshuler has been with us for 10 years and on behalf of all members I want to thank him for leading us so well through our many ups and downs in that time, and particularly over the past extremely difficult year. We are planning a celebratory Shabbat 5 June, his birthday, when we will all be able to say so much more.





## Synagogue Snapshots

*We continue our series with another stalwart of the synagogue staff*

**NAME:** Jennifer Saul  
**JOB TITLE:** Assistant Administrator

**What does your job at Belsize involve?**

I'm the administrator for the Cheder as well as for a few life cycle events.

**What's your favourite thing about your work?**

I love working at the Synagogue. Every day brings a new challenge. It's wonderful to speak to various members and help with problems as well as enquiries.

**If you could do any other job for one day, what would you choose?**

I would choose the job that I have as I enjoy it very much.

**How did you come to be a member of Belsize Square?**

I chose to convert at BSS about 29 years ago and then became a member.

**What's your favourite festival?**

Chanukah

**Where do you like to sit in Shul and why?**

We sit on the right side of the Shul.

## MAOZ TZUR – ROCK OF AGES

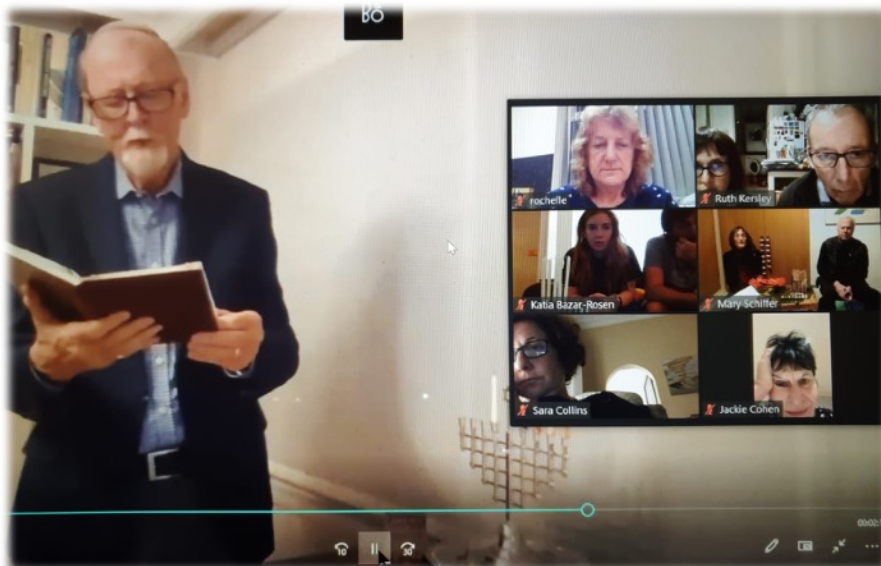
### Another Belsize video project

Cantor Paul Heller

There are certain activities during this pandemic that bring me particularly great pleasure and one of them is to have the choirs singing. When the Tikkun committee came up with the idea of a community Chanukah Zoom and sing-along, I approached our Music Director Benjamin Wolf about getting all the choirs of Belsize involved by recording Maoz Tzur.

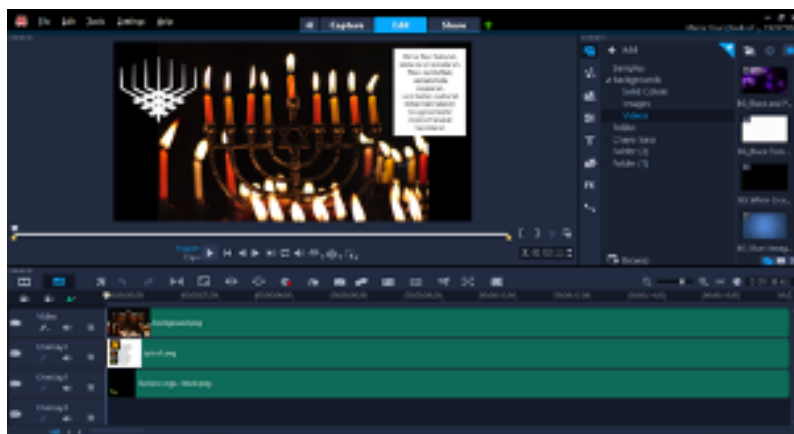
Members of the community choir responded very positively and sent in their clips rapidly, and those from the youth choir started to trickle in too. The professional choir recorded the four-part harmony, which we always have as part of our service for Shabbat Chanukah.

The video of the choirs' recording of Maoz Tzur is available on the Synagogue YouTube channel. Hope you enjoy it as much as I have done. The Zoom candle lighting for first and fourth nights was enjoyed by all (see photo, top right, of Rabbi Mariner and members on Zoom). Wishing you all a healthy secular new year and a better 2021!



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# A BUSY SUCCOT TERM AT CHEDER

Caroline Loison

On Sunday 6 September, BSS cheder returned for the start of a new and busy year. Chagim falling on Sundays and Covid-19 regulations put a stop to any plans to return to the shul building itself, and then Lockdown 2 straight after half-term ensured the entire Succot/Autumn term has taken place online, with pupils learning over Zoom.

As usual, our amazing staff – Susannah Alexander, Benji Nathan, Jeannie Cohen, Marion Godfrey and Adam Rynhold – have delivered fantastic lessons, including making etrogim by wrapping string soaked in glue around balloons for Succot, constructing origami Torah scrolls for Simchat Torah, performing Tashlich by flushing away sins written on toilet paper, and facilitated philosophical and ethical discussions for our B'nei Mitzvah and iGCSE pupils.

This term has also included Mitzvah Day, J-POD (Jewish-Practical Open

Day) and an educational trip. For Mitzvah Day many of our pupils contributed to the BSS concert that was sent to care homes and classes also did their own projects, making noughts and crosses games, designing posters, creating jigsaw puzzles and recycling T-shirts into tote bags. J-POD went online, thanks to Cantor Heller, Adam Rynhold and Shelly Masters who demonstrated how to lay tefillin, how to fix a mezuzah to a doorpost and how to light the Chanukah candles. Please remember that our J-POD mornings are an opportunity for the whole Belsize Community to come together and learn some practical Judaism skills, so why not join us for the next J-POD in March 2021? Finally, Covid-19 did not stop us going on a trip, as Itamar Ben David, a professional guide, took us to Israel for a

wonderful virtual tour to learn about its landscapes and wildlife. If you or your child enjoyed the tour, Itamar would love you to review it on [tripadvisor.co.uk](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk)

If you have a child in School Years 1 to 10 who would like to join us on a Sunday morning for BSS Cheder online or the iGCSE class, please contact me ([caroline@synagogue.org.uk](mailto:caroline@synagogue.org.uk)) for more information and the Zoom login details.



From Itamar Ben David's virtual Israel Tour  
<https://itamarbendavid.com/>

## News from Abernein Mansions

### Dear Fellow Members

As I ride this article, we are still in lock up, but in Whales the obstructions have been lifted up. Mrs Klopstick was hoping to lead a expedition to Snowdonia. Her plan was to drain a party from her Jewish Ladies Eggsteem Sports Club in basic mountaineering. The main purpose was to prepare a Chanukah celebration display off synchronised abseiling from the roof of the JW3 building, too bus stops down the road from hear. Despite having a distant cousin who lives in Cmwyl Mffym, Mrs K, and know won from England, is aloud to enter the Princedom at this time.

Being hear pant up in our flat, had made Mrs K like a coiled thing. She hates languaging around und I am worried that at any moment she could throw a tentroom at me. Too days ago we were both taken backwards when our estranged ex-daughter-in-law arranged for our grandchildren to speak to us wire Zoom. We have not scene oder spoken to for several years. Melvyn junior is now also a New York lawyer like his farther was und our granddaughter, Fanny is living with a yaz musician in a hallowed out redwood tree in California.

Sank goodness for Mrs K's grandknees, Helga. Despite

still being on remand, she keeps in regular contact with us und, unlike those in the UAS, is not after our inhairdence only. Of cause at this time of the year familiar connections are very impotent. This year many Chanukka und Christmass cellarbrations will be a very quite und lonely time, especially for the elderly. For this reason I have arranged from those inmates hear who are not yet completely hard from herring to form a quire und accompanied by Mrs Klopstick on the trombone make musical visits, at a save distance outside, to any members from Belsize Square Synagogue who will be on there own for Chanukka und over the festering season.

I sink all from us in the Mansions are paining for sings to return to normal. We all remember with foundness the Chanukkah Bizaars of old. The stalls with cloths – ladies dresses und mens trousers, books, pots und pants, cakes und so wider. Then there was the restaurant in the Hall. It was always pegged to the rafters. We can now only hold our breast that these vexinations all work und we can once again mangle together in 2021.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick

ASK  
FRITZ

I have received a letter from an anonimouse member. He rides that his father is in ore of my wive und her remarkable fizzle und assleticism. He would very much like to make youth of her personal services. I have mensched this to her und she is very keen with the idea in principal. The first step wood be for him to join her Jewish ladies aerobatic class in the Frogal Jim. It is entirely free from charge for the over eighties. He should bring with und change into his own leopard, also a defribulator if he has one. Details on this websight [www.mrsklopstick@frog.jim](mailto:www.mrsklopstick@frog.jim). I hope this helps.





## SYNAGOGUE AGM 2020

The Synagogue's Annual General Meeting took place on Zoom in November. Our Chairman and Honorary Treasurer reported on an unusual year.



### Chairman's report Jackie Alexander

This year, the first of my second term as Chairman, divides neatly into two halves:

before COVID entered our lives and afterwards.

Our Synagogue life in the second half of 2019 and early 2020 was as we expected. In 2019 we held our August Tisha B'Av service jointly with New London Synagogue; we attended our wonderful High Holyday services; we walked in solidarity to South Hampstead Synagogue to join their Shabbat service after their wall was daubed with graffiti; we held the brilliant Night to Remember fundraiser in September, which among other things secured the future of our Holocaust Memorial Day Schools programme; we held a successful mini market instead of the Chanukah Bazaar; we lit Chanukah candles; we created the Emeritus Rabbi Award (which will be reinstated once COVID restrictions are lifted here and in Israel); we ran our important and valued Holocaust Memorial Day Schools project; Lucy Bergman our Youth Leader left us for new adventures and Caroline Loison took over that role in addition to being Head of Cheder; Miles D'Cruz moved on from being our Youth Choirmaster and Penny Homer took over.

A large part of 2019 was taken up with rabbinical succession planning and we were visited for a week by Rabbi Gabriel Botnick. Many members met him or heard him speak at services and he also helped with our Holocaust Memorial Day schools project and with the Cheder JPod day. I am delighted to announce that after detailed discussions, he has confirmed that he will be joining us in April 2021. This means that Rabbi Altshuler will start his

sabbatical, as planned, in June 2021. We will be looking to arrange events to honour Rabbi Altshuler and while I want to save many thoughts for then, I want to repeat my thanks to him now for all that he has done for us in the recent tumultuous period.

I must also thank Cantor Heller for not only keeping our Friday services going on BelsizeLive when he was alone in the Synagogue but also for creating a wonderful selection of services for transmission, for creating back-up choir recordings for the Festivals and Shabbat services and recordings of our Youth Choir. All that, before I even get round to thanking him for singing so wonderfully throughout this time.

Of course, we are also fortunate to have our Rabbi Emeritus, Rodney Mariner. Throughout the year Rabbi Mariner has been in telephone contact with many members who have pastoral needs, which is greatly appreciated by all of us. We must give enormous thanks too to Eve Hersov, our Community Care Co-ordinator. Eve has worked tirelessly to assist those most in need of help in these difficult times and despite the pressure on her, she manages to remain cheerful with everyone.

During lockdown you will have noticed that our website became easier to use, thanks to Adam Hurst and his team who have reviewed and restructured it.

Shortly after the first lockdown began, I formed the Planning Committee that worked on the plans for Shabbat services and Festivals. I am so proud of what we have achieved and I want to thank everyone who worked, week after week, with such dedication to the Synagogue. The work included creating and reviewing mandatory risk assessments, trial runs of security and

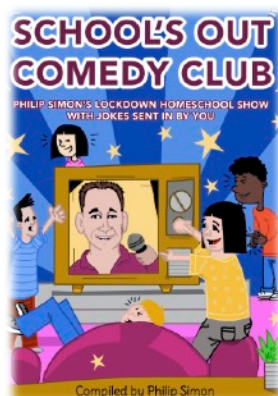
services, extra choir rehearsals, measuring for social distancing, testing one-way systems, screens, microphones and cameras, the writing and design of information leaflets, devising the booking system for Shabbat services, the youth service rehearsals and a myriad other things.

We have been keeping Cheder under review and, led by Caroline Loison, this has continued to thrive online, including one-to-one Hebrew teaching and singing lessons.

The volunteers who work with the Tikkun Olam Committee have rung members, baked and delivered honey cakes and more. It is my privilege to sit on this Committee, which is led by Deborah Nerva-Cohen and includes Philippa Strauss, Henny Levin, Allan Morgenthau and Claire Walford. They and the volunteers are phenomenal in their achievements. Thank you!

I need to thank the Office, the Executive and Board as the life of the Synagogue has continued, and along with it, all our meetings and regular work. I am sorry that this year Anthony Stadlen is standing down from the Board. I will miss him. Lastly, I must thank the Honorary Officers and Lee Taylor who have worked tirelessly for the Community and given me wise counsel.

I certainly did not expect to be dealing with a pandemic in my role as Chairman and what strikes me most (apart for the time it takes up, which reminds me to thank my husband John for making me endless cups of coffee and never complaining about any interruptions to our lives!), is that I cannot recall a cross word on Committees and at meetings and I think that is a tribute to our Community and shows how deeply we all care about each other's welfare.



### 'The comedy world's Joe Wicks' raises money for charity with new joke book

Following on from the success of his homeschooling YouTube show where kids have been sending in their favourite jokes, stand up comedian, Philip Simon, who also does the layout for *Our Congregation*, has self-published a children's joke book, full to the brim of jokes sent in by kids from all over the world. All profits go to FareShare, a charity helping to feed families and vulnerable children.

The book is suitable for children of all ages, and you can buy your copy via his website ([philipsimon.co.uk/shop](http://philipsimon.co.uk/shop)) where he is delighted to offer all Belsize members a 10% discount using the Promo Code "BSS10".





## Treasurer's report Jimmy Strauss

As a result of the current pandemic, we held the AGM 5 months later than usual and we are nearly at the end of this current financial year.

It is hard to remember, but 2019 was yet another successful and vibrant year in the life of this remarkable community. We celebrated our 80th anniversary and held several events to mark this milestone including a very well attended civic ceremony and an outstanding Night to Remember, which raised just under £90,000. I am extremely grateful to the committee for organising such an outstanding event and to all those who attended and donated. We produced a brochure that raised a significant amount of money and had many interesting articles reviewing the 80 years of Belsize Square, and we also benefited from a very generous donation in honour of this landmark anniversary for which we are extremely grateful. Despite these successes our cash balance (both current and on slightly longer-term deposit) reduced by £27,000. I need to remind you that membership fees cover just 80% of our salary bill and salaries are not our only expenditure. We remain reliant on those members who are prepared to donate over and above their subscriptions.

We did receive two legacies totalling £15,000. These were very helpful, but it is worth remembering that in the early years of this millennium, we would

regularly receive legacies in excess of £100,000 per annum. If you haven't already done so, please consider leaving your community something in your will. Please do contact either me or Lee if you would like some assistance.

We just about broke even in 2019 but there were several one-off positives that we are unable to rely on going forward. Moving on to 2020 and the effect of COVID-19, I am pleased to be able to report that the financial effect ought to be relatively minor. A significant proportion of our subs are paid early in the calendar year and as a result many had been paid before COVID struck. However, we have been approached by a small handful of members who are struggling financially, and we have, naturally, either reduced or waived fees depending on the circumstances.

Both our tenants, Keren's Nursery and the Montessori Nursery, were shut during lockdown and a small team were in discussions early on about the implications for our rental income. These were at all times amicable and have resulted in a small loss of income for us in 2020. Currently both schools are functioning and paying full rent. We did furlough some members of staff but did, of course, make up the balance of their salaries that the scheme was not paying. As a result of not having any fundraising events, slightly lower membership and reduced general donations, we are forecasting a deficit of £70,000 for 2020.

I will end with a few thank-yous, though

there is always the danger of missing someone out. First, to the Association of Jewish Refuges for their continued and generous support of Eve Hersov in her role of Community Care Co-ordinator. As you can imagine, Eve's workload has increased exponentially over lockdown and we are grateful for all her efforts.

Our office led by our extraordinary Chief Executive, Lee Taylor, adapted very quickly to the new normal and made sure that we provided a seamless service to our members both in good and bad times. Even though the Six Point Foundation no longer functions, I would like to thank them and Ashley Mitchell for their generosity in funding the installation of LiveStream. The numbers watching the recent High Holyday Services were amazing. I am pleased to be able to report that we have had donations approaching £2,000 from non-members who watched these Services. As usual, I could not have performed my role without the help of Adam Hurst and we are both supported by Clive Goldstein and the rest of my Finance Committee.

We are living through unprecedented times and as a result, the workload for the Honorary Officers has increased substantially. We have had regular weekly Zooms, almost daily conversations with one or other of us, BUT there is one person that has been involved in virtually all meetings and decisions. Jackie Alexander continues to work tirelessly for the greater good of our community and we all owe her a huge debt of gratitude.

## ANNE GOODWIN AND THE WIENER LIBRARY

Belsize member Anne Goodwin, who died in 2020 aged 96, is fondly remembered by many congregants and by colleagues from the Wiener Library, where she worked for several decades.

Anne Goodwin contributed to the historic efforts made to bring the leading perpetrators of Nazi crimes to justice. She was born in Berlin, Germany in 1923 and came to London with her family in 1938. After the war, Anne's German and English language skills were put to good use by the American Army at their base in the city of Offenbach where her duties included translating letters written by Nazi officials.

On her return to England, Anne married Gerald Goodwin and settled in London.

After a variety of jobs and bringing up two children, she went to work at the Wiener Library in the 1970s and was involved in its financial management.

At this time, the Library was recovering from dire financial difficulties that had almost seen the entire holdings move to Tel Aviv. Having Anne to act as a conscientious steward for the accounts was vital for the Library, but she also made other important contributions, including spotting the opportunity to purchase replacement copies of many of the books that had been moved to Tel Aviv.

In 2021 a memorial plaque will be unveiled at the Wiener

Library to celebrate Anne's remarkable life and achievements.

*With thanks to Dr Toby Simpson and the Wiener Library.*



Anne & Gerald Goodwin



# Community News

## NEW MEMBERS

*We extend a cordial welcome to:*  
Evelyn & Raymond Altbach

## BIRTHDAY

We wish mazel tov to our former editor Ruth Rothenberg who celebrated her 80th birthday in December 2020

## DEATHS

*We regret to announce the passing of:*  
Hazel Kay on 25 October 2020  
Miriam Borchard on 3 November 2020  
Peter Eden on 23 December 2020  
Lilian Metzger on 24 December 2020  
Evelyn Stern on 2 January 2021

## STONESETTING

The stonesetting of Anthony Batkin will take place on Sunday 31 January 2021 at 2.30pm at Edgwarebury Lane Cemetery

## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SHABBAT

**Friday 29 January at 6.45pm**

A service to commemorate the anniversary of the end of the Holocaust  
To include Mazkir for those who died Al Kiddush HaShem

## THE ANNUAL HENRY KUTTNER Z"L CHOIR SHABBAT

**Friday 12 March at 6.45pm**

Each year we honour the professional choir of Belsize Square Synagogue in memory of the late Henry Kuttner. Join us in thanking the choristers who make our services so special and unique.

## Following the AGM in November 2020, the Board now consists of:

### HONORARY OFFICERS

**Chairman:** Jackie Alexander  
**Hon Secretary:** Annette Nathan  
**Asst Hon Secretary:** Rob Nothman  
**Hon Treasurer:** Jimmy Strauss  
**Asst Hon Treasurer:** Adam Hurst

### EXECUTIVE

Adam Davis, Francis Joseph, Justyn Trenner, Nick Viner

### BOARD OF THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

John Abramson	<b>Francis Joseph</b>
John Alexander	Freddy Lehmann
Joe Brookes	Adam Nathan
Paul Burger	<b>Annette Nathan</b>
Carol Cohen	Marion Nathan
Deborah Cohen	<b>Rob Nothman</b>
Keith Conway	Sarah Percival
Simon Cutner	David Pollins
<b>Adam Davis</b>	Richard Pollins
Suzanne Goldstein	<b>Jimmy Strauss</b>
Joe Hacker	Dilys Tausz
Michael Horowitz	<b>Justyn Trenner</b>
<b>Adam Hurst</b>	<b>Nick Viner</b>
Pat Hirschovits	Claire Walford

Honorary Officers & Members of the Executive are in bold

The copy deadline for the next issue of *Our Congregation* is 18 February 2021

## SERVICE TIMES

**Friday evenings at 6.45pm**

**Saturday mornings at 10.00am**

Contact Adam Rynhold in the synagogue office to book tickets to attend, in compliance with current restrictions, or watch online via BelsizeLive at [synagogue.org.uk](http://synagogue.org.uk)

## Kikar Kids

**Saturdays 6 February and 6 March**

11.00am via Zoom

Please contact Richard Pollins for more information on 020 8444 3074 or [rgpollins@gmail.com](mailto:rgpollins@gmail.com)

## Cheder

Sunday mornings 9.30am-12.30pm

Enquiries to Headteacher Caroline Loison or the Synagogue Office on 020 7794 3949

Term commences on Sunday 10 January 2021  
Half-term break 14 & 21 February

## ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

### Sunday 10 January

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – The Psalms  
11.30 - 12.45 TBC

### Sunday 17 January

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' book *Morality*  
11.30 - 12.45 Rabbi Barbara Aiello, Ner Tamid del Sud synagogue, Serrastretta, Italy – The Lost and Isolated Jews of Southern Italy

### Sunday 24 January

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – The Psalms  
11.30 - 12.45 TBC

### Sunday 31 January

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Ask The Rabbi Q&A session  
11.30 - 12.45 TBC

### Sunday 7 February

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' book *Morality*  
11.30 - 12.45 TBC

### Sunday 14 February

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – The Psalms  
11.30 - 12.45 Michael Schraer, European History Department, City Lit, London – Jews and Money-Lending

### Sunday 21 February

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' book *Morality*  
11.30 - 12.45 Jonathan Paris, political Analyst and journalist – Middle East Update

### Sunday 28 February

10.00 - 11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – The Psalms  
11.30 - 12.45 Professor Mick Dumper, Professor in Middle East Politics, University of Exeter – Jerusalem History: The Holy Sites (TBC)



# LONDON YOUNG SINFONIA RETURNS TO BELSIZE SQUARE

Following their very successful performance of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* two years ago, Music at Belsize was delighted to welcome the London Young Sinfonia back for their concert on 25 October. The circumstances in 2020 were very different to those in 2018: there could be no audience to listen intently to the music or to applaud – or, for that matter, to cough in the quiet moments. Instead we were able to watch an excellently produced video stream of the event online and, if anything, to get a more intimate glimpse of an orchestra and its conductors entering into the joy of music-making.

The LYS attracts some of London's finest young musicians for specific projects such as this concert. Our own maestro Philip Keller conducted the orchestra in Haydn's *Symphony No. 90*, and their dynamic musical director, Elias Peter Brown, conducted Beethoven's *Symphony No. 4*.

Philip was responsible for bringing the LYS back to Belsize Square and Our Congregation asked him about this experience. He told us that he had been a regular guest

conductor of LYS since soon after the orchestra was established ten years ago. This concert was very different to those that he had conducted previously as the current Covid-19 restrictions had led to particular challenges. There had to be social distancing, so the musicians were positioned as individuals rather than at the usual 'desks' of two. There were advantages in this arrangement: it gave each musician a feeling of independence and they capitalised on this by playing standing up, allowing them a greater sense of freedom to express themselves. Best practice dictated that the wind instrument players required additional space, so the full orchestra, fully spaced, took up all the

room that would normally be occupied by the audience – and the synagogue became what was essentially a very large studio. To the orchestra's members, the absence of an audience for a concert must have felt very strange.

Philip said that the synagogue's acoustics and sense of intimacy are excellent for music, even without an audience, making it a great venue for concerts. But, we asked him, synagogues are places of worship – how does this fit with the performance of secular works? He felt that synagogues are also places of community and he saw no conflict in performing non-religious music in religious venues. Most orchestral music is abstract and should therefore be free of associations that might offend a congregant or the sanctity of a house of prayer.

Our thanks go to Philip for stimulating Music at Belsize and for this concert in particular. We look forward to future events and to the time when concerts like this will be able to go ahead with a real, live, audience.



*The London Young Sinfonia  
under the baton of a masked Philip Keller*

## LYDIA GOLDBLATT: PRIZE-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER

Artist Lydia Goldblatt has been awarded second prize in the National Portrait Gallery's prestigious Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2020. Lydia is a lifetime member of Belsize Square, the granddaughter of founder members Walter and Katja Strauss. Her portrait is of her three-year-old daughter Eden, taken in their garden during the spring lockdown, and is part of a larger series called *Fugue*. The series features other images of Eden, as well as younger daughter Riva and Lydia's husband, but only a small proportion of the photographs are portraits. There are also photographs of local streets, often taken at night, sometimes looking in through windows, as well as still life images. The work is a reflection on the experience in lockdown of the strange combination of heightened intimacy with enforced distance and alienation.

Lydia was awarded a commission by arts organisation Grain in July 2020 to continue developing the *Fugue* series. It is an ongoing project and Grain are hoping an Arts Council grant in 2021 will enable them to continue supporting it.

More of Lydia's pictures from *Fugue* can be seen at [grainphotographyhub.co.uk](https://grainphotographyhub.co.uk).

This is not the first time that Lydia's family has featured in her work. A collection of her photographs of her parents made in the last months of her father's life, entitled *Still Here*, was published as a book in 2012. She comments, 'I have dealt a lot in my work with transition, loss and love.'

Lydia works predominantly on film, using a medium format Hasselblad camera that produces square images, which she likes for the equality of frame it produces. When working to commission, she uses digital if that is right for the work and the client. Asked how she felt about the accessibility of photography to everyone, thanks to smartphones, Lydia explained that it means that certain kinds of pictures are ubiquitous, but that is interesting in itself. 'In the past, a photographer might have

been recording an experience on behalf of the world, but now all our images feed into that. I am not aiming to record a moment of history. Instead, I am trying to reflect on it, and to create a visual language that best expresses my ideas.'



*Eden, from the series 'Fugue'  
by Lydia Goldblatt, 2020*



## MITZVAH DAY

BSS's activities for Mitzvah Day 2020 included the donation of 20 crates of food to Camden Food Bank, handcrafted gifts for care-home residents from Cheder kids and a unique online concert.

Hosted by Rob Nothman, this concert video was sent to a number of care homes. It involved around 30 contributors from across the Belsize community and featured drawings by Belsize children, Melanie and Stephen Wiener singing favourite songs of the 1940s and '50s, and some fantastic individual musical and spoken word performances from many of our talented young members.

It's still available on the BelsizeLIVE archive, accessible on the shul website.

*Henny Levin and Dilys Tausz sorting out the foodbank donations.*



*Toby and Maisie performing an Elton John song for the concert.*



## Liturgical Music in Jewish history

WITH  
CANTOR PAUL HELLER

Tuesdays @ 8pm  
January and February 2021  
Zoom details follow after  
having expressed interest at  
cantor@synagogue.org.uk

## SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES

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### SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

9.00am - 5.30pm

Fridays: 9.00am-2.00pm

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Joint Vice Chairs: Helen Grunberg - 020 8450 8533

Cantor Dr Paul Heller

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Evenings/weekends phone Calo's (Undertakers)

020 8958 2112

### EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR CONGREGATION

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### LAYOUT AND DESIGN

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### THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

Charity Number 1144866

Company Number 7831243