

Our Congregation



News and views from Belsize Square Synagogue

SECURITY FEARS IN THE MIDST OF TERROR – ARE WE SAFE?

Shalom, Dear Members Of Belsize Square Synagogue,

This past month has been a difficult one for us because of the horrific terrorist murders that took the lives of 17, including four Jews simply shopping for Shabbat.

We now know that one of those victims was Yoav Hattab, aged 21, son of the Chief Rabbi of Tunisia. At the start of the supermarket siege he tried to grab the terrorist's gun. His last text from the shop to a friend, was to "light Shabbat candles to bring peace into the world."

Such a contrast between the Jewish environment we try to create in our homes and the violent ways of many around us. There has been much discussion about the future of UK Jewry, about the increase in uncertainty and fear that has gripped parts of our community.

While there is some disagreement about the validity of the results, Jews are talking about the recent survey of the Campaign Against Antisemitism,

showing 45% of British Jews believe that Jews "may no longer have a long-term future in Britain."

I have been in this country for the past four years and am certainly not oblivious to the dangers of terror and the violent anti-Semitism gripping much of European society, including the UK. But from what I have observed, British Jews are thriving. Never before have there been as many opportunities for Jewish learning, life, observance and participation.

Since arriving, I have personally noticed a greater willingness in our own midst to stand up, to be counted, to participate in demonstrations for Israel and against all threats to Jewish honour and existence. While aware of the reality in London and other parts of the country, I do not believe in any overreaction. This is not Nazi Germany.

We should be grateful that terror threats and the rise of anti-Semitism have met a

response from leaders of both major parties, police and security personnel, and our own community. We are not afraid and are protected in our freedom and Jewish life by the rule of law.

As Home Secretary Theresa May declared before the Board of Deputies: "Without its Jews, Britain would not be Britain".

There is another way of looking at religion, very different from the "religion" of the terrorists or extremists, and that comes from our own Source of Life, the Torah. I am addressing the importance of each of the Commandments on Friday nights. I hope you will all come for the remaining sermons.

A recap thus far – **Commandment 1:**

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. One God, one humanity, the sanctity of all life is the basis of all Commandments. This is a God who cares less about the magnificence of the creation of the universe and who emphasises the importance of freeing slaves from bondage. Our compassion and goodness to all human beings is the gateway to God. That's what our God expects, everything else is secondary.

Commandment 2:

You shall not make any other gods besides Me (God). In modern idiom, this means that any time we place anything else – even "good" things – at the top of the pyramid of our value system, it leads to ruin. Humanity has tried placing nation, money, art and music, education, science, even love in place of God, and all efforts to do so have failed us. If you replace God's Law, the supremacy of God over all, if you divide humanity in any way, if you worship replacement gods, you are violating the viability of our world.

Commandment 3:

You shall not take God's Name in vain. This Commandment in no way prohibits "swearing" or "blasphemy". What it does prohibit is using God's Name for unjust and immoral purposes. This Commandment is for all those who kill in the name of God, who find no inconsistency between God and using religion and/or God to brutalise other human beings.

Please come and discover the rest of the magnificence of the Ten Commandments, *Aseret Hadibrot*, and know why these Commandments, given at Sinai, are the foundation of Judaism and, for that matter, human existence as we know it.

My wishes to all of you for a month of learning, increased Jewish awareness, of life, of peace, of goodness, of sanctity in everything we do.

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler

BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE
Save the date
Wednesday 4 March 2015 6 p.m.
PURIM

- **Megillah Reading**
- **The songs from "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat"**
performed by :
The Belsize Square Youth Choir
directed by Alison Denza
- **light supper provided**
- **All ages welcome**
- **fancy dress parade**

Please let us know if you will be joining us so that we have an idea of numbers for catering

office@synagogue.org.uk - 020 7794 3949





You Heard Her Here First

John Abramson Reviews Alice Burla's Piano Recital



A chance meeting in a cafe 20 years ago led to an evening of wonderful entertainment for our community. Let me explain.

Twenty years ago, our Rabbi went to a concert given by the virtuoso violinist, Maxim Vengerov, in Chicago. After the concert, Rabbi and wife (musician Ella) were enjoying a coffee when Maxim walked in with his family. Ella went over to introduce herself and her husband, "an amateur violinist and oh,...a rabbi". From this meeting flowed a lasting friendship.

On 17 December Maxim Vengerov and his wife, Olga, came to our synagogue personally to introduce the young pianist, Alice Burla, to our community. Alice was born in Toronto into a Russian emigré family, whose ties with the Vengerovs went back two generations. She showed her prodigious musical talent early. Her first public performance on piano was at five. Now 18, she lives in Madrid to study with the renowned piano pedagogue, Professor Dmitri Bashkurov.

We were indeed privileged to have the opportunity to hear Alice playing an hour-long recital in our synagogue to an excited and discerning audience of 180 community members and friends. We were also honoured to welcome as distinguished guests the Deputy Ambassador of Israel, Eitan Naeh and his wife, and the violinist, Georgy Pauk.

Alice's programme was intelligently constructed. She opened with the Prelude to Bach's second English Suite. I was immediately blown away not only by the precision of her playing but also by the intense and interesting musicianship that shone through. Yes, it was Bach but with a slight twist. The explanation came later, particularly in the encore.

Alexander Scriabin's massive third piano sonata followed. He was a strange fellow, who pushed musical expression to limits not always appreciated by his audiences. His music owes much to Chopin but he also experimented with tonality and structure in the development of his own unique language. The opening syncopated chords were played with a confidence and power that provided a clear guide through the piece.

Alice was able to give this *Drammatico* movement bright light and deep shade, moving dramatically between forte and piano as demanded by the often jagged music. Successive movements had a cohesion and musicality that belied our performer's youth. Not always an easy listen, Alice was faultless throughout this mammoth work.

A Chopin selection followed – not the usual suspects but a collection of mazurkas and études on the more reflective side of Chopin's music. Here again Alice excelled, especially in the mazurkas, riding the music's gentle swells with a lightness of touch that was perfectly suited. The four études, from the less popular second series, were beautifully executed but I felt were performed with a slightly greater debt to Scriabin than Chopin.

However, Alice brought the house down with her next piece, the pyrotechnic *Grande Valse Brillante*, with the notes pouring out of the piano faster than you could hear them. Wonderful! Her final piece was a small toccata by a living Ukrainian composer, Nikolai Kapustin, heavily jazz-influenced. Here Alice came into her own, massaging the chords, living the syncopation, and giving exquisite shape to this delightful vignette. Clearly loving jazz, her facility with this style explains the way she approached the Bach prelude that opened the programme.

Several ovations brought Alice back for two encores, a melancholy early Scriabin and another rollicking jazzy Kapustin. What a treat!

Maxim Vengerov then bounded onto the bimah, Stradivarius in hand, closely followed by our Rabbi, also armed with a violin. With Alice at the piano, totally unannounced and unexpected, the two dear friends proceeded to play the first two movements of the Bach double violin concerto (*picture below*). A creditable performance by the Rabbi, and Maxim wasn't bad, either.



All in all, a terrific evening for Belsize and a wonderful effort by a small organising team comprising the Rabbi, Philip Keller (Music Committee Chair) and Ben Wolf. Those who attended gave generous donations, out of which we have made a small gift to the star of the show, Alice Burla, to assist with her studies. Remember that name.

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Last Call For Community Lunch

Saturday 31 January
after the Service

Contact the Synagogue
Office to book

Lewandowski and the Creation of Musical Order

Reflections on why and how we sing as we do - by Ben Wolf

Many of you will have been present at that moment on Yom Kippur when the Rabbi invited questions from the congregation and was asked how we choose the melodies for our services.

Since we had recently introduced a couple of new melodies into the services, and since I have thought about that issue every so often, I thought that was an excellent question – though I must confess to taking a break at that point and not staying for the answer.

Still, let's return to the question, for a synagogue's music is an important expression of its identity. It is also an important expression of two tangled and problematic things – our relationship with tradition, and our relationship with the non-Jewish world. And Belsize's musical tradition is a curious one. For we have music that was, in its time, radical and we have made it traditional.

We have melodies that we cling to because they are familiar even though, when Lewandowski introduced them, they were anything but. We live in London but we sing German music in Hebrew. We perform Jewish ceremonies but many of our singers are not Jewish. What does this say about Belsize Square and why do I find these facts so puzzlingly unpuzzling?

Before I deliberately fail to answer that question, I am going to spend a minute communing with Lewandowski, whose music we perform, and whose view of choirs and organs explains to some extent how we got here. Like other reformers of the 19th century, his desire was to sweep away the chaotic, tangled informality of traditional Jewish prayer, to bring in choir-singing fashioned according to what he described as "artistic law", accompanied by the organ, an instrument which he considered "alone capable...of leading

large masses of people in large spaces".

While his attitude may have been condescending, he sincerely believed that such music would help the congregation to take an "active and autonomous part in the services". Choral music, then, might appear as a restrictive form of music but in practice it allowed congregations to commune with each other musically, to be, in essence, a congregation brought together in the rejection of a musical chaos.

And there is something of this at Belsize. As Sue Mariner used to say, one of the magical moments of the High Holydays is the point at which the cantor begins to sing *Oseh Shalom* to our traditional High Holydays melody and the congregation joins in. In music, we become community.

Lewandowski's music, and the music of other reformers, also allowed other changes to take place. Adopting Christian musical traditions allowed Jewish music and Christian music to mix, and it was one manifestation of the ability of emancipated Jewish congregations to mix with the wider society in which they found themselves, a society which had for so many centuries viewed them with suspicion.

Yet another consequence, which Lewandowski probably did not foresee, was that it allowed non-Jews, trained in the classical Christian tradition, to come to Jewish music and to discover it, or part of it, for themselves. And that is where we find ourselves with the Belsize choir, a group of people who have in some cases shown their loyalty to this synagogue over many decades. For all of them I am grateful.

Perhaps loyalty is also a part of a musical tradition. Through loyalty and music we find community and through sharing we confront the world. Let us be grateful that, sometimes, the world also comes to us.

JAZZ IN THE SQUARE

New Bazaar Draw

London's best jazz gig on Saturday 6 December was almost certainly held at Belsize Square, where the audience in a packed-out hall were treated to vibrant energising music, served up with a satisfying accompaniment of fish and chips.

Belsize Square's Ralph Freeman used to book Britain's leading jazz artists for the St. Ives Jazz Club in Cornwall. On this occasion, he brought them to shul for an exceptional evening of music from a quartet that featured Ralph's own piano playing and a number of his excellent compositions.

Trumpeter Steve Waterman is one of the finest brass players on the UK jazz scene. He wears his virtuosity lightly, blending astonishingly fast bursts of notes seamlessly into lyrical phrases.

Ralph's up-beat number *Riff-Raff* offered a suggestive platform for Waterman's buoyant phrasing, while the luscious ballad, *Patience of Dreamers* — another of Ralph's originals — saw Waterman switching to the flugelhorn for an even more fluid and mellifluous tone.



Jazz group leader Ralph Freeman at the piano entertains post-Bazaar audience

Double bassist Dominic Howles anchored the quartet with considerable panache and combined nicely with drummer Andy Trim, who enjoyed letting loose on a number of extended solos. Ralph's piano playing was soulful and assured, and his compositions spanned an impressive range, from the bluesy licks of *The Grasshopper* to the waltz-feel of *Three Speak* and the bossa-esque *Mine at a Quarter to Nine*.

Wine flowed freely, as did the Grumpy Mule coffee ably administered by Joe Hacker. Almost two hours of music still left the audience pleading for an encore, which was delivered with beboppy brio, before a grateful crowd spilled out into the chilly streets of NW3 still buzzing from the warmly spirited music. Congratulations are due to Suzanne Goldstein and the Music Committee for a hugely enjoyable and memorable evening.

Dan Matlin



Winter Activities

Another year, another great Chanukah Bazaar. A huge thank you to the more than 50 volunteers who helped set up, prepare and man stalls over the December weekend. It is always a pleasure to see how the colour and life of the Bazaar emerge from the blank canvas of an empty Sanctuary and Kiddush room, and this year was no exception.

Thanks to a last-minute wave of donations, the Bottle Tombola was fully stocked, the Books full of recent publications (we continue the process, begun a few years back, of paring down stocks and giving multiple boxes to charity), and fresh supplies filled Household goods and designer (pre-loved!) Clothing. Similar collections ensured that the Kids Zone, under the Parents Association, was fully loaded.

The Bazaar kicked off with the now traditional year 3-led Havdalah service. This year, with the opening evening sandwiched between Havdalah and Jazz, there seemed to be an extra special atmosphere and sense of community bustle.

In terms of the financials we generated £8,030 after all expenses – this compares to £9,970 last year and an average of £9,200 over the past six years. Highlights included Wrapping (best performance for 15 years), Jewish Household (at nearly £1,000, the strongest performance for 10 years) and Books. Youth, PA and Football stalls made a combined £520 – particularly impressive, given that these have been loss-making in the past.

Special mention must go to the Wax Hands stall. This donated stall generated profits from the 90 children and adults tempted to have their hands immortalised in multi-coloured wax. Bucking Bronco was less successful and appears to have passed its sell-by-date, so will be retired.

Special mention also goes to our in-house Barista, Joe Hacker, and his Coffee stall which, in combination with the Liz Cowen and Dilys Tauz Breakfast stall, made £390. Both great achievements which, since their launch two years ago, have

THE BAZAAR EXPERIENCE

Report by retiring chairman Philip Brass

added a new dimension to the early morning Bazaar (alongside the return of Cheder on Bazaar Sunday), providing sorely needed caffeine to bleary-eyed stallholders as well as a new source of revenue. Some were disappointed at the lack of tea as an alternative – something to consider for next year.

Seven stalls made over £500; three over £1,000, including Groceries at £2,800, which continues to be an amazing achievement.

Huge thanks must go to Gordon and his team, without whom none of this could happen. As we always say, the incredible amount raised is just one facet of the Bazaar weekend. The other is the amazing sight of the community coming together for this curiously Belsize Square ritual.

Whether buying food that harks back to German roots or eating a delicious lunch prepared by Claire Walford and her team, it really is a unique experience. The Bazaar has changed in many ways since I joined the committee in 2008, serving as chairman for the last four years. It has certainly given me a wonderful insight into the history, personalities and quiet "doers" who make up our community.

I will now be handing the reins over to a new manager, who can inject new ideas into this wonderful Belsize institution. So far, despite some interest, we are yet to confirm a replacement. This needs to be done as soon as possible, so that I can take time to pass on relevant information, contact lists and personal experience of what worked and what didn't.

So please come forward – we are happy to split the role between sharers. I promise it is a rewarding experience. And thanks again to everyone.

RAFFLE WINNERS

Monica Bohm - £100
 Tiny Daly - £50
 Ludwig Berlin - £25
 Liz Cowan - £25
 Harry Kornhauser - £10
 Martha Tausz - £10

Marshmallows & Melodies

Winter Machaneh Report by Youth Leaders, Yohel and Michelle

Our second weekend Winter Machaneh took place from 7-9 November at a new campsite in Mill Hill, resulting in our largest ever weekend away. Our 18 children ranging from years 4-9 (9-14 year-olds for those unfamiliar with today's school terminology) took part in a multitude of activities, creating a really friendly and fun atmosphere throughout the weekend.

After settling in on Friday evening and getting to know everyone else – both youngsters and our new Youth Leader Michelle – we gathered at the Shabbat table and together sang the beautiful melody of *Shalom Aleichem*, followed by candle lighting and Kiddush, led by the children.

Next day followed with exciting outdoor activities based on team-building until the rain hit us right on time for lunch. After the tacos, we continued with indoor games including costume-making and a quiz seeking answers to the many and varied questions about the 75 years of our congregation's existence.

We baked our own pizzas, gathered around the cosy campfire to sing Havdalah and ate marshmallows. Tired and cold after a long sing-song to guitar accompaniment, we went back for hot chocolate and a movie night. On Sunday we enjoyed the sun with outdoor activities in fields and woods, until the weekend finally came to an end.

We would like to thank all the fantastic leaders who helped us over this weekend and contributed enormously to making this *machaneh* such an amazing success all round.

Keep an eye open for our upcoming activities. More fun is on its way!



Jewish Life in Latin America

by Cantor Paul Heller

Travel

Maybe I should start off by saying that to be a Jew in Bogota, Colombia, and Quito, Ecuador, is no different from being a Jew anywhere else in the world. It requires dedication and commitment and gives pride and satisfaction.

After all, we Jews have lived in different places in the world but we share the traditions and values, based on a very special history that is thousands of years old and has survived trials and distances. These traditions and values are the same in Stockholm, Jerusalem, Amsterdam, Washington or London as they are in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires or Colombia, where I grew up and lived most of my life.

But it would be unfair to stop there because I'm sure you want to know exactly how Jews live in Colombia and how our synagogue is organised, remembering that Jews have come to America since Columbus and the Spanish Inquisition. Here I want to describe my own experience in Colombia in 2012 when I was acting rabbi of the community in Medellin during its 80th anniversary celebrations. The experience put me in contact with other interesting Jewish communities.

But there is a particular phenomenon that I want to share with you, the return to Judaism of forced Christian converts (*anusim*). Over the generations these hidden Jews lost their identity. Now many of the Christians, searching for their roots, make the full pilgrimage back to Judaism.

In Medellin I was visited by former Christian priests who wanted to become rabbis, by believers in kabbalah who wanted to convert, and by people who called themselves Jews without going through any form of conversion. Some of them even said they came from synagogues in the most remote villages of this vast country.

Incidentally, Colombia has 440,800 square miles, compared to Great Britain's 88,745 square miles, so it is five times bigger than Britain, almost twice as big as France and half as big as Argentina, which has slightly more than a million square miles.

Among those I met in Medellin was Rabbi Elad Villegas of the Jewish community of Bello, now known as The Orthodox Community of Antioquia. In 1998, as Padre Elad Villegas and leader of a 3,000-strong mega church, he joined a group of 20 evangelical Christians on a trip to Jerusalem. After meeting rabbis there, as part of the programme, he started to have doubts about his spiritual path as a Christian.

Back in Medellin, he became Jewish and 70 families followed him. In 2012 he immersed himself in yeshivah studies in Jerusalem and became rabbi of his orthodox synagogue. Another 20 communities across Colombia have similarly emerged in the last few years.

The traditional Jewish community largely consists of Jews who emigrated from Europe, mainly Central and Eastern Europe, before and after the Second World War. My wife's

grandfather escaped earlier pogroms in Moldavia in the early 1920s. My parents came after the Shoah. My mother lost all her family in Holland. My father's family made it out of Vienna in 1938 just before the *Anschluss*.



*The Jewish Community's Synagogue
in Quito, Ecuador*

Over the years since the Second World War, several families have left South America, usually for the United States or Israel. Quito, capital of Ecuador, had a 5,000-strong community in 1946. Today it numbers 500. The 1990s saw a large emigration from Colombia because of the war with the drug barons. I was one of those emigrés.

Economic crises in Argentina reduced Jewish numbers there. More recently, Venezuela's left-wing and highly anti-Semitic government has severely reduced its Jewish community of 9,000.

Talking about numbers, I thought it would be interesting to share some figures. The biggest and most important community in South America is Argentina with 180,000. This comes third after the UK with 290,000 and Russia with 190,000. Brazil has 108,000, followed by Australia with similar numbers.

In Colombia there are about 5,000 Jews, with around 2,700 in the capital, Bogota, whose total population is 10 million. Most are active members of three synagogues, either Eastern or Central European or Sephardi. My parents belonged to the Central European synagogue, which is similar to Masorti here. There are smaller communities in Cali (1,000), Medellin (500) and Baranquilla (also 500), with the rest in smaller cities.

It is not hard to live a full Jewish life in Bogota. We have many organisations in the community taking care of the various aspects of Jewish life. We have two Orthodox rabbis, a Lubavitch house which is unique in its infrastructure, and a Masorti rabbi. There is a full-time Shochet. Kosher food, including meat, is available in major supermarkets.

The three synagogues and the Community Center are governed by committees and smaller boards of under ten people. The boards of directors are elected every four years. We have an active youth movement with camps and excursions. The Chevra Kadishah maintains three cemeteries serving all three congregations.

Our women's organisation, Ezra, takes responsibility for the welfare of the old and sick. We have a *Beit Avot*, or old-age home, where my mother now lives and is well cared for. It is a nine-story building with 10 apartments of 80 square metres, two penthouses of 200 square metres and 40 rooms that vary in size from 10-30 square metres.

Independent organisations include the Hebrew Colombian School, where I studied. My high school was considered one of the best in Bogota. The age range goes from kindergarten to end of secondary school. The school, which teaches Jewish history and Hebrew, is open to non-Jews. Its



graduates are literally scattered across universities worldwide.

The well-used sports and social club, Carmel Club, hosts numerous weekend events and is enjoyed by Maccabi for sports, as well as by non-members of the congregation. Diplomats love its 18-hole golf course. Wizo and KKL actively organise fund-raising campaigns for Israel.

Last but not least, the 23rd chapter of B'nai Brith had a very active branch in Bogota. I belonged to it. It had a Beit Hillel where I lived after graduation from university and worked in the anti-Defamation League office, participating in their regular activities. One of my beloved teachers was its executive director, Rabbi Dr. Gunther Friedlander.

To sum up, there is no lack of activities or volunteering within the community. Its members are mostly involved in industry or the professions.

There is, by the way, no anti-Semitism in Colombia. We are affected by wars in Israel but nothing compared to the reaction we experienced here last summer. The Muslim population is very small and there is really no extreme right in Colombia. Anti-Semitism certainly exists in Argentina. As you remember, the community building was bombed in 1994,

killing 80 people. Many left for the US and Israel but they have been coming back.

South America is very beautiful. It has magnificent places, spectacular mountains, the beautiful Caribbean and Pacific Ocean, many tourist attractions like the very popular "coffee zone" eco-park

in Colombia, well worth a visit. Not to mention the Galapagos Islands off Ecuador, the pre-Colombian city of Machu Picchu in the Peruvian Andes, and the city of Cartagena in the Colombian Caribbean, former headquarters of the Inquisition, with its 16th-century castles.

And now you also know that it has a Jewish active life to welcome you when you visit.

This article was first delivered as a talk to B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Lodge on 22 October.



The Metrocable: an intrinsic part of Medellin's public transport system



B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck (London) Lodge

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 8 February at 3.00pm
Quiz organised by Sister Gerta Regensburger

Sunday 22 February at 3.00pm
The Jewish Community's Uncivil Wars – and what to do about them
Talk by Keith Kahn-Harris, author and scholar.

Wednesday 11 March at 8.00pm
Musical Evening with Jane Rosenberg

All events take place at the Leo Baeck Hall,
11 Fitzjohn's Avenue, NW3 5JY

Jam Jars

The new season of jam making is upon us



Seville Oranges are very early this year and marmalade is already in storage for Bazaar 2015. Throughout the year I make jams, marmalade and chutneys. All I need from you is to bring your empty jam jars to the synagogue office. You then reap the pleasure of organic homemade relishes, which is done with so much pleasure

Henny Levin

Invitation to Nominate Candidates for Membership of the Board of The Belsize Square Synagogue (The Synagogue)

The third AGM of The Synagogue (the AGM) will be held on **Monday 1 June 2015**. Formal notice will be given in due course.

The Board hereby invites the members of The Synagogue to nominate candidates for the Office of Chairman and for election to the Board for a period of three years commencing from the AGM. There are 15 vacancies.

Nominations must be in writing, addressed to the Hon. Secretary and submitted to the Synagogue Office by twelve noon on **Friday 17 April 2015**. Each Nomination must be signed by at least five members of The Synagogue who are themselves entitled to vote at the AGM. Only valid nominations which are received by that date can be considered. No member may sign more nominations for the Board than the number of vacancies (namely 15).

In accordance with the Articles of Association of The Synagogue, the following 9 members will be retiring from the Board by rotation but are eligible for re-election if duly nominated:

Brenda Brod, Philip Brass, Joe Brookes, Paul Burger, Deborah Cohen, Adam Hurst, Annette Nathan, Vera Pollins, Sam Sanders.

From 20 April, a list of the candidates duly nominated will be available for inspection at the Synagogue Office and the formal notice of the AGM will also include a list of those candidates.

Election of Deputies

Election of up to two Deputies to the Board of Deputies of British Jews to be undertaken as a postal vote. Nominations should be sent in writing to the Hon. Secretary not later than **Friday 17 April 2015**, with names and addresses of the persons nominated, whose consent should be obtained.

Any person eligible for nomination as a representative to the Board of Deputies must have been, for at least one year prior, not under 18 years of age or an undischarged bankrupt or convicted of a serious criminal offence or a paid employee of the Board of Deputies. Retiring Deputies are eligible for nomination. Should there be more nominations than there are places, a postal ballot will take place. Our present deputies are: **Eric Moonman** and **Robert Sacks**.

FROM IRELAND TO ISRAEL : THE JOURNEY OF THE IRISH ARK

Jacqueline Goddard tells the story of a remarkable relocation

My husband Walter and I visited Israel this summer at the end of August last year and we were lucky that the final ceasefire had just begun so we did not need to rush off to shelters if sirens went off.

There we visited our American nephew and his wife and their six children Aaron, Avi, Leah, Tehilla, Yehuda and Zviki, in the Orthodox enclave of Ramat Beit Shemesh in the Judaeen hill, about 45 minutes bus ride from Jerusalem – outside the "green line".

I mention the childrens' names because the El Al security officers at Heathrow required me to recite all their names, presumably to prove that it was a bona fide relationship and that we had no explosives in our suitcases!

Ramat Beit Shemesh is an Anglo-American community with attractive modern buildings built uniformly from a light beige stone, quarried locally and quite similar to the Jerusalem stone buildings.

In London I had attended a lecture by Dr Sharman Kadish, where she lamented the demolition (apart from the facade) of the main Dublin synagogue in Adelaide Road (see *photo on page 11*). She mentioned that its Torah Ark had been transferred to a synagogue in Ramat Beit Shemesh.

When the Victorian synagogue, designed by leading Irish architect, J J O'Callaghan, and opened in 1892, was closed in 1999, due to declining membership and for commercial reasons, it had become the main "cathedral" synagogue in Dublin. At that time the Irish Heritage Service had not yet been set up, so there was no national register of historic monuments, which would doubtless have protected it.

The first Chief Rabbi of Ireland and later of the State of Israel, Yitzhak Halevi Herzog, officiated there for 17 years, and his son Chaim Herzog, a former President of Israel, celebrated his barmitzvah there.

In her book, *Synagogues in Britain and Ireland* (Yale University Press 2011), Dr Kadish writes that the Adelaide Road Synagogue was the flagship building of Irish Jewry and of great architectural significance. Moreover it had been in excellent condition, as can be seen from the photograph.

She suggested that it could well have been converted into an Irish Jewish Museum that we, living in nearby England, could have easily visited and enjoyed. As she wrote in a feature article for the *Jewish Chronicle* (27 July 1999), the Manchester Jewish Museum is housed in that city's former Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue and has been very successful.

However, Dublin's lost opportunity became a blessing for the congregation of Kehillat Ahavat Tzion in Ramat Beit Shemesh. KAT is a Modern Orthodox congregation, founded by British *olim* in September 1999. It moved to permanent premises in 2007 (see *photograph on page 11*). Through a congregant, the community was put in touch with the Dublin Hebrew Congregation and a *shidduch* – a match – was made.

Although the Ark is now in a very different setting from its original home, it seems as if it had been designed for its new position. Made of light coloured wood and painted white, blue

and gold, it looks fresh, modern and beautiful. A traditional dark Victorian ark would not have fitted in quite so seamlessly. The pulpit – this time of dark wood – was among other interesting items transferred. (*Ark and pulpit shown on page 11.*)

KAT's rabbi, Rabbi Menahem Copperman, is of Irish origin and his parents and family worshipped at Adelaide Road. Several congregants are also of Irish origin with close links to the Adelaide Road Synagogue.

Estelle Menton, president of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, which arranged for the transfer of the various items to Israel, wrote at the time: "The cherished pieces of furniture, built a century ago, have now found a new home in Eretz Israel. The circle has been closed. We couldn't have been more pleased."

The items were rededicated in 2008, when the new synagogue celebrated both its *chanukat bayit* – dedication of the new building – and the rededication of the Ark.

A congregant, Keith Shaw wrote: "Led by a choir composed entirely of members of the Kehillah, songs were sung to celebrate both the shul itself and the Aron Kodesh and, in a deliberate reversal of the final part of the Adelaide Road deconsecration, the Ark was opened by the same two people ... who were last to close it back in 1999 – and the Sifrei Torah placed back inside.

"The Ark remains a physical symbol of such continuity, resplendent in its new home, and provides a direct link between the generations who prayed before it for over a hundred years and the young community in Israel, some of whom are descendants of the former."

The ceremony was attended by the Irish Ambassador to Israel and also by the son of President Chaim Herzog, Isaac Herzog MK. It was a memorable occasion according to Keith Shaw, whose late grandfather, Eli Schwartzmann, davened at Adelaide Road. He wrote that Minister Herzog was visibly moved to be speaking from the same pulpit from which his late grandfather, Yitzhak Halevi Herzog z"l, had preached.

Another congregant addressed the congregation in Gaelic and there were many Irish people present, both visitors from Ireland and members of the Kehillah. The Ambassador referred to the shul as "a little piece of Ireland in Israel".

In conclusion, it can be said that it is wonderful that the ark and other artefacts are being used in a live setting as they were intended to be, and it is great that Irish Jewish continuity has been maintained. Although some might disagree and side with Dr Kadish, feeling that sadly we have lost out on not having an Irish Jewish Museum to visit in Dublin, housed in the architecturally significant Victorian building, where the Ark would have remained its jewel in the crown.

Additional note from Ruth Rothenberg: *In mid-August last year the blue plaque, installed by the Ulster History Circle in 1998 on the Belfast (Northern Ireland) house where Chaim Herzog was born, was removed after a series of anti-Semitic attacks during Operation Protective Edge (last summer's Gaza conflict), which culminated in an attempt to prise the plaque off the wall with a crowbar. A call was made for the plaque be displayed in Belfast City Hall.*



BRIDGING THE GENERATIONS

Eulogy for Herbert Levy by his son Andrew

I have never read *David Copperfield*. I have never read *Great Expectations* or *Oliver Twist* or *Tom Sawyer* or *Huckleberry Finn* but I know them all very well. I did by the age of 12 or 13. I had a father who read every word of those books to me, and many other books to my sister, Hilary, with deep love and affection.

Every single one of those five books is about a boy growing up in straitened circumstances as a youngster, who overcame them in adulthood. We reveal a lot about ourselves in the choice of reading material for our children.

The circumstances were not initially "straitened". Moabit [a pleasant district of central Berlin] was a comfortable place to be born into a loving and stable extended family. But history intervened and, on his tenth birthday, my father found himself in England without his parents. Unlike so many, they were able to follow him just a few days before the outbreak of war. They lived in poverty, were interned on the Isle of Man for a period and slowly began to recreate community at what became known as the Belsize Square Synagogue.

The community which in crisis created itself in the early 1940s in Belsize Square certainly began to lack fluency in the language they had left behind – German – but never regained it in the language they had to adapt to – English. My father was completely fluent not just in both languages but in their literary canons. He was at ease and knowledgeable about Goethe, Heine and Schiller as he was about Shakespeare, Shaw and Miller.

He became a bridge between those two generations, which he straddled. He could understand those slightly older than himself, who clung to a culture which, in its original context, had disappeared but he also "got" the children of those refugees born in the 1940s, who needed to live but, above all, who needed to laugh.

Many of you here got to know my father as the inspirational leader and role model, in a 1950s youth club, to nothing less than the renaissance of a whole generation of children of refugees. The Phoenix took wing and flourished. As a consummate actor himself, he created actors from spotty teenagers and musicians from shy youngsters. It was described by so many of that generation as an oasis of joy in a world of repressed memories. He cajoled and encouraged with gratuitous acts of kindness and in one case, even: "Reader, he married her!"

But one thing we, his family, know above all. As a young man, he was radical. As he grew old, he never grew fuddy-duddy. That radicalism stayed throughout. He hated authority figures

and authoritarianism and always understood ordinary people and their need to bloom.

It was the lesson he learned from his own experience. He never turned in on himself as a result of history. Mr Micawber in *David Copperfield* always waited for "something to turn up". My father never did. The Voices from the Past [referring to the title of his 1995 memoir] were a lesson for today. When he saw injustice in any circumstances, he spoke out.

The injustice of slavery described in *Huckleberry Finn* or the horror of Nazi persecution he knew personally became the lessons of history for the Rwandan massacre or the Balkan conflict or contemporary British racism. In becoming principal guide to the travelling Anne Frank Exhibition in 1991, he spoke what he saw as the truths from history to countless children throughout the UK.

But it was not just children. In *Great Expectations* there is a prisoner called Magwitch, whose capacity for acts of kindness fills the pages. My father read that book to me nearly 40 years ago and later in life his belief in the redemptive possibilities open to prisoners led him to do time in pretty well every prison in the country – showing the exhibition to inmates.

He inspired and developed close deep friendships with young Germans from the Action Reconciliation programme, who assisted him in the exhibition and who have come over especially for today. Anne, Edith and Immanuel – your mere presence here speaks volumes.

Many distinguished guests also visited the exhibition through his guidance and that also gave him the opportunity to speak truth to power. He showed the Leader of the Opposition round in January, and Tony Blair's first government created a Holocaust Memorial Day, a day my father viewed initially with some ambivalence, which dissipated. He would have hated it to become an opportunity for Jewish navel-gazing.

A few words of memory touch only a small part of the whole. He was a prodigious reader, listener to classical music and incredibly knowledgeable film buff. His values permeated his view of the community at Belsize Square, which he loved, and the challenges which faced it. He was a devoted husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather. His legacy endures. The Phoenix flew. It still flies in all of you. May "flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

This hesped was given at Herbert Levy's funeral on Sunday 11 January.

Purim Lunch and Sing

Thursday 5 March, 12.30 in the Synagogue Hall
Please contact the Synagogue Office to book a place



SECOND NIGHT SEDER Saturday 4 April

Rabbi Altshuler and Cantor Heller, together with their families, invite you to join them for Second Night Seder at the Synagogue after the Service at 6.45pm

Please phone the Synagogue Office on 020 7794 3949 or send an email to office@synagogue.org.uk if you wish to attend.

WINCHESTER PROJECT UPDATE

Judith Farbey writes:

Belsize Square Synagogue will be helping with a family meal at the Winch (21 Winchester Road, London, NW3 3NR) on Wednesday 11 March from 5-7pm.

We are looking for a small number of volunteers to set up the room, serve the food, chat with children and families, and wash up. Some lifting and stairs are involved.

To take part, please contact the Synagogue Office.

Dear Fellow Members

will have already past by when you read this words.

I really am becoming more confused as I gather up the years. In December there was something called Lunge und Learn, also entitled Eat, Meat und Discover. Well, as you must know by now Mrs Klopstick is something of a stranger to the kitchen. So from my point of view if she can learn what to do in it, this will change my live. Even though she had to give up her American Football training session, I finally managed to persuade her to attend this advent. But after all this, she came back with no more cooking skills than she had beforehand, which is none. On top of this she complained that there was no meat on the menu as advertised!



Still on a musical seam, I see that Westminster Abbey is slowly becoming our second home. Again the Belsize Square chores und our canter, Rev Paul Heller will be heard echoing through those hollowed walls to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

On a much lighter node, we are only a month away from Purim when I for one will be stamping my feet und making a lot of noise while I try to bite through one of Mrs Klopstick's homemade Haman Taschen. This woman's ability to turn pastry into concrete would have brought her great honour in the time of Moses und the Furrows. In her ewes in the Purim Spiel she was cast often in the roll of Esther, because this is her middle name. I am more a backroom boy und would either tear the stage curtains or make sound affects.

By the way, I hope that you have already noticed a remarkable improvement in my English pros. I have been taking private lessons with Professor Egon Nasshosen from across the road. He is unfortunately very deaf and visually impacted, but was still able to correct many of my repeated arrows. I also hope that you all enjoyed a restful gap in this seasonal period. I take this opportunity to wish all und Sunday a Happy, Healthy und Preposterous New Year in two Southend und fifteen.

It is not generally known, but before I was born my grandmother on my mother's sight, wanted me to become a canter. That is, of course, if I was to become a boy. In those days they didn't have under sound scanning, so no one really knew what sex was coming out. Unfortunately I didn't live up to my grandmother's expectations as I was und still am town deaf. Nevertheless, I am a big musical fan und can't wait for the night of the three canters, entitled Against all Odds, which

Und then another month onworts und we are at Pesach again, but I will safe my matzo stories for the next addition.

These are difficult times in every respect, terror, decease, whether und soon another election. Who should we Jews throw our load into? Although I personally can't support everything Israel does, I also can't support parties that show there hostility toworts the Jewish State. This leaves very few to chews from, but we owe it to our passed to avoid any with racial concoctions. I think you all know to who I am refereeing without spilling it out und I don't mean the Scottish Naturists.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick

More on the Nightingale of Königs Wusterhausen

Further to the article on Edith Bach in the December/January issue, Eddie Kaczinski writes:

I forgot an important aspect of my mother's later career, namely, her membership of the synagogue choir for some 25 years. She joined in its early, unpaid years, around 1948, under Dr Hans Kuttner (Henry's father) before we moved into the converted Belsize Square vicarage in 1951. A coloratura soloist in her heyday in Germany, she sang soprano at Belsize Square in a choir of extraordinarily high standard until her mid-70s, when she moved into a care home for her last few years.

She was also responsible for introducing another choir member, the late Peter Heimann. He was a rather lonely 14 year-old boy brought up by an aunt in West Hampstead, who found his way to our shul. We used to take him home after the service and my mother suggested that joining the choir would provide him with company and something to do. He became a choir stalwart as a tenor – something choirs are always short of. Sadly, he died of cancer in 2008 aged 61.

The background to the belated German interest in my mother's career (as described in the previous issue) is that the early years of German radio and the pioneering station at Königs Wusterhausen, mentioned in that article, were being researched a couple of years ago for a history of German broadcasting – and suddenly there was a gap. Their star singer (my mother), known as the Nightingale of Königs Wusterhausen, disappeared – apparently without trace – when my parents fled Nazi Germany. That gap has now been filled.

Scripture Readings

Candle Lighting	Date	Sidrah/Festival	Torah		Haftarah	
Friday 6 February Suzanne Smith	7 February Shevat 18	Yitro	Exodus	18:1-20:23	Isiah	6:1-7:6 9:5-6
Friday 13 February Charlotte Fraylich	14 February Shevat 25	Mishpatim Shabat Shekalim	Exodus	23:20-24:18 30:11-16	II Kings	12:1-17
Friday 20 February Sasha Spencer	21 February Adar 2	T'rumah	Exodus	26:31-27:19	I Kings	5:26-6:13
Friday 27 February Imogen Turner	28 February Adar 9	T'tzaveh Shabbat Zakhor	Exodus Deuteronomy	29:19-30:10 25:17-19	I Samuel	15:2-34



Community News

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:

Henry & Diane Charles
Jonathan Charles
Gideon Farrell
Hilary & Antony Markson

BIRTH

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Georgia & Richard Malach on the birth of their son, Joshua James

WEDDINGS

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Cira Gaber & Anthony Laser, who celebrated their wedding on 6 December

BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Miss M Kinstead (88) 3 January
Mrs R Brent (94) 5 January
Mrs R Eisenfeld (83) 8 January
Mrs L Simmonds (91) 18 January
Mr J Phillip (89) 23 January
Mrs A Carson (94) 6 January
Mrs I Wolffberg (95) 20 January
Mrs G Oblath (90) 27 January
Mrs R Gordon (94) 28 January
Mrs L Freeman (95) on 7 February
Mr A Behrens (94) on 23 February
Mr M Hellman (92) on 27 February

DEATH

We regret to announce the passing of:

James Seftel on 24 November 2014
Edith Rothschild on 5 December 2014
Hilde Benjamin on 8 December 2014
Herbert Levy on 7 January 2015
Helen Gibson on 8 January 2015
Therese Grosz on 9 January 2015
Gaby Low on 12 January 2015
Hilda Mayer on 18 January 2015

Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group

Sunday 1 February

9.45-11.00: Rabbi Altshuler – The Great Philosophers and the Jewish Response

11.15-12.30: Rabbi Markus Lange – Bibliologue – looking at biblical text in a new, creative midrashic way

Sunday 8 February

9.45-12.00: Rabbi Altshuler – The Great Philosophers and the Jewish Response

12.00 - 12.30: Open Forum – Israel, West Bank & settlements

Sunday 15 February

CHEDAR HALF TERM – no adult discussion

Sunday 22 February

9.45-12.30: Film morning followed by discussion – Film to be confirmed

**The copy deadline for the next issue of
Our Congregation is Friday 13 March 2015**

Regular Services

Friday evenings at 6.45pm / Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Kikar Kids

Saturdays 7 February and 7 March at 11.00am

Under-5s Service in the Crèche

Junior Service for 5-9 year-olds in the Library

11.30am – Kids Kiddush

Contact Mandy Brass on 020 8452 6936

**On Saturday 7 March we are "re-launching" the over 5s
Children's Service followed by a Family Pot Luck Lunch**

Religion School

Sunday mornings: 9.30am-12.30pm

Half Term – Sunday 15 February

LOCAL LUNCHEON GROUPS

Still running and happy to welcome new members

Please let us know if you plan to attend

The NW3 Group

1.00pm on Wednesdays 18 February and 18 March

Giacomo, 428 Finchley Rd, London, NW2 2HY

Please phone Deborah Jay on 020 7435 8835

The Edgware Group

12.30pm on Wednesdays 25 February and 25 March

Amaretto, 12 The Promenade, Hale Lane, HA8 7JZ

Please phone Inge Strauss on 020 8958 9414

The Wembley Group

12.30pm on Wednesday 18 February with The NW3 Group

12.30pm on Wednesday 11 March

The Preston Pub, 161 Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8NG

Please phone Anne Goodwin on 020 8452 3997

BELSIZE BOOK CLUB

Tuesday 18 March at 8.00pm

We will be reading Amy Waldman's
book, **The Submission**

Contact Dorothy White on
020 8445 6388 for further details



GENERAL ELECTION HUSTINGS FOR HAMPSTEAD AND KILBURN CONSTITUENCY

Belsize Square Synagogue

Sunday 1 March at 8.00pm

Doors open 7.00pm for refreshments

Questions to be submitted in person by 7.30pm

Discussion commences at 8.00pm

Panellists:

Simon Markus (Con), **Maajid Nawaz** (Lib Dem), **Tulip Siddiq** (Labour) and **Geoff Martin** (Executive Editor, Ham & High)

Chairman:

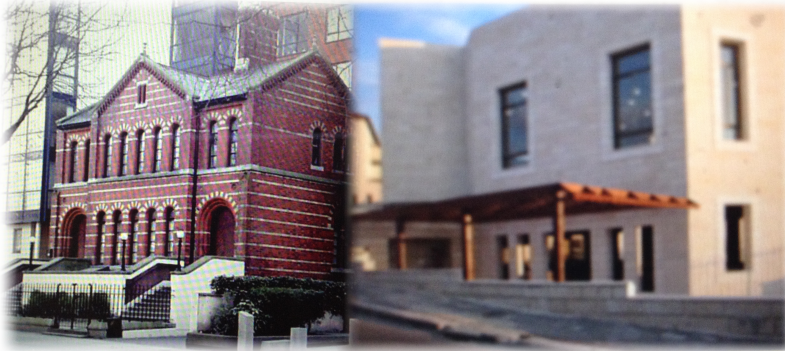
Jonathan Charles, Director of Communications for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, formerly long-serving BBC world affairs correspondent and presenter – and BSS member.

We welcome all members, friends and constituency residents



Photographs from Jacqueline Goddard's "Irish Ark" article on page 7

1. Facade of Adelaide Road Synagogue, Dublin
2. Kehillat Ahavat Tzion Synagogue in Ramat Beit Shemesh
3. The Irish Ark & pulpit now in Kehillat Ahavat Tzion Synagogue



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9:00am - 5:30pm

Fridays: 9:00am-2:00pm

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Lee Taylor - 020 7794 3949

BELSIZE MEMBERS' GROUP

Co-chairs: Marion Nathan - 020 8361 2443
and Dilys Tausz - 020 7435 5996

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 Dorothy White on 020 8445 6388
or email dorothywhite@synagogue.org.uk
or call the Synagogue Office for a leaflet

FUNERALS

During synagogue office hours phone 020 7794 3949.
Evenings/weekends phone Calos (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 Wednesdays)

LIBRARY

Open Wednesdays 10am - 12 noon
At other times please check first with the office

CHEDER

Enquiries to Jeanie Horowitz, Principal in the Synagogue
Office, or email jeanie@synagogue.org.uk

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Chairperson: Mandy Brass - 020 8452 6936

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Email Youth Workers Yohel Heller and Michelle Heller -
youth@synagogue.org.uk

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Philip Simon

www.philipsimon.co.uk

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