

Our Congregation



News and views from Belsize Square Synagogue

SHAVUOT AND THIS YEAR'S THEME OF MAIMONIDES

Chaverim Yekarim – Dear Friends,

This is the month of Sivan, the month of June, when we celebrate Shavuot, our short two-day chag that has few rituals or customs attached to it, unlike its partner pilgrimage festivals (*regalim*) of Passover and Succot.

There's a reason for that lacuna in ritual for Shavuot because the primary message of this festival is *matan Torateinu*, the commemoration of the giving of the Torah. Torah speaks for itself, it needs no formal ritual, for it is about our mental and intellectual connection to Torah and Judaism. That is why the most prominent ritual attached to Shavuot has been the custom of Tikkun Leyl Shavuot, the Kabbalistic tradition of studying Torah all night long, as our ancestors at Har Sinai stayed awake all night long before receiving the Ten Commandments.

By now you all know the importance of our educational component at Belsize Square Synagogue. We have hosted a variety of prominent speakers, including the former Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Rabbi Dr Ismar Schorsch, and more recently the Provost and esteemed Dean of History at JTS, Professor Jack Wertheimer. We've had other scholars with us and we have a steady diet of classes in our weekly Monday night *Introduction to*

Judaism course, covering everything from theology, festivals and life cycle to interfaith matters and history.

And we have our regular Sunday morning Discussion Group where we have studied this year the great thinkers of Western civilisation and Jewish responses to those thinkers, and have become familiar and knowledgeable about Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Kant and Hegel. We have hosted a magnificently successful day of study, Limmud, and held joint classes with our neighbour, St Peter's Church, on Bible, extremism and many other subjects.

Education is the heart and core of our congregation. Without knowledge we lose our vision, our wisdom, our drive to maintain the light of Israel. Talmud Torah (Torah study) is the hallmark of our religious faith and commitments. We know that without our Jewish education, knowledge and literacy, we would have disappeared long ago.

Here are some cornerstone citations to remember:

1) It says in *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers): *Am ha'aretz lo chasid* (An ignorant Jew cannot be a pious person). Our rabbis knew 2,000 years ago that without knowledge of Torah, it is impossible to find the drive and purpose to observe the commandments, personal and inter-personal. You simply cannot be or act on something important to you without knowing why.

Knowledge increases the sense of obligation. Jews have learned through the centuries that there is no substitute for learning.

2) *Talmud Torah k'neged kulam* (The study of Torah has equal weight to all of them, i.e. the rest of the commandments). What was Rabbi Akiva trying to teach us? Without study of Torah you cannot understand why

we Jews must do what we do. This says it all regarding the place of study in our tradition.

3) *V'shinantem l'vanecha* (And you shall teach it to your children – or chew it over with them.). All parents have this obligation, as we recite from the Shema morning and evening, for study leads to the parental ability to transmit our tradition to our children and grandchildren. The verse says we should teach them intensively, repeatedly. *V'shinantem*, which comes from the word for tooth (*shin*, like the Hebrew letter), means that we must first be students ourselves so that we know what we are telling our children.

4) *Torah lishma* (Torah for its own sake), which means that the purpose of our study is not to gain a diploma or secure good grades or even "prepare ourselves for a job", but for its own sake, just to love the learning – no ulterior motives allowed. Now, would not this ethical value be helpful on our university campuses where so much of student and classroom life is about getting good grades rather than the substance of learning?

So my plea to you all is: Come to our classes and services. I always try to teach something new each week. Come to our Tikkun Leyl Shavuot after evening service on Saturday 11 June. Our subject this year is Maimonides, the great Rambam (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, 1140-1205). Each of our sessions will be on a different aspect of his teachings. What do you know about Maimonides? Come and find out.

And join us on Sunday mornings. We're wrapping up this year's course but come next year, when we will be exploring the philosophies of Heschel, Fackenheim, Buber, Rosenzweig, Kaplan and many more prominent 20th-century Jewish thinkers.

My wishes to all of you for a blessed and dairy-filled Shavuot.

Chag Shavuot Sameach,

Rabbi Altshuler

SHAVUOT SERVICES AND STUDY

1st Eve: Saturday 11 June at 6.45pm followed by Tikkun Leyl Shavuot (details on page 2)

1st Day: Sunday 12 June at 10.00am

2nd Eve: Sunday 12 June at 6.45pm

2nd Day: Monday 13 June at 10.00am

SHAVUOT OFFICE HOURS

The office will close at 2.00pm on Friday 10 June and re-open on Tuesday 14 June at 9.00am

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CELEBRATING ISRAEL'S 68th YEAR

Our Synagogue provided the perfect setting for a tremendous outpouring of joy to mark Israel's 68th Independence Day.

A full house of 150 guests danced the night away after listening to a short update by Israel's deputy ambassador, Eitan Naeh, taking part in a question and answer session with Lord Daniel Finkelstein (Baron Finkelstein of Pinner, no less) – after he had been interviewed by our own professional, Rob Nothman – tucking into a delicious and original fish dinner (thank you, Adam Nathan), and responding to Allan Morgenthau's stirring and reasoned appeal for the three Israeli charities with which we have a longstanding relationship.

The evening raised around £50,000 for programmes for immigrant children in the Youth Aliyah village of Yemin Orde in the Carmel mountains, extra help after school hours for Arab and Jewish kids in the Jaffa-Tel Aviv area, and specially adapted wheelchairs for the disabled to compete in sports. Many thanks to all our organisers and to Israel Bonds, which helped sponsor the event.

Right: Sheer energy on the dance floor, thanks to Shir's music



Below: At the starting line: Rabbi Stuart Altshuler, chairman of the Israel Committee Jeff Graham, deputy Israel ambassador Eitan Naeh, Lord Daniel Finkelstein, interviewer Rob Nothman, Cantor Paul Heller



Brian Harris (left) gives the toast to the President of the State of Israel Steven Bruck (right) gives the loyal toast



Rob Nothman (left) interviewing Lord Daniel Finkelstein. Questions included the resurgence of anti-Semitism under the guise of anti-Zionism and the myth of Jewish control of the media. As Daniel Finkelstein said: "If we are in control of global media, we are really rubbish at it." He was also concerned that Donald Trump as president, however personally friendly to Israel, could destroy the Western liberal ideas which support

Israel. Questions from the audience ranged from the EU referendum (he personally preferred a looser relationship) and its likely outcome, to the anti-Semitism of the "illiberal left", which he condemned as classic conspiracy theory. Speaking of his mother's release from Belsen, he recalled the UN's decision that Jews should have a home in Israel. "We have a duty to protect Jews and the place where they can be at home," he said.

TIKKUN LEYL SHAVUOT

Saturday 11 June

8pm after Evening Service until 11pm

Join us for our traditional evening of study, cheesecake and schmoozing.

Please bring a contribution for a milky Pot-Luck Supper.

We will provide the cheesecake.

Our theme this year:

Maimonides – Struggles with Texts

Lectures

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler:

Maimonides – The First "Non-Orthodox" Rabbi!

Dr Claire Walford:

Maimonides – Prince of Physicians: Chicken Soup and Tomorrow's Doctors

Naomi Stadlen:

Whoever desires the crown of Torah may come and get it

Alasdair Nisbet:

Confronting Torah to get your money back: Maimonides vs Hillel

BELSIZE IN BERLIN

Dalia Lichfield offers her personal reflections

"What were your main impressions of the visit to Berlin?" asked my friends when I returned from our Belsize Square excursion in May. My reply was instant: "The warm, friendly and caring attitude of people we met – from hotel staff and taxi drivers to public administrators, high ranking politicians and priests; and the perplexing contrast with Nazi Germany".

This sensation hovered over a dense set of experiences, thoughtfully planned by our Rabbi together with our author, Thomas Harding, whose latest book, *The House By The Lake*, formed the lynchpin of the exercise, and Claire Walford, who switched from running the Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group programme to keeping our somewhat larger group on course.

We were thrust into it from the start by walking the three-mile-long route that Jews were forced to march to the Pultitzbrücke, a bridge over a main railway line and station. We stopped at the top of steps leading down to the tracks and gazed at a modest memorial sculpture set on the edge of the bridge, in long moments of contemplation. But these Jews, including Thomas's great-aunt and uncle, had been forced to walk down to board the trains bound for "the east", the death camps.

But why and how could the extermination of Jews come about? We found the answer in the magnificent villa in Wannsee where, in January 1942, 15 top officials of the Nazi bureaucracy and the SS consolidated, over a two-hour lunch, the "final solution" for Jewish extermination. Following a long and most informative lecture by its director, Dr Hans-Christian Jasch, we studied the impressively detailed exhibition, which shows the progression of antisemitism over many decades, culminating in the Holocaust. The impact of the Wannsee visit is deeply set within us.

In fact, records and memories of the thriving Jewish community remained in several libraries and archives. These records of Jewish people's achievements, photos and family memories have been collated and are open for visitors to explore in quiet, welcoming surroundings in the Schoeneberg Rathaus (town hall), where 6,000 cards cover the walls, each detailing a Jewish family or individual from the borough. And what excitement when we found personal stories of familiar people!

There were also other disturbing memories to explore – seeing the remnants of the Berlin Wall and understanding the techniques that kept half the city under a ruthless Communist regime. This included a tour of the Stasi Archives, where some 11 kilometres of files contain personal data and informers' tell-tales on every person in town. We were honoured to be shown around by the delightful current Archive Manager with his explanation of the Stasi methods and then the methodical analysis and management of these vicious troves.

Having experienced such close contact with the disturbing past, we were moved when introduced to the humane present and future. It came through in ordinary contacts with people, and was clearly developed in public buildings and spaces.

Most impressive were the new Parliament buildings and extensions of the Bundestag, a feast to the eye when walking around and a pleasure to the mind when Parliamentary procedures, content and approach to politics were explained by members of the House and, in particular, by the very thoughtful SDP member with responsibility for religious affairs, Kerstin Giese.

But there was more to come, as our experiences spread beyond the city of Berlin and into the countryside and the focal point of Thomas Harding's endeavours. An hour's drive out of Berlin took us to "the house by the lake", Thomas's great-grandparents' weekend retreat in Gross Glienicke, in a pastoral environment of lakes and woods, a warm village community and very friendly Church pastors.

Thomas showed us the badly deteriorated building and explained his intention to create a facility which, reflecting the history of human conflicts as well as understanding and conciliation, would – after restoration – bring together children of diverse backgrounds to learn, play and appreciate each other's human qualities. We witnessed the strong local support for his idea, expressed by local church clergy and a welcoming party of the entire local community. Like all our guides and speakers, they were knowledgeable, sympathetic and excellent communicators.

Completing this rich tapestry of experiences were our visits to Berlin's original flagship synagogue, the Neue

Synagoge in Oranienburger Strasse – or what remains of it. It was actually saved from being burned down on Kristallnacht by a local policeman but then used as a warehouse until bombed by the British. Only the frontage has now been restored.

On our first visit we met the delightful Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, who converted to Judaism due to her deep appreciation of our religion, and who has built up an open-minded community in which men and women, straight and gay, share the beliefs and ethos of Judaism. On our second visit we heard about the state and composition of today's Jewish community in Germany from Rabbi Walter Homolka, rector of Potsdam University's Abraham Geiger College for Progressive rabbinical training.

We also looked around the grandeur of the remains. The magnificent structure can be imagined from its scale and from the many photographs and salvaged items – all well displayed and explained by a permanent exhibition, attracting many visitors.

Our last day in Berlin included the amazing Pergamon museum of archaeology, containing magnificent remnants and reconstructions of Babylonian and Roman public spaces and palaces, as well as ancient sculptures of gods and animals – something not to be missed!

It was altogether a most interesting and inspiring week, evidence of the survival power of Jewish communities and a happy bonding amongst our group. But its richness and effects are totally due to the efforts of Thomas, Claire, and our adventurous Rabbi. My thanks to them.



Steven Bruck at the Pultitz Bridge railway line memorial





A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHEVRA KADISHAH

Helen Grunberg outlines our traditions and invaluable helpers

Burial is inevitably one of the fundamental responsibilities of any community. Jewish practice is recorded going back to biblical times but it has changed over the ages.

What is now our traditional practice seems to have taken shape about a thousand years ago. It centres round taharah (purity or, in this case, purification) the process of washing and preparing the body of the deceased for burial, including specific prayers for what has always been considered a sacred duty.

Taharah is recorded in the 11th century in Baghdad and in Rashi's writings in Troyes in central northern France (worth a detour from the motorway, should you be travelling that way) and in Maimonides's work in the following century. These mentions are based on discussions in the Geonic period of the great Jewish academies in Babylon from the 6th to 9th centuries, so there is a long history of continuity.

Medieval European Jewish communities established a separate Taharah House at their cemeteries, where the deceased were prepared for dignified burial. There were many local variations. In 13th-century Mainz, the body was anointed with a mixture of eggs and wine. In 15th-century Spain, a Kabbalist recited blessings and washed the body before burial

Ashkenazi custom as we now know it in Europe and the Western world was formalised in the mid-16th century by Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi of Prague, who organised the "holy group", the Chevra Kadishah, to carry out this vital role as a burial society. You can still see the room in the Jewish quarter of Prague, up a short outdoor stone staircase, where the members held their annual dinner and elected their president.

The dinner, an important date in the communal calendar, is traditionally held on 7 Adar (early February), the date of

Moses' birth and death. It was the occasion for appointing officers and making any amendments to rules and practice – you could call it an AGM. Traditionally, across Europe, women also had their own burial society called Nashim Tzadkaniyot (pious women).

Our tradition has mostly been passed down by Ashkenazi refugees from the Shoah. Serving our community in 1953, our Cantor, Rev Magnus Davidsson was elected chairman of the Chevra Kadishah. The elected joint vice-chairs were Friedl Kochmann and Max Abrahams, who actually lived in Bournemouth. (Another member with the same name lived in London.)

Rabbi Salzberger outlined the tasks and duties that had to be undertaken. Underlying them was the principle of caring for the dying and deceased as a religious duty. Some rituals are exactly the same as in the 16th century, such as burying men with their tallit. But one tzitzit (corner fringe) is cut off to denote that the deceased can no longer fulfil the mitzvot or commandments.

Other traditions include the white shrouds, the ban on tying knots, the 20 litres of continuous water flow using three buckets, the prayers and asking for forgiveness and, above all, the respect, sensitivity and loving kindness in carrying out taharah and preparation for burial.

On 29 September 1957 a memorial was unveiled to those who perished in the Holocaust. It was commissioned by the Chevra Kadishah at the Liberal Jewish Cemetery in Pound Lane, Willesden, while we were part of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue under the wing of the Hon Lily Montagu, a leading and pioneering figure in Liberal Judaism, who was instrumental in helping our fledgling refugee community establish itself in London. She died in 1963.

The memorial not only recognised the tragedy of German Jewry, it explained

the reason why we were there as a German "Liberale" community, sharing a similar "liberal" title but with very different traditions. We were called the New Liberal Jewish Congregation until we changed our name to the Belsize Square Synagogue in 1989.

In 1967 Dr Hans Kuttner was our Honorary Secretary. He wrote that "the last ten years had seen great progress ... and second and third generation members were very active in the work for the community." In 1969 the chairman of the Chevra Kadishah, Dr Hans Blum died, a great loss to the community.

In 1970 Rabbi Kokotek called on more members to take an active role in the Chevra Kadishah. In 1971 Max Kochmann (Friedl's son) became chairman. Dr Hans Kuttner arranged an annual se'udah, a Chevra Kadishah dinner. A meeting that year recorded a good attendance of 17 people in fairly equal numbers of men and women.

Among them were people I remember: Max's wife Hilde, Vally Kokotek, Hilde Grodzinski, Hans Wreschner, Dr Apt and Norbert Cohn. Friedl Kochmann provided the tachranim, the shrouds. The undertakers at that time were Foreman and Sons. Since then, we've used M M Broads and now Calos.

In 1982 Rabbi Rodney Mariner revitalised the Chevra Kadishah, ensuring that all members would have taharah unless they chose to opt out. With Rev Larry Fine he supported Vally Kokotek in asking for more female members to join the Chevra Kadishah, which is when I volunteered. He also produced our first Hebrew-English Order of Service booklet.

Belsize Square Synagogue now has a team of 15 to carry out this mitzvah, with Rabbi Stuart Altshuler as chairman and more male members, whom he has trained. I am pleased and proud to be part of this caring and quietly performed work.

ANNUAL PULPIT EXCHANGE

Saturday 11 June

Rev Paul Nicholson of St Peter's Church (C of E) will address us at Belsize Square Synagogue

Sunday 26 June

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler will speak at St Peter's Church

Revelation: How does God speak to us in our two religious traditions? And if God speaks to our particular faith traditions, how does that include or exclude the other?

LUNCH n' LEARN

Saturday 18 June following the Service

Eat, Drink and Discuss:

Does our Synagogue need a religious or halachic ideology?

What is the mission of our Synagogue?

How do we agree or disagree with our Orthodox and non-Orthodox counterparts?

THE ROOTS OF EXTREMISM

Ruth Rothenberg explores where today's terrorism comes from

In a world which has recently seen so many sickening terror attacks in the name of one particular religion, Islam, there is an understandable interest in what drives people to commit these horrific crimes. How can anyone think them justified by any religion?

There are a variety of explanations and no easy answers but Rabbi Altshuler made a brave attempt to tackle the issue through a series of lectures on fundamentalism and extremism in the three monotheistic religions. Rev Paul Nicholson spoke on Christianity in our synagogue, Rabbi Altshuler outlined the Jewish experience at St Peter's Church, and Sheikh Ahmed Haneef concentrated on recent Muslim developments in the final talk which took place in the church.

Change of Message

The first two lectures covered long stretches of history. Rev Nicholson outlined how the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century changed it from Jesus's messages of pacifism to a centre of powerful authority, the church, which soon had to create a philosophical justification for its use of force. Before that, its early converts felt they belonged to an exclusive group whose martyrdom would be rewarded in heaven. Later efforts aimed at unity – but whose unity and at what cost? Rev Nicholson noted that Muslim power at its peak showed markedly more tolerance towards minority religions than Christianity. But Christian observance is now in decline, with church membership dwindling.

Rabbi Altshuler went even further back in time, when the Israelites were one group among many fighting for territory. By the time we reach well documented historical eras, Jewish independence was over and rabbinical thought was directed towards keeping Judaism alive for people who lacked the means of defence. Any extremism and fundamentalism was played out internally between different sects and movements at various points in history.

The rise of militant Islam in today's world has taken the world by surprise and we wonder where it comes from. Sheikh Haneef explained its roots in the rise of oil money and power in Saudi Arabia. The starting point was the oil shock following Israel's

1973 Yom Kippur War with Egypt, when Saudi Arabia boycotted Israel's supporters. Oil prices rocketed and Saudi Arabia became seriously rich.

After the Ottomans

The Saudi ruling family are Sunni Muslims, dating back to the split into Sunni and Shia branches after Mohammed's death in 632CE. The prominent family had been banished by the Turks but returned and flourished as the Ottoman Empire fell. They were finally recognised as rulers of the new kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. Oil was discovered in 1938.

Its first king was helped to power by the Muslim Brotherhood, the militant arm of Wahabbism, an 18th-century puritanical movement reacting to the widespread Shia practice of creating and visiting shrines. The Saud family were closely allied to this fundamentalist movement from its start.

The minority sect used the country's apparently unstoppable oil wealth to infiltrate every corner of the Islamic world. Sheikh Haneef said that Wahabbi doctrine and propaganda dominated Islamic universities. By the beginning of this century, 80% of mosques in the USA were run by Wahabbi sheikhs. Most mosques in Britain and Europe are also Sunni.

Though Shia centres from India to Egypt have tried to counter the rise of Wahabbism, the only significant challenge was the 1979 Iranian Revolution. When the new ruling Shia clerics called for the overthrow of corrupt regimes, Saudi Arabia reacted by creating Sunni militant groups. The effect was soon seen in the disruption of previously tolerant peoples' lives. Countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, where different communities such as Hindus and Buddhists as well as different streams of Islam had happily co-existed, changed to intolerance.

Sheikh Haneef, who was born in Trinidad and grew up in Canada, is a convert to Shia Islam. He had experienced what he felt as the innate racism of the church and was attracted

by Shia Islam's "message of love". He was highly critical of the Sunni Wahabbi doctrine (also known as Salafism) with its simple literal beliefs. These include a belief in the decline and degeneration of each successive generation – because only the original "first" generation was and could be perfect.

As an example he cited a Wahabbi book his daughter, a medical student, happened to pick up. It denounced Einstein's theory of relativity ($E=mc^2$) as an expression of "unbelief". Such beliefs attract criminals and thugs, as well as alienated youth, he said. "They believe they can justify murder in the name of God." He compared it to "teaching Nazism" where "they promise you everything in the future".

Muslims are not blind to the problem. "A lot of Muslim clerics are now reacting to this," he said. "They die trying to change people's minds." He accused the media of not reporting Muslim protests against extremism. There were demonstrations against Lee Rigby's murder in 2013, he said, but they never made the news.

He also defended sharia law as a dynamic and evolving system that accepts modern development but said that it can only operate in a Muslim state. "You cannot call for it in the diaspora. It is not extremist in itself but it attracts extremists. That makes it misunderstood in the West because it is called for by extremists."

"History is Rubbish"

His talk did not go unchallenged. Rabbi Altshuler accused Shia Iran of extremism in calling for the destruction of Israel. But for Sheikh Haneef, extremism is a psychological condition, not political. "Doing the wrong thing is not the same as extremism," he said, noting that current uprisings and civil wars in the Middle East and North Africa are all intra-Muslim conflicts, with cruel dictators succeeded by even worse chaos.

What perhaps saddened him most of all was Saudi Arabia's attitude towards its own history and holy sites. All the historic buildings and sites connected with Mohammed have been demolished, he said, and rubbish is strewn around sacred buildings. "To them history is rubbish."



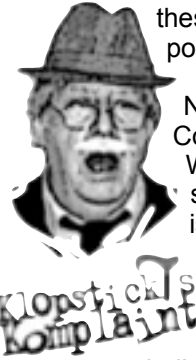


Dear Fellow Members

Well here we are at the outskirts of June, in which this country has to decide what continent we are belonging to. Personally I think the hole thing is ridiculous. How we ever came to this fiestco hardly anyone knows. I think Mr Cameron was frightened from the thread of a rise of Nigel Farage's You Kip party. In the end only one of his ex-conserves is now in the house for parliament. Und his seat will be lost in due cause. So this referendum was never needed, but instead we are tottering on the ring of disaster.

Of course last month all the papers und news brought-casts was full of the matter of auntie semitismus. Und every time this was mentioned on the television oder newspapers they show off always the same picture of Hasids from the back walking down the road in short trousers, long stockings, payos, und unusual hat wear. What is anyone who is not customed to such circles to make from this strange closes? It is not reprehensible of most from our community.

This matter was risen first by Miss Nazi Shah und then made verse by ex-major Red Ken Lebensraum who put in his four pennies. The fact is that all these people hate Israel und have come under the proper-ganda from some synthesisers for the PLO. Many from us are not very happy with certain abjects from the Nathan Yahoo regime, but he should never be compared with depots like the late Satan Hussain, General Gadaffi, Ayatollah Hoomany und the still living Basher Al Saddam. But people like Herr Lebensraum demonise the Israeli leadership much more then they do to



these real criminals und a proportion from the British population are only two happy to believe it.

Now we also have a new major in London, Sadique Cohen. He is very contrasting to the late Boris Johnson. We will see how he goes along. Mrs Klopstick says that she wants to give him a big chance, because his hair is tidy, not like the past blond bombshell who couldn't be bothered even to find a comb. What I find very disturbing about the hole business is that not won of the people und party I voted for in this election were winners from their seat. I am wandering now if my ballot paper was counted at all. I would hate to think that my vote had been ricked und all the people I crossed out on the paper therefore didn't have a chance to win.

I have just returned to Abernein Mansions from the Belsize Square Israel 68 dinner party. The sanatorium was laying out in the most beautiful way. Mrs K would have loved it but she had already had herself committed. Everything was really marvellous, especially the cooking from Adam Nathan, und also the music form Sher und the charitable peals. I was specially in-armoured by the Rob Nothman sports interview from Lord Baron von Finkelstein. He is a hugely educated man und a very fine und lurid speaker und really kidnapped the mood of the evening with everybody hanging on his every silly-bill. From the heart of my bottom I dispatch my thanks to all those helped to organise this advent.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick

CELLO MASTERCLASS AND RECITAL

Sunday 5 June at Belsize Square Synagogue

Gemma Rosefield: Cello with Ben Wolf: Piano

4.00pm Masterclass for young cellists aged 14-18
6.15pm Refreshment break
7.00 - 8.30pm Recital: Bloch, Janacek, Popper and Mendelssohn

Tickets £15 (students £10) Available from the Synagogue Office



Scripture Readings

Candle Lighting	Date	Sidrah/Festival	Torah		Haftarah	
Friday 3 June Mia Brent & Georgia Barclay	4 June Iyar 27	B'chukotai	Leviticus	26:3-27:15 27:32-34	Jeremiah	16:19-17:14
Friday 10 June Marion Godfrey	11 June Sivan 5	B'midbar	Numbers	1:1-54 4:17-20	Hosea	2:1-22
Saturday 11 June Jackie Alexander	12 June Sivan 6	Shavuot 1st Day	Exodus Deuteronomy	19:1-20:23 16:9-12	Isaiah	6:1-13
Sunday 12 June Sandra Clifton	13 June Sivan 7	Shavuot 2nd Day	Deuteronomy	5:1-6:3 4:12-15	Jeremiah	31:27-37
Friday 17 June Anat Sherman	18 June Sivan 12	Naso	Numbers	4.21-5.10 7:87-89	Judges	13:2-25
Friday 24 June Sophie Cutner	25 June Sivan 19	B'ha'alot'cha	Numbers	8:1-9:14 12:14-16	Zechariah	2:14-4:7

Community News

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:

Sam Greenberg
Emily Goodman
Elizabeth Roberts

BIRTH

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Sandra & Andy Burke on the birth of their daughter, Ella Anne

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Mia, daughter of Gillian and Thomas Brent, who celebrates her Bat Mitzvah on 4 June
Georgia, daughter of Jane Barclay, who celebrates her Bat Mitzvah on 4 June
Guy, son of Anat and Barry Sherman, who celebrates his Bar Mitzvah on 18 June
Max, son of Sophie and Simon Cutner, who celebrates his Bar Mitzvah on 25 June

WEDDING

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Debby Rothenberg on her marriage to Simon Hill

BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Mr G Summerfield (83) on 3 June
Mr P Summerfield (83) on 3 June
Mrs I White (99) on 8 June
Mrs I Feldstein (90) on 22 June
Mrs M Smith (101) on 24 June
Mr R Saltiel (94) on 26 June
Lord P Eden (95) on 27 June
Mr P Koppel (83) on 29 June
Mrs M Katz (93) on 30 June

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of:

Jennifer Benedict, who died on 4 May
Emil Ettinger, who died on 7 May
Robert Miller, who died on 13 May
Charlotte Fellner, who died on 18 May

Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Groups

Sunday 5 June - HALF TERM - No adult discussion

Saturday 11 June

Tikkun Leyl Shavuot, following evening service at 6.45pm

Sunday 12 June - SHAVUOT - No adult discussion

Saturday 18 June

LUNCH & LEARN with Rabbi Altshuler
Pot-luck lunch following Shabbat morning service

Sunday 19 June

10.00am-12.30pm Discussion lead by Naomi Layish:
Refugee politics of the 1930s-40s and the current refugee question

Sunday 26 June

10.00-11.00am Rabbi Altshuler on The Great Philosophers and the Jewish response: Schopenhauer, Mill, Darwin and Kierkegaard, Part 1

11.00-12.30pm Rabbi Altshuler in Pulpit Exchange with Rev Paul Nicholson of St Peter's Church

The copy deadline for the next issue of
Our Congregation is Friday 17 June

REGULAR SERVICES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm & Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Kikar Kids

Saturday 4 June and 2 July at 11.00am

Under-5s Service in the Crèche

5-9 year-olds Service in the Library

11.30am – Kids Kiddush

Often followed by a Pot Luck Lunch

Contact Frank Joseph on 020 7482 2555 to bring a dish

Religion School

Sunday mornings: 9.30am-12.30pm

Half Term: 5 June

Terms Ends: 10 July

LOCAL LUNCHEON GROUPS

Still running and happy to welcome new members
Please let us know if you plan to attend

The NW3 and Wembley Group

Giacomo, 428 Finchley Road, NW2 2HY

1.00pm on Wednesdays 22 June & 20 July

Please phone Irene Strauss on 020 7435 3538

The Edgware Group

The Kitchen, 16-17 The Promenade, Hale Lane, HA8 7JZ

12.15pm on Tuesdays 21 June & 19 July

Please phone Inge Strauss on 020 8958 9414

Cantor Heller invites the B'nei Mitzvah Class to a Kabbalat Shabbat Chat

Friday 10 June, 5.30pm in the Library
Refreshments provided

An Erev Shabbat opportunity to make Kiddush,
sing Lecha Dodi and to learn the lessons of the Parsha

Notice is hereby given that the
AGM OF THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE
will be held in the Synagogue Hall, 51 Belsize Square,
London, NW3 on Tuesday 7 JUNE 2016 at 8.00pm
(to be followed by refreshments).

A G E N D A

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

Candidates for Election to the Board

John Abramson; *John Alexander; *Steven Bruck; *Keith Conway;
Suzanne Goldstein; Joe Hacker; *Richard Pollins; *Hilary Solomon;
*Jimmy Strauss; *Dilys Tausz; *Justyn Trenner
* members of the present Board

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

Voting is by secret ballot of those present at the AGM and entitled to vote.





DIDN'T THEY DO WELL?

Marathon Fund-Raisers



Two young members gave up their second day of Pesach to run this year's London Marathon. Katie Wayne (28) and sister, Clare (27), raised over £8,000 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association, thanks partly to donations from our well-wishing congregants. The charity is close to their hearts, as the illness claimed their great-grandmother, Trude Hirsh. The Hirshes, who moved to Britain in 1933, were early members of our Synagogue.

Apart from completing the Silverstone half-marathon in March, this was a first for the sisters. They did extremely well, finishing in five and a quarter hours. Both girls juggled their training around hectic City jobs and full social lives.

"It was a huge challenge and ultimately a great feat," said their proud mother, Michelle Wayne. "They received a lot of support from family and friends and feel very privileged to have been able to compete and raise such great funds."

Budding Authors

Congratulations to brothers, Max (8, right) and Joey Slotover (6, left) who both featured among the 13 winners of this year's Short Story Competition run by Daunt Books, out of 450 entrants worldwide. And for young Joey, it was his second year of winning!



Joey's story, *The Wish*, was about a little bear who flies to heaven to see his grandmother. His mother, Victoria, said: "it is very interesting to see how children process loss. Their great-grandmother died two years ago." Brother Max focussed on a sparrow who defeats *The Beast of Terror*, the title of his story. "It's about how even the smallest creature can make a difference if it cares enough," his mother explained.

The children, accompanied by their proud family, received their awards at Burgh House in Hampstead on 9 May – book tokens and a copy of the charmingly illustrated *Children's Short Story Competition 2016*, available at Daunt for £5.

Folk Song Award at the Royal Albert Hall



From Belsize Square Bar Mitzvah boy (*Ki Tavo* in 1993) to *Lovely Molly* at the Royal Albert Hall on April 27, which won him the BBC Radio 2 Folk Award for Best Traditional Song, Sam Lee is the new young guru of live folksong. From Chelsea School of Art he went into the natural environment, literally, as a forager and wilderness expert. This brought him into contact with the Gypsy and Traveller communities and the outstanding Scottish

Traveller singer, Stanley Robertson. He spent four years studying and collecting their traditional songs, and has given them a new lease of life through the folk club, The Nest Collective, and his latest acclaimed album, *The Fade in Time*.

His world-wide tours include Israel and he is "managed" by our member and former chairman, Paul Burger, who thinks his achievement "quite remarkable in an area of music so far from the mainstream." Sam's father, Ian, puts it down to his Bar Mitzvah training: "Never underestimate the power of a free fountain pen or a good sermon from Rodney Mariner."

SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES

THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square, London, NW3 4HX
Tel: 020 7794 3949

Email: office@synagogue.org.uk

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

9.00am - 5.30pm

Fridays: 9.00am-2.00pm

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Lee Taylor - 020 7794 3949

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 Eve Hersov on 020 7435 7129

or email eve@synagogue.org.uk

or call the Synagogue Office for a leaflet

FUNERALS

During Synagogue Office hours phone 020 7794 3949.

Evenings/weekends phone Calo's (Undertakers)

020 8958 2112

JUDAICA SHOP

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

KIDDUSH

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

LIBRARY

Open Wednesdays 10am - 12 noon

At other times please check first with the office

CHEDER

Enquiries to the Head, Jeanie Horowitz, in the Synagogue

Office, or email jeanie@synagogue.org.uk

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Chairperson: Mandy Brass - 020 8452 6936

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Email the Youth Worker, Michelle Heller

youth@synagogue.org.uk

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The Belsize Square Synagogue