

Our Congregation



News and views from Belsize Square Synagogue

USHERING IN NEW YEAR 5776

Shalom Chaverim,

We are just a couple weeks away from ushering in another new year, 5776. These *Yamim Nora'im* (Days of Awe) will be my fifth with the congregation and I, as each year, look forward to our sacred time together.

So much that has occurred during the past year – the terror threat of ISIS, or Daesh, streams of Middle Eastern refugees, continuing Israeli tensions, a likely change in Western relationships with Iran's Shiite theocracy, the Greek financial crisis, earthquakes and other natural disasters. Elections at home highlighted worries over immigration.

For Belsize Square Synagogue, there were more triumphs than not – increased membership and continued enthusiasm for our beloved congregation and its activities, with celebrations galore and glorious musical offerings from our multi-talented members, young and old.

The challenges remain the same: enhancing Jewish identity, raising educational levels, offering a vital home for our youth, developing leadership and new volunteers, and never taking our future for granted.

We may approach the holidays with our usual presumptions but there are ways we can improve. For many the holidays are an ordeal, attendance something we "have to do", services boring and prayers written in a time hard to relate to. We are unaware of the symphony,

history and moral genius of the liturgy. We come late, leave early and let our minds wander or talk to our neighbours.

Despite the regular assumption that I must be disheartened by the lack of attention, I am fully aware how difficult it can be for some of you. The Hebrew is difficult, translations even more so, and services are long. And while I spend days and weeks writing my sermons, it is always a wonder that anyone really listens to my words, whose theme this year is Fear: Fear of God (the *Yamim Nora'im*), terror, loss of health, life, relationships.

The biggest challenge for us is this: we have too blithely turned our services into a spectator sport. People come to watch the action take place on the bimah instead of in the seats! You can change that by doing something to make our time together more engaging.

+ So make some noise at services! They are not supposed to be quiet. I hope for a constant buzz of people singing along with the choir and Cantor and it is OK to chat to our neighbours, so long as we avoid long conversations that detract from the focus of the services and disturb others.

+ Make the services more meaningful before you even get here! Find someone to whom you owe an apology. Ask forgiveness and forgive others at home, work and synagogue. Do real *cheshbon hanefesh* (scrutiny of our

lives and souls) to put us in the right frame of mind to use the service as a catalyst for self-improvement.

+ *Da lifnei mi atah omed* – Know before Whom you stand. If you are distracted in synagogue, have negative thoughts, get annoyed with this or that, say to yourself: "I stand here before my Creator and I must take account of who I am." It will jolt us into experiencing truly meaningful prayer and devotion.

There is a tale of a wagon driver who took a rabbi from town to town. Passing an orchard, the driver said: "I'll get some apples." As he climbed a tree, the rabbi yelled: "He's watching!" The driver scrambled down and ran. The rabbi drove till he caught up. "Rabbi, why did you yell: 'He's watching'? There was no one there." The rabbi said: "I wasn't talking about the farmer. I said – and he pointed upwards – 'HE's watching!'"

Come to our synagogue, a haven of sanctity. I want them to have a constant buzz, with all of you singing, thinking, engaging with God, Torah and the Jewish people. Then our ushering in of 5776 will be the best ever!

My wife Ella and our son Micah, with my daughter Elana and son Eitan, and I wish you all a sweet, healthy, blessed and peaceful new year 5776

Bivracha, shana tova u'metukah

Rabbi Stuart Altshuler

The Rabbi, Cantor, Emeritus Rabbi and their families, Honorary Officers, Members of the Board and Staff extend their best wishes to all our Members for a happy healthy and peaceful New Year.

Information about High Holydays can be found on page 2

Selichot Service & Dinner Saturday 5 September 2015 ~ 7.45pm for 8.00pm

Havdalah, Fish 'n' Chip supper, dessert. Wine, tea and coffee
Discussion led by Rabbi Stuart Altshuler
10.00pm Selichot Service led by Cantor Paul Heller
with our Choir under Ben Wolf

Meal price: £12 adults, £8 under-16s.
Please book with the Synagogue Office:
020 7794 3949 or office@synagogue.org.uk
or www.synagogue.org.uk





OUT OF CHAOS

A picture belonging to our Synagogue is on view at the Ben Uri art gallery's centenary exhibition, *Out Of Chaos*, at Somerset House, WC2.

The celebratory exhibition at the prestigious historic building on the corner of Waterloo Bridge and Aldwych, includes works by David Bomberg, Mark Gertler, Solomon J Solomon, Frank Auerbach, Jankel Adler and Joseph Hermann. Among the 100 or so paintings on view, out of the full collection of 1,300 artworks, is a 1927 self-portrait of Max Liebermann, which was left to Belsize Square Synagogue as part of the Zondek legacy.

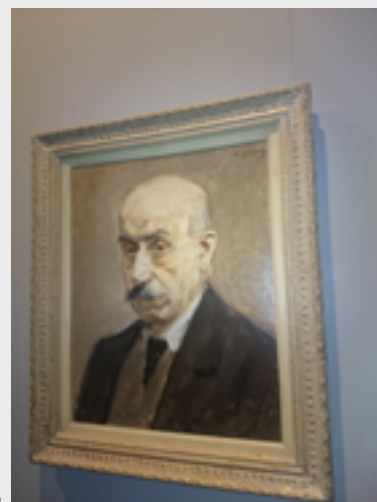
Lily and Theodor Zondek were members of our Synagogue. Theodor was related to the artist, who died in 1935, and held the picture as a family possession. The couple had no children and left their estate to the Synagogue. This was common practice among our early refugee members, whose families had been destroyed by the Nazis and did not have their own next generation to bequeath their possessions to.

At the request of a relative, the Synagogue Board did not sell the painting but gave it on long term loan to the Ben Uri in

2002, around the time the gallery moved into its current premises at 108a Boundary Road, NW8. The Ben Uri considers this self-portrait to be among its most important works. Another version of it hangs in the Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue in Berlin.

Founded in the East End as an artists' circle by Russian-Jewish immigrant Lazar Berson, the Ben Uri has embodied its recurrent theme of identity and migration by moving from one London location to another. In keeping with its history and ambitions, it considers its present home as a temporary address while it keeps its eye open for a spot in the centre of town.

The exhibition, which opened on 2 July, continues till 13 December and is well worth a visit. It is housed in the Inigo Rooms and entry is free.



2015/5776 HIGH HOLYDAYS AT BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

Tickets and Information

Members of the congregation will have received in the post a pack with all the information required for our High Holyday Services. This includes tickets for each family member, which are sent out automatically. Application for tickets is now only required for non-members. The pack also includes application forms for non-members' tickets, prayer books and transport requirements/volunteer provision. Please do not discard the contents. Please contact the Synagogue Office if you wish to discuss any aspect of these arrangements.

Office Hours and Closures

Ticket Collection

The Synagogue office will be open for the collection of High Holyday Prayer Books and non-member tickets on Sunday 13 September from 10.00am - 12.00pm.

The Office will be closed on the following dates:

Rosh Hashanah: Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 September, reopening Wednesday 16 September

Kol Nidrei: Tuesday 22 September at 12.00noon, reopening Thursday 24 September

Succot: Monday 28 and Tuesday 29 September, reopening Wednesday 30 September

Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah: Monday 5 and Tuesday 6 October, reopening Wednesday 7 October

Kever Avot (Visiting the Grounds)

On Sunday 6 September at 11.00am we will come together at Edgwarebury Cemetery in a service to remember family and friends who are buried there.

Service Information

Selichot

Saturday 5 September - 10.00pm
(for full programme see page 1)

Rosh Hashanah

1st Eve: Sunday 13 September - 6.45pm

1st Day: Monday 14 September - 9.30am

Junior Services (under 6's) at 11.00am in the Crèche

Youth Services at 11.30am in the Hall (for 6+)

2nd Eve: Monday 14 September - 6.45pm

2nd Day: Tuesday 15 September - 9.30am

Junior Services (under 6's) at 11.00am in the Crèche

Youth Services at 11.30am in the Hall (for 6+)

Kol Nidrei

Tuesday 22 September - 7.00pm

Fast commences at 6.45pm

Yom Kippur

Wednesday 23 September - 9.30am

Youth Service at 10.30am in the Hall (for 6+)

Junior Services (under 6's) at 11.30am in the Crèche

Fast Ends at 7.48pm

Youth Mifgash

During the Mazkir Service on Yom Kippur there will be an afternoon Youth *Mifgash* (gathering) in the Synagogue Hall, run by our Youth Workers.

"On Rosh Hashanah it is written... On Yom Kippur it is sealed." May it be written and may it be sealed that you and your dear ones have a new year that brings fulfilment and happiness, peace and prosperity - all of life's very best things. Have a Happy, Healthy New Year!

לשנה טובה תיכתבו ותיחתמו

LeShanah Tovah Tikatevu veTechatemu

Cantor Paul, Antge, Michelle and Yohel Heller

STARRING ROLE AS FILM EXTRAS

Ron Cohen describes his and Linda's winning bid at the Auction of Promises

In common with many members of our community, my parents hardly ever spoke of their experiences in Germany. Whilst my father died very young, I should, of course, have asked my mother whilst she was still alive the thousands of questions which now perplex me.

So when I read *Alone in Berlin* a few years ago, I was fascinated by the gripping story of the almost contemporaneous accounts of life in Berlin at the start of the war, descriptions of a city my mother would have known as she only managed to leave in November 1939. The novel by Hans Fallada, based on a true story of a humble couple in Berlin in 1940, was published in 1947 but only appeared in English translation in 2009.

It will therefore come as no surprise to learn that when the opportunity arose in March at the Synagogue's Auction of Promises to spend a day on the film set of *Alone in Berlin*, courtesy of our member, film producer Paul Trijbits, it was simply a case of having to bid enough to win. Linda and I were delighted to have been successful.

We were given the choice of going to Berlin, Cologne or Goerlitz. The last is the most easterly town in Germany, separated by the River Neisse into two parts, one German, the other Polish. The British did not bomb Goerlitz, choosing to concentrate instead on nearby Dresden, and the Soviets skirted it, leaving the city's medieval heart untouched, as well as majestic late 19th-century and art nouveau buildings.

The East Germans neglected it and only after reunification has much of the German side been tastefully restored, with the result that Goerlitz's main industry now is film making, including *The Book Thief*, *Grand Budapest Hotel* and *Inglourious Basterds*. We opted for Goerlitz.

The two days we spent there at the beginning of May were genuinely the experience of a lifetime. We did not know how to thank everyone we met sufficiently for their kindness, consideration and helpfulness and we are truly grateful to Paul and all his team for having arranged this trip.

Not only did we have the chance to watch a film being made, but also we were asked to perform as extras, or rather VIP



Ron and Linda Cohen in 1940 "period costume" entering the film set of Jablonski Street

extras. We were given an identity (Herr und Frau Mueller!) and assigned our own caravan. Had we been Hollywood stars at an Oscar ceremony, I very much doubt if our treatment could have been any better.

The costume department dressed us as working-class Berliners with great care and an astonishing eye for detail. It's extraordinary to witness the care taken to ensure every scene is absolutely perfect and the number of takes needed to make this happen. A whole day's filming can result in only two or three minutes of screen time.

The stars of the film are Emma Thompson and Brendan Gleeson and both were utterly charming and gracious to us. One of our parts was to walk past a dairy shop just as Anna Quangel (Emma Thompson) is coming out of the shop, grief-stricken at hearing of the death of her son on the Western Front while soldiers give the Nazi salute to cheering crowds for victory over France. The street, decorated with swastika banners, was a chilling sight.

The flat in which the two leading characters lived, and we were filmed, looked exactly as I had imagined. It was in this flat that they organised their futile and pathetic protest against the regime.

We were taken around the building by the fascinating local producer, Michael Scheel. He wants to show the world that not all Germans of the time were Nazi supporters. Those few who protested should be acknowledged. Michael Scheel's wife is a novelist, who has just written a book about a Jewish violinist in Berlin in the 30s called Cohen (no relation).

The cars and trucks were, of course, all of the period – a bonus for me, given my enthusiasm for pre-war cars. One Auto Union Wanderer in particular was remarkably similar to my 1934 Triumph Gloria.

The film is due to be released next year and, of course, we can't wait to see it. We had an amazing time and sincerely hope that the contribution we made to the shul as well as to the charity, Rays of Sunshine, in our winning bid at the auction, will help also to give some amazing times to the children whom the charity supports.

SUCCOT IS COMING!

Services

First eve: Sunday 27 September at 6.45pm

First day: Monday 28 September at 10.00am

Second eve: Monday 28 September at 6.45pm

Second day: Tuesday 29 September at 10.00am

Shemini Atzeret eve: Sunday 4 October at 6.45pm

Shemini Atzeret day: Monday 5 October at 10.00pm

Simchat Torah eve: Monday 5 October at 5.00pm (families with young children) and 7.00pm

Simchat Torah day: Tuesday 6 October at 10.00am

Branch Line

If you are thinking of pruning your pine, laurel or cypress trees this year, then the Synagogue would be grateful to receive branches for the Succah, which will be erected on Thursday 24 September.

Please contact the Synagogue office to make arrangements for delivery if you are able to help or contribute.





THE ACCEPTABLE FACE OF FEAR

Rabbi Altshuler's Sermon in St Peter's Church on 21 June

We often learn our most important religious lessons not from our teachers but our children. When my daughter, Elana, was three, we had a bedtime routine. I would tuck her into bed, tell a story (Snow White was the favourite), sing a bedtime song and prayer, kiss her good night, then try to slip away.

Halfway down the hall, she would scream: "Daddy! There's a monster in the closet!" I would go back, turn on the light, look into the closet for her to see: "No monster! Go to sleep, Elana, everything is safe." "OK – but leave the light on in the hall."

This was a regular occurrence and I remember asking myself: "Who is right here? Whose description of the world is factually correct? The child afraid of monsters under the bed or the father who assures her that all is safe and tomorrow will surely come?"

The truth is that my daughter was correct. She did not know the names of the monsters under the bed or of cancer, heart disease, drug addiction of a loved one, job loss, terrorism, fires, earthquakes or random violence. We adults know their names and yet we still insist to our children that the world is safe enough to trust for this one night. All loving parents do it, even the most hard-boiled atheist.

All these fears are legitimate and constitute one of the biggest challenges to our confidence and faith in the world. Yet what is amazing in both our religions, Judaism and Christianity, is that despite a focus on legitimate fears – hunger and thirst in the desert, slavery and oppression, enemies, illness, old age (it's all there) – the overriding and indeed acceptable fear is the fear of God, *yirat Elohim*, *yirat shamayim* (fear of God, fear of heaven), as in Psalms 1 and 15.

It sounds so archaic. But the fear of God is awe of God, not fear of terrible punishment. For specific biblical examples, look at Shifrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives who disobeyed Pharaoh's order to kill Hebrew boys at birth. They feared God, not Pharaoh. They remind us of the Righteous Gentiles who saved Jews and did not fear the reprisals and death threats of the Nazi regime. They stand in a long line of God-fearers.

When Leviticus chapter 19 prohibits us from cursing the deaf or tripping up the



blind, it reminds us to be aware of God, even when there is no one around.

In Psalm 23 we say: "I shall fear no evil for You are with me." We end our synagogue services singing: "*Adonai li v'lo ira* – The Lord is with me and I shall not fear." To reach the spiritual freedom of fear of God alone is an aspiration of the religious Jew.

So what is freedom? For me, the outstanding example of our time is Natan Sharansky, the human rights activist, now head of the Jewish Agency in Israel, who refused to give up his struggle to leave the Soviet Union. As a young scientist of 25, he was denied an exit visa in 1973 on the grounds of possessing state secrets.

In 1978 he was sentenced to hard labour for publishing a list of scientists refused permission to emigrate – a state secret for its sensitive information. Released from Siberian gulag in 1986, he described his experiences in his book, *Fear No Evil*.

I came to know him and his family well. His story is about his battle not to give in to fear. He memorised the Psalms as his book of Psalms kept being taken from him. They taught him to recognise a Higher Authority, not to fear but to have faith.

In discussing the intellectual and psychological process of resisting the KGB's interrogation methods, he acknowledged that, although he needed rational arguments to convince himself not to co-operate with his tormentors, the real basis of his strength was "irrational".

He wrote: "Its basis was this feeling of inner freedom, of fearing no evil, which I kept deep inside me. I remember the verse which I suddenly understood: 'and when I go through the valley of death, I

will fear no evil, because You are with me.'

"It was such a powerful feeling as if King David himself together with my wife, Avital, and my friends came to prison to save and support me. Suddenly you feel just like King David writing this 3,000 years ago. It was sending me a message to be strong. Maybe what I say now will influence someone in prison in 3,000 years' time. It was a very powerful feeling and it gave me my strength."

Sharansky describes how he held onto his Psalm book through hunger strikes and punishment cells. When finally released in a spy exchange, he refused to leave without it. The book had been removed along with his prison uniform when he left the country.

"I was so scared to be without it," he said, "that I lay in the snow and refused to enter the plane until they brought it back to me. And that's the only [Soviet] property I brought with me to freedom."

This is the strength and power of faith. The USSR thought it had crushed the human rights movement. But it reckoned without "the real power of inner freedom...based on national and religious identity."

Life is tough – war, terror, violence, fears of antisemitism – legitimate fears as human beings. But this is the beginning of our spiritual quest. Religious conviction lies just beneath the surface of consciousness.

Judaism, as well as Christianity, is a language for experiencing and sharing the answers of our previous generations, a discipline for facing our fears, listening to the questions and searching out the answers. The book of Numbers in the Torah tells us that as the people of Israel moved towards *Eretz Yisrael*, the Promised Land, the perilous and mysterious trek in the wilderness, literally *b'midbar* – the real name for the fourth book of Torah – before they marched, they kindled the Menorah.

The kindling of the sacred lamp, the light left on overnight for for my daughter – the gift of wisdom, of fear of God, of faith and hope, wherever we suspect monsters lurking under the bed. *Adonai li v'lo ira* – the Lord is with me and I shall not fear.

May we all reach that state of peace and serenity, strength and faith, in God.

FEAR NOT – GOD'S ANSWER TO ATHEISM?

Reverend Paul Nicholson's Sermon at our Synagogue on 27 June

Rabbi Altshuler visited St Peter's last Sunday to share biblical insights into the place that fear, rightly understood, should have in our walk with the Almighty. He took us back to the Holiness Code outlined in Leviticus in which, amidst a set of prohibitions against harming your neighbour or despising the poor, the underlying positive command rings out : "You shall fear your God: I am the Lord."

Proper awe and reverence for our Creator is the essential and fundamental deterrent against wrong or unholy behaviour. No wonder that the second Psalm exhorts rulers to "serve the Lord with Fear" and that a recurrent theme in the scriptures is that "the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

In the Rabbi's address a thread of such references reinforced the theme that Fear of the Lord is the only fear we need to hold before us. I can add nothing substantial to that basic truth except perhaps to amplify it with observations of my own from both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

Of course a common misconception, exploited by certain celebrity atheists, is that all religion contrives to keep us in a state of fear, as a tool to keep us "on message" and compliant in obedience and orthodoxy.

But alongside the injunction to "fear the Lord", it's an instructive exercise to note how often in Judaeo-Christian scriptures the equal and opposite command "Fear not" is made. As a boy I associated those words with many of the key Gospel texts at Advent and Christmas: when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she is to bear a Saviour, when an angel appears in a dream to encourage Joseph to take Mary as his wife, and when the angelic host announce the birth of Jesus to the hillside shepherds in Bethlehem.

All of those passages come with a very prominent "Fear not" and, as I now realise, this is but the continuation of an abundant succession of "Fear nots", going right back to Genesis: "The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.'"

Or Exodus when, at the giving of the Ten Commandments, to the accompaniment of thunder, lightning and smoking mountains, Moses says to the people:



"Fear not".

The pattern that emerges is that it is precisely at the points when the Almighty acts or humanity is brought to an encounter with Him, that those reassuring words, "Fear not" or "Do not be afraid", are uttered. Even in the jaws of exile and oppression, these words come to Israel through Isaiah: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Our faiths offer us a rich seam of resources of encouragement against fear in the general sense, and yet this doesn't seem to stop many other fears readily rising to the surface in our daily lives. Many of us feel driven and under pressure to keep up with the demands of work; for others, more fearful by nature, pressures can feel self-induced.

I have asked myself why, so often, the morning starts with a sick feeling in the pit of the stomach – whether because of nervousness that I won't be able to get through it, or discomfort that it demands too many things I'm not good at! To submit too easily to these anxieties is to allow a kind of "creeping atheism" to shape our behaviour, so that "Fear of the Lord" is replaced by strategies we put in place to manage our other fears, in self-defence.

Maybe it was recognition of this that prompted Jesus to say: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all [the other things] will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

A later Christian document, the New Testament 1st letter of John, distils Jesus' teaching into the simple message that "God is love" and says "and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." From this it goes on to

reason that: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." That is a text I try to hold on to and live by.

I believe in that teaching of 1 John and yet it has to be acknowledged that in our contemporary world there is much to fear. The fact that we see thousands of migrants fleeing their Middle Eastern lands in fear of their very lives makes this impossible to deny.

One survivor of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen camps, who later became a founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra and I am sure is known to you, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, said in a recent interview that as a Jew under Hitler's Reich: "All you felt was fear of what was going to happen the next day. You didn't think so much of being a musician."

Despite Jesus' encouragement not to "worry about tomorrow", I'm sure that in those extreme circumstances I would have found it all too easy not to think so much of being a person with a Christian faith. There are types of fear which are born out of such deprivation and desperation that those who suffer it simply cannot help themselves but need the good prayers and actions of others.

This brings us back to the Fear of the Lord. I believe the Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, was correct when he wrote in his book, *Eclipse of God*: "He who begins with the love of God without having previously experienced the fear of God, loves an idol which he himself has made, a god whom it is easy enough to love. He does not love the real God who is, to begin with, dreadful and incomprehensible."

In the face of the evils of the world we live in, we need righteous people who, from their more fortunate position of strength, reach out in compassion to help the persecuted and homeless, who stand out against hate and injustice. Though it pains me to admit it as a fellow Liverpudlian, John Lennon was wrong when he sang *All You Need Is Love*.

The divine economy requires us to fear the complacency that would allow us to ignore the plight of others whilst our own lives continue in comfort. In short, it requires the Fear of the Lord.

Rev'd Nicholson is Priest-in-Charge of St Peter's Church (Church of England)





TORAH AND THE PROFESSIONS

Our Shavuot Study Evening

This year's *Tikkun Leyl Shavuot*, the study session marking the onset of the festival, gave us five interesting lectures. Topics covered areas of public life, combining each speaker's professional experience with ancient precedents.

Law was tackled by retired circuit judge, His Honour Leonard Krikler, who concentrated on the much misunderstood text of "an eye for an eye". This is not a validation of revenge, he explained, but an expression of balance in looking for redress. In practice, it works out as compensation in monetary terms for the injured party.

From law to medicine. Dr Claire Walford, now retired after 29 years with the National Health Service, described the process of triage. As head of the Accident and Emergency Department at University College Hospital, London, she dealt with the crises of the anti-gay Soho pub bombing in April 1999, the Paddington train crash in October 1999 and the London Islamist bombings in July 2005.

Triage is working out the priority in treating victims of such disasters. The process goes back to the Napoleonic wars and is indicative of medical progress. You only worry about whom to treat first when it is possible to treat people at all. Medical ethics were further

spurred by the Nuremberg trials, which revealed the enormity of Dr Mengele's notorious experiments on defenceless prisoners. As a result, informed consent has become crucial.

Attitudes to money and its use were the focus of Rabbi Stuart Altshuler's talk. Money in Jewish eyes, he said, is neutral and there is no sin in having it. What matters is what you do with it. There is no shortage of biblical or talmudic direction on personal and collective responsibility for the needs of others (welfare) and investment in the future, mainly education but also research and development.

A conservative-leaning society might put more emphasis on individual action in getting the poor back on their feet, a liberal viewpoint would stress society's obligation's towards the poor.

Our second legal speaker, emeritus Professor Harry Rajak of the University of Sussex, looked at the long history of debt and repayment. Creditors and debtors need each other, he said. But too many debtors is a recipe for discontent and revolution, particularly land distribution.

The biblical solution was the shmittah, making every seventh year a "release" year, when land was left uncultivated and free for people to forage in, while all

debts were cancelled in the jubilee year, every 49 years. But this utopian ideal was unsustainable, as credit dried up in the lead-up period. As early as the 5th century BCE, documents from the Jewish settlement on the upper Nile island of Elephantine show that the "release" was being disregarded, along with the ban on charging interest to fellow-Jews.

Hillel's famous prosbul, some four hundred years later, normalised the situation through the legal fiction of transferring the individual creditor's claim to a communal institution which, unlike the individual, was under no obligation to recognise debt release. But Professor Rajak infinitely preferred the modern system of insolvency, which often provides a haven for the debtor, while creditors fight among themselves.

The final speaker, Alasdair Nisbet, who chaired and organised the educational event, comes from the field of corporate finance and looked at the Torah from the viewpoint of governance. He noted that the text is directed towards different audiences or constituencies: God, the land, the people, tribes and individuals. Today they might very well be called stakeholders.

An eclectic mix of subjects and much food for thought – together with salads, cheesecake and coffee.

WHAT IS A GAY JEWISH WEDDING?

Helen Grunberg and Sue Arnold report on a panel discussion at the Jewish Museum

This was the title of a very interesting debate held earlier this year. The panel was made up of Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger DBE, Senior Rabbi at West London Synagogue; Rabbi Jeremy Gordon, minister of the New London Synagogue; and Eli Kaufman and Paul Ginsberg, the first same-gender couple to be married in a synagogue. It was chaired by Alma Reisel, co-chair of Keshet UK, the 2011-founded body to work for greater acceptance and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Jews, mainly in London.

Rabbi Neuberger gave a fascinating insight into the background discussions leading up to the Civil Partnership Act 2004, which gives same gender partnerships the same rights and responsibilities as civil marriage. The

law came into effect in December 2005. The wording was of primary importance, since no strict faith community will accept the term marriage in this context. Rabbi Neuberger highlighted and explained the lengthy and tortuous arguments deployed in the political wrangling that eventually led to the new law being passed.

Rabbi Jeremy Gordon elucidated the Torah readings, whose rigid interpretation by Orthodox Jews makes it almost impossible for them to accept the notion of gay marriage. They are, however, prepared to talk about the acceptance of a long caring relationship of two partners of the same gender. The Masorti-Conservative approach is to explain the halachic underpinning based on *kavod habriot*, the dignity of creation, which bestows dignity and respect on

all people, regardless of their gender.

Eli Kaufman and Paul Ginsberg were the first same-gender couple to be married in synagogue. They spoke of their experiences and the challenges to make the ceremony they were pioneering meaningful and uplifting to them and to the congregation of Finchley Reform Synagogue. Paul revealed how one of his Orthodox relatives felt unable to attend the shul service. But she wanted to share their joy, so she joined them for the rest of the celebrations on their day.

It was a most interesting discussion and made us realise how lucky we are to have had our Civil Partnership recognised in 2006 by the wonderful community of Belsize Square and in particular through the warmth and encouragement of Rabbi Mariner.

TEFEN – THE YEKKE CENTRE IN NORTHERN ISRAEL

Ruth Rothenberg reports on an unusual museum

If on a visit to Israel you find yourself amid the rolling hills of western Galilee, take a diversion to a remarkable industrial park, Tefen. It's a 20 minute drive from Nahariya, 10 minutes from Ma'alot to the north or Karmiel to the south.

The pioneering concept, nicknamed the capitalist kibbutz, is not just a high-tech manufacturing centre enhanced, in typically Israeli fashion, by an art gallery and open-air sculpture display. Its unique feature is a museum dedicated to the German-Jewish contribution to Israel's birth and development, familiarly known as the Yekke Museum.

And for car enthusiasts, there is also a large shed housing some 40 vintage specimens ranging from Bugatti to Hudson and Jaguar E-type – purchased in Israel. The whole shebang goes by the name of the Open Museum.

The project is the vision of a remarkable German-born industrialist, Stefan Wertheimer, who was 11 when he left his native Kippenheim in the Black Forest and came with his family to Tel Aviv in 1937. The same push which drove German-speaking Jews to Britain, founding our synagogue, also sent them to Palestine, then under British mandate.

Stefan, universally known as Stef, was a late developer. He left school at 16 to work in a camera shop, where he got interested in optics and began studying it seriously. Towards the end of WW2, as he reached 18, he joined the British Army and got his training in optic mechanics in the RAF. He then fought in Israel's 1948 War of Independence and joined Rafael, Israel's armaments manufacturer. But lack of formal qualifications led to his being sacked. So in 1952 he started his own business, ISCAR, a metal cutting tool factory, in the garage of his home in Nahariya on Israel's northern coast.

Nahariya was so well known as a German-speaking centre that when the crucial UN vote was taken on the division of Palestine, the town reputedly refused to opt for either the

Israeli or Arab side of the proposed border, insisting it would stay German – *Nahariya bleibt deutsch*. It was also the home of the original "heritage museum", an archive which moved out of the town hall into Tefen in 1991, re-emerging as the Museum of German-Speaking Jewry in 2005.

Stef's enforced start-up launched him into politics, philanthropy and business expansion. His motto for success was "Manufacture and Export", which he promoted across Israel. In 2006 he sold ISCAR to Warren Buffet for \$5 billion.

Tefen industrial park, founded in 1982, is his prime example – there are a few others sprinkled around – incorporating cultural, educational and welfare aspects into industrial employment. Among other benefits Stef is fond of citing is the availability of decent jobs for the local Arab population.

The museum exhibits contemporary photographs, posters, advertisements, letters, cartoons and products of the various groups and individuals from Germany who contributed to Israel's development. They cover areas such as the arts, science, medicine, agriculture, athletics, industry, architecture and economics (illustrated by coinage).

The one area conspicuously absent is politics, which was the fief of Jews born under the Tsar. But the Yekkes have more than made up for it in every other sphere. The museum display, similar in concept to the AJR's 2002 Continental Britons exhibition in London but far wider in scope, will bring a glow of pride to Yekke descendants.



King of the Shepherds, created in brass by Yitzhak Danziger, 1965-66, from the collection of the Tefen Open Museum.

Photograph by Avraham Chai

THE HONORARY MEMBER

Marion Smith celebrated her birthday at her care home in Chorleywood, Herts, with 25 relatives, including her daughter, Vivien Rosenthal, three grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Born Marion Lehrburger in Munich, she grew up in Berlin and reached England in 1938 on a domestic visa, thanks to an uncle who had happened to be born in England. She worked for a Hatton Garden jeweller, then moved to a Foreign Office building and became secretary on a propaganda paper, *Lagerpost*, sent to German prisoners of war to persuade them of the virtues of democracy. In 1943 she worked at Bletchley Park, Britain's vital decoding centre.

After the war she qualified as a teacher and taught German and English. She was a frequent correspondent to newspapers, including the AJR Journal, and a strong supporter of the forerunner of today's Jewish Care. She married her late husband, East Ender Lewis Smith, an analytical chemist for Regent Oil (which became Texaco in 1967), in 1946. He died in 2003, shortly before his 88th birthday.



Marion Smith holding the certificate of honorary synagogue membership, which she received on her 100th birthday on 24 June with, of course, the birthday card signed by the Queen.





Dear Fellow Members

I am writing on my kolumne at the beginning of the month of August. We journalist used to call this the silly season, because there was not much on going in this vacated time of year, so we all felt silly. I imagine that most of you are at the moment in your holyday on a sun-luncher by a swimming bath caked in sunshine.

For me these days are passed. I don't neat to be browned off anymore und my bathing trunks fit no longer und no weider. I am perfectly happy to munch around Abernein Mansions shatting with the other inmates in the community gardens und playing gin rommy when the whether is incumbent. Mrs Klopstick is of course of a different equation. Nothing would give her greater pleasure then to badpack up a mountain und abseil oder hang guide down again in some remote region from this Earth.

Recently she has been very concerned about the people of Nippul, the Sheppards. She is cross with the leg of information coming about this very destroyed region. When she started talking about going to Katmandoo to help with the rebuilding I had to put my foot up. I don't think it is right for a woman who is on the doormat of her nighties to go wondering through the Himmel Layers. Apart from everything there is a shortage of oxygen there.

Coming now onto Belsize Square, I was dump-funded to read in the last addition of Our Congregation that with attendedness falling from some services we are going to expand the synagogue, reconstruct the New Hall underground, build a blog of flats und provide an outside pizza for the local residue. No doubt this has been heavily thought threw by the Board und Council. I just hope that they



**Klopstick's
Kompliment**

know what they are doing und this will not turn up to be a pie in the eye project.

At the time from writing I am having terrible trouble with my niece. I have a consistent problem with the left one since I had a carthalage operation through my keyhole some years ago. Recently it has furred up again und at the same time my right one became unraged und painful. I have last week had it trained off 100 litres of fluid und it is much better. However, I find it difficult to walk without my crutch und stock. This means I am housebound for most of the time. For this reason I am now a regular viewer from Belsize Lives on my lapdog.

Here I could do with some guiding to the correct procedures. During the service I will off cause wear my home kappel, but should I also put my tallis on? When it comes to the misters asking the Congregation to stand, can I be excused instead? I have tried, but often by the time I am up, the Congregation is down again. Und finally, when the services are not being shown, could we have some Jewish films oder reverent documentaries?

Mrs Klopstick has just pronounced that she is going Ky Yekking on the Welsh Harp today, so I have to help her into her wet suit. To do this, as always we will get through an entire bottle of olive oil und she insist that it is virgin mature, witch could be considered half a contradiction in her case. I just hope my niece will be better for the High Holidays so that I can make an aspiration in person. In the meantime I und Mrs K wish every single one of you und those in pears a very good Yomtov und getting well over the fast.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick

BELSIZE'S NEW CHANUKAH MARKET

Where Carmel meets Spitalfields

12 December 5.00pm - 8.00pm

13 December 11.00am - 4.00pm

Our Chanukah Bazaar is having a makeover. It's going to be more Market and less Bazaar with new and interesting things to do, eat and buy. More variety and much better. (Yes, we heard you, we've listened and we have taken it in!)

To Do: By 12 December you'll be eager for the Christmas break! So to get you over the line, Belsize Market will have therapists on hand to fix your chipped nails, massage your tense backs and reflexologists to cure you from the feet up.

If you're about to embark on a new career, whether you're 20 or 70 (70 is the new 50 after all), we're going to have experts on hand from the field of marketing, property, media, law, medicine, retail etc to give you helpful advice on how to build a career in these areas.

To Eat: There will of course be the traditional fish and salads to buy, but at other Market stalls there will be yummy home-made falafel, pastas, curries and lots more. Don't eat for days before you come – we know your Ima does it best but here you'll have lots of Imas making their favourite dishes for you to enjoy. Maybe even wash it all down with a decent bottle of wine. No plonk in our Market!

To Buy: Tummy satiated, no time for a schluff! Let's shop! New to the Market will be stalls selling great seasonal gifts



like costume jewellery, candles, picture frames, as well the usual home-made cakes, groceries from France, Judaica, household items and vintage clothing stalls which everyone loves. Shopping in other people's wardrobes and cupboards – what could be better?

And, of course, there will be the Children's Market which this year will be run by our B'nei Mitzvah kids, who are much cooler than the Mums.

And Fun: And just as you thought it couldn't get any better, on Saturday evening after Havdalah we'll have Jazz at Belsize. Then on Sunday at teatime, we'll hold a concert of Chanukah songs performed by our youth choir. Beat that, Spitalfields!

Your Support We need you to come in December but right now we need your stuff. But no junk please. We want your good quality surplus items like ornaments, DVD's and Box sets (not the ones you've used as kiddush mats!), glassware and clothing. We also need bottles for our "Shampoo to Champagne" bottle tombola (but no Head & Shoulders please!).

If you wouldn't buy it, take it to the tip. If you like it but are just a bit tired of it, bring it to the Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London, NW3 4HX (just in case you forgot the address).

YOUTH ROUND-UP

After our record-breaking weekend Winter Camp in November, followed by Sunday Fun Day in March and Sports Day in June at Primrose Hill, we are now looking forward to the launch of our new exciting programme for the upcoming year. It will be filled with monthly activities for different age groups ages and interests.

Belsize Youth activities provide the perfect opportunity for younger family members to enjoy their time together and build lasting friendships in a fun-filled and enriching Jewish environment. Make sure you (or your children) don't miss out!

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the leaders who have helped us throughout the year in making these activities possible and successful.

Keep an eye on our upcoming weekends away, disco, movie, bowling, musical and magician evenings and much more!

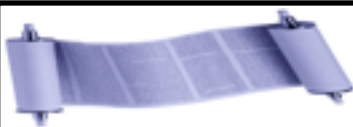
Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

**Shanah Tovah from Yohel and Michelle
Your BSS Youth Leaders**

MAZAL TOV to all who have taken GCSE, AS, A levels and University Finals this summer. News of superb results has been reaching us daily. We're always delighted to hear good news so please let us know how you've done. Whether you are still at school, "gapping", trekking, starting a career, or going off to University – we wish you good luck for a sparkling future and **PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH!!!!**

SALVATION ARMY COLLECTION

This year we are collecting tinned and dried goods (vegetarian only, please) for those in need in Camden, through the Salvation Army. To contribute to this very worthwhile cause for those struggling to make ends meet, please bring your gifts to the Synagogue during office hours or before or after services from Sunday 27 September - Wednesday 7 October.



Scripture Readings



Candle Lighting	Date	Sidrah/Festival	Torah		Haftarah	
Friday 4 September Belinda Harding	5 September Elul 21	Ki Tavo	Deuteronomy	27:-29:8	Isaiah	5:6-6:8
Friday 11 September Philippa Strauss	12 September Elul 28	Nitzavim	Deuteronomy	29:9-30:20	Isaiah	18:46-19:21
	14 September Tishri 1	Rosh Hashanah - 1st	Genesis Leviticus	21:1-27 23:23-25	I Samuel	1:1-2:10
	15 September Tishri 2	Rosh Hashanah - 2nd	Genesis Leviticus	22:1-19 23:23-25	Jeremiah	31:1-20
Friday 18 September Carmel Inwald	19 September Tishri 6	Vayeilech Shabbat Shuvah	Deuteronomy	31:1-30	Hosea Micah Joel	14:2-10 7:18-20 2:15-27
	23 September Tishri 10	Yom Kippur-Shacharit	Exodus Leviticus	33:12-34:10 23:26-28	Isaiah	57:14-58:14
		Yom Kippur-Minchah	Leviticus	19:1-18	Jonah Micah	Book 7:18-20
Friday 25 September Annette Bielesch	26 September Tishri 13	Ha'azinu	Deuteronomy	32:1-52	II Samuel	22:1-51
Sunday 27 September Mary Schiffer	28 September Tishri 15	Succot - 1st	Leviticus Deuteronomy	23:23-44 16:13-15	Isaiah	35
Monday 28 September Manuela Grayson-Turner	29 September Tishri 16	Succot - 2nd	Deuteronomy Leviticus	8:1-18 23:42-44	I Kings	8:2-21





Community News

BIRTHS

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Phoebe & Ricky Cohen on the birth of their daughter Marnie Rae Rose. A grand-daughter to Linda & Ron Cohen

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:

Julia Blass
Matthew Cowan
Zoe Cowan
Gabriel & Kitty Balint Kurti
Charlotte Levay
Faye Raw
Noah Viner
Carol Cohen
Luke & Vicky Hersheson

BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Mr P Wasserman (95) on 1 August
Mr J Goldberger (88) on 4 August
Mrs L Weinreb (94) on 3 August
Mr J Epstein (85) on 5 August
Cantor M Stone (84) on 8 August
Mr B Rebuck (87) on 10 August
Mrs S Allan (82) on 10 August
Mr H Gerschel (94) on 18 August
Mr S Kornhauser (82) on 30 August
Mrs R Kollner (101) on 30 August
Mr HH Stenham (100) on 3 September
Mr W Frank (87) on 6 September
Mrs C Krasner (85) on 25 September

WEDDINGS

Mazel Tov to:

Kate Davis and Adam Hirschovits on their Wedding, which took place on 5 July
Michelle Goldfarb and Anthony Kayser on their Wedding, which took place on 1 August
Vicky Heywood and Luke Hersheson on their Wedding, which took place on 29 August
Jessica Frank and Adam Ross on their Wedding, which took place in Vancouver

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of:

Anne Simmonds on 14 June
Ruth Gordon on 19 June
Suzanne Weiss on 10 July
Ernest Weighman on 10 July
Fanny Marle on 28 July

Course in Jewish Liturgy

Learn to Leyn (chanting) Cantillation of the Torah with Cantor Paul Heller

8 September – 15 December, held on alternate Tuesdays
From 7pm - 8pm in the Synagogue Library

Open to anyone interested in learning the unique trope used in the Synagogue on Shabbat.

A wonderful chance to repeat your Bar/Bat Mitzvah portion



The copy deadline for the next issue of *Our Congregation* is Friday 11 September

REGULAR SERVICES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm & Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Kikar Kids

5 September and 3 October 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

New Term Commences: Sunday 20 September

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

1.00pm on Wednesday 22 September and 19 October

Giacomo, 428 Finchley Road, NW2 2HY

Please phone Deborah Jay on 020 7435 8835
or Anne Goodwin on 020 8452 3997

The Edgware Group

12.30pm on **TUESDAY 8 September** and 13 October

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

Please phone Inge Strauss on 020 8958 9414

Please note change of day and dates for Edgware Group

BELSIZE BOOK CLUB

Tuesday 6 October at 8.00pm

We will be reading:

My Brilliant Friend by **Elena Ferrante**

Call Dorothy White on 020 8445 6388 for information



Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group

Sunday 20 September

09.45 - 12.00: Rabbi Altshuler - Challenges of Modernity: Enlightenment from theos to anthropos, Hobbes & Leviathan
11.15 - 12.30: Open Forum: Summer 2015

Sunday 27 September

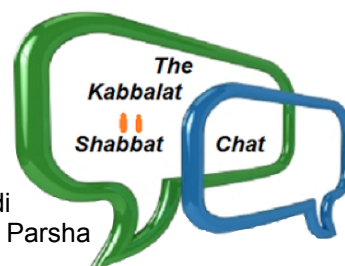
09.45 - 11.00: Rabbi Altshuler - Triumph of Kabbalah over Philosophy: Descartes and Pascal
11.15 - 12.30: Andi Pacurar: Israel in Judaism

Belsize Square and Cantor Heller invite you to...

An Erev Shabbat opportunity to learn and share with the future B'nei Mitzvah

Let's Learn:

to make Kiddush,
to sing Lecha Dodi
the lessons of the Parsha



4 September 2015 at 5.30pm in the Library

Then the first Friday of the month
Refreshments will be provided



BELSIZE DOES SHABBAT UK

Friday 23 and Saturday 24 October 2015

As a community we will be participating in our own way,
and for the first time in Shabbat UK

Eat ♦ Pray ♦ Study ♦ Socialise
Laugh & Learn Together

Beginning with challah baking on Thursday and finishing
with Havdalah, we have a varied programme, including
sharing your Friday night, Shabbat learning Service,
communal lunch, following by activities for all.

Please put
this very
special
weekend in
your diary
and look out
for further
information
on this event.



**Grandmother.
Survivor.
Hero.**



**And all alone this
Rosh Hashanah...**

£5
can send
a homecare
worker to
visit Dvora

**Older Jewish people in Ukraine
shouldn't have to be lonely.**

Give Dvora the companionship she
deserves this Rosh Hashanah.

Text ROSH4 to 70500 to donate £5

For more information:

✉ worldjewishrelief.org

☎ 020 8736 1250

🐦 @wjrelief

You will be charged £5 plus one standard network rate message. World Jewish Relief will receive 100% of your donation. We may contact you again in the future. If you would like to donate £5 but do not want us to contact you again, text ROSH4 NO INFO to 70500. UK only.



**the
Happy
Puzzle
Company**



SAVE THE DATE: BMG PUZZLE EVENING **Sunday 15 November 7.30pm**

For a fabulous fun-filled evening put the date in your diary and invite your friends and family. The BMG will provide a yummy home-cooked supper and the Happy Puzzle Company will provide a stimulating selection of puzzles that are suitable for all ages.

Watch out for further details in the next issue of *Our Congregation*.

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ALEX IN FOOD WONDERLAND

Alex Percival was in Food Heaven when he sampled the delights of Gefiltefest at JW3 at the end of June.

In his own words: "I ate lots of samples – rugelach, sushi, kosher coffee ice cream, elderflower cordial, Turkish delight and smoked salmon. It was very good."



Alex peeps out of the smoked salmon sides, watched by master smoker Ole

But though he watched people in workshops, including challah-making, he only joined in himself at the end of a sushi-making session. Next year he intends to be much more hands-on and learn how to make sushi properly, as well as use pedal power to operate the blender for fruit smoothies.

However, he did cut smoked salmon into thick slices under the eye of expert smoker Ole, who plays piano to the salmon while they hang out to dry. Ole's speciality is "steak" slices, cut downwards, as opposed to fine slicing along the length of the fish. This made it easier for Alex, who produced a very creditable plate of smoked salmon pieces. In fact, if only he had realised it a year ago, he might have provided some of the catering at his own Belsize Bar Mitzvah last summer.



AWARD FOR OLIVER

It was a big night for 11-year-old Oliver Abrahams, who is a pupil at our Cheder, when he received a certificate from the Jesner Foundation for his voluntary work in the community.

The event took place in the Camden Centre, King's Cross, on 2 July, when Oliver as co-compere, introduced the Mayor of

Barnet, Cllr Mark Shooter, and Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

Oliver, who is a pupil at JCoSS, the cross-communal Jewish Community Secondary School in New Barnet, was recommended by his school for his volunteering over the past year. This included providing food for the homeless, visiting residents in care homes, fund-raising in scouts and visiting a long-standing member of Belsize Square Synagogue, Anne Simmonds, who sadly passed away in June.

Oliver used to visit her, accompanied by his brother, Harry, and his mother, Izobel, who attended our cheder as Izobel Kerry and follows in her parents' footsteps as a member. They sang Hebrew songs to Mrs Simmonds and took her to synagogue and to their home on festivals. "I will never forget her kindness and sense of humour," he said.

Oliver received his award from Marsha Gladstone whose son, Yoni Jesner, was tragically killed in 2002 in a suicide bombing on a Tel Aviv bus. The 19 year-old Glaswegian was actively involved in Jewish charity work and study before starting medical school. The Jesner Foundation was established in his memory to encourage Jewish youngsters to volunteer their time and help.

Oliver, who is about to start preparing for his Bar Mitzvah, said: "Yoni has been an inspiration to me and I hope that I can follow in his footsteps with all the wonderful work that he did in putting others before himself. If you would like to volunteer there are many opportunities available on the charity's website."

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

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 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 Youth Workers Yohel Heller and Michelle Heller -

youth@synagogue.org.uk

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Philip Simon: www.philipsimon.co.uk

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR CONGREGATION

Emails to: office@synagogue.org.uk

or to the Editor: ruth@famrothenberg.com

CO-CHAIRS

John Abramson and Suzanne Goldstein

07946 353340

MINISTER

Rabbi Dr Stuart Altshuler

rabbid@synagogue.org.uk

CANTOR

Cantor Dr Paul Heller

cantor@synagogue.org.uk

EMERITUS

Rabbi Rodney Mariner

rodmariner@aol.com / 020 8347 5306



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