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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

LJS NEWS



Benjamin Ealovega Photography



New Music Commissions

We are indebted to Merula Frankel who marked the 10th anniversary of the death of her husband, Dr Richard Frankel, with a generous donation to the LJS. Merula writes, 'Knowing how Richard particularly enjoyed the varied music and choral works during synagogue services, I decided to ask that the funds be used to commission one or more new works for synagogue services.' Following many discussions with Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Music Director Cathy Heller Jones, there are now three new pieces, the first of which, a setting of *Adonai ma adam* by Roxanna Panufnik, receives its first hearing during this year's Yom Kippur Memorial service.

The other two commissioned works, written to be sung both by the LJS Choir and the Members' Music Ensemble, are a double-choir setting of Psalm 100 by Julian Marshall and a new setting of the Torah Service by Toby Young.

Merula hopes our community enjoys the pieces, and she pays tribute to everyone involved in the project, knowing how her late husband would be honoured by such a dedication. All three pieces will be heard at a concert at the LJS on 26 March 2023, as well as in our services for many years to come.

L-R: Julian Marshall, Roxanna Panufnik, Toby Young

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Shabbat, High Holy Day and Festival Services: September and October

Members and Friends receive their High Holy Day (HHD) tickets and booklet direct by post. All services are in person and can also be accessed as live streams via Zoom, Facebook and the LJS YouTube channel.

Times of the HHD and Festival services are specified below. Please note that detailed information about times of children's/family services and activities on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are in your HHD information booklet, along with details of individual services on Yom Kippur.

Family, friends and other visitors are most welcome to attend our HHD services in person. Please fill in the Visitor Tickets Application Form enclosed with the HHD booklet.

Erev Shabbat services on Friday evenings are at 6.45pm; Shabbat morning services are at 11.00am. Services will be led by either Rabbi Alexandra Wright or Rabbi Igor Zinkov unless otherwise specified.

This information is correct and in line with government Covid guidelines at the time of going to press. The weekly e-newsletter Shalom LJS provides up-to-date information.

Friday 2 September	
Shabbat 3 September ♦ <i>Shof'tim</i>	James Halford-Harrison Bar Mitzvah
Friday 9 September	
Shabbat 10 September <i>Ki Tetze</i>	The sermon will be given by Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, the LJS's scholar in residence
Friday 16 September	Co-led by Max Josefs Bar Mitzvah
Shabbat 17 September ♦ <i>Ki Tavo</i>	Max Josefs Bar Mitzvah
Saturday 17 September 8.30 pm	The Social Action team invites you to a Chavurah supper and a talk on asylum seeker experiences at 6.45pm followed by our beautiful, musical Selichot Service (see page 3)
Sunday 18 September 11.00 pm	Annual pre-High Holy Day Memorial Service led by Rabbi Igor Zinkov at the Liberal Jewish Cemetery, Pound Lane, Willesden, NW10
Friday 23 September	
Shabbat 24 September ♦ <i>Nitzavim</i>	The sermon will be given by LJS Member Alasdair Nisbet
Sunday 25 September ♦ 6.45 pm	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Monday 26 September 10.30 am	Rosh Hashanah Morning Service in the Sanctuary; Family Service in the Montefiore Hall; Tiny Tots (0–4) and a service for 4–6 year-olds and parents held upstairs at the LJS
Friday 30 September	
Shabbat 1 October <i>Vayelech/Shabbat Shuvah</i>	The sermon will be given by Rabbi Rebecca Birk of Finchley Progressive Synagogue
Tuesday 4 October 7.15 pm	Kol Nidre Service with Gemma Rosefield (cello) and Timothy Farrell (organ) playing Bruch's <i>Kol Nidre</i>
Wednesday 5 October 10.30 am	Yom Kippur Services will be held all day in the Sanctuary; Family Service in the Montefiore Hall; Tiny Tots (0–4) and a service for 4–6 year-olds and parents held upstairs at the LJS
Friday 7 October	
Shabbat 8 October <i>Ha'azinu</i>	You are invited to come and help decorate the Sukkah after the service

Sunday 9 October 5.30 pm	Erev Sukkot: Please note earlier time for the service which will follow the LJS Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families
Monday 10 October 11.00 am	Sukkot Festival Morning Service; Children's services led by Caroline Hagar
Friday 14 October	Erev Shabbat Chol Ha-Mo'ed Sukkot
Shabbat 15 October	Shabbat Chol Ha-Mo'ed Sukkot
Sunday 16 October 6.45 pm	Erev Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah; Service followed by a Chavurah supper and Torah Quiz
Monday 17 October 11.00 am	Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah; Children's services led by Caroline Hagar
Friday 21 October	Co-led by Spencer Dinwiddie Bar Mitzvah
Shabbat 22 October Bereshit	Bar Mitzvah Spencer Dinwiddie
Friday 28 October	
Shabbat 29 October Noach	

◆ **Parking alert: cricket at Lord's on this date; parking restrictions and/or charges may apply**

Musical Selichot Service

Evening of Saturday 17 September

The beautiful, musical Selichot service at 8.30–9.30pm is preceded by a Chavurah supper and a talk about the experience of asylum seekers in the UK at 6.45pm. Our guest speakers are Kolbassia Haoussou MBE, Director of Survivor Empowerment at Freedom from Torture, and Abdullahi Yussuf, graduate of SOAS, University of London, and volunteer at Coram and Hackney Migrant Centre. All welcome.

Please RSVP if you are coming to the talk and supper: <https://forms.office.com/r/rh9MYFAyPg>. Please bring a vegetarian or sweet dish (no nuts) if you can.

Bereavements

We offer our sympathy to those who mourn **Monty Norman**, husband of Rina, father of Shoshana, and step-father of Clea and Livia.

We also extend our sympathy to Gillian Smith and her family on the death of Gillian's mother, **Eve Oppenheim**.

הַמָּקוֹם יִנַּחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שָׂרַר הָאֲבֵלִים
May God comfort you and all who mourn

Rabbinic ordination 2022

The ordination of five Rabbis took place at the LJS on the afternoon of Sunday 3 July. In the photo below (left to right) are Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill, Rabbi David-Yehuda Stern, Rabbi Mathias Elasi, Rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber and Rabbi Lev Taylor.

Our synagogue has a particular connection with two of the newly ordained Rabbis: Lev Taylor is the grandson of Jane and the late Rabbi John Rayner, our former Senior Rabbi; Anthony Lazarus Magrill is the son of LJS members Deborah and Richard Lazarus, and grandson of Lady Elizabeth and the late Sir Peter Lazarus, former President of the LJS.



Zoe Norfolk Photography

Congratulations

We send our congratulations to Hannah Crawley and Ryan Tunkel who were married at the LJS on Sunday 31 July.



Mazal tov to the Goldblatt family on the birth of Frieda Beatrice who was born on 20 October 2021 and pictured here at 5 months old.



Thank you to Martin, Sue and Matt

At the AGM in June, Martin Slowe stepped down from his role as President of the LJS, and Sue Head retired as Chairman of Council, her role now taken up by Chris Godbold. Both Martin and Sue were honoured during the Kiddush after the service on 9 July, and they, together with Matt Turchin, who has completed his time with us as Rimon Lead, were thanked for their outstanding contribution to our community.



Martin Slowe



Sue Head



Matt Turchin

Photos: Trevor Haynes

Social Action

LJS member and immigration lawyer Alan Gelfer gave a talk at the LJS on 9 July about the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and the recently published UK Bill of Rights. Here Alan outlines his key points.



The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 restricts the admissibility of asylum claims. If asylum seekers pass through a safe third country before arriving in the UK, then their claim can be deemed inadmissible

and will not be considered in the UK provided there is a reasonable prospect of removal to a safe third country in a reasonable time.

The UK has separately agreed with Rwanda that they will accept asylum claims from the UK on the basis that Rwanda is a safe country.

The Act introduces differential treatment of asylum seekers based on their mode of arrival in the UK: those in Group One are granted permanent refugee permission to stay after 5 years; those in Group Two are granted temporary refugee permission to stay if they don't arrive in the UK directly from where their life is threatened, and present themselves without delay to the UK authorities.

The claimant will not know which group they fit into until after they have been granted refugee status. If granted Group Two refugee status, then they will need to make four applications of 2½ years each, which means waiting for 10 years to be eligible for the right to permanent residency.

Other proposals are as follows:

Section 41 extends the maximum penalty for assisting unlawful immigration or asylum-seeking from 14 years prison to life imprisonment. Astonishingly, it removes the previous requirement that the individual assisting is doing so for gain.

The Bill of Rights published in June is an attack on human rights, repealing and replacing the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998. It proposes to remove the duty to interpret legislation compatibly with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) even though the UK is to remain a member. It proposes to take away the duty of a court or other public bodies to carry out a balancing exercise between the rights of the individual and the state, and will require the greatest possible weight be given to the interpretation with which Parliament directs ECHR rights.

In targeting the deportation of foreign criminals, it puts the bar so high that it effectively extinguishes the essence of the Article 8 right to family life of the individual concerned.

The proposals have received widespread criticism, not least in unnecessarily seeking to change the HRA 1998 which has been a success.

Alan Gelfer

Council Report

Chris Godbold, who was elected Chair of Council at the AGM in June, continues the regular newsletter feature on Council business to ensure the LJS membership is kept informed.



Photo: Trevor Haynes

The July Council meeting was the first following the AGM at which Sue Head stood down as chairman. As such, it was my first in the chair and it was necessary to address a number of issues relating to the future

running of Council with only three Honorary Officers (rather than the five we had previously). These are David Adams (Treasurer), Benita Hart (Communications & Marketing Lead) and me. According to the LJS Articles, I am the Chairman, but I shall be using the title of Chair, as for me this has a more inclusive ring.

As at most Council meetings, issues related to the LJS building occupied a lot of time. Much has been reported before, but there is to be a serious attempt at tidying all areas so that a better impression is created. Council has agreed that, in order to honour our former Senior Rabbi, Dr David J. Goldberg OBE z"l, the front foyer will be renamed in his honour. Before this can happen, however, some thinking will be put into the redecoration of that area, ensuring that the Shoah Memorial continues to be presented in its correct context. We shall also improve the displays in the corridor leading to the foyer and reduce clutter. In the Sanctuary, we approved maintenance of the tapestry seat covers, which were completed several years ago. They greatly enhance the appearance of the Sanctuary, but many have now come loose. We are seeking a permanent solution to the problems with the planting at the front of the building, and there were plenty of other buildings issues too (including some at the cemetery, which continue to exercise the mind of the Chair of the Cemetery Committee, David Davidson), but will leave it at that for now apart from reporting that there will

shortly be major improvements to many paths at the cemetery thanks to a most generous donation from one of our members.

We discussed arrangements for the High Holy Days, and it is not too late for anyone else to volunteer to help with stewarding. Please contact Sue Head at stewarding@ljs.org to offer help; full training will be given. How wonderful it will be to hold the High Holy Day services without the tedious but very necessary restrictions of 2021.

A Remuneration and HR Committee is to be established, consisting of the Executive Director, Treasurer and me. This will enable a more consistent and proactive approach, engaging the services of external specialists where required. One decision of Council was that no employee aged 18 or over will be paid less than the London Living Wage as determined by the Living Wage Foundation. I am pleased to report that no-one was being paid below that rate, but this is an important principle.

There was much discussion about the LJS finances, and the Executive Director updated us on the position at 30 June. We were some £15k worse off than expected for a number of reasons, but with the slow receipt of membership subscriptions for 2022 being a significant factor. I appeal to those who have yet to pay to do so soon.

Arising from questions at the AGM, the next Council meeting (in September) will consider the appropriate means of administering our property portfolio and also what we offer at kiddush. Governance training will begin in the autumn. Council members are both charity trustees and company directors, and this type of training is most important. Finally, the September Council will consider how best to progress towards becoming an EcoSynagogue.

Chris Godbold, Chair of Council

Yom Kippur Appeal 5783/2022: Our Chosen Charities

'Every act of charity and deed of kindness that Israel performs in this world does much to make peace and is an important intercessor between Israel and their Creator who is in Heaven' (Bava Batra 10a). How much more is this true on the eve of Yom Kippur when, after making peace with one's fellow human being, a person seeks to make peace between the poor person and their Creator. How? By charity and deeds of kindness to the poor. (S.Y. Agnon, 'Days of Awe')

As is our custom in choosing which three charities to support for our Yom Kippur Appeal, we have selected a UK charity, an Anglo-Jewish charity, and an Israeli charity: **Little Village**, located in Camden and other London boroughs, runs a baby bank and family liaison service, supporting impoverished families with children under the age of five; **Raphael – The Jewish Counselling Service** is a generic broad-based service to adults in the Jewish community who are struggling with emotional difficulties particularly exacerbated by the pandemic; **Physicians for Human Rights Israel** is a non-profit organisation working to promote equality and social justice through a number of projects in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank through the lens of health.

Little Village



The LJS's local charity was founded in 2016 by a group of mothers aware of families living in poverty in the UK, who could not afford basic items for their children. They created a community of support and solidarity, recycling items for children under the

age of five. With the rising cost of living, the 43% of children living in poverty in London is likely to rise and will affect families acutely and plunge them further into deep poverty.

Little Village recycles clothes, toys, bedding, books, buggies, feeding equipment, high chairs and other items through their baby bank service, offering equipment in excellent condition to other families. Families are referred to Little Village by a network of nearly 2,000 professional referral partners working in the community.

The LJS has been asked to support Little Village's vital **Family Liaison Service**. Since the start of the pandemic, instead of visiting a hub to receive equipment, the family liaison team calls families to ensure that they still experience the warm welcome of Little Village and the holistic support offered beyond provision of essential items.

Families supported can often be deemed 'hard to reach' by other services, perhaps because of language barriers, lack of integration into local society or mental health issues.

The LJS's High Holy Day Appeal is for a year's salary for three staff members who manage the family liaison volunteer team. The team welcomes families into the Little Village community and ensures they receive the support they need – equipment, but also signposting to further resources and support. The team speaks to 150+ families a week for 10–30 minutes per call. Twenty volunteers are currently managed by the team, and Little Village is in the process of recruiting more to respond to the growing demand. <https://littlevillagehq.org/>

Raphael – The Jewish Counselling Service



The LJS's Anglo-Jewish charity was founded forty-two years ago and provides a safe, welcoming, non-judgemental and confidential place for individuals

and couples in London and the Home Counties and more recently on remote platforms further afield.

Raphael therapists and counsellors work with people with emotional difficulties including relationship issues, family breakdown, trauma, depression, anxiety, illness, bereavement, financial difficulties, issues concerning sexuality and sexual or gender identity, or low self-esteem, as well as with Holocaust and second generation issues.

Many have been affected severely by COVID-19 over the past couple of years, and there has been an exceptional 75% increase in requests for Raphael's service as a direct result of the pandemic. In addition, the rising cost of living, unemployment due to the pandemic, and even working from home, leading to family tensions, have resulted in a decline in mental health.

Raphael is a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and all their counsellors are bound by their Ethical Framework for Counselling Practice. They are professionally trained or are undergoing supervised training, and they provide their services on a voluntary basis.

Raphael turns no-one away if they are unable to pay the full cost of their sessions. The LJS Yom Kippur Appeal will be applied to their **Bursary Fund**, enabling Raphael to recruit more counsellors and their necessary supervisors, thus cutting the costs of the shortfall as the number of clients requiring bursary funding is likely to rise.

Raphael's therapists and counsellors give of their time pro bono; clients pay on a sliding scale depending on what they can afford, with those on very low incomes offered concessionary supplements. The LJS's donation will contribute towards the cost of clients' sessions including the hire of counselling rooms, ongoing supervision, training of counsellors, and IT maintenance.

<https://www.raphaeljewishcounselling.org/>

Physicians for Human Rights Israel

Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) was established in 1988 by Israeli and Palestinian medical professionals who believe that health is a basic and universal human right, and an essential cornerstone to the attainment of a truly equitable society. PHRI's work includes humanitarian action,



as well as legal, advocacy, educational and public activities. It provides direct medical assistance with the support of thousands of medical volunteers to 12,000 vulnerable men, women and children each year. In addition, they track emerging trends of rights violations, conducting advocacy and legal activities to overturn unjust and discriminatory policies.

PHRI has made a request for the LJS to support the **Bella Kaufman Open Clinic** in Jaffa for status-less individuals. Over 200,000 people live in Israel without residency or citizenship, including asylum seekers, work migrants, and Palestinians persecuted due to their sexual orientation. Of these, some 28,000 are asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan. In addition, the number of asylum seekers in Israel is now growing rapidly as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine, which has already led to the arrival of over 6,000 individuals whose visas do not grant their holders access to the public healthcare system or other basic services.

In Israel, non-residents are excluded from the national healthcare system and therefore have limited access to medical services. Most are eligible for medical treatment only in cases of life-threatening emergencies through the hospital emergency rooms, but with no aftercare once they are stabilised. Many individuals suffer from severe or chronic medical conditions, and without routine access to healthcare, asylum seekers' health suffers and declines. Operating five days a week, the walk-in Open Clinic bridges the acute gaps faced by these communities, and offers free primary and secondary healthcare to individuals who lack legal status in Israel. <https://www.phr.org.il/en/>

A short video from each charity will be available on the LJS YouTube channel <https://tinyurl.com/LJSyoutube> and a full version of the Yom Kippur Appeal can be viewed on www.ljs.org from 6 October. Thank you for your generosity.

Newly elected Members of Council

Gaby Lazarus and Jenny Nathan were elected to serve on Council at the June AGM. Here they introduce themselves.

Gaby Lazarus



“ When David and I joined the LJS 16 years ago with our children, we felt very comfortable coming from our Reform and Orthodox backgrounds; having been to several Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Kabbalat Torah services, as well as having

regularly brought both children to the drop-in nursery, the LJS was already a familiar place. A big draw for us was that we could attend as a family on Shabbat. All four of us created enduring friendships, and I was excited to take on a very active role, starting with resurrecting and running the Rimom Parent Class Representative network.

I have previously served on Council, and over the years have also chaired the Education, Fundraising and Membership committees. I have led Shabbat services, done Security, Greeter and Shammas duty, and organised fundraising and social events including Summer Soirées, a Quiz Night, Jazz and Comedy Nights.

David loved his weekly philosophy class and we both appreciated the respite from our busy lives that the Shabbat services gave us, and he quietly offered his advice and expertise to the LJS on volunteering and marketing. The LJS was *our* LJS, and we were proud to invite family and friends to services and events that showcased its beauty, warmth and inclusivity.

Our world shattered when David succumbed to Covid in April 2020. I felt supported and comforted during those brutal months through the LJS's immediate online presence. It gave me faith and strength to reclaim my physical connection to the LJS a year later.

The LJS has as special place in my heart, a true sanctuary where David is always with me. As I return to serve on Council, I can think of no better way to honour David's passion for volunteering than by taking on the role of Volunteer Co-ordinator. ”

Jenny Nathan



Photo: Trevor Haynes

“ I am a child of the LJS – my grandparents came to the first service in 1925, my parents were married here in 1940, my brother, Peter Abrahams, whom many people will remember in the Security Team, also married here, and Michael and I were

married here in 1984, Michael being part of a long-established LJS family – his mother was one of the first Confirmees, his grandfather was Treasurer from 1918–1946, and Michael himself was Chairman of the United Charities Fund for 45 years.

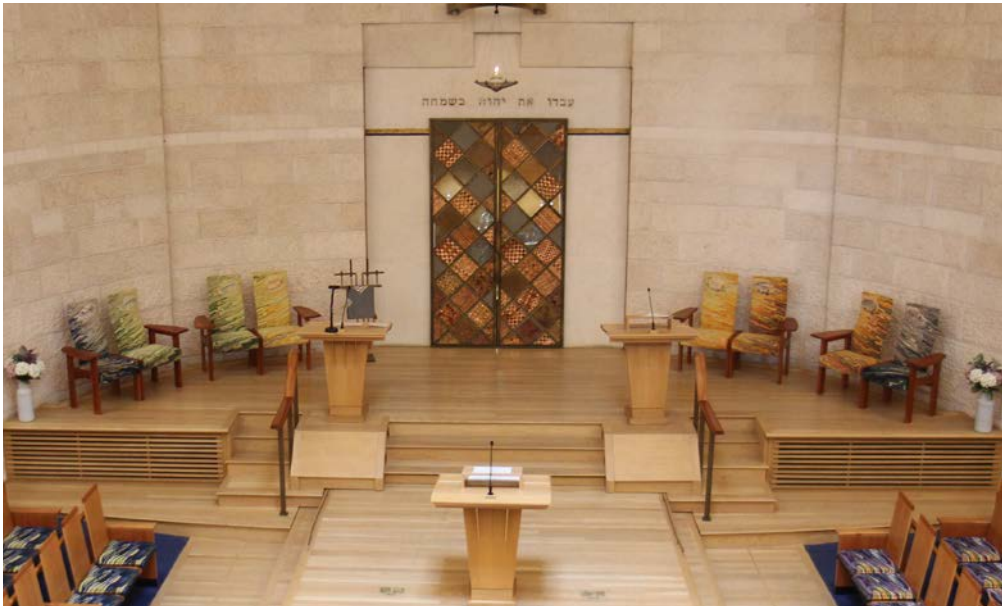
Michael and I were married by Rabbis John Rayner and David Goldberg, having met at the Goldberg's home following an evening they arranged for unattached congregants. I think David was pleased that it had a successful outcome!

At the LJS I helped set up the Community Care Co-ordinating Committee (4Cs) in 2002 and Singing for the Mind in 2011. I have chaired the Out & About club for about 35 years, now co-chairing with Sonia Leanse. In the past couple of years I have also been part of a small group of people who, mostly on Zoom, have met up to try and see how best we could keep in touch with all the community during lockdown.

My interests are music, especially choral, watching ballet and collecting glass. I am a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London, of which Michael was the Senior Past Master. This has been a wonderful introduction to the world of glass and the ancient traditions of the City of London.

I am very proud to be a member of the LJS and love its diversity and openness. Community care is at the heart of what I like to do, but I also feel we should be putting effort into organising more activities for young people and promoting the accessibility of the building, which was a key feature of its design when the LJS was rebuilt in 1991. ”

In Celebration of our Bimah Chairs



This year we mark 30 years since the tapestry chairs specially designed for the bimah were installed in our Sanctuary. When the decision was made to rebuild the synagogue in 1986, the Women's Society decided they wanted to be personally associated with a very specific gift with which to beautify our new place of worship. It was Ruth Ive who put forward the idea to follow a long-established tradition among Jewish women to utilise the skill in embroidery recorded by Josephus in Second Temple times, attested in references found in the Cairo Geniza and in examples found in synagogues down the centuries.

The Women's Society wished to involve as many members as possible. And so it was that the project, known as Chairscape, crystallised and a set of eight covers for the eight new bimah chairs were to be created. Chairscape came to glorious fruition when the chairs were completed, upholstered and installed in the autumn of 1992.

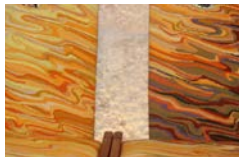
Each chair has a finely curved back and single broad supportive wooden arm, with delicately grooved edging to emulate an open-leaved book. The chairs represent the knowledgeable leaders of the community – exemplary teachers to be respected.



Rachel Caro joined the small Executive Committee, and she introduced Diana Springall, a renowned professional embroiderer, who advised throughout the project.

Once the form had been decided, Jane Finestone was invited to produce a design. Jane took her inspiration from three sources: the perpetual cycle of the Jewish year; the varied texture of the Jerusalem stone in the Ark wall suggesting rock strata and the succession of generations; and the centrality to that wall of the Ark itself and the Torah scrolls within it.

The colours of the 38 different hand-dyed coloured wools reflect the cycle of seasons, with cooler shades on the left of the Ark and warmer equivalent tones to the right. A third of each chair's colours filter into the next chair and get brighter or darker accordingly. The colour cycle is darkest nearer the congregation: the two most sombre-coloured chairs are the two High Holy Day chairs. They serve as reminders of the most serious days of the year – Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The colour cycle graduates to brilliant on either side of the Ark, which symbolically glows, emitting the wisdom of the Torah. All contours reach up towards the Ark.



Every chair represents a specific season or religious festival to create the cycle of Jewish festivals, the sequence of chairs being from right to left. Each one has a small off-centre vignette appliquéd onto it in silk thread petit point, and this contains a key word which encapsulates the underlying message of each festival, together with appropriate symbols.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

The two High Holy Day chairs at either end of the bimah signify the completion and re-start of the Jewish year. The key Hebrew word is *Selichah* (forgiveness). We see the shofar which is sounded as a call to repentance, a tallit representing solemnity and prayer, the Book of Life recording all humanity's deeds, good and evil, from which grows a Tree of Life, branching equally to the past and future, with the future side bearing two more leaves than the past to show hope for improvements next year.



Sukkot

The key word is *Sason* (rejoicing). We see the *lulav* (palm, willow and myrtle) and *etrog* (citrus fruit) which are held together and shaken symbolically in the Sukkot service; fruit, vine and fig leaves show the abundance of nature and harvest.



Simchat Torah

The key word is *Torah* (teaching). We see an open scroll ready for study. Candles, flowers and seasonal leaves are used for decoration to celebrate and glorify the continuity of the words of the Torah. The warm and brilliant gold tones are positioned nearest the Ark and reflect its glory.



Chanukkah

The key word is *Yeshuah* (salvation). We see the eight oil-fed flames together with the *shamash*, the servant candle.



These are reminders of the Maccabean battle for religious freedom and the cruse of oil which fed the re-dedicated Menorah for eight days. The brilliant yellow and gold colours indicate spiritual light and reach towards the reflected light from the Ark.

Pesach and Shavuot

The key word is *Cherut* (freedom). We see blossom and trailing leaves symbolising springtime, and wheat and barley showing the ancient biblical harvests.



The dark green plant with its roots depicts the bitter herbs, a reminder of bitter tears of slavery, remembered at Pesach. Young trees with their roots represent new life and growth and new planting at Shavuot.

(The Sukkot and Pesach/Shavuot chairs are duplicated. This is to allow them to be divided between the upper and lower bimah levels, as can be seen in the photo at the foot of page 11.)

The stitching of the canvases for the chairs was a remarkable community endeavour, with over a hundred LJS members contributing their time and skills. There was a real spirit of camaraderie amongst stitchers with many new friendships forged along the way. Similarly remarkable was the fact that from the outset there was a determination

that no cost should fall on synagogue funds. Money was raised by the energetic efforts of the team, by generous donations from well-wishers and supporters, from bring-and-buy sales and Bridge competitions, and from the Penny Jar that used to sit in the foyer.



At this time of the 30th anniversary, we thank everyone involved in this ambitious project, and remember with affection and gratitude members of the original team who are no longer with us: Ruth Ive, the originator of the entire concept, committee members Maureen Roe and Rosemary Lazarus, and Michael Adler who organised a fully computerised wool supply service. Very much still with us is the wonderful Jane Finestone (*pictured*) who not only created the inspired and inspiring design, but was the driving force behind the project, and whose enthusiasm and commitment ensured we have the glorious bimah chairs we enjoy thirty years on, and will continue to enjoy far into the future.



Notes: This article was put together with information provided by Jane Finestone, from the November 1992 edition of LJS News edited by Ann and Bob Kirk, and from the *Chairscape* book designed and collated by Jane Finestone and edited by Rita Adler. We are most grateful to Peter Singer who took all the photos in this article.

Such was the success of the *Chairscape* bimah chair project that a few years later Jane was asked to produce chair designs for the foyer and entrance to the Montefiore Hall. Another community project, *Seatscape*, took place between 2011 and 2014 – a large community tapestry project to provide hand-stitched tapestry-cushioned seats in the Sanctuary. This was an ideal extension of the original concept.



Why are these days different from all other days?

Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Rabbi Igor Zinkov reflect on spiritual preparation and the deeper meaning of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.



Alexandra Wright:

How do you prepare yourself spiritually for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?

Igor Zinkov:

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is the season of self-reflection. This season has the most beautiful music, and I often listen to it to prepare for the season. I like that people only hear *Avinu Malkeynu* and other High Holy Days tunes during this season. Music is the way to express the most profound thoughts and uncover hidden meanings in the words of the liturgy. When a composer writes a tune, they often study the text first and only then use music to emphasise the most important messages. For me, music becomes a psychological anchor. It inspires me to begin the journey of self-reflection and *teshuvah* (repentance) and the best way to prepare myself spiritually for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Igor Zinkov:

There are Jews who only come to synagogue on the High Holy Days. Why do you think people specifically choose these days and not another festival?

Alexandra Wright:

I wonder whether we *choose* these days over other days of the Jewish year. Not to underestimate these festivals, but isn't it like doing one's tax returns on an annual basis?

Many of us feel compelled to return to our roots or to seek out the extraordinary liturgy, the music, to

find out what it means to repent, confess our sins and ask for forgiveness.

Judaism speaks of *chesbon ha-nefesh* – accountability of the soul. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur require us to scrutinise ourselves. It is our annual accounting of the self.

For many, the influence of family plays a part in drawing us back. How can we break that chain of tradition that goes back such a long way? At *Yizkor* there is a palpable sense of connecting with past generations; it may not be the prayers that draw us together, but what I've heard described as 'the continued presence in us of the past' and a profound sense of loss and love. As a people schooled in grief, there is comfort in coming together to mourn our own losses and also the loss of six million.

Repentance and forgiveness are powerful signatures throughout these days. How do we mend what we feel to be dysfunctional in our own lives? How do we repair the relationships that have broken down? The *Yamim Nora'im* – Days of Awe – give us a second chance in life. We come to synagogue to find the strength to change ourselves and do some good in the coming year.

Alexandra Wright:

Is there anything you find challenging theologically about these festivals?

Igor Zinkov:

The theology of the High Holy Days often seems outdated and challenging: the Judge who sits on His throne, watching over people, inscribing us in the Book of Life – or not, pardoning us if we merit forgiveness. Many prayers in our *Machzor* describe this kind of theology. The English translation often makes it better, but the Hebrew language of most prayers remains challenging. I often ask myself, 'Do modern Jews believe in this kind of God?'

Rabbi Alan Lew helped me to reconcile with this question. In his book 'This Is Real and You Are

Completely Unprepared' he writes: 'The liturgy, however, makes a very different claim, namely that prayer, righteousness, and *teshuvah* will not change what happens to us; rather, they will change us.' In other words, when we recite prayers on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we do not address them to God but to ourselves.

Igor Zinkov:

What is the most meaningful High Holy Days prayer for you?

Alexandra Wright:

There are many: the final verse of *Avinu Malkeynu* with its plea to God to 'be gracious to us and answer us – *ki eyn banu ma'asim* – which means literally 'for there are in us no deeds'. Our translation is a little kinder, 'for there is little merit in us'. But there is a sense during these Days of Awe that we are utterly dependent on God's graciousness. The musical mode of these festivals is melancholy, full of yearning; it transports us to a place where we can forget about the ego.

The fourth blessing of the *Tefillah*, *kedushat ha-yom*, is extended for Yom Kippur and ends with a quotation from Isaiah 44.22: 'I have swept away your transgressions like a mist and your sins like a cloud; return to Me for I have redeemed you.' I am moved by this image of our sins evaporating like a mist. It is what allows us the hope to put behind us the harm we do to ourselves, to others and our planet and begin again.

Alexandra Wright:

How can one make these festivals relevant and significant for young people and children?

Igor Zinkov:

Most principles and messages of the High Holy Days are clear and relevant for all ages. I think the challenge is using the right language to deliver them. The language of prayer is poetic and often metaphorical. Sometimes the prayerbook uses archaic and difficult words to describe simple things. This is why the language of prayer is not always the best for children. But Judaism has many different tools to help the youngest to understand complex concepts. One of them is storytelling. This is my favourite story I learnt from Rabbi Shamai Kanter about prayer and the sense of importance:

The Talmud tells a story about Rav Sheshet, who was blind and turned up among the crowd at a parade. One of the bystanders scoffed and remarked that his presence was a waste since, being blind, he wouldn't be able to tell when the emperor passed by. The rabbi insisted he would be able to tell exactly when. As every legion approached, the crowds cheered, but he said, 'That isn't the emperor.' At last, there was a pervasive hush, and Rav Sheshet said, 'Now the emperor is approaching. You can tell his presence from the silence' (Berakhot 58a). *V'kol demama dakah yishama* ... we recognise God's presence in the sound of silence. Sometimes we do not need words to understand an important message. Sometimes the best spiritual experience happens in silence.

Igor Zinkov:

On Yom Kippur, we reflect on our past and think about how to improve our lives. What do you think Liberal Judaism has to do to improve and change?

Alexandra Wright:

I admire the current leadership of Liberal Judaism and I think they are doing a magnificent job in supporting the communities of the movement. If there is one thing I would like to see us do, it is to strengthen Jewish education. The texts of Tanakh, rabbinic literature and contemporary interpretations of Judaism have so much to teach us – young and old – about how to respond to our own turbulent and unsettled world.



Trumpeter Blowing the Shofar
(13th–15th century,
© Archives Charmet)

Community

The LJS Members' Music Ensemble

New singers – and instrumentalists – are welcome to join the LJS Members' Music Ensemble conducted by Cathy Heller Jones

We lead the music in Shabbat morning services once a month, with one monthly Thursday evening rehearsal.

An exciting programme is planned for 2022/2023, including a major concert on 26 March 2023 which will include Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* as well as the three new compositions commissioned by the LJS (see page 1). For more details contact Cathy Heller Jones at: c.hellerjones@ljs.org

Nosh 'n' Drosh

5 November

Shabbat lunchtime 1.15–2.15pm



Irene Kyffin on Yiddish Theatre

We continue our occasional series of talks and discussions over a bagel lunch.

Save the date: 26 November



For tickets, please visit <https://www.ljs.org/event/magic2022> or call the office on 020 7286 5181

Chavurah monthly gatherings

Former members and friends of West Central Liberal Synagogue, as well as those from the wider LJ community who wish to continue the legacy of Lily Montagu, are warmly invited to the monthly hybrid Chavurah meetings held in the Assembly Room at the LJS on the first Shabbat of the month. For further information and Zoom links please contact Martina at: chavurah.emunah1@gmail.com

Community Care

Aviva Shafritz, our Community Care Co-ordinator, is ready to help with difficulties experienced not only by our older members, such as with illness and provision of care, but also across the spectrum of life. You can contact Aviva by email: a.shafritz@ljs.org or by telephone on 020 7286 5181.

Bridge Club

The Bridge Club meets at 2.00pm every Monday (except Jewish and Bank Holidays) and continues till 5.00pm, with a break for refreshments. The cost is £2.00 per members and £3.00 for non-members. We welcome new players. For more details, please contact the LJS on 020 7286 5181.

The LJS Book Group

All LJS Members and Friends are invited to join our friendly and informal book group. The sessions are on Zoom and start at 7.00pm.

The next session is on Thursday 22 September when we will discuss *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie.

If you have any questions or would like to be sent a Zoom link for the next book group, please email: ljsreaders@hotmail.com

KIT Tea Party

The next Keep In Touch (KIT) tea party will be held on Sunday 30 October. All Members and Friends aged 70 and above are welcome to afternoon tea and a chance to catch up. Invitations are being sent out in September. If you have any questions, please email Naomi (communitycare@ljs.org) or call the office on 020 7286 5181.

Video and Tea

You are warmly invited to this event which takes place on the fourth Wednesday of the month 1.30–4.30pm. There is no need to book – just come along. You will have soup on arrival, then a DVD followed by a delicious tea including ice-cream. The cost is just £2.00 per session.

Our next screenings:

28 September: *Calamity Jane*

26 October: *Whisky Galore!*

Restaurant Tuesday

Everyone in our community is welcome to attend our informal lunch club at 12.45pm on the third Tuesday of the month for a chance to meet and chat and have a delicious meal, hosted by our delightful team of volunteers. We suggest a donation of £6.00.

Our next lunches are on **20 September** and **18 October**. Please call the office on 020 7286 5181 to let us know if you are coming.

Singing for the Mind

Singing for the Mind is open to anyone with memory problems or in the early stages of dementia. Tea and biscuits are served as people arrive to allow participants and their companions the chance to chat before we start singing. The hour-long singing session is led by a trained music leader, supported by volunteers. A dementia specialist is available for help and advice. For further details and advice on joining the group, please email sfm@ljs.org or phone the LJS on 020 7286 5181.

Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The next LJS Drop-Ins for asylum-seeker families are on **Sunday 11 September** and **Sunday 9 October 2.00–4.00pm**.

Existing volunteers are asked to arrive from 1.00pm to help set up. If you are interested in becoming a Drop-In volunteer, please email Hannah Tickle at: asylumproject@ljs.org

Visit to the Chagall stained glass windows at Tudeley

Effie and Michael Romain had the wonderful idea of taking LJS members to see the twelve stained glass windows by Marc Chagall at All Saints' Church in Tudeley, Kent. And so it was that on a lovely summer's day in July a group of about 25 people gathered together for this outing, the majority of whom met at Tonbridge station to take the route with Michael, a keen walker, along the River Medway, past the Castle and then through orchards and farmland before arriving at the church.

After a picnic lunch, we were given a fascinating talk about the background to the windows and the motifs within them. A window had been commissioned by Sir Henry and Lady D'Avigdor-Goldsmid in memory of their daughter Sarah who had met with an untimely death by drowning. Sarah and her mother had previously viewed Chagall's Hadassah Medical Centre window designs exhibited at the Louvre and been enthralled by them; this is what prompted Lady D'Avigdor-Goldsmid to persuade an initially reluctant Chagall to create a memorial window. On attending the church for the installation of the east window in 1967, Chagall decided there and then that it was magnificent and that he would create designs for all twelve windows: '*Je les ferai tous!*' In rich hues of predominantly blue, red and yellow, representing love, joy and hope, the east window conveys the fate of the daughter, and the other windows are filled with angels, fish, birds and other motifs including an Adam and Eve window.

After plenty of time for viewing, everyone made their ways home, many walking back to the station with Michael through the parkland estate of Somerhill

House, the home of the D'Avigdor-Goldsmid family. The whole outing was a delight, and everyone was most appreciative of Michael and Effie's initiative. A repeat trip is planned!





The Learning Circle

Adult education classes at the LJS

Welcome to the New Year's Learning Circle programme

We have a rich programme on offer which includes preparation for the High Holy Days, Classical Hebrew classes at all levels, and opportunities for learning and discussion about Judaism and Jewish life.

If you have questions or need advice, including advice on which level of Hebrew is suitable for you, please contact our Education Co-ordinator, Debi Penhey: education@ljs.org

For full details of all classes, including which are on Zoom and/or in person, please refer to The Learning Circle Autumn/Winter 2022/5783 brochure available on the LJS website: www.ljs.org (click on 'Learning'). If you would like to sign up for a course, please click <https://www.ljs.org/form/Adult-Ed-Autumn-2022> for the registration form or contact Debi Penhey: education@ljs.org

Courses are free for Members and Friends of the LJS. The Learning Circle brochure outlines payment for Non-Members.

Dates of Sukkot term classes

Tuesday classes run Tuesday 13 September – Tuesday 13 December with half-term on 25 October.

Shabbat morning classes run Saturday 10 September – Saturday 10 December with half-term on 22 and 29 October.

High Holy Day Preparation

Tuesday evenings 13 September and 20 September 8.10pm – 9.15pm on Zoom

The Tuesday evening Continuing Our Jewish Journey course is opening its doors to any Members, Friends or visitors who wish to join us for a guided tour of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy and music (13 September) and of the Yom Kippur liturgy and music (20 September).

Tutors: Cathy Heller Jones and Rabbi Alexandra Wright

The High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the most important festivals of the Jewish year. Large congregations gather together to celebrate two days that focus on our interior worlds, and on the serious themes of repentance, confession and forgiveness.

In these two preparatory sessions before the High Holy Days, the LJS's Director of Music, Cathy Heller Jones, together with Rabbi Alexandra Wright will take you through the structure of the prayers and introduce you to the exquisite melancholy modes of music to which the liturgy is set.

These preparatory sessions are open to all. Registration is essential, and you will be sent the Zoom link the day before the session each time.

Sukkot term classes

Tuesday mornings 11.15am – 12.30pm

Tuesday Texts

This friendly group is led by our Rabbis and Dr Dov Softi. We study biblical and rabbinic texts, modern poetry and short stories, as well as Jewish history, and we enjoy sessions on Jewish art and music.

The class is based around discussion on a variety of topics, the starting point being a text, painting or piece of music. New students are always welcome.

Tuesday evenings 5.45 – 6.45pm

Reading and Understanding the Book of Judges

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

The Book of Judges is the seventh book in the Tanakh (canonical collection of Hebrew scriptures). It describes a period of social and political unrest among the Israelite tribes, a period before the Israelites' monarchy. The stories are interesting and intriguing to read and learn from.

This course is suitable for those who can read Hebrew and have a basic understanding of Biblical Hebrew, grammatical structure and a basic knowledge of Biblical Hebrew words.

Tuesday evenings 7.00 – 8.00pm

Classical Hebrew for Absolute Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

If you know absolutely nothing about reading Hebrew but want to learn, this class is for you. Using Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* (available for purchase from the LJS), this class will enable you to unlock the mystery of the Hebrew letters and start reading. Absolutely no previous experience is required, just regular attendance of this friendly and supportive class.

Understanding Biblical Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

Participants in this course will follow the book *Prayerbook Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase from the LJS) which focuses on understanding Biblical and Siddur (prayerbook) Hebrew. Participants will also read key Torah portions to increase their understanding of the Bible as well as their Hebrew vocabulary. Suitable for those who can read basic Hebrew.

Gaining Confidence in Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Sally Gold

If you can read a little Hebrew, this supportive, informal class will help you to improve. We are reading the Abraham narrative in *Bereishit* (Genesis). Your reading is guided and at your own pace, with questions about the language and texts encouraged. Your confidence will grow with your skills and understanding, and you will be on the path towards greater enjoyment and participation in synagogue services, using the Siddur, Bible reading and life cycle events.

Joseph: Forgotten and Remembered

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

New students are welcome to this class as we embark on Genesis 41. The class reads in Hebrew, learns a bit of grammar and vocabulary, and enjoys far-reaching discussion about the text. Joseph, languishing in prison and forgotten, is remembered by Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and rushed out of prison to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. His swift rise to power and the use he makes of his position to 'punish' his brothers eventually leads to a reconciliation.

Tuesday evenings 8.10 – 9.15pm

Exploring Judaism

Tutor: Rabbi Igor Zinkov

Exploring Judaism is for people, including non-Jewish family members, who wish to know more about Judaism, Jewish history and the Jewish people. It is also an essential programme of instruction for people choosing Judaism by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read materials which will be put online during the year. In addition to offering knowledge of Judaism, the course encourages practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for reflection within the group. The full syllabus is in The Learning Circle brochure, available on the LJS website: www.ljs.org

Continuing Our Jewish Journey

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

This class is working towards a jointly led service on 6 May 2023. Some of the students are also preparing for individual Bar or Bat Mitzvahs on separate dates. The course will continue with a journey through the Middle Ages and beyond as we read some of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, Joseph Caro's *Shulchan Aruch* and encounter some Jewish mysticism. We also aim to read some Holocaust theology.

Shabbat mornings 9.45 – 10.45am

Women in the Bible

Tutor: Nitza Spiro

In this course we examine key female figures in the Bible, analysing their characters and roles in the context of psychology, sociology, politics and literature, often making comparisons with ancient texts of other peoples in that area and era.

Our discussions are in English, with texts read in Hebrew, enriching participants' vocabulary and understanding of grammatical structure. Members of the group receive weekly guidance of words and topics to think about prior to each lesson, making the learning more effective.

Should be of interest to men, too!

Learning with Texts

Facilitator: Michael Romain

This term the focus of the class will be on Judaism in the first century BCE. Our guest contributor, leading classes on 1 and 8 October, is Dr David Friedman, lecturer in Law at the University of Cambridge and an expert on Josephus. Classes will also be led by Rabbis Dr Michael Hilton, Sybil Sheridan, Alexandra Wright and Igor Zinkov. If you are interested in joining the class, please contact Michael Romain: romain@netgates.co.uk

Understanding Biblical Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

Participants in this course will follow the book *Prayerbook Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase from the LJS) which focuses on understanding Biblical and Siddur (prayerbook) Hebrew. Participants will also read key Torah portions to increase their understanding of the Bible as well as their Hebrew vocabulary. Suitable for those who can read basic Hebrew.

Please note this course commences at 10.00am to allow parents of Rimón children to attend Tefillah.

The LJS Chavruta

Learning with Study Companions

Rabbi Igor Zinkov has adapted a traditional form of study called Chavruta (literally 'Companionship') specially for the LJS: groups of two or three people study specific texts together in search of their meaning, then discuss how to apply their findings to their own lives. Chavruta fosters meaningful friendships between study companions.

The programme allows for continuous enrolment, so you can register at any time. You are assigned study partners and texts which are from both traditional and general cultural sources. The traditional sources are in English as well as in Hebrew, so knowledge of Hebrew is not a prerequisite, and the experience is meaningful even if you have no knowledge of Hebrew at all. The general culture sources include poetry, art and book extracts.

Your Chavruta group meets for an hour-long session virtually or in person every month at a time agreed between participants, with the

opportunity of staying together or joining other study companions for future sessions. Everyone of all ages is welcome to join in this exciting study opportunity.

To find out more, and/or to register, please contact Rabbi Igor Zinkov: i.zinkov@ljs.org or visit www.tinyurl.com/ljsch

Preview of new Purim term classes

Tuesday evenings 24 & 31 January, 7, 21 & 28 February, 7 March 2023, 8.10 – 9.15pm
Navigating the Sea of Talmud

Tutor: Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill

The Talmud is perhaps the Jewish people's primary cultural storehouse. For two millennia, its study has been one of Judaism's key religious and intellectual experiences; but numerous barriers have restricted access to its treasures. Over six sessions, open to learners whatever their prior experience, we will grapple with some of the Talmud's iconic passages, working principally with texts in English translation. Expect wild stories, legal controversy, and insight into Judaism's rich cultural diversity.

Tuesday evenings, January – July 2023
Classical Hebrew for Not Quite Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

Students who have successfully completed the first term of Absolute Beginners in the Sukkot Term (2022) are invited to join this group to continue their learning. New students are welcome to join this class if they already have good knowledge of the *Alef Bet* and would like to learn some grammar and vocabulary.

Wednesday evenings, January – July 2023
Classical Hebrew for Absolute Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

If you know absolutely nothing about reading Hebrew but want to learn, this class is for you. Using Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* (available for purchase from the LJS), this class will enable you to unlock the mystery of the Hebrew letters and start reading. Absolutely no previous experience is required, just regular attendance of this friendly and supportive class.

Rimon Corner

Rimon Stav (Autumn) Term

10 September – 10 December

Half-term: 22 and 29 October

As Rabbi Elana Dellal and Susannah Alexander take up their respective roles as Rimon Rabbi and Rimon Lead, they each introduce themselves and reflect on their vision for Rimon Religion School.



“ It is with immense pleasure and a sense of warm return that I have re-joined the staff team of the LJS in the role of Rimon Rabbi. Alongside the Rimon team of Susannah Alexander and Debi Penhey and the Rabbinic team, I will be looking after the young people and their families. I will be overseeing the identity development, worship and pastoral care of our Rimon students. Additionally, I'll be engaging with the Education Committee led by Scott Dinwiddie with hopes of further involving our parent volunteers in the visioning, learning, worship and community of Rimon.

It has been such a delight reuniting with the students of Rimon. Our community is one of diversity, depth and compassion. By engaging our students in deep identity development and relationship building (not to mention FUN) at Cheder, we hope to give them a sense of roots in their own tradition, pride in who they are, and a sense of purpose so they can involve themselves in the sacred work of being human. ”



“ I have been coming to the LJS since I was 13 years old, attending with my late Aunt Colette on High Holy Days. Colette, herself a respected teacher, was my inspiration for my career in Jewish education. After studying Jewish History at UCL, I became a teacher at the LJS where I have remained for the last 25 years whilst pursuing parallel careers as a Jewish educator, retreat host and registered nutritional therapist.

This synagogue has always been my spiritual home, and I aspire to create a community in Rimon in which young people and their families feel that this is a lifelong Jewish home for them as well. The dedicated and talented teaching team alongside the leadership team aim to create a learning environment of curiosity, creativity, enquiry and fun underpinned by the values of Liberal Judaism, celebrating holidays and lifestyle milestones together, supporting one another, and functioning as an active and integral part of the wider community. ”

We wish these young members of the LJS a very happy birthday in September and October.

September

Aman Abib
Albert Allison
Edoardo
Armstrong
Benjamin Atwell
Nathaniel
Beagelman
Felix Freeman
Max Freeman
Cedric Ginsberg
Joshua Gulperin
Rachel Kops
Electra Levi-French

Bea Matthews
Spencer Menaker
Dinwiddie
Daniel Radin
Marlowe Rieger
Brooke Shipman
Claudia Spanier
Artemisia Ullmann
Zachary Wald

October

Rafi Abib
Ethan Abolins-
Loguiiko

Eva Abolins-
Loguiiko
Freddie Albert
Sophia Baneth
Elkie Braddick
Zev Braddick
Eliza Davidson
Shoshana
Davidson
Gideon De Winter
Harry Delew
Raphael Dellal
Katie Falk
Ruth Forster

Frida Gauder
Frieda Goldblatt
Charlie Grainger
Aida Hassan
Michael Josefs
Freya Lefebvre Sell
Maya Moran
Alma Munthe
Sforza
Avi Penchina
Neidle
Jacob Pleass
Lola Pollak
Rachel Posner

Mia Romeo
Zoe Rushbrook
Louis Sellier
Bae Shipman
Meela Shipman
Eve Spearman-
Walters
Josh Wald
Lily Warne

Liberal Judaism Appointments



We are delighted that **Rabbi Alexandra Wright** has been elected as the new President of Liberal Judaism.

Rabbi Alex has held her position as Senior Rabbi at the LJS since 2004, becoming the first woman to lead a major Jewish congregation in the UK.

For more than three decades, she has been an

inspirational leader within Progressive Judaism – acclaimed for her work on inclusivity and education, as well as for a deep dedication to pastoral responsibilities. She is co-coordinator of the British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights and a member of a small cross-Atlantic Jewish-Christian Scriptural Reasoning group.

Rabbi Charley Baginsky, CEO of Liberal Judaism, writes: ‘Rabbi Alexandra Wright is without doubt a leading voice in Liberal Judaism; committed, passionate, wise and thoughtful.’

In addition to Rabbi Alex’s appointment, we are pleased to announce that three members of the LJS community were elected as Vice-Presidents of Liberal Judaism: **Ann Kirk BEM**, **Bob Kirk BEM** and **Dr Edward Kessler MBE**.



Jewish Museum, Photo John Holloway

Ann and Bob Kirk both came to the UK from Nazi Germany as Kindertransport refugees. In addition to their many leadership and volunteer roles within the LJS and wider community, they have worked tirelessly and with great determination in the field of Holocaust education, regularly speaking at churches, clubs, schools and universities, reaching over 30,000 people across

faiths, cultures and generations. They focus on combatting racism, educating people about where hatred and prejudice can lead, doing so in a spirit which always emphasises reconciliation and shared humanity.



Ed Kessler, son of Jo and the late Willie Kessler, is Founder President of the Woolf Institute and a leading thinker in interfaith relations, primarily Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations. Elected Fellow of St Edmund’s College in 2002, Ed is a life-time member of Liberal Judaism, Patron and adviser to the CEO.

Congratulations to Rabbi Alex, Ann, Bob and Ed!

Copy and ideas for the newsletter should be emailed to: newsletter@ljs.org

In line with LJS policy, the paper which *LJS News* is printed on is recycled.

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liberal judaism

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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Effie and Michael Romain
Martin Slowe
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Christine and the late Sam Stevenson
Veronica Thatcher

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Scholar in Residence

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Elana Dellal

Rimon Lead

Susannah Alexander

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