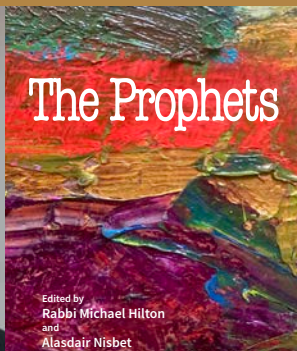


September/October 2023

Ellul 5783/Tishri/
Cheshvan 5784

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

LJS
News



New LJS publication: *The Prophets*

We are delighted to announce the publication of a collection of essays on the prophets written by our Rabbis and members of our community.

The idea came out of the very successful 'Learning with Texts' Shabbat morning discussion classes which began in 2009 and were led for many years by Bernie Bulkin; since 2017 Michael Romain has been the class facilitator. The book *The Prophets* is based on the classes held in the summer of 2021 which Michael organised and chaired. It was his idea to create a book from some of the class contributions, and he put forward two members of the class – our scholar in residence, Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, and Alasdair Nisbet – as editors.

The result is this eminently interesting and readable collection of essays, with an introduction by Bernie Bulkin. The beautiful painting on the cover is by Effie Romain. The book is dedicated to the memory of the late David Lazarus, a much-loved member of the Shabbat morning classes.

Selected passages of the book (projected onto the wall) will be discussed at the Yom Kippur study session at 1.00pm on 25 September which we hope many of you will attend. If you would like to purchase a copy of *The Prophets* (available mid-September) please click: www.ljs.org/form/the prophets.html

Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton (left)
and Alasdair Nisbet (right),
editors of *The Prophets*

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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.

Non-member 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. Visitor tickets may also be ordered online: <https://tinyurl.com/HHD23LJS>

Erev Shabbat services on Friday evenings are at 6.45pm; Shabbat morning services are at 11.00am. Services are led either by Rabbi Alexandra Wright or by Rabbi Igor Zinkov unless otherwise specified. At the end of each service on Friday evening and Shabbat Morning, congregants are invited to join together for Kiddush in person or via Zoom. The link is shown on the screen with clear instructions.

This information is correct at the time of going to press. The weekly e-newsletter Shalom LJS provides up-to-date information.

Friday 1 September	Co-led by Student Rabbi Matt Turchin and Mia Dexter, Bat Mitzvah
Shabbat 2 September <i>Ki Tavo</i>	Mia Dexter, Bat Mitzvah Teacher Training for Rimon Staff
Friday 8 September	Led by Karen Maxwell, adult Bat Mitzvah
Shabbat 9 September <i>Mitzavim-Vayelech</i>	Karen Maxwell, adult Bat Mitzvah First day of term for Rimon and The Learning Circle
Saturday evening 9 September	7.30pm A concert of 16th–17th century music presented by the Vache Baroque Singers; 8.30pm Selichot Service (ends 9.30pm) – see page 4
Sunday 10 September 11.00am	Memorial Service at the Liberal Jewish Cemetery, Pound Lane, Willesden, NW10 – see page 4
Friday 15 September ♦ 6.45pm	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Shabbat 16 September All services and activities start at 10.30am	Rosh Hashanah Service in the Sanctuary Family Services for all ages 0–13 in the Montefiore Hall and upstairs 1.30pm Lunch in the Montefiore Hall; places must be booked in advance: www.ljs.org/event/rhlunch.html
Friday 22 September	
Shabbat 23 September <i>Shabbat Shuvah/Ha'azinu</i>	
Sunday 24 September 7.15pm	Kol Nidre – please be seated promptly at the beginning of the service to hear Simon Wallfisch (cello) accompanied by Tim Farrell playing Bruch's <i>Kol Nidre</i>
Monday 25 September All services and activities start at 10.30am	Yom Kippur Services in the Sanctuary Family Services for all ages 0–13 in the Montefiore Hall and upstairs Breaking of the fast at the end of the day
Thursday 28 September 4.15–7.00pm	Please come after school to help decorate the Sukkah; tea provided
Friday 29 September 6.45pm	Erev Sukkot Service followed by Kiddush in the Sukkah
Shabbat 30 September 11.00am	Sukkot Service Rimon and The Learning Circle classes as usual

Friday 6 October 6.45pm	Erev Simchat Torah Service followed by a Chavurah supper
Shabbat 7 October 11.00am	Simchat Torah Service with scroll processions Rimon and The Learning Circle classes as usual
Friday 13 October	Service co-led by Semih Nasi, Bar Mitzvah
Shabbat 14 October Bereshit	Semih Nasi, Bar Mitzvah
Friday 20 October	
Shabbat 21 October Noach	Shabbat Morning service with Felicity Marianna Ross Naming and Blessing Nosh 'n' Drosh with Esta Charkham – see page 4
Friday 27 October	Service co-led by Arthur Davidson-Kelly, Bar Mitzvah
Shabbat 28 October Lech L'cha	Arthur Davidson-Kelly, Bar Mitzvah Rimon and TLC half-term

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

Congratulations

We are delighted to announce the birth on 5 May 2023 of Otto Nicholas Englander (*pictured here at 10 weeks old*). Otto is the firstborn of Rachel and Tom Englander, and second grandson of Leanda and the late Peter Englander.



Mazel tov to Maya Wegryzn and Milo Riley-Smith (*pictured*) whose wedding blessing took place in Totnes, Devon on 4 August 2023.



We also send many congratulations to Stephen Spiro (*pictured*) who was appointed OBE in the King's Birthday Honours in June for services to hospice care. Stephen is Vice-President of



Rennie Grove Hospice Care, and was its chair for ten years. It is a great honour, and very well deserved.

Bereavements

We offer our sympathy to those who mourn:

Dora Cohen, mother of Robert, Laurence and Andrew

Annette Davis, wife of Stanley, and mother of Anthony, Penelope and Diana

David Harris, husband of Lynne, and brother of Alan

Maeve Singer, mother of Anna, David, Victoria and Cressida

We also extend our sympathy to Ergun Arican (Financial Controller of the LJS) and his family on the death of Ergun's mother, **Rasiha Arican**, and to Marcia Shelley and her family on the death of **Fred Shelley**, the LJS's former caretaker.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר האבלים
May God comfort you and all who mourn

Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The next LJS Drop-Ins for asylum-seeker families are on Sunday 10 September and Sunday 8 October from 2.00pm – 4.00pm.

If you are interested in becoming a Drop-In volunteer, please email Hannah Tickle at: asylumproject@ljs.org

Calling all knitters!

The Drop-In is re-introducing new baby bags for the pregnant mothers amongst our guests. We need to find a supply of hand-knitted baby blankets to add to the bags. Perhaps you are a keen knitter or part of a knitting group that likes to support charities. Please get in touch if you or someone you know can help out by emailing asylumproject@ljs.org or calling the office on 020 7286 5181.

Forthcoming Events

Selichot service and musical offering

Saturday evening 9 September

7.30pm: We are delighted to welcome the music group *Vache Baroque* (singers and lutenist) to the LJS for a concert of 16–17th century music including works by the Jewish composer Salomone Rossi. The concert is in memory of former LJS member, Andy Stoller.

Everyone, including non-members, is welcome to attend this concert for which there is no charge, but please register your attendance: www.ljs.org/event/vachebaroqueconcert

8.30pm: Havdalah is followed by our beautiful Selichot service which introduces us to some of the prayers and music of the Days of Awe with themes of repentance, renewal and return.

Memorial Service at The Liberal Jewish Cemetery, Pound Lane, Willesden, London NW10 2HG

Sunday 10 September at 11.00am

It is traditional to visit graves or memorials of loved ones before Rosh Hashanah, and this is an opportunity for family and friends to gather with Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Rabbi Igor Zinkov. The service will include *El Malé Rachamim* and *Kaddish*. After the service you will have the opportunity to visit the final resting place of your loved ones.

Please RSVP to Jo-Anne Winston synagogue@ljs.org if you plan to attend.

Nosh 'n' Drosh

Join us for our occasional series of talks and discussion over a bagel lunch following the Shabbat morning service. All welcome.

Saturday 21 October at 1.15pm

'All my Estadays'

Join LJS member **Esta Charkham** for sparkling stories from her many years working in the theatre and television industry.



Former stage and television actress, producer (*Boon, Birds of a Feather, One Foot in the Grave*), casting director (*Chariots of Fire, The Professionals* and many more) and founder and principal of West London Drama Training, Esta shares her journey from teenage actor in the National Youth Theatre to becoming one of the most recognised casting directors and producers for the BBC and LWT. She founded her own production company ETC (Esta's Television Company) in the early 1990s. A teacher in most of London's leading drama schools, she has won a British Comedy Award and was nominated for a BAFTA for *One Foot in the Grave*.

Further Nosh 'n' Drosh dates:

Shabbat 18 November at 1.15pm We are honoured to have a visit from representatives of the Bereaved Families Forum Israel, one of our High Holy Day charities. (See page 13.)

Shabbat 2 December at 1.15pm Rabbi Dr Jackie Tabick will speak on Lily Montagu, marking the 150th anniversary of her birth in 1873. Lily Montagu was the first woman to play a major role in Progressive Judaism. The Heritage Committee is putting together an exhibition of books and artefacts at the LJS in her honour.

For your diary:

Sunday 5 November 5.30 – 9.00pm: *Let's Face the Music*

This promises to be a fabulous concert at the LJS featuring acclaimed musicians, Caroline Kennedy and Stuart Pendred (singers), with pianist Iain Farrington. It will be a celebration of music from Irving Berlin in a cabaret-style performance. Book tickets: www.ljs.org/event/lfm2023. Tickets cost £35.00 and include supper.

Shabbat morning service 9 December: We are honoured that the renowned and distinguished international lawyer and writer, Philippe Sands, will be delivering a talk during the service as we mark the 75th anniversary of one of the world's groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Council Report

Benita Hart, our new Chairman of Council, summarises key points from the July meeting.



The July Council meeting was my first as Chairman. I am really rather excited by the role and by the potential to add to the forward motion of this wonderful synagogue and our great community. I

thought long and hard before making my decision, looking at what we need to do to create a strong and secure long-term future for the LJS, and what my skills and experience could bring to it.

Essentially, Council is another LJS committee but with additional extensive legal responsibilities. As all committees have remits, Council's primary remit is to ensure the LJS has a future – a good strong future as a Liberal synagogue and as a growing and supportive community. To ensure success, we need to actively plan for it. At Liberal Judaism's AGM, Rabbi Charley Baginsky talked of ensuring that Liberal Judaism itself is future-proofed, and this is precisely what we also need to ensure for the LJS.

It is the how and where we do this which I find both engaging and energising. We have a wealth of material and information to use and, together with the creativity and energy of our Trustees and volunteers, we will build on these foundations for the creation of our all-important strategy for the future.

Council's mission is to research, develop, question and communicate and, together with the Rabbis and the Executive Director who form the other two sides of our support triangle, create our future-proofing strategies.

To be part of this, we were delighted to welcome two new trustees to Council, Scott Dinwiddie and Tyana Petrova, each with different skills and experience (see page 6). We were similarly pleased to have Sue Bolsom elected as an Honorary Officer.

Detailed planning for the High Holy Days has been ongoing for quite some time with the tickets

and the HHD booklet having been posted out in late August. Please contact the office with any enquiries. This year's additional events include a short concert by the musicians of *Vache Baroque* preceding the Selichot service, a Rosh Hashanah buffet lunch (which must be booked in advance), and the launch of *The Prophets*, the new collection of essays which forms the basis of the Yom Kippur study session (see page 1).

We noted a diverse array of new events outlined on page 4 and look forward to welcoming members and friends at each of them. Please note, all LJS events can now be found on the home page of the LJS website.

We took great delight in viewing the new LJS introductory video, generously filmed by a group of experienced volunteers, and beautifully edited by Rabbi Igor. This short 3-minute video is shown at the opening of the LJS YouTube channel and is on our website, and will be used creatively to promote the synagogue.

The latest update to the Strategic Plan was discussed; it is now exactly half-way through its three years. Each committee chair and group lead has set their own requirements, wish lists, financial targets and spend. Re-assessing every six months enables us to keep a finger on the pulse of all our activities and finances. Jonathan Bruck was thanked for the huge amount of work and support he has given in its ongoing operation.

The 2023 budget is predicted to produce a deficit, albeit substantially reduced by the fortunate receipt of unrestricted donations and legacies. However, as we cannot plan for such good fortune, part of the future strategy will be to actively plan for income.

Finally, we looked forward to welcoming a new Operations Co-ordinator, David Carnochan, to the office team at the end of August. And I look forward to being with many of you at the High Holy Day services in September.

Benita Hart, Chairman of Council

Newly elected Members of Council

Scott Dinwiddie and Tyana Petrova were elected to serve on Council at the June AGM. Here they introduce themselves.

Scott Dinwiddie



“ I grew up in Palo Alto, California, and only affiliated with a religious institution on becoming a parent. My mother is a third-generation American, with Eastern European ancestors who smuggled their two sons out of Russia in a hay

wagon to avoid their being drafted into the Czar’s army. My father is a third-generation Californian.

In high school, I joined the Jewish Youth Group Hashachar which immersed me in contemporary Jewish issues and ultimately led to my spending a consequential summer at the High School in Israel in Hod HaSharon studying Jewish history and culture.

Andrea, who also has Eastern European ancestry, and I met in law school in Seattle, and married in 1997 after moving to New York City to start our legal professions. We later moved to the Washington, DC area and had our only child, Spencer. When Spencer reached primary-school age, we agreed to enrol him in Hebrew school at one of the local synagogues, so we joined Beth-El Hebrew Congregation in Alexandria, Virginia. It was when Spencer started Hebrew school that I started introductory Hebrew.

On moving to London in 2019 for Andrea’s work, we joined the LJS, having heard many positive things about it. I continued my Hebrew studies in Dov Softi’s Shabbat morning class, and then found myself regularly staying for Shabbat morning services. All that shortly led to my joining the LJS Education Committee, then taking on the Education Committee chairperson role last year, ultimately joining Council this summer. I am also trying to assist Sally Van Noorden and Judith Diamond with bringing the LJS library catalogue online.

The LJS is full of incredible individuals, a meaningful mission, wonderful rabbis, and a rich history. I hope that I can assist the Education Committee and Council in helping others to thrive in their Judaism.

” flourishing future. ”

Tyana Petrova



“ I grew up secularly with what I would describe as an openness towards tradition and spiritual and ethical values. The LJS has been the first community I’ve belonged to, and it has been a very impactful learning process for me, finding what was

already existing in my personal and familial culture, and greatly expanding that through the Exploring Judaism classes and conversion process.

I started following services just after the High Holy Days in 2020, and formally joined in February 2021. What drew me to make the decision to join were Rabbi Alexandra and Rabbi Igor’s sermons and insights into the weekly portions of Torah. They gave me great support and guidance through those last months of lockdown, and helped my spirit stay afloat, reminding me to look for the strength in myself.

Since then, I have made some deep connections which feel almost familial with other members of the LJS. We have travelled to Israel together on a few occasions, and during the last visit we took part in the WUPJ conference together which was particularly meaningful. During one of the services, there was a prayer of gratitude, and I was able to share my sentiments with my friends and everyone else who was present. This felt like an even deeper sense of connection and belonging for me.

I have spent some time being a part of PaM (Phone a Member community care network) and I also volunteer at Rimon as a teaching assistant. During the past few High Holy Days, I have facilitated, together with other members of Kulanu (the Young Professionals group), discussion groups on Jewish topics and their intersection with secular concepts and ideas.

I feel really excited to be a part of the Council and to learn how I can contribute to our community’s

Dr Peter Englander OBE 29 November 1951 – 31 May 2023



Our community mourns the loss of Peter Englander who was a man of exceptional qualities – kind, generous, gracious, and full of humility.

Peter was born at home in Golders Green, the elder of two children born to Doris and

Geoffrey Englander, to whom he remained devoted throughout their lives. He and his sister Susan were close, Peter the more gregarious, with a constant group of friends who remained close from school days into adulthood. Geoffrey was an only child, so there were no cousins on their father's side, and Doris had come from Prague on the Kindertransport organised by Nicholas Winton. Although their mother rarely, if ever, spoke about the tragic losses of her parents and younger sister, Peter remained acutely aware of her past and, on the 75th anniversary of their deaths, took the family to the place where his grandparents and his mother's younger sister had been deported, the Łódź Ghetto, and to Chelmno where they had perished in terrible circumstances.

He followed in his father's footsteps to St Paul's School where he himself confessed that he 'did not stand out academically or on the sports field'. But he certainly came into his own when he graduated from Manchester University with a first-class degree in Chemical Engineering. This was despite a potentially catastrophic car accident in which he very nearly died and was in hospital for three months. It was a year before he was back at university.

After a spell of working with Air Products, Peter applied for a Kennedy Memorial scholarship to study for an MBA at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and then joined the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), initially in Boston and later in their UK office, which included a 3-month project in Australia.

After BCG, Peter joined Apax Partners where he stayed for thirty years, working closely with colleagues who admired his work ethic, integrity, his acumen and professional expertise, as well as his deep sense of social responsibility.

The qualities he brought to his work applied equally to each of the philanthropic foundations which he

founded and with which he was involved. Peter's life was steeped in charitable and philanthropic work – he was committed to helping the disadvantaged, offering support and enabling many to fulfil their potential. For his tireless and decades-long efforts he was awarded an OBE in 2019.

Peter also made time to complete a doctorate in 1985; according to his wife, Leanda, he wrote his PhD on the bus to and from work! He was always focused, organised and efficient.

The achievement he was most proud of was his marriage to Leanda, and family life with their three sons, Simon, Tom and Will. He was a deeply caring partner, and as a father he was always present in his sons' lives; he was a listener, supportive, someone who instilled without enforcement the values which he lived by. He loved finding mutual interests: tennis with Simon, the crossword with Will, and although he disliked fast cars, he still went track racing with Tom. His was a gentle, guiding hand, a true mentor and proud father, and a kind and thoughtful uncle to his nieces and nephews. There were amazing family holidays even after Peter's diagnosis, including trips to Colorado and Kenya, and skiing on a Sitski in the Alps. Peter also enjoyed dancing, most recently at his sons' weddings – he was by all accounts a fabulous dancer!

Many of us are aware of the cruel illness Peter endured over the last five years of his life. He bore this with such fortitude, and the care he received from Leanda, in particular, was exceptional. Peter lived long enough to see the birth of Max, son of Simon and Sophie, and Otto, son of Tom and Rachel. He could not have been more delighted.

At the LJS Peter was a much loved, hugely generous, and highly respected member, memorably reading during the Yom Kippur Musaf service every year, right up until October last year, the day before he had a major operation. For many years, he was a regular participant of one of the Shabbat morning discussion classes.

Peter was a deeply moral and spiritual man, and we remember with great affection his gentle smile, his twinkling blue eyes and his warm, loving personality.

This tribute is an edited version of the eulogy given by Rabbi Alexandra Wright at Peter Englander's funeral on 6 June 2023.

The Progressive Project – a new, united movement for Progressive Jews in the UK

LJS Member Annabel Hervey-Bathurst reports on the first ever community forum about this exciting new initiative, held at the LJS on 11 July 2023.



In mid-April, Liberal Judaism (LJ) and the Movement for Reform Judaism (MRJ) announced that they would 'work in close partnership to create a new movement to represent all of Britain's Progressive Jews'. Since then, the Progressive

Project has made giant strides. In July, the LJS was the scene of a historic moment for British Judaism as Rabbis Charley Baginsky (LJ CEO) and Josh Levy (MRJ CEO) launched the enterprise's first community forum – a chance to present their vision, awaken us to the opportunities it will bring and listen to the hopes and concerns of those present.

Excitement and optimism hummed quietly through the Montefiore Hall – and beyond, to the 40 of us accessing the meeting via Zoom – as the coming together of Liberal Judaism and the Movement for Reform Judaism seemed really to be underway for the first time in our 120-year history.

There was gravitas, too. We were standing at the brink of a new world, gazing out at the opportunities, challenges and uncertainties that entails; and at the same time, we were looking behind us, honouring the legacies and memories of those who had done so much to lay the foundations for this historic moment.

Rabbi Alexandra Wright began by reviewing earlier attempts at collaboration between our two movements, from the days of the Jewish Religious Union in 1902 through to greater – though limited – post-war co-operation. Hearteningly, she reminded us: 'Today, there is a hair's breadth, if that, between us' on so many of the issues over which discussions have foundered in the past. Indeed, as Rabbis Baginsky and Levy launched into their presentation, it was uplifting to see their almost seamless collaboration after a mere 20 days of working together on this project. The ease, warmth

and understanding between the two certainly inspires a mood of positivity and confidence about the changes ahead.

They outlined why they felt that the moment is finally ripe for our two movements to unite. With, perhaps, a post-pandemic openness to change, the leadership of both bodies is now 'committed to making a leap together', and the project has received a 'beyond positive' response from the communities involved. Rabbi Baginsky also noted that 'the wider Jewish world is really optimistic about organisations talking about how they can work together'.

Key to the project's success is the idea of 'diversity within shared values' – a sense that we can enjoy diversity of practice amongst our communities, in the knowledge that we hold common core values. As Rabbi Baginsky pointed out, there is a realisation that 'there is now much more breadth and diversity within our movements than between them'. Both rabbis emphasised that there is no plan to merge the two movements; rather, this will be the creation of an entirely new entity, and communities will be consulted and engaged with throughout the process.

Above all, there was a sense that we can be 'stronger together' and that a united Progressive Judaism will open up a world of possibilities. The new movement will represent 35% of British Jews and will also perhaps be able to support and attract some of the 75,000 non-affiliated Jews in the UK. Rabbis Baginsky and Levy commented that 'we are already feeling more powerful and effective', and that they had already held fruitful meetings with the Archbishop of Canterbury and several leading MPs. Rabbi Baginsky spoke for many of us when she relished 'reminding the non-Jewish world that Judaism is not homogeneous, but that we can do disagreement well – something that society really needs at the moment'.

'I am excited by ...' was the sentence we were then asked to complete, discussing our ideas in small groups; the responses were many, varied and

enthusiastic. They included showing the non-Jewish world that Progressive Judaism is not marginal within UK Judaism, and that we can create a solid intellectual and spiritual foundation for a Progressive Jewish voice, together with a strong platform for social action. Other speakers mentioned creating a more powerful, conscientious voice to comment on events in Israel, and having a greater ability to support the Progressive communities there. There was enthusiasm for merging the LJ and MRJ youth movements to create more opportunities, as well as being able to support our clergy more effectively, and allowing them the freedom and resources to provide thought leadership. The hope was expressed that the union will bring a strong Progressive focus to some of the great spiritual debates of our time, and perhaps inspire a burst of intellectual and spiritual creativity. There is clearly much to look forward to!

It was reassuring, too, that Rabbis Baginsky and Levy asked to hear our concerns. Such transparency regarding the challenges ahead was perhaps one of the greatest strengths of an inspiring evening. Concerns were voiced regarding the loss of much-loved liturgies – and Rabbi Levy swiftly allayed these by assuring us that each synagogue will retain its own individual culture and ritual life, and that there might, perhaps, be a flowering of liturgical writing, ‘a permission for a flourishing, rather than a closing down’. Other worries centred on the potential loss of Liberal Judaism’s radical edge; how to balance relationships between large and small communities; divergent policies on interfaith marriage and the ritual of wedding ceremonies; the potential creation of a Progressive Chief Rabbi; and new structures for governance. However, many of these concerns will hopefully prove unfounded.



The fact that the Progressive Project is not a merger of two existing organisations, but a creation of an entirely new entity should ease the situation. The rabbis stressed the opportunity for ‘crossover and cross-pollination’ rather than the closing down of options, and communities will be able to make their own decisions at their own pace.

So, what next? Over the course of the next 18–24 months, Rabbis Baginsky and Levy will visit the 83 communities of LJ and MRJ, and collaboration between the two movements will continue to increase. Detailed discussion will be carried out by working groups in specific subject areas, such as governance, finance, communities, leadership, outreach, youth and education. There will be regular updates, consultations, online forums, and reports to councils – and you can also contact the rabbis via email. At every stage of the process, approval will be needed from an advisory board, and the final decision will be in the hands of the congregations. In due course, LJ and MRJ will disband and transfer their assets and governance to the new entity.

There is also the chance to get involved! If you would like to help navigate this historic process, you can find more information here: <https://www.liberaljudaism.org/2023/07/help-to-shape-progressive-judaism-for-the-future/> and the application form to join a working group is here: <https://fs27.formsite.com/reformjudaism/lqscwhqlnj/index>. Your commitment will be time-limited, as the transition should be complete within 24 months.

At the end of the evening, we joined in the *shehecheyanu* blessing, and Karen Newman spoke for us all in thanking the rabbis for a magnificent evening. I was left reflecting on how the power of this shared vision is energising our two movements as they stride forward to meet new challenges – but also on the way that both our movements are strengthened by our diverse histories, and the roots put down by our founders which still nourish us today. Rabbi Wright encapsulated this sense of combining treasured heritage with truly Progressive progress in her powerful rephrasing of Rabbi Tarfon’s words: ‘It IS our duty to complete the work of our forebears; we are not free to desist from supporting this great endeavour.’

Annabel Hervey-Bathurst

‘Teshuvah’

Rabbi Alexandra Wright reflects on repentance and returning.



Where do we start our journey through the Tishri festivals? After the very end of the Yom Kippur service when the Shema has been sung and the shofar sounded, our Machzor has one more page – a teaching by Rabbi Israel Lipkin

Salanter, the 19th century Lithuanian-born father of the Musar movement:

Most people repent during the Selichot week preceding Rosh Hashanah; the more pious during the month of Ellul preceding Rosh Hashanah; but I say that one should begin to repent immediately after Yom Kippur.

An Orthodox Jew, Salanter – the epithet was added to his name since most of his education took place in the Lithuanian town of Salant – was born a year before Israel Jacobson launched the Reform movement with his ‘temple’ in Seesen, Germany. Nine years later, the Hamburg ‘temple’ was established, with its organ, men and women praying and studying together, and Hebrew and German used as the language of prayer.

Musar was an Orthodox movement, but these upheavals and changes in the Jewish intellectual and spiritual world grew out of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Salanter drew on earlier literature, such as *Mesillat Yesharim* by Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707–1746), Solomon ibn Gabirol’s *Tikkun Middot ha-Nefesh* (11th century) and *Cheshbon Ha-Nefesh* by Menachem Mendel Lefin (1749–1826), the latter a prominent *maskil*, with an interest in subjects beyond the rabbinic literary canon. These three works of Musar literature were republished with Salanter’s encouragement in Vilna during his lifetime.

Musar literature and practice focuses on the cultivation of our human attributes, how to live a meaningful and ethical life and how to nurture

our interior, spiritual world. Luzzatto’s *Mesillat Yesharim* (Path of the Upright) is a meditation on our place in this world and what we need to do to attain a place in the world to come. The afterlife was an article of faith in rabbinic thinking, the *mitzvot* provided *mesillat yesharim* – a path for the upright, the Torah a lamp to light their feet. Even if our own beliefs have reverted to the biblical idea of sleeping with our forebears, and even if our attitudes are more sceptical, it strikes me, reading Luzzatto nearly 300 years later, that he addresses the very issues that trouble us today. And he makes me think that our place in this fleeting and transient world – a corridor to the world to come, a raging tempest that traps us in forces we find difficult to overcome – is not necessarily a true and tranquil residence for our existence.

Thus, we see that a person is truly placed in the midst of a raging battlefield. For all matters of this world, whether for the good or for the bad, are trials for [us]. Poverty from one side versus wealth from the other ... Tranquillity on one hand versus suffering on the other, until the battle is waged against [us] from the front and from the rear.

Our place in the world is precarious, says Luzzatto; we are seduced by our worldly appetites and the dangers of corruption which disturb our vision and confuse our direction in life. It is only through self-examination and accounting for our deeds that we are able to find some clarity. ‘I see a need,’ he writes, ‘for the individual to be meticulous and weigh our ways (*shokol d’rachav*) each and every day.’

He quotes the famous midrash in which the two-and-a-half year-long argument between the Schools of Shammai and Hillel caused a division over the question of whether humankind should have been created. ‘It would have been better if humankind had never been created,’ argues the School of Shammai. ‘It is better that humankind was created,’ rejoins the School of Hillel. After the debate, they reach a consensus: it would have been better had humankind not been created; but now we are here, let us examine our deeds (*bEruvin* 13a).

The midrash is both outrageous and tragic. We shouldn't be here; we are out of place in the world, or we are not worthy of it, and the only way to earn our existence is by utilising our free will to examine our deeds and hold ourselves to account. This examination and accounting of our lives requires solitude and a withdrawal from the world, from its injustice, prejudice and hostility. When we are distressed or in pain, when we carry unshared burdens, we become unmoored and overwhelmed. We cannot cure the ills of the world – poverty, the climate catastrophe, incitement of hostility against those who are different from us, the lack of creative and constructive thinking, broken systems that cannot cope with the demands and needs of a suffering humanity or warfare. It isn't only that our place in the world is precarious, but that we shouldn't really be here. This is not where our souls, our innermost being – however you wish to refer to that deepest part of ourselves – find their rest. We are not made for the spikiness, noise and complexity of worldly existence.

But since we are here, since we have been created, should we simply accept the world's instability and shortcomings, lament its fate and our own inability to repair and renew what is broken or ruined, or can we rouse ourselves to small, but significant acts of restoration and healing? When we have withdrawn from the world on Yom Kippur, recited our confessions and supplications for forgiveness, when we have stripped ourselves of all material and physical need and felt our own weakness and susceptibility, what then?

Will we look around to see the vulnerability of our neighbour, listen to their voice, observe their face and feel their pain? It is too much for one person to remember the earth's oppressed, to restore the dignity of every human being who suffers from persecution. It is too great a task to restore the earth's resources and solve the massive problems of a climate emergency, of pollution and humanity's negligence of the earth, air and sea.

If I can do but one thing to help another human being, or restore what has been lost in our lifetime on the earth – is it enough? It is summer as I write

these words; the sun has burnt through the clouds, the rain is over and gone, and through half-closed eyes I see a mass of purple cranesbill geraniums, their flowers and foliage spilling over the flowerbed and



on to the grass beside me. And in this rare and quiet moment, I listen to the hum of gold-tailed melitta bees, not only one or two, but twenty or thirty, hovering and then moving from one flower to another. I have done nothing but witness a still moment in time, a glimpse of how the world could be without grief, without the despoiling of the earth.

Before we walk away from precious hours of fasting, prayer and solitude, out into the darkness, into the rain-splashed, noisy street of this world, let us read again that last page by Rabbi Israel Lipkin Salanter, the words that require us to find a place for beauty in the face of violence, for creativity in the face of destruction, for tranquillity in a place of clamour, for faith in a place of scepticism, for truth where there is no truth. Repentance – *teshuvah* – in Hebrew, is what it says it is: a returning to the deepest part of ourselves. It is the journey that some begin to take during the Selichot week preceding Rosh Hashanah, the path that the pious walk along during the month of Ellul before Rosh Hashanah. But actually, says Rabbi Israel Lipkin, the journey should really begin immediately after Yom Kippur, for it is the only pathway to repair and renewal of broken spirits, contrite hearts and ravaged worlds. *Teshuvah* is the pathway of open hearts and love, restoration and peace; it is the passage to places of 'perpetual possibility'.

Alexandra Wright, Tishri 5784

Please note that the High Holy Day preparation classes on 12 and 19 September (see page 14) relate to this article.

Yom Kippur Appeal 5784/2023:

Our Chosen Charities

The Yom Kippur Appeal Committee found it exceptionally difficult to select our three charities this year. During the last few years, when money has been scarce, charities have found it challenging to maintain services. The needs of so many are incalculable, and even though we asked ourselves, where is there hardship and destitution, where is there urgent demand for building bridges, the decisions we made excluded other charities just as worthy. After much discussion, we chose three charities – as is our custom, an Anglo-Jewish charity, a UK charity and an Israeli charity – that highlight mental health, homelessness and dialogue in Israel and Palestine. They are **The Headroom Project**, **Hackney Doorways Homelessness Project** and the **Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum**.

Head Room by Jami and Jami's Community Programme



Jami was founded by a group of parents in 1989 desperate to create a mental health service for the Jewish community, no different in their suffering and needs from anyone else. Its purpose is to enrich and save lives impacted by mental illness, to provide expert advice on how to navigate the complex maze of mental health services and to focus on recovery and advocacy so that individuals can access advice, treatment and support in a timely manner. It supplements the care available through the NHS and provides a safety net on which people can rely.

The LJS has been asked to support **Head Room**, an extensive free programme of daily activities and groups to improve mental well-being. In 2022, Head Room ran 468 community activities, averaging 39 each month. This involved 3,727 people of whom

1,612 joined in person. Activities include Art 4 All, a Writing and Performance Group, a Walking Group, Coffee and Connect, Community Conversation, all led by Jami's professional staff and supported by a team of volunteers.

Head Room is located at Jami's social enterprise mental health café in Golders Green, a community hub on the high street, providing a safe place for people to access mental health support and where people can also sit down for a coffee or something to eat. Head Room has recently extended into the available premises next door, having remained all but closed during the pandemic. The additional space enables all the groups to operate and greater collaboration with other organisations to deliver support. Choosing Head Room as one of this year's charities is an acknowledgement that engaging with the support, activities and companionship offered is a step towards recovering and being back in the world. <https://headroomcafe.org/>

Hackney Doorways – Routes out of Homelessness



In the spacious premises of former Council offices, Hackney Doorways has transformed office space into a large communal space for eating, watching television, playing games and relaxing, as well as bedrooms for up to 26 people who have found themselves homeless. Originally a Drop-In provided by churches and a synagogue, Hackney Doorways has become a place of respite for up to 28 days, run by volunteers and overseen by Mark Palfrayman who has been working with homeless people for

thirty years. He emphasises that the organisation is there to provide routes out of homelessness, working with other agencies, taking referrals, and moving people on into their own accommodation.

Those who stay at Hackney Doorways are not only street sleepers, but people who have lost their own accommodation through relationship breakdown, eviction or being unable to pay their rent. Many of the current residents work – as cleaners, as a chef in one case and, in another, as a breakdown recovery driver. Another man, from Syria, is a violinist, earning a little money playing at weddings and other events. Living in London, the cost of living and rents have made it impossible for them to afford somewhere to live. The aim, says Mark, is to 'bounce them back into their own accommodation as soon as possible'.

The residents leave early in the morning if they have work, and return at 6.00pm for an evening meal and spend time together in the communal area. Volunteers prepare an evening meal and there are showers and a place to wash clothes.

Doorways is supported by charitable grants. The LJS's contribution will help to save the lives of women and men, particularly during the winter months when homeless people's lives become exceptionally hard. Funds are requested to support Doorways' operation through those coldest winter months, saving lives and providing routes out of homelessness.

<https://www.hwms.org.uk/pages/4-about-us>

Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum

**פורום משפחות שכולות
ישראלי-פלסטיני בעד שלום
ISRAELI PALESTINIAN
BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR PEACE
منتدى عائلات تكلّي فلسطيني
إسرائيلي من أجل السلام**



Against a background of increasing violence in Israel and the West Bank, and restrictions that threaten many of their activities, the work of the Bereaved Families Forum (also known as the Parents Circle – Families Forum) has become more urgent and more in need of support than ever. The Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum is the British chapter through which financial aid is channelled and education about their work is disseminated to the British public. The Forum is helping to change the narrative that maintains Israel and Palestine are

unable to engage in any kind of dialogue or rebuilding.

The Bereaved Families Forum comprises more than 600 Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost an immediate relative during decades of conflict. Despite intense suffering and grief, these bereaved families do not seek revenge or demonise the other which would only continue the cycle of hatred and violence. Instead, they choose to see the humanity of the other, and promote non-violence, dialogue and reconciliation.

They have a wonderful track record of projects for peace and better understanding, including many meetings for youth and adults, in schools, community centres and other settings.

The LJS's donation will help many imaginative and creative programmes for different groups and ages. These include: The 'Joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Ceremony' organised by BFF in collaboration with Combatants for Peace, a moving annual event where members of the organisation share their stories of profound pain and their commitment to peace and reconciliation; 'Young Leadership Groups' training the next generation of peace activists in various areas such as facilitation of groups and youth guiding; 'Youth Camps for Peace and Reconciliation' – five day camps for Israeli and Palestinian youth adults, which include workshops, dialogue circles and field trips; the 'PCFF Women's Group' which gives Palestinian and Israeli women an authoritative voice in the peace process; and 'The Parallel Narrative Experience' bringing together groups of 15 Israelis and 15 Palestinians in order to learn personal stories of the other as an important step towards understanding and reconciliation. <https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-home-page-en/>



A short video from each charity is available on the LJS YouTube channel <https://tinyurl.com/LJSyoutube> from 26 September 2023.

Thank you for your generosity.



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. We are starting a brand new course on Yiddish, and also a new short course – 'The Future of ...' – with a range of distinguished speakers.

If you have any questions, such as which Hebrew class is the right level for you, or whether a class is online, in person or hybrid, please email: education@ljs.org.

If you would like to sign up for a course, please click: <https://www.ljs.org/form/Adult-Ed-Autumn-2023> for the registration form or contact education@ljs.org. Registration is online only.

Courses are free for Members and Friends who have paid membership of the LJS. For non-members, termly fees are £120 or £360 per year. For individual lectures (not classes), the cost is £12 per session for non-members.

Dates of Sukkot term classes

Tuesdays 5 September – 12 December. Half-term is 31 October. Please note there are no classes on 26 September, the day after Yom Kippur.

Wednesdays 6 September – 13 December. Half-term is 1 November.

Shabbat mornings 9 September – 9 December. Half-term is 21 and 28 October.

Note: Short courses have specific dates indicated below.

High Holy Day Preparation

Tuesdays 5, 12 and 19 September at 8.10pm

Tuesday 5 September at 8.10pm: in person at the LJS and online

'Blowing in the New Year' with Alasdair Nisbet
Rosh Hashanah is described in the Torah as Yom Teruah or Day of Blowing. We will discuss how

the shofar became associated with the festival, the development of the sounds Tekiah, Teruah and Shevarim, and what the mitzvah 'to hear the shofar' means today. We will finish with a blowing workshop for those who want to learn. Bring your shofar or borrow one of ours, and come and have a blast.

Tuesday 12 September at 8.10pm: online only
'Musal and the High Holy Days' with Rabbi Monique Mayer

'At first I tried to change the world and failed. Then I tried to change my city and failed. Finally I tried to change myself and then I was able to change the world.'

Although the Musar movement, founded by Rabbi Salanter in the 19th century, was Orthodox in origin, increasingly Liberal Judaism has found its teachings relevant to our world today. How do we cultivate wisdom, courage, humanity, justice and other attributes that help us to be kinder and more humane individuals? And how can Musar, in a practical way, influence our journey through the *Yamim Nora'im* (Days of Awe) with their emphasis on leading an ethical and meaningful life?

Tuesday 19 September at 8.10pm: online only
'Precarious Life' – Rabbi Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto's Mesillat Yesharim (Path of the Upright) with Rabbi Alexandra Wright

This 18th century text by Rabbi Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto (1707–1746) was written and published in Amsterdam, and examines ways in which the individual can navigate their precarious journey in this world. Do we belong in this world? Or do we belong elsewhere? How do we steer the difficult path between our own appetites and longings, on the one hand, and finding a way to be less selfish, more giving, more loving and kind, on the other? Texts studied will be in English translation.

Note: For more on Rabbi Salanter and Rabbi Luzzatto, please see Rabbi Alexandra Wright's article on pages 10 and 11.

Sukkot term classes

Tuesday mornings 11.15am – 12.30pm

Tuesday Conversations

This friendly group is led by Rabbis Alexandra Wright and Igor Zinkov, and Dr Dov Softi, with the occasional guest speaker. Biblical and rabbinic texts as well as modern poetry and short stories are studied, and there are also sessions on Jewish art and music. New students are always welcome.

Tuesday evenings 5.45pm – 6.45pm

Understanding the Geography of the Torah

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

This course will focus on understanding the structure of the five books of the Torah.

The class will have the opportunity to examine key Torah portions, adhering to the weekly Torah portions which are read at the LJS. Students will read the Torah portions, understand their meaning, and be able to see them in light of the bigger picture of the Torah.

This course is suitable for those who can read Hebrew and have a basic understanding of biblical Hebrew, grammatical structure and 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 Abrahamic narrative in *Bereishit* (Genesis). Your reading is guided and at your own pace, and 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 and Bible, and life-cycle events.

Tricks, Tests and Tears in the Story of Joseph

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

When Joseph's brothers appear before him, they still do not recognise the younger brother they sold into slavery seventeen years earlier. He tests them to find out whether or not they have changed since they threw him into an empty pit. The build-up to the reconciliation is beautifully conceived. If you read Hebrew (even slowly) and want to build up vocabulary and a little bit of grammar, please join us for our rich discussion around the nuances of this story.

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 Sukkot term syllabus is available on the LJS website: www.ljs.org. It includes explorations of the Jewish calendar (Shabbat and key festivals) and Jewish ethics, values and beliefs, as well as history and sacred texts.

Wednesday evenings 7.00 – 8.00pm

Classical Hebrew for Elementary Level Students

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

This is a fun and supportive class for students who have completed a year of Beginners' Hebrew or can already read a little Hebrew but would like to learn more. Starting with High Holy Day texts and moving on to key Torah portions, we explore the texts that are the cornerstones of the Jewish year.

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 cultures 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 we are looking at current issues and how our Jewish values and teachings may affect our approach to them. Classes will focus on subjects as varied as artificial intelligence, assisted dying, freedom of speech and censorship, and whether we should be vegan or vegetarian. The classes are led by the Rabbis and lay members of the class.



Students from the Learning with Texts class at their summer garden party

For a timetable with a list of subjects and class leaders, please contact Michael Romain: romain@netgates.co.uk. We welcome new members. Please note that the first class is Saturday 23 September.

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 Rimmon children to attend Tefillah.

Two new autumn short courses

In the Sukkot term we are holding two brand new short courses:

Tuesday evenings 8.10 – 9.30pm in person at the LJS and online

The Future of ...

Facilitator: Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton

We are delighted to announce that Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, our scholar in residence, has put together a new course 'The Future of ...' which will be on Tuesday evenings in October and November. The schedule is:

10 October: *The Future of Liberal Judaism* – Rabbi Charley Baginsky

17 October: *The Future of Jewish Theology* – Rabbi Dr Judith Rosen-Berry

24 October: *The Future of Orthodoxy* – Rabba Dr Lindsey Taylor-Guthart

7 November: *The Future of the Rabbinate* – Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris

14 November: *The Future of the Yeshiva and Jewish Study* – Rabbi Lev Taylor

21 November: *The Future of Anglo-Jewry* – Dr Jonathan Boyd

The 30-minute presentations will be followed by discussion.

Thursday evenings at 7.00 – 8.00pm online

Yiddish for Absolute Beginners

Tutor: Osian Evans Sharma

Eight classes: 12, 19 and 26 October, and 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 November.

Over a millennium, the Yiddish language grew from a regional Judeo-German dialect to the most common language for Jews around the world. With an introduction to conversation, grammar and literature, you can gain access to the treasures of Yiddish culture, stretching from Hasidic folktales to revolutionary anthems, kabbalistic melodramas to modernist poems.

The LJS Chavruta

What is Chavruta?

Chavruta (companionship) is the study among small groups to uncover the meaning of specific texts. In doing so, we hope that our students gain a greater understanding of the passages and can apply it to their own lives. In studying together this way, long-standing friendships are often

formed between study companions.

The original concept has been adapted by Rabbi Igor Zinkov into a modern format for LJS Members and Friends.



The LJS Chavruta encourages intriguing debates on applying traditional texts to our own lives using many of the different influences in our society, such as modern and classical literature, poetry, and music.

How it works

All participants are split into groups of 3–5 people. Each month, you receive a few texts and questions to discuss. Meetings can be virtual or in person and last for around an hour. For safeguarding reasons, in-person meetings can only be held at the LJS. There is no need to read texts or prepare anything in advance. The texts will be read and discussed during the session at a convenient time for each group. After the first two sessions, each group will have a feedback session with Rabbi Igor, and participants can continue studying within the same group, or join up with other study companions.

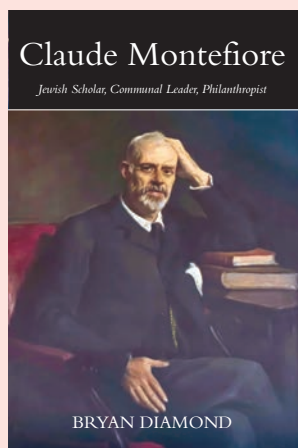


The LJS Chavruta Registration Form

The LJS Chavruta is only available to Members and Friends of the LJS.

To register: <https://tinyurl.com/ljschavruta>

New book on Claude Montefiore by Bryan Diamond



Following extensive research, LJS member Bryan Diamond has published a book telling the story of the life and work of Claude Montefiore, a scholar, social activist and educator, who was one of the three founders in Britain of Liberal Judaism in the early 20th century.

Claude Montefiore left an impressive legacy of literature, thought and institutions, and this book shines a light on his beliefs and achievements. Bryan's new book has received excellent endorsements from Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein and Dr Edward Kessler MBE who congratulate Bryan on his publication which is of interest to those seeking to understand the historical context of the development of Liberal Judaism, as well as anyone open to the inspiration of a remarkable man.

You can buy a copy at the LJS or order either a print copy or e-book online at: www.bryandiamond.co.uk

Bryan's book is also available in the LJS Library.

Community

LJS Film Club

Wednesday 18 October at 7.00pm: *Woman in Gold*

We are delighted that LJS member David Thompson, a producer and director, will be speaking about the making of his acclaimed 2015 film, *Woman in Gold*. This film tells the true story of how a determined Jewish exile living in the USA (played by Helen Mirren) seeks restitution of a Klimt painting seized decades earlier by the Nazis. The screening will be followed by a Q&A session.

To register: www.ljs.org/event/ljsfilmclub

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. This is as much a social afternoon as a competitive one. 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.

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.

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 £7.50.

Our next lunches are on **19 September** and **17 October**. Please call the office on 020 7286 5181 to let us know if you are coming.

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 for some soup on arrival, after which we hold the film screening. This is followed by a delicious tea including ice-cream. The cost is just £2.00 per session.

Our next screenings:

27 September: *Brigadoon*

25 October: *The African Queen*

The LJS Book Group

All LJS Members and Friends are invited to join our friendly and informal book group. The sessions are on Zoom, start at 7.00pm, and last between an hour and an hour and a half.

The next sessions are:

Thursday 7 September: *The Romantic* by William Boyd

Thursday 5 October: *The Thread* by Victoria Hislop

If you have any questions or would like to be sent a zoom link for the next Book Club, please email ljsreaders@hotmail.com

Chavurah Club

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 West Central Liberal Chavurah Club. These meetings are held in the Assembly Hall at the LJS on the first Shabbat of the month. A talk or discussion at 2.00pm is followed by an afternoon Shacharit at 3.00pm, after which there is tea and coffee and some social time.

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.

Rimon Corner

Rimon Head Teacher Susannah looks back at the past year and forward to the coming year.

Another year at Rimon has ended, and at the time of writing, we are currently on our summer break. During our last weeks, some of our pupils were asked about the highlights of their year. Some of their favourite things included: taking part in the L'Dor va-Dor service; making an edible map of Israel; going to Amsterdam; having debates; seeing their friends every week.

Many of our students will have been spending part of their summer with LJY-Netzer, our youth movement, at one of their brilliant summer camps. We can't wait to hear what they've experienced, learned and enjoyed.

Registration is now open for a new academic year at Rimon. Whether you have been with us for many years, or are trying us for the first time, the staff and pupils of Rimon are eager to offer you a warm welcome. New families may try Rimon for three weeks before joining the synagogue. If you are already a member of the LJS, you can register for Rimon by following this link: <https://www.ljs.org/form/rimon-registration-2023-2024.html>, or otherwise please email education@ljs.org. Term begins on Saturday 9 September, and we look forward to seeing you there.

A Teacher's-eye View



Last year, we welcomed five new teachers to our team, four of whom were new to the LJS and Rimon. **Russell Harris** (*pictured*) is one of our new teachers and has a degree in Hebrew and

Arabic from Oxford University. Here he shares his experiences of being part of a new community and working with teenagers for the first time:

'Warning! New teacher at Rimon! A year ago I walked into the LJS with the aim of teaching classes Zayin and Chet some Hebrew. Alongside bite-size pieces of grammar and some Hebrew exercises, I realised from the very first lesson that I needed to listen to all the class members and let them speak and express themselves as well as giving them space both to ask questions and offer answers. This often led to very animated debates in class about various aspects of Judaism, tradition and belief with my input limited to directing the students to back up their opinions with facts or suggesting more logical methods of argument. Every week has been a pleasure, as has guiding those alert and creative minds towards a tradition of learning and belief.'

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

September

Aman Abib
Benjamin Atwell
Nathaniel Beagelman
Joshua Elliott
Felix Freeman
Max Freeman
Cedric Ginsberg
Joshua Gulperin
Otto Harris
Rocco Harris
Arjun Hermans
Rachel Kops

Electra Levi-French

Bea Matthews
Spencer Menaker
Dinwiddie
Marlowe Rieger
Artemisia Ullmann

October

Ethan Abolins-Loguiiko
Eva Abolins-Loguiiko
Freddie Albert
Sophia Baneth
Elkie Braddick

Zev Braddick

William Copsey
Eliza Davidson
Shoshana Davidson
Etta Davies-Benjamin
Oriol Davies-Benjamin
Harry Delew
Raphael Dellal
Zachary Elliott
Sienna Fidler
Ruth Forster
Frieda Goldblatt
Charles Grainger

Freya Lefebvre Sell

Maya Moran
Huxley Pauker
Avi Penchina Neidle
Jacob Pleass
Lola Pollak
Rachel Posner
Zoe Rushbrook
Louis Sellier
Bae Shipman
Meela Shipman
Eve Spearman-Walters
Lily Warne

The LJS Library – a heritage collection

The Israel Abrahams Library at the LJS has over 6,000 books of Jewish interest covering prayer books, commentaries on the Bible and Talmud and other ancient writings, books on history, biography, philosophy, studies on Judaism and comparative religion, writings on Israel, and books on art, sociology and literature.

Many books were collected and donated by LJS members from the early twentieth century onwards. There is much original material on ‘the three Ms’ (Montefiore, Montagu and Mattuck), and the library is named after Israel Abrahams, a friend of Montefiore’s and an early supporter of Liberal Judaism. We are celebrating the 150th anniversary of Lily Montagu’s birth this year and will show what information is held in the library.



The collection of both old and new books enables comparisons of viewpoints from different times: for example, the Bible commentaries in the library range from Rashi to modern thinkers such as Robert Alter, who considers the Bible as literature, to Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, who takes a psychoanalytical approach to biblical stories and characters.

Our history books include general histories of the Jewish people from different periods to the present

day, and our collection on the Holocaust has some original French investigative material from the 1940s.

Books on Israel range from early accounts of the creation of the State of Israel to recent consideration of current issues.

The library collections are part of our heritage and we want them to be as accessible as possible. We have recently transferred the catalogue to an internet programme and this is available at:

<https://www.librarything.com/catalog/LJSynagogue>

The catalogue is searchable and is regularly updated. Please use it to find books, and of course you are always also most welcome to come in to the library to browse or borrow. The library is open whenever the building is open.

Sally Van Noorden, LJS Honorary Librarian

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

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liberal judaism 

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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