

April 2018

Nisan-Iyar  
5778



## First century for Rosie

Rosie Saunders celebrated her 100th birthday (left) with a party organised by the Out and About Club.

Rosie was born in Whitechapel and grew up in a Yiddish-speaking household, moving to St John's Wood when the family home was destroyed in the Blitz.

When she was 90 she decided to learn French and came top of her class. She joined the Out and About Club after the death of her second husband. Members are waiting to hear what she will take up now that she has turned 100!

■ The cake was baked and decorated by Sonia Leanse.

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## Welcome

to these new Members and Friends:

**Peter Crouch**

**Matthew Friedman**

**Turi Munthe**

**Graham Norton-Standen**

**Paul Schapira**

**Rabbi Sybil Sheridan**

**Janet Underwood**

**Roxana** and

**Emmanuel Wiesenfeld**

## Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

**Pamela Betty Baron**, mother of Veronica and grandmother of Guy and David Cohen

**Adam Jacques**, husband of Deborah, son of Janet Shelley, stepson of Ian Shelley, son of Peter Jacques, brother of Claire Jacques and grandson of Rose Marie Hirschfeld

**Anthony Lionel Reynold**, husband of Barbara

**Renee Rifkind**, mother of Charles, Gabrielle and Marion

**Clive Sinclair**, father of Seth and partner of Haidee Kenedy

המקום ינחם אתכם

בתוך שאר האבלים

May God comfort you  
and all who mourn

**Dear Editor...**

## Montefiore's view of Purim

Rabbi Hilton's article on *Purim* [*LJS News*, March] mentioned Claude Montefiore's published view. From my research for my biography of CGM I can amplify:

In a letter to Lily Montagu in 1899, Montefiore advocated keeping all the festivals apart from *Purim*, which he saw as too particularistic and vindictive. In a 1978 Montefiore lecture, 'The Liberal and the Lady', Rabbi Jonathan Magonet quoted CGM's comments in his *Bible for Home Reading* and *A Rabbinic Anthology* regarding the national and religious hatreds in the Book of Esther. This seems to relate to his views on the nationalism of the Zionists.

The historian Elliott Horowitz recounts [1994] that Montefiore wrote in a JC article in 1888 that *Purim* 'presents serious difficulties and objections... it was surely of doubtful propriety to give thanks to God for a triumph which probably never existed... or which is not yet lifted up by any grand religious issue.' He would not be sorry if the festival lost its place in the calendar, and felt that its observance belonged to an era of primitive religion.

In his *Rabbinic Anthology* [1938] Montefiore wrote about the elaborations of the Esther story in the Midrash and Targum [Aramaic translation of the Bible] literature as 'not entirely pleasant reading'.

**Bryan Diamond**

# SHABBAT ATZMA'UT

## Celebrating Israel's 70th birthday



Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Executive Director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, will be guest speaker at a very special service, held in conjunction with Liberal Judaism, to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel at **11.00 on Shabbat 21 April** at The LJS.

Rabbi Kariv will also be the guest speaker at a special lunch and talk following the service – all are welcome.

# Shabbat and festival services: April

Unless otherwise stated, Friday evening services start at 18.45 and Shabbat morning services at 11.00

▲ = Parking alert: cricket at Lord's on these days

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER	NOTES
Friday 30 March <i>Erev 1st night Pesach</i>		<b>Please note: there is no service at the synagogue on Erev Pesach.</b> If you know of anyone who would like to be invited to a home Seder, please contact Rabbi Alexandra Wright: <a href="mailto:a.wright@ljs.org">a.wright@ljs.org</a> or 020 7432 1283
Shabbat 31 March <i>1st day Pesach</i>	Alexandra Wright	
Saturday 31 March <b>18.30</b>		<b>Communal Seder led by Rachel Benjamin and Igor Zinkov:</b> Members, Friends and guests all welcome
Thursday 5 April <i>Erev 7th day Pesach</i> <b>18.45</b>	Alexandra Wright	An informal service in the John Rayner Room to celebrate the eve of the 7th day of Pesach
Friday 6 April <i>7th day Pesach</i> <b>11.00</b>	Rachel Benjamin	
Friday 7 April <b>18.45</b>	Cathy Heller-Jones	
Shabbat 8 April <i>Shemini</i> <b>11.00</b>	Alexandra Wright	
Friday 13 April <b>▲</b>	Rachel Benjamin	
Shabbat 14 April <i>Tazria-M'tzora/ Shabbat Ha-Shoah</i> <b>▲</b>	Rachel Benjamin	We will be marking <i>Yom Ha-Shoah</i> as part of our Shabbat morning service with readings on the theme 'Acts of Courage and Resistance'
Friday 20 April	Alexandra Wright	
Shabbat 21 April <i>Acharey-Mot/ Shabbat Atzma'ut</i>	Gilad Kariv	Joining with Liberal Judaism, we welcome Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Executive Director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, to celebrate Israel's 70th anniversary. The service will be followed by lunch, to which all are welcome. More details: see p2
Friday 27 April <b>▲</b>	<i>Kabbalat Torah Class</i>	Celebrate with the KT class who will be leading the service giving a <i>D'var Torah</i>
Shabbat 28 April <i>Kedoshim</i> <b>10.30</b>	<b>▲</b> <i>Kabbalat Torah</i> service led by the nine members of our KT2 class	Please note the early start time
Friday 4 May	Rachel Benjamin	Service co-led by Sam Hanna-Kemper <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
Shabbat 5 May <i>Emor</i>	Rachel Benjamin	<i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Sam Hanna-Kemper

# Education: much to celebrate

A few years ago, The LJS community developed what became known as our 'statement of values'. At our Council meeting in March, we were reminded of the following value statement: 'The LJS prioritises life-long learning and the intellectual challenge of Jewish texts, ideas and practice.' We were taking part in a discussion about education at The LJS, led by Caroline Villiers, our nursery school headteacher, Dov Softi, headteacher of Rimon (the religion school) and Harriett Goldenberg, chair of the education committee.

There is much to celebrate in terms of education at The LJS: the nursery school, Rimon and adult education are all thriving with many students attending and exciting programmes being delivered. We discussed the challenges being faced. The nursery is anticipating an Ofsted inspection some time this year (you may remember that it achieved an 'outstanding' judgment last time). Rimon has the challenge of a lack of space on Saturday mornings, having filled every room and corner available. Adult education is looking at ways to continue offering interesting and stimulating classes that attract the good numbers we have seen recently.

A key challenge is the change in the law regarding the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Trustees



*LJS Chairman  
Sue Head  
reports Council  
discussions on  
safeguarding,  
fundraising  
and synagogue  
membership  
nationwide*

have increased responsibilities with a 'Designated Leader' for the LJS building needing to be chosen from among the Council. It was agreed that, as Chairman, I should be the lead person, with Karen Newman and Steve Laughton as deputies. We will all be taking part in training for these important roles.

Lysa Schwartz, our Executive Director, presented to Council a useful paper on our fundraising programme. We

discussed some of the issues we need to deal with. Most important is people renewing their membership: this is the basis for the future of The LJS and the range of services we can provide. If we do not receive the subscriptions, it becomes more and more difficult for us to survive.

We have begun planning for this year's AGM on 20 June, to which you are all invited. The deadline for anyone wishing to stand for Council is Thursday, 12 April. There is more information on the website and in Shalom LJS, outlining the election process.

We have a very interesting speaker booked for the AGM, Dr Jonathan Boyd, Executive Director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research. He is the co-author (with Dr Donatella Casale Mashiah) of a thought-provoking study of synagogue membership in the United Kingdom. This takes an in-depth statistical look at synagogue membership figures. The analysis is challenging. Dr Boyd will speak and answer questions on this study. It should be a stimulating session.

Another piece of good news is that we have received ten applications for the post of rabbi to join Rabbi Wright. A panel is working on short-listing and interviews will take place during April.

More news on this later!

*Sue Head*

# Traitors to our own history?

'One law for the citizen and the stranger who dwells with you' (Exodus 12:49)

1 April 2018 is the deadline issued by the Population and Immigration Border Authority for the deportation or imprisonment of 20,000 Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers living in Israel. Less than a week after refugees received notice of this time limit, a group of Rabbis formed *Miklat Yisrael* (Israel Sanctuary), an organisation which encourages Israelis to open their homes to these asylum seekers.

At the latest count, over 2,000 families in over 90 locations have registered to take asylum seekers into their homes and give them a place to live, while work and housing is found for them. Co-founder, Rabbi Tati Schagas explained: 'What we are trying to do is disperse them all over the country so that the pressure presently in south Tel Aviv is no longer an issue, and we're trying to give them places where they will be able to work and become part of communities that are ready to support them.'

The Interior Ministry plans to deport 20,000 single men of working age and the remaining 18,000 asylum seekers within three years. The aim of *Miklat Yisrael* is to absorb everyone who wants to stay.

Deportation for these men, who may have fled forcible and indefinite conscription, conflict and human rights abuses in their own countries, would mean being sent to a third country – Rwanda or Uganda. Many have said they would prefer to be in prison in Israel than to be deported. *Miklat Yisrael* acknowledges that deporting these men would almost inevitably mean they would be trafficked or harmed, back on the refugee trail, or worse.

More than any other festival, *Pesach* – that great moment of celebration of freedom in our people's history – draws our attention both to the unique traditions of our own heritage, and

also to the moral issue of how we are with people who are not like ourselves. The Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, quotes the historian Simon Schama as saying that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who are happy to live and engage with people who are not like themselves and those who are not (Common Ground, Spring 2018).

We need to be proud of our own heritage, says Rabbi Mirvis, but no less proud of the universal values embraced by Judaism – those teachings that are underlined again and again in the *Torah*: that we are all created in the image of God, that all are worthy of dignity and respect, that there is one law for the home born and the stranger

who lives among us and that all should be able to live in freedom and peace.

As we celebrate *Pesach* with our families and friends and in our community and as we begin to think of how to

celebrate Israel's 70th year as a state, we need to reflect on our Jewish values, our history and our future. Do we want to be judged by our children and grandchildren as the generation that betrayed those values of hospitality and kindness? Do we want history to see us as traitors to our own history as refugees from Egypt and more recently from Nazi persecution?

And when we sit down to celebrate our *sedarim* this year and enjoy the week-long festival of freedom for our own people, let us reflect on the practical ways in which we can reach out to those who are not like ourselves, with openness and generosity, with compassion and grace.

For in so doing, we strengthen our own Jewish identities, forged in the same places, under a hot sun in the African desert, as those refugees and asylum seekers today seeking sanctuary and refuge in Israel.

*Alexandra Wright*

**'We need to reflect on our Jewish values, our history and our future. Do we want to be judged by our children and grandchildren as the generation that betrayed those values?'**

# How we support the bereaved

In the final part of her series about death, Rabbi Alexandra Wright looks at the rituals and observances we follow after someone dies

## **Burial of ashes**

It is often appropriate to bury the ashes of a person who has been cremated at the end of the 30-day period. A rabbi is always available to lead a short service as the earthly remains return to the earth. In the LJS cemetery in Willesden, ashes can be buried beneath a rose bush or another plant, and a plaque can be erected.

## **Matzeivah (tombstone consecration or stone setting)**

A tombstone is usually erected within the first year of a death – around eleven months after the funeral. However, if mourners wish to consecrate a stone earlier, that may be possible. Please check with Jo-Anne Winston, the LJS Funerals Co-ordinator. Finding the right words with which to remember a loved one is often difficult. Please consult one of the rabbis for suggestions.

It is usual for the rabbi to lead a short service at the cemetery with the reading of psalms and prayers and the dedication and reading of the stone. The tombstone consecration also acts as an important marker, bringing to an end the first year of mourning. It is not that grief or mourning is over, but it is a way of acknowledging that life continues even after those closest to us have gone.

## **Yahrzeit (Anniversary)**

As the end of the first year

approaches, the LJS office will write to you to ask whether you would like your loved one's name to be read out before *Kaddish* on the *Shabbat* morning nearest to the anniversary of their death. Responding to this first letter will ensure that you receive an annual letter with notification of the date on which the name is to be read out each subsequent year.

## **Who are the mourners?**

Jewish tradition designates seven mourners: husband, wife, mother, father, child, brother or sister. Jewish law is most concerned with these specific mourners and what they may or may not have to do following a death.

However, Liberal Judaism allows for a greater degree of openness and flexibility in its practice. It treats same-sex marriage partners in the same way as heterosexual marriage partners. It takes note of the grief and sadness of in-laws, grandchildren and partners who may not have entered a marriage and who may have lived with the deceased for many years – their feelings need to be considered with sensitivity and understanding.

## **Non-Jewish partners**

Many Jewish families include those who were not born as Jews and who have not chosen to convert to Judaism.

Although we may imagine that mixed-faith partnerships are a phenomenon of the 20th and 21st centuries, it is likely that mixed faith marriages have always taken place throughout our history. That may be one reason for this statement in the 16th century code of Jewish practice, the *Shulchan Aruch*: 'We may provide for the poor of non-Jews, visit their sick, bury their dead, speak funeral eulogies and comfort their mourners in order to promote peace' [*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Dei'ah* 151:12]. Jewish sources much earlier than Caro's work speak of the obligation to care for non-Jews especially at times of bereavement.

The LJS takes a very clear view on how to help Jewish members of a family to mourn for non-Jewish relatives, and will always offer support to non-Jews whose Jewish family members or partners have died. When requested, rabbis will officiate at funerals for non-Jewish members of a Jewish family, lead prayers at a *shivah* and are always there to support the needs of non-Jewish partners and children following a bereavement. It is certainly permitted and the family is encouraged to say *Kaddish* for non-Jewish members.

The LJS has, for some years, allowed mixed faith partners to be buried together in the

LJS cemetery. If you wish to discuss your final wishes with a rabbi, please feel free to contact the LJS office for an appointment.

### Conclusion

For a number of Jews, the traditional rituals associated with mourning are a great comfort and support. There is often a familiarity when it comes to taking up the traditions practised by one's parents and grandparents and these often bring consolation and reassurance.

For Liberal Jews, tradition has its place and importance, but its observances and rituals are not necessarily obligatory. We observe such rituals because they have meaning and purpose for us, because they are comforting and supportive and, ultimately, because they help us to come to terms with our loss.

What is of immense importance at these times in our lives is the support of a Jewish community, which is able to take on the role of helping individuals practically, as well as emotionally and spiritually. In the months after a bereavement, a member of the LJS Bereavement Support Team will be in touch to see how you are and to support you through the difficult and painful months that follow.

■ If you would like a copy of the booklet from which these articles were taken, please contact Jo-Anne Winston, Funerals Co-ordinator, at 020 7432 1298 or [synagogue@ljs.org](mailto:synagogue@ljs.org)

Alexandra Wright

# African Exodus

## 'Sudanese back to Sudan!'

### 'Foreigners out!'

These were some of the vitriolic chants of Jewish Israeli nationalists that shocked and disgusted those of us gathered in the Montefiore Hall to watch the documentary African Exodus.

The documentary exposes the plight of African asylum seekers hoping for safety in Israel. It was screened at The LJS, in conjunction with British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights, after the Israeli government announced that it would be forcing Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers to choose between deportation and indefinite imprisonment in Israel, effective at the beginning of April.

Israel is currently host to more than 39,000 asylum seekers, most of them from Sudan and Eritrea, who arrived before 2016, while the Sinai provided an open border. However, to date, only seven Eritreans and two Sudanese have been granted refugee status. By comparison, the global recognition rate for Eritreans is over 80% and that for Sudanese is over 60%.

'Why, if they are a country of refugees, don't they take care of us?' asked one asylum seeker. But the truth of the matter is that, while Israel is well known for its Law of Return for Jews from around the world, in other ways it has an undeveloped and unlegislated immigration policy which is simply not fit for purpose.

Juxtaposed to the tremendous generosity of Israelis who have set up projects to help those in need, the documentary shone a light on the cruelty of Israeli Government policy which forces those seeking asylum into years of limbo, unable either to return home or to work legally in Israel. One Israeli government minister was caught on camera referring to refugees as a 'cancer'.

'How can this happen?' asked Yigal Shtai, the founder of the Livinsky soup-kitchen. 'It is not Jewish to treat people like this.' And Andrea Krell, a young woman helping refugees to set up micro-enterprises in their own community, posed the fundamental question: the conflict between maintaining a Jewish state and sustaining Jewish values.

In the discussion after the showing, Rabbi Alex focused on the importance of language, responding to the use by some government Ministers of the term 'infiltrator' to describe refugees. For Bob Kirk, past President of The LJS, who arrived in England on the Kindertransport, it was reminiscent of Nazi descriptions of Jews as 'vermin'. As one Israeli academic commented, 'At least in this sense, we Jews might have forgotten something over the past two generations.'

To sign a petition urging Israel not to deport Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers, visit [www.letushelpil.org/join-us.html](http://www.letushelpil.org/join-us.html)

Harriett Goldenberg and Sam Cozens

# Kabbalat Torah 2018

On Friday 27th and Shabbat 28th April, LJS services will be led by nine young people who will be celebrating their *Kabbalat Torah*. The whole congregation is invited to participate in both services. Here the class introduce themselves...

My name is **Toby Levitt**, I am 15 years old and I go to Haberdashers. I have been a member of The LJS since birth. In my spare time I enjoy playing sports such as football, tennis, skiing and sailing. I also like to go out with family and friends, especially for a meal. My highlight of Rimon was the trip to Amsterdam in October which was great fun. I particularly appreciated the Anne Frank house.



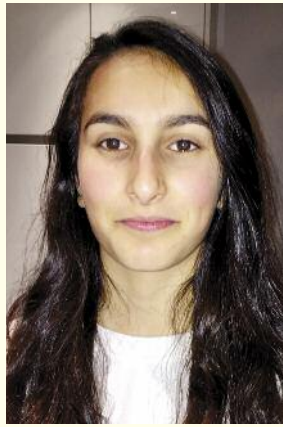
My name is **Amelia Osband** and I am 14 years old. I'm in year 9 at Aldenham, but I will be attending Fine Arts Tutorial College in September. I love art, English, and rock music. I wish to become an illustrator when I am older. I have been coming to The LJS since I was eight and have made some of my best friends here. I cannot wait to become an assistant teacher with them.



My name is **Rebecca Collett** and I am 15 years old. I go to City of London School for Girls and I am taking Spanish, music, RS and Latin for my GCSEs. In my spare time I enjoy music, horse riding and fencing. I have made many friends from an early age at The LJS that I hope to stay in touch with throughout my adult life.



I'm **Dahlia Levin** and am 14 years old. I have enjoyed coming to The LJS and attending *cheder* since I was a child as I have learned so much about my religion and culture. I have loved KT even more, especially our amazing Amsterdam trip which was not only educational but brought our class as close as we are today! The LJS and its values are important to me and my family - I have been taught to understand and be proud of my Jewish identity and hope to continue my learning as an assistant teacher.



My name is **Michael Falk**, I am 14 years old and I attend Aldenham School. I have been a member of The LJS since I was born as both my parents' families are long term members, some of them since the synagogue began. My hobbies are cycling, skiing and sailing. I have very much enjoyed making good friends at The LJS and am looking forward to becoming a teaching assistant next term.



I am **Dalia Gelfer** and The LJS has been part of my life since I was three. I go to Queens Park Community School, where my favourite subjects are Spanish, history and business. I sing in my school choir. I attend weekly classes at JW3 where I'm learning the Czech-Israeli self-defence form of Krav Maga. I'm really looking forward to participating in the KT service, and becoming an assistant teacher at The LJS. I've made many of my closest friends here, and I enjoy feeling a sense of belonging in a community that is accepting of all types of people.



I am **Annabel Grade** and I joined The LJS when I was thirteen years old. I go to Mill Hill School and enjoy music, history and religious studies. I play the piano and sing in a group with my friends and I also play the drum in a marching band. My family have been members of The LJS for four generations.



My name is **Naomi Kemper**. I am 14 and I go to City of London School for Girls. My favourite subjects are design, music, maths and biology. I like baking, taking photographs and playing badminton. I also play the cornet and I am in brass band, swing band, jazz band and school orchestra. I have been at the religion school since I was very little and I have made many close friends here. I was the first girl in my family to do a *bat mitzvah* and I am happy that I was able to do it at The LJS.



My name is **Benjamin Mencer** and I am known to my friends as Benji. I am 14 years old and attend the International School of London in Chiswick. I enjoy practising basketball and table tennis at a competitive level. I am in the varsity basketball team at school and I play table tennis at a national level for my age group, and I play in a men's league in division 2.







at the **LJS**

**Classes in Judaism and Hebrew  
Purim/Shavuot terms 5778/2018**

**Tuesdays 11.15-12.30**

**24 April to 10 July**

### **Tuesday Texts**

Led by our Rabbis, Dr Dov Softi and Susannah Alexander, we study biblical texts and commentaries and enjoy sessions on Jewish art, philosophy, theology and other subjects. Discussions are lively and relevant to contemporary issues.

Watch out for two taster sessions given by Norbert Meyn and musicians from the LJS choir in June and July:

### **Love of Song – from Mendelssohn to Brahms:**

**tracing Jewish connections and intercultural mobility in the art of Lieder:**

**a study course with Norbert Meyn of the Royal College of Music and Ensemble Émigré**

After two successful concerts with Ensemble Émigré at The LJS in 2016 and 2017, Norbert Meyn returns to join Cathy Heller Jones and fellow musicians for a short study course. Together they will explore the role of Jewish cultural figures in the evolution of the art of classical song (with piano accompaniment). They will also discuss how Jewish and other émigré musicians from Nazi Europe helped to make it more popular in Britain. Includes live performances.

#### **11.15-12.30 on 26 June: Mendelssohn**

This lecture looks at the cultural vision of Moses Mendelssohn and the music of his famous grandson Felix, whose music gained great prominence in Germany as well as Britain, where Victoria and Albert were ardent devotees. This session will also feature music by Mendelssohn's sister Fanny and the English composer William Sterndale Bennett.

#### **11.15-12.30 on 3 July: Brahms**

In this second session we will explore the influence of Johannes Brahms and his circle, which included the violinist Joseph Joachim and the composer and pianist Robert Kahn, who eventually emigrated to Britain in 1939. The programme will also feature music by Clara Schumann and emigre composer Hans Gál.

**These two 'taster' sessions will be followed by a four-week course on Tuesday evenings in November.**

Cost: Free for LJS members and registered proselytes; £10 per week for non members.

Tuesdays 19.00-20.00

24 April to 10 July

## Classical Hebrew at all levels

Half term: 29 May

### Beginners' Hebrew with Susannah Alexander

Are you learning to read Hebrew for the first time, or have you tried to get your head around the letters for years, and never quite achieved success? If so, join this fun and supportive class, open to all, where we will use a tried-and-tested method to get you reading faster than you ever thought possible. Beginning with Jonathan Romain's Primer 'Signs and Wonders' and moving on to a taste of grammar, liturgy and Bible, this class will equip you to take your first steps into the wonderful world of Hebrew with skill and confidence.

### Next steps in biblical Hebrew with Sally Gold

This class is for those who would like to practise guided reading, at their own pace, of simple Hebrew from the *Siddur* and the Hebrew Bible. We will gradually build reading skills and knowledge of vocabulary and simple grammar at an unhurried and manageable pace. The class allows plenty of time to gain, revise and consolidate using texts from the *Siddur* and some simple exercises which help with progressive understanding and confidence.

### Saul: an unsuitable case for a king; David: warrior and lover king with Rabbi Alexandra Wright

The Book of Samuel includes the stories of the first king of Israel, a complex character, not altogether suited for kingship, as well as the rise of King David from simple shepherd boy to conqueror of the Jebusite town that became Jerusalem. These stories are told in consummate narrative form. The Hebrew is not too difficult. The class aims to improve your reading, widen your vocabulary and build knowledge of various grammatical forms.

Tuesdays 20.00-21.00

24 April to 10 July

## Exploring Judaism with Rabbi Rachel Benjamin and Student Rabbi Igor Zinkov

Exploring Judaism is for people who wish they knew more about Judaism or would like to brush up their Jewish knowledge. It is for family members who are not Jewish, who would like to understand more about Judaism. It is also an essential programme for people choosing Judaism, by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read materials which will be made available online. The course is designed to offer knowledge about aspects of Judaism, to encourage practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for personal reflection within the group.

24 April	<i>Pesach</i> and the Counting of the Omer
1 May	End of life, funeral and mourning
8 May	Life after death, Messiah and Messianic Age
15 May	Exploring <i>Shavuot</i>
22 May	Home rituals and prayers, including <i>Kashrut</i> , <i>Mezuzah</i> , <i>Tallit</i> and <i>Tefillin</i>
29 May	Half term
5 June	Different forms of Judaism
12 June	17 <i>Tammuz</i> , 3 Weeks, <i>Tisha B'Av</i>
19 June	Who is a Jew?
26 June	Humankind in Jewish thought

Tuesdays 20.00-21.30

24 April to 15 May

### The *Shoah*: historical and topical overview Taught by Susannah Alexander

This course will explore the history of the Nazi *Shoah* (Holocaust), and the experience of some of those affected. It is suitable for those with no prior knowledge of the *Shoah*, and for those who have studied the subject before. The opening session will be:

#### **24 April: Prelude to the *Shoah***

How did the events from 1929-38 set the stage for what was to come? How did a fringe party rise to power, and how did it exploit that power to control and subjugate an entire population?

Shabbat 9.45-10.45

21 April to 7 July

### Torah study and Jewish thought

Half term: 26 May and 2 June

This term we will continue to study the teachings of Moses Maimonides, the Rambam. We have a diverse range of leaders including Rabbi Alex and Rabbi Rachel. Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, our new scholar in residence, will be leading two classes. We are also maintaining our contributions from members of the class and others. We have a nucleus of regulars and also welcome new students. Why not come and sample a class? For further information contact Michael Romain at [romain@netgates.co.uk](mailto:romain@netgates.co.uk) or Harriett Goldenberg at [hgoldenberg@btinternet.com](mailto:hgoldenberg@btinternet.com)

Shabbat 9.45-10.45

21 April to 7 July

### Beginners' Hebrew with Naomi Brightwell

Half term: 26 May and 2 June

Naomi Brightwell's class uses Jonathan Romain's Signs and Wonders to help complete beginners decode the squiggles and start tackling what they've always been afraid of. With a little bit of grammar, a sprinkling of vocabulary and plenty of off-topic conversations on Jewish food, the structure of the liturgy and anything else that helps us have fun while learning. No previous knowledge required. Previous students have even gone on to lead Shabbat morning services.

### Moving up in Hebrew with David Strang

The aim of this class is to help students to understand the Hebrew prayers and songs in our services. New students will need basic reading skills but we will spend some time increasing reading fluency. We will also look at the basics of Hebrew grammar using the textbook *Prayerbook Hebrew the Easy Way* which will be available for purchase. We will build up your vocabulary too, and there will be five words a week to learn. We will also start learning how to write the Hebrew letters, using simplified versions of the block letters in the *siddur*.

### Intermediate Hebrew with Nitza Spiro

The aim of these sessions is to explore the Hebrew texts which the learners will come across in synagogue services on *Shabbatot* and festivals.

Some of the texts which will be introduced and studied in preparation for each festival (like the Passover *Haggadah*, the Book of Esther, and the Book of Ruth with some verses from the Book of Proverbs) might even be sung at times. Hopefully this knowledge will also be shared with families at home. The class will be working on fluency in reading but at the same time will also be learning about the historical, ethical, philosophical, and ideological messages of the texts. Through such familiarity every student will gain a deeper understanding and sense of identity with our heritage as well as appreciation and love for the Hebrew language.

# Charming and generous: the publisher who cared about the vulnerable and the underdog

Ernest Hecht, who died in February at the age of 88, arrived in England under the *Kindertransport* scheme from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia.

Although he remembered the journey by train with his mother, and leaving her behind in Prague, he maintained a curious detachment about his past. One can't help thinking that the creation and success of Souvenir Press, and his determination to preserve its integrity in a world of huge corporate publishers, were his response to the gross injustice he experienced as a Jewish refugee from Nazi Europe.

In the course of his life, Ernest collected six languages, two honours degrees from Hull, an honorary fellowship from UCL in 2006 and an OBE in 2015.

He was chairman of the Society of Bookmen in 1994 (the year, he wrote, in which Arsenal won the European Cup-Winners Cup). He was presented with the first 'Lifetime Achievement Award' by the British Book Awards in 2001 and was awarded the Neruda Medal by the Chilean President.

The Ernest I knew a little was defined by his contradictions: a man of purpose, choice and astute decisions, but who lived and worked in the chaotic mass of papers and books that weighed down his office desk and floor. Engagingly conversational, with a wide



smile and a mischievous sense of humour, he was intensely private about his own life.

While he could be somewhat perplexed when others didn't quite march to his drum, there was a certain charm, a charisma about him and he was immensely generous: more than 60 organisations benefited from the Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation. Children with autism, the arts, sport, the elderly with dementia, hospices, all were recipients of generous grants.

He had an extraordinary mind: he micromanaged every aspect of his business but at the same time could maintain a broad view. He would meet a young and ardent supporter of Arsenal (like himself) and the following day a load of books about Arsenal would turn up on that man's doorstep. Nothing escaped his attention: noticing that The LJS was holding a service for bereaved

parents, he sent me a dozen books on the subject to give away to those attending.

The books he published and the charities he supported revealed an acute sense of justice, an understanding about principles and universal connections. But there was also that boyish sense of mischief that wasn't afraid to embrace the bestseller one day, the arcane or bizarre the next.

'Anyone can create a high-class literary list of prestige titles,' he said. 'It's better to have a balanced list, comprising books that make money and those perhaps more worthy titles that don't. My adage is that a publisher's first duty to an author is to remain solvent.'

Here was the practical voice of the entrepreneur, the man who perhaps had a slightly inflated view of himself, who could do exactly what he wanted, when he wanted, but whose egoism was curbed by a strong regard for the vulnerable and the underdog in society.

Demanding, impatient, self-reliant and independent, he was a one-off: courageous, immensely generous, clever, ambitious and determined, original and creative. His death leaves a gaping loss for his personal friends as well as for the world of publishing.

**Alexandra Wright**

**VIDEO AND TEA**

From 13.30-16.30 on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Just come along – no need to book. Enjoy soup on arrival then a DVD (film classics, musicals, etc) followed by a delicious tea including home-made coffee ice-cream.

Donation of £2.

**25 April:** *Bugsy Malone*

**23 May:** *The Artist*

**27 June:** *Genevieve*

**25 July:** *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*

**22 August:** *Whisky Galore*

**26 September:** *Meet Me in St Louis*

**24 October:** *Brief Encounter*

**28 November:** *The Snowman* and *Father Christmas*

**COMMUNITY CARE**

Aviva Shafritz, our Community Care Co-ordinator, is ready to help with difficulties experienced, not only by our older members, such as illness and provision of care, but also across the spectrum of life.

**RESTAURANT TUESDAY**

Restaurant Tuesday meets on the third Tuesday of every month and is an informal lunch club for the more elderly members of the congregation.

Please let the office know if you are coming for the first time or if you are a regular and cannot come [020 7286 5181].

**LOCAL WALKING GROUP**

The LJS local walking group is planning its next walk for Thursday 5 April, starting from The LJS at 11.30. Walks adopt a friendly pace and last no more than an hour and a half.

Future walks are scheduled on 10 May, 14 June and 5 July. All LJS members and friends are welcome to join in.

For more information, please contact either Michael Romain ([romain@netgates.co.uk](mailto:romain@netgates.co.uk)) or Jody Graham ([awithj@gmail.com](mailto:awithj@gmail.com))

**BRIDGE CLUB**

The Bridge Club meets from 14.00 to 17.00 every Monday at The LJS. Anyone with any

knowledge of the game is most welcome. This is a social afternoon rather than a competitive one. There is a friendly atmosphere and helpful suggestions. The cost (including tea or coffee) is £2. New members are welcome: for more details leave a message for Neil Levitt or William Falk at 020 7286 5181.

**YOUNG ADULTS' DINNERS**

Are you between the ages of 25 and 35 – or thereabouts? Do you have children or grandchildren of a similar age? Or friends whom you would like to introduce to The LJS? Friday

evening dinners for Young Adults are held once a month. For more details contact [a.wright@ljs.org](mailto:a.wright@ljs.org)

**SINGING FOR THE MIND**

This is a popular weekly activity for people with memory problems who come with a family member, friend or carer. Music brings fun, confidence and a time to relax among new found friends. To apply, email [sfm@ljs.org](mailto:sfm@ljs.org) or phone 020 7286 5181. For further information pick up a leaflet or visit the LJS website.

**PAINT FOR PLEASURE**

Both experienced artists and beginners are welcome to join this friendly, informal group to paint together. Bring pastels, water colours, acrylic, oils or other materials. The group meets at 11.00 every Monday [except on Jewish festivals and Bank Holidays]. For more details, email Jocelyne Tobin at [jocelynetobin@talktalk.net](mailto:jocelynetobin@talktalk.net)

**ARCHIVE TUESDAYS**

The Archive team works in the Assembly Hall on most Tuesdays. Activities include sorting historical papers, cataloguing and photo preservation. If you'd like to help with this important work, please contact Cinde Lee at [cinde.lee@gmail.com](mailto:cinde.lee@gmail.com)

# Young LJS

We wish these young members  
of The LJS a very happy birthday  
in April:

**Nena Atwell**  
**Kobe Behr**  
**Axel Cohen**  
**Audrey Curtis**  
**Gabriel Dubin**  
**Antoine Garbus**  
**Wilfred Ginsberg**  
**Emily Gruber**  
**Ethan Haller**  
**Sam Hanna-Kemper**

**Naomi Hanna-Kemper**  
**Jude Message**  
**Marcelo Muller**  
**Zoe Roeder Wald**  
**Ava Rosenthal**  
**Emily-Rose Samuel**  
**Jessica Spanier**  
**Genevieve Sparks**  
**Baxter Spurr**  
**Thomas Stonehill**  
**Emilia Stonehill**  
**Aaron Tedeschini Rigal**

## TINY TOTS at the LJS

*Do you have little ones  
aged between 0 and 4?*

Please bring them to The LJS on *Shabbat* mornings

**April 21 and 28**

**May 5, 12 and 20 (Shavuot)**

for a delightful session of songs, stories, drawing and *kiddush*.



Activities for tiny ones with their  
parents, grandparents and carers.  
The nursery will still be available every  
Shabbat for children to play or read.

Please email [education@ljs.org](mailto:education@ljs.org)  
to be added to the Tiny Tots mailing list.

## Board of Deputies elections

The LJS must appoint its representatives to the Board of Deputies for the 2018-21 term by 31 May 2018. Council is pleased to report that we have four members (comprising existing and new representatives) who are willing to undertake this important role and Council will confirm their appointment at its next meeting.

For more information about the BoD, contact Lysa Schwartz ([execdirector@ljs.org](mailto:execdirector@ljs.org) or 020 7286 5181).

## The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

### Patrons

Malcolm Brown  
Bernie Bulkin and Vivien Rose  
Richard and Joy Desmond  
Peter and Leanda Englander  
Willie and Jo Kessler  
Hugh and Angela Marsden  
Anthony Roe (*zichrono livrachah*)  
The Eranda Rothschild Foundation  
Martin Slowe  
Michael and Janine Sternberg

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### Senior Rabbi

Alexandra Wright

### Rabbi Emeritus

David J Goldberg OBE

### Rabbi

Rachel Benjamin

### President

Martin Slowe

### Chairman of Council

Sue Head

### Executive Director

Lysa Schwartz

### Head of Rimon Religion School

Dov Softi

### Nursery Head Teacher

Caroline Villiers

### Community Care Co-ordinator

Aviva Shafritz

### Director of Music

Cathy Heller-Jones

### Organist

Tim Farrell

In case of bereavement:

In office hours, ring 020 7432 1298

At other times, ring 020 8958 2112  
(Calo's)

### LJS News Team

#### Editor

Peter Singer

#### Artwork

Davies Communications  
Tel 020 7586 0850

## Outbreak of cross-channel harmony

Following our Community Choir's successful trip to Paris, the choir of *Kehillat Gesher* were welcomed for a return visit to The LJS in March.



## 5 lectures in 5 synagogues

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, West London Synagogue, West Central Liberal Synagogue, the New London Synagogue and Westminster Synagogue invite you to join them for the third in a series of five lectures:

**Monday 14 May**

at West London Synagogue, 33 Seymour Place, W1H 5AU

**Guest speaker: Simon Schama**  
followed by responses from  
**Rabbi Sybil Sheridan and Rabbi Benji Stanley**

## The LJS Annual General Meeting and Council elections

At the AGM on 20 June 2018, the LJS membership will confirm the election of new members to the LJS Council. Two existing members of Council, Russell Delew and Steve Penn, are coming to the end of their first term and may be re-elected for a second term. There will also be places for up to three additional members, one of which Council recommends is filled by Stephen Laughton, the Chair of the Young Adults Group, who is currently co-opted onto Council.

If you are interested in standing for Council please contact Lysa Schwartz ([execdiretor@ljs.org](mailto:execdiretor@ljs.org) or 020 7286 5181) and she will send you details of nomination procedures and eligibility. Nominations, including a formal seconder, must be received by Council by 9.00 on Monday 7 May 2018.

The next LJS News will be for May 2018. Final copy date: 6 April 2018.

Copy should be emailed to [info@daviescomms.com](mailto:info@daviescomms.com)

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## Our next Drop-in for asylum seeker families

will be from 14.00-16.00 on Sunday 8 April. We need volunteers from 12.00 to help prepare for our guests.

If you are interested in volunteering once a month or a few times a year, please contact Rabbi Alexandra Wright - [a.wright@ljs.org](mailto:a.wright@ljs.org) - for more information.

## Israel at 70

Hills • Valleys • Encounters

**3-10 June 2018**

LJS community trip to Israel with Rabbi Alexandra Wright

3 days in the North, 4 nights in Jerusalem, engaging with nature, political and spiritual issues through visits and talks

**Last few places: details from**  
[SueBolsom@gmail.com](mailto:SueBolsom@gmail.com)

The LJS is a constituent synagogue of Liberal Judaism

  
**liberal judaism**