

February 2019
Sh'vat/Adar I 5779

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

LJS NEWS



10,000 Steps for 10,000 Children

To mark the 80th anniversary of the first *Kindertransport* children who arrived at Liverpool Street Station, sixty members of the LJS and other LJ congregations joined by their friends walked the 10,000 steps – or more – from the LJS to Liverpool Street. This walk took place on 2 December 2018 in honour of the first of the approximately 10,000 children who arrived in Britain in the months leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War.

LJS member Gaby Lazarus's words convey beautifully the mood of the occasion:

'As we walked along the quiet canal, through Regent's Park, across Bloomsbury, Holborn and Barbican, in the light and warmth of the unexpected afternoon sunshine, we shared stories about our parents' experiences and wondered again and again at their courage and the courage of THEIR parents.'

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The first *Kindertransport* train in December 1938 carried 200 children from an orphanage in Berlin; the last train arrived in Britain at the very end of August 1939.

The children were fostered by Jewish and non-Jewish families. Many of them, now in their eighties and nineties, gathered on the concourse around Frank Meisel's sculpture 'Kindertransport – The Arrival' for a brief Memorial Service and to see the first candle of *Chanukkah* lit by the Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis.

Kiddush Celebrations

If you are celebrating a special birthday or another commemoration, have you thought about contributing to the weekly *Kiddush* following our *Shabbat* morning service?

If you would like to take part in the service to mark a special occasion – birthday, anniversary, baby blessing, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, or another special day – please contact Felicia Beder on 020 7432 1283 or rabbispa@ljs.org.

Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

Alec Benjamin

father of Rabbi Rachel Benjamin, Ian and Liz

Derek Chapper

father of Naomi, Ruth and Eve,
and brother of Philip

Susie Goldie

mother of Marc, Lisa and Debra,
sister of Stuart and Jenny

David Lovell

husband of Alice, mother of Shauna and
Jonathan, brother of Robin

Susan Marmor

sister of Paul

Dorothea Rose

LJS member for 67 years

המקום ינחם אתכם
בתוך שאר האבלים

May God comfort you and all who mourn

Book launch invitation: Echoes of Contempt

A History of Judeophobia and the Christian Church

With:

- Bruce D. Thompson, Author and British Methodist minister.
- Rabbi Alexandra Wright, Senior Rabbi, the Liberal Jewish Synagogue
- Marie van der Zyl, President, Board of Deputies of British Jews

Thursday 7th February, 5:30pm

A North London Venue (RSVP for details)

Refreshments will be served

Enquiries: 020 7543 5408

RSVP by email: Rosita.Rybokaite@bod.org.uk



BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS
ADVOCACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Shabbat Services: February 2019

Friday evening services are at 6.45pm.

Shabbat morning services are at 11.00am unless otherwise stated.

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER	NOTES
Friday 1 February	Igor Zinkov	
Shabbat 2 February <i>Mishpatim</i>	Elana Dellal	
Friday 8 February	Elana Dellal	
Shabbat 9 February <i>Terumah</i>	Lev Taylor	Lev is a second year Leo Baeck College student rabbi and the grandson of Jane Rayner and the late Rabbi John Rayner z"l. Dedication of the new stained glass window in the Rabbi John Rayner Prayer Room will take place after the service.
Friday 15 February	Bernie Bulkin	<i>LJY-Netzer</i> weekend at the LJS
Shabbat 16 February <i>T'tzavveh</i>	Michael Hilton	Nosh 'n' Drosh with Rabbi Harry Jacobi on Moses Mendelssohn Half-term <i>Rimon</i>
Friday 22 February	Alexandra Wright	Co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Hannah Spearman-Walters
Shabbat 23 February <i>Ki Tissa</i>	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Hannah Spearman-Walters Half-term <i>Rimon</i>
Friday 1 March	Alexandra Wright	
Shabbat 2 March <i>Va-yak'heil/Shekalim</i>	Elana Dellal	<i>Rimon</i> returns

Shabbat morning services are streamed live via the internet. If you would like to follow a service on your computer or tablet, please phone the LJS office to get your user name and password.

PURIM CELEBRATIONS AT THE LJS

Please save the date for Erev Purim Wednesday 20 March 2019

7.00pm *Shiur* on Purim with Igor Zinkov, followed by *Megillah* reading

7.45pm Refreshments

8.30-9.15pm 'Behind the Mask: *Purim* Story Hour'

Please contact Felicia Beder on rabbispa@ljs.org if you would like to be involved.

Drop-in for Asylum-Seeker Families

The next LJS Drop-in for asylum-seeker families will be on 10 February from 2.00-4.00pm.

Volunteers are asked to arrive at 1.00pm to help set up.

Forthcoming dates: 10 March, 14 April, 12 May, 16 June, 14 July, 11 August, 8 September, 13 October, 10 November, 8 December

Volunteers are also needed from 5.00pm on 7 February and on the Thursdays immediately prior to the Drop-in dates to sort clothes.

VOLUNTEERS PLEASE

If you are interested in volunteering once a month or a few times a year, please contact asylumproject@ljs.org for more details. We are especially looking for younger members of the community who can help us with some of the heavier work. Thank you.

Council Report: Generating funds – and ideas



By now you should all have received your Membership Pack for 2019. Thank you to everyone who has begun the new year by promptly paying their subscription and to those who, following the example of Lord Grade, have added an extra amount to help members who struggle to meet their financial commitment.

Please don't forget the Board of Deputies levy. It is not mandatory, but the Board does a great deal of excellent work for the Jewish community: combating antisemitism, educating the wider society about Judaism, and building inter-faith links. We have strong representation from the LJS on the Board, demonstrating the growing progressive voice.

Another thank you: this is for the donations to the *Yom Kippur* Appeal. So far, we have raised £60,000 for our three charities: The Avenues Youth Project (our local non-Jewish charity); the Ben Gurion University Bedouin Fund; the Young Neighbours Project organised by JCore, the Jewish Council for Racial Equality.

We have received many concerns from members of our community about the proposed draft *siddur*

and as a result, Council has invited the editors, Rabbis Elli Tikvah Sarah and Lea Muehlstein, together with the Chair of the Conference of Liberal Rabbis and Cantors, Rabbi Aaron Goldstein, to meet with them in January. The meeting was scheduled for the end of January, after the publication date for this newsletter and I will report on the outcome of the discussions in March.

Council has been doing some 'blue sky thinking' on how to generate funds for our synagogue. This is very necessary, as you all know, with the increasing needs of the community and with a costly building to maintain. There is already a range of fundraising initiatives in place, such as the President's Patron's Appeal, a planned Comedy Night and the 'Grow your Tenner' campaign, but we wanted to add to the list to encourage as many different people as possible to contribute. We have lots of ideas, including holding a fundraising dinner and running a legacy campaign and seminar, and we will now look at how these can be implemented. One particularly interesting and meaningful idea is to have a 'yahrzeit tree'; people would be able to have their family members remembered by buying a leaf to go on the tree and the tree itself would be a beautiful memorial. What are your views on this idea?

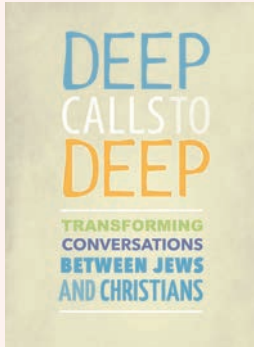
Highlighting the need to raise funds, Council has approved expenditure for some emergency work at the cemetery. This includes repairing the roof to make it watertight and undertaking some maintenance work on the toilets. In the longer term, the Cemetery Committee will be considering what should be the next steps.

There are many exciting events in February, but of particular significance is the installation of the stained glass window in the John Rayner room. The dedication service is on *Shabbat* 9 February and it is particularly wonderful that Rabbi Rayner's grandson, Lev Taylor, who is a student rabbi, will preach on that morning. We hope you can all come.

Sue Head, Chairman of Council

Forthcoming Events

Deep Calls to Deep - Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton introduces our inspiring new course starting 5 March
See page 10 for course details.



This spring the LJS is privileged to host a remarkable group of Jewish and Christian scholars, two each week for eight weeks, presenting their pioneering work which pushes forward the frontiers of Christian-Jewish dialogue in the UK. They are the contributors to a book called *Deep Calls To Deep: Transforming Conversations between Christians and Jews*. The title quotes from Psalm 42, and conveys the desire to get beyond a superficial level of dialogue. The book begins: 'This is a book intended for a wide readership, not least all those Christians and Jews who want to engage with each other on a level deeper than polite acknowledgement. Who are you as a Jew, as a Christian? What part does identity and faith play in your life? What exactly do you believe?'

The sixteen scholars who wrote the book are all members of the Council of Christians and Jews, which commissioned the work. The group was divided into eight pairs, each with one Jew and one Christian, and given a topic for study. One would write an essay and the other a response. But because they met often over a four-year period, worked together and formed friendships, these are so much more interesting than standard academic essays. The success of the writing process can be attributed in no small measure to our editor, Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield, who held the group together, wrote introductions and conclusions to every section, and asked so many of those searching questions which deepened the dialogue.

Rabbi Alexandra Wright and I are both honoured to have been part of this important venture.

As Jews and Christians, how do we experience modern Western culture? How should we live in a Modern Western democracy? How do we come to terms with our difficult past? What are the important lessons for us from our scriptures? Are there doctrines on which we cannot compromise? How do Jews relate to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity? How do Christians relate to our Jewish attachment to Israel? And finally, what does respect mean between people of faith?

These are the questions explored in the book and which will be explored in the study sessions, designed to be accessible to all, and which will take the form of talks, discussion and textual study.

Koleinu services

At 11.00am in the John Rayner Room

Our *Koleinu* services are a chance to enjoy a *Shabbat* morning in a creative and more spontaneous way, and are held while there is a service in the Sanctuary. You are invited to join us on **23 March** when we will be using the new draft prayer book *Siddur Shirah Chadashah*, pausing to consider some of its translations and innovations. There will be plenty of time as well to discuss the *Torah* portion.

Looking ahead: for your diary

Wednesday 20 March

Shiur on Purim at 7.00pm followed *Megillah* reading, refreshments and 'Behind the Mask: *Purim* Story Hour'

Saturday 20 April

Communal *Seder* at 6.30pm

Shabbat 27 April

Kabbalat Torah Service at 10.30am

Sunday 28 April

Memorial Service for the Loss of a Child and the Loss of the Prospect of a Child at 3.00pm

Shabbat 18 May

Community Service

Blessing for a Mixed Faith Couple



Last year Rabbi Alexandra Wright began a series of articles on the Jewish life cycle that included pieces on Marriage and on Death and Mourning. Here, together with Rabbi Elana Dellal, they continue that series, looking at blessings for couples where one partner is Jewish and one is of another faith or has not been raised in any particular religion.

The beauty of officiating at a ‘mixed faith blessing’ is that there is no fixed liturgy, no prescribed prayers or rituals. The process of creating a service is just that – creative, born of a couple’s desire to express their own spirituality and aspirations, their hopes and the ethos of the home they wish to create.

And so we begin with a clean slate. Or almost a clean slate. The Conference of Liberal Rabbis and Cantors (CoLRaC) does set some boundaries in their manual. And those boundaries are sometimes difficult for couples who come with certain expectations about what a blessing might look like.

Rabbis try to adapt each ceremony to the needs of the couple, and it’s therefore important for couples who are planning a mixed faith blessing to arrange several meetings with the officiating rabbi to plan the blessing, its liturgy, music, rituals and raising of children. Our hope is that by encouraging couples to become part of the LJS community, they will feel connected to their Jewish faith and be part of our congregation.

Here are the questions that are most often asked by couples seeking a mixed faith blessing.

Does Liberal Judaism permit mixed faith blessings?

Yes, Liberal rabbis are permitted to officiate at a blessing for a couple where one is Jewish and the other is of another faith or has not been raised in any particular faith. While a rabbi would not put any pressure on an individual to convert to Judaism, if the non-Jewish partner happened to be interested in becoming part of the Jewish people, then we would certainly open the door and create an opportunity to explore that option.

Would we be able to join a class and learn about Liberal Judaism?

Yes, absolutely! The LJS rabbis would encourage you to attend the Exploring Judaism class and a Hebrew class (if you wished) and to learn something about creating a Jewish home, Jewish observance and beliefs, history and the Jewish life cycle.

Do all Liberal rabbis officiate at mixed faith blessings?

Whether or not a rabbi participates in a mixed faith ceremony is determined by their individual conscience. All the rabbis at the LJS welcome the sacred opportunity to officiate at such a ceremony.

Where would our mixed faith ceremony take place?

Many couples choose to hold their ceremony (and civil ceremony) in the same place as their reception. A mixed faith blessing can take place in the Sanctuary, but the civil ceremony would have to be in another venue.

Would we have to have a civil ceremony first?

Yes, the civil ceremony must take place before the blessing. It should not be held on *Shabbat* or on a festival. Some couples hold the civil ceremony on a different date from their religious ceremony, but most hold it immediately prior to the blessing on ‘neutral’ ground, such as where their reception is being held

Is a mixed faith blessing the same as a Jewish wedding?

No. Liberal rabbis are not allowed to create a ceremony that resembles a Jewish wedding. This is because English law allows marriage to take place between two people 'professing the Jewish religion'. While the blessing has no validity in either Jewish or English law, it undoubtedly has significance for a couple and might include readings and music that have special meaning for both partners. It could include, as well, a blessing over wine and the breaking of the glass – both Jewish customs. However, no symbols from the wedding ceremony may be used, such as those of *Chuppah*, *Ketubbah* or the *Sheva Berachot* (Seven Blessings); nor may the words of the betrothal formula (*Harei at/attah* – Behold you are consecrated to me by this ring according to the law of Moses and Israel) be used.

Will our children be Jewish?

It is sincerely hoped that you will wish to raise your children as part of the Jewish community. Regardless of whether the mother or father is Jewish, providing your children have a Jewish upbringing in their home and education (by attending Religion School and becoming part of the community), with appropriate life cycle rituals, such as a baby blessing, *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* and *Kabbalat Torah*, your children will be Jewish and recognised as Jewish by the non-Orthodox world.

Could a priest or officiant from another religion co-officiate at the blessing?

The participation of non-Jewish clergy at your ceremony is at the discretion of the officiating rabbi. Clergy from other faiths are not permitted to introduce non-Jewish ceremonies, prayers or quotations that are contrary to Judaism or Jewish practice.

Do Liberal rabbis officiate at same-sex mixed faith blessings?

Yes. There is no difference in the process of creating a mixed faith blessing for a same-sex couple.

If we would like a blessing, how should we proceed?

Please make an appointment with one of the LJS rabbis. It is our privilege and pleasure to work with couples who want to create a ceremony that reflects your respective heritage and culture. The process of creating a blessing, rituals, readings and music, is deeply satisfying and the result is meaningful and very beautiful. And it's important that each ceremony is created especially for you.

If you would like to know more about mixed faith blessings, please contact Rabbi Alexandra Wright a.wright@ljs.org or Rabbi Elana Dellal e.dellal@ljs.org. We are happy to make an appointment to chat to you and go into further details.

And by the way, *mazal tov!*

Alexandra Wright and Elana Dellal

'The preparation for the mixed faith blessing was a very special experience for us both – we had a number of face-to-face meetings and discussions with Rabbi Alexandra who was very thoughtful about our situation. Most of all, it allowed us both to think carefully about what is important from our different religious backgrounds and as such create a unique and personalised ceremony which we and our guests will remember forever.'

Jonny Azern and Kerry Turnbull celebrated their blessing in August 2018.



All about the Out and

The Out and About Club is a non-denominational club for disabled people who live in Westminster and provides activities, entertainment and friendship.

Members and the volunteer helpers meet up in the Montefiore Hall at the LJS on the first and third Tuesday of every month, with transport provided for all those who need it. Each meeting begins with tea and sandwiches. More often than not there is a home-made cake to celebrate a birthday, with a big fuss made over special birthdays!

The forms of entertainment which follow are many and varied. Last year we had singers performing across a wide range of musical genres, and travel talks about home and abroad. One of our most successful evenings was when helpers and members alike demonstrated their skills from embroidery and crochet to baking and jam-making, as well as many different kinds of artistic media. Members are keen to participate in activities – singing along with gusto and occasionally getting

up to dance or wheelchair dance. A particular highlight of every year is our outing to Worthing which is often the only time the members enjoy a day by the sea.

Our vision for the coming year is to continue providing our members with as much enjoyment as they say they have experienced in previous years. In March we are looking forward to celebrating the 101st birthday of our oldest member, Rosie Saunders, still in feisty form.

The ‘Outs’, as it is affectionately referred to, always engenders happiness, and has led to warm and lasting friendships amongst its members. For many members the ‘Outs’ plays a vital role in their life, giving them an opportunity to get ‘out and about’, socialise and have fun.

We are totally dependent on the generosity of LJS members to ensure the continuation of this club which has been such a success for over five decades. We are most grateful for your support.

Harry (Henry) Joel MBE: 5 October 1924 – 28 October 2018

Long-standing LJS member and stalwart of the Out and About Club

Harry was a member of the LJS for 48 years, and a member of the Out and About Club for 16 years.

Brought up in Bethnal Green, Harry joined the medical branch of the Royal Navy in 1939 and worked at the Royal Naval Hospital in Gillingham. He was later deployed to a destroyer, where he travelled far and wide, gaining a lot of medical experience as he was transferred from ship to ship, treating the wounded. Back home he worked in a naval hospital in Chatham.

After the war Harry studied ‘The Knowledge’ and became a black cab driver. Together with other black cab drivers he formed what is now called The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, and was elected Chairman, then later Life President. In 1981 he was awarded the MBE for his services.

Harry married his late wife, Frances Burman, in 1951, and they had a daughter, Lee.

Harry hugely enjoyed attending the Out and About Club, and loved the various entertainments, especially the music ones. He would customarily give short thank-you speeches after events, appreciated by all. Harry admired the fact that the Club always welcomes people of different denominations, creeds and cultures.

In recent years Harry attended the Club with his friend Margaret Fennymore, and last summer they both greatly enjoyed taking part in the Out and About Club annual trip to Worthing.

Harry is survived by his daughter, Lee, son-in-law, David, grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He is sorely missed by his family, his friend Margaret, by Club members, and by everyone who knew him.

Sonia Leanse,
co-chairman of the Out and About Club

About Club

The Out and About Club annual dinner

The Out and About Club's annual dinner is a highlight of the year. In 2018 it coincided with the third night of *Chanukkah* so we were able to celebrate with the lighting of the *Menorah* by Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Lieba Birn, and the singing of *Ma'oz tzur*.

A delicious three-course meal catered by Shelley Salter and served with the help of many of the 'Outs' volunteers was enjoyed by a hundred and ten people. Sonia Leanse then gave the club's Annual Report which included a message from our President Rabbi Dr David Goldberg. He said how sorry he was not to be able to attend and how he hoped he would be able to see members in the new year. We were delighted that Carole Goldberg was

able to come and draw the raffle. She is something of an expert at this task as this was the 44th year she has drawn the tickets!

Sonia took the opportunity to thank everyone involved in the running of the club, and in particular expressed her delight that the drivers from Westway Community Transport were at the dinner. They are not just drivers but friends to the members and helpers, and we could not run the club without this reliable transport making membership of the club accessible to all who need it.

Sonia Leanse and Jenny Nathan, joint chairmen of the Out and About Club



Harry Joel with his friend Margaret Fennymore (2011)



Jessie Shaughnessy and her friend June



Audrey Durrant with her daughter, Joanne, and son-in-law, Adam



Helper, Danny Kessler, with Natasha Pein

You will find with the copy of *LJS News* posted to you an insert offering you the opportunity to support the excellent work of the Out and About Club. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



at the **LJS** 5779/2018-9

Classes in Judaism and Hebrew

Deep Calls To Deep: Transforming Conversations between Jews and Christians

Tuesday evenings 8.00-9.30pm
A major new eight-week course commences on Tuesday 5 March. Dates below.

Deep Calls To Deep is the title of a volume of essays, the fruit of several years of inter-religious learning between a group of Christians and Jews. In an era of dangerous populism and nationalism, this course will examine the ways in which Jewish-Christian dialogue has progressed, and how we engage with each other in the 21st century and with the cultural and political realities of the world we inhabit together.

This Tuesday evening course is for anyone who is concerned about the nature and need for dialogue. It will look honestly at those things that unite our faiths, but also at what divides us. Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, the LJS's Scholar in Residence, is curating the course and is delighted to announce that all the contributors to the book have accepted the invitation to take part. Please honour them by registering for this course with Debi Penhey, education@ljs.org or 020 7432 1284.

See page 5 for Michael Hilton's article on *Deep Calls To Deep*.

5 March	Professor David Ford and Rabbi Alexandra Wright, with an introduction by Rabbi Tony Bayfield: <i>The Legacy of Our Scriptures</i>
12 March	Dr Wendy Fidler and Joy Barrow: <i>What Does Respect Mean Between People of Faith?</i>
19 March	Canon Steve Williams and Rabbi Jeremy Gordon: <i>How Should Christians and Jews Live in a Modern Western Democracy?</i>
26 March	Rabbi Natan Levy and Sister Teresa Brittain: <i>Jewish Particularism – Christians, Jews and the Land of Israel</i>
30 April	Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah and Revd Dr Stephen Roberts: <i>The Third Dialogue Partner: How Do We Experience Modern Western Culture?</i>
7 May	Revd Alan Race and Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers: <i>Religious Absolutism</i>
14 May	Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton and Bishop David Gillett: <i>How Do We Cope With Our Past?</i>
21 May	Revd Patrick Morrow, Rabbi Natan Levy and Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton: <i>Christian Particularity – Incarnation and Trinity and Jewish Responses</i>

Please note that some of these titles may be subject to change.

The course is free to Members and Friends of the LJS, and £10 per session for guests or £80 for the whole course. Concessions available.

TUESDAY MORNINGS:

11.15am-12.30pm

8 January – 3 April 2019

Tuesday Texts

This friendly group is led by our rabbis, including our Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, and Dr Dov Softi and Susannah Alexander. We study biblical texts and commentaries and enjoy sessions on Jewish art and music. Previous classes have examined the influence of Jewish texts on Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan, Adventures in Jewish History, the Love of Song, and an Introduction to *Kabbalah*. New students are always welcome.

TUESDAY EVENINGS:

7.00-8.00pm

8 January – 2 April 2019

CLASSICAL HEBREW AT ALL LEVELS

Classical and Prayer-Book Hebrew for Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander

Have you tried to get your head around Hebrew letters for years and never quite achieved success? If so, join this fun and supportive class, where we use a tried-and-tested method to get you reading faster than you thought possible. Beginning with Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders*, we move on to a taste of grammar, liturgy and the Bible.

Next Steps in Prayer-Book Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Sally Gold

This course is to improve your understanding and confidence in Hebrew. We will be learning the Hebrew of the *Tanakh* (Bible) on the path towards greater enjoyment and participation in synagogue services. We practise reading simple Hebrew from the *Siddur* and the Hebrew Bible, building reading skills, knowledge of vocabulary and simple grammar at an unhurried pace.

David: Warrior and Lover King

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

New students are welcome as we continue with the story of David, who is either defending Israel from the raiding Philistines or on the run from the murderous intentions of Saul, now his father-in-law. Neither his military prowess nor his close friendship with Jonathan, Saul's son, mitigate the king's jealousy of David. We read in Hebrew, texts provided, translating and analysing the Hebrew carefully.

TUESDAY EVENINGS: 8.00-9.00pm

8 January – 2 April 2019

Exploring Judaism

Tutor: Student Rabbi Igor Zinkov

Exploring Judaism is for people, including non-Jewish family members, who wish to know more about Judaism or who would like to brush up on their Jewish knowledge. It is also an essential programme of instruction for people choosing Judaism by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read materials which will be made available online during the year. In addition to offering knowledge of Judaism, the course encourages practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for personal reflection within the group. Resources can be found on: www.ljsexploringjudaism.wordpress.com

Purim Term 2019: continuation of classes which started 8 January

Tuesday 5 February Introduction to Life Cycle and Early Life Rituals

Tuesday 12 February Education and Coming of Age

Tuesday 19 February (no class during half-term)

Tuesday 26 February Conversion

Tuesday 5 March Marriage and Mixed Faith Blessings

Tuesday 12 March End of Life, Funeral and Mourning

Tuesday 19 March Exploring *Purim*

Wednesday 20 March *Erev Purim* – service and special event in the evening

Tuesday 26 March *Pesach* and the Counting of the *Omer*

Tuesday 2 April *Pesach* Workshops

Shabbat 20 April *Pesach* Morning service

Thursday 25/Friday 26 April *Erev* 7th Day and 7th Day *Pesach* services (6.45pm and 11.00 am)

SHABBAT MORNING CLASSES

Saturday mornings until 30 March

9.45-10.45am

Adult *Torah* Texts and Studying our Prayers

This class, led both by members of the class and the rabbis, examines the weekly *Torah* portion and our prayers. We have been looking at some of the more challenging texts in the *Torah* and the new *Siddur*, *Shirah Chadashah*, and its theology. Please contact Michael Romain (romain@netgates.co.uk) or Harriett Goldenberg (hgoldenberg@btinternet.com) for further information.

BEGINNERS' HEBREW

Tutor: Naomi Brightwell

This class uses Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* to help absolute beginners to decode Hebrew. Classes include a little bit of grammar and vocabulary, the structure of the liturgy, plenty of off-topic conversations on Jewish food, and anything else that helps us have fun while

learning. No previous knowledge is required. Former students have even gone on to lead *Shabbat* morning services.

KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING CLASSICAL HEBREW

Tutor: David Strang

This class is designed to increase students' understanding of classical Hebrew, as used both in the *Torah* and the *Siddur*. We are using the text book *Prayer Book Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase, £27.00) and will aim to complete it by the end of the academic year. Each lesson involves a mixture of reading, learning vocabulary and grammar, and translating from Hebrew to English. Students are expected to be able to read with reasonable fluency and to know how to write in block Hebrew script before they begin this class. There is a core of students who have been following the course for two years now, but please be assured that new students will be made very welcome.

INTERMEDIATE HEBREW

Tutor: Nitza Spiro

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

Full details of all LJS adult education courses can be found in The Learning Circle brochure: download your copy from www.ljs.org and click on Learning



Hebrew and Yiddish lessons with Spiro Ark

In all Spiro Ark's classes, in addition to acquiring a new language through enjoyable and effective methods, you receive encouragement and personal attention. The classes give you a window into Jewish history, links to biblical Hebrew, Jewish ritual and customs, Israeli history and current affairs. All classes continue term after term so you can progress from one level to another. In our current advanced classes we have a number of students who started with no knowledge of Judaism or Israel at all.

For full details of lesson times and charges, please visit www.spiroark.org/classes or contact us on 020 7794 4655 or education@spiroark.org

80th anniversary concert held at the LJS



The Wiener Library concert at the LJS, November 2018



Pianist Mathias Husmann and cellist Friederike Fechner



Actor Roger Allam receives a gift for his participation from Cecile Stheeman, great-granddaughter of the composer Felix Mendelssohn



Bob Kirk, one of the six *Kinder* lighting candles

The Wiener Library's Memorial Concert for the anniversary of *Kristallnacht* and the *Kindertransport* was held at the LJS on 22 November. It was an unforgettable evening and a fantastic fundraising success, raising £30,000 towards the Library's mission to collect, preserve and share evidence of the Holocaust for present and future generations.

The inspiration for the concert came from the research of the German cellist Friederike Fechner, after discovering the house she had bought on Germany's Baltic coast had formerly belonged to the Blach family who were Jewish. Friederike made it her mission to find any members of the extended Blach family, and connection was indeed made, not least via The Wiener Library. Indeed one family member, Gaby Glassman, played a major role in organising this event.

Friederike Fechner performed classical works with pianist Mathias Husmann - a fitting tribute to those affected by *Kristallnacht* and the *Kindertransport*.

Dame Esther Rantzen introduced the evening, speaking about the need to protect personal stories. There followed a specially-written prayer from Rabbi Alexandra Wright and a candle lighting by six *Kinder*, led by Ann and Bob Kirk. The concert concluded with dramatic readings by Roger Allam and Mariah Gale evoking the story of the Blach family, leading to a moving finale performance of Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* for cello and piano.

The unique atmosphere of the concert has prompted widespread praise. One guest, Lady Esther Gilbert, wrote: 'It was a very moving event, beautifully brought together, inspiring and hopeful.' For those who were unable to attend, a film of the concert is available in the Library's archive.

Everyone at The Wiener Library offers their heartfelt thanks to the many individuals and organisations who contributed to this very special evening, including all the artists who so generously donated their services for our cause.

Dr Toby Simpson, The Wiener Library

Community Events

BRIDGE GROUP, Mondays at 2.00pm

The Bridge Club meets at 2.00pm every Monday (except Jewish and Bank Holidays) and finishes at 5.00pm with a break for refreshments. The standard of Bridge playing is average, but players should know the basis of the game. This is as much a social afternoon as a competitive one. Cost is £2.00 per person. We welcome new members. For more details please contact the LJS (020 7286 5181) who will pass on the message to Neil Levitt or William Falk.

BRIDGE CLUB



VIDEO AND TEA

The LJS warmly invites you to this monthly event on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1.30 -4.30pm. Just come along – there's no need to book. Cost is £2.00 for the film and refreshments.

Forthcoming screenings:

27 February: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*

27 March: *Casablanca*

LOCAL WALKING GROUP February – March

Our next two walks are on Thursday 14 February and Wednesday 13 March, meeting at the LJS at 11.15am. All members and friends are welcome. There is a Walking for Health two-page form to fill out before walking for those who have not walked with us before. We walk in Regent's Park for an hour or so and aim to end up at a café for coffee or lunch. To find out more, please contact Jody Graham on awithj@gmail.com or on her mobile 07765 214867 or contact Michael Romain on romain@netgates.co.uk or on his mobile 07818 000849.

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 on email: a.shafritz@ljs.org or by telephone on 020 7286 5181.

NOSH 'N' DROSH

Shabbat lunchtimes 1.15-2.15pm

Shabbat 16 February

Rabbi Harry Jacobi will speak on Moses Mendelssohn.

Shabbat 23 March

Rachel Kolsky, prize-winning Blue Badge Guide and author of 'Jewish London', returns to the LJS

Shabbat 6 April

Gaby Lazarus, Simon Cooney and Samantha Glazer present a talk on their trek in Israel in aid of Jewish Child's Day

Shabbat 11 May

Louise and Michael Carmi on 'Can touch heal? A Journey with Havening Techniques reducing stress responses and building resilience'

If you would like to sponsor a Nosh 'n' Drosh please speak with Martin Slowe or Alexandra Wright.

SINGING FOR THE MIND

Singing for the Mind is open to anyone with memory problems or in the early stages of dementia. We meet once a week, serving tea and biscuits 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 – CAN YOU HELP?

This is an informal lunch club for the more elderly members of the congregation. We have been meeting at 12.30pm on the third Tuesday of every month. Please note that Restaurant Tuesday is having a break for a few months but with plans to re-convene, possibly in a different format. We are actively looking for more volunteers to help with cooking and serving. If you are able to assist with this, please call us on 020 7286 5181.

Young LJS

We wish these young members of the LJS a very happy birthday in February

Rebekah Allen	Rachel Crawley	Raphael Lewis
Alexander Boizard	James Crawley	Ariana Malbon-Arvanitakis
Zack Braham	Jessica Falk	Jeremy Mencer
Adam Cang	Noah Gershon	Clinton Newman
Joshua Cang	Alice Gilbert	Kaim Nwokeji
Vera Cohen	Layla Grant	Jake Phillips
Rebecca Collett	Daniel Isaacson	Isabella Sinclair
Jason Covey	Erik Klein Wassink	Hannah Spearman-Walters
Tomas Cowley	Lily Lazarus	Daniel Tahar

Tiny Tots at the LJS

Do you have little ones between the ages of 0 and 4 years old?

Please bring them to the LJS on Shabbat mornings for a delightful session of songs, stories, activities, drawing and Kiddush

Tiny Tots meets on Shabbat mornings at 11.00am during Rimón term times, and is for tiny ones with their parents, grandparents and carers.

NEXT SESSIONS:

2 & 9 February; 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 March



The Nursery is always available for children to play or read in every *Shabbat* with a parent or carer present.

If you would like to be added to the e-mail circulation list, please e-mail education@ljs.org and ask to be included on the Tiny Tots e-mail.

KULANU Young Adults' Group

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 and other events are held each month at the LJS for Young Adults.

Contact youngadults@ljs.org for more details.

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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Dov Softi

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Caroline Villiers

Community Care Co-ordinator

Aviva Shafritz

Director of Music

Cathy Heller-Jones

Organist

Tim Farrell

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In case of bereavement:

In office hours, call 020 7432 1298
At other times, call 020 8958 2112
(Cala's)

Board of Deputies Update



If you've ever wondered whether the expression 'four Jews, five opinions' is exaggerated, access a Board of Deputies Plenary meeting live via the Board website. There you will find virtually every strand of Jewish opinion passionately, if sometimes argumentatively, represented. The Board seeks to craft consensus from this myriad of opinions, while Progressive Deputies are working to ensure that our views on controversial issues are becoming ever more influential. The Board is led by President Marie Van der Zyl and Chief Executive Gillian Merron – two progressive women, the latter a former Liberal Judaism National Officer – with a small professional team.

Core activities include parliamentary work, social action, education, campus activities etc., all of which cost money to carry out effectively. It is funded chiefly through the voluntary £30.00 Board Communal Contribution, which appears in the LJS Membership Pack in the 'additional donation' section. PLEASE make this donation this year; the Board needs your support, and Progressive Deputies have never been better placed to make a real impact on the work of the Board.

Karen Newman



Stephen Laughton on the reaction to his play *One Jewish Boy*

LJS member and playwright Stephen Laughton wrote in the last issue of *LJS News* about his new play, *One Jewish Boy*, which was on at The Old Red Lion Theatre in Islington. We have now caught up with him to hear about the reaction to his play...

Stephen tells us:

'The *One Jewish Boy* journey started and ended – ironically – in a flurry of antisemitism. The very first "Why should we give a damn about Jews when you're blowing up Palestinian babies" response (though using somewhat more raw and incendiary language...) led us through each of the four columns of antisemitism the play is actually about. It landed on the scrawled swastikas we found in the Gents on the last night of the show. It didn't abate – it took in some far-right abuse from Jewish groups too, mainly because I couldn't help but get outspoken about *Likud*, settlements and blockades (not least because I genuinely think Netanyahu's expansionism is hugely to blame for a lot of the antisemitism we currently face). And then after those anti-Israel accusations died down (I love

Israel) I finally found myself accused of stoking antisemitism as a cynical marketing ploy.

But none of this matters because I believe we achieved something great – the first contemporary play that smashes into antisemitism head-on. The rise in attacks on our communities lately is terrifying, and in a theatre landscape chock-full of plays on *isms* and *obias*, getting this message out there, and then turning it into one of the most successful plays in the Old Red Lion Theatre's history, and landing that point, is all that matters. They heard. On stage. In *The Observer*. On ITV and the BBC. In the US and Israel. We got a chance to say, this is real. This is scary. And as the conversation turns to West End transfers and perhaps even a movie, I'm hopeful we can shout a little louder.'

Final copy date for the March edition of *LJS News* is 7 February. Copy and ideas should be emailed to newsletter@ljs.org

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