

March 2019  
Adar I/Adar II 5779

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

# LJS News



### New stained glass window in the Rabbi John Rayner Prayer Room

Rabbi John Rayner z"l was uppermost in our thoughts at the *Shabbat* service on 9 February. John and Jane Rayner's grandson, Lev Taylor (pictured), who is studying to be a rabbi at Leo Baeck College, gave the sermon to a packed Sanctuary. He reflected with great affection on John as a grandfather – and avid collector of jokes!

We left the Sanctuary for the dedication service for the stained glass window panel created by Ruth Kersley and now in position in the John Rayner Prayer Room. Rabbi Elana Dellal read from a sermon by Rabbi Rayner reflecting on a rabbinic saying about never praying in a room without a window. Rabbi Alexandra Wright's dedication prayer included a passage about performing *mitzvot* by creating beautiful ritual objects and places of worship. Igor Zinkov, our student rabbi, then read a blessing before everyone marvelled at the new stained glass panel and enjoyed the sumptuous *Kiddush*. Jane Rayner provided for this special occasion.

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# Echoes of Contempt

Last month there was a Board of Deputies event at which Rabbi Alexandra Wright was in conversation with Reverend Bruce Thompson for the launch of his book *Echoes of Contempt*.

Rabbi Alexandra summarises this important book for *LJS News*:

*Echoes of Contempt* traces a particular kind of prejudice and contempt developed in Christian theology towards Jews and Judaism. The book begins with the breach that is created between Pauline Christianity and Pharisaic Judaism and what Revd Thompson describes as 'a struggle for hearts and minds'. It continues with the 'unjustifiable claim made by many Christians that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus' and traces this hostility in the Church towards Jews through the early centuries of the Christian era to the moment that Constantine embraced Christianity and eventually made it a state religion in 325 CE.

We encounter the figures of John Chrysostom and Augustine in the fourth and fifth centuries, massacres and an early blood libel in Syria, and are then led into the early and later Middle Ages for an examination of the Crusades and the tragic consequences for the Jews, with their subsequent roles in European society as usurers, attracting further hostility. We hear about the blood libels



that took place in England in the 12th century and the repeated expulsions, including the expulsion of the Jews of England in 1290, followed by expulsions from France in 1394, much of Germany by 1350, and Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century.

In this gathering of the evidence of Judeophobia throughout the last two millennia, Revd Thompson includes Luther and his tract *The Jews and their Lies* and the mutation of this form of hatred of Jews into the racial prejudice of antisemitism in the latter part of the 19th century. Moving from one century to another, the author demonstrates the way in which the echo of those first statements of contempt against the Pharisees/Jews in the Gospels is heard throughout the centuries and reaches its tragic and catastrophic climax with the *Shoah*, the Holocaust, only to re-emerge more recently in radical Islam and the messy and complex issue of anti-Zionism.

## Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

### Peter Abrahams

father of Guy, brother of Jenny Nathan and partner of Ann Beaton

### Lilian Barnett

mother of Alexandra (Alex) Weiss, Elissa Bayer and Sheila Davies

### Peter Fidler

husband of Barbara, father of David and step-father of Katherine, Richard and the late Clare

### Elizabeth Hornsby

mother of Richard and David

### Galina Loguiko

wife of Valery and mother of Yelena and Vitaly

### David Lovell

husband of Alice, father of Shauna, Jonathan and Tamsin, grandpa of James, Holly and Jenny, and brother of Graham and Robin

### John Macdonald

father of Stuart and Matthew

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר האבלים

*May God comfort you and all who mourn*

## Shabbat and Festival services: March 2019

Friday evening services are at 6.45pm.

Shabbat morning services are at 11.00am unless otherwise stated.

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER AND NOTES	
<b>Friday 1 March</b>	Alexandra Wright	
<b>Shabbat 2 March</b> <b>Va-yak'heil/Shekalim</b>	Elana Dellal	
<b>Friday 8 March</b>	Alexandra Wright	Co-led by <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Max Phillips Parallel <i>Koleinu</i> service in the John Rayner Prayer Room with Igor Zinkov, followed by <i>Chavurah</i> supper with speaker Merphie Bubis from the 'Breaking the Silence' organisation
<b>Shabbat 9 March</b> <b>Pekudei</b>	Alexandra Wright	Max Phillips <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
<b>Friday 15 March</b>	Alexandra Wright	Classes <i>Zayin</i> and <i>Chet Chavurah</i> supper
<b>Shabbat 16 March</b> <b>Vayikra/Zachor</b>	Alexandra Wright	Albert Herskovits special birthday <i>Kiddush</i> 1.00pm brief meeting of the Social Action Committee (see page 12)
<b>Wednesday 20 March</b> <b>7.00pm</b>	PURIM	<i>Megillah</i> reading in the Sanctuary followed by 'Behind the Mask: transitioning to our authentic selves' with guest speakers telling their own stories. See page 16 for more information.
<b>Friday 22 March</b>	Alexandra Wright	
<b>Shabbat 23 March</b> <b>Tzav</b>	Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov – <i>L'Dor va-Dor</i> service	Parallel <i>Koleinu</i> service in the John Rayner Prayer Room with Alexandra Wright, followed by Nosh 'n' Drosh with Rachel Kolsky, author of <i>Jewish London</i>
<b>Friday 29 March</b>	Igor Zinkov	Co-led by Jeremy Mencer <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
<b>Shabbat 30 March</b> <b>Shemini</b>	Igor Zinkov	Jeremy Mencer <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
<b>Friday 1 April</b>	Alexandra Wright	
<b>Shabbat 6 April</b> <b>Tazria</b>	Elana Dellal	Nosh 'n' Drosh – Gaby Lazarus, Simon Cooney and Samantha Glazer present their Jewish Child's Day 60k trek in Israel

*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.*

## Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The next LJS Drop-In for asylum-seeker families will be on Sunday 10 March from 2.00-4.00pm.

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

Dates thereafter (Sundays): 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 Thursday 7 March 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](mailto:asylumproject@ljs.org) for more details.

# Council Report

*‘By knowledge, the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.’ (Proverbs 24:4)*



Education is at the heart of Judaism, and the LJS has an amazing range of educational programmes. The Council recently met with Caroline Villiers, Head of the Nursery School, Barbara Fidler, the Chair of the Nursery Committee and Harriett Goldenberg, Chair of Education, to hear about the provision for learning for all ages. We looked at some of the work the youngest children are doing in science, numeracy and in writing and learnt of the high number of pupils registered in *Rimon*, our Religion School. We also discussed the thriving programme for adults and congratulated those involved in the *Tu Bi'Sh'vat Shabbaton*.

The education departments of the synagogue, along with social care, rabbis and the management, had had an intensive two days prior to the Council meeting, undergoing a Safeguarding audit. 'Safeguarding' is the term used for measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, especially children, young people and

vulnerable adults, enabling them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. The audit looked at all areas of our work with children and adults who may be at risk. The aim is to ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place. We will receive a written report with recommendations in due course. This was a demanding process for the staff and volunteers involved, but it will give us a useful analysis of our gaps, as well as our strengths.

As you are probably aware, we are facing challenges with maintaining the synagogue building. It is twenty-eight years old and very much like an old car, parts of it are beginning to require renewing. I have already written of our need to replace the boilers. This is expensive, but in hand. Council have now come to the conclusion that the situation with the toilets is not sustainable: many do not work properly, and they are in a generally poor condition. As a result, we have decided that we must prioritise their refurbishment and have agreed to aim to do this work during the summer when the Nursery School is closed (to avoid disruption to their activities). The renovations will be costly, but we have reached the point where we have to do something about them. Our plan is to pay for them from a combination of fund-raising, members' contributions through the Building Renewal Fund and from releasing some of our capital.

At this time of year, Council begins looking ahead to the AGM and to replacing those Trustees whose terms of office are coming to an end in June. We are looking for new people to join us on Council. At 10am on *Shabbat* 2 March a group of us will be speaking to the parents of the *Rimon* children to inform them of the work of Council and to see if any of them would be interested in becoming Trustees. Do join us if you would like to hear more.

**Sue Head, Chairman of Council**

# Forthcoming Events

## Community Service

### *Shabbat Morning Service 18 May*

The LJS is a community of members and volunteers, friends and helpers whose support and service to each other and those who are not members of the synagogue is second to none. Whether it is being on Council or another committee, Phone a Member, Keep in Touch, Singing for the Mind, the Out and About Club, the Security Team, the Archive Team who meet at the synagogue on Tuesday mornings, those who give their time to teach Hebrew and other subjects, care for the *Sukkah* garden, who look after the books in the library, Video and Tea, the Bereavement Support Team, Members' Choir, fundraising and the many other activities and events that take place under the auspices of the LJS, we depend on the time and willingness of volunteers to take on a huge number of roles within the community.

At our Community Service on *Shabbat* 18 May at the LJS, we would like to acknowledge and thank all those who volunteer their time, and will be showcasing our activities – particularly those that reach out to local neighbours in Westminster and beyond – in the presence of our local MP, Karen Buck, local councillors, the Mayor and other dignitaries.

If you are already a volunteer, please put the date in your diary. If you would like to know more about our activities and ways in which you can get involved in synagogue activities, please do get in touch with Rabbi Alexandra Wright or Rabbi Elana Dellal on 020 7286 5181 or email: [a.wright@ljs.org](mailto:a.wright@ljs.org)/[e.dellal@ljs.org](mailto:e.dellal@ljs.org)

## Koleinu Services

Our *Koleinu* services are a chance to enjoy a *Shabbat* evening or morning in a creative and more spontaneous way in the John Rayner Prayer Room and are held while there is a service in the Sanctuary. You are invited to join us at 6.45pm on **Friday 8 March** and at 11.00am on **Saturday 23 March**.

## Liberal Judaism's Day of Music

### Saturday 22 June

Liberal Judaism is holding a Day of Music which will take place at Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS), with the theme of 'Music reflecting the text'. You are welcome to attend whether you are a singer, music leader, instrumentalist or just interested in learning some new tunes.

Through a range of song sessions and workshops, we will look to the future and ask what direction our synagogue music might take as Liberal Judaism introduces its new *Siddur*. The day will end with a musical event in the evening.

## Liberal Judaism's Day of Celebration

### Sunday 23 June

The LJS is hosting Liberal Judaism's Day of Celebration. This year we will be focussing on the role communities play in supporting their members in a variety of different ways.

We will look at how we can directly support individuals as well as how we empower our members, in turn, to support others inside and outside the synagogue walls.

Come and celebrate the current best practice, the Jewish textual basis for community relationships, and the deeper questions around community responsibility versus state responsibility.

## Looking ahead: for your diary

### Saturday 20 April

Communal *Seder* at 6.30pm  
(for details see page 16)

### *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



## Notes from the Rabbis' Desks: The *mitzvah* of volunteering and an inspiring *Purim* programme



One of the privileges of being a congregational rabbi – especially at the LJS – is working side by side with volunteers. Nearly 250 members of the LJS give their time, expertise and energy to the many different activities and events that take place within the community. Listening to their stories, one begins to understand and appreciate the reasons why people volunteer. Here is what a small group of volunteers have to say about the *mitzvah* of volunteering:

*'I volunteer at the LJS because Judaism is a religion of deed not creed.'*

*'It is a privilege to be there for LJS members at a time when they may need support or befriending, and to be a link to the life and community of the synagogue.'*

*'I volunteer at the LJS to put something back into the community... The synagogue has given so much to me... It is our home and our extended family.'*

*'The LJS is full of such lovely, warm people, and the beauty of being a volunteer is not only the benefits we try to bring but the sheer pleasure, friendship and well-being we get from volunteering.'*

Are you a parent whose children have recently started school with a few hours to spare each week? Have you recently retired and are you looking for some very part-time 'proxy' work? Do you feel you have a skill or some expertise that you could offer to the members of the LJS? Would you like to keep a lonely, housebound member company for an hour a month?

If you or members of your family would like to become more involved, please do contact one of us – Rabbi Elana Dellal at [e.dellal@ljs.org](mailto:e.dellal@ljs.org) or Rabbi Alexandra Wright at [a.wright@ljs.org](mailto:a.wright@ljs.org). Or telephone 020 7286 5181 and leave a message for one of us and we will get back to you.

For *Purim* this year at the LJS we are doing something a little bit different. We have planned 'Behind the Mask' – an evening of storytelling inspired by the Book of Esther around the theme of risk-taking and identity transformation. (Full details of the evening can be found on page 16.) The climax of the *Purim* story details Esther finding the courage to share with Ahashverosh that she is Jewish whilst knowing that Haman is plotting to kill the Jews of Shushan. Esther's courage in sharing her identity with Ahashverosh saves the Jewish community. Our 'Behind the Mask' *Purim* programme will begin with a text study led by student rabbi Igor Zinkov followed by a *megillah* reading and supper catered by Spice Caravan, a collective of refugee women. After supper we will have the opportunity to hear four individuals share their stories of risk-taking and identity transformation: Izzy Posen's story of transitioning from the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community to the wider Jewish community; Dex Grodner's story of developing and performing the art of drag; Rabbi Indigo Jonah Raphael's story of gender affirmation and transition; Hilary Totterman's story of conversion to Judaism. Please do join us for what promises to be a fascinating and inspiring evening.

**Alexandra Wright and Elana Dellal**

# Artist Ruth Kersley tells us about our new stained glass window panel

Artist Ruth Kersley, who created the stained glass panel in the John Rayner Prayer Room, pays tribute to those who supported this project:

*I extend my heartfelt thanks to the many people who enabled this project to come to fruition. I am particularly grateful to Karen Newman and Rabbi Alexandra Wright whose vision and resolve turned an idea into reality. Thanks also to Jenny Newman for her invaluable advice. I am indebted to Jane Rayner for lending me Rabbi Rayner's memoirs and for our lovely meetings at her home.*

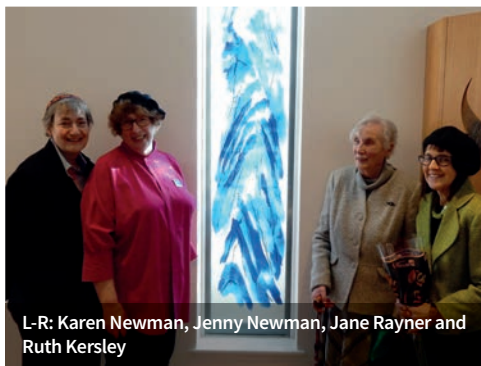
LJS News reports Ruth's prelude to reading the *Haftarah* portion on *Shabbat* 9 February:

“ I would like to start by saying how much it means to me to be with you all today and to honour the memory of Rabbi John Rayner

through the installation of this stained glass window. Thanks to conversations with the many people who have supported me with this project I was able to build a picture of this extraordinary person.

From the beginning it was evident that my design would need to reflect Rabbi Rayner's moral integrity. In his *Principles of Jewish Ethics* he identified the three pillars of a civilised society – justice, truth and peace: ‘*Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*’ This quotation from the Prophet Amos resonated with me immediately and I knew it would be the inspiration for the window's imagery.

You will see in my panel traditional hand-blown



L-R: Karen Newman, Jenny Newman, Jane Rayner and Ruth Kersley

antique glass with all its characterful irregularities, and the use of paint and etching which goes back to mediaeval times. You will, however, also see the introduction of new techniques which have brought stained glass into the 21st century, and this includes dispensing with traditional leading and introducing night-time illumination through the installation of a light panel. Adopting a contemporary genre seemed wholly appropriate in the light of Rabbi Rayner's radical approach to Liberal Judaism in this country in the post-war era.

He left his native Germany on one of the last *Kindertransport* in 1939 never to see his parents again: they were to perish in the Holocaust. In spite of – or perhaps because of – this, I felt that having the window fabricated in Germany at the famous Derix studio outside Wiesbaden would be something of which Rabbi Rayner would have approved: a German studio creating a window for a synagogue which 75 years ago would have been totally unthinkable.

This week's *Haftarah* portion from the Book of Kings (6:1-13) describes the creation of Solomon's Temple built in the 10th century BCE, 480 years after the children of Israel left Egypt. The passage describes in meticulous detail every aspect of the construction of the Temple, with specific reference to the windows: ‘*He made windows broad within, and narrow without.*’ This suggests the Sanctuary required no outward light; rather its spiritual radiance would illuminate the world outside.

My hope in creating this window was to imbue the space with spirituality and provide an opportunity for personal reflection, revelation and calm. ”

*Ruth Kersley*



# Tu Bi'Sh'vat 2019: from the LJS to Kew Gardens

## The LJS Tu Bi'Sh'vat Shabbaton

‘See how lovely and excellent

My works are; I have created them all for you.

Take care not to spoil and destroy My world...’

This verse from *Kohelet* (Ecclesiastes) *Rabbah* 7:13 was at the heart of the *Tu Bi'Sh'vat Shabbaton* held at the LJS on 19 January. *Tu Bi'Sh'vat*, the New Year for Trees, is one of those minor festivals usually marked by children planting seedlings, or parents or grandparents contributing towards tree planting or reforestation in Israel through the JNF (Jewish National Fund). Here at the LJS we often have a *Tu Bi'Sh'vat Seder*, but this year we celebrated with a whole day of study and activities.

The title of the opening session, ‘How varied are thy works, O Lord’, set the tone for the day as we gave attention to many aspects of our interface with the natural world, locally and internationally, and considered the inspiration we glean from liturgy and Jewish scholars. Rabbi Alexandra made the point that *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* is unique as a faith celebration of nature and renewal.

Following on from the very popular vegan lunch, our keynote lecture delivered by Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith really touched the audience. Hearing about the work of EcoPeace Middle East was, despite being depressing, also inspirational, so much so that a special LJS trip is being considered – watch this space!

From the Middle East we travelled to India (in spirit) with Graham Carpenter and learned about an important water project being run by *Tzedek*, while Bernie Bulkin guided participants through some of the environmentalist thinking of Rav Kook and Martin Buber. Meanwhile, two of our youngest members, together with their families, created fantastic paintings using blow art, skilfully

instructed by Susannah Alexander. The mood was joyful as we sang with Rabbi Elana.

One of the many firsts of the day was the involvement of teens alongside the adults. Our KT1 and KT2 classes joined in for the opening *shiur* led very ably by our scholar in residence, Rabbi Michael Hilton, and the conversation that ensued was lively and considered. As a parent and Chair of Education, I was delighted with the level of engagement of our young people and their intelligent, articulate contributions. Later in the day, two of our *Rimon* teaching assistants who are also now LJY- *Netzer madrichim*, Olivia Goldenberg and Lily Crane-Newman, led a session for adults on The Circles of *Tikkun Olam*. Comments received were that it was not only stimulating and worthwhile but that the presentation style might be adopted for learning elsewhere in the LJS.

Alongside all these sessions we had a hands-on marketplace where we learned about gardening in small spaces (with Kathryn Michael), doing our own composting (with Effie Romain), the importance of bees to the cycle of life (with Nicky Faith), and the life cycle of a tree (with Jenny Nathan, who had a full *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* weekend – see page 9).

We closed with *Havdalah* and tea. All in all it was a terrific day. If you didn't make it this year, do check the synagogue diary for next year's *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* celebrations.

**Harriett Goldenberg**



**LJS member Diana Levitas wrote her poem, *Unless*, ten years ago, and it remains a timely reminder of the need to care for our planet.**

*Unless we turn soon, now, yesterday,  
There will be no world for the children of our children.*

*Unless we turn soon, now, yesterday,  
The ice will melt and the polar bears will die,  
The waters will rise and my city will drown,  
My beautiful ugly city,  
My city of hope and despair,  
My city of infinite possibilities will drown.*

*Unless we turn soon, now, yesterday,  
Unless we learn that the world is not for sale,  
Unless we learn to share the fruits of the earth,  
There will be no world for the children of our children,  
And when the deserts spread and the floods engulf us  
And we are hungry and thirsty  
Who will care about Beethoven, Shakespeare  
or Da Vinci?*

*Unless we turn soon, now, yesterday,  
There will be no world for the children of our children.*

**Diana Levitas**



Lily Crane-Newman and Olivia Goldenberg with the Circles of Tikkun Olam



Tree painting created by Effie Romain, Susannah Alexander and the children of Rimon

## ***Tu Bi'Sh'vat* at Kew Gardens**

As Friends of Kew Gardens, my husband, Michael, and I were delighted – not to say somewhat surprised – to receive an invitation to *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* at Kew on Sunday 20 January. It was a perfect winter's day – very cold but with a bright blue sky. Fifty of us met up and were taken on Kew's electric buggy bus for a tour of the arboretum with a commentary by the Director of Kew, Richard Deverell. In the spacious grounds of Kew we were able to appreciate the magnificent shapes of the trees in winter and the vast variety of trees that grow there.

We were all invited to take part in planting a sapling before going into the most elegant surroundings of Cambridge Cottage for a sumptuous kosher tea. Cambridge Cottage is one of the historic houses which belongs to Kew and is used for a variety of functions. During tea, which included a table full of traditional fruits including figs, dates, pomegranates and grapes, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg gave a talk on the history of *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* and thanked the Trustees for organising such a wonderful day.

It is hoped that this function will become an annual event.

**Jenny Nathan**



The planting of a sapling at the Kew Gardens *Tu Bi'Sh'vat*



# 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](mailto:education@ljs.org) or 020 7432 1284.

<b>5 March</b>	Professor David Ford and Rabbi Alexandra Wright, with an introduction by Rabbi Tony Bayfield: <i>The Legacy of Our Scriptures</i>
<b>12 March</b>	Dr Wendy Fidler and Joy Barrow: <i>What Does Respect Mean Between People of Faith?</i>
<b>19 March</b>	Canon Steve Williams and Rabbi Jeremy Gordon: <i>How Should Christians and Jews Live in a Modern Western Democracy?</i>
<b>26 March</b>	Rabbi Natan Levy and Sister Teresa Brittain: <i>Jewish Particularism – Christians, Jews and the Land of Israel</i>
<b>30 April</b>	Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah and Revd Dr Stephen Roberts: <i>The Third Dialogue Partner: How Do We Experience Modern Western Culture?</i>
<b>7 May</b>	Revd Alan Race and Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers: <i>Religious Absolutism</i>
<b>14 May</b>	Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton and Bishop David Gillett: <i>How Do We Cope With Our Past?</i>
<b>21 May</b>	Revd Patrick Morrow, Rabbi Vivian Silverman, 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 £10.00 per session for guests or £80.00 for the whole course. Concessions available.*

## **TUESDAY MORNINGS:**

**11.15am-12.30pm**

**8 January – 2 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, *Talmud*, the Psalms 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**

#### **BRAND NEW! Absolute Beginners Hebrew**

Absolute Beginners Hebrew starting 26 February run by Dr Dov Softi. For more information call Dov on 020 7432 1285.

### **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](http://www.ljsexploringjudaism.wordpress.com)

### **Purim Term 2019**

**Tuesday 5 March** Marriage and Mixed Faith Blessings

**Tuesday 12 March** End of Life, Funeral and Mourning

**Wednesday 20 March** *Erev Purim – Megillah* reading and special event in the evening (see page 16)

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

**Tuesday 2 April** *Pesach* Workshops

**Friday 19/Shabbat 20 April** *Erev Pesach* and *Pesach* Morning Service

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

## **SHABBAT MORNING CLASSES:**

**9.45-10.45am**

**Saturday mornings until 30 March**

**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](http://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](http://www.spiroark.org/classes) or contact us on 020 7794 4655 or [education@spiroark.org](mailto:education@spiroark.org)

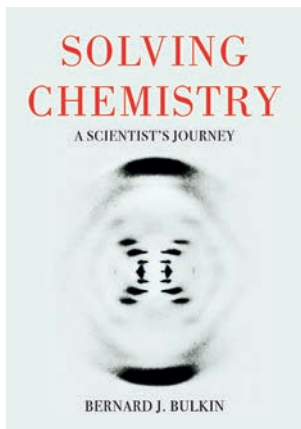
## **Social Action**

There will be a brief meeting at 1.00pm after the *Shabbat* morning service on 16 March to re-establish the Social Action Committee. Please join us if you think you might like to be involved. Email [ljchrisgodbald@hotmail.com](mailto:ljchrisgodbald@hotmail.com) for more information.

## **Kiddush Celebrations**

If you would like to take part in the service or contribute to the *Kiddush* to mark a special occasion – such as a birthday, anniversary, baby blessing or *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* – please contact Felicia Beder on 020 7432 1283 or [rabbispa@ljs.org](mailto:rabbispa@ljs.org).

# Memoirs of a scientist – Bernie Bulkin on his new book: *Solving Chemistry*



In his new book, *Solving Chemistry*, LJS member Bernie Bulkin blends personal experience with the history of chemistry. *LJS News* asked Bernie to tell us how he came to write this book and about his experience of the writing process.

Bernie tells us:

“Some people say that writing a book is a very lonely activity – just you and the keyboard. But I don’t find it to be so. That is because at the heart of what I write are stories, and mostly my own stories. So it is with my new book, *Solving Chemistry*. As I wrote these stories of chemistry I was with my parents and classmates, the students who worked with me, my colleagues in industry, and the global community of scientists that I became a part of during the course of my career.

This book has a thesis: for a major scientific discipline, chemistry, something unexpected has happened. All the major problems have been solved, and we now have a complete (well, say 97% complete) understanding of chemical structure, reactions, the nature and laws governing solids liquids and gases. Despite chemistry being a very old science, at the beginning of the 20th century and even 50 years later there were huge gaps in our knowledge, both theoretical and experimental. Between 1950 and 2000 tens of thousands of problems were solved and many errors were corrected so we could see patterns in reactions and structures. What the great enterprise of chemistry does now is to use all this understanding to solve complex problems of biology, medicine, materials science and the environment.

*Solving Chemistry* is the story of how this happened, told in part through problems that I worked on personally over the course of my several careers in academia and industry. I also reflect on how my teachers rewired my brain when it was still young and plastic so that I could think like a scientist – a very unnatural way of thinking. What was it in my upbringing that limited me in what I could achieve, and what was it that helped develop the work ethic so that I could accomplish things in many different settings?

So no, not at all lonely at the keyboard. I hope many of you will enjoy reading *Solving Chemistry* as much as I enjoyed writing it. ”

## An extract from Chapter 2 of *Solving Chemistry*:

*I thought maybe I would read petroleum engineering at university. My father owned stock in Esso, and their work seemed both interesting and exotic. I told my parents about the direction I was contemplating, and for a few weeks they didn't say anything. Then one day they sat down with me at the kitchen table, where all serious meetings in our family were held, and said that unfortunately oil was found in the Middle East, and they doubted that oil companies would ever hire a Jewish scientist or engineer. My mind turned to chemistry. I learned later that their view was generally untrue.*



# Community Events

## BRIDGE CLUB

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.



## LOCAL WALKING GROUP

Our next two walks are on Wednesday 13 March and Thursday 11 April meeting at the LJS at 11.15am. All members and friends are welcome. For first-timers there is a Walking for Health two-page form to fill out before walking. 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](mailto:awithj@gmail.com) or on her mobile 07765 214867 or contact Michael Romain on [romain@netgates.co.uk](mailto:romain@netgates.co.uk) or on his mobile: 07818 000849.

## VIDEO AND TEA

The LJS warmly invites you to this monthly event on the fourth Wednesday 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. Enjoy soup on arrival then a DVD (film classics, musicals, etc) followed by a delicious tea including home-made coffee ice-cream

### Forthcoming screenings:

**27 March:** *Casablanca*

**24 April:** *There's No Business Like Show Business*

## NOSH 'N' DROSH

### Shabbat lunchtimes 1.15-2.15pm

#### 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.

## 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](mailto:a.shafritz@ljs.org) or by telephone 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. 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](mailto: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 March*

Emma Armstrong	Albie Gavshon	Katherine Sarfaty
Romilly Blitz	Rose Gilbert	Georgia Scheer
George Blumenthal	Gabriel Grade	Lily Sebag-Montefiore
Honor-Ray Caplan-Higgs	Samuel Grainger	Sasha Sebag-Montefiore
Lily Chevallier	Fanny Mendelsohn	Oralee Sellar
Rachel Crawley	Quincy Newman	Edan Silbiger
James Crawley	Benno Ratner	Olivia Sinclair
Isobel Dagtoglou	Max Roeder Wald	Cy Solomons
Angel Desmond	Ollie Roeder Wald	Jonas Wiesenfeld
Amelia Dubin	Steven Ross	Georgia Woolf
Rebecca Forster	Emily Roth	
Kitt Frankel	Jacob Rushbrook	

## 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 Rimon term times, and is for tiny ones with their parents, grandparents and carers.*

**NEXT SESSIONS: 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 March**



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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](mailto: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](mailto:youngadults@ljs.org) for more details.**

## The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

### Patrons

Richard and Joy Desmond  
Peter and Leanda Englander  
Willie and Jo Kessler  
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Website [www.ljs.org](http://www.ljs.org)

### Senior Rabbi

Alexandra Wright

### Rabbi Emeritus

David J Goldberg OBE

### Rabbi

Elana Dellal

### Scholar in Residence

Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton

### President

Martin Slowe

### Chairman of Council

Sue Head

### Executive Director

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### 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

### LJS News Team

Editor: Judith King  
Artwork: Tingle Design

### In case of bereavement:

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

# PURIM CELEBRATIONS AT THE LJS 5779/2019

## BEHIND THE MASK Wednesday 20 March 2019 at the LJS

7.00pm *Shiur* with Igor Zinkov on the *Megillah*

7.20pm *Megillah* reading

7.45pm Supper with Spice Caravan, a group of refugee women who will provide vegetarian refreshments

8.30pm *Purim* Story Hour – join Izzy Posen, Dex Grodner, Rabbi Indigo Raphael and Hilary Totterman who will tell their stories of transitioning to their authentic selves.

**Izzy Posen** will share his story of transitioning from ultra-Orthodox Judaism to joining the wider Jewish community. He is currently a second year student at Bristol University studying Physics and Philosophy.

**Dex Grodner** will share the story of developing and performing the art of drag. Dex is a genderqueer Reform Jew, a queer historian, poet, drag artist, stylist and political activist and educator.

**Rabbi Indigo Raphael** will share his story of gender affirmation and transition. Rabbi Raphael is a Liberal Rabbi and part of the Chaplaincy-Spiritual Care Team at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust.

**Hilary Totterman** will share her story of converting to Judaism. Hilary is a member of the LJS and Director of *Cheder* of Reading Liberal Jewish Community.

If you would like to come to this fascinating evening, please contact Felicia Beder by 14 March on 020 7432 1283 or email her on rabbispa@ljs.org

You are welcome to come for the whole evening or just for the Story Hour. A donation of £5.00 is requested for those attending the supper.



## *Pesach* 2019/5779 Communal Seder 6.30pm on Saturday 20 April at the LJS

Led by Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Igor Zinkov

**Members:** Adults: £36.00; Children up to 12 years: £16.00  
Family of two adults and two or more children: £92.00

**Non-members:** Adults: £60.00; Children up to 12 years: £28.00  
Family of two adults and two or more children: £150.00

The caterer Helena Miller is back by popular request, offering her exceptionally flavoursome Seder buffet.

Please book by Monday 15 April as places are strictly limited.

Pre-booking is essential as there will be no tickets available on the night.

Financial assistance towards the cost may be available.

Please contact the Rabbis' PA, Felicia Beder, on 020 7432 1283 or email: rabbispa@ljs.org

Final copy date for the April edition of *LJS News* is 4 March.  
Copy and ideas should be emailed to newsletter@ljs.org

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