

November 2019  
Cheshvan/Kislev 5780

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

# LJS News



**Food Sustainability panellists:  
Geraldine van Bueren, Garry Lemon and Anna Isaacs**

*Selichot* provided the perfect occasion for a pre-service discussion on 'Food Sustainability and Food Poverty' and the launch of our programme of Social Action activities. Geraldine van Bueren Q.C., Professor of International Human Rights Law at Queen Mary University of London, spoke about the right to food as a fundamental human right; Dr Anna Isaacs, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Food Policy at City, University of London, shared with us her experience of shadowing a woman in her everyday life in Margate attempting to feed herself and her children while on Universal Credit; and Garry Lemon, Director of Policy, External Affairs and Research at The Trussell Trust, told us that as well as running 800 foodbanks around the country, they now have a campaigning arm.

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The event was beautifully chaired by Rabbi Alexandra Wright, and the exchange between the panel and the 50-strong audience reinforced our plan to take a multi-pronged approach to the current food crisis – to educate, lobby, and provide hands-on aid.

*Harriett Goldenberg (Chair of Social Action)*

## Thank you to Ian Senett



We send our heartfelt thanks to Ian Senett who after eleven years as a volunteer with the LJS team left London to move to Leeds. Ian (*pictured centre*) and LJS staff gathered in front of the Ark, where Rabbi Elana gave Ian a special blessing.

## Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

**Leonard Abrahams** father of Damien and Jonathan, and brother of Della

**Elaine Feinstein** mother of Adam, Martin and Joel

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

Poems by Elaine Feinstein can be found on page 5, and a tribute to her will appear in the December/January issue of *LJS News*.

## Memorials

**Celebration of the life of Willie Kessler**  
1927 – 2019

**Sunday 24 November**  
**at 4.00pm at the LJS**

Please join us for this celebration of the life of Willie Kessler. The actual memorial service starts at 4.30pm and will be followed by refreshments. RSVP to: [sharon.cunningham@kesslergroup.eu](mailto:sharon.cunningham@kesslergroup.eu)



**Celebration of the life of Rabbi Harry Jacobi**  
1925 – 2019

**Sunday 15 December**  
**at 3.00pm at the LJS**

Everyone is most welcome to attend this celebration of the life of Rabbi Harry Jacobi. Refreshments will be provided after the service.



**Celebration of the life of Rabbi Dr David J. Goldberg**  
1939 – 2019

**Sunday 19 January**  
**at 5.00pm at the LJS**

Please make a note in your diaries of this celebration of the life of our former Senior Rabbi. Further details will be provided in the December/January newsletter.



## Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The next Drop-In dates are Sunday 10 November and Sunday 8 December from 2.00pm-5.00pm. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 1.00pm to help set up. Volunteers are also needed from 5.00pm on the Thursday afternoons prior to the Drop-In dates to sort clothes.

## Shabbat services: November and early December 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 November</b>	Alexandra Wright and Elana Dellal	Service co-led by <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Abe Wolchover Admission Service for Sabrina Bassan
<b>Shabbat 2 November Shabbat Noach</b>	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Abe Wolchover Rabbi Igor Zinkov will be leading a <i>Koleinu</i> Service at 11.00am in the John Rayner Prayer Room (see note about <i>Koleinu</i> services below)
<b>Friday 8 November</b>	Igor Zinkov	
<b>Shabbat 9 November Shabbat Lech L'cha</b>	Igor Zinkov	Remembrance <i>Shabbat Kristallnacht</i> The service will be followed by a Nosh 'n' Drosh with Dr Edie Friedman (see pages 12 and 14)
<b>Friday 15 November</b>	Alexandra Wright	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Katie Falk
<b>Shabbat 16 November Shabbat Vayera</b>	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Katie Falk <i>Aufruf</i> Laura Graham and Richard Fidler
<b>Friday 22 November</b>	Alexandra Wright	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Kaila Brooks
<b>Shabbat 23 November Shabbat Chayyey Sarah</b>	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Kaila Brooks
<b>Friday 29 November at 6.45 pm</b>	Elana Dellal	Service co-led by <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Gideon Putnam
<b>Friday 29 November at 8.00 pm</b>	World AIDS Day Service	Guest speaker Sir Nicholas Hytner Please note that we will be holding two separate services this evening (details on page 7)
<b>Shabbat 30 November Tol'dot</b>	Elana Dellal	<i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Gideon Putnam
<b>Friday 6 December</b>	Igor Zinkov	
<b>Shabbat 7 December Vayetze</b>	L'Dor va-Dor Service Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov	Co-led with the young people of <i>Rimon</i> Last day of <i>Rimon</i>
<b>Friday 13 December</b>	Alexandra Wright	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Honor Caplan-Higgs
<b>Shabbat 14 December Vayishlach</b>	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Honor Caplan-Higgs

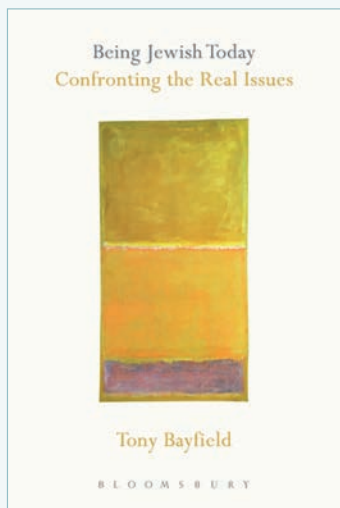
Shabbat morning services are streamed live via the internet. If you would like to follow a service on your computer or tablet, please phone the LJS office to get your user name and password.

### Koleinu services

*Koleinu* services are informal, meditative musical services with interactive discussion around the weekly *Torah* portion, and offered as an alternative to the service in the Sanctuary.

# Book Review

Rabbi Alexandra Wright reviews *Being Jewish Today: Confronting the Real Issues*  
by Tony Bayfield



I greatly enjoyed reading Tony Bayfield's book which is one of scholarship, profound and original thought, poignancy and humour; a book that conveys in its very form and structure the challenge of being a people always on the move – not only geographically, but spiritually and theologically.

It begins with Tony's autobiographical journey, but before long, we are tracing the journey of Abraham and Sarah, and within a few more pages, we have come out of Egypt, crossed the Jordan into Canaan, have been sent into exile, returned and are dispersed again. We encounter the birth and growth of Christianity and Islam, we are in Babylon and Spain, Eastern Europe; we are confined to the ghetto and released into the luminous and sometimes blinding light of an enlightened world. And we reach the abyss of destruction in the twentieth century – the shattering of the Jewish world.

This is no ordinary story of the Jewish journey; it is a book with a difference. The journey is understood not only through the lens of history, but in a uniquely challenging way, through the lens of our own experience of the world today.

And there is another difference about Tony's book. We have scarcely reached page 8 when an unnamed voice enters the narrative from nowhere declaring: 'I agree', to which Tony responds: 'Don't worry, this is just a rhetorical device for asking whether there's a metaphysical dimension to my last sentence.' Those two words 'I agree' are like clues dropped into the narrative of a detective story. Where are they going to lead? What are we going to learn about the presence behind this disembodied voice?

I don't want to give away all the clues, but this is a remarkable rhetorical device. Even before we discover where the clues are going to lead us, we are taken through our history and enter a profound and analytic excursus of philosophy and theology. We encounter the great figures of Jewish history as well as those who wrestled with the darkness of the *Shoah* and voices from our own century.

If I dare make one criticism of a book that reads so fluently and gives evidence of such profound research, it is that out of the 121 Jewish thinkers discussed in this book, there are only 13 women, and those mentioned might have been more fully represented. Overall, though, *Being Jewish Today* works because it succeeds in interleaving Tony's own story with the story of the Jewish people, surveying our history, our literature, our Jewish laws and practices, as well as our relationship with people of other faiths, with the Land of Israel and the modern state of Israel, with the *Torah*, with our ethics, with ourselves and our own identities, and with God.

There is an honesty to this book and a determination to wrestle with key and troublesome issues. It is for all those who want to understand more about a liberal expression of Judaism, unafraid of confronting the metaphysical questions around faith and belief.

*Being Jewish Today: Confronting the Real Issues*  
is published by Bloomsbury, 2019

# Poems by Elaine Feinstein

Elaine Feinstein, poet, novelist and biographer, who was a member of the LJS for 24 years, died in September. Here we share with readers two of her poems.



## *November Songs*

I

The air is rising tonight and the leaf dust is  
burning in cadmium bars, the skinny beeches  
are alight in the town fire of their own humus.  
There is oxblood in the sky. No month to be surly.

The attic cracks and clicks as we ride the night  
our bodies spiced with salt and olive sweetness:  
but a savoury smoke is hanging in our hair,  
for the earth turns, and the air of the earth rises.

And it blows November spores over the sash.  
The sky is a red lichen in the mirror,  
as the air rises we already breathe in the  
oracular resins of the season.

II

And now what aureole possesses the fine  
extremities of my leafless trees? They are  
Florentine today, their fen wood is ochre

an afternoon's bewildering last  
sunlight honours their sunken  
life with an alien radiance:

and we, who are restless by the  
same accident that gives their  
vegetable patience                      grace

may worship the tranquillity of  
waiting, but will not  
find such blessing in the human face.

# Forthcoming Events

## Sunday 3 November

7.00pm at the LJS

'All that Jazz' – an evening of live jazz with LJS member, Peter Werth, his Jazz Crew and award-winning vocalist Sara Dowling

Music – socializing – buffet of Lebanese mezze.

Tickets £35.00 in aid of our building renewal.

For tickets: [allthatjazzatljs.eventbrite.co.uk](http://allthatjazzatljs.eventbrite.co.uk)



## Piano recital at the LJS – Angela Hewitt

Wednesday 13 November at 7.30pm

The LJS is delighted to be hosting a piano recital given by the internationally renowned pianist Angela Hewitt, who will be playing a programme of Bach and Beethoven.



This event is part of the Hampstead Arts Festival, and tickets can be bought via their website: [www.hampsteadartsfestival.com/whats-on/angela-hewitt.html](http://www.hampsteadartsfestival.com/whats-on/angela-hewitt.html)

Please note that a 20% discount is being offered to LJS members – during the ticket purchase process, simply enter the discount code: LJS

## Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day is **Sunday 17 November**. Information is available in our weekly online update: *Shalom LJS*. Please contact Harriett Goldenberg if you would like to be involved: [hgoldenberg@btinternet.com](mailto:hgoldenberg@btinternet.com)

## Film Club

Israeli films in Hebrew with subtitles

7.00pm Thursday 28 November at West London Synagogue (WLS) – please note the venue

Our next screening is in conjunction with WLS and will be shown there: 33 Seymour Place W1H 5AU

*Elohei Ha'Psanter* -

'God of the Piano' (2019) directed by Itay Tal

When a concert pianist learns her new-born son is deaf, she resorts to drastic measures to ensure her child can hold his own within her competitive, musically accomplished family.

This new film is being screened with kind permission of Itay Tal, and comes direct from the Jerusalem Film Festival.



## Special announcement – Next LJS Israel Trip 25 Oct– 1 Nov 2020 (UK school half-term)

With Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith of Ecopeace

Accompanied children 14+ and young adults welcome.

The LJS is organising a community trip in conjunction with Ecopeace (<http://ecopeaceme.org>). From Amman in Jordan to Tel Aviv, with stays in Ecoparks, Jericho and Ein Gedi, travelling principally in the Jordan Valley, looking at projects involving Israel and her neighbours in water management, desert ecology and peace initiatives, visiting some major historical sites, and celebrating *Shabbat* together. This trip is in the development stage. Bookings from 1 January 2020.

Email [suebolsom@gmail.com](mailto:suebolsom@gmail.com) to register your interest and to receive more information as soon as it is available. Numbers will be limited by the available accommodation.



## Seminars on antisemitism

We are holding two seminars on the subject of antisemitism with distinguished academics and authors who have recently written books on this subject. Please note the seminars are free for members of the LJS and cost £10.00 for non-members.

### ***'A noxious weed': antisemitism in a disturbed political environment***

**Tuesday 12 November**

**8.00-9.15pm at the LJS**

Dr Keith Kahn-Harris and Dr Dave Rich will address the following questions:

Where has the rise of antisemitism in the 21st century come from? How do we distinguish between antisemitism and anti-Zionism? And what can our communities and faith groups do to combat the rise of racism in the current political climate?



Keith Kahn-Harris is a sociologist and writer. He is a Senior Lecturer at Leo Baeck College and runs the European Jewish Research Archive at the Institute for Jewish Policy Research. *Strange*

*Hate: Antisemitism, Racism and the Limits of Diversity* is his sixth book.

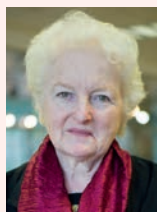


Dave Rich is Director of Policy for the Community Security Trust (CST), and an Associate Research Fellow at the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, Birkbeck, University of London.

He is the author of

*The Left's Jewish Problem: Jeremy Corbyn, Israel and Antisemitism*, and writes regularly about antisemitism and extremism for newspapers and journals both nationally and internationally.

## Save the date for the second seminar:



**Tuesday 21 January 2020**

**8.00-9.15pm at the LJS**

**Antisemitism:  
What it is. What it isn't.  
Why it matters.**

Rabbi Julia Neuberger,  
Senior Rabbi of West London

Synagogue, will lead this seminar based on her recent book of the same title, published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2019.

## World AIDS Day

**Friday 29 November at the LJS at 7.00pm**

The LJS will be marking World AIDS Day jointly with Beit K'Lal, Laviot, KeshetUK and GJIL. Following a finger buffet in the Assembly Hall and Mattuck Room, there will be an *Erev Shabbat* and World AIDS Day service in the Sanctuary at 8.00pm led by Rabbi Mark Solomon, Rabbi Igor Zinkov and student rabbi Anna Posner, with Sir Nicholas Hytner as our guest speaker. The evening will continue with dessert and an opportunity to socialise. (Please note that our regular *Erev Shabbat* service will take place as usual at 6.45pm in the Sanctuary, led by Rabbi Elana Dellal with Gideon Putnam, *Bar Mitzvah*. The World AIDS Day reception will be taking place upstairs during this service.)

## Pre-Chanukkah Interfaith Celebration

**Wednesday 11 December at 4.30pm**

There will be a guest speaker for this special event.

## Mental Health Awareness Shabbat

**Saturday 1 February at 11.00am**

Our guest speaker for this special service 'In pursuit of good health' is Susan Morris, a member of Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue, who has personal experience of severe mental health issues. Her passion is to work with others to shed more light on mental health issues, to facilitate understanding, remove stigma, and help individuals receive effective treatment.

# Rabbi Alexandra Wright reflects on the story of creation

*With the Tishri festivals behind us and the last verses of Deuteronomy chanted at Simchat Torah, the scroll is rolled back to the beginning of Bereshit (Genesis) and we turn our attention to the story of the creation of the world and its first human beings. How did rabbinic tradition imagine those moments that led up to the creation of humanity?*

I

The rabbis wrote of seven things that were created before the world came into existence: the *Torah*, the Divine Throne, Paradise, Hell, the Celestial Sanctuary, the Name of the Messiah and Repentance – or as the sages said, a Voice that cries aloud, ‘Return O children of humanity’.

When God resolved upon the creation of the world, He took counsel with the *Torah*. Would it be a good thing, asked God, to bring forth an earthly world? And the *Torah*, God’s very own teaching, was sceptical and said to God: Surely your creatures will be sinful and disregard the precepts and teaching that are in me. God replied: Surely that was why repentance was created, even before the beginning, so that all sinners would have the opportunity of mending their ways.

And the myth continues that God created many worlds – experiments – even before He created our world, and when all was in place, the heaven and the earth, light and darkness, the upper and lower waters, the earth’s vegetation, plants, trees, the sun and moon, the stars, swarms of living creatures and birds flying over the earth, animals and creeping things, each one true to its type, then God resolved to create the first human being, the crown of all creation. And yet before He brought the first human being into the world, God took counsel with the angels and said to them: What is your opinion? Should humanity come into existence? The Angel of Love favoured humanity’s creation, because it would be affectionate and loving; but the Angel of Truth opposed it. It would be full of lies. And while the Angel of Justice



favoured humanity because it would be full of justice, the Angel of Peace opposed it, because it would be quarrelsome and bring violence and conflict into the world.

Then the *Torah* appeared again and addressed God: Eternal One of the universe: the world is Yours and You can do with it whatever is good in Your eyes. But the person You are now creating will be few of days and full of trouble and sin. If it is not Your purpose to have forbearance and patience with it, it were better not to call it into being. God replied, ‘Am I called long-suffering and merciful for nothing?’

While the angels and the *Torah* were thus arguing among themselves, God cast truth to the ground, gathered the dust of the earth and created the first human beings, female and male, in the divine image and after God’s likeness.

In these rabbinic *midrashim*, the appearance of humanity on the earth is not unqualified. There is moral ambiguity in our origins. We are just and merciful, but also divisive and aggressive. And our days are full of toil and labour; there is pain and suffering, loneliness and struggle.

There is a poignant truth in these rabbinic flights of imagination. We may have been made ‘in the image of God, after [God’s] likeness’, but we are also ‘a little less than divine’; we are ‘out of nature and hopelessly in it’ – this is the paradox of our



humanity. What does it mean to be created in God's image? Not that we are perfect, far from it, but that what we reflect in our image of God is God's longing, God's prayer that humanity will become a fitting partner in the renewal of creation, in the mending of a broken world.

After creation, it is not humanity who utters the first prayer, seeking out its Creator, but God, who walking in the Garden in the heat of the day, while the man and woman hide themselves among the trees, cries out, *Ayekka* – 'Where are you?'. (*Genesis* 3.9)

'Where are you?' asks God, because I need the moral commitment of humanity to partner me in the work of creation. This is God's prayer, God's search for humanity amidst wars and violence, suffering and conflict.

God needs us and searches for us, as much as we search for God in our own moral and spiritual wilderness.

## II

Creation is inextricably linked with the observance of *Shabbat*. On the seventh day, God completed the work and blessed the seventh day and made it holy. And later on: 'Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Eternal One your God... for in six days the Eternal One made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, and then

rested on the seventh day; therefore the Eternal One blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy' (*Exodus* 20:8-11)

Abraham Joshua Heschel writes: 'The seventh day is the armistice in man's cruel struggle for existence, a truce in all conflicts, personal and social, peace between one person and another, between the individual and nature, peace within... The seventh day is the exodus from tension, the liberation of the individual from their own muddiness.' (*The Sabbath*)

On the seventh day, the spirit rests with God. No longer does the divine voice cry out *Ayekka*, it has us in its embrace. We liberate ourselves from the material world, from monetary gain, we acquire an 'additional soul', we live between the world of time and eternity. And when the day ends and night falls, and we must let go of the preciousness of a palace constructed in time, there is sadness and nostalgia for the stillness, serenity and peace of what has been. We pray for an everlasting Sabbath of tranquillity, yet know that it must as yet remain beyond our grasp. The Sabbath is a taste of eternity and the expression of hope that humanity can be redeemed.

**Alexandra Wright,**  
**Cheshvan 5780**

*Note:* The pronoun 'He' to refer to God is used in this article in line with its use in the rabbinic tradition alluded to here.





# The Learning Circle

## Adult education classes at the LJS

### Sukkot term classes

**TUESDAY MORNINGS 11.15am-12.30pm**

Classes run 17 September – 10 December

#### TUESDAY TEXTS

This friendly group is led by our rabbis. We study biblical and rabbinic texts, modern poetry and short stories, and enjoy sessions on Jewish art and music. The starting point is always a text or painting, whether ancient or modern, but the class is based around discussion on a variety of different topics. New students are always welcome.

**TUESDAY EVENINGS 7.00-8.00pm**

Classes run from 17 September – 10 December

#### 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 will help you to improve your understanding and confidence in prayer-book Hebrew. At the same time we will be learning the Hebrew of the *Tanakh* (Bible). You will be on the path towards greater enjoyment and participation in synagogue services. We practise reading simple Hebrew, building your reading skills and knowledge of vocabulary and grammar at an unhurried pace.

#### Reading the Psalms in Hebrew

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

The Psalms are intensely personal songs of praise, lament and yearning. Many are familiar to us – 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...'; 'I will lift up mine eyes to the hills...'. Some are read or sung in our Friday evening, *Shabbat* morning or festival liturgies. But how are they constructed, how do they sound in Hebrew, and what are they really saying? Join a class for Hebrew readers (at any pace that is comfortable for you) which will help you with your reading and understanding, and open up one of the most beautiful books in the Bible in its original language.

**TUESDAY EVENINGS 8.00-9.00pm**

Classes run from 17 September – 10 December

#### Exploring Judaism

Tutor: 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 Hebrew knowledge. It is also an essential programme of instruction for people choosing Judaism by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read the materials made available online during the year. In addition to offering knowledge of Judaism, the course encourages practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for reflection within the group. Resources can be found on: [www.ljsexploringjudaism.wordpress.com](http://www.ljsexploringjudaism.wordpress.com)

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.

## Exploring Judaism Sukkot term 2019

**5 November:**

Jewish History Overview

**12 November:**

*Tanakh* and *Sefer Torah*

**19 November:**

Rabbinic Literature

**26 November:**

Liturgy and Prayer Book

**3 December:**

Jewish Ethics

**10 December:**

Exploring *Chanukkah*

## Seminars on antisemitism

**Tuesday 12 November and**

**Tuesday 21 January 8.00-9.15pm**

Information about these two seminars on antisemitism given by distinguished academics and authors can be found on page 7 under Forthcoming Events.

## Hebrew and Yiddish lessons with Spiro Ark



For details of lesson times and charges, please visit [www.spiroark.org/classes](http://www.spiroark.org/classes) or contact Spiro Ark on 020 7794 4655 or at: [education@spiroark.org](mailto:education@spiroark.org)

## The Israel Abrahams Library

Our synagogue library has over 6,000 books with a Jewish connection, covering fiction, philosophy, bible commentaries, history, ethics, comparative religion, and beautiful art books. There is a growing collection of DVDs, including Israeli films, as well as music CDs and some videos. The library regularly buys new books, and LJS members generously donate both books and DVDs. Items may be borrowed by LJS members for four weeks at any time – a notice about how to do this is displayed on the library desk.

## SHABBAT MORNINGS 9.45-10.45am

Classes run from 14 September – 7 December

### Beginners' Hebrew

**Tutor: Naomi Brightwell**

This class uses Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* to help absolute beginners 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!

### Key to Understanding Classical Hebrew

**Tutor: Dr Dov Softi**

This class is designed to increase students' understanding of classical Hebrew as used both in the *Torah* and the *Siddur*. We study using *Prayer Book Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase £27.00) and 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. New students are particularly welcome.

### Intermediate Hebrew

**Tutor: Nitza Spiro**

The aim of this class is to allow students to explore different Hebrew texts which they will come across in synagogue services on *Shabbatot* and festivals – from the morning blessings of the *Tefillah* to the Books of Ruth and Esther, and much more. The class will work on increasing fluency in reading, but at the same time we will also explore the historical, ethical, philosophical and ideological messages of the texts.

### Exploring the Psalms in English

**Facilitator: Michael Romain**

Addressing the question as to how reading the Psalms can help us in today's world, we will be looking at a number of different Psalms, led by our rabbis and other teachers. No previous knowledge is required. If you would like to know more, please contact Michael Romain on 07818 000849.

# Focus on Nosh ‘n’ Drosh

## Sue Bolsom explains what Nosh ‘n’ Drosh is all about

Nosh ‘n’ Drosh has been a most successful LJS initiative. Held most months after the *Shabbat* morning service, these informal talks over a bagel lunch are given by outside speakers or by LJS members invited to share their particular area of research or interest. The sessions usually end with a Q&A, and finish by 2.15pm. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge.

Ideas for talks are always appreciated, as is sponsorship of the event (£200.00 to cover the cost of the food). Please contact Sue Bolsom at: [suebolsom@gmail.com](mailto:suebolsom@gmail.com)

Forthcoming talks include Dr Edie Friedman on Asylum Seekers; Suzanne Higgott on Sir Richard Wallace of the Wallace Collection; Dr Tony Klug on Israel and Palestine. Details can be found on page 14 under Community Events. Looking further ahead, on 22 February William and Maggie Carver will tell us about the highly successful medieval Jewish businesswoman, Licoricia of Winchester; on 14 March Geoffrey Pollard will give a talk on the Jewish revolutionary, Leon Trotsky; and on 30 May the life of LJS member Walter Wolfgang, who died in May 2019, will be celebrated by his close friend, Carol Turner.

## Harriett Goldenberg reports on ‘Understanding Sharia’ – a talk given by Dr Mohamed Keshavjee, assisted by Russell Harris

It was a great pleasure to welcome back Dr Mohamed Keshavjee and Raficq Abdulla to the LJS for the September Nosh ‘n’ Drosh. What followed was an illuminating and highly intelligible exposition of the history and development of *Sharia* throughout the Muslim world, delivered by Mohamed, together with Russell Harris, editor of their book, *Understanding Sharia: Islamic Law in a Globalised World*.

I couldn’t possibly do justice to this comprehensive talk in a short report, but here are a few of the key points that for me stood out:

Mohamed suggested that as with *Halachah* in Judaism, there are two approaches to *Sharia* within Islam: one is that the Koran is the word of God; the other that the Koran must be interpreted by humans.

*Sharia* developed from many strands of thinking. The Saudi Arabian school, which has come to be so influential, was originally the smallest school of thought. Mohamed spoke of the branches within the Islamic world, the Sunnis and the Shias, the Sufis, and the Ismailis – the Sunnis being the majority, the Shias much smaller, with what we might see as more progressive attitudes, particularly towards women’s rights



and roles. In fact, women owned property in the 7th century, but Islamic law has ossified in parts of the world. Today, 13 million Muslims live outside of the Arab world.

The question was posed as to which areas in a modern community religious law has to deal with. The answer: human rights, criminal justice, new knowledge (e.g. Artificial Intelligence) Islam in the diaspora, and Islamic finance. And the ‘highest purposes of the law’ are considered to be life, intellect, property, offspring, religion.

The talk was gripping and was followed by many questions in the Q&A session, indicative of the interest it engendered.

# Summoned to the Tower

## Ann and Bob Kirk receive British Empire Medals

Historically, being summoned to the Tower of London hasn't always ended well, but LJS members Ann and Bob Kirk, whose contribution to our community cannot be overstated, are looking forward to their visit there this month. They will each receive a truly well-deserved British Empire Medal in recognition of their services to Holocaust Education and Remembrance.

Both born in Germany, they separately witnessed the horrors of Hitler's rise to power, and remember the looting of Jewish shops and the burning of synagogues during *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. This event was the trigger for their desperate parents to send them on *Kindertransports* in 1939. Once in the UK, Ann and Bob made the most of the opportunities they were given to forge new lives for themselves. It was at a club for young refugees that they met each other, and in 1950 they married, and had two sons.

As with many refugees, memories of Nazi Germany and what ensued were too painful to articulate. The past was a taboo subject. However, in 1992, when Rabbi Andrew Goldstein from Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue asked Bob and Ann to speak at the *Kristallnacht* service, they agreed. And so began what was to become their outstanding contribution to Holocaust education. Their initial talk was an immensely difficult undertaking – confronting what they had kept repressed for decades. However, the account of their lives made a huge impression on everyone present, and word started getting around that Ann and Bob had an important story – and message – to tell.

Invitations to give talks gathered apace, with presentations given at the Jewish Museum, at Holocaust Memorial Day Trust commemorations, at schools throughout London and the Home Counties, for the Holocaust Education Trust, at synagogues and churches, and for the Council of Christians and Jews, Rotary Clubs and a housing association.



Bob and Ann are motivated to tell their story because through their own experiences they can make history real for their audiences. Their presentations include telling visuals such as a photo of the Hanover synagogue in flames during *Kristallnacht* and the censored messages Ann received via the Red Cross, including the last message she received from her father. Ann's account of her parents waving her off on the *Kindertransport* train conveys the sacrifice of parents who themselves then suffered the most dreadful fate.

For each presentation Ann and Bob have to relive painful memories, but they are determined to carry on for as long as they can. The questions they are asked after their talks can be searching: Have you lost your faith? Do you ever wish you weren't Jewish? Do you forgive? To this last question, they say that it is not for them to forgive, but that there can be reconciliation, and they must ensure that victims of the Holocaust are never forgotten.

Bob and Ann were genuinely surprised to have the recognition of a UK national honour. Ann says her father would have been both proud and amused for his daughter to be honoured by the Queen. Bob appreciates the recognition, but explains he and Ann do this work because it needs to be done. The refugee crisis is still with us, now as then, and it is important to understand that each refugee is an individual deserving support and respect.



# 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 basics 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).

## BRIDGE CLUB



## 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.

## 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.

We are looking for new volunteer helpers, and would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact the office on 020 7286 5181.

### Our next screening:

**27 November:** *Coppélia* (ballet)  
(No screening in December)

**22 January:** *Stan and Ollie*

## 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.

## NOSH 'N' DROSH

### **Shabbat lunchtimes 1.15-2.15pm**

**9 November:** Dr Edie Friedman, from the Council for Racial Equality: Lift the Ban – Why asylum seekers should have the right to work.

**14 December:** Suzanne Higgott, Curator at the Wallace Collection: *'The most fortunate man of his day'* – Sir Richard Wallace: connoisseur, collector and philanthropist.

**18 January 2020:** Dr Tony Klug, special adviser on the Middle East to the Oxford Research Group and an international member of the Palestinian-Israeli Journal, will talk on whether the collapse of the two-state solution will be bad for Jews.

*A special feature on Nosh 'n' Drosh can be found on page 12.*

## LOCAL WALKING GROUP

Our next walks will be on **Thursday 14 November** and **Thursday 12 December**, meeting at the LJS at 11.15am. All members and friends are welcome. 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) / 07765 214867 or contact Michael Romain on [romain@netgates.co.uk](mailto:romain@netgates.co.uk) / 07818 000849.

## RESTAURANT TUESDAY – read about our successful relaunch on page 16!

This is an informal lunch club for the more elderly members of the congregation. Everyone is welcome! Join us at 12.45pm on the third Tuesday of the month for a chance to meet and chat and have a delicious meal, hosted by our delightful team of volunteers. We suggest a donation of £5.00. Our next lunch is **19 November**. Please call the office on 020 7286 5181 to let us know if you are coming.



# Rimon Corner

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

Kaila Brooks	Natalie Ohana-Cole
Sam Cooper	Alice Osband
Lily Crane-Newman	Freddie Price
Marni Dagtoglou	Grace Rogers
Bertie Davis	Tigist Silbiger
Floriana Davis	Leora Sternberg
Sidney Gruber	Nina Williams
Rebecca Lawson	Seth Williams
Axel Munthe Sforza	Abe Wolchover
James Norton	Yahel Yaroshevski

## Tiny Tots

*These sessions for little ones between the ages of 0 and 4 with their parents, grandparents or carers are held at 11.00am on Shabbat mornings during term times.*

The Nursery is always available for children to play or read on every *Shabbat* with a parent or other carer present. Email [education@ljs.org](mailto:education@ljs.org) if you would like to be added to the Tiny Tots email circulation list.

## New Year and New Era at Rimon

### Thank you to Dov and welcome to Elana!

From *Rimon* teacher to Head Teacher, then to Educational Consultant and rabbinic student, Dr Dov Softi has done us proud. He is offering valuable support to our new team led by Vice-Principal Rabbi Elana Dellal. We send a big thank you to Dov, and wish him good luck with his studies; and we extend a big welcome and good luck to Rabbi Elana in her new role in *Rimon*.

*Harriett Goldenberg (outgoing Chair of the Education Committee)*

## Reflections on the festivals

The young people of the LJS had a wonderful festival season. There were many volunteer leaders during our *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* family services led by Rabbi Igor and Rabbi Elana, the services were participatory and lively, and the participants did a marvellous job. Upstairs we had services and art activities for children aged 7 and under. These were meticulously planned and wonderfully led by Education Co-ordinator Debi Penhey, Caroline Hagard and Susannah Alexander. Every *Rimon* class spent some time learning about the festivals, we had an all-school assembly where we sang *Avinu Malkeinu* and heard the blasts of the shofar. There was a competition to see which teacher could blow the shofar the longest; Daniel Mautner won the competition with Caroline Hagard coming in a close second. For *Sukkot*, our *Kabbalat Torah* students helped to build the roof of the *sukkah*, and every class added their decorations. Student rabbi Dov Softi spent time in the *sukkah* with each class teaching them about the meaning of *Sukkot* and the symbolism of the *etrog* and the *lulav*.



Top: Jonah Dellal's imaginative painting of his namesake, Jonah. Below: Dov shows the *lulav* to *Rimon* children

# Bob Kirk reports on the highly successful relaunch of Restaurant Tuesday



After a recess of some months, Restaurant Tuesday restarted on 11 September under new management. Twenty-five diners sampled the excellent meal – soup, and a choice of fish or vegetarian – provided by Jewish Care. The verdict was that it had been well worth the wait.

Early this year there had been a distinct possibility that, after more than fifty years, Restaurant Tuesday might have to close down because the dedicated cooks who had run it for such a long time were no longer available. Eventually, after successful negotiations by Angela Camber, the Chairman of 4C's, together with our Community Care Co-ordinator, Aviva Shafritz, Jewish Care now provides a hot meal – delivered in sealed containers – and when possible, the volunteers produce a sweet course. Nicola Solomons' fruit and cream dessert was a delight.

The combination of a delicious meal, convivial atmosphere and good conversation is a winning formula. Now all that is needed for Restaurant Tuesday's continued success is for the diners to roll up.

## An evening of surprise and poignancy for Eva Schloss

There was a special gathering for LJS member Eva Schloss (*pictured right*) on 3 October when she received a book presented to her by Martha van der Bly (*left*). The book, *Pondering in the Dark*, is a collection of poems and paintings by her late brother, Heinz Geiringer, which had been hidden under attic floorboards in Amsterdam before he was betrayed and perished in the Holocaust. This beautiful volume, put together by Martha, was presented to Eva in a very moving ceremony and celebration – all the more so as it came as a complete surprise to her.



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## The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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