



Igor Zinkov's rabbinic ordination

Photograph: Zoë Norfolk

West London Synagogue was packed with guests from France, Russia and Israel for the ordination of four new rabbis on 7 July. Rabbi Igor Zinkov, who was one of the four and who joins the LJS full-time on 1 September, began his sermon with the words from the *Shema*: 'You shall love the Eternal One your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your might... ' and ended with another well-known quotation on love: I come to you, he told us, 'From Russia with Love'.

A few days earlier Igor had presented the subject of his highly-regarded MA dissertation to colleagues and faculty at Leo Baeck College. Entitled '*Guard my tongue from evil (Berachot 17a): Jewish Concepts of Ethical Communication and Social Media*', he explained how he had developed social media guidelines for Jewish organisations drawing on classical rabbinic texts and principles. We look forward to hearing more about this important work. For now, we say *mazal tov* to Rabbi Igor, and wish him all the very best.

Inside this issue

| | |
|--|-------|
| Bereavements | 2 |
| <i>Shabbat Services and Festivals</i> | 3 |
| Council Report | 4 |
| Tribute to Walter Wolfgang; Social Action | 5 |
| Forthcoming Events | 6-7 |
| Preparing for the Days of Awe | 8-9 |
| The Learning Circle | 10-12 |
| Jo Kessler's special birthday | 13 |
| Community Events | 14 |
| <i>Rimon Corner</i> | 15 |
| Raymon Benedyk's <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> | 16 |



A Peace Walk was held in July to remember and honour the 8,500 Muslim men and boys who were murdered for their religion in Srebrenica in 1995. The walk started with a visit to the LJS, and there were further stops at St James's Church, Piccadilly and Al-Manaar Mosque.

High Holy Day tickets

High Holy Day 5780/2019 tickets will be posted at the beginning of September. If you do not receive your tickets by 10 September please call the office on 020 7286 5181 or email: membership@ljs.org

Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

Eric Blaire husband of Trixi and father of Camie and Felicity

Henry Carr husband of Jan and father of Ollie, Harry, Charlie and Lily

David Ive brother of Martin

Willie Kessler husband of Jo and father of George, Charles, James and Edward

Michael Salmon husband of Jill and father of Paul, Caroline and Andrew

Rosie Saunders mother of Sylvie and Laurence

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

Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The Drop-In dates for the rest of 2019 are the following Sundays:

8 September, 13 October, 10 November and 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 Thursdays afternoons prior to the Drop-In dates to sort clothes.

VOLUNTEERS PLEASE

The Drop-In has now been running for five years and is as much needed as ever.

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.

Shabbat and Festival services: September and early October 2019

Friday evening services are at 6.45pm. *Shabbat* morning services are at 11.00am unless otherwise stated. Please note special timings for Festival services.

| DATE | RABBI/SPEAKER AND NOTES | |
|--|--|--|
| Friday 6 September | Elana Dellal | Co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Emily Cooper |
| Shabbat 7 September <i>Shof'tim</i> | Elana Dellal | <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Emily Cooper |
| Friday 13 September | Igor Zinkov | |
| Shabbat 14 September <i>Ki Tetze</i> | Igor Zinkov | Turi Munthe <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Nosh 'n' Drosh with Raficq Abdullah and Dr Mohamed Keshavee on Sharia law |
| Friday 20 September | Alexandra Wright | |
| Shabbat 21 September <i>Ki Tavo</i> | Alexandra Wright | <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Fanny Mendelsohn |
| Saturday evening 21 September 8.30pm (but note the 6.30pm start for the panel discussion) | LJS Rabbis | <i>Selichot</i> service preceded by a panel discussion on Food Sustainability with Professor Geraldine van Bueren, Dr Anna Isaacs and others at 6.30pm (see page 9) |
| Friday 27 September | Alexandra Wright | |
| Shabbat 28 September <i>Nitzavim</i> | Alexandra Wright | Victor Maxwell special birthday |
| Sunday 29 September <i>Erev Rosh Hashanah</i> 6.45pm | Igor Zinkov | |
| Monday 30 September <i>Rosh Hashanah 10.30am</i> | Alexandra Wright Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov | Service in the sanctuary Family Service in the Montefiore Hall |
| Friday 4 October | Alexandra Wright | |
| Shabbat 5 October <i>Vayelech/Shuvah</i> | Danny Rich | Denise Asserson special birthday |
| Tuesday 8 October <i>Kol Nidre 7.00pm</i> | Elana Dellal | |
| Wednesday 9 October <i>Yom Kippur 10.30am</i> | Alexandra Wright Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov | Service in the sanctuary Family Service in the Montefiore Hall |

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.

Please refer to the High Holy Day Information Booklet available with your tickets for details about times of individual services, children's services and activities.

See page 10 for information about the High Holy Day Preparation Course.

Council Report

'For Everything there is a Season...' (Kohélet, Chapter 3)



This Chairman's Report is written during the Council's summer break and looks ahead to the new year and back to our previous Council meeting held in July. At that meeting, we welcomed Simon Van Someren and Harriett Goldenberg as new Trustees. As has become our practice, we opened the new Council (for 2019-2020) with a prayer in front of the open ark in the sanctuary, reminding us of our underlying values as progressive Jews.

The July meeting itself was a preparation for the coming year. We took part in a brainstorming session ready for the updating of the strategic plan: more on this next month when we will be asking for your views.

The summer, when the Nursery School is not in session, is the opportunity for the LJS to undertake any major rebuilding works and as I write, the toilet refurbishment is well underway. It is too early for me to comment on progress, but

I would like to thank everyone involved: Lysa Schwartz, our Executive Director, the caretakers and office staff for working to ensure the LJS runs as smoothly as possible during this period. We are aware that some of our regular activities are being disrupted and are grateful to everyone for being so patient: it will all be worth it!

August is also the time of preparation for the autumn and the High Holy Days. Because of changes in the law relating to charities' eligibility to claim Gift Aid, we have had to alter our pricing policy for the High Holy Days visitors' tickets. This means that we will be implementing a mandatory administration fee of £45 per ticket and will be asking visitors to make a donation of £200 to support the work and activities of the LJS. If we do not carry out these changes, we will no longer be entitled to claim Gift Aid, resulting in the loss of substantial revenue for us. Members are welcome to apply for tickets for friends and family (but will not be able to purchase visitor tickets in lieu of membership fees).

The charities for the Yom Kippur Appeal 2019 have now been chosen and thanks go to Tim Simon and the committee who consider the many applications received by the LJS. This year the charities are Noah's Ark Children's Hospice in Barnet; Liberal Judaism's proposal to raise money for bursaries for Leo Baeck College rabbinic students; and Leket Israel, a National Food Bank scheme supporting the very large numbers of poor people in Israel. More details on these will be shortly sent out to you.

Council returns to its regular monthly meetings in September when our first focus will be on planning for the year ahead. September also brings the start of the High Holy Days with *Erev Rosh Hashanah* on Sunday evening, 29th September. Please check you have paid your membership fees in order to receive your High Holy Day tickets.

Sue Head, Chairman of Council

Tribute to Walter Wolfgang

23 June 1923 – 28 May 2019

Many of us still remember watching the news in 2005, and seeing an elderly man ignominiously ejected from the Labour Party Conference for shouting out 'Nonsense!' in response to Jack Straw's justification of the Iraq War. We admired his courage, were shocked by the way he was treated, and then we realised this was none other than LJS Member, Walter Wolfgang, a long-time regular at *Shabbat* morning and festival services.

Born to Jewish parents in Frankfurt in 1923, a teenage Walter was sent off to the UK in 1937 to escape from Nazi Germany. Joined by his parents in 1939, Walter was to take over the family leather factory business, later becoming an accountant.

Walter's political beliefs were underpinned by his Jewish faith, and he drew inspiration from the story of the Exodus. It was fitting that the last service Walter attended at the LJS, only a month before he died, was the *Pesach* morning service. Walter was also inspired by the teachings of the Hebrew prophets with their ideals of equity, justice and peace for all. This thinking propelled him to the political views he not only held but acted on, remaining a committed



Photograph: Peter Marshall

socialist and peace activist throughout his long life. An indefatigable campaigner and passionate speaker, Walter was a Labour Party member for 70 years, served on the National Executive Committee, and stood as a Labour candidate in Croydon. He was one of the founding members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, becoming its Vice-President, and was Chair of Labour CND.

Thoughtful, kind, generous, and capable of great friendship, Walter was a man of integrity who showed true moral courage.

Social Action

Food is an ever-present theme of the High Holy Days: apples and honey, family recipes for honey cake, sharing our table with family and friends; then the absence of food – voluntary fasting going hand in hand with contemplation and personal reflection ten days later on *Yom Kippur*.

So as we enter into the spirit of the High Holy Day season on 21 September at *Selichot*, we are presented with a logical moment to launch our Food Sustainability campaign and projects. Prior to the service, a panel of speakers, including our own Geraldine van Bueren, will address issues of food sustainability and child poverty.

And there's more. You may have noticed the yellow wheelie bin from Sufra, a local food

bank on the Edgware Road that we are now supporting and collecting for. Last year The Avenues, a local Youth Club, was one of the beneficiaries of our High Holy Day Appeal. They are one of the few remaining youth facilities in London. We are hoping to be involved with providing monthly teas for the 30-40 children aged 8 to 13 who regularly attend.

And this is just a beginning. Do watch this space and *Shalom LJS* for further Social Action activities. If you'd like more information or would like to be involved please contact me at: hgoldenbergt@btinternet.com

Shanah Tovah to all.

Harriett Goldenberg (Chair of Social Action)

Forthcoming Events

Concert at the LJS: Piano & Tenor

Thursday 5 September at 7.30pm
(drinks reception from 6.30pm)



The Nicholas Roth Memorial Trust in partnership with Myisrael and the Forgotten People Fund bring you 'Piano & Tenor' – an evening of sparkling entertainment by highly-acclaimed musicians Chris Hamilton (*top*) and Shimi Goodman (*below*) who will perform a range of glorious operatic arias as well as songs from the musicals and original songs by Chris Hamilton, a multi-award-winning composer.



A voluntary donation of £35.00 is suggested for what promises to be a very special evening which will include refreshments. To register, visit: www.myisraelcharity.org/events

Beyond Coexistence: interfaith in action

Sunday 8 September at 11.45am – 4.15pm
at a venue in Golders Green (the precise address will be provided after registration)

The Board of Deputies of British Jews invite us to a half-day conference in which some of the most topical questions in interfaith relations will be addressed:

How can we challenge racism together?

How should we talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

How can we act together for social justice?

Attendance costs £5.00 and includes a kosher lunch.

To register, go to:

<https://bodinterfaith.eventbrite.co.uk>

Lecture on Universal Human Rights

Tuesday 10 September at 7.00pm
(refreshments from 6.30pm)

Speaker: Professor Francesca Klug OBE

Please see page 10 for details.

Selichot Seminar and Service

Saturday 21 September at 6.30pm (panel discussion) and 8.30pm (service)

Please see pages 3 and 9 for details.

Annual Memorial Service

Sunday 22 September at 11.00am
at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue Cemetery,
Pound Lane, London NW10 2HG

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

Film Club at the LJS

Israeli films in Hebrew with English sub-titles
Wednesday 16 October at 7.00pm for 7.30pm



Ushpizin – Sukkot Guests directed by Gidi Dar

A comedy drama about the custom of receiving visitors at *Sukkot*.

Moshe and Mali, an Orthodox Jewish couple in Jerusalem, are childless and without means to celebrate the week-long

holiday of *Sukkot*. After much prayer, they receive unexpected money, and Moshe is told about an abandoned *Sukkah* where the couple can celebrate *Sukkot* and receive guests. However, they are visited by two ex-convicts with an unexpected link to Moshe's past, and the celebration becomes a series of emotional trials.

Drinks and popcorn served from 7.00pm; screening at 7.30pm; post-film discussion till 9.30pm.

Sunday 3 November

7.00pm at the LJS

'All that Jazz' – an evening of live jazz with 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

Introducing jazz musician Peter Werth

LJS member Peter Werth, who is performing for us on 3 November, has been playing drums since the age of 18. His first engagement was at the Astor Club in Berkeley Square, followed by gigs in a cabaret band touring the US Air Force bases across the UK, and a year as a dance band drummer at the famous Lyceum Ballroom (now a theatre) in Covent Garden. After many years as a (hungry) jobbing musician, he ventured into fashion design and ran a successful menswear business till 10 years ago. Throughout his business career he played drums as a semi-pro in function bands until he caught the jazz bug and studied for five years with renowned drummer Mark Fletcher who encouraged him to start up his own jazz ensemble in 2015. The band he formed boasts some of the best musicians and vocalists on the London jazz scene. Peter and his Jazz Crew specialise in what is known as straight-ahead bebop consisting of tunes written by some of the jazz legends of the 60s and songs from the Great American Songbook. They have played at Ronnie Scott's and many jazz gigs across the country, and have a monthly residency at The Scolt Head jazz venue in north London.

THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE
PRESENTS
**ALL THAT...
JAZZ**

An evening of live jazz with **PETER WERTH, his Jazz Crew**
and award-winning vocalist **SARA DOWLING**
Sunday 3rd November @ 7pm

In aid of our building renewal

TICKETS £35
Buffet of Lebanese meze included
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:

<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

Preparing for the *Yamim Nora'im* – the Days of Awe

“ We live in a time when human actions are the cause of great suffering, a source for unimaginable destructive power, and the reason for irreversible environmental damage. And yet we also live in a time of hope. A time when young people are engaged more than ever in cultivating their minds, their compassionate hearts and mindful action.”

(Ogyen Trinley Dorje, quoted in *Generation Y, Spirituality and Social Change*, edited by Justine Afra Huxley, 2019)

The month of *Ellul*, which began on 1 September and which provides four weeks of preparation for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, is a time for introspection and self-examination. In traditional communities, *Selichot* – prayers for forgiveness – are recited on a daily basis. In our own congregation, the beautiful service on the Saturday night, a week before *Rosh Hashanah*, is held in the Sanctuary, distilling the prayers and music of the festivals in an hour of quiet meditation and reflection. It is here that we attempt to drive our attention away from the external chaos and anxieties of our world and give ourselves time to think about our human existence, how we can change and become more true to ourselves.

It is hard to be engaged in this annual check-up of spiritual health. We have squeezed the time we used to have to prepare for *Yom Kippur* into a few hours snatched away from work, college, school and other claims on our attention. In Stefano Massini's beautifully written play, *The Lehman Trilogy*, a character reflects on the practice of sitting *shiva* for seven days for a family member, whittled down to three days in the next generation, and then to three minutes for his descendants.

It would be desperately sad to lose our festivals of repentance and atonement in a similar way and



fail to pass on to the next generation the powerful message of these *Yamim Nora'im*. Because we need them: our beaten up souls require the healing and interior convalescence that prayer offers. We need to sit with our community on these occasions, to be in silence, to listen to the beating of our heart, to the beating of the heart of a suffering world, and take ourselves away from the constant battering of bad news. What is the health of our hearts and spirits as we witness millions suffering because of poor leadership, economic hardship, civil war, humanitarian crises? How can we have hope for a better future when women and children suffer from sexual abuse and violence on a daily basis, when new revelations of incest, paedophilia and brutality are brought to light? What does it do to our sense of hope to see voters choose populist leaders, coalitions of ambitious and elitist individuals, scarcely in touch with those they lead?

Pittsburgh, the Philippines, Christchurch, Sri Lanka - these are the names of the places where hundreds were killed this past year because of bigotry and hatred: Jews, Muslims and Christians in their places of worship, ordinary men, women and children, peaceful and hard-working, whose lives were cut down or forever changed by a single individual, pedalling hateful and murderous ideas.

In our own country, the drive towards a 'no-deal' Brexit fills many with a visceral fear that good money is being thrown after bad, that the ever-widening gap between rich and poor won't abate, that where resources are needed – early childhood centres, youth provision for young people to get off the streets during holidays and after school, pastoral support in schools and much-needed money to reduce austerity – will be side-lined and forgotten as we prepare to leave the EU.

And hanging above all this, determining the future of our planet and the age in which we live, is global warming and the climate emergency, the legacy we have bequeathed thoughtlessly to our children in the last 50 years as our consumption of the earth's resources has risen and now imperils the very existence of numberless species, endangers lives and threatens to bring this age to an end.

'There are days when it all feels like too much – the violence, injustice, inequality and exploitation of humans, our home, and the other species we share this home with... But I have to remind myself that we're on a journey and it's not just downhill...' (Vero Lopes da Silva, in *Generation Y, Spirituality and Social Change*). These words come from a book that is full of hope, full of stories of success and positive examples of change. It is a book of young people's voices, Generation Y, whose motivation for change is more powerful, more uplifting, more willing to break down boundaries and build bridges, more courageous about facing the future together.

We cannot be fearful, for nothing positive comes out of a space of fear. Generation Y are helping us to acknowledge that many remarkable things are happening: eco projects, working in refugee camps, tackling racism and sexism – we need to remember that there are individuals and communities who come together to form powerful networks that deal with the issues of our times, all feeding into something that is much greater.

And at the heart of this sacred activism – whether small networks and groups or Extinction Rebellion, or the voices of young people like Greta Thunberg – where the pain lies deep within us, grief for the state of the world, for its social inequalities, the catastrophe that is engulfing the environment and the chaos of our politics, there is a desire to transform that pain into action. Pain makes us vulnerable and open; it connects us to a profound awareness of what is blessed and what is cursed. Beyond our differences, beyond our religious institutions and the political gulfs that separate us, we must realise that we inhabit the same universe and join forces to resist domination, oppression and violence.

May our preparation for the *Yamim Nora'im* fill us with purpose and hope, and enable us to find a spiritual space that will promote deeper understanding, more listening and mutual learning now and in the future. *L'shanah tovah tikkateivu* – May you and your dear ones be inscribed for a good year.

Alexandra Wright
Ellul 5779

Selichot Seminar and Service

Saturday 21 September

6.30pm Geraldine van Bueren QC, Professor of International Human Rights Law at Queen Mary University of London and Visiting Fellow, Kellogg College, Oxford, together with Dr Anna Isaacs, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Food Policy at City University, London, and other speakers will be opening up a discussion about poverty and food sustainability.

8.00pm *Havdalah* and refreshments

8.30pm *Selichot* service in the Sanctuary led by the rabbis and musicians from the LJS Choir



The Learning Circle

Adult education classes at the LJS

Launching the New Year's Learning Circle programme

We begin the new academic year with a special lecture the evening of Tuesday 10 September, with sessions on High Holy Day preparation on the two subsequent Tuesday evenings.

Lecture on Universal Human Rights

Tuesday 10 September

6.30pm refreshments; 7.00pm lecture

Speaker: Professor Francesca Klug OBE

80 years after the start of World War II and 70 years on from the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where are we heading now? Academic and human rights activist Francesca Klug explores the origins of this landmark document, its roots in Jewish experience and the influence of Jewish values on its vision for a better world.

This event is a joint initiative of the LJS and René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights.

Get your free tickets via Eventbrite at:

https://universal_human_rights.eventbrite.co.uk

High Holy Day Preparation Course

Led by Rabbi Alexandra Wright

In these two sessions we will look at the interface between our beliefs or unbeliefs and the liturgy of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, and suggest ways of understanding the texts through the prisms of history and memory, music and poetry, community and tradition.

Tuesday 17 September 8.00-9.00pm

Preparation for *Rosh Hashanah*: Traversing the landscape of awe and reverence on *Rosh Hashanah* morning.

Tuesday 24 September 8.00-9.00pm

Preparation for *Yom Kippur*: 'Let me teach you the meaning of faith': Can our language, thoughts and actions lead to atonement?

Note: For those less acquainted with *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, Rabbi Igor offers introductory sessions in his 'Exploring Judaism classes' (see pages 11 and 12) which run in parallel with those led by Rabbi Alex.

Sukkot term classes

TUESDAY MORNINGS 11.15am-12.30pm

**Classes run 17 September – 10 December
(no half-term break)**

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
(no class on *Kol Nidre*, Tuesday 8 October or during
half-term on 22 October)**

**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.

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 (no class on *Kol Nidre*, Tuesday 8 October or during half-term on 22 October)

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.ljsexploringjudiasm.wordpress.com

See the top of page 12 for details of *Sukkot* term classes.

TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 8.00-9.15pm

Seminar on antisemitism

‘A noxious weed’: antisemitism in a disturbed political environment

This is the first of two seminars with distinguished academics and authors who have written recently on the subject of antisemitism. 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 Leao 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 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.

Exploring Judaism *Sukkot* term 2019

10 September:

Lecture on Universal Human Rights
with Francesca Klug; Registration for 2019/20

17 September:

Exploring *Rosh Hashanah*

24 September:

Exploring *Yom Kippur*

1 October:

Exploring *Sukkot* and *Simchat Torah*

8 October:

No session – *Kol Nidre*

15 October:

What is Judaism? Overview of Jewish Values
and Beliefs

22 October:

No session – half-term

29 October:

Jewish Ethics

5 November:

Overview of Jewish History

12 November:

Tanakh and *Sefer Torah*

19 November:

Rabbinic Literature

26 November:

Liturgy and Prayer Book

3 December:

Israel – People and Land

10 December:

Exploring *Chanukkah*

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



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

SHABBAT MORNINGS 9.45-10.45am

Classes run from 14 September – 7 December
(no classes on 19 and 26 October during half-term)

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 the 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 will also explore the historical, ethical, philosophical and ideological messages of the texts.

Exploring the Psalms in English

Tutor: 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.

Celebrating Jo Kessler's special birthday

Jo Kessler is not one to seek the limelight. She is one of those unassuming people who quietly and efficiently make things happen behind the scenes. She has contributed hugely to the LJS and the wider community in countless practical ways, and in 1996 was awarded an MBE for her services to the community in London. In celebration of her 90th birthday, we hear Jo's story.



Jo's connection with the LJS goes back to December 1938 when she arrived in the UK from Vienna on one of the early *Kindertransports*. A meeting had been held at the LJS calling on Members to sponsor refugee children, leading to Jo being supported by three LJS families.

During her time at boarding school in Kent and subsequent evacuation to Dorset, Judaism didn't play a prominent part in Jo's life, though she somewhat reluctantly completed her weekly correspondence course. Returning to London in 1946, she attended Confirmation classes at the LJS and started to have Jewish friends. She met Willie Kessler, our much-loved former President who sadly died in July, at evening classes at the LSE, and they were married at the LJS in 1952 by Rabbi Leslie Edgar – the Edgars having been one of the three families who had originally sponsored her. It was after the birth of their four sons, each of whom attended Religion School to Confirmation, that Jo and Willie became heavily involved with synagogue life. An invitation arrived from the LJS inviting them to join the Younger Members' Organisation, which they duly did, and which changed their lives dramatically.

Jo joined the Women's Society, later becoming its Secretary, and was instrumental in setting up the Community Care group, now an integral part of the LJS. Jo's many and various volunteering tasks included running the Nursery School, providing tea parties, setting up Friday night dinners, involvement with the initial Nosh 'n'

Drosh sessions, helping organise the Communal *Seder*, establishing Video and Tea, and assisting at the Out and About Club as well as Restaurant Tuesday. In addition to all this, when rabbis from the USA joined the LJS, Jo helped their families find accommodation and schools for their children.

Although Jo has helped people across the age range, she has always taken a special interest in the elderly. She would invite older Members to her home for lunch and arranged outings – known as 'Jo's Journeys' – to places of interest. A particular enterprise, the Peggy Lang House – the very first Jewish Abbeyfield Society Home – played a prominent part in Jo's life. She was a key player in the team who ensured the smooth running of this successful project which expanded to include two further Abbeyfield Homes offering residents accommodation, meals, care and entertainment.

In recent times, with Willie having been unwell before his death, and Jo now advancing in years, it's been the LJS's turn to offer support, and Jo says this is being done beautifully. But even so, Jo – who remains unbelievably youthful – is still visiting the sick and is still very much the matriarch of the Kessler family.

Everyone at the LJS congratulates you, Jo, on your special birthday, and sends heartfelt thanks for your decades of selfless volunteering which has greatly enhanced the lives of so many in our community.

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).



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.

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.

Forthcoming screenings:

25 September: *Blithe Spirit*

23 October: *Quartet*

27 November: *Coppélia* (ballet)

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

14 September

Rafiq Abdulla and Dr Mohamed Keshavee, both highly distinguished lawyers and writers, will speak about Sharia law.

Future Nosh 'n' Drosh dates: **9 November** with Dr Edie Friedman talking about why asylum seekers should have the right to work, and **14 December** with Suzanne Higgott, Curator at the Wallace Collection, speaking about Sir Richard Wallace: connoisseur, collector and philanthropist.

LOCAL WALKING GROUP

Our next walks will be on **Thursday 12 September** and **Thursday 10 October**, 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 / 07765 214867 or contact Michael Romain on romain@netgates.co.uk / 07818 000849.

RESTAURANT TUESDAY – relaunched!

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 every 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 lunches are on **17 September, 15 October** and **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 September

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Aman Abib | Rachel Kops |
| Edoardo Armstrong | Talia Ting Hui Kriegel |
| Brooke Behr | Electra Levi-French |
| Max Daals | Heath Rosenblatt |
| Cedric Ginsberg | Brooke Shipman |
| Leila Goldstone | Claudia Spanier |
| Joshua Gulperin | Zachary Wald |
| Charlotte Korn | |

Tiny Tots at the LJS

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. Tiny Tots restarts on Shabbat 14 September.

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 if you would like to be added to the Tiny Tots email circulation list.

Please note:

Rimon classes start on Shabbat 14 September

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 at: rabbispa@ljs.org

Winners of the LAFTA!

Congratulations go to everyone at the LJS, especially *Rimon* students, who were involved in the short documentary film which was joint winner with Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue of this year's LAFTA (Liberal Academy for Film and *Torah* Awards). This is a competition where Liberal Judaism religion schools are asked to make a short film on a Jewish topic, the theme of which is linked to that selected for the LJ Day of Celebration. This year the theme was 'the individual and the community', and the LJS film focusses on the activities of the Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families for which *Rimon* students volunteer. In it they explain with great thoughtfulness why they choose to volunteer and what they get out of it. To watch the film, go to: <https://youtu.be/ZIVAW3z0F1o>

The values of the Drop-In are:

Community, Openness, Mutual respect, Meaningful, Understanding, Non-judgemental, Inclusive, Trust and Yes – an affirmation of support for our social justice programme.

Together these values build the word 'Community', which is at the heart of Liberal Judaism. This wonderful film shows this in action.



This beautiful camel is the mascot for the Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

Bar Mitzvah Boy Raymon Benedyk

When a 13-year-old Raymon Benedyk, later to become our Synagogue Secretary, was asked by his father whether he wanted a *Bar Mitzvah*, the answer was a resounding 'no'. The negative experiences recounted by some six or seven older male cousins had put him off the idea. But a mere 80 years later, he changed his mind, and so it was that the Benedyk family and the LJS congregation had the great pleasure of attending Raymon's delayed *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony on 13 July.



After *Kiddush*, Raymon addressed a very well-attended Nosh 'n' Drosh session, focussing on his time as a 'Bevin Boy' – a largely unacknowledged aspect of World War II. By 1943 Britain was becoming desperate for coal required both for the war effort and for keeping homes warm. To address the manpower shortage, Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, implemented a scheme whereby one in ten young men called up for service would be randomly selected to work in the mines even if they had, as was the case with Raymon, volunteered to serve in the fighting forces.

Raymon was one such recruit and was dispatched to Doncaster. The vivid description which he gave of just how arduous and dangerous this work was made a great impression on us. We learned that a high proportion of the 48,000 'Bevin Boys', as they became known, suffered terrible and long-lasting injuries, and many died. They additionally had to bear hurtful and completely unjustified accusations that they were deliberately avoiding military conscription. Indeed, it wasn't until 1995, the 50th anniversary of VE Day, that the Queen gave them proper recognition for their crucial role in helping win the war.

Despite so much darkness in his story, Raymon nevertheless delivered it with great wit. Everyone present was moved both by Raymon's later-in-life *Bar Mitzvah* and his gripping account of his wartime service.

We salute you, Raymon.

Final copy date for the October edition of *LJS News* is Monday 9 September. Copy and ideas should be emailed to: newsletter@ljs.org

Printed by Premier Print,
38-40 London Industrial Estate, London E6 6LP

The paper which *LJS News* is printed on comes from a sustainable source.

© The Liberal Jewish Synagogue 2019

The LJS is a constituent synagogue of Liberal Judaism

liberal judaism 

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

Patrons

Joy and Richard Desmond
Jo and the late Willie Kessler
Suzy and Peter Osband
Martin Slowe
Michele and Rick Senat
Janine and Michael Sternberg
Christine Stevenson

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue is a company limited by guarantee (Company No 9113305) and a registered charity in England and Wales (Charity No 1159292).

Registered office:
28 St John's Wood Road
London NW8 7HA
Tel 020 7286 5181
Fax 020 7266 3591

Linked to Typetalk
Email ljs@ljs.org
Website www.ljs.org

Senior Rabbi

Alexandra Wright

Rabbis

Elana Dellal
Igor Zinkov

Scholar in Residence

Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton

President

Martin Slowe

Chairman of Council

Sue Head

Executive Director

Lysa Schwartz

Vice Principal Rimon Religion School

Elana Dellal

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)