

January/February 2022
Tevet/Sh'vat/Adar I 5782

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

LJS News



Photo by Peter Singer

The LJS Multi-Faith Chanukkah Celebration

On 2 December our now traditional multi-faith Chanukkah celebration was once again in person as well as online, with guests from all faith groups and from round the world participating.

After Rabbi Alexandra Wright's warm welcome and imaginative explanation of the Chanukkah story, we listened to the eloquent and thoughtful addresses of our four esteemed guest speakers: Zara Mohammed, the youngest and first female Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain; Bharti Tailor, the first female Secretary General of the Hindu Forum of Britain and President of the Hindu Forum of Europe; Rabbi Jeff Berger, 2016 Fellow of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue; and Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director at the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

Eli and Rosa Wolchover (*pictured above with Rabbi Igor Zinkov*) lit the shammash (servant candle), and the candles on our chanukkiyah were lit by representatives of diverse communities. Rabbi Igor then led the song *Don't Let the Lights Go Out*, after which the congregation repaired to the Montefiore Hall for individually-wrapped and Covid-safe doughnuts!

Inside this issue

Announcements; Services	2-3
Membership Renewal; Council Report	4-5
Profiles; Social Action	6-7
One Family's Judaism	8-9
Introduction to Sir Anish Kapoor, and his Kristallnacht address	10-13
'The Wood Wide Web'	14
The Learning Circle	15-17
Community	18
Rimon Corner	19
Social Media; Festival Dates	20

Mazal tov!

We are delighted to introduce you to three new important members of our LJS community.



Elio, born 2 December 2019, is the son and firstborn child of Tiziana and Andrew Parisi-Mills. He is pictured here two weeks before his second birthday.



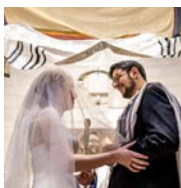
Noah Tadeo, born 12 March 2021, is warmly welcomed into the family of Diego Actis and Seth Rosenfeld. Noah is pictured here aged seven months.



Elijah Jean, born 24 May 2021, is the son and firstborn of Louie and Anthony Silkoff. This photo was taken when he was four months old.

Many congratulations to all these families!

We also send our warmest congratulations to **Avi Green** and **Matt Turchin** whose marriage ceremony took place at the LJS on Sunday 28 November.



Tu BiShvat – the New Year for Trees

On the evening on Tuesday 18 January the Exploring Judaism class is holding a Tu BiShvat Seder. If you would like to take part, please contact Rabbi Igor Zinkov: i.zinkov@ljs.org

Special tree planting ceremony

As part of the 80 Trees for 80 Years campaign to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), LJS member Bob Kirk was invited to take part in a special tree planting ceremony at the Whipsnade Tree Cathedral on Sunday 28 November. The oak was one of 80 being planted in locations throughout the UK relevant to refugees. Bob had been evacuated to Whipsnade as a child refugee during the Second World War.

In the photo we see Bob with his grandson Ben beside the oak tree. Bob is carrying a time capsule which will be buried near the tree.



KIT Tea Party

The Keep In Touch (KIT) group met for the first time in over two years on Sunday 21 November in the Montefiore Hall. It was a joyful afternoon of catching up with old friends as well as making new ones, and tucking into a delicious tea.



Bereavements

We offer our sympathy to those who mourn:

Joan Anderson, mother of Caroline, Sarah and Michael, and sister of Doreen

Rachel Bresley, mother of Suzanne, Jane and Sarah

Carol Gould, sister of Susan

David Pattarini, husband of Judith and father of David and Caroline

Susan Raucher, partner of Simon and mother of Steven and Ariella

We also extend our sympathy to Sue Head, Chairman of the LJS Council, and her family on the death of Sue's mother **Patricia Head**, and to Jessica Sokel and her family on the death of Jessica's mother **Victoria Shirley Learmond-Criqui**.

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

Services: January and February 2022

Friday evening services are held at 6.45pm and Shabbat morning services at 11.00am. The Rabbi leading the service will be either Rabbi Alexandra Wright or Rabbi Igor Zinkov.

At the time of going to press and in line with government guidelines, you are welcome to

join us in person, with mask-wearing required. Alternatively, you can attend services online including online Kiddush via the LJS YouTube channel or on Zoom. Any updates on this information will be communicated by the weekly email, Shalom LJS.

Friday 31 December 2021	
Shabbat 1 January 2022 <i>Va'era</i>	
Friday 7 January	
Shabbat 8 January <i>Bo</i>	
Friday 14 January	Co-led by B'nei Mitzvah Winter Simon
Shabbat 15 January <i>B'Shallach/Shirah</i>	B'nei Mitzvah Winter Simon
Friday 21 January	
Shabbat 22 January <i>Yitro</i>	Naming and Blessing of cousins Isaac Sternberg and Stella Sternberg
Friday 28 January	Co-led by Bar Mitzvah Sam Cooper
Shabbat 29 January <i>Mishpatim</i>	Bar Mitzvah Sam Cooper
Friday 4 February	
Shabbat 5 February <i>Terumah</i>	
Friday 11 February	
Shabbat 12 February <i>T'tzavveh</i>	
Friday 18 February	
Shabbat 19 February <i>Ki Tissa</i>	The LJS is delighted to be hosting the 120th anniversary service of the founding of Liberal Judaism (formerly ULPS and the Jewish Religious Union).
Friday 25 February	
Shabbat 26 February <i>Vayakheil/Shekalim</i>	
Friday 4 March	Co-led by Bat Mitzvah Nora Bielawski
Shabbat 5 March <i>Pekudey</i>	Bat Mitzvah Nora Bielawski

Purim event

An LJS Purim event is taking place the evening of **Wednesday 16 March**. Details to follow, but in the meantime, please note this date.

Membership Renewal 2022



Dear Members and Friends,

You will have recently received a membership renewal notice which has been sent out to every Member and Friend of the LJS. We realise that this has been another challenging year financially for

many people, but the synagogue needs your support so that we can continue to reach out, connect and engage with all our members.

2020 lockdowns necessitated a new way of working for the LJS. The Nursery, Rimón Religion School and The Learning Circle (the adult education programme) all moved online, and this encouraged our existing students to remain involved and continue to learn. The Rabbis were broadcasting from their own homes supported by the office team. The significant investment in updating the technology in the Sanctuary ensured the smooth running of the live-stream services, which have been watched and appreciated by so many and have been instrumental in keeping the community connected.

As restrictions started to be lifted at the end of March 2021, the word 'hybrid' was in every conversation as LJS staff and Rabbis, supported by volunteers, worked within Covid regulations to ensure a safe return for service attendance, whilst still providing access to everything online. This was highlighted by the full High Holy Day programme of services which required major levels of planning and organisation.

The LJS Covid compliance regulations were constantly reviewed and updated through regular assessments as government guidelines changed, permitting the LJS Nursery and Rimón students a full in-person return from September. The absolute priorities have been, and continue to be, the safety and comfort of everyone who enters the building.

Creatively expanding communication is at the core of the synagogue's activities, resulting in new friendships and a feeling of inclusivity being formed through the ether, as well as physically welcoming a growing number of people back into the community.

In support of this, the website and Shalom LJS, the synagogue's weekly email communication, are constantly updated and honed to actively promote the extraordinary activities of the LJS to you all and to the wider world. Our new media include the LJS YouTube channel, a wonderful shop window, and a social media programme has been very successfully established on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

The operating costs for running the LJS have largely stayed the same. The staff continue to be paid for their hard work either working from home or back in the LJS office, and the savings at the beginning of the year in heating and lighting costs have helped support the investment in technology. Mick Daly, the House Manager, with the assistance of his wife, Sandra Watson, continue to keep the building safe and secure, and take responsibility for minor repair works and gardening.

Our religious, educational, social, and pastoral activities depend upon the dedication of our hundreds of volunteers, the skilled staff **as well as the financial contribution of all**. In these challenging times we need your help to ensure that the LJS upholds its commitment to enhance the lives of our community.

We urge you to renew your membership. Please be assured that no one is ever excluded by their inability to pay. If you cannot afford the full rate, this can be discussed and amended in strict confidence by a senior member of staff or one of the Honorary Officers. Please contact the office to discuss.

Thank you for your continued support of our LJS.

Gaby Lazarus,
Chair of Membership Committee

Council Report

'Wisdom strengthens the wise ...' (Kohelet 7:19)



Since September, Council has continued to hold its meetings in a hybrid manner, with people in the building and others joining online. The technology in which we have invested has allowed us to do this, and despite intermittent

connection problems, the result is a success with discussions flowing more freely.

Council has recently been updated on the work of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. This organisation represents all parts of the British Jewish community, the first port of call for the government, the media and others seeking to understand Jewish community interests and concerns. It works to protect the rights of all Jews. The Liberal Jewish Synagogue elects representatives, or Deputies, onto the Board, and four of them, Jonathan Bromfield, Harriett Goldenberg, Karen Maxwell and Karen Newman, spoke to Council about their role and recent experiences.

Many key issues are considered by the Board and recently these have included ways to confront antisemitism and the importance of education in dealing with this; the climate emergency and the action that is needed to bring about change in people's behaviour; social action and the relevance of Judaism with its underlying principle of social justice.

The discussion at Council included these topics and was particularly important in increasing the Trustees' understanding of how the Board works, and for the Deputies to consider with Council the values of the LJS and how they should be reflected in the work they do.

The LJS Deputies form part of a strong voice for Progressive Judaism on the Board, and Council

is grateful for the work they do on behalf of the synagogue. The Board of Deputies relies on financial contributions. Please consider making a donation when you pay your LJS membership subscription.

Each year the subject of education is the focus of a Council meeting. Recently we discussed children's education at the LJS. The new Chair of the Education Committee, Jennifer Gold, attended together with student rabbi Matt Turchin who leads Rimon Religion School, Caroline Villiers, Head of the Nursery, and Barbara Fidler, Chair of the Nursery Committee.

Council was keen to hear how education had been managed over the last year and the protocols in place for dealing with Covid. We learnt about the challenges of running a Zoom religion school and the problems of organising its return to the building. The Nursery School has remained open and in-person for over a year, and Council heard about the challenges this has brought. The main difficulty for the Nursery School is to build up the numbers of children attending. Caroline Villiers reported that many are not sending their children to nurseries at the young age they did previously, and there is anecdotal evidence that many families with young children have left London.

Through these difficult times, the staff in Rimon and in the Nursery are bringing life into the LJS and building knowledge and understanding in children for the future. We are very grateful to the staff for the work they are doing.

I am pleased to let you all know that Chris Godbold has been elected as the Vice-Chair of the LJS. He is the Honorary Officer who takes the Council lead on governance and in recent times, on Covid safety.

***Sue Head,
Chairman of Council***

Introducing Members of our Council

We continue our series in which we introduce you to members who play a key role in the running of the LJS. On this page we read about two members of Council, and on the next page about our Honorary Lawyer.

Michael Romain



“ I was brought up at the Sephardi Synagogue on Lauderdale Road where my father’s family had been long-standing members. My mother’s family came to London in the 1930s from Lisbon.

I married Effie in 1980 and she considered

converting to Judaism but I had no wish to introduce her to the Judaism of the Sephardim. We decided to explore other synagogues and our first stop was the LJS. The teacher of the conversion class was Rabbi David Goldstein, a delightful man who converted us both to Progressive Judaism. I attended all the classes with Effie. We both feel indebted to Rabbi Goldstein.

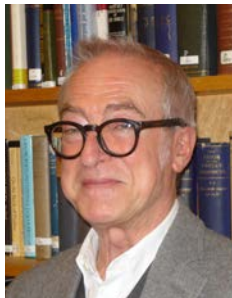
We were members here until 1986 when my business and the desire of both of us to bring up our then two children out of London took us to the West Country, and we lived in the Bristol area for 30 years. I became very involved in the Bristol community and was chair of the BWPJC for many years. I became an officer of Liberal Judaism during my time in Bristol. For a number of years I was also a governor of Leo Baeck College.

Upon my retirement, when our by then three children were settled in London, we decided to return in 2016 and now we have been members here for over five years.

Effie and I joined Bernie Bulkin’s Saturday morning study class which we found very stimulating. When he announced just a few months after our arrival that he was stepping down after eight years of leading the class I offered to take on facilitating and managing it, and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Effie and I feel very blessed to have four grandchildren, who keep us busy. ”

Anthony Sefton



“ I grew up at the North London Progressive Synagogue, and attended the religion school on Sunday mornings, although I can’t honestly say that I enjoyed going! However, I did have a bar mitzvah and a confirmation, as it was

called in those days. I attended synagogue on most festivals – I think it was the wonderful music and the cantor, Henry Danziger, that drew me to the services.

Around 20 years ago I became a member of LJS. I visited one Shabbat morning and was thrilled by the professional choir and Rabbi David Goldberg’s sermon. I telephoned the office the following Monday morning to apply for membership, and am happy to be a member to this day.

As a regular attendee of Shabbat morning services, I was invited to become a shamash, and was subsequently given the role of Head Shamash. I find it very rewarding and it’s a great way to meet new people.

This is my third time of serving on Council. I sit on the Avodah committee which oversees the content of services and discusses the implementation of new prayers and practices. The committee facilitates a dialogue between the congregation and the rabbis, as well as with our wonderful musical director.

In the past I have volunteered for the Asylum Drop-In, which was both challenging and hugely rewarding.

In my life outside of the synagogue, I started my working life helping to run the family business which was a wholesaler to furniture and DIY trades. After the business was sold, I worked for 25 years in a specialist antique silver business. I am now thoroughly enjoying early retirement, living with my partner, Ron, in our new home. ”

Daniel Sternberg



“ I was born and brought up in the United Synagogue, but over a number of years both I and other members of my family found that it wasn't meeting our spiritual needs. I joined the LJS over ten years ago and have found it a very welcoming and friendly

community. I've also persuaded my parents and both my sisters to join. My wife and I got married in the Sanctuary in 2014 which was, of course, a particular highlight of my LJS membership – and of my life!

The LJS really is a synagogue that lives its values, engaging with its own community from babies to the older generation as well as the world around it, both through dialogue with neighbouring churches and mosques and through programmes like the Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families.

Until I was asked to join the Council as the synagogue's Honorary Lawyer, I had no real idea of the range and breadth of these activities. Attending Council meetings gives me the opportunity to appreciate this and to offer my advice and assistance when I can. I've been on Council as the LJS's Honorary Lawyer for about six years, and it is never boring. It has required my advice on diverse issues ranging from missing wills, real estate and contracts for photocopiers; I've enjoyed the challenge of assisting on such varied topics.

I hope that in the future we will all continue to come together as a community to worship in the Sanctuary and to celebrate important lifecycle events as well as festivals. More broadly, for the synagogue, I value its role as a welcoming and spiritual beacon for Members and Friends, both in and around London and now, with improved live streaming, across the world. ”

Social Action Report



The world we live in means that Social Action could be a full-time activity, so it's very difficult to choose priorities. However, at the moment, our efforts at the LJS are divided between four main areas.

We continue to support Sufra, and urge members to bring their contributions of tins and dried food to the LJS to put in their big yellow wheelie bin in the foyer. Food poverty in the capital continues to be a serious problem.

We also continue to offer support for the campaigns to end the forced labour and detention of the Uyghur community in China.

We have an ongoing relationship with the Afghan refugees who have arrived in Westminster, doing our best to support them by organising and distributing essential goods (clothes, toiletries, etc) as well as giving of our time and know-how.

Increasingly our efforts are focused around environmental issues. We are part of the EcoSynagogue initiative, and in November held an EcoShabbat. Effie Romain spoke to Rimmon students about the efforts they can make to care for the environment – simple things, like turning lights off and not leaving taps running – and she distributed wild flower seeds for them to plant at home to encourage bees and butterflies in their gardens. There is much more for us to undertake to make the LJS as eco-friendly and sustainable as possible; it's a work in progress.

On Mitzvah Day in November, a contingent of LJS members strolled down Regent's Canal equipped with sacks, grabbers and rubber gloves, doing a bit of rubbish clearing. We were blessed with sunshine, and appreciated the smiles and thanks we received.

Harriett Goldenberg, Chair of Social Action

One Family's Judaism

LJS member Mary Davidson, née Sebag-Montefiore, looks back.



My family, like all Jews, celebrated their Judaism in their own way. Fiercely loyal, fiercely eccentric, deeply serious, my forbears' ways of worship are enshrined in handed-down memories of a vanishing past.



One of the legends concerns my many-greats uncle, Sir Moses Montefiore (*pictured*), who used to dine with Queen Victoria. Indeed, she knighted him for his philanthropy and bold, worldwide work for the oppressed, writing that

day in her diary 'doing what I thought was right.' Her ministers, she meant, disagreed. Moses took his own kosher food with him in his carriage. As a child I thought this was incredibly rude – an over-pernickety insult to the Queen when it was such an honour to be asked; only later did I admire his bravery in sticking to his guns at a time when snobbery and antisemitism marched hand in hand.

Another story: In 1827, Moses endured a perilous storm when sailing on a humanitarian mission to the Holy Land. He wrote a letter describing the terror aboard, and how, when he threw a piece of his Passover afikomen into the raging seas and prayed, the storm immediately abated. This miracle he asked to be remembered at every Passover he attended thereafter. For nearly 200 years, his letter has been read aloud by the oldest family member, to end our Seders. 'Time for the letter!' we cry. My mother, Ruth, then in her late nineties, trying to decipher his tiny, squiggly italics, arrived at the sentence, '... the pumps were hard at work ...' and declaimed in her most fervent voice '... the pimps were hard at work ...'

Roars of laughter, the pimps and the pumps revered ever since, as much a part of our family Passover as the Exodus.

In the 1960s these Passovers grew so big – all the Montefiore clans coming together – that they were held in large London hotels. My father led the service, a solemn, formal proceeding underlined by the men's combination of dinner jackets and bowler hats. My brother, a schoolboy, was on hand to pour away the plagues, dolloped out of my father's lovely silver cup into a kitchen bowl. Murrain, frogs, lice, the lot. 'There,' said my father. 'Find a suitable place and get rid of them.' My brother never forgot the awfulness of wandering around a strange hotel, people staring, past reception rooms, corridors, staircases, carrying a bowl of wine, searching for a Gents. But he did it.

My mother's mother, Granny Magnus, born Dora Spielman in 1882, had a synagogue story. She was a little girl in her best floaty, frilly dress, upstairs in the ladies' gallery of the beautiful Italianate synagogue in Ramsgate, built by Sir Moses at the end of his garden. (It's still there, a Sleeping Beauty in a wood.) She leaned forward, the better to see what was happening downstairs. Alas! The candle that lit the dim interior caught her dress. She was on fire! Her mother, Emily (*pictured*),



quickly extinguished the flames. There were furious mutterings from Orthodox buffers below. Putting out fire on the Sabbath! Emily called out in ringing tones, 'What was I to do? Let the child BURN?' and the service continued.

My father told me tales of picnics during Passover week, when he and his brothers went to point-to-point horse races. No sandwiches, obviously; instead they had round matzahs stuck together with butter. But these, unlike bread, were so light

that on windy days they blew out of their hands and bowled like wheels down the race track as fast as the horses' hooves. My father and uncles found this very funny. They never felt excluded by their Jewishness in non-Jewish gatherings. They had a splendidly jolly attitude, springing from altruism, confidence, expansiveness, and probably affluence, and were loved for it. Consider this same period – the thirties – in Germany, where horror was spreading its evil mantle. How fortunate my family were, secure in Britain.

My father taught me Hebrew. I had miserly weekly pocket money – 6d (about 2½p), not enough to buy even a small sheep for my toy farm – but I earned extra cash if I did my Hebrew well. A busy stockbroker, rushing off early to London to work, my father gave me lessons while he took his morning bath, to save time. My nanny (yes, I know no-one now is brought up by an old-fashioned nanny) was horrified, and made me sit on the linen basket facing the wall, so I shouldn't see my naked father. My memories of my lessons are forever interspersed with steam, splashing, dropped soap, expletives and corrected Hebrew. But I've never forgotten all he taught me. The prayers are part of me.

Equally precious are my early memories of Friday nights. These took place in my father's pipe-kipper, book-filled study, my brother and I on the sofa, my mother between us, her arms around us. Two small silver candlesticks flickered on the mantelpiece, inherited from her grandmother, Katie Magnus, author of books of Jewish history, while my mother read us prayers from her cousin Lily Montagu's pamphlet, *Suggestions for Sabbath Eve Celebrations*, published in 1944. Flimsy wartime paper bearing strident words for children: *'Let us be better and do better next week. Let us try harder to do our lessons well and be kinder to one another, and more obedient and less ready to grumble.'* She also read us two books from Katie's pen: *Lady Magnus's Little Miriam's Bible Stories* (1871) and *Boys from the Bible* (1895), now very rare, and costing a lot on websites. Judaism, we learnt, was a golden thread, *our* golden thread of faith and loving-kindness. There was a holiness and charm about these Friday nights, impossible to ignore or forget.

Courageous acts of long ago burnished that thread. My father's mother, Granny Mont, was born Muriel de Pass (*pictured here with her sons*). The de Pass family came from Spain, and many of them died in the flames of Ferdinand and Isabella's Inquisition while reciting the Shema. Just a few escaped, via Holland, to England. Their brave gene continued; one descendant, Frank,



was awarded a posthumous VC in 1915, the first Jew to receive one. That led to a family joke: another cousin, awarded the admirable but lesser DSO, was forever known, but lovingly, as 'The Coward'.

In 1959, my parents were the first Jews to be officially welcomed in Spain after the Expulsion of 1492. (My father was head of the World Sephardi Federation.) A state occasion. Off they went, almost unrecognisable, my father in topper, tails and medals, my mother in a hat covered in silk flowers, dropping me off first at school, kissing me. I was 8. *I was* proud of them, just mortified by their resplendence. Everyone goggled. 'Are those your parents?' 'Certainly not.'

As a child, those Inquisition deaths haunted me. Fear! Flames! O, my forbears! What would I have done? Turn Christian, and live? Die a brave Jew? Run? Hide? And still I think of it, as well as the histories of the Holocaust, the survivors and the martyrs, in awe and homage. And equally of the enduring memories and laughter of family lore.

The wellspring of my Judaism come from these tales. I know it's all old-fashioned, peculiar and privileged, steeped in family history, in stories disappearing into incomprehensible mists of lost time. But it was as it was. Valid. And happy. My joy now is handing the golden thread to my grandchildren. I wish, when I am also history, I could come back and see what they've made of it. And what they will pass on to the future.

Commemoration of Kristallnacht (the November Pogrom) and the 25th anniversary of the LJS Shoah Memorial

On 9 November, Kristallnacht was commemorated with an evening of prayer, words and music. We were privileged to have as our guest speaker Sir Anish Kapoor, whose Shoah Memorial was installed at the LJS 25 years ago. Here we present the introduction (abridged) to Sir Anish Kapoor given by LJS member Jeremy Lewison, former Director of Collections at Tate, who served on the Shoah Memorial Committee.



Jeremy Lewison by the Shoah Memorial

Anish Kapoor was born to a Jewish mother and a Hindu father in Mumbai in 1954. His maternal grandfather had been a cantor in the synagogue in Pune, and Anish and his brothers were brought up with a strong cultural

awareness of their Judaism, which led him as a young man to live on Kibbutz Gan Shmuel in 1971. In Israel he began to study electrical engineering but soon found that his interest lay in art. It is perhaps a blot on the record of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem that they rejected his application to study fine art, but it was London's good fortune as the rejection led him to apply to Hornsey College of Art and then Chelsea School of Art, where he came under the tutelage of the late Paul Neagu.

British sculpture in the twentieth century had a strong presence on the world stage beginning with Jacob Epstein, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Their legacy was important for Anthony Caro and his contemporaries to rebel against, and Caro's in turn was challenged by the generation of Barry Flanagan and Richard Long. The trajectory of British sculpture had been increasingly towards abstraction and the conceptual, but Anish and his generation began to think in more humanistic terms, how to bring the focus of sculpture back to the body and the lived experience.

Anish's early works stood out as distinctively different from other sculptural practices when he first showed them in the late 1970s and early

1980s. Using a palette of red, blue and yellow pigments, redolent of those found outside Indian temples, he coated structures to create forms that evoked the Jungian archetypes of mountain, cave, void and mother. At the same time they made reference to the primary colours associated with the work of Mondrian whose geometric abstraction had a spiritual quality associated with theosophy.

The surfaces of these sculptures were fragile, and were surrounded by a penumbra of pigment suggesting growth out of the ground. I remember the excitement in the early 80s of seeing his first exhibitions at the Lisson Gallery, which led to the first of a number of acquisitions made by the Tate Gallery over the years.

As Anish's work developed, the overtly symbolic characteristics receded in favour of a deeper engagement with the void, with the idea of an absent presence, of a disembodied corporeality. These were works which could be understood through the prism of phenomenology. Either suspended as open cylinders on the wall, or hewn out of stone but with dark blue or black pigmented interiors, the illusionism of these sculptures was disorientating. To comprehend them the viewer had to project themselves into the infinite, to become disembodied and yet to have a bodily experience. The number of people who furtively touched the sculptures to establish their physical presence – both their presence before the sculpture and the presence of the sculpture before them – testifies to the power of Anish's work.

This first phase of his career climaxed when he was chosen to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1990, where he was awarded the

Premio Duemila for the best young artist. He and I collaborated on a survey of his drawings at the Tate Gallery in the year he won the Turner Prize.

International success increased the flow of works into public collections worldwide. From Japan and New Zealand to the United States and Australia, Anish's work was in demand. With scarcity of work and rising prices, when I first proposed Anish as an artist to be commissioned by the LJS for the Shoah Memorial it was with some doubt that we could afford it. I had been brought on to the committee after it had met for about a year without being able to find the right artist. I suggested two artists (the other is now equally well known) and there was also a proposal to make a memorial incorporating Czech scrolls, designed by Les Koski, architect of this synagogue. We invited the three of them to submit proposals, all of which were compelling, but Anish won the day. David Goldberg and I were adamant that this would be the right choice. There was of course a question of cost. The amount of money available really was insufficient, but Anish was generous. I remember him telling me 'It's about time I made some kind of Holocaust memorial.'

So what was it that prompted me to propose Anish to David Goldberg and committee members Bob Kirk, Edward Mendelsohn and Vikki Slowe? It was the sense of transcendence evinced by Anish's work, the idea that the sculpture was more than the object before us, taking the viewer beyond physical presence into a reflective space, into a state of suspension, neither in the world nor out of it. Through the power of colour and surface Anish creates a space beyond the here and now, a dark world, what the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas called 'a descent of the night, an invasion of shadow'. It is not a revelatory space but an empty space, a void, that seems so appropriate when recalling the horror of the Shoah; a space of the unknown that has its origin in doubt and not knowing but one with the potential of becoming. It is uncanny – *unheimlich* is Freud's word – womb-like, familiar and unfamiliar, what Plato described as the *chora*, both receptacle and nurse. And finally, Anish's unwillingness to

ascribe specific meaning to a work but to allow poetic meaning to accrue, or as he puts it, 'to bring things to expression' rather than to express, made his work particularly suitable to the difficult task of creating a Shoah memorial.

The sculpture is carved from three tons of Kilkenny limestone. It lies on the central axis of the building, opposite the Ark, linking the inner sanctum to the outside. In its hollowed-out shape it even recalls the Ark. The polished interior reflects light, creating an equivalent of the *ner tamid*. It provides a calm place for the repository of thoughts, a *makom*, an in-between space, a concept Anish frequently used to refer to when talking to me about his early work. There are many other Holocaust memorials but none more intimate than this. What is special about this work is that it obliges the viewer to be fully aware of their own presence before it but also to lose themselves. Anish's memorial draws them in.

Since its creation, Anish has gone on to have an increasingly distinguished career. He was the first living British artist to be given a major exhibition at the Royal Academy; he has created a number of enormous installations, not least the magnificent *Marsyas* at Tate Modern in the Turbine Hall; he has created the large Cloud Gate in Millennium Park, Chicago and the Orbit sculpture at the Olympic site in London; he has held exhibitions all over the world, and in 2022 will be only the second living artist to be invited to mount an exhibition at the Accademia in Venice. He was awarded a CBE in 2003 and knighted in 2013.

In 2017, on winning the Genesis Prize, the so-called Jewish Nobel Prize, Anish pledged his winnings to support Syrian refugees. He uses his fame to support good causes. And now in Oxford he has an exhibition of paintings and sculptures that, while providing reflections on the body and the *écorché*, made me think a lot about global warming. The paintings on view there are impressions of a different kind of holocaust, of the earth engulfed in flames, volcanic explosions and charred, disintegrating bodies. It is powerful testimony to the dangerous times in which we live.

The full version of Jeremy Lewison's introduction together with Anish Kapoor's address can be found on the LJS YouTube channel.

Conceptualising and Expressing the Unimaginable

We present the address given by Sir Anish Kapoor on 9 November 2021 at the LJS to mark Kristallnacht and the 25th anniversary of the installation of his Shoah Memorial.



Photo by Anna Dillphy

I want to start by saying that I am a Sephardic Jew. My father was Indian and my mother was a Baghdadi Jew, whose family fled Baghdad in the 1920s and settled in Bombay. Even though my

grandfather was the cantor at the synagogue in Pune, we were not religiously Jewish. We were brought up conscious of our Jewish inheritance but ours was a Jewishness of community and identity.

So here I am this evening with you on the anniversary of Kristallnacht to talk about conceptualising and expressing the unimaginable – an appropriate question for this time of horrific recall. How can we, in our lives of privilege, imagine the horror of such events? And yet today, somewhere in the world, equivalent horrors are taking place.

We human beings hold within us a deep beauty and deep violence. Beauty is around us at every moment and yet somehow, we too often fail to see it, or cannot allow ourselves to see it. Violence is with us as a constant. Violence *is* the inarticulate, unspoken, or unrecognized *known*. Violence sits within us waiting to pounce, it readily finds voice in collective acts of horror, political and communal. And yet, violence is deeply generative. It has a pivotal role to play in the formation of art. Violence and its articulations or its disavowals lead, on the one hand, to Mahatma Gandhi's actions of non-violence, and on the other hand, to the nasty neo-nationalism of our current era with its echoes of the violence of 80 years ago. It is my conviction that violence has also led artists to make their finest work – Jackson Pollock and Pablo Picasso amongst many, many others. I am saying therefore that beauty and violence

are inextricably linked – in scripture, in art, in literature we find ample evidence that beauty and violence are in a psychic continuum.

In Hebrew there is a concept. It starts, like many things in Jewish theology, with a word, *makom*, literally translated meaning place; place – here and now. But *makom* – place – is also the site of Abraham's sacrifice, the place at the centre, the sacred mound, the site of the First Temple in Jerusalem, by extension the place of the omnipresent. It is also a word for God.

Let's think about this. *Makom*, meaning here, now, physical, particular, is also a name for the ineffable, the distant, the faraway, the everywhere, the unreachable, the intangible. What a strange and wonderful dichotomy. In other words, the present is not present, the physical is not only physical. The *site*, as in 'place' is speaking of *sight*, as in the act of seeing with our eye, or our inner eye. This is precisely what art does. Like beauty and violence. Art is able to enmesh the here and now with the NOT here and the NOT now. *Makom* points at the poetics of the object, the imaging of the un-image-able: that without image, that which is outside of image – hence perhaps the Jewish disavowal of image? Mythological projections that emanate out of the physical thing; here and now turned into here and there. All objects have this ontological reality – or is it that we, or our eyes, are incapable of looking without projection, I mean the projection of love, the projection of hate, the projection of want or desire, or the projection of abjection.

Art then has a double being. It is present – here, as a physical phenomenon, but its deep purpose is mythological, tied up in otherness, as if in fiction, in the unknown and unknowable. The fiction of art is therefore arguably more real than the apparently real. Does this bring us any closer to 'conceptualising and expressing the unimaginable'?

Another way to think about this double reality may be this: this body, this physical thing that I am – my body, your body – seemingly describes me and you. And yet, when I close my eyes, the space I occupy is vastly bigger, unknowably deeper, profoundly more than this physical body. Is it that the inside is bigger, far bigger than the container?

Once again, *makom* has indescribable otherness. *Place* is turned into *space*. In this place, right here, right now, symbolically *makom*, the inconceivable, is around us. And I am not necessarily talking about God.

So, what then does an artist do? What do I do to conceive of the inconceivable? I don't wake up in the morning and decide that today I will make the inconceivable. All I can do is continue my practice and cultivate the means by which I might tumble into something I don't know or have not done before.

I am a believer in the Zen saying: first idea, best idea. In other words, unpreparedness is my recourse. It is my duty to my practice to de-educate myself, to de-school myself, and in so doing, to reach beyond what I know. This of course cannot be done as an act of will, but rather from deep practice, from continuous repetition and re-articulation.

In Freud's great insight of psychoanalysis, we see that continual repetition eventually articulates a previously unconscious psychic reality. Fear – sexuality – trauma and the semi-conscious – known. And sometimes as if in revelation the completely unknown. I describe this as an act of prayer, an incantation calling on the unknown. I think of the religious Jew rocking back and forth, talking to God, reaching into her deeper self, attempting transformation.

I once had a conversation with a quantum physicist, and asked him if, at a quantum level, there was a difference between the oil paint in the tube of paint and the paint on a great work of art once it had undergone the transformation that made it into art. He could not tell me. But I know that the alchemical transformation has taken place in the work of art. Material difference is real; at quantum, that is, physical levels and of course at poetico-mythological levels. The unimaginable

happens, but again not as an act of will. Psychic matter mixes with physical matter in some mysterious act of transformation or transmutation.

I have circled the topic I was asked to speak about and have suggested that the unimaginable is held in our deep selves as the unconscious known; that which I know, but don't know I know. *Makom* is the present unknown, linked to the subconscious, known. As if knowing and un-knowing are present in each other. Art nominates a site or *makom* for itself, and only in so doing can it speak of both what is present and what is absent.

I want to end by saying a few words about Rabbi Goldberg. When we were thinking about the Holocaust memorial here in this synagogue, Rabbi Goldberg came to my studio, and we discussed how not representing the facts of the Shoah might be the way of conceiving a memorial. Memorialising is done by you, in witness, to something that gives space to the inconceivable or the mysterious. If it is that the artist is a mediumistic being, then it is that you, the viewer, that is the artist's accomplice in completing the circle of the work. Rabbi Goldberg was my collaborator in this way of thinking. I admire him for the fact that he had a great belief in the dialogue between the spiritual and the political. I admire that he spoke of the Bangladeshi immigrant community in the East End of London, as following in the footsteps of Jews who were once there and have, to this day, to endure the racist attitudes that were sadly the lot of our community in the East End of London.

In this time, when global capitalism has taken over our every desire, our every aspiration, our every utopian or egalitarian possibility, I believe that we have to somehow, once again, interrogate the link between beauty and violence, between present and imagined.

Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus, asked three questions, to which I have added a fourth question by the great poetess Adrienne Rich. They give reflection ...

If I am not for myself, who will be there for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?

And then, if not with others, how?

Anish Kapoor, 9 November 2021

‘The Wood Wide Web’

To mark Tu BiShvat, the New Year of Trees, Rabbi Igor Zinkov reflects on the role of trees in Judaism.



Trees may look like solitary individuals, but the ground beneath our feet tells a different story. Trees are secretly talking, trading, and sometimes having conflicts with one another. In his book *The Hidden Life of Trees*, forester Peter Wohlleben convincingly demonstrates that trees

are social beings and forests are social networks.

Forest trees have a net of fungus that grow around and inside their roots. Scientists call it the Wood Wide Web. ‘Adult’ trees can share sugars with younger and weaker trees; ‘dying’ trees can send their remaining resources to others, and they can warn each other about dangers, such as insect infestations.

Trees occupy a special place in Jewish thought. Judaism has a special festival celebrating trees – Tu BiShvat, or Rosh Hashanah La-Ilanot, literally the New Year of Trees.

Tu BiShvat means the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Sh’vat. In biblical times, this day had no celebratory significance, but an agricultural one. There is a Torah law that forbids Jews from collecting the fruit of new trees for three years after they have been planted. The fourth year’s fruit was to be tithed to the Temple (*Leviticus* 19:23-25). Tu BiShvat was merely a date on the calendar that helped Jewish farmers establish exactly when they should bring their produce of fruit from recently planted trees to the Temple. On the fifteenth day of Sh’vat all trees were declared one year older, even if they had been planted just a day before. In other words, Tu BiShvat was the equivalent of the modern tax return date and the beginning of the new fiscal year.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jewish people were dispersed around the world. The commandment of tithing could no longer be upheld, and Tu BiShvat lost its original significance. From a formal agricultural meaning, the festival

gradually acquired the meaning of nostalgia for the Land of Israel. Trees, therefore, became the symbol of desired stability and the hope that one day Jews could ‘put down roots’ and become permanent residents in their land.

Rabbinic literature developed a rich body of wisdom literature with trees at its centre. Early rabbis saw trees as a symbol of connection between generations, and the moral responsibility to think of long-lasting consequences.

The rabbis noticed that a tree was the focus of the first human moral dilemma when Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge. A Talmudic interpretation holds that this was a fig tree (*Sanhedrin* 70a-b). Even though the fig tree was the cause of their exile from paradise, the tree also offered them the first step towards physical and spiritual redemption by providing Adam and Eve with fig leaves to cover their nakedness.

According to another midrash, Honi the Circle-Drawer fell asleep by a carob tree for 70 years. When he woke up, he discovered that the tree had outlived the person who had planted it (*Ta’anit* 23a).

A long time before scientists discovered the Wood Wide Web with its marvellous and complex system of interconnectedness, Judaism saw trees as a metaphorical link between people. Today we know this connection is not only between people, but between all living things, including trees. Modern Jews see Tu BiShvat as an authentic opportunity to raise environmental concerns.

May this Tu BiShvat be a time when we express our hopes and yearnings for stability, sustainability and harmony between people and nature.

‘Carob Tree Boulevard’
by Ori Reisman,
Israel Museum
(Bridgeman Images)





The Learning Circle

Adult education classes at the LJS

Purim term

Tuesday classes start on 11 January, apart from Exploring Judaism which starts on 4 January, with half-term on 15 February. Wednesday evening classes start 12 January with half-term on 16 February. Shabbat morning classes start on 15 January, apart from Learning with Texts which starts on 8 January, with half-term on 12 and 19 February.

Please refer to the weekly Shalom LJS email, visit the LJS website or contact Debi Penhey: education@ljs.org for up-to-date information on whether classes are in-person, on Zoom or hybrid. If classes are solely on Zoom, irrespective of Covid restrictions, this is indicated.

TUESDAY MORNINGS 11.15 – 12.30pm

Tuesday Texts (on Zoom)

This friendly group is led by our Rabbis and Dr Dov Softi. We study biblical and rabbinic texts, modern poetry and short stories, as well as Jewish history, and we enjoy sessions on Jewish art and music. The class is based around discussion on a variety of topics, the starting point being a text, painting or piece of music. New students are always welcome.

TUESDAY EVENINGS 5.45 – 6.45pm

Reading Joshua

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi (on Zoom)

This course aims to increase students' understanding of Biblical Hebrew. The class reads key chapters in the Book of Joshua, and discusses the interactions of the text and how it fits into the Biblical Hebrew canon. We study the grammatical structure of sentences as well as extend our Hebrew vocabulary. The course is suitable for those who can read Hebrew and wish to practise reading as well as discuss the meaning of the text.

TUESDAY EVENINGS 7.00 – 8.00pm

Classical Hebrew for Not Quite Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander (on Zoom)

This is a fun and supportive class which began with Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders*, and has

now moved on to grammar, liturgy and the Bible. New students who would like practice in reading and understanding key prayers are also welcome.

This class is a continuation of the Absolute Beginners class that began in September 2021.

Understanding Hebrew Grammar

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi (on Zoom)

The aim of this class is to enable students to understand the Hebrew prayers and songs used in services. Those joining the class will need basic reading skills, and we spend some time each week increasing reading fluency. We look at the basics of Hebrew grammar using the textbook *Prayerbook Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase from the LJS, £34.00) and build up your vocabulary as we go. The class also read key Torah portions to reinforce the basic grammar and to understand the geography of the Torah.

Gaining Confidence in Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Sally Gold (on Zoom)

If you can read a little Hebrew, no matter how long ago or how recently, this highly supportive, informal class will help you to gain confidence. Our reading of *Bereishit* (Genesis) is guided and at your own pace, with questions about the language and texts encouraged. As you gain skills and understanding, you will be on the path towards greater enjoyment and participation in synagogue services, using the Siddur, Bible reading and Jewish life cycle, for all of which Hebrew is the key.

Narrative and Counter-Narrative:

The Story of Joseph

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright (on Zoom)

From the very beginning of the story of Joseph, we are aware of an undertow to the plot. Jacob is 'settled' in the land of Canaan, but his 'settled' status is about to be overturned by the loss of his favourite child. His brothers plan to kill him, but then sell him to traffickers, telling their father he has been 'torn to pieces' by a wild animal.

Joseph is taken to Egypt, escaping the toxic jealousy of his brothers. But is this where he can flourish, or is there a poignant awareness of his own losses as he experiences years of imprisonment and then a sudden rise to power? The text is studied in Hebrew, and we welcome readers with different levels of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

TUESDAY EVENINGS 8.10 – 9.15pm

Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah Class

Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright (on Zoom)

This class is for adults who would like to celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah either individually or as part of a group. The sessions will build on existing Hebrew and Jewish knowledge by studying different passages from the Torah, and students will learn how to construct a *D'var Torah* (their own interpretation of a Torah portion) using the text itself, medieval commentators, midrash and contemporary commentaries.

Exploring Judaism

Tutor: Rabbi Igor Zinkov

Exploring Judaism is for people, including non-Jewish family members, who wish to know more about Judaism, Jewish history and the Jewish people. It is also an essential programme of instruction for people choosing Judaism by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read materials which will be put 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. The syllabus is in the Learning Circle brochure, available on the LJS website (www.ljs.org) and resources can be found on: <https://tinyurl.com/ljsexploring>

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 6.00 – 7.00pm

Classical Hebrew for Absolute Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander (on Zoom)

If you know absolutely nothing about reading Hebrew but want to learn, this class is for you. Using Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* (available for purchase from the LJS, £15.00), this class will enable you to unlock the mystery of the Hebrew letters and start reading. Absolutely

no previous knowledge is required, just regular attendance of this friendly and supportive class.

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7.00 – 8.00pm

Classical Hebrew for Advanced Beginners

Tutor: Susannah Alexander (on Zoom)

This is a continuation of Susannah's Absolute Beginners class which began in March 2021.

SHABBAT MORNINGS 9.45 – 10.45am

GCSE Syllabus in Classical Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

The course aims to develop knowledge and understanding of ancient literature, values and society through the study of original texts.

Students will follow the syllabus of the GCSE in Classical Hebrew, will read and understand unseen passages of Biblical Hebrew, translate text from unseen passages into English, and understand the grammatical structures of Biblical Hebrew.

This course is suitable for those who can read Hebrew and have some basic Hebrew vocabulary.

The True Image of Female Biblical Characters

Tutor: Nitza Spiro

In response to student request, our learning this year revolves around the true characters of women in the Bible, understanding them through sensitive analysis of the texts using linguistics, psychology and history, and making comparisons with ancient Middle Eastern cultures, leading to surprising revelations!

The texts are prepared by participants during the preceding week, reading them in class in Hebrew, but discussing them in English.

Learning with Texts

Facilitator: Michael Romain

This class will look at how the study of midrash can affect our understanding of the Torah. We will look at the Torah portion through the lens of midrashic interpretation. Classes will be led by our Rabbis and by members of the class. All are welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Romain: romain@netgates.co.uk

Exploring interfaith relations

Tuesday evenings 8.10pm – 9.30pm

Judaism and Islam: A Shared History

Led by LJS Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton and our guest Muslim lecturer, Dr Harith Ramli from Edge Hill University

We continue this special course with a session in January, and three further sessions running until June.

25 January: Is every Torah scroll/Quran mushaf the same? This will focus on the drive to establish definitive texts in each faith. We will compare the evolution of the vowel systems in Hebrew and Arabic in the early centuries of Islam, and their implications for meaning and interpretation.

1 March: The duties and nourishment of the heart We will explore texts from the 10th to 11th centuries which developed notions of spiritual medicine and which influence our thinking about *tikkun/islah* (repairing the world) today.

10 May: Why we love Jerusalem Jewish and Muslim traditions and teachings about the holy city.

14 June: The Jewish Orientalists The little-known story of the leading Western scholars of, and enthusiasts for Islam, who came from Jewish backgrounds. This lecture, the culmination of the course, is the Rabbi Dr David J. Goldberg Memorial Lecture, and there will be a special reception in honour of our late Rabbi Emeritus.



New study initiative: LJS Chavruta – Learning with Study Companions

Join in this exciting study opportunity which launched in November and which is always open for new enrolments.

Rabbi Igor Zinkov has adapted a traditional form of study called Chavruta (literally ‘Companionship’) specially for the LJS: groups of two or three people study specific texts together in search of their meaning, then discuss how to apply their findings to their own lives. Chavruta fosters meaningful friendships between study companions.

The project has got off to a very good start with several groups now engaged in companionable study. Our initial topic is looking into each of the ten values which underpin the LJS.

The programme allows for continuous enrolment, so you can register at any time, and as soon as there are enough people to form a new group, that group will open. Everyone of all ages is welcome to take part.

You will be assigned study partners and texts. These texts will be from traditional as well as general cultural sources. The traditional sources will be in both Hebrew and English, so knowledge of Hebrew is not a prerequisite, and the experience will be meaningful even if you have no knowledge of Hebrew at all. The general culture sources will include poetry, art and book extracts. Your Chavruta group will meet for an hour-long session virtually or in person every month, with the opportunity of staying together or joining other study companions for future sessions.

To find out more, and/or to register, please contact
Rabbi Igor Zinkov:
i.zinkov@ljs.org or visit
www.tinyurl.com/ljsch



Community

Update on the LJS Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The loyal volunteers of the Drop-In team welcomed our guests to Covid-secure events in the Montefiore Hall in October, November and December. We provided legal advice, money, clothing and toiletries to our guests, as well as bags of food. Those who cannot attend in person receive vouchers.

Many of our guest families travel for several hours and are given a wonderful welcome on arrival. Smiling faces are everywhere. One of our guests informed us that she has been granted 'Leave to Remain' by the Home Office. We all stopped to applaud her, and she pledged that she wishes to continue attending, but now as a volunteer!

A nine-year-old boy informed me of all the stations on the London Transport map which he has studied assiduously. He was also proud to state that he can plan international trips for anyone.

We have enjoyed three happy events in person, and hope that we shall be able to offer an enhanced experience in the future.

Anne Cohen (Drop-in Volunteer Co-ordinator)

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

Video and Tea

Video and Tea is on the fourth Wednesday of the month. At the time of going to press, it is uncertain whether it can take place as planned owing to Covid, so please call the office first on 020 7286 5181 to check.

Our next planned screenings:

26 January: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

23 February: Spanish Fly

Jazz Night 2021

Peter Werth and his Jazz Crew return to raise our spirits!



Photo by Mike Beral

On Saturday 6 November the LJS opened its doors to nearly 80 guests – almost entirely made up of Members and Friends – attending the first social event for over 18 months. It was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and warmly welcome newer members in a relaxing, friendly, and Covid-safe environment.

For one night only, the Montefiore Hall was transformed into a Jazz Club. After a tasty two-course supper of meze catered by Penny Beral, plus a cash bar open all evening, a very appreciative audience was treated to nearly two hours (with an interval for coffee/teas and chocolates) of outstanding jazz, led by LJS member Peter Werth on drums with his guest musicians on piano, guitar, bass, saxophone, and trumpet. They were joined by the amazing Irene Serra on vocals, bringing her Brazilian salsa moves and lyrics, interspersed with well-known jazz standards and lesser known but equally wonderful pieces, each one greeted with enthusiasm by a very happy audience and applauded with gusto. The standing ovation at the end of the evening, thoroughly deserved by the band, was testament to the success of the event.

Many thanks to Peter Werth for bringing back his guest band for a second time and providing another entertaining and uplifting evening. Hopefully this heralds the return of an increasing number of social events at the LJS in the coming months.

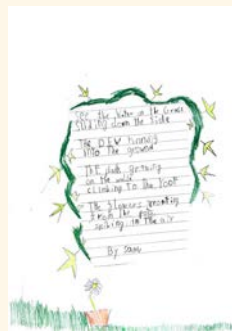
Gaby Lazarus (Event organiser)

Rimon Corner

Matt Turchin, Rimón Lead, updates us on Rimón Religion School activities

Reflecting on the Sukkot term at Rimón, we feel so grateful that we were able to be back in person and running our full Shabbat programme. While an important goal of our time together is the learning and sharing of Hebrew and Jewish knowledge, and we have added the communal aspect of mixed-age activity groups, the highlight of the second half of that term were preparations for a special Shabbat Chanukkah service. Our final Shabbat of the term was a L'Dor va-Dor service, an intergenerational shacharit in which our students took part, leading many of the prayers and even sharing a few which they composed themselves. Built around the theme of 'Lighting Up the Darkness', our service featured unique prayers which our students themselves

composed, and presented beautifully to our community. Students of Gan treated us to Fran Avni's 'How Many Candles?'; classes Alef and Bet read out their poems of thanksgiving; Gimel and Dalet took us on a journey through their response to the question 'What is Prayer?'; Heh reimagined prayer as the language of the eye (their beautiful drawings include those shown below by Samu, Zoe, Ava and Jazzy); Vav used the themes of light and darkness as a poetic and stunning visual commentary on the concept of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world); Zayin delivered a Chanukkah- themed call to prayer; Chet rewrote the Shabbat prayer to include the miracle of Chanukkah; and our Kabbalat Torah class delivered our Shabbat sermon in the form of excerpts from Jewish teachings about light and darkness in the world. We are incredibly proud of the effort, thoughtfulness, and commitment to learning displayed by our students in that first in-person L'Dor va-Dor service since March 2020, and we can't wait to see what they come up with next!



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

January

James Blumenthal
Astrid Cohen
Quincy Davies-Benjamin
Oliver Dellal
Valentine Desmond
Zara Gale
Mark Gelfer
Joshua Haller
Samuel Johnson
Isaac Kane

Joel Langham McLellan
Layla Lewis
Eleya Mordehachvili
Bertie Morrison
Amelia Osband
Tabitha Penn
Gidon Reeve
Sacha Rosenthal
Ellis Simons
Seve Solomons

February

Rebekah Allen
Theadora Bendel
Alexander Boizard
Adam Cang
Joshua Cang
Jason Covey
Tomas Cowley
Layla Grant
Daniel Isaacson
Alan Lach Stein

Rafa Lewis
Jeremy Mencer
Clinton Newman
Jake Phillips
Jacques Sellier
Gabrielle Sinclair
Hannah Spearman-Walters
Daniel Tahar

A social media success story



The LJS thanks Anna Dilphy very much for her major contribution to the running of LJS Social Media. Here, as she steps down from this role, Anna reports on the progress we have made in this area.

The Talmud and subsequent Jewish literature illustrate how Jewish personalities and communities shared, connected, and led each other across the world and over time.

Irrespective of their location, Jews network with each other, sharing the conversations and experiences that matter most to them.

Social media sites invite users to create a profile, connect with other users while sharing content and engaging in conversation; more or less a digital kiddush lunch, but with a specific purpose.

In the last few months, the LJS social networks have emerged, gaining incredible traction. We grew our Twitter followership to over a thousand, and our new Instagram platform is over 350 members strong and growing by the day. The LJS Facebook page and its sister page, Kulanu, have been revived, and the interactions are vibrant.

As more people connect through the social web, communities need to engage their social community online to benefit from making content accessible, and to allow community members to catch up with our many and various activities.

I look forward to seeing further developments in the future.

Anna Dilphy

Dates of festivals in 2022

Purim: starts evening of Wednesday
16 March

Seder Night (start of Pesach):
evening of Friday 15 April

Shavuot: starts evening of Saturday
4 June

Rosh Hashanah: starts evening of
Sunday 25 September; first day is
Monday 26 September

Kol Nidre: evening of Tuesday
4 October

Yom Kippur: day of Wednesday
5 October

Sukkot: starts evening of Sunday
9 October

Simchat Torah: starts evening of
Sunday 16 October

Chanukkah: first night is Sunday
18 December

Final copy date for the March/April 2022 issue of *LJS News* is Monday 31 January.
Copy and ideas should be emailed to: newsletter@ljs.org

In line with LJS policy, the paper which *LJS News* is printed on is recycled.

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liberal judaism

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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Martin Slowe
Janine and Michael Sternberg
Christine and the late Sam Stevenson

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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

Rabbi

Igor Zinkov

Scholar in Residence

Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton

President

Martin Slowe

Chairman of Council

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Education Co-ordinator

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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

Designers: Nick and George Newton

In case of bereavement:

In office hours, call 07976 930 112

At other times, call 020 8958 2112 (Cala's)