



PESACH REMEMBERED – AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Next year in Jerusalem

Cantor Paul Heller on the words that conclude our Seders

Residing in Jerusalem for two years during my twenties, and proudly bearing an Israeli ID with Jerusalem listed as my city of residence, I grappled with the city's rich religious diversity. My encounters with texts in our liturgy helped me to believe strongly in the significance of praying for Jerusalem's place in the world.

Allow me to elaborate further, albeit within the constraints of this page: in my daily prayers, in the context of Zechariah's prophecy and the longing for the day when God will be One and His name will be One, I am convinced that that day will become possible.

At our Passover Seders, as every year, we raised the bread of poverty, the matzah, and sang *Ha lachma anya*: we invited all those who wish to join us to come and sit at our table, a reminder that we are not alone. From the tones of *Vehi sheamda* to the joyful melodies of

Chad gadya, the Seder evokes a range of emotions, reminding us of the trials and triumphs of the Israelites' journey to freedom.

Music serves as a bridge, transcending words, and inspiring unity in diversity. Whether through the liturgy, traditional hymns, folk melodies, or contemporary compositions, music has the ability to foster empathy, understanding, and dialogue among communities divided by decades of strife.

At our choral concert in memory of Henny Levin on 14 April in our beautiful sanctuary, the words from Isaiah 57:19, *Shalom lekarov ve lerachok amar Adonai* (Peace to the near and far, says the Lord) were sung. This is a call to all of humanity. As we hope for peace in Jerusalem, *Ir hashalom*, the city of Peace, let us remember that Shalom is also one of God's names, therefore the translation of *Ir hashalom* is also 'The city of God'. In the final moments of the Passover Seder, as we sing the traditional refrain *L'shanah habah b'Yerushalayim*, 'Next year in Jerusalem', there lies a profound message of hope and inclusivity that extends beyond geographical

borders. This statement, while rooted in the historical longing for return to the homeland, also serves as a call to action for global solidarity and empathy with all who yearn for freedom and peace.

'Next year in Jerusalem' takes on added significance this year. It becomes a prayer not only for the physical return to a sacred city but also for the restoration of harmony and coexistence among all inhabitants of the region. Regardless of nationality, religion, or ethnicity, this aspiration speaks to a universal desire for a future where individuals can live with dignity, security, and mutual respect.

The vision of peace in Jerusalem becomes a powerful medium for expressing shared hopes and aspirations of peace, not just for Jews. In the Middle East, where conflict often drowns out the voices of hope, our liturgy and music can serve as a powerful reminder for reconciliation and healing, not only for the Jewish people but for all.

Let's sing again, with all our heart
– *L'shanah habah b'Yerushalayim* –
Next year in Jerusalem!

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ISRAEL CHARITY DINNER

Monday 13 May 2024

Never before have our charities needed so much support

BEIT URI | ASSAF | YEMIN ORDE

- Delicious canapés and dinner provided from our own Adam Nathan
- All wine and drinks included
- Live music from the London Jewish Male Choir.

Please invite like-minded charitable friends & family

Tickets still available – just £100

Book now by emailing office@synagogue.org.uk or through the website www.synagogue.org.uk/payment

PACK THE ROOM | DO OUR BIT | MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SYNAGOGUE SNAPSHOTS

Anthony Gee

Multi-faceted entrepreneur and Chair of our Israel Charity Dinner



What's your favourite thing about your work?

I love the variety. As an entrepreneur I've been very fortunate to be able to turn my hand to many different jobs in a wide range of industries. After working in the City, I ran a concierge and lifestyle management business

and then worked in property, distribution, lighting, football – and I'm now developing a new biscuit gifting company!

What is the hardest part of your job?

Probably managing employees, but also having to deal with all the paperwork, and the admin which I hate!

If you could do any other job for one day, what would you choose?

I used to run a football club from top to bottom. Not my boyhood team, Arsenal, but a much smaller team 200 miles north, Oldham Athletic. My five years there were filled with good times and also not-so-good times and running a football club with extremely limited resources became a harsh reality. The best day I had was when Oldham beat Liverpool in the fourth round of the FA Cup despite Liverpool having players with a wage bill that was 100 times greater than ours. So, to answer the question, I would love to run Arsenal, preferably for more than a day, but I guess that will have to remain a dream!

How did you come to be a member of Belsize Square?

I grew up at Hampstead United Synagogue, where I had my Bar Mitzvah, but I can't say that I was a very regular visitor. When my now wife, Anne Marie, decided that she wanted to convert to Judaism we were introduced to Belsize Square by my uncle, Allan Morgenthau. Rabbi Mariner made us feel very welcome and we felt that the warmth and openness of the synagogue was exactly what we were looking for. We were married by Rabbi Mariner, we have been members ever since and our two children were bnei mitzvah at BSS.

What's your favourite festival?

Oddly, it's probably Yom Kippur. It's a great time for self-reflection, and the haunting melodies of Belsize remain a favourite of mine even though I currently go to support my elderly dad at the Central Synagogue in the West End.

Where do you like to sit in shul?

I have no preference, although I generally go to the side seats, about halfway back. I don't like being in the front row!

SYNAGOGUE EVENTS

And the Angels Sing

Alex Antscherl enjoys a celebration of song



Ben Wolf conducting the Zemel Choir

In memory of much-missed Belsize administrator and lifelong member Henny Levin, a choral concert was held at the Synagogue on 14 April. Henny had been a member of the Zemel Choir and our Synagogue Community Choir and these two groups were joined by our Professional Choir and chazan Paul Heller for a delightful event in her honour. The programme consisted of a wonderful variety of liturgical music, interspersed with some traditional and popular Jewish songs. Highlights included an arrangement of Adon Olam (ViennAdon Olam) that Ben Wolf, musical director of the Zemel Choir and of Belsize

Square, wrote for a Zemel tour to Vienna, which featured familiar melodies including the Blue Danube Waltz. The song that gave the concert its title is a jazz standard based on an old klezmer tune, which was given a choral arrangement, accompanied by a clarinettist.

Songs that the Belsize Professional Choir had sung at the Lewandowski Festival in Berlin also featured, as befits the colossal influence this composer has had on the music of our Synagogue. A personal favourite of mine was Zemel's fantastic performance of *Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn* ('To Me You Are Beautiful'), a jazz song originating

in the New York Yiddish theatre in the early 1930s, later performed by singers from the Andrews Sisters to Ella Fitzgerald). When Ben had first proposed introducing this to the repertoire and performing it in a concert at Belsize Square, Henny had warned him that this Yekke community would not appreciate Yiddish lyrics!

Throughout the whole concert, the great enjoyment of the singers was evident, and was shared by the audience. We also appreciated Rabbi Rodney Mariner's warm recollections of Henny. The event was a most fitting tribute to her.

A CHANCE TO CHANT

Learn to read the Torah in just three days!

A short course with Cantor Heller on three Sunday mornings, 16, 23 and 30 June.

Our goal is for participants to become proficient in reading and interpreting the *negivot* (trope signs) so that they can confidently leyn from a Torah scroll.

Anyone who can read Hebrew reasonably well is welcome to join the course.

If you're interested, please email cantor@synagogue.org.uk by 12 May

CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY

A guide to inner work

Online course starting 8 May

Five weekly Zoom sessions on Wednesdays at 8.00pm

For login details contact: cantor@synagogue.org.uk

Studying the work of Rabbi Kalonymus Szapira, the Piaseczno Rebbe, who died in the Holocaust and his practical guide to self-awareness.

Notice is hereby given that the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

will be held in the Synagogue Hall,
51 Belsize Square, London NW3 on

MONDAY 3 JUNE 2024 at 8.00pm

To be followed by refreshments.

AGENDA

1. Introduction and Report by the Chairman
2. Financial Report
3. Appointment of Auditors
4. Election of members to the Board
5. Election of Board of Deputies Representatives
6. Discussion on Annual Reports
7. Any Other Business

Candidates for Election to the Board

Joe Brookes*, Michael Horowitz*, Frank Joseph,
Annette Nathan*, Marion Nathan* & Nick Viner*

*members of the present Board

Election of Representatives to The Board of Deputies

Deborah Cohen, Peter Strauss, Dilys Tausz

Under clause 17(c) of the Constitution, every member of the Synagogue not being in arrears with more than one year's subscription shall be entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting. Voting is by secret ballot of those present at the AGM and entitled to vote.



Our regular report from our Board of Deputies representatives
Deborah Cohen,
Peter Strauss and
Dilys Tausz

What has the Board of Deputies been up to recently?

Following the election of George Galloway to represent Rochdale we published a statement asking for all parliamentarians to shun him as a pariah. Two more vigils were held in Westminster for the hostages in Gaza. In response to growing antisemitism, the Board published resources for parents and teachers in non-Jewish schools, for Jewish employees to help navigate the workplace, and top tips for psychological wellbeing and for managing anxiety at the present time. For further information about these resources please contact your Deputies via the Synagogue office.

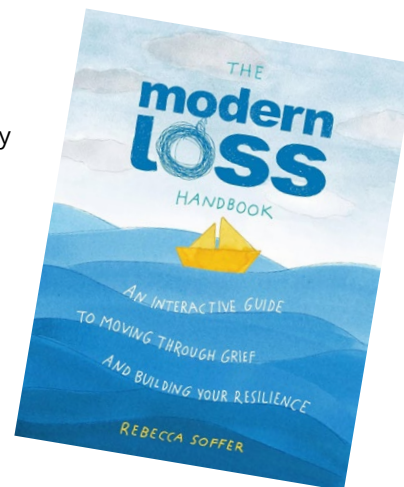
The Board's triennial elections for a new President and honorary officers will be held on 12 May. Although it is your Deputies who will be voting in these elections, you can attend the hustings which will take place in the evenings of 2 and 7 May and you can register to attend at bod.org.uk/hustings2024. We should be represented by those who will present the best face to the public in these difficult times for British Jewry and your Deputies are happy to take your views on board.

RESOURCES FOR BEREAVEMENT

Good grief

Eve Hersov reviews
a helpful book

The Modern Loss Handbook by Rebecca Soffer is a superb resource. I had the privilege to hear Rebecca speak last year about Modern Loss, an organisation she developed in order to help herself and others by sharing personal stories of grief. Rebecca's latest book abounds with practical ideas and common-sense guidance and is the most accessible bereavement book I have ever read. Rebecca gets your attention from the very first page and has created a handbook you can dip in and out of, which works even if you find you cannot focus for more than two or three minutes.



Rebecca talks about grief not as an academic or a therapist but as someone who has felt pain and loss acutely. She appreciates that it is something we are mostly not prepared for individually or as a society. Her own background is as a stand-up comic, comedy writer and TV producer so she knows how to communicate easily, directly and with humour and compassion. And yes, it is very Jewish humour. I wish that this book had existed 30+ years ago when my father died, and I felt alone in a country where practically no one knew him.

If you are grieving, supporting someone who is bereaved or simply interested in a good resource on loss, then get a copy of this book. And let me know if you agree or disagree with my recommendation.

Eve is Belsize Square's Community Care Co-ordinator and manages our Bereavement Support Service.

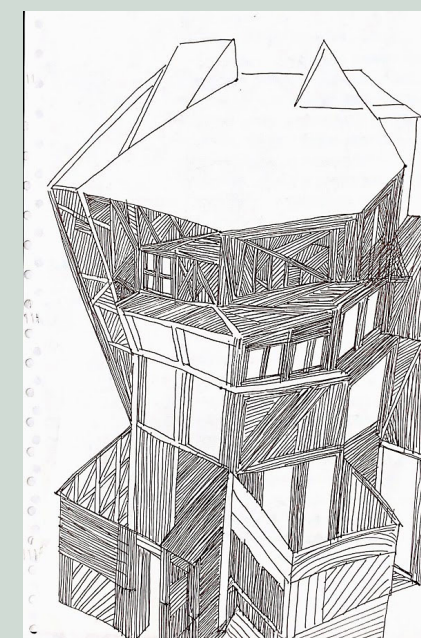


AN ARTIST REMEMBERED

Rosalie Ronel

Belsize Square Synagogue member Rosalie Ronel passed away in January this year at the age of 86. She was born in Bulgaria and migrated to Israel in 1948 and then to London in the 1960s after her marriage. Her two children were born in her twenties, but after an attack of meningitis she developed chronic fatigue syndrome, which affected her severely for the rest of her life. Confined to her home, and eventually to her bed, she nevertheless developed her artistic and poetic skills. Her work only came to light late in her life and her daughters Sharon and Leora hoped that showing some of her output would bring joy and appreciation to a wider audience.

We are happy to join them in sharing four of her drawings and paintings here, as examples of her wide variety of styles. Many more are available at <https://tinyurl.com/3n8h38u9>



FOR YOUR BOOKLIST

The Wingate Prize

Emily Kasriel introduces the shortlisted books and the winner of this year's prize

The Wingate Literary Prize, presented at a ceremony at JW3 on 13 March, is awarded to the best book, fiction or non-fiction, to translate the idea of Jewishness to the general reader. This year's shortlist was a treasure trove of wonderful books to read and to share and all are worth your taking your time to read.



Belsize member Emily Kasriel (right) with this year's Wingate Prize judges Rabbi Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz, Natasha Solomons, Ashley Hickson-Lovence and Benjamin Markovits

Kosher Soul by Michael Twitty: Illuminates through food an insider take on part of the Jewish community not yet understood: people who are both black and Jewish, with all their turmoil, pain and nourishment.

One Hundred Saturdays by Michael Frank: A magnificent and tragic tale of a precious Jewish community, the *Juderia* of Rhodes, and the survival of a young member through the trauma of Auschwitz and beyond.

Your Hearts, Your Scars by Adina Talve-Goodman: A poignant, powerful and humbling book about a young woman who grapples with having a foreign heart in her body.

Still Pictures by Janet Malcolm: A memoir about an extraordinary life lived among Czech Jewish emigres in New York. Intellectually curious, each chapter is prompted by another ordinary/extraordinary image.

The Dissident by Paul Goldberg: A compelling, dark humour, poignant, cold war thriller of intrigue, peopled with very funny 70s refusenik characters. Full of linguistic delight.

And the winner – **The Hero of This Book** by Elizabeth McCracken: It's pioneering in its form: a novel, a memoir, and everything in between. The story of one writer's journey around London, grappling with memories of her ever present but poignantly missed Jewish mother.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Relaunching Belsize Square's Keshar Committee

Synagogue Board member Marion Nathan on initiatives to keep in touch with our community

Keshar means Connections – and it's those connections that we want to enhance within our community, so I am delighted to have taken over as the Board member responsible for the Synagogue's Keshar Committee. We'd like to reach out to all who may feel that they need a connection with someone from the Synagogue. We make phone calls to our over 80s, we visit them as required and we offer lifts to Synagogue services and events. We arrange lunches for this age group twice a year, to get together and connect with each other. Over the next year the lunches will be after Shavuot, on

19 June, and after Chanukah, on 8 January 2025. Nearer the time we will be in touch with invitations. But it's not just the elderly who may need a connection with someone from the Synagogue. You might have recently given birth and the delivery of some meals for you and your family might help when you have so many other things to think about. Or you might just have come home from hospital and something to eat, or a visit from one of our volunteers or leaders, would help you with your recovery. And if you have just had a bereavement, we could help you in this way too and give you support at a difficult time.

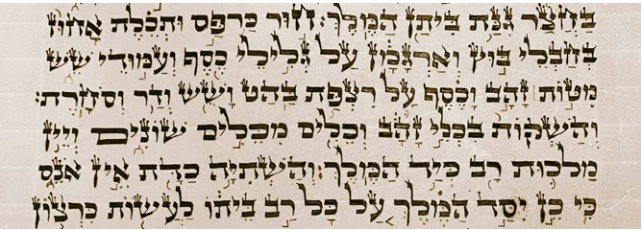
With all this in mind, we also need your help. The only way we can reach out to you is if you share your needs with us. It's a mitzvah to help others, but we can only do that if we hear from you. Please let us know what your needs are. We can also connect for happy events. Have you just become a parent or a grandparent? Would you like an announcement in News from The Square or in this magazine? Do you wish to celebrate exam results, graduation from university or a public award? Unless you make us aware of these, we might not know! So please keep us connected. That is what we are here for. Either phone the office on 020 7794 3949 or email office@synagogue.org.uk and either I or a member of the committee will get back to you and make those connections. We look forward to performing mitzvot together with 'Keshar', Connections.

SYNAGOGUE EVENTS

PURIM

David Horwell on a new megillah – and a great celebration

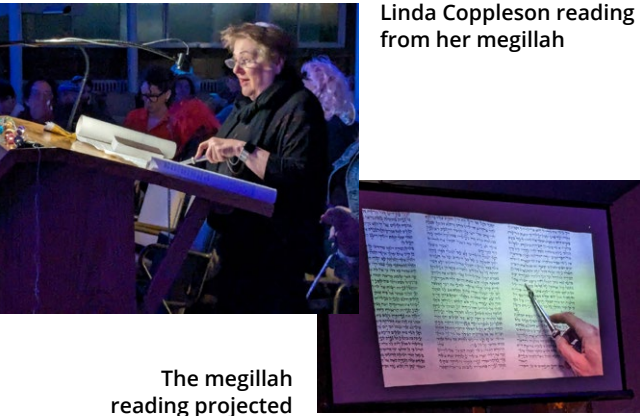
Purim this year was an occasion for celebration at our Synagogue. We were proud to inaugurate our wonderful new Megillat Esther, handwritten for us by soferet Linda Coppleson, a calligrapher and one of the very few female Torah scribes worldwide. Her work had included preparing the parchment, painstakingly inscribing the ten columns of 42 lines perfectly with a quill pen and finally sewing the sheets together to form the scroll. The project was made possible by a member's very generous donation.



A fragment of the megillah's beautiful script

Our megillah is special in that Linda has included the vowels and the 'tropes' – the tiny symbols that indicate the musical phrases for the chanting. Neither of these are permitted in writing the Torah, but they are permitted for the megillah, supporting Rabbi Botnick's aim to encourage more synagogue members to participate in the mitzvah of reciting the Book of Esther on Purim.

At our Shabbat service on 23 March we were honoured by the presence of Linda Coppleson herself. She had come to Belsize from New Jersey and she introduced and showed us her beautiful work.



The megillah reading projected

At the Purim service that evening, Linda, our Ministers and five synagogue members took turns to chant the Purim story from our new megillah – and the congregation were able to see and follow the text thanks to video projection. The festive atmosphere was enhanced by plenty of our members wearing Purim fancy dress – and by a very happy 'Heroes & Villains' party after the service, organised by a great quartet of volunteers!

NEWS FROM ABERNEIN MANSIONS NW3.

Dear Fellow Members

Now we enter my favorite month from the hole year. It sees us from Schpring into Sommer. This is not alone, it also brings with it special mamories. Not only is it the munce of my wive, Mrs Klopstick's burseday, but also, two long ago, that from our wetlock.

This time also brings us much clother to the elexions here in Grate Briton und across the pound in the USA. We hear in Abernein Mansions have a rule to not discuss politics. Althrough, I can't see what the fuzz is about with President Biden. He is still in his first flash of use. Certainly not at all two old by any means.

In the meantime Mrs Klopstick continues with her sporting live. She has returned to the jim doing jewjitzu, wait draining und working out on a punch back. This is too build up her strength in reparation for her coming up entry into an ultra marathon going up the Pennein Way.

Und vile mentioning strength, we soon will be in June und Schavuos, ware we celebrate the burseday of the Torah. Of cause, Moshe has ridden it in fife books. But was this also on stone tables like the too he carried down from Mount Sinus? Of cause, this wood explain why there are no wowels. Leaving them out wood make the tables und Torah so much lighter too carry.

Unfortunately, like Moshe, no longer with us is Miss Edith Krumhosen, who was a professional confectionist. She made the most standing out Schavuos scheese cakes. Now in the Mansions there are several competing for the best scheese cake maker. Among them is not Mrs Klopstick, who only tempted this wons before. In her recipe was ridden soft scheese, so she shose a very airomatic Camembert. This did not go down well with our inmates. Becourse most was left over, she wanted to donate it to the staff from Belsize Square. I was given the task of delivering it. On the way, I accidentally dropped it into a recycling welly bin.

With the best of intentions
Fritz Klopstick

ASK FRITZ

A congregationist who wishes to remain unanimous has asked me witch is my favourite commandment. It is unpossible to shoes from 613, including the ten originals. I prefer to make my own. Und this is: If you want a peaceful live, do not conflict with your wive.

SERVICES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm
Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Kikar Kids – Junior Shabbat Service

Saturday 4 May, 1 June & 6 July
11.00am in the crèche for under 5s Service
11.00am in the library for 5–9-year-olds
11.30am Kids Kiddush

Often followed by a potluck lunch

Contact Richard on rgpollins@gmail.com
for more information

SHAVUOT

1st Night: Tuesday 11 June at 6.45pm
followed by Tikkun Leil Shavuot
1st Day: Wednesday 12 June at 10.00am
2nd Eve: Wednesday 12 June at 6.45pm
2nd Day: Thursday 13 June at 10.00am
including Yizkor

CHEDER AND BEIT MITZVAH

Sunday mornings 9.30am–12.30pm

Enquiries to Head: Caroline Loison
caroline@synagogue.org.uk

Half Term – Sundays 26 May & 2 June

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Meetings take place on Sunday mornings in term-time.

Programme and Zoom joining details for each meeting will
be in the News from the Square emails every Thursday.

For further information, please contact Claire Walford
claire.walford@yahoo.com.

COMMUNITY NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:
Isaac Antscherl | Jackie Lesser | Cocoa Wagner
Hannah Klug | Isabelle Klug | Gabriella Lauffer
& Oril Pliner with son August

BNEI MITZVAH

Mazal tov to:
Kat & Jake Polonsky on Charlie's Bat Mitzvah
which will take place on 11 May
Philippa Ross & Toby MacDonald on
Blaise's Bat Mitzvah which will take place on 18 May
Tamara Moss on Ethan's Bar Mitzvah
which will take place on 8 June
Paula & Alex Keve on Eben's Bar Mitzvah
which will take place on 15 June

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of:
Vera Pollins on 16 March
Ingeborg Lesser on 3 April

SYNAGOGUE HELP LINES

BELSIZE SQUARE SYNAGOGUE

51 Belsize Square,
London NW3 4HX

020 7794 3949
office@synagogue.org.uk
www.synagogue.org.uk

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Thu: 9.00am–5.30pm
Friday: 9.00am–2.00pm

SHAVUOT OFFICE HOURS

The office will close on
Tuesday 11 June at midday
and will reopen on
Friday 14 June at 9.00am

SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY

Open to members during
office hours

RABBI

Rabbi Gabriel Botnick
rabbi@synagogue.org.uk

To book an in-person,
video or telephone
appointment with Rabbi
Botnick, please email his
PA Claire Austin:
claire@synagogue.org.uk

CANTOR

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07949 078366

RABBI EMERITUS

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FUNERALS

During Synagogue office
hours phone Synagogue

Evenings/weekends phone
Calo's (Undertakers)
020 8958 2112

OUR CONGREGATION

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David Horwell

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the Synagogue office

TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

TUESDAY EVENING 11 JUNE 2024

Shavuot Evening Service at 6.45pm,
followed by a light supper

We will have educational sessions, led by
Rabbi Botnick, Cantor Heller and other guests

Bring a homemade cheesecake for the
Belsize Cheesecake Bake Off – Prize for the
winning cake!

Programme ends at 11.15pm

Watch for full programme details in *News
from the Square* before Shavuot

