



Our Congregation



News and views from Belsize Square Synagogue

THOUGHTS BEFORE MOVING ON

Shalom, Belsize Square Synagogue,

Sadly, we are moving towards the end of my tenure at Belsize Square Synagogue, but my hope is that new opportunities and discoveries will open for both the congregation and for my own rabbinic journey that begins abroad on 1 July.

In the last *Our Congregation* I began to review my thoughts on some of the achievements and, at the same time, challenges that there have been and those that lay ahead for the congregation.

A few more areas for us to consider:

1) ISRAEL: You all know that Israel is a passion of mine. I am proud that many people in the congregation have told me that they have learned so much about the State of Israel, its history and reason for being, from our classes, sermons and time together. Israel will continue to be a major source of debate in the community, but I do hope that we will all realise, regardless of our political leanings, that there is a general assault against our Jewish state that is not going away. In fact, it may get more heated as tensions brew with Iran and there may be less support from the new administration in the United States. We have to be smart, informed, vigilant and ready for the arguments and the political posturing that may attempt to undermine Israel's very existence. My hope is that you will all remain part of the front line against these abuses and canards as Israel will need every single voice of support, given the powerful vitriol against her. I am thankful for those who have cared for Israel during

these past years and grateful for our trip there some five years ago and our meetings with Natan Sharansky, Ambassador Michael Oren, Rabbi David Rosen and other dignitaries. I am grateful for all of you who have made our Yom Ha'atzmaut dinners so successful, raising precious funds for our worthwhile Israel charities. But I am also grateful for the dissenting voices who have disagreed with me: the way we grow as a community is to invite healthy debate. Continue the good work. As the Psalmist says, *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem...*

2) LEADERSHIP: I am thankful that there have been so many wonderful leaders, committee chairs, members of the Board and Honorary Officers with whom I have enjoyed working over the past ten years. These are people who give their time and energy on a daily basis, just because of their love of the congregation. I would encourage you all to get more involved, to sign up for committees and get your voices heard. A vibrant congregation needs a constant stream of involved members.

3) CHEDER AND YOUTH: I am grateful for having worked with the heads of Cheder, Jeanie Horowitz and now Caroline Loison. They have both brought their passion for teaching our youth and their love of Jewish life to the Cheder. Parents, stay involved, let your children know you support the efforts at making sure they have a good Jewish education and experience. It will happen with your involvement and assistance to

Caroline and the teaching staff. Of course, as a rabbi, I hope that we will continue to "raise the bar", extend our goals for Jewish education and think of ways we can keep our post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah young adults on a Jewish learning path. It is vitally important to have the youth more involved in a wider community youth movement, as it is virtually impossible to sustain vibrant youth groups as single entities. I hope that the synagogue will be able to find a way of making this happen.

4) LIFE CYCLE: I would have loved to have seen more weddings at the synagogue – the ones we have had have been so precious and beautiful. At the end of life, we have had amazing representation in the running of Edgwarebury Cemetery. Our funerals, our shiva minyanim and our marvellous Bereavement Support Group spearheaded by the brilliant Eve Hersov, have been shining lights of my time here at the synagogue. Keep up your wonderful work.

5) SOCIAL ACTION: This is one area that needs a great deal of commitment and attention and I am pleased that the Tikkun Olam Committee has been set up, led by Deborah Cohen. We could be doing much more to reach out to other faith communities, to support our already existing programmes with St Peter's and the local mosque and to make the sort of Mitzvah Day activities in which we have excelled a more regular part of our community agenda. As Rabbi Tarfon taught us: *The work is much, we will never fulfil everything but we should try to leave a beginning for future generations.*

By now you will have heard that I shall be starting my new position in Sarasota, Florida in July, so the next piece I write for *Our Congregation* will sadly be my last.

I wish you all a chag *Pesach* kasher v'sameach.

Rabbi Altshuler

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Synagogue Snapshots



NAME: Benjamin Wolf
JOB TITLE: Director of Music

What's your favourite thing about your work?

I love the music at Belsize, particularly Lewandowski's music for the High Holydays. In general, I love the fact that I am able to spend my life rehearsing, performing and thinking about music, which is one of the most physically and emotionally enjoyable things that people can do. I also enjoy my academic research and teaching. I do wish that I had more time for composition, but it's great when it happens.

What is the hardest part of your job?

In 'normal' times at Belsize, perhaps the hardest thing is keeping musical freshness. This is particularly difficult given that we focus on a relatively small proportion of Jewish choral music (Lewandowski and Sulzer, in particular), and that people like to hear the melodies that are familiar to them. I also face other challenges, particularly the fact that I balance four different jobs! I should also mention the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic – rehearsing choirs via Zoom, playing the organ for services while simultaneously playing choir recordings from my computer, arranging and then postponing musical events, teaching online, and managing singers who go in and out of furlough.

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

I'd quite like to be a radio presenter – I've dabbled in it, but never done it seriously. Otherwise I think I would choose something outdoors – working with animals, or leading hiking groups somewhere very beautiful. When I was a child I wanted to be a train driver, and I'd still love to give that a try.

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

I originally came to Belsize to lead Friday night services after Cantor Larry Fine left. Sue Mariner had put up an advert on a now-defunct Jewish music network and she was obviously happy enough with my audition. I carried on doing that until Norman Cohen Falah was appointed as Cantor, and then came to lead the choir.

What's your favourite festival?

Simchat Torah. It's such a joyous end to a long process that begins with High Holyday choir rehearsals, and I really appreciate the whisky! Musically, I would choose the memorial service on Yom Kippur, as we perform a small number of really beautiful compositions.

Where do you like to sit in shul?

I don't get much choice about where I sit – or stand. I do like leading services, as it's really possible to focus on prayer without distractions, and singing is such a wonderful way of expressing feeling. But I'm also very happy to be up in the gallery with the choir.



NAME: Helen Grunberg
JOB TITLE: Community Volunteer

What does your job at Belsize involve?

I started doing catering for the synagogue and kiddushim for congregants' simchas after having been chef manager for many years at the AJR Club in Cleve Road, West Hampstead. Before that I had worked for Trust House Forte as chef/manager of various City establishments.

What's your favourite thing about your work?

Satisfying the customer and providing healthy wholesome meals.

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

I'd love to be a pianist.

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

I came to BSS as my grandfather was a member and blew the Shofar there. He knew the Hon. Lily Montagu too – she was one of the founders of Progressive Judaism and she supported the establishment of our synagogue in its very early days.

What's your favourite festival?

Purim is fun but I find the most meaning in Rosh Hashanah.

Where do you like to sit in shul?

Sue and I are happy to sit anywhere within our shul.

An Introduction to Rabbi Botnick

Jackie Alexander

It is my great honour to introduce Rabbi Botnick and family to our Synagogue. Rabbi Botnick will be working with Rabbi Altshuler for the next few months and we will all get to know him.

Rabbi Botnick grew up in Cleveland, Ohio where his family are active members of the B'nai Jeshurun Congregation, which was founded more than 170 years ago by Hungarian Jews to bridge the gap between the early German Jewish community and the newer wave of Russian Jewish immigrants. It is a synagogue with an organ and choir and a history parallel to ours. An intersection for me personally is that Rabbi Botnick's mother served as the first female president of the synagogue, during which time she recruited all three of its current clergy.

I asked Rabbi Botnick why he became a rabbi. He says that after university, he returned home to work in the family jewellery business and eventually to take it over. He had already been

involved in BBYO and Hillel and became Youth Director of his synagogue. He told himself that he would go to rabbinical school upon retirement – not to serve as a rabbi, but simply to engross himself in Torah study. Then, having moved to Los Angeles, he re-evaluated this decision, inspired by a desire to connect with others, in order to bring the depth of our Jewish heritage to life for them. He studied in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Botnick comes to us from the Mishkon Synagogue, located in Venice Beach, California, founded more than 100 years ago as the first synagogue serving Jews on the west side of Los Angeles. Unlike in London, during Lekha Dodi the Community would open the front doors,

overlooking the ocean, to welcome the Sabbath bride!

He has come to London with his wife Rabbi Rose Prevezer and daughter Lev. While Rabbi Botnick has not lived in the UK before, Rose grew up in Hampstead Garden Suburb and attended South Hampstead High School, after which she read Archaeology and Anthropology at St Hugh's, Oxford, and stayed on at Oxford for her master's in Visual Anthropology. Her rabbinate is focused on the intersection between arts and spirituality and she has just started working at JW3. Rabbi Botnick has visited London regularly to see his in-laws, so knows our city well. Lev loves dancing, playing football, making music, reading – and building LEGO.

Welcome to Belsize!



News from Abernein Mansions

Dear Fellow Members

For the coming year I have decided to turn over a new leaf. Up to now I have been very unsuccessful to find someone to act as an approve reader for my articles. Sicily Schwartz, who is a fellow inmate here and is well read, has agreed to look over my warts. I hope that in future their will be not so many typographies to be found in my articles.

Because Our Congregation is published bi-literally it is not always possible to be totally topical. This is why I have to take a broad spectrum of adverts in the future which requires some degree of speculation.

I am writing this article in the first grasp of February. A large portion of the country is just coming over being under water with flooding. I am just thankful that our flat is on the second floor and above ground. Last month the Covid pandemonium had reached out of proportion with new strains arriving from South Africa, Brazil and Kent. Now there is a glitter of good news with the vexations in full spillage to now over 15 million of the venerable population. I hope that by the time you read these words, you will have been impregnated as well.

The coroner virus has coursed much hardship. The log down has come as a big blow for Mrs Klopstick. She was especially looking forward to the Highland Games in Schottland, which is now cancelled. She had entered the senior ladies tossing the capon competition. Now the farther

news that the Glastonbury Festival is also cancelled is really for her the last nail in the coffin. For me the prospectus of Mrs K being cubed up in our flat like an aged tiger sends shivers down my spine. I personally have no problem being consolidated in our apartment. I have my riding to do, my button collection to abate and many household scores to deal with.

Since the services at Belsize Square are under suspension again, we hear will continue with BelsizeAlive. With the wonderful big screen in our communal launch, it is very much like being there in reality. Both the rabbi and cantor look really alive with this high-definition.

Despite this worldwide plaque, Mrs K and I are making our plans for the coming months. Pesach is not so many weeks away, and under my wife's guidance our communal Seder is all ready in preparedness. Of course, every safety precaution will be taken such as wearing masks during the meal and being always specially distant.

With so many from us having relatives across the Pond, we are very relieved that Jo Beiden is now in the Office. I hope he will bring peace not just to his populous but also expand his hand to the Middle East and Israel in particular.

With the best of intentions

Fritz Klopstick

ASK
FRITZ

I have been asked by a number of readers how to avoid putting on weight during the lock up. My best peace of advice is to belt up. Don't allow your clothes to go tight on you, especially the buttons. Avoid eating between snacks, and when you do, eat only half. In no time at all you will drop off.



EVELYNE STERN – A DIAMOND LIFE

Belsize member Evelyne Stern, who died in January this year at the age of 96, was well-known in diamond and gem circles and possessed a boundless knowledge of the trade. She served on the Board of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain for many years and was an examiner for their diamond course until she was diagnosed with cancer in spring 2019.

Born Evelyne Steindorff in Berlin in 1924, she was sent to Karlsbad to stay with her mother's brother in 1933 and was subsequently joined there by her parents, Rosl and Jerome. When Hitler annexed the Sudetenland in 1938 the family escaped to Prague. With the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, it was time to flee again. Evelyne's parents managed to secure a place for her on a Kindertransport organised by the Scottish Church. After a long, tumultuous journey, she arrived at a children's home in Selkirk. Evelyne's parents managed, through a combination of good luck and fate, to secure exit visas, so that they too were able to escape to Britain. Initially, her mother found a position as a live-in housekeeper in Worthing and her father found accommodation nearby while Evelyne went to boarding school.

The family was reunited when her father found employment in London and the

family moved to Belsize Park. Aged 18, Evelyne started work in a chemical laboratory. The director suggested that she would be better employed doing translations for him at the Patent Office and she moved. After two years there, in 1944, she was recruited by the De Beers' Diamond Trading Company to work in the diamond research department where she met her husband-to-be Werner (an early member of what became Belsize Square Synagogue). They married in 1947 and a year later their daughter Marion was born.

After the war when the Diamond Trading Company decided to supply the German diamond manufacturing industry, De Beers approached Werner to become a broker looking after German clients. Evelyne joined him in the brokerage firm. In addition, they worked with industrial diamonds, leveraging their research work, and forming a close relationship with a tool manufacturing company in Ludwigsburg. Evelyne's fascination with gemstones developed and she took two diplomas in gems and attended meetings of the Society of Jewellery Historians.

Werner worked as a De Beers Broker till his death in 1971, after which Evelyne took over his role. When the brokerage business dwindled, she continued



working with industrial diamonds and pursuing her interests in gemmology.

Despite the forced relocations of her childhood, Evelyne had a great love of travel. She travelled widely in South America, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. She was a frequent visitor to Ireland, where De Beers had a factory, and enjoyed an annual trip to Connemara with her daughter and her dog in later years. Her last trip was to the Maldives, managing to travel just before the start of the pandemic, during a short break between chemotherapy treatments.

Evelyne also loved opera. She celebrated her 91st birthday with a trip to Berlin where she saw Daniel Barenboim conduct Parsifal. Evelyne remained astute right until the end, valuing the chance to spend her final few months in her beloved bungalow with its beautiful garden.

VOICES FROM THE ARCHIVE

An Event with Alisa Jaffa



The Association of Jewish Refugees are hosting an online event featuring Belsize member Alisa Jaffa on Thursday 4 March at 8pm.

Alisa was born in 1935 in Frankfurt an der Oder where her father, Dr Ignaz Maybaum, held a rabbinical position. In early 1939 Alisa's older brother was sent on a Kindertransport to London. A month later, Rabbi Maybaum, his wife and Alisa were

granted a visa through the help of Chief Rabbi Hertz.

They settled in Cricklewood, where Alisa went to school. In 1948 Rabbi Maybaum became the first rabbi of Edgware and District Reform Synagogue and the family moved to Edgware. Alisa studied German and French at University and became a translator, particularly for art books, and later worked as a registrar for the Jewish Museum.

In this free event, Alisa will describe how her early experiences in Nazi Germany have affected her life and perspective, and what it feels like to give testimony for the AJR Archive. Visit ajr.org.uk or Eventbrite.co.uk to book.

VIRTUAL PESACH

Since we can't be together in person this year, our online programme has all you need to experience the Exodus together!

First Seder Night – Saturday 27 March

A recorded Virtual Seder for you to play alongside your own Seder with explanations and pearls of wisdom from Rabbi Altshuler.

Visit the Synagogue website www.synagogue.org.uk to view.

Second Seder Night – Sunday 28 March – 7.00pm

Join Rabbi Altshuler and Cantor Heller on Zoom as they host a live Seder. Ask your questions and sing our traditional Pesach songs in a relaxed, social Seder experience.

Contact the Synagogue Office for Zoom Details

✉ office@synagogue.org.uk

☎ 020 7794 3949

A HOLY YEAR IN ZOOM

Cantor Paul Heller

The past year has, without a doubt, been among the most meaningful of my career as a Cantor.

Around a year ago, an email went out to our congregants announcing that our Shabbat services were moving exclusively to our Livestream platform. Since then, we have together navigated a very challenging time. Our services have included clips from our archive of live-streamed Shabbat *tefillot* with edited sermons, Torah readings and B'nei Mitzvah, and virtual Passover Seder, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Tikkun Leil Shavuot, Simchat Torah and Chanukah events. For this year we are programming a Zoom Purim and Passover Sederim. I'm thankful to have had our Rabbi and Rabbi Emeritus as such wonderful co-contributors during these times and for the great support I've received from our administrators Lee Taylor and Adam Rynhold.

Our Cheder on Zoom hasn't stopped even for one Sunday and we have had memorable moments thanks to our

Head Teacher Caroline Loison's creativity. Kikar Kids has continued to offer meaningful Zoom services to our smaller ones. I have been offering an online course on Liturgical Music in Jewish History which has been very well attended, with participants from all over the world. Our adult education programme has grown considerably because of Zoom and we are also working on streaming our very successful Holocaust Memorial Day programme. We hope that a number of schools will be able to 'attend' via Zoom.

On the High Holydays we blew the Shofar in the courtyard of our Sanctuary. We literally opened the gates of our Synagogue for a 'virtual congregation' – a holy space so we could pray together, joined by many non-members from far and wide. We have cried with the bereaved in the funerals, where sometimes only two family members could be present. We have sat Shivah 'virtually' on screens with our families. Each of these moments was moving and transformative. Your help, feedback,

love and support inspired me to try to do more every day. We have re-imagined what our Judaism looks like.

That is why we must be thankful for having reached this moment. Now that the vaccines are being rolled out for so many of us, we can look forward to meeting in person again. I want to thank all of you who have inspired the holy work we do at Belsize Square Synagogue.

Let us all say two blessings:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh
'Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season'

and

Baruch atah Adonai, rofeh kol basar, umafla la'asot
'Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all flesh and acts wondrously'.

HOW TO HOST A SEDER ON ZOOM

Caroline Loison

Just over a year ago, millions of Jews all over the world downloaded the Zoom app in time for Pesach, to hold Seder nights virtually for the first time ever. Now Pesach is just around the corner again and many of us, including my family, will be Zooming our Seder once more. This year, we have the benefit of 12 months' experience of using Zoom for Cheder, Kikar Kids, B² quizzes, endless meetings and, for my family, even a 'Zoomitzvah'. Most things are possible on Zoom but it takes a little imagination so I hope you will find my Top Ten Tips for hosting a 'Zeder' useful this Pesach.

1. **Time matters.** Aim to keep the before-and after-meal sections of your Zeder to no more than 30 minutes each or people might feel 'Zoomed-out'.
2. **Be prepared.** If you intend to share a document with your participants, have it open in advance on your computer.
3. **Share sound.** If you're going to play any videos with music etc, tick the 'share sound' box to the bottom left of the 'share screen' box.
4. **Mute all.** If you're the host, you have the power to 'mute all'. It works every time!
5. **Think of your audience.** Many youngsters are now used to fast-paced Zoom lessons with videos, audio clips and stories so do some research and find some fun songs, pictures, video clips etc to share. Try brettlubarsky.com/holiday-resources or The Maccabeats' version of Dayenu on YouTube. At haggadot.com you can create your own Haggadah. And the littlest guests will love the Sesame Street 'Les Matzarables' afikoman hunt on YouTube.
6. **Be creative.** You may not be able to hide the afikoman for the children to find so use your imagination and think of a different way to do this: run a scavenger hunt, share a search-and-find puzzle image, set a riddle to solve.
7. **Record your Zeder.** I really hope this will be the last Zeder of our time so why not change your Zoom settings and record it to share it with your participants afterwards? It will show how you adapted your Judaism in these tricky times.
8. **Make it interactive.** Engage participants with activities such as interactive quizzing on Kahoot!, play 'Plague charades' or download a Seder Bingo in advance to play throughout the evening.
9. **Gallery View.** As the host, you want to see all your participants at the same time so use Gallery View, but participants may prefer to select Speaker View or 'pin' the host screen to keep it visible.
10. **Do it your way.** Just as you would in person, your Zeder should reflect your style and your family traditions. Your participants will love it because it's bringing everyone together, so ENJOY.

Chag Pesach Sameach from me to all of you!



Community News

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to:

Graine McLoughlin & Spencer Bright and their son Daithi
Richard Sherwood with children Freddie, Daisy, Harry & Alfie
Naomi Layish
Lauren Keller
Isaac Sneade
Lauren Sneade
Georgie Strauss
Joan Shaw
Penny Shaw

BIRTHS

Congratulations and mazal tov to:

Lara & Dan Rothman on the birth of their daughter Maggie Sandy
Spencer Bright & Grainne McLoughlin on the birth of their son Daithi
Faye & Ran Levin on the birth of their daughter Eden
Alexa & Robert Jakobi on the birth of their daughter Isla

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of:
Anneliese Goldstein on 12 January

Invitation to Nominate Candidates for Membership of the Board of The Belsize Square Synagogue (The Synagogue)

The sixth Annual General Meeting of The Synagogue (the AGM) will be held on **Monday 7 June**. Formal notice will be given in due course. The Board hereby invites the members of The Synagogue to nominate candidates for election to the Board for a period of three years commencing from the AGM. There are 13 vacancies.

Nominations must be in writing (by post or email), addressed to the Hon. Secretary and submitted to the Synagogue Office by twelve noon on **Friday 16 April 2021**. Each Nomination must be supported by at least five members of The Synagogue who are themselves entitled to vote at the AGM. Their support can also be sent by post or email to the Office. Only valid nominations which are received by that date can be considered. No member may sign more nominations for the Board than the number of vacancies (namely 13).

In accordance with the Articles of Association of The Synagogue, the following eight members will be retiring from the Board by rotation but are eligible for re-election if duly nominated: **Joe Brookes, Paul Burger, Simon Cutner, Michael Horowitz, Adam Hurst, Annette Nathan, Marion Nathan & Nick Viner.**

From **19 April**, a list of the candidates duly nominated will be available for inspection at the Synagogue Office and the formal notice of the AGM will also include a list of those candidates.

Election of Deputies

Election of up to three Deputies to the Board of Deputies of British Jews to be undertaken as a postal vote. Nominations should be sent in writing (by post or email) to the Hon. Secretary not later than **Friday 16 April 2021**, with names and addresses of the persons nominated, whose consent should be obtained. Any person eligible for nomination as a representative to the Board of Deputies must have been, for at least one year prior, not under 18 years of age or an undischarged bankrupt or convicted of a serious criminal offence or a paid employee of the Board of Deputies. Retiring Deputies are eligible for nomination. Should there be more nominations than there are places, a postal ballot will take place. Our present deputies are: **Carol Cohen, Deborah Cohen & Robert Sacks.**

The copy deadline for the next issue of *Our Congregation* is 16 April 2021

SERVICE TIMES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm

Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Watch online via BelsizeLive at synagogue.org.uk
Check your emails or contact Adam Rynhold in the office for information on services once the synagogue can open again

Kikar Kids

Saturday 6 March, 3 April, 1 May

11.00am via Zoom

Please contact Richard Pollins for more information
on 020 8444 3074 or rgpollins@gmail.com

Cheder

Sunday mornings 9.30am-12.30pm

Enquiries to Headteacher Caroline Loison
or the Synagogue Office on 020 7794 3949

Term commences on Sunday 28 February

End of Term: Sunday 28 March

THE HENRY KUTTNER Z" L CHOIR SHABBAT

Friday 12 March at 6.45pm

Each year we honour our professional choir in memory of the late Henry Kuttner. Join us in thanking the choristers who make our services so special and unique.

SHABBAT HAGADOL

Saturday 27 March at 10.00am

The Annual Remembrance Service when we remember those who will not be at our Seder table and who have no others to remember them

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Sunday Sunday 7 March

10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Reward and Punishment
11.30-12.45 Joshua Rozenberg QC, barrister, legal commentator and author – Enemies of the People: How Judges Shape Society.

Sunday 14 March

10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Ask the Rabbi Q&A
11.30-12.45 James Marlow, broadcast journalist and public relations media consultant – Intriguing Insights into Israel's Fourth Election in Two years

Sunday 21 March

10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Open Forum
11.30-12.45 Jonathan Charles, Director of Communications, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – Economic Update: COVID-19 One Year On

Sunday 28 March & Sunday 4 April

1st & 8th day Pesach – No Adult Discussion Group sessions

Sunday 11 April

10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Topic to be confirmed
11.30-12.45 Sir Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, UCL – Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Report (to be confirmed)

Sunday 18 April

10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Topic to be confirmed
11.30-12.45 David Collier, undercover researcher into anti-Zionism and anti-semitism – Academia: The Epicentre of Global Anti-semitism

Sunday 25 April

10.00-11.15 Rabbi Altshuler – Topic to be confirmed
11.30-12.45 Speaker TBC – Road To Recovery – Breaking Down Barriers of Mistrust Between Israelis and Palestinians

THE COLLAGE HAGGADAH

Belsize member Emily Marbach has designed and published a brand new and really original Haggadah. *Our Congregation* spoke to her to learn about the background to her creation.

Emily is an artist and printmaker who now works mainly in collage and who has exhibited at the Royal Academy. She was born in the USA and she grew up with a love of Haggadah, as a tradition in her family was that new and different Haggadahs were often presented as afikoman presents. Emily had long



nurtured the idea of using her artistic talents to create her own version. There is a great tradition of artists illustrating the Haggadah and over the years her religious upbringing, her Jewish knowledge and her explorations of the Exodus, Pesach and the Seder rituals had resulted in her creation of collages based on those subjects. These came together when she was able to devote thought, time and effort to her pet project when lockdown overtook us last year.

The Collage Haggadah was published in January and is clearly both a labour of love and of scholarship. Its 214 pages are richly illuminated with Emily's collages, which are intended to complement the text rather than simply to illustrate it. The Collage Haggadah contains the complete Hebrew text and Emily's new translation into modern English. In addition she has curated a collection of commentaries, also in the Haggadah tradition.

Readers can find out more about The Collage Haggadah via its website,

collagehaggadah.com, through Google, or on Instagram @collagenottinghamhill.

The Haggadah is available through Amazon. Emily has very kindly offered to donate profits from sales to Belsize members to the synagogue, so when you buy your copy please let her know by emailing your details to collagehaggadah@gmail.com. In return, Emily will be happy to send you a set of five postcards of selected illustrations from her Haggadah.



RECOLLECTION OF TIMES PAST

Our Congregation recently received an email from Mr Xavier Kreiss, a retired journalist, with memories of Max Dobrin, a London chocolatier who was the grandfather of Belsize member Jackie Dobrin and the uncle of our late member Miriam Cohn:

In 1981 or '82, I had recently moved to George Street near Marble Arch, and stopped in front of Clare's Chocolates to gaze at the treasures on display. A man who seemed to be in his late 60s or early 70s walked out and invited me inside. We chatted, and as soon as he knew I was French, he spoke to me in my language. He had a pronounced German accent but spoke good French. I seldom buy chocolates: I love them with a passion but they tend to disagree with me. But Mr Dobrin plied me with them: "encore un, Monsieur!" After that we met from time to time. I remember him at one point mentioning his family. And that terrible name: Theresienstadt.

One day, seeing me in the street, he called out to me and enthusiastically showed me a book, asking me if I'd read it. It was *Last Waltz in Vienna*, by George Clare, although the author's name and the name of the shop being the same was entirely coincidental. Anyway, after the Anschluss Clare's Jewish family had tried to emigrate. Clare eventually managed to reach

England via Ireland, but his parents only got to France, where they were hidden by the Resistance; ultimately, they were arrested and subsequently murdered.

But at one point, I believe in 1938, when George Clare and his parents were still together, they were in Berlin, searching for a country where they could find refuge. In his book, he mentions an afternoon when his mother was queueing at the Irish embassy, while his father and he waited for her in 'the Jewish-owned Café Dobrin on the Kurfürstendamm'.

I moved from the Marble Arch area in the mid-eighties and lost touch. But one day in the '90s I was having a coffee in the Finchley Road when I noticed that the shop I was in also stocked chocolates and Bar Mitzvah greeting cards. It was run by three cheerful ladies of respectable age, so I asked them if any of them had known a chocolatier called Max Dobrin. They reacted with loud giggles and big smiles. One of them said,

'Ooo! That awful man!' but in an affectionate way, her face showing pure delight at the memory, and they all laughed. The lady added, 'Yes, I knew him, he came to stay with us when he got out of Germany.'

The shop is now gone, so are all the other little islands of Central and Eastern Europe in that street: the Cosmo Restaurant, Grodzinski's bakery. A whole lost world, where bus conductors approaching Swiss Cottage would sometimes call out 'Finchley Strasse!'.

Mr Dobrin too is no longer with us. A good, friendly man, it was a pleasure and a privilege to know him. The correct phrase, would be "alav ha-shalom". Dormez bien, Monsieur.

An account of the Dobrin and Cohn family's trip to Berlin to reconnect with their heritage, including the sites of the Dobrin Cafés, appeared in the July/August 2015 Our Congregation. It is available on the synagogue website.



Annual Israel Fundraising Event Wednesday 14 April 8pm

Catch up with news from the wonderful humanitarian charities we support in Israel – ASSAF, THE JAFFA INSTITUTE and YEMIN ORDE – and enjoy a musical performance from the people we support.

Plus very special guest appearances from violinist Maxim Vengerov, Lord Finkelstein OBE, Lord Grade CBE, Mike Freer MP and more.

A FREE online event – register via event.synagogue.org.uk
Help us raise as much as we can for our worthwhile charities



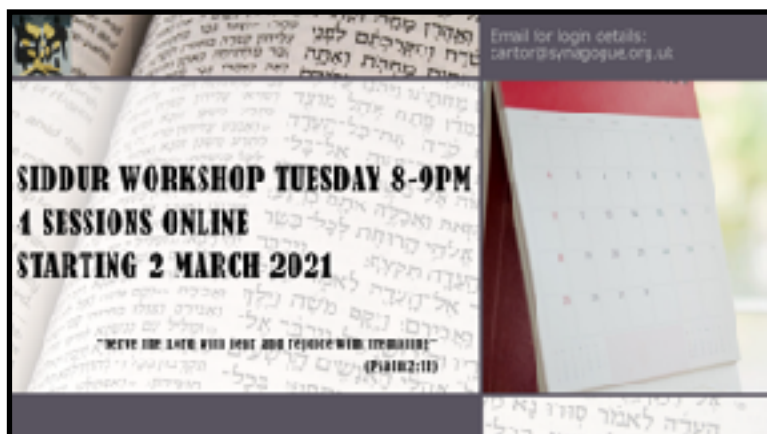
COMMUNITY ZOOM COMEDY NIGHT

Sunday 21 March at 7.30pm

Full line up to be announced,
but for now put the date in the diary and
we'll send out more details very soon.



Mila, age 2, possibly the youngest reader of Our Cong



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