



SUMMER THOUGHTS

The joy and enjoyment of Shabbat

Rabbi Gabriel Botnick on a route to Shabbat happiness

This past Shabbat, as the temperature was approaching 30 degrees, I sat down to enjoy my first Aperol Spritz of the season. Immediately, I felt as if I were on holiday – enjoying a good book while fending off the heat with a deliciously refreshing drink.

Of course, we are well aware of the Pavlovian connection between the senses and memory. The faintest trace of a perfume can conjure vivid memories of long-past loved ones. Or, as Proust mused in his writing, biting into a madeleine can lead one to recall long-forgotten childhood experiences. Our sages even note that in the Torah's various descriptions of manna, this heavenly food would remind people of different things based on their life experiences: to the elderly it brought to mind memories of rich, decadent cakes, while to the young it evoked the flavour of sweet cream. All of which is to say, it's no

surprise that a Spritz can help me revisit the sands of Sicily from the comfort of my own sofa.

It's worth acknowledging that such sensory triggers tend to elicit recollections with particularly strong emotional associations – great joy or anger, profound love or sadness. For me, connecting with my family while on summer holiday is when I am happiest and most content. Without distractions from the outside world or the demands of work, I can allow myself to relax and be fully present with my wife and kids, building memories that help power me through the busy weeks and months ahead. And so, while others might view a cheeky weekend cocktail as a mere refreshment, for me it is a portal to a headspace of happiness.

This might be why, when the rabbis of the Talmud discuss the ways they find joy on Shabbat, they invariably mention their favourite foods. One rabbi finds pleasure through a fish roasted with beetroots and garlic, while another says he prefers snacking on fried whitebait. The idea being, I believe, that by indulging in sensory delights on Shabbat, one is transported in one's mind to a realm of utter bliss and tranquillity. And it is specifically on Shabbat – a day free of demands, spent however we wish – that this mental holiday is made possible.

Whatever you have planned for this summer – whether a trip to

a far-off land, morning swims in the ponds, or simply some time off from your usual routine – I hope it helps you gain a renewed sense of joy, contentment, and vigour. But more importantly, I want to encourage you to identify some sensory experience – a particular drink or snack, the fragrance of a flower or melody of a song – that you'll be able to revisit once your daily grind resumes. So that later in the year, when you are in desperate need of a quick escape, you can satisfy that need by enjoying an indulgent Shabbat afternoon.

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SYNAGOGUE SNAPSHOTS

We introduce Belsize Square's new Co-Chairs, who were elected at the Annual General Meeting on 9 June

Annette Nathan

Co-Chair of Belsize Square Synagogue



What's your favourite thing about your work?

I retired from Jewish Care 18 months ago after 12 years working in the Family Carers Team. My role was to support unpaid carers who were themselves supporting a family member or friend with

a physical illness or dementia. My favourite part of the role was being able to spend time with carers, allowing them to offload and share their worries and feelings. In many cases this was their only opportunity to talk about themselves, and not the person they were caring for. Now my favourite job is looking after our delicious grandson Jacob twice a week, and having much more time to travel with my husband Tom. Of course, I am also heavily involved with Belsize, particularly now that Jimmy and I have become Co-Chairs. I have worked with Jimmy for several years, both as Honorary Officers and on the Executive. Our meetings are always stimulating and productive – you can't always say that about committee meetings!

Jimmy Strauss

Co-Chair of Belsize Square Synagogue



What's your favourite thing about your work?

I left the City many years ago, having originally been a graduate trainee at Warburg Investment Management, and then joined the family stockbroking firm, Strauss, Turnbull & Co. I carried on working in my own business

until some ten years ago. I really enjoyed the social interaction with my colleagues and clients as well as the overseas travel. In recent years, I have delivered food to food banks on behalf of Food Bank Aid and have received enormous satisfaction in knowing that I have been able to help feed people in need.

What is the hardest part of your job?

When I was working, I found getting up at 6am to be in the office by 7 very hard, especially after a late night entertaining clients or going to White Hart Lane!

What is the hardest part of your job?

There is nothing hard about being a wife and grandma! As for being Co-Chair – well, I am sure we will have challenges to face. It isn't easy keeping everyone in a community happy, but Jimmy and I are very committed and we will do our best. We are also blessed with a wonderful team around us.

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

I would be an actress. To save me from having to learn lines, as you are only giving me a day, I would like a part in my beloved radio drama *The Archers*. I could then read from the script whilst taking in everything around me.

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

I married into Belsize 40 years ago. I grew up at Southgate Progressive Synagogue and my parents were as involved there as the Nathans were at BSS, but the music got to me straight away and I was hooked!

What's your favourite festival?

I think it has to be Pesach, particularly our second-night seder, which is always very special. In addition, I adore matzah with thick butter, but I only eat it for 8 days a year because it is not the healthiest! A very close second has to be the Neilah service at Yom Kippur – it is so emotional and uplifting.

Where do you like to sit in shul?

As you look at the Bimah, we sit on the left, near to the front. On the odd occasion that we have 'crossed' to the other side it feels like we are in a different shul!

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

Official scorer at an Ashes Test Match at Lord's. It is so special to be there for these matches and I would have a bird's-eye view of proceedings.

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

I was born and bred in this wonderful community. My mother's parents were founder members and my father joined shortly after marrying my mother in 1954. He was an active Board Member and Honorary Treasurer for several years.

What's your favourite festival?

Passover. I enjoy being surrounded by family and friends on two Seder nights and going to Synagogue to hear Hallel.

Where do you like to sit in shul?

Far right of the middle section, towards the back. Amusingly, I have memories of my grandparents sitting near the front on the left-hand side of the middle section whilst my parents and I were sitting where I sit now!



Deborah Cohen, one of our three BoD deputies, reports on her committee work

THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES' SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Social justice is my passion. I previously chaired Belsize Square's Keshet Committee and last summer I was asked to chair the Board of Deputies' Social Justice Committee (SJC).

Social justice resonates deeply with Jewish values, rooted in the concepts of

- **Tzedek (justice)** – Pursuing fairness and moral action, encapsulated in the Biblical phrase 'Justice, justice, you shall pursue' (Deut. 16:20)
- **Tikkun Olam (repair of the world)** – A call to social responsibility and improving society for all
- **Chesed (lovingkindness) and Tzedakah (charity)** – Acts of compassion and charity aimed at creating a more just and compassionate society.

The SJC includes a number of the charity members of the BoD including HIAS-JCORE, Mitzvah Day, Kisharon Langdon and Norwood Ravenswood. The other members of the committee represent a wide range of synagogues across the UK, of all denominations. The SJC seeks to build relationships with other faith and ethnic communities around shared justice goals, such as tackling hate crime, racism and social marginalisation, working together on key issues such as asylum and refugee support and climate justice.

The SJC seeks to provide resources to the member organisations of the BoD on areas that can be taken up by synagogues. A good example of this has been the Eco-Synagogue initiative, which was incubated in the SJC and spun off into its own organisation. Belsize Square fully engaged with this initiative and obtained accreditation under the scheme

Some of the SJC's current areas of work are

- A partnership with HIAS-JCORE to develop and promote an initiative called 'synagogues of sanctuary' that connects synagogues to local authority initiatives to be 'boroughs of sanctuary' for refugees in their area. More to come on this as it is developed
- Support and promotion of work to prevent domestic violence and to help individual victims
- A partnership with Mitzvah Day to promote ideas for synagogues for Mitzvah Day 2025
- Other ideas being explored include promoting 'plastic-free' *chagim*/festivals (especially Pesach), and a tree-planting initiative.

As these ideas evolve, updates and requests for our shul's engagement will be made to our Board and to our Keshet Committee.

REMEMBERING RABBI RODNEY MARINER

An evening of memories and reminiscences in words and music on 22 June

Contributions from Belsize Square members, friends and colleagues brought our late Rabbi's extraordinary story to life, all wonderfully arranged and compered by his wife Sue. Music came from David Lawrence, Michael Cayton, Cantor Heller and the Belsize Square Choir conducted by Ben Wolf. The atmosphere was appreciative and happy, but appropriately serious in places, perhaps best summed up by Gordon Smith, former President of the European Union for Progressive Judaism, who listed Rabbi Mariner's attributes in his role of Convenor of the European Beit Din: dedication, diplomacy, dignity, tenacity, patience, care, respect, calm, discretion, mediation, courtesy, skill – and graciousness.



L-R in each row: Sue Mariner introducing the evening, David Lawrence, Michael Cayton, Fiona Kaufman, Paul Burger; Belsize Square Choir with Cantor Heller in a rousing rendition of Adon Olam set to many familiar tunes including Waltzing Matilda and Auld Lang Syne; Cantor Heller singing the Australian National Anthem (!); Sue enjoying the choir's finale

Watch the recording on Belsize Live!

A family connection

Recent Bar Mitzvah Max Wald reveals some fascinating family – and Belsize Square – history and makes a heartfelt plea for its lessons to be honoured today

In the D'var Torah I gave at my Bar Mitzvah in May, I mentioned that we were sitting in a synagogue whose origins lie in the arrival of refugee Jews fleeing from Hitler's Germany to this part of London, less than a century ago. Suddenly displaced, many of those refugees met for services in the living rooms of homes very nearby. Until that is, the vicar of St Peter's Church, next door to our synagogue, stepped in to help make the site of the vicarage formerly owned by the Church available to them. That vicar, the Reverend Tom Jupp, was the great-grandfather of my cousin Josh (who celebrated his own Bar Mitzvah just seven weeks ago) and the father of Tom Jupp Jr, both present in the congregation at my Bar Mitzvah.

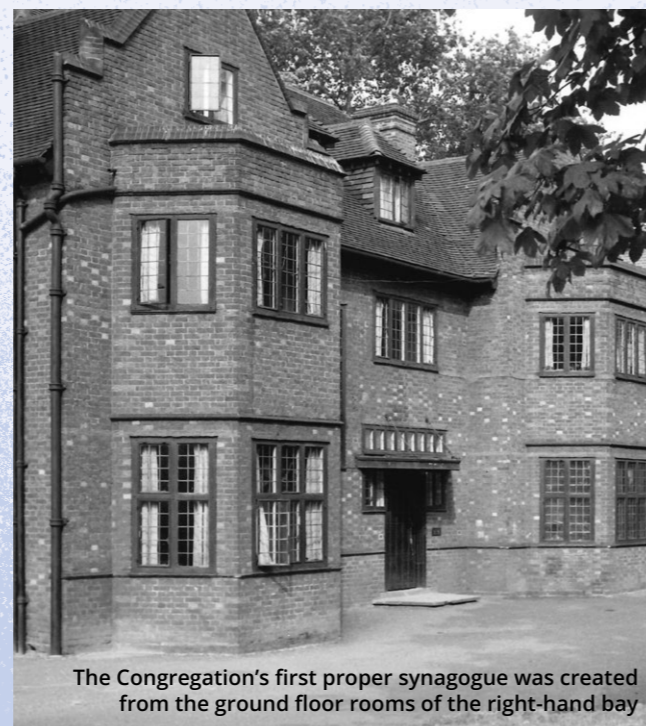
The welcome that the Reverend Tom Jupp gave to the founders of this congregation serves as an example of how refugees today can and should be received when arriving on these shores, in extremely challenging circumstances. And the fact that the Jewish community of Belsize Square Synagogue has flourished ever since that welcome was given just shows what can come from acts of kindness such as his. That kindness and openness stands in contrast to the treatment received by many of those seeking asylum in this country today and one can only hope that they too will experience some of that kindness as their UK asylum applications are processed now and in the future.

Alex Antscherl takes up the story, with the help of Tom Jupp

Fascinated by his family connection to the origins of our Belsize Square home that Max mentioned in his D'var Torah, I took the opportunity during Kiddush that day to talk to Tom Jupp (son of the vicar) himself. He told me that as a small boy he moved with his family to Belsize Square when his father was appointed Vicar of St Peter's in 1949. The vicarage (which we know as our original shul building) was in a state of disrepair and his parents, despite having five children, decided it was too large and too dilapidated to move into. Instead they eventually made their home in a brand-new vicarage behind the church – the distinctive 1950s building we still see there today. The Jewish refugee community then known as the New Liberal Jewish Congregation, who had once gathered at 27 Belsize Square, had for some years been based at 30 Buckland Crescent but were urgently looking for new premises large enough to accommodate their growing numbers, by this point amounting to 1,000 members.

The Congregational committee charged with finding new premises had been advised by the Town Planning department of London County Council that they would not be allowed to use premises in a residential street. There were five NW3 locations that were named as possibilities, with the last of these being 'The Vicarage in Belsize Square "but very doubtful"'. The Church Commissioners were willing to sell the old vicarage but legal and financial stipulations made it seem impossible for the Congregation to achieve the purchase. Through his work with the Hampstead branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, the Rev. Tom Jupp came to hear that the Congregation was looking for a home and could see that the former Vicarage would be perfect. It is unrecorded in the annals of community history whether it was a generous anonymous donation from a congregant or the intervention of the Vicar that finally made the purchase possible – perhaps a combination of the two. We can only celebrate the fact that it happened and enjoy the remarkable coincidence that two generations later the Vicar's granddaughter Rachel Jupp married Jonathan Wald, whose brother Richard, sister-in-law Sarah, nephew Max and family, are members of Belsize Square Synagogue.

Some additional information for the second part of this article, except for the Jupp family connection, came from *Three Rabbis in a Vicarage* by Antony Godfrey (Larsen Grove Press, 2005), which the author acknowledges with grateful thanks.



The Congregation's first proper synagogue was created from the ground floor rooms of the right-hand bay

A kiddush with meaning

Daniella Peled on her son Adam's culinary Bar Mitzvah project

Some senior Belsize Square members had the chance to enjoy their favourite childhood foods at a special kiddush that followed the Shabbat morning service on 14 June. Delicacies including custard Danish pastries, treacle tart and *apfelmus* (apple sauce) were part of a wonderful spread prepared by Adam Peled, all based on his Bar Mitzvah project.

For his project, Adam had decided to interview a group of the more senior members of the community about what their favourite foods were when they were much younger. He joined one of their regular lunch gatherings earlier this year to ask about their treasured memories of childhood foods and what it was about those dishes that made them special. 'My idea was to cook the food, so they could enjoy the happy memories it brought back,' he said. At the kiddush following his Bar Mitzvah, the dishes were served with an explanation of what made them so memorable.

Dobos torte, a Hungarian speciality made with six layers of cake, a special chocolate buttercream and topped with caramel triangles, was selected by Janet Friedlander. She said that her father, a pastry chef, had introduced the cake to England when he came here as a refugee from Germany.

Helen Grunberg chose the classic Jewish dish of *apfelmus*, while apples also featured in Lilian Levy's choice – the first cake she baked after she got married, from a recipe given to her by her new mother-in-law.

It featured layers of pastry, Bramley apples, crunchy demerara sugar and cinnamon.

Jackie Levy's choice recalled shopping trips with her mother as a child, during which they would stop in the Finchley Road for tea and custard-filled Danish pastries. For Philippa Strauss, chocolate biscuit cake was the only possible choice, while Sue Arnold, after toying with the idea of cornflake cakes, decided that treacle tart was the quintessential happy memory of her school dinners.

Adam referred to his project in his D'var Torah on his parsha, Beha'alotecha, when he spoke about the Children of Israel's repeated complaints about the food they were receiving in the desert. 'Studying my Torah portion has made me think more deeply about food and memory and my relationship to Judaism, which is also a lot about food,' he told the congregation. 'What we eat at the different holidays, and also preparing the dishes and sharing them with family and friends.' He explained that cooking sweet childhood treats for synagogue members had made him realise the deep connections between memory, happiness and community.

'What the Children of Israel failed to understand,' he continued, 'is that food is not just about the ingredients, it's about those who prepare it, provide it and enjoy it with you. And that food can provide us with not only physical, but also spiritual sustenance.'



Our Hidden Treasure

In the first of a new series, **Minyanman** introduces us to an uplifting but hidden Belsize resource.

If you feel like a quick stretch of your legs after the Torah service and sermon, you can stand in silence for the Amidah, or you can do a quick turn to the west, head to the back of the shul and take the first right up the stairs. Head west again along the corridor. Look up and you will see all the past BSS Chairs and Cantors smiling upon you, as they know you are heading towards a little *beit midrash* after half a morning in the *beit tefillah*. Enter the left of two doors facing you at the end of the corridor – and welcome to the best kept secret of Belsize Square Synagogue. If you want to continue the Amidah right where you are, then immediately take a half turn and scan the first shelf while standing facing east.

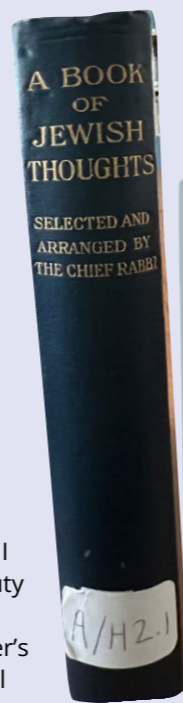
For those who spent long days of the summer term buried in school or university books, you will by now have guessed where we are – in the Synagogue's Library, lovingly tended by Joan Arton and Ruth Sands. My latest discovery there can be found using the code A/H2.1. Open the first pages and you will see inscribed a personal note to the owner in a script that reminds us of handwriting of the old school: 'D. Furburgh Esq With

the Compliments of the Chief Rabbi. Mar 9/22'. Not 2022, rather 1922. A Book Of Jewish Thoughts. Selected and Arranged by The Chief Rabbi (Dr J H Hertz). Jewish words of wisdom in our library, as well as novels involving wonderous Hebrews, books of Jewish mysticism and meticulously kept records spanning Anglo- and World-Jewish events.

I let myself be guided by the spirits of members past and present to fall across a new book each week, my mind fresh from another enlivening sermon from Rabbi Gabriel and the words of the prophets just chanted that seem more modern and relevant with every week that passes. Often I borrow a novel that speaks of love and beauty in some of our darkest times, returning it in exchange, for example, for a former member's compendium of Jews and the Olympics; I will let you find that volume, which found me just before the Paris games last summer.

When I hear the first lines of *Ein Keloheinu*, it's time for me to return to the *beit tefillah*. But I can't wait to get back to our Belsize library – our *beit seforim*. Let us know what books you'd choose.

As told to James Rossiter



RECENT EVENTS

SENIOR MEMBERS' POST-SHAVUOT LUNCH

Our post-Shavuot lunch for senior BSS members brought forty people together, some for the first time. These lunches are a team effort involving Eve Hersov (our Community Care Co-ordinator), Lee Taylor and Adam Rynhold; Marion Nathan organises our volunteer

helpers, our Ministers are at the meal, Gordon and Yelena provide support on the day – and cooking for all is provided by Claire Walford.

Eve asked the guests, who were mostly over 80, to list what helps them to feel part of a community, welcomed and connected. Here are just a few of their many observations:



Being welcomed at the door

The common ground of shared history and culture – music, art and Jewish heritage

The tradition of learning together and storytelling

The tradition of learning together and storytelling

People with similar values and interests

Learning from the younger members of the congregation how the world's changing around us

A congregation can fulfil an important function in providing that feeling of belonging which we all need



NEWS FROM ABERNEIN MANSIONS NW.3.

Dear Fellow Members

Looking out from our balcon hear on Finchley Road, I can't help wandering where the world is coming to or going from. Mrs Klopstick has gone for her morning yog und is running faster then the traffic is moving. Every sing seams to be turning on its hat? Unlike the traffic the world is rapidly going backwards into media evil times.

Unter the circumstances I am pleased to import some good news for a chainge. Our Gross Grandson in New York, Maurice Klopstick, who no won ever menschens, und who his Grandfather Melvyn, said wood mound up to nothing, has been appointed as a barrister at Starbugs. This is even befour he has achieved a lore degree, so they must sink very highly of him. We are next to ourselves with proudness.

Vile I prefer to potty around at home, Mrs Klopstick still has inside her the wonder lush. Instead of going with the other Abernein ladies on a coach trip to Stone Hedge und Longleap Sephardi Park, she is going on a crews to Eislandt. Sankfully I have always bean bored minded und after so many decays of marriage if I didn't truss my wive now, where wood I put myself? She intents to go schnorgelling in the eis sea waters, specially und spifically to do so with men-at-ease. Just as well I don't have a gelatinous bone in my body.

For reasons beyond my knowledge I was unable to attend the AMG from the synagogue, although I ride this befour the advent has taken plaice. We now have Annette Nathan und Jimmy Strauss as joined sharepersons. Wood it not be more aproppriate too now, as they are to chair the sharemanship in a dopple seater arrangement, two refer to this posture as being sofapersons rather then sharepersons? I postulate this question out of the deepest respect for both upstanding lieders.

With the best of intentions
Fritz Klopstick

ASK FRITZ

Kwite a phew members have ridden to me asking for my advise on how they ken fill they days youthfully. If I was not so observed with my button collection, I wood make my way to the river Tames und go mud lurking. I sorrowly recommend this passed time. It intails searching the river bangs when the tight is out und finding railics that go back even befour Romany times. Oder turntively have a game off rommy, und then a schluff in the communal lunch.

TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

Divine Divergence – An Interfaith Exploration of Revelation

Alex Antscherl and Daniella Peled report on BSS's Shavuot study session

Belsize Square marked Shavuot with an evening of interfaith learning on Sunday 1 June led by Rabbi Gabriel Botnick with the Reverend Ewan King of the Heath St Baptist Church.

Following the service and a complementary supper – which of course included cheesecake – some 50 attendees joined a discussion about the meaning of revelation in both the Jewish and Christian faiths.

Reverend King described the more individualistic interpretation that Baptists and other Protestants have of the personal relationship between Christians and God, in contrast with the Catholic belief in the significance of priests and the Church as intermediaries. He referred to the 4th-century Christian theologian St Gregory of Nyssa, whose philosophy of universal salvation has been a subject of increased interest to academics in the last 50 years. Gregory was from the area called Cappadocia, in modern-day Turkey. There are only two references to this area in the Christian bible, one of which is in the Book of Acts and refers to Jews gathering there on 'the Day of Pentecost', which is, appropriately enough, usually taken to refer to Shavuot.

Rabbi Botnick spoke about revelation of the Ten Commandments and the Torah, and the plurality of interpretation of those events in various Midrashim. He provided relevant sections for us to study from Torah and Midrash. He touched on the fact that in Jewish tradition, revelation is not just a direct singular dictation of mitzvot from God to humans but that human agency is also involved in the interpretation of the commandments.

Following their presentations, journalist Daniella Peled moderated a discussion looking deeper into the similarities and differences between each faith's understanding of revelation.

SCIENCE TUITION

Science tutor available for after school or weekend tuition, with focus on helping children with SEN.



I have been teaching full time for 8 years and cover all three school science subjects, specialising in chemistry. I can tailor online or in-person sessions to each individual, to help them reach their full potential.

Please contact me, Stuart Miller, on 07821 938944 or stuartmiller88@gmail.com

SERVICES

Friday evenings at 6.45pm

Saturday mornings at 10.00am

Kikar Kids – Junior Shabbat Service

Saturday 5 July, 2 August, 6 September

11.00am in the crèche for under 5s Service

11.00am in the library for 5–9-year-olds

11.30am Kids Kiddush

Contact Caroline Loison caroline@synagogue.org.uk
for more information

CHEDER AND BEIT MITZVAH

Sunday mornings 9.30am–12.30pm

Enquiries to Head: Caroline Loison

caroline@synagogue.org.uk

End of Term Sunday 6 July

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Meetings take place on Sunday mornings in term-time.

Programme 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:

Marika Cobbold, Alexander Simon & Elizabeth Simun-Janson, Yanit & Antony Montague, Yuri Koorland with children Fabian & Sasha, Jeff Shapiro with son Adam, Helena Vautravvers with son Adrien, Emma Kentridge, Megan & Andrew Spector, Georgina James & Rafi Herman, Eva Robledo-Sierra & Jake Barnett

BIRTH

Mazal tov to Anna Rosenberg & Aneurin Jones on the birth of their son Akiva

BNEI MITZVAH

Mazal tov to Sandra & Roy Kashi on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Eviana on Saturday 6 September

MARRIAGES

Mazal tov to Suze Miller & Dylan Lazarus who were married on Sunday 8 June

Mazal tov to Georgina James & Rafi Herman who were married on Sunday 22 June

DEATHS

We regret to announce the passing of Naomi Stadlen who died on 6 June

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

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

Dr Paul Heller

cantor@synagogue.org.uk

07949 078366

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Lee Taylor

lee@synagogue.org.uk

CHAIRS

Annette Nathan and

Jimmy Strauss

[chairman@](mailto:chairman@synagogue.org.uk)

synagogue.org.uk

CHEDER AND YOUTH

Caroline Loison

[caroline@](mailto:caroline@synagogue.org.uk)

synagogue.org.uk

020 7794 3949

COMMUNITY CARE CO-ORDINATOR & BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

Eve Hersov

eve@synagogue.org.uk

07944 574676

FUNERALS

During Synagogue office hours phone Synagogue

Evenings/weekends phone

Calo's (Undertakers)

020 8958 2112

OUR CONGREGATION

Editor: Alex Antscherl

Associate Editor:

David Horwell

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SYNAGOGUE BOARD

Following the Synagogue's Annual General Meeting on 9 June 2025, the members of the Board are:

HONORARY OFFICERS

Co-Chairs: Annette Nathan & Jimmy Strauss

Hon Secretary: Rob Nothman

Asst Hon Secretary: Adam Davis

Hon Treasurer: Sarah Percival

Asst Hon Treasurer: Nick Viner

EXECUTIVE

Carol Cohen

Justyn Trenner

Simon Cohen

Peter Goodman

Joe Hacker

Pat Hirschovits

Michael Horowitz

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Oliver Jerome

Frank Joseph

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Richard Pollins

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