



## *Celebrating The Beauty of Nature*



These images are part of a video presentation created by Gary Italiaander.  
See article inside for background to the project.

# ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

## Since our last issue

Children and Teen birthdays on page 14

### MOSAIC REFORM

#### MAZAL TOV TO:

Finley Vincent and his family on his recent Bar Mitzvah.

Sam Feldman and his family on his recent Bar Mitzvah.

Suzanne Herschman on the birth of her grand-daughter, Olga. Mazal tov also to Hannah & Trevor Pinkus on the birth of their great-grand-daughter.

#### BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Shirley Freeman, 85

Sue Kessler, 75

Simon Turner, 70

Neil Herschman, 80

Nat Levene, 97

Peter Mendel-Lion, 95

Jane Prentice, 65

Carol Shama, 55

Judy Armit, 70

Lesley Young, 75

Phyllis Kline, 75

Trevor Pinkus, 85

#### ANNIVERSARY WISHES

##### TO:

Hilda & Ivor Cohen on their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Jonelle & Jonathan Roback on their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

#### GET WELL WISHES TO:

Greg Wand

#### CONDOLENCES TO:

Joe Wayne on the death of his wife, Rachel.

Neil Goodman on the death of his wife, Mim.

Annette Ashmele on the death of her mother, Adelaide Lester.

Lorraine Tureck on the death of her father, Harold Berman.

The family of Magdi Marer.

The family of Rudi Braude.

The family of Betty Brand.

The family of Lew Leaderman.

The family of Iris Francies.

#### WELCOME IN THEIR

##### NEW HOME TO:

David Solomon

### MOSAIC MASORTI

#### SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

##### WISHES TO:

John Levy, 80

Elaine Glass, 60

Rebecca Alexander, 21

Tomer Goldenberg, 20

Isabel Rafalin, 17

Maisie Balkin, 19

#### ANNIVERSARY WISHES

##### TO:

Jackie & Anthony Alexander on their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

#### CONDOLENCES TO:

Michael Morris on the death of his partner, Vivienne Levine.

Neil Mendoza on the death of his mother, Muriel Mendoza.

### MOSAIC LIBERAL

#### MAZAL TOV TO:

Brenda and Alan Hunt on the birth of a grand-daughter, Olivia Miriam, to parents Joel and Maryjane Winston.

#### SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

##### WISHES TO:

Adrienne Green

Rhoda Kohn

Mimi Rotbart

#### GET WELL WISHES TO:

Anthony Share

Stella Share

Jeanette Shindler

Janet Solomon

Richard Sontag

#### CONDOLENCES TO:

The family and friends of Bernie Solomons.

The family and friends of Harold Levene.

Josie Mans on the death of her husband, Harry.

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(Edwin Lucas, Ron Collins, Gary Italiaander, Simon Rutstein)

The next issue will be that for July – copy date 14<sup>th</sup> June, distributing 25<sup>th</sup> June. Articles of wide appeal with a Jewish/community theme are always most welcome.

Send your articles, pictures, letters, etc to  
[newsdesk@choosmosaic.org](mailto:newsdesk@choosmosaic.org)



**NOTICE** is hereby given to all members that the 71st Annual General Meeting of Mosaic Liberal Synagogue will be held **via Zoom** on

**SUNDAY 31st MAY 2020 at 12.00 noon sharp**

The Zoom link will be: <https://zoom.us/j/97306661510>  
To join the meeting use the meeting ID of 973-0666-1510

The Agenda for the meeting as well as the Minutes of last year's AGM, the Hon Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2019, and nomination form for the election of members to Council, will be circulated to members by e-mail in advance of the AGM. The e-mail will also include a direct link to the Zoom meeting. Any member who is not on e-mail and would like hard copies of any of these papers should please ring the Synagogue office and ask for them to be posted.

Any member wishing to submit a motion or resolution for consideration at the Meeting must do so in writing to the Administrator at the Synagogue address **NOT LATER THAN SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020**. Motions or resolutions received after this date cannot be considered at the Meeting.

Paragraph 9.6 of the Constitution and Rules is reproduced below for the benefit of those members who are unable to attend the meeting:

"Any member unable to attend an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary Meeting may vote by post by requesting a ballot form from the Synagogue Secretary not later than 21 days before the Meeting. The Synagogue Secretary shall comply with all such requests not later than 14 days before the Meeting. A postal vote will only be valid if the ballot form is returned duly completed and signed and is received by the Synagogue Secretary not less than 48 hours before the start of the meeting. If a Member who has submitted a postal vote subsequently attends the Meeting, such postal vote will not be counted."

Members are invited to nominate for election to Council individuals who have been Members or Associates of the Synagogue for at least one year. Nominations must be received by the Administrator on the form below **NOT LATER THAN SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020**, and must be accompanied by the nominee's written confirmation of his/her willingness to stand for election.

### NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION TO MOSAIC LIBERAL SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL

Nominee(s) .....

Proposer ..... Date .....

I hereby agree to stand for election to the Mosaic Liberal Synagogue Council

Signed .....Date .....

## Post-Pesach message from the Mosaic leadership

Our community has two priorities at this time:

- 1 Supporting our members – practically and emotionally, and
- 2 Providing (virtual) “space” to come together as a community – to pray, to support each other, for education or “just” to be together

We are inspired, but not surprised, how our volunteers, Rabbis and staff have risen to the challenge and are continuing to develop teams of volunteers and staff who are keeping in contact with all our members – every week, where appropriate.

We have volunteers who have come forward to shop and run errands for members who are self-isolating. Our Rabbis, care co-ordinators and trained volunteers are supporting the unfortunately unprecedented numbers of individuals and families who are ill, hospitalised or bereaved.

Please do contact us if you need our help or just feel you need to talk to someone.

Mosaic now has over a dozen opportunities each week for the community to come together online through our Zoom and streamed services and other activities – ritual services, pre-Shabbat catch up, guest speakers and more. We are continuing to add activities and opportunities to come

together as a community so please do check the list of online activities on pages 9-12 of this edition of Kehilah. If you have any ideas or suggestions for things we could be doing, then please contact us.

We recognise and are realistic about the scale of the challenge we face, but at the same time we are being relentlessly positive in seeking ways to make the best of the situation. We are grateful for the support we are receiving from across the Liberal, Masorti and Reform movements and also from Harrow Bereavement Care and other organisations.

Jeff Highfield and Mark Phillips, Mosaic Jewish Community co-chairs

Hana Schlesinger, Mosaic Liberal Synagogue acting chairman

Rabbi Natasha Mann, Mosaic Masorti Synagogue

Gill Ross and Edwin Lucas, Mosaic Masorti Synagogue co-chairs

Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton, Mosaic Reform Synagogue

Lawrence Chadwick, Mosaic Reform Synagogue chair

## Meeting at a Time of Isolation

By Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton



**M***ah* *tovu* *ohalecha*, *Ya'acov*, *mishk'notecha Yisrael* (How good are your tents, Oh Jacob, your dwelling places, o Israel). These words usually signal the start of all Mosaic Reform services, as the wardens walk up the Bimah and open the iconic outer doors of the Ark.

The iconic outer doors of our Ark have not been opened for over a month now, as all our services have moved online. Nevertheless, we still start our services with '*mah tovu*', because, just as our daily routines have changed overnight, so has the meaning of the words we use. When we start our online services with these words, '*Mah tovu ohalecha, Ya'acov, mishk'notecha Yisrael*' we are aware of the virtual sanctuary – the *mishkan* – we have created for ourselves online, as we gather from within our own homes, to meet, to study and to pray.

The Covid-19 crisis has disrupted every aspect of our daily lives; our movements are restricted, schools have closed, shopping has become an activity best to be avoided, roads have emptied, churches, mosques and synagogues are closed... How do we remain a synagogue; a *Beit Knesset* (a place where people gather) when 'gathering' is the one thing we cannot do, lest it puts our lives in danger? Faced with such a threat, how do we support each other spiritually and emotionally

at a time when we need it most as we find ourselves shaken to the core of our humanity. Human beings need social contact, and it is our human instinct, a basic need, to gather for comfort, support and strength at times of insecurity, suffering and hardship.

These were the most fundamental questions that faced us at the beginning of this crisis, and although we are still struggling with many aspects of these questions, we have tried to address as best we can our need to gather. We are keeping in touch by phone with our most isolated members and those without online access and are providing virtual meeting space online for Shabbat and festival services, adult and children's education, *B'nei Mitzvah* training, lifecycle celebrations as well as intellectually and socially engaging experiences. These range from just a simple chat over a cup of tea to the very popular 'Meet the Author' series and JACS meetings on Tuesday afternoons.

In the past month many of us have done things we never thought of doing, some of us holding *s'darim* alone and yet together with family members in other countries, or elsewhere where we wouldn't have been able to visit!

Of course, meeting online is not the same as meeting in person, and yet we have had the wonderful

Continued on page 6 >>



## Continued from page 5 *Meeting at a Time of Isolation...*

occasion of two *B'nei Mitzvah* online, which became the happiest, most intimate *B'nei Mitzvah* we, who attended them online, have ever had the privilege to attend! And now, as we are all getting more used to this online reality, our community is getting more comfortable chatting with one another, transferring the usual warmth of community and the joy of seeing one another through our computers into our homes.

Heart-breaking have been the online funeral and shivah prayers, which I have had to take, for when a loved one dies, our need to gather is the strongest, and the pain of not being able to do so is beyond imagination. And yet even at these saddest of moments there have been unexpected moments of warmth and comfort that we would never have held possible, when for example far flung or vulnerable family

members, who would never have been able to come to either funeral or shivah, suddenly find themselves able to join remotely. My colleague and teacher, Rabbi David Goldberg z'l once told me that his favourite rabbinic saying was from the second century *Tanna*, Nachum Ish Gamzu, who was known for saying – **Gam zu l'tovah** – this too will come to good.

This crisis is surely hard on all of us, each for their own reasons, but it has also shown extraordinary glimmers of hope and beauty... It has shown the true strength of our community, and the advantages of technology, some of which we will surely carry over into our daily workings when this crisis finally ends.

And it will end, there is no doubt about that, as Her Majesty the Queen said in her address to the nation: 'we'll meet again'.

## *A spiritual approach to Covid-19*

Esther Aronsfeld, Mosaic Liberal, offers 10 ways to keep calm, centred and divinely connected

### 1. Write a letter to God

In the present lockdown it's easy to feel lonely, fearful and out of control. Don't bottle up your feelings. Put pen to paper and write a letter to God. Pour out your heart as you would to a best friend. Offload all your problems and worries, all your fears, anxieties and heartache. Let rip on the page. If you are feeling let down by God, say so. Forget about grammar and syntax. When you are done, screw up the paper and bin it or burn it.

### 2. Take a breath

When your mind starts racing and sadness and confusion threaten to engulf you, stop. Take a couple of deep breaths. Breathe out the stress and tension you are holding then let the breath find its natural rhythm. Place your hand over your heart and continue focussing on your breathing. Breath is oxygen for the soul. Remind yourself at intervals throughout the day to take a deep breath.

### 3. Do a mitzvah

If you are self-isolating, don't wait for someone to call you, pick up the phone and call someone you've not been in touch with for ages, or someone who lives on their own. Let them know you are thinking of them at this challenging time. It will make you both feel good.

### 4. Keep a spiritual journal

Journalling as a spiritual practice is a tool for self-discovery, a place to capture ideas, a safety valve for releasing emotions. It provides a structure for exploring your life – your thoughts and feelings, your dreams, your beliefs, your gifts and relationships with others and with God. It makes you more aware of what is going on inside you and around you.

### 5. Read the Psalms

When the psalmists felt down and defeated they poured out their hearts to God in words that have been a source of comfort and strength to people throughout the ages. Psalms such as 23, 121 and 139 remind us that despite being socially isolated, we are not alone.

### 6. Colour your prayers.

When you want to pray and words escape you, get out your coloured pen or pencils and a piece of paper. Write your name for God in the centre, draw a shape around the name and start doodling. Add colour, marks and shapes. Let your hand flow across the page.

### 7. Connect with nature

Being in nature or viewing scenes from nature lifts the spirits, calms the mind and relaxes the body. Set aside time each day to connect

with the beauty and majesty of God's world. Go for a gentle walk, spend time in the garden or gaze out from the window of your home and let the amazing sights and sounds nature offers, fill you with awe and wonder.

### 8. Reflect on your day

The 'Bedtime Shema' routine is like a sleeping pill for the soul. It is designed to help you look back on the highs and lows of your day, to leave behind the day's baggage, to forgive anyone who has hurt or angered you and to pray for any hurt you have caused. Ask yourself : When did I feel most alive today? What were the chief joys? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to release so I can go to sleep with a lighter heart and mind?

### 9. Count your blessings

Gratitude plays a key part in our tradition. No matter how difficult a time you are having, there are always things to say 'thank you' for. Yet so often we focus on what's gone wrong, the one person who was rude or unkind to us, the one apparent setback due to an unmet need. Shabbat is a time to reflect on your blessings and to thank God for the people, activities and gifts that have come your way. You may also want to create a daily gratitude list.

### 10. Sing your heart out

Singing is a powerful mood lifter. So get up and sing (and dance) along to your favourite songs. Join one of the many virtual choirs that are springing up, or 'get together' with friends and form your own choir. As Ella Fitzgerald said, 'the only thing better than singing, is more singing.'

# Mosaic Jewish Community on-line and on the phone

While we can't be together in person, Mosaic continues to be together from your computer and/or telephone. We are using "Zoom" to enable this, alongside our existing streaming of services and other activities from our website.

You can download Zoom to your computer, tablet or smartphone – if you need help with that then please contact us either at the office **020 8864 0133** or at **covid19@choosemosaic.org** Replace this sentence with:

If your device doesn't have a microphone or speakers, you can still use it to see what we're doing and at the same time dial in to Zoom on your phone to hear and talk to us – similarly, if you don't have a smart device at all. You will need the meeting IDs from our website (or from the office) and then dial in to Zoom at **020 3481 5240** (standard call charges will apply).

You can find out what's on from the weekly email or at <https://choosemosaic.org/whats-on/events/> (or call the Office on **020 8864 1033**. If you don't get our weekly email then please email or call the office.

## Our online activities include:

### Weekly:

- Kabbalat Shabbat and candle lighting (Masorti) Friday at 5:30 for 6pm
- Shabbat Evening Service (joint Liberal and Reform) Friday at 6:30 for 7pm
- Shabbat Morning Reform Service at 9:45 for 10.30
- Shabbat Morning Liberal Service at

- 10:30 for 11:15am
- Havdalah as Shabbat goes out
- Hamakom on Sunday mornings
- "Fun at four" on Sundays – quizzes, knitting, cooking and more at 4pm
- Rabbi Natasha's teatime and Torah on Mondays at 2.30 for 3pm
- "Tuesday talks" at 2.30pm
- Cuppa, chat and (optional) cookie, Thursdays at 2.30pm

### Festivals and other one off:

- Mosaic Reform VE day shabbat Saturday 9th May
- Marion Bloom and Michael Italiaander interviewed about their wartime experiences Sunday 10th May 4pm
- Lag b'Omer Tuesday 12th May.
- Erev Shavuot on Thursday 28th May
- 1st day Shavuot services on Friday 29th May at 9.45 for 10.30am



The community Seder was a great success – huge thanks to Rabbi Kathleen (and her family) for making it so and to Stefan Roos for ensuring the techie stuff all ran smoothly.

## Mosaic is still up and running during the lockdown

If you have a computer/laptop/ipad/smart phone, you can join our services and activities via Zoom.

Age is no barrier!!

No computer? You can still join all our services and activities. Please note the telephone number given in our publicity or contact the office for dial-in details.



## Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Natasha

You're invited to join Rabbi Natasha at 6.00 pm every Friday via Zoom or by telephone for candle lighting. Have your own candles ready if you so wish.

Join Zoom meeting ID 999 4353 2418 or, if you have no computer, dial in (standard rates apply) 020-3481 5240. Meeting ID 999 43532418.

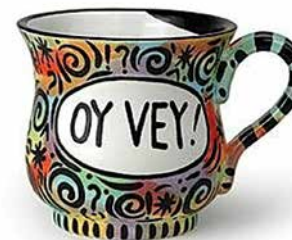


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## Tea with Rabbi Natasha

On Tuesdays at 4.15 pm, join Rabbi Natasha for tea. A chance to catch up with each other over a cuppa (which you'll need to provide!) and with a short discussion to finish off.

Join Zoom meeting ID 323 600 692. If you have no computer, dial in (standard rates apply) 020-3481 5240. Meeting ID 323 600 692.



## Chat with a Cuppa

Join us on Thursday afternoons at 2.30 pm to catch up with friends and chat about whatever's on your mind. Please bring your own cuppa and cookies (optional!)

Zoom link 941 3856 0666. If you have no computer, dial in (standard rates apply) 020-3481 5240. Meeting ID 941 3856 0666.



## VE75 – We were there!

### *Marion Bloom and Michael Italiaander*

Join us at 4.00 pm on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May when Marion Bloom and Michael Italiaander will talk about their experiences during World War II and their memories of VE Day.

Aged 16 at the outbreak of war, Marion was evacuated and went to Lycée Français de Londres to train as bilingual secretary. She worked for Journal France, a daily newspaper published in wartime London during the Blitz. She was a part-time Firewoman and progressed to working for a prestigious film, theatre and literary agency.

Michael served in the 8<sup>th</sup> Army in the Western Desert under Montgomery, who he actually met! He was (probably) the youngest British war artist of WW2 creating propaganda images for the Ministry of Information.

Contact the office for the zoom and dial-in details.



## Mosaic JACS Programme



*May - June*

**All events are on Tuesdays and start at 14:30. They will, of course, be accessible online. Zoom link details will be provided**

### **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

A licence to be nosy – what market research can reveal. Diane Allard – owner of Outlook Research Ltd. – a market research consultancy.

### **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May**

Agatha Christie, Queen of Crime – Nick Dobson

### **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

The A-Z of Las Vegas legends continued – music and dancing – Roy Blass

### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June**

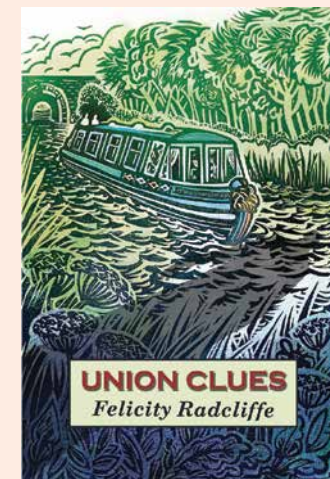
History in the Baking – Esther Rinkoff

## Meet the Author *Felicity Brennan*

Join us at 2.30 on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May for another in our 'Meet the Author' series

Felicity has published two novels since May 2018 and written numerous short stories and poems, which are broadcast regularly on HCR104fm and included in their podcasts. She is also a scriptwriter for a local radio soap opera called 'Huntsford.' Her first novel is called 'The Dark Side of the Book Club' and her second, 'Union Clues' has just been published.

Contact the office for the zoom and dial-in details.



## Meet the Journalist *Steve Levinson*

At 2.30 on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May, Alex Gerlis will interview Steve Levinson



Steve has been one of Britain's leading economics journalists for many years. He is highly respected both within and outside his profession for the quality and originality of his journalism. His insights into the news agenda and his understanding of the media have also made him a sought after media trainer, consultant and adviser to many national and international organisations.

In the course of his career he has interviewed many leading political and financial figures. These include numerous British Prime Ministers and Chancellors, as well as global figures such as Shimon Peres and Nelson Mandela.

Contact the office for zoom code and dial-in details.

*Note: the 'Meet The ...' series will be every other Tuesday – look out for the next one on the Mosaic website!*





# WE NEED YOU!

# TO HAVE FUN

... and help to keep us  
entertained during isolation.

No special skills needed!

All you have to do is ...  
use the camera on your phone or your digital camera

What to do next ...  
take photos in your home or garden  
and choose **ONLY ONE** which is your favourite.

We're asking children up to 12 years old to take an image ...  
through, between or inside something.

We're asking the age group from 12 up to 115 to take an image ...  
of a common or familiar object  
in a way that's difficult to recognise and to make us all think!

A selection of images will be shown in the July edition of Kehilla.

Closing date for entries: **27th May 2020**

Email entries to: [photofun@choosemosaic.org](mailto:photofun@choosemosaic.org)  
(Please include your name and what you have photographed!)

# GOOD LUCK & HAVE FUN!

Photo organisers: David Ruback / Pat Zatz / Gary Italiaander

# Meet the Author Paul A. Mendelson

*By Jonelle Roback*

Today (14<sup>th</sup> April) started week four of Lockdown, or what I now call the new normal! It's been a bit strange getting used to having a full house again, but not as bad as I thought it might be. So far, I have managed to fill the time very well – today I took time out from my new “Catering and Cleaning” jobs to ‘Zoom’ into Mosaic’s latest ‘Meet the Author’ session.

Sitting in my kitchen, I logged-on via the link in the ‘Whats On’ section of the Mosaic website and was pleasantly surprised to see four pages of faces that had already zoomed in – all waiting to hear Paul Mendelson being interviewed by Steve Levinson – our community’s semi-retired journalist and interviewer. [Ed: In fact, 150 people were in the audience, mostly Mosaic members, but also from other communities as far away as Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, South Africa and Australia!].

Paul was interviewed for half an hour. He talked about his young life in Newcastle and his early career as a lawyer (which he left when he found himself getting too emotionally involved in his clients’ cases). A career change saw him as an advertising copywriter at Ogilvy & Mather where he created adverts and slogans – most famously ‘Think before you drink before you drive’ for the anti-drink/drive campaign. This, almost by chance, led him to writing scripts for comedy and drama shows such as ‘May to December’ (perversely set in his home area of Pinner), ‘So Haunt Me’, ‘My Hero’ and ‘Losing



**Pictured: Paul Mendelson**

It’ – the latter starring Martin Clunes and drawing on Paul’s own experience of testicular cancer. Subsequently, he wrote several books, some funny, some less so but all with a serious theme aimed at a family audience, such as ‘In the Matter of Isabel’, ‘Losing Arthur’, ‘A Meeting in Seville’ and ‘The Funnies’.

Paul captured everyone’s imagination and attention, which led to a flurry of questions being asked at the end about all aspects of his career, including his relationship with his actors, his agents and the transferability of UK humour to the USA.

I’m sure I can speak for everyone and say thank you to Paul and Steve for a very enjoyable hour – a very welcome break from the monotony of lockdown. Also to Stefan Roos for his technical expertise which ensured everything ran so smoothly. I’m now very much looking forward to the next Meet the Author session in 2 weeks’ time – Alex Gerlis, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2:30pm.

## My Barmitzvah

*by Finley Vincent*

We had planned to have my Barmitzvah on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020. By the 16<sup>th</sup> of March we realised that we would have to postpone our party but really wanted to still have the Shul and Torah reading on that day as I had practised so hard, and had lessons for a year with Rabbi Kathleen weekly.

The morning of my Barmitzvah was certainly different. We weren't rushing around in a panic trying to get ready to leave our house, instead calmly getting ready to have a virtual Barmitzvah with all my family and friends as well as the congregation, from my dining table at home.

We were all set to go, the laptop in front of us, it was so lovely how we got to say hello to family and friends before the service started. It almost felt as if we were in Shul greeting people. The service and interactive Zoom went



**Pictured: Finley Vincent**

really well, it was a bit strange seeing my reflection in front of me as I chanted my Aliyah's, said my prayers and Maftir.

I felt a real sense of happiness, seeing all the people who are special to me watching, especially with what has been happening in the world around us.

After the service, I felt a real sense of achievement – I felt I had made my family very proud. I would do it all again in a heartbeat.

It was a real great day, we didn't stop smiling. Obviously, I would have loved my Barmitzvah to have

been at Shul, but that just wasn't possible.

I'd like to thank all the people who made this happen for me – my wonderful teacher Rabbi Kathleen for teaching me so well and Stefan Roos for his singing help and setting up all the virtual screening.

## Happy Birthday in April and May

Ezra Buchan, 1  
Chase Vincent, 11  
Jayden Brummell, 9

Lennon Mydat, 3  
Mackensie Mydat, 3  
Benjamin Hipgrave 9

## My Barmitzvah

*by Sam Feldman*

At the time of my Barmitzvah, coronavirus was nearing its peak. Due to this, my service had to be done virtually and my party had to be postponed.

My service was one of the best experiences of my life. We may not have got to sit in shul and I wasn't able to read from the scrolls, but by doing it like this everyone got a front seat view and my kittens, Oreo and Memphis, made an appearance at the end!

About 20 minutes into the service, I started to become nervous, as it was almost at my first part, the Amidah. It hit me that all that seemingly never-ending Barmitzvah practice had all led up to this, all that nagging from Mum was about to pay off! I started singing the Amidah and although it seemed surreal at first, I was confident by the end! When I finished, I turned round to Mum, who said I'd done really well, and I breathed a sigh of relief! I was overjoyed at the proud looks on my parents' and grandparents' faces!

During the service, my dad did a lovely D'Var Torah in which he read two poems that taught me, and everyone watching, a valuable lesson on being kind. Throughout the whole service I wore my awesome blue suit bought by Mum and Dad, an amazing golden and blue Tallit bought by Nana and Papa, and a beautiful gold



**Pictured: Sam Feldman**

Magen David bought by Nana and Pops! I sang and read everything and at the end it occurred to me afterwards that I had just sung to over 250 people (and a few of their pets)!

The service ended with a lovely sermon from Rabbi Kathleen and me doing a little thank you speech. Stefan did an amazing job of running the whole event on Zoom and advising my parents along the way. Rabbi Kathleen made my lessons fun and I will miss learning with her. I was so happy about what an amazing experience I had just had and was over the moon at the end when everyone was congratulating me!

Thank you to the whole community for the kind e-mails we received afterwards. I will certainly never forget my virtual Barmitzvah!



## Mahnishtano (Manish tana)

*by Edwin Lucas*

How many of us in the community could have recited Mahnishtano? We all had our own stories. I was wondering who to ask my four questions to.

This night was different to all other Seder nights:-

1. No putting an extension onto the table
2. No cleaning of the silver
3. No putting out extra seats
4. No place names?

What a shame all of this was.

We did however have a great time embracing new things:-

1. Change to the norm
2. Technology
3. Different charoses
4. Only 3 people around the table

How did we cope? We did well. We enjoyed it with reservations. We missed chatting about the English translations. And then there was the kneidlach – some like it hard and some soft; some like big balls and some like wee balls and others no balls – which is great for those that want extra balls. There is no pleasing everyone. Now what were to do with the wine question? We are not drinkers but managed to imbibe the Palwins. It is my favourite time of the year. I drink more in two nights than I do in two months. It is sweet and tasty and

very moreish. What a shame I need to wait for a year to be allowed to drink so much sweet liquid. I could not find a sugar-free Palwin. I have not done a wine tasting either. My sister-in-law always does our charoses. Now, that is a conversation piece on its own. Do you put in date, do you put in apple, do you put in nuts and which nuts and how much wine goes in? It is such a problem. Is the charoses runny or stiff? I like it stiff as I like to use the charoses for what it was intended. I love making pyramids and like to use my matzo as bricks and the charoses as mortar. I should have started the month before to make my pyramids, as I did not get very far. The first night's consistency was not the best for building but the second night was perfection.

So many of us say as is tradition, 'Next Year in Jerusalem'. We will not be doing that but hope we can say 'Next year in Pinner en famille'. We look forward already now to spring cleaning and bringing out the spare chairs, putting in the table extension, getting a long table cloth, working out who is to sit where and who is to read what and what songs to sing. There will be lots of helpers to wash up and dry and up and 'yes', with all the delays, we will be finished later than this year but in time for the morning Shemah. But we may miss the Zoom discussion and wondering if we have enough time and also muting the not great singers of which we have our fair share.

## Life in Sri Lanka

*by Ron E Collins – Mosaic Liberal Overseas Member*

I have been a member of the Liberal Synagogue since 1982 and have been living in Sri Lanka as an overseas member, since 2013 – loving every moment.

Sri Lanka has an average climate of 32°C – much warmer than the climatic condition in the UK of course. Sri Lanka has many advantages particularly for retired elderly people – in my case, for example, at 78

years old, my arthritis and diabetic conditions have much improved since leaving the UK.

Many foreign national expats including UK citizens live in Sri Lanka (over 2 million of them with 750,000 in Colombo). There is a small Synagogue in Colombo with a very small Jewish community. The country is made up of 75 per cent Sinhalese – the balance is made up of Hindus, Christians and Muslims.

Great improvements have been made since the end of the civil war in 2009 with the development of new infrastructure and highways. The unbelievable New Colombo City line, which will be completed over the next 20 years, is being built on land reclaimed from the Indian Ocean off the Colombo coast.

Casualties from Covid-19 have been relatively low in comparison with most western countries, which have been hugely



**Pictured: Ron E Collins**

affected. The WHO Geneva have congratulated the Sri Lankan Health Authorities on the way they have handled the situation to date and for the extremely fast way that the health authorities have responded. We do, however, have concerns about our Indian neighbours, where the pandemic is just gaining momentum – they are only separated by a 20 mile strip of the Indian Ocean in the

north part of the country.

Covid-19 has been carried mainly by returning Sri Lankan nationals or by overseas visitors. Those affected people have been quarantined in isolation in the Hill Country far away from the heavily populated cities such as Colombo.

The Sri Lankan Tea Board just announced they intend to promote the drinking of Sri Lankan Black Organic Tea which, they say, gives drinkers a strong immune system – particularly useful for elderly members of the community, as well as young children.

Otherwise, everything is still under control with a full lockdown as we approach Passover, Easter and Ramadan. All religious buildings are currently closed, and there is additional security from police and army as we approach the anniversary of last year's terrible terrorist

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# Gary Italiaander Celebrates The Beauty of Nature

I created this collection of photographic floral images to allow 'study' of them in close-up and appreciation of their incredible beauty. Presented as portraits, they were photographed in my studio.



Photography is all about the way that light falls onto an object and then capturing it, originally on film but now generally through the digital process onto a sensor. The final quality of images captured will depend on the size of the sensor, as well as the quality of the lens used to process the image. Professionally, processing is done using Photoshop to create the highest definition.

A short video of this flower collection can be found on YouTube using the search bar with the title:  
The Beauty of Nature by Gary Italiaander



# Second Chances

*by Edwin Lucas*

It was not Seder night, but here are my four questions

1. What is a second chance?
2. Who should get a second chance?
3. Why are second chances given?
4. Does G-d give second chances?

I remember a story about a student at City University who did his first-year exams and failed. He did his resits and failed again. He said to the professor, that he should get a second chance, as when he was at school, and failed something, he was given lots of chances to repeat until he passed. The professor was listening and explained to the student that he had been given a second chance and failed. Therefore, he was not eligible for a second, second chance. 'But, but, but...' came the response and the professor said, 'But nothing..., go on your way as you have not applied yourself and this is real life and not a school. There are no special circumstances and you will have to fend for yourself now.' The now ex-student left crestfallen as he never thought that he would not be given a second chance, for the second time. What was he to do?

At Mosaic HQ on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 45 members attended a talk on 'second chances', given by film director Rex Bloomstein and Timpson's National Recruitment Manager, Darren Burns. What would a film director have in common with a cobbler and key cutter?



**From the left Darren Burns (heads-up the prisoner rehabilitation programme at the Timpson Foundation) Edwin Lucas (joint Chairman of Mosaic Masorti) and Rex Bloomstein (the film director)**

The answer was loads, and we were inspired by a film which Rex directed on behalf of the Timpson Foundation to do with second chances. The film was different, just like the Seders this year – it opened up our eyes to a new set of visions. We went inside the prison system. The film lasted 90 minutes and you could not hear a pin drop. Everyone was interested. Everyone was captivated by the cast. The cast were not actors. They were everyday people like you and me. They had made a mistake and ended up in prison. They were made up of men and women of a variety of ages and backgrounds. The one common denominator was that they had all been sentenced to a custodial sentence and were all on a journey, preparing for release.

That is where Timpson come in, and in particular Darren. Darren is responsible for selecting new recruits to Timpson. He visits prisons throughout the UK and, with his team, looks for candidates to see if he can find new colleagues to join the Timpson family. This is not a sop but real. The Timpson foundation has currently over 600 former prisoners working for them. Darren gives "Second Chances", but the candidates have to want to have a second chance. The staff have identified them as possible applicants and they have all attended interviews. We saw six candidates who had gone through the hoops and were starting their training at Timpson. No, it is not a day out, or a soft option. We watched the stories unfold and what brought the individuals to prison and saw them learn, not in a traditional workshop with bars and bolts but a high street shop in a prison which emulated the outside world. The shop had experienced staff who were serving prisoners and we watched a new recruit coming in nervously to the unknown. Over many weeks in their apprenticeship they learned what to do and what was acceptable to Timpson. Was it easy? Was it a pushover? Was it a certainty that they would pass the course? No. No. No. Every person who passes the training course is eligible for an interview for a position at Timpson on release.

We saw men released on temporary licence to attend a shoe repair and key production unit outside a prison. They had to travel long journeys to go to the academy. Just like the Ladies in the Max Photographic store, they had to look the part and learn every facet of shoe-mending and key-cutting. There were regular tests and trainees had to pass. All the trainees did take it seriously and it was

wonderful to watch their experience grow and also their confidence. What struck me was that a Timpson Academy recruit was NO DIFFERENT to any other new recruit starting out anywhere in life. Why should it be? Darren explained that the new recruits were representing the Timpson brand and had to show they could do so.

Darren can tell a lot of stories about successes. During the question and answer session, someone asked about failures. Yes, there are some and for a variety of reasons. The main point is that none amongst the six people on the film had reoffended.

Timpson do not just employ suitable candidates who want to grasp their second chance. They help the staff reintegrate into the community. The store managers go out of their way to help the new recruits. This might be technical or just listening and having banter in trying to help reintegration. It was wonderful to hear about some of the cast re-establishing links with their families. We saw remorse. We saw regret and we saw a drive and an appreciation of the second chance being given. It was heart-warming

I would like to thank everyone who attended and who gave a donation to the Timpson Foundation to help them continue their good work in giving second chances.

To end with my own 4 questions:-

1. What is a second chance? Something we should all consider in life.
2. Who should get a second chance? Everyone who is in need of one.
3. Why are second chances given? To show that we all understand each other.
4. Does G-d give second chances? Every Day.



# The Jewish Presence in Luton

*by Sid and Simon Rutstein*

Sid is an Elder at Luton United Synagogue and a Deputy of the Board of Deputies. Sid's son, Simon, is a current member of Mosaic Masorti – he grew up in Luton after his parents moved there from North London in 1969

The first Jewish family settled in Luton in around 1880 and by 1912 there were about five families living in the town. However, the first organised Jewish community meeting took place in Duke Street on 23 September 1923 and it was resolved to form a body called the Luton Hebrew Congregation. Until 1929 services and religious classes were held above a factory in John Street. In 1929 a minister was appointed, and a house was purchased at 5 Moor Path and this was converted into a Synagogue which could accommodate about ninety people.

At the outbreak of war in 1938 there were about twenty-five families in Luton, but this swelled to over two thousand souls with the evacuees from London. This represented a turning point in the history of the



Luton Jewish community and it was apparent that a new Synagogue and Communal Centre were required. So, in 1949 the Empire Cinema in Bury Park Road was purchased. The Empire Cinema had opened as an independent cinema on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1921. Plans were developed for the conversion of the building and it was consecrated by the Chief Rabbi, Dr Israel Brodie in 1953. At that



**Top: The Empire cinema, which became the town's synagogue**

**Bottom: Luton United synagogue today (picture by Harvey Podgorney)**

time the congregation had about two hundred members and held regular services as well as religious classes and social functions. There was a Youth Club, Young Marrieds' Group, Ladies Guild, Parent Teacher Association and a Friendship Club for older members.

The Bury Park area of Luton has been a predominantly Muslim Asian area since the 1970s and although the relationship between the Jewish and Asian communities is now very good, with a strong relationship via various interfaith programs, in the 1970s and 1980s there were occasional attacks on the building which, along with the movement of the Jewish population away from the area, prompted a search for a new building.

The Bury Park area is also home to Luton Town Football Club. I (Simon) have vivid recollections of the away team coaches arriving to the Oak Road end of the stadium (where we used to park) as we left shul on a Saturday lunchtime. It was another reason to move away from the area, as football crowds in the '70s and '80s were generally not as friendly as they are today (certainly not in Luton).

The Bury Park area is the subject of a film released in summer 2019, called *Blinded By The Light*, which is based on the memoir by the broadcaster and journalist Safraz Manzoor, called *Greetings from Bury Park*.

By the late 1980s it was apparent that new premises were required. The membership was declining and aging and few members lived near to Bury Park. A protracted search was begun, to find new accommodation, or land upon which to build, and also to identify a purchaser for our building. After many false starts, the Synagogue in Bury Park Road was sold at the end of 2001. The purchasers were the Islamic Cultural Centre, so the building retained its religious use and the location was much more appropriate for the new owners than it had been for the Jewish community.

For the next eight years the Jewish community had a series of temporary homes. These ranged from Luton Town Hall, various community centres and various houses. However, in 2009 a disused doctor's surgery was purchased and work was undertaken to convert it into a Synagogue. On 27 June 2010 the new Synagogue in Dunstable Road was consecrated by the Chief Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks.

The membership now is one hundred and thirty and the regular services and social and cultural events continue.

It is worth noting that since the appointment of the first minister in 1929, there have been full-time ministers almost continuously up to the present day.

Continued from page 17 *Life in Sri Lanka...*

bombing attacks on Easter Sunday.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka is well-worth visiting once the pandemic is over. The country is a very beautiful and diverse with wonderful beaches, cultural centres, hill

country, cascading waterfalls, tea plantations, national wildlife parks, and of course Kandy – the Old Capital – home to the Temple of Buddha's Tooth Relic – the most sacred place in the Buddhist world.



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