

Demolition has started at Stanmore Hill!



Since our last issue

Children and Teen birthdays on page 12

MOSAIC REFORM

MAZAL TOV TO:

Andrew Segal & Belen Marquez on the birth of their son, Noah Casimiro. Mazal tov also to Trudy & Bernard Segal on the birth of their grandson. Gary Miller and Michelle Miller on the birth of their grand-daughter, Willow. Mazal tov also to Adela Sefton on the birth of her great-grand-daughter. Dennis Goodman on the birth of his great-grand-daughter, Tami. Jacqueline Gross on the birth of her grand-daughter, Maiya. Leslie Kopitko on the birth of his grandson.

BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

David Wyman, 70
Larry Frost, 90
Jeannette Less, 75
Linda Paerse, 75
William Warren, 90
Gloria Faber, 90
Hilda Freeling, 96
Carolyn Carvin, 80
Sam Bell, 50

ANNIVERSARY WISHES TO:

Hilda & Joshua Freeling on their 60th wedding anniversary
Lesley & Jeff Young on their 55th wedding anniversary

CONDOLENCES TO:

Ruby Nerva on the death of her husband, Lawrie.
Sam Walport on the death of his wife, Doreen. Condolences also to Jane Prentice on the death of her mother.
The family and friends of Sydra Heinemann.
The family and friends of Leila Webber.

MOSAIC LIBERAL

CONGRATULATIONS IN YOUR

NEW HOME TO:

Ruth Eva Fiegel

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Irene Conway
Maisie Philips
Rosa Pinkus

GET WELL SOON TO:

Beryl Sontag

CONDOLENCES TO:

The family and friends of George Adams.
The family and friends of Ursula Gross.
The family and friends of Sylvia Rose.
Marjorie Monnickendam on the death of her mother, Isobel.

MOSAIC MASORTI

BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Lore Lucas, 101
Isabel Alexander, 21
Amy Ezekiel, 21

ANNIVERSARY WISHES TO:

Sharon & Alan Grossman, 20

CONDOLENCES TO:

The family and friends of Samuel Taratooty.
Gary Italiaander on the death of his father, Michael.

Next Issue

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Send your articles, pictures, letters etc to

newsdesk@choosemosaic.org

Tu b'Shevat – Looking Towards a Brighter Future

by Rabbi Middleton

It seems that we celebrate the New Year of the Trees in the middle of winter; January and February often turn out to be the coldest months of the year here in the UK and in these grey and miserable months our thoughts aren't much on trees or the garden, least of all now that we find ourselves yet again in a serious lockdown.

The Rabbis instituted *Tu B'Shevat* (the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat) as *Rosh ha-Shanah la-Ilanot* (New Year of the Trees) mainly for the purpose of tithing; (in which one designated one tenth of one's produce as a kind of Temple tax) as such, midwinter seemed an appropriate time to declare a new year from which to count new produce; well before the appearance of any actual new produce could muddle a landowner's mind in identifying which produce belonged to which year.

The Mishnah describes a dispute between the famous pair of Sages: Hillel and Shammai disagreeing over the date of the New Year of the Trees. Whilst Shammai suggests that it should be celebrated on the first of Shevat, Hillel holds that it should be at the full moon on the 15th of Shevat. 15 is an interesting number: in order not to unwittingly write God's



Name in vain, we exchange the letters *yod* (ten) and *he* (five), which should have made up the number 15 for *tet* (9) and *vav* (6), but underneath those different letters, there still hides a hint of God's name as a reminder that even in bleakest midwinter, God's creating and lifegiving presence is stirring the trees.

Rabbis also point out that precisely six months after *Tu*

B'Shevat is the lesser-known festival of *Tu B'Av*: the full moon of summer (sometimes dubbed 'the Jewish Valentine's Day') on which, in ancient Israel the maidens would go out to dance into the field to choose their husbands.

If *Tu B'Shevat* symbolizes the promise of abundance in midwinter, *Tu B'av* is the acknowledgement of abundance and fruitfulness in midsummer.

As we all start to feel the effects of the national lockdown in which we find ourselves, we must take heart from the festival of *Tu B'Shevat*, the New Year of the Trees, plant trees and eat fruit to acknowledge the potential, the promise, that trees hold for us in midwinter. Even the bleakest winter will come to an end and the trees will once again grow leaves and be laden with fruit. Just as this pandemic will one day be *Continued on following page >>*

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overcome and normal human interaction will resume.

The *Midrash* often stresses that suffering builds resilience. Indeed, we are a resilient people; our history has been pockmarked by suffering; but often we have been able to adapt to crisis and became stronger: the synagogue was built on the ruins of the Temple; the Diaspora with its diversity on the Exile and, some say, the creation of Israel on the ruins of the Shoah.

These of course are huge generalisations, and history is not always as neat and easy as all that, but it is true that our resilience has helped us adapt and pull through the most devastating experiences in history.

For us, as a Jewish community, it means that we have had to adapt to the crisis of the pandemic too. With every month longer that it

lasts, we also come to the realization that the Jewish world will never go back to as it was pre-Covid.

I do not think we will ever pack up our laptops and leave zoom behind when we are allowed back to meet one another again because, although it has been born out of restriction, we have learned that it has liberated us too – we have been able to attend symposia, lectures, shivah meetings, and assemblies without having to get ourselves there physically. The pandemic has galvanized some general trends in Jewish communities which had already been forming pre-Covid.

At the moment we cannot predict how the post-pandemic 'shul of the 21st century' will look, but I am sure that we will be creating it in our new shul.



Mosaic JACS Programme

February - March



All JACS events will be on-line using a Zoom meeting, starting at 2:30 pm

Tuesday 9th February 2.30pm

Journalism – It's Not All Fake News! Join us to hear Jonathan Braude talk about, "Journalism; It's not all fake news, sensationalism or biased reporting! At least: not unless the proprietor has an axe to grind (or money to make). Jonathan, a business writer and former daily newspaper reporter, will be presenting anecdotes and sober judgements from behind the computer screen.

Tuesday 23rd February 2.30pm

The Life & Times of Boris the Photographer – Join us to hear about "The Life and Times of Boris, the Photographer" as told by Michael Bennett. Michael will be talking about the life and times of his late father, Boris Bennett. He has many entertaining tales to tell.

Tuesday 9th March 2.30pm

Jewellery & Precious Stones – Tony Weiss will be talking about jewellery

and precious stones and describing how he came to work in the trade that he has been in for most of his working life.

Tuesday 23rd March 2.30pm

Jewish Prisoners – Keith Simons visits Jewish prisoners all over England. He will be talking about their experience of being Jewish in a prison and how he is able to support them.

Moving on

by Adrian Cohen

"I felt a strange mix of relief that our precious jewels were going to new homes where they would be loved and taken care of, but tinged with the sorrow of parting"

I am sure we are all looking forward to the eventual move to Stanmore Hill in 2022 with great excitement. Of course there are worries about finding a temporary location for both Reform and Liberal members. That concern is further compounded by the Covid situation i.e. if we do vacate Bessborough Road in April/May will we be in a position to hold services etc wherever we are?



these pieces in situ on 23rd January when we will have attended by zoom the Shabbat morning service led by Rabbi Nathan Godleman of South London Synagogue.

Our organ, that we purchased for our new building in Preston Road, has been lovingly used by the Reform synagogue downstairs ever since we moved to Bessborough Road in June 2011. It was just right for

Preston Road but was too big for our upstairs sanctuary and it would be too big for our new home. Our organ has gone to a loving home in Croydon, cared for and played every day by our once stand-in organist in Preston Road, Richard Pillner. Richard is a gifted organist who played for many years at Kingston Liberal Synagogue under Rabbi Danny Rich.

I was surprised at my reaction when I oversaw the removal of all these treasures. I felt a strange mix of relief that our precious jewels were going to new homes where they would be loved and taken care of, but tinged with the sorrow of parting. I am sure that we are about to go through this strange combination of feelings over the next few months.

In the meantime, stay safe and stay well.

In the meantime there are practical matters to deal with and the issue of what we do with our synagogue treasures, those that we will keep and, more pertinently, those that have served us well but are more than fixtures and fittings that will not go with us to our purpose new-built home.

I am pleased to inform you that the reading desk and two benches which occupied part of our sanctuary and the smaller reading desk that we used on the High Holy Days have gone to a super new home at South London Liberal Synagogue. They have remodelled their bimah to include our treasured pieces. By the time you read this many of you will have seen

We're packing up

from Harry Grant – Chairman, Mosaic Reform



We would like to upcycle items that will not be needed in our new building. We have chairs (various), desks / tables (various), cupboards (various), bookshelves (various), walking frame, wheelchair, fans, heaters, lecterns, music stands, plastic stools, up-lighters, chandeliers, a display cupboard unit and leaflet display unit. If you might be interested then please let us know and we can send you a detailed list of all available items. If you are able to, please offer a donation for any items.



And, finally, various items have now been identified as being surplus to requirements from the kitchen.

Remembering the old days of the MNS bazaars, we have a table of items from which you could take your pick. Please let the office know if you'd like to have a look as, for Covid reasons, we can only allow one household at a time to visit.

We're really hoping that our members will be able to help with the above requests. Please contact the office to find out more.



Can you possibly help us store items in the interim? If you have a spare bedroom (or other room), could we use around 4 feet of that room? (so we are not asking for all of

the room, just 4 feet of it!) If 15 to 20 members of Mosaic can help us out with this then we will be able to avoid the costs of renting a storage unit.

Moving on

by Harry Grant, Chairman Mosaic Reform

Things are moving fast on Stanmore Hill, the petrol station has been demolished and, as I write, the storage tanks are being removed. The groundwork is ongoing. These are very early days, but it is getting exciting!



foreseeable future.

They could have all been added to the landfill being accumulated in the skip but instead Barbara made a couple of quick calls and got in touch with a local branch of London's Community

Kitchen, a communal welfare project based in Harrow. We took a car full of plates, cutlery and food and were greeted with open arms by Douglas, the chef who coincidentally had joined our Communal Seder a few years ago.

It was great to see good coming from the occasionally depressing job of emptying Bessborough Road and emphasised Mosaic's role in, and commitment to, the wider local community.

And much has been happening in Bessborough Road. David Leibling and his 'Bexit' team have filled their first skip full of rubbish, and the contents of the kitchen are being sorted. We will be taking our 'best' china and cutlery with us to Stanmore but there is a vast quantity of equipment, accumulated over the last 50 years, that will not need to go with us to our new home.

In addition, there were lots of dry goods, well within sell-by dates, which various shul users, such as our Friendship Club, had not been able to use during the past year, or the

And as our move to Stanmore Hill steadily grows legs, there will be many more opportunities, as seen elsewhere in Kehila, to help with this exciting project.

Walking as they work

Rabbi Rachel and Kevin Ziants (Chairman of Mosaic Liberal Rites & Practices Committee) have monthly walks together. They discuss some Synagogue issues in an informal setting, while having valuable exercise.



Rachel has tried to show Kevin some uncharted territory of Stanmore Country Park, ensuring his trainers end up full of mud. They have discovered beautiful lakes on their

doorstep, and have seen the currently derelict site of our new Stanmore building. They have recently stumbled upon a table tennis table, where the weather

has not deterred them from a competitive challenge. Kevin has seen Rachel's angry side where she came back from 2-sets-to-0 down, to inspire her to a 3-2 win.

After the sessions they feel in a better frame of mind to face the challenges of their good work.

Science & miracles

*This sermon was delivered to mosaic reform by David Leibling
on shabbat chanukah 2020*

For many years, I have been interested in the possible scientific explanation of miracles in the bible. A very relevant theme for Shabbat Chanukah.

The 14th century Portuguese Jewish scholar, Isaac ben Judah Abrabanel says: "The Torah of Moses does not include philosophical theories or logical investigation or proofs involving high enquiries. For human success is above Reason and beyond Nature."

I think he is trying to say that the Torah does not need scientific or rational explanation if we believe in Divine inspiration. However, I am going to take some of the miracles in the Bible and give them a logical explanation and then we can see whether we agree with Abrabanel.

Let's start with one of the easiest miracles to explain – the burning bush which Moses sees when he gets the call from God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The burning bush may well have been a group of acacia plants, which are known for making excellent charcoal. Why did it spontaneously burst into flame in the

first place? Well, scholars have long claimed that Mount Sinai (Moses' favourite hideout) was an active volcano which could have been the source of the flames. So a burnt bush would retain its framework, making it seem like it was burning endlessly. And the voice of God that Moses heard? The acacia produces a psychoactive substance known to produce overwhelming religious experiences, like hearing voices and meeting God. Perhaps Moses was high on psychedelic fumes.

In order to protect the Ark of the Covenant from being mishandled, ancient Israelites who inappropriately handled it were immediately struck down by God. An engineer from the Lewis Institute of Technology studied the construction of the ark as explained in the Bible and showed it could have been an electric condenser which, in the right conditions, could potentially hold 10,000 volts of electricity and anyone touching it would be struck down by a strong electric shock.

Let's look at the ten plagues and here I am indebted to Chief Rabbi Hertz, the most devoted of rabbis who provides a scientific explanation in his Hertz chumash. In the first plague, the Nile turns red – this is not an uncommon phenomenon in the summer caused by decaying vegetation. This would provide a fertile breeding ground for the second plague – frogs – which in turn would breed huge swarms of flies and other vermin – the third and fourth plagues. Now we know

that insects carry germs which would infect the cattle or as we quaintly say in the haggadah – given them murrain, the fifth plague and humans, the sixth plague – boils. The seventh plague – hail – could come at any time and so can locusts, the eighth plague. The ninth plague – darkness – could well have been an eclipse which was total over Egypt proper but was only partial in Goshen where the Israelites were. All this could have poisoned the grain which would have been eaten by the eldest in the family hence the tenth plague – the death of the first born.

The parting of the Red Sea to let the Israelites cross in safety is often explained by a strong wind parting the waves but I have also read of another explanation – a tsunami travelling down the Mediterranean caused by the explosion of the volcano which is now Santorini in southern Greece. And why did the Egyptian soldiers get bogged down when they tried to cross – it was because the sand became quicksand when the waters flowed back.



And, finally, the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days when the Maccabees wanted to re-dedicate the Temple after it had been overrun by the Syrians. Perhaps it was just a thoughtful and careful shamash who only

put a small amount of oil in the lamp each day to stretch it out till the new supply arrived.

So before I go back to my original quotation I would like to refer to some modern miracles. Here is a simple example, dating from Galileo's time – a little-appreciated miracle of reading glasses, which have restored clear vision to hundreds of millions of people with sight problems.

Some more modern miracles:

Life expectancy. Life expectancy in Europe and America hovered around 35 for over two centuries, before soaring, starting about 1880, to over 80 at the present time due to the wonders of modern medicine and the dramatic fall in infant mortality from 25 per cent of new births, to a fraction of a percent.

Disease – The elimination of diseases such as polio and smallpox.

Malnutrition – Vast improvements in food production have improved the diet of billions of people.

Transportation – Trains in the first part of the 20th century and cars in the second part have provided freedom of movement everywhere.

Technology – Computer technology, communications and smart phones in the 21st century have transformed our daily life. For example, Apple watches can produce a clinical-quality electrocardiogram and can automatically call emergency services if they detect that the wearer has a problem.

And some people are referring to the rapid development of the Covid vaccine as a modern miracle – ten years work concentrated into less than one.

Perhaps there are some negatives associated with modern developments such as global warming, the free availability of pornography *Continued on following page >>*



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online, and traffic jams – but it is impossible to deny the progress we have made though modern miracles.

By definition, science depends on reproducible experimental methods. But most biblical scholars and theologians have moved away from the notion that miracles are necessarily contraventions of natural law. The miracle is that these natural phenomena

occurred in such a way and at such a time as to give people faith. Belief in the actuality of God, like belief in the actuality of anything real and vital, is rooted in an encounter with a personal, moral, liberating, and transforming power and presence.

Abrabanel was right – the Torah does not need scientific explanation if we believe in Divine inspiration.

The Pope's Message to the World Union for Progressive Judaism

As viewed by Michael Reik by Zoom



On the 8th Day of Chanukah a service was held by Zoom, worldwide, 'Many Candles one World' from the WUPJ

Headquarters in Jerusalem. Included in the Service were words spoken from the President Rabbi Sergio Bergman from Argentina.

Rabbi Bergman met Pope Francis at a Hanukkah interfaith Celebration, lighting the candles together at his Synagogue in Buenos Aires in 2012. As a result, they have continued to communicate with each other and for this year's Chanukah Celebration the Pope sent a handwritten note as follows.

"Rabbi Sergio Bergman Dear Brother, Thanks for your mail. As you invite me to do it. I send a greeting to those who participate

in the virtual meeting to celebrate Hanukkah. I remember when in 2012 I lit the candle in the Temple on Arcos Street. Light, the first gift of the Lord in Creation. I wish all of you an existence illuminated by the Lord, with the light that united paths, teaches the true profiles of things, draws towards the horizon. May the Lord bless each of you, your families, your communities, and please I ask you to pray for me so that I always have the grace to walk in the light and get lost in the darkness. For my part I pray for you. May the Lord bless you fraternally Franciscus".

Rabbi Bergman added, "We join Pope Francis in wishing all humankind, unity and strength in moving forward together, brothers and sisters, to repair our world which has changed so much in this pandemic with the light of Tikkun Olam".

A beacon of light during a very dark time

by Lydia Safir

During the Second World War and the Holocaust there were many brave and indeed now famous rescuers of Jews. I am on the team of Holocaust Educators at FRS and during the week of Holocaust Memorial Day we invite Barnet schools to the synagogue to hear a survivor and do a workshop. Sadly, this year we are unable to do this so each of the Educators has put a profile of a rescuer on a special website for schools to access. The rescuer I decided to write about is not famous like, for example, Oskar Schindler or Irena Sendler, but was very brave nevertheless. I also chose him to show the many Muslim students I have taught just how special he was.



Ali Sheger PashKaj was a Muslim Albanian who saved a Jew during the Holocaust.

His son, Enver Alia Sheqer, wrote, "Why did my father save a stranger at the risk of his life and entire village? My father was a devout Muslim. He believed that to save one life is to enter paradise"

Albania during the War

Albania, a small mountainous country on the south west coast of the Balkan peninsula, was home to a population of about a million. Of those only 200 were Jews. After Hitler's rise

to power many Jews found refuge there – there are no accurate figures but it is estimated up to 1,800 entered Albania from Austria, Yugoslavia and Greece. Following the German occupation in 1943, in an extraordinary act,

the Albanian population refused to turn over lists of Jews residing there. Also the various governmental agencies provided many Jewish families with fake documentation which allowed them to integrate with the rest of the population. The Albanians also provided sanctuary to Jewish refugees when it was still under Italian rule and who found themselves faced with the danger of deportation to concentration camps.

This remarkable assistance was grounded in BESA, a code of honour, which today still serves as the highest ethical code in the country. It means 'to keep the promise'. One who acts according to Besa is someone who keeps his word, someone you can trust with your life and those of your family. The Albanians not only went out of their way to save Jews – they competed with each other for the privilege! Almost all Jews living in Albania – either of Albanian origin or refugees- were saved. There were more Jews in Albania at the end of the war – up to 1,800 – than at the beginning – when there

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were around 200.

At Yad Vashem, the world-famous Holocaust exhibition in Jerusalem, 70 Albanians have been honoured as Righteous among Nations. They have been given the more accurate title of Righteous Muslims. One of these brave rescuers, who was recognised in 2002, was Ali Sheger Pashkaj. Like many Muslims in Albania, Ali Sheger Pashkaj refused to comply with the Nazi occupiers' request to hand over information about the Jewish population and helped to provide fake documentation. He saved a Jew by providing a hiding place and misdirecting Nazis. This is his story. Ali Sheger Pashkaj owned a convenience store in Puke. One day after the German invasion a Nazi transport lorry rolled up containing 19 Albanians on their way to prison and one Jew who was going to be shot. The Nazis stopped at the cafe and Ali, who spoke German, invited them in. He supplied them with food and drink and gave them rather more alcohol than he needed to, getting them drunk. They all fell asleep. Meanwhile he passed the young Jewish man a melon containing a note which said 'get out of the lorry, jump down, run into the forest and hide there, I'll help you' and that is what the man and Ali did. Eventually the Germans woke up, realised the prisoner had gone and were furious at Ali. They drove him into town, held him against a wall, put a

gun to his head and interrogated him. They threatened to shoot him and destroy the whole village. Eventually they became fed up as Ali refused to confess. They let him go and he went back to his store and for the rest of the war hid the young man. His name was Yeoshua Baruchowic. After the war he went to Mexico and became a dentist.

After the War

Norman Gershman was an American photographer who spent many years travelling in Albania and photographing families who provided a haven for Jews during the Holocaust years. In 2007 he opened his exhibition at Yad Vashem honouring Muslim Albanians who rescued Jews. Among those he photographed there were Ali's son, Enver, and the man Ali rescued, Yeoshua Baruchowic. Both had travelled to the exhibition and it was a very emotional meeting. A fitting end to a very moving story.

Herman Bernstein, US ambassador to Albania, wrote in 1934, "There is no trace of any discrimination against Jews in Albania, because Albania happens to be one of the rare lands in Europe today where religious prejudice and hate do not exist, even though Albanians themselves are divided into three faiths".



Covid poem

by Kevin Ziants

This has been a year like no other
New ways of existing we have had to
discover
Many of us have had to stay apart
As we find new ways to mend a broken
heart.

We are told we have to social distance.
Not get too close for any instance
We can't support our loved ones with a
simple touch
There are others we can't see while we
long to so much.

Best we can hope for is seeing people
using zoom
To see and hear them in a virtual room
We long for the day in person they can
be seen
Instead of just through a box on a
rectangular screen.

Some of us have had to completely
isolate
Going out again for them is a very long
wait
Just sitting in a room all alone
With your only friend the mobile phone

We try to find ways of managing to
cope.
And look for something to give us hope.
Somehow we manage to find ways to
survive
In our efforts to keep ourselves mentally
alive.

The year 2020 has certainly bought
Us all plenty and plenty food for thought
Here's hoping 2021 will bring us more
cheer
As we try look forward to a happier new
year.

Happy Birthday in February to:

Nathan Morrow, 4
Ria Morrow, 4
Isaac Wolff, 8

Cici Rutstein, 11
Phoebe Ellison, 10

Trilogy for Life

by Bernard Fisherman

If lady luck pays you a visit be happy not coy or vain
She rarely makes regular visits you are lucky if it's now and again
A sense of humour is always needed you can't beat a laugh and a joke
It's certainly much better than a heart attack or any type of stroke
Regular bowel movements are always most welcome they keep the body from strife
So with lots of luck and a good sense of humour
You should have a pretty good life.

Le Chaim 5781/82

I know it is a little late, but I am sure praise is always welcome.

I would personally like to mention the telephone calls when lockdown started, it was very much appreciated to hear a friendly voice, I found it particularly difficult living on my own, not going out to dance classes and not seeing anyone.

Thank you for organising such varied and interesting activities on Zoom, there really has been something for everyone. I have attended several of these events and particularly enjoyed the magician.

Thank you for the wild flower seeds, what a lovely thought, it made us smile.

Felicity, Aedhan and I would like to thank everyone who was involved with the wonderful High Holydays services. It started with Stefan welcoming us with a very friendly, smiling manner. The online book was extremely easy to follow and the Yad during the Torah service and the "opening" and "closing" of the Ark were superb. Even though we weren't together, we felt very included in this very separate world. The pictures of the Shul and the Scrolls dressed in white were very moving. The resume of the Temple service was extremely interesting and thanks goes to whoever put that together.

Massive thanks to David and Juliet for the singing, it must have been very difficult for them but I hope they know how much it is appreciated.

Last, but by no means least, a huge thank you to Rabbi Kathleen, we are immensely grateful for all your hard work.

Stephanie Lindley, Felicity Amswych and Aedhan Brown

On behalf of my Father, brother and sister I would like to thank the Mosaic community members for all their amazing support after losing my wonderful Mother on January 1st.

Rabbi Kathleen led such beautiful services and although we couldn't have physical support, Stefan's technical expertise allowed us to reach many friends and family who could not have attended in person under any circumstances.

It has perhaps been extra difficult coming to terms with our loss with the Covid restrictions, but the support through Zoom, letters, cards, e-mails and phone calls has been quite overwhelming and this has confirmed everything I already felt about being a member of such a caring community as ours. It is a privilege to be part of Mosaic and a member of a Jewish community. Rabbi Kathleen asked in her sermon last Shabbat (paraphrased) 'What extra worth does being a member of a Jewish community give us?' and although there are many answers to this question, I can certainly vouch for so much 'extra worth'.

It will take a long time to come to terms with our loss but we have so many wonderful memories and many of them are linked with many of you.

Jane Prentice

Covid-19 and lockdown – What state are we in?

by Alyson Warner

This article was written in November 2020 prior to the release of the first vaccine.

The definition of Dystopia is an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic or in which everything is bad. The antonym is Utopia: an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. Sir Thomas More wrote the novel Utopia in 1516.

I believe that there cannot be a perfect society. Can there be a dystopian society? Certainly, at present time, we feel that we are living in a surrealistic world with dystopian features. The first two sentences of a joint statement by the World Health Organisation, International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organisation, and International Fund for Agricultural Development, dated 13 October 2020, describe the macro effect of the current pandemic on the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty.



Our country, the UK, is the sixth or seventh richest in the world. Nevertheless, our society has a high death rate from the virus and this is causing much suffering, mass unemployment and increased social exclusion. The deadly Covid-19 coronavirus spreads like the common cold which totally disrupts

society because humans have to social-distance themselves from one another, cannot congregate in crowds, must live in isolation with one household (nuclear family or a single individual), and must wear masks in certain areas. Our movements are restricted, we cannot frequent organisations associated with our previous normal life, for example theatres, cinemas and sport events, or physically mass congregate in places of worship. We are in lockdown at the present time so we can only go to food shops. Restaurants and other shops are closed. We are encouraged to stay, and work, at home. This situation on a micro level is totally contrary to the sociability of the basic human instinct. We are all used to close interaction and contact. When I deviate away from people in the park or street, I sometimes feel physiologically peculiar as though I am in a dream-like horror world.

Most countries are finding the disease difficult to

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control. Is there a “light at the end of the tunnel”? There is always hope, the hope that is released from Pandora’s box (from Greek mythology). Human beings are enterprising and intuitive. Technology, such as social media and on-line meetings, has slightly mitigated the lack of human contact and produced a special type of sociability. We can see and talk to individuals from different countries on our mobiles and computers. It is amazing. On-line shopping has increased due to necessity. I have now learnt on-line grocery shopping. There is much volunteering and communal help. Pharmaceutical firms are collaborating

not only with universities but internationally with competitors to produce vaccines which may be available in the late Spring of 2021.

All countries must truly cooperate together to “mend” the world (תיקון עולם Tikkun Olam) from this health, social and economic tragedy. There is an opportunity now to reconstruct our societies to focus on peoples’ general wellbeing. During the pandemic I became more mindful of the beautiful natural world. We must also work globally together to drastically reduce the problem of climate change and the resulting environmental degradation. I believe we can also try to achieve this.

Getting through long covid

by Esther Aronsfeld

Last summer I was diagnosed with Long Covid. I said ‘no’ to medication and instead created my own back to health programme based around five life-affirming principles.

1. We are more than our symptoms

When we get sick we often define ourselves by our symptoms. But we are more than our aches and pains. We are also a soul. And when the soul is in pain it expresses itself through the body. In my case that translated into severe fatigue, muscle ache, joint pain and nausea. To make that connection I turned my symptoms into questions. Instead of saying ‘I feel drained’, I asked ‘Who or what is draining me?’ Instead of saying ‘my legs ache’, I asked ‘What am I aching to do?’ Similarly, with the nausea, I asked ‘What am I sick and tired

of doing?’ The answers gave me the clues I needed to move forward.

2. Positive thoughts enhance our wellbeing

Long before Jung delved into the unconscious, the great medieval physician and philosopher, Maimonides, understood the power of thoughts on the psyche. So once I realised how often I kept telling myself ‘I have no energy, I have no energy,’ and how draining the words made me feel, I quickly changed the record to ‘My energy has come back’. By repeating the phrase several times each day, it wasn’t long before I started perking up. We can’t so easily control what goes on in our unconscious mind, but we can learn to control our conscious thoughts and feelings so we are no longer at their mercy.

3. The inner critic needs taming

My symptoms went into overdrive just before the High Holydays, a time when we are called to do some serious soul searching. That’s when it hit me. My harsh inner critic, the yetzer hara, was drowning out the cries of my soul. Small wonder I couldn’t hear the ‘still small voice’ imploring me to ditch the baggage labelled ‘the perfect professional’ and take a leaf out of Leonard Cohen’s anthem, Halleluliyah: ‘Forget your perfect offering, there’s a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in’. The light he was referring to is what the kabbalists term the Or HaKodesh, the holy light, which, like us, grows brighter when we can make peace with our inner critic.

4. Self-kindness is a mitzvah

If, like me, you work in the caring field, it’s easy to forget that as care givers we also need to take care of ourselves. It’s not being selfish, quite the opposite. It shows you value who you are and what you do, to quote Hillel, ‘If I am not for myself, who will be for me?’

With limited stamina and no end in sight to the pandemic, I took time off work and created a be-kind-to-myself programme. I ordered ready-made meals, listened to life enhancing talks, read uplifting and schmaltzy books, had cranial osteopathy and spent time in prayerful reflection. It was the kindest thing I could have done.

5. Laughter lifts the spirits

When my muscles went into lockdown I had to cancel my Monday morning fitness sessions with the lovely Roger. No longer able to work on my core muscles I turned to YouTube to exercise my funny bones. Victoria Wood’s ‘Dinner Ladies’ and Victor Borge’s concert antics had me howling with laughter. In the current climate it’s easy to feel fearful, depressed and out of control. But dwelling on things we can’t do anything about doesn’t help. Laughter not only lifts the spirit, it also burns calories and makes your face glow. Now that’s really something to lift the spirit.

Israel – the Jerusalem artists’ house

by Rosemary Wolfson

For a flavour of the influence of European culture on the Middle East, go to this museum and arts centre in Shemuel Hanagid Street!

Although the museum contains Israeli art, there are frequent exhibitions showing both Israeli and international artists. On entry on the ground floor there is a sort of office with

a fascinating assortment of different size canvasses of modern art, for sale, many of which seem to be more concerned with ideas rather than technique, which interests me greatly.

This three-storey, crenelated stone structure was built by the Turks around 1890. It was later purchased

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by the Jewish National Fund for the Bezalel School of Art, established in 1908. The founder of the school was Boris Schatz, who left his position as head of the Royal Academy of Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1906. Schatz attempted to create Jewish and also Palestinian Art. This academy attracted Zionist and Bauhaus artists - immigrants from the Middle East and Europe, many of whom were suffering from the subsequent problems of social upheaval.

The derivation of "Bezalel" within the original name of the building is interesting. Bezalel is mentioned a few times in the Tanach, particularly in the book of Exodus. He was the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. Apparently the Lord "filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship...to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary". The rabbinical tradition relates that God determined to appoint Bezalel as architect of the desert Tabernacle.

However, the Bezalel was in 1990 located to the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

We have usually visited the Jerusalem

Artists' House on Shabbat. This has been because it is on our route home from visiting orthodox relations on the way back to our hotel. It seemed to me on a Shabbat afternoon like a sanctuary for progressive Jews. This is because the directors seem willing to accept ideas, for instance, of experimenting with Christian iconology from the artists chosen. Amongst the exhibitions with which I have been impressed was one of risky ideas bound up with biblical figures, and another concerning dramatic architectural ideas about the dark wooden parts of church structures. (Sorry – no photos of these – couldn't carry camera on Shabbat!)

Because these artists are making large works regarding unconventional ideas, their sculptures and paintings are more suitable for exhibiting in galleries, rather than decorative purchases for home spaces. Therefore I think it is interesting to wonder whether non materialistic idealism is usually a specialisation of the young.



'Carry That Weight' (above) from an exhibition in 2018. By Leo Roth, (1914-2002), Shepherd, 1964, oil on wood, Ziva and Eli Madjar Collection, Tel-Aviv

If you missed any of our events, you can catch up with them by visiting www.choosemosaic.org and clicking on "past events". There are more than 60 recordings to choose from!

David Safir in conversation with Robert Voss CBE, CStJ

by Michael Reik

6th December



Robert, a member of Northwood and Pinner Liberal took the roll over from the Countess of Verulam in 2017. As Robert is 67 now, he is due to stay in the roll for a further 8 years as retirement is at age 75.

The role of the Lord Lieutenant started under Henry VIII. He is responsible for upholding the duties of the Queen in the County and to represent her. Robert attends many events in the County (361 in 2019) There are 1.2 million people in Hertfordshire and up to 56 deputies may be appointed to carry out all duties required. Visits to many hospitals and charities (including AGMs) are required. Robert has become Patron of many of the charities. Also, a major and enjoyable requirement is to escort members of the Royal Family while they are visiting in the County. We saw several photographs of Robert with members of the Royal Family (which included one with Prince Edward playing Real Tennis).

We enjoyed listening to Robert, the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, the first Jew to take on this roll in the country since Lord Rothchild in 1889.

Robert was chosen to take on the roll in 2017 while he was a Deputy Lieutenant. Theresa May approved (the day after the 2017 election) his appointment, and he was appointed two days later by the Queen. As Lord Lieutenant he unfortunately cannot call men to arms (If need be). This prerogative was disbanded in 1921. However, he needs to stay in touch with 'The Chief Constable', all the Hertfordshire Politicians and even the Queen's private secretary.

Robert discussed the proposal known as London Bridge, the preparation for when the Queen dies. At that time, one could expect a television audience of 4-5 billion people.

Interesting events included the Queen visiting the community in Hitchin by travelling by train to the town. Robert having a padded seat available to him at St Albans Cathedral (assigned for the Monarch but kept in her absence for the Lord Lieutenant who happens to be at this moment a Jewish boy). He is often asked to read at this high Church. He is very aware that, as he must represent the Queen's views, he must not invite any adverse comments especially as he is Jewish.

On a personal level Robert has been involved for many years in Holocaust Education. With Natasha Kaplinsky he helped to obtain 120 survivor testimonies. He recalled his Grandparents on his father's side who died at Sobibor concentration camp which he recently visited, and his parents who escaped from Europe (1936-1939) before the Nazi takeover. Finally, Robert recalled his other grandfather (who died in London at 103 years of age) and who inspired him to become President of the British Metals Association and to always respect others.

Meet the Human Rights Activist – Mia Hasenson-Gross

by Jeff Highfield

8th December



1 0th December 2020 was Human Rights Day, marking the 72nd anniversary of the adoption of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As one part

of observing that milestone, on 8th December Mosaic met Mia Hasenson-Gross, the Executive Director of the charity René Cassin, the Jewish Voice for Human Rights.

Steve Levinson asked Mia about her multinational personal background – born in Israel with a Salvadorean father and Finnish mother – and how she came to be involved in human rights activism – after serving in the IDF, she went to university and became active with Amnesty International. After moving to the UK with her family, she was appointed Director of René Cassin in 2015.

Mia went on to explain who René Cassin was. Born in 1887, he was a Jewish French jurist who participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He lost many family members in the Holocaust. The charity takes its name from him as a signal that Jews are speakers by experience and our personal stories and family histories give moral authority to speak out against abuses of human rights. More, our Jewish values place a

moral duty on us to speak out.

Steve pointed out that we were marking the 72nd anniversary of the Declaration – wasn't that long enough for the battle to embed human rights to have been won? Mia agreed that incorporating human rights into national and international law had made significant progress but it was far from complete. She pointed to two areas as examples, relating them to some of René Cassin's current campaigns and activities.

First, many nations continue to reject the universality of human rights and refuse to accept international criticism or even scrutiny of actions against their own citizens. The Chinese Government's treatment of its Muslim Uyghur population is an egregious example of this, and Mia pointed with pride to the Jewish community's leading role in the UK campaign to expose these abuses. The charity had also led the campaign to include a "genocide clause" in the Trade Bill currently going through the UK Parliament.

Secondly, Mia accepted that much human rights activity had been lawyer-led, had perhaps not related human rights to people's everyday lives and had stressed dry legality over shared human values. René Cassin is very active in bringing human rights to life, for example, by supporting the short film "Sunrise, not Sunset" which tells the story of how the right to family life enshrined in the Human Rights Act was used to keep a married couple together when the social care system tried to separate them into care homes many miles apart. (You can view the film on René Cassin's YouTube channel.)

And, bringing human rights right up-to-date, Mia had led recent Zoom seminars on whether

surveillance by employers of employees working from home during lockdown might constitute an abuse of human rights; and on the impact of lockdown on domestic violence.

During questions from the audience, Mia was asked about human rights in Israel. She emphasised that René Cassin was exclusively a UK charity, but, as an Israeli citizen, she of course had a personal view; which was in summary that human rights has become very politicised and risks overshadowing other individual human rights abuses in the country such as racism and domestic violence.

That sounds a gloomy note to end on; but Steve remarked on how clear it was that Mia remains positive, enthusiastic and energetic in broadcasting the Jewish voice for human rights.

Jeff Highfield is Co-chair at MJC (and, for full disclosure, Treasurer of René Cassin, the *Jewish Voice for Human Rights*).

4th Night Chanukah

by Judith Russell

13th December



On a grey, dreary, rainy afternoon, I decided to join a Mosaic Zoom gathering led by David Pollak with his guitar to celebrate Chanukah. It was clear from the start that this was going to be well attended

by young, old and in between. We were informed by David that we were going to sing, find missing words to the Chanukah story and participate in a quiz. We were given the words to some well-known songs which we sang in our own homes whilst muted. However for the Chanukah story we unmuted, which was fun, and called out the answers. Although the activities were intended more for the children it was very clear that the adults were enjoying the session just as much. We joined Rabbi Kathleen and her children in lighting our own Chanukah candles. If we had wanted to we could have eaten doughnuts or latkes (Paul was making some for our dinner which was impressive) We ended a very happy hour with a rendition of "Mo'ar Tzur" and "Puff the Kosher dragon". Thanks must go to David for brightening up our Sunday and preparing the session and as always Stefan for managing the technology.

Meet the Gemmologist – Menahem Sevdermish

by Ann Simon

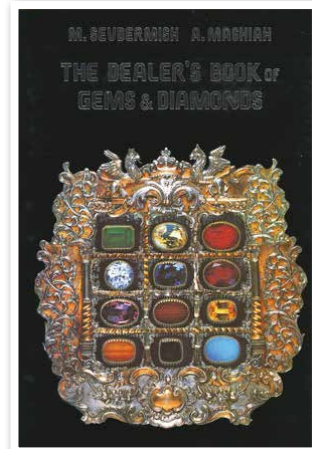
20th December

A hospital porter at Northwick Park-cum-well-known Gemmologist, Menahem amused us with his personal gemmological story. He came to the UK from Israel, after his release from the IDF where he served as a medic. His first job was as a porter at Northwick *Continued on following page >>*

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Park Hospital but a chance advert in the Harrow Observer (spotted by his mother-in-law) led to his working for a jewellery manufacturer in Hatton Garden. Whilst there, he attended the John Cass College, where he studied Gemmology, passing with distinction and becoming a Fellow of the Gemmological Association of GB. Not bad for someone who had to write in his second language and far from his intention of becoming a doctor!

On returning to Israel in 1974 with his English wife, Carol, he established the first



gemmological laboratory and school of gemmology. He went on to write "The Dealer's Book of Gems & Diamonds" which was the first book on this subject in Hebrew, later to be translated into

English and even Chinese. The book is used today as a recognised textbook at the Gem-A in London. He is an internationally recognised authority on gem commercialisation and gemstone processing, sourcing and cutting. "GemeWizard" is Menahem's brainchild. This invention is a digital solution for colour communication in gemstones and diamonds, gem grading with a diamond and gem trading platform used worldwide as a teaching tool as well as for trade and appraisals.

Rabbi Alexander Dukhovny

by Paul Zatz

22nd December



The latest in the series of interviews conducted on Zoom by members of Mosaic took

place when Alan Solomon of Mosaic Liberal interviewed Rabbi Alexander Dukhovny, Chief Rabbi of the Progressive Synagogues in the Ukraine. There are 47 such congregations, although some of them are very small; nevertheless, Ukraine continues to hold one of the largest Jewish populations in Europe.

Rabbi Alex is a long-time friend of Mosaic Liberal, since he was an assistant to Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith while a student at Leo Baeck College and he has kept up his contacts with what is now Mosaic Liberal. His enthusiasm and broadminded approach were much in evidence during the interview, which highlighted the differences between a central position in Ukrainian Jewry and our suburban community in London.

The economic problems in Ukraine are quite frightening and the help Mosaic Liberal has been able to provide in the last 20 or so years has been very welcome. He reminded us that on the morning of his induction as a Rabbi in 1999, he married another student Rabbi, Erleen Warhaus who very sadly died a few years later. When Rabbi Alex moved to Kiev, Harrow and Wembley (as Mosaic Liberal then

was) initiated a "Kiev Koppers" programme to collect small change for the Kiev congregation and its religion school. The funds have been increased with regular donations from Mosaic Liberal's Yom Kippur Appeal and from individual donations, particularly from those who have been able to visit Kiev. Over the 20 years the funds provided by Mosaic Liberal exceed £53,000, which of course has been hugely useful in Kiev.

Rabbi Alex has also played an important role in the European Union for Progressive Judaism, part of the World Union, and I remember particularly the moment at the WUPJ conference in Moscow when a Torah scroll was brought into the hall on its way from the USA to Moscow. Helping less well-off communities in the East is a real mitzvah in which we can all participate, and it was encouraging to hear how much that help is appreciated.

Travels with my camera – Les Spitz

by Vera Gellman

– 3rd January



Les took us to wonderful places especially at this difficult time and certainly cheered us up with his amazing photos of a wide variety of places.

Venice was our first stop looking at the

people wearing the most intricate masks and the views of one of the most beautiful cities. Then on to Antarctica with its huge sculptures made of ice and the penguins. My favourite photo is one of a penguin with its flipper round his partner. We then travelled on to Halong Bay in Vietnam which is made up of 2000 Islands with many lime rocks protruding out of the water. Next to Cape Town to the National Botanical Gardens Kirstenbosch, founded by Cecil Rhodes. We were treated to Les's magnificent pictures of the plant life and colourful birds that feed off the flora. Our last stop was Churchill in Northern Canada seeing the large white bears from a special bus for safety reasons as a bear on his hind legs can reach up to ten feet.

David in Art by Patrick Bade

by David Leibling

5th January



Patrick Bade is an art historian, writer and occasional broadcaster who studied at UCL and the Courtauld Institute and was senior lecturer at Christies Education for many [Continued on following page >>](#)

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years. He has lectured at many museums and is a well-known lecturer at JW3 and has conducted personal tours of Paris for members of Mosaic.

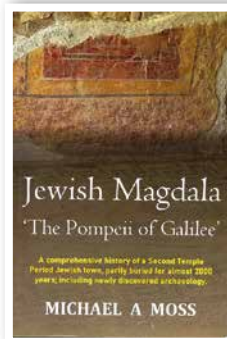
Michael Reik introduced his talk which was on the theme of the biblical David and particularly the story of his relationship with Bathsheba whom he married after arranging for her husband Uriah to be killed in battle. Patrick used numerous pictures to compare four statues of David either about to kill or having killed Goliath. While the originals are spread around Europe, it is possible to see excellent reproductions in the Cast Gallery at the V&A Museum. Donatello's statue made in 1430 was the first life size bronze since Greek times, (he had made a marble statue of David in 1408), Verrocchio's smaller bronze of 1473 was said to be modelled on his pupil Leonardo da Vinci and has quasi-Arabic lettering on his tunic. Michelangelo's statue of 1501-1504 is the most famous – a huge 17 ft high sculpture hewn out of a single block of Carrara marble. Finally Bernini's baroque marble statue is a masterpiece with the muscular David about to sling the stone which killed Goliath. Patrick described the patronage of the Medicis and Cardinal Borghese, the Cardinal is said to have held a mirror to enable Bernini to use his own face for the head of Goliath in his sculpture.

Patrick then compared two paintings of Bathsheba bathing by Rubens and Rembrandt. Ruben's picture of 1635 depicts Bathsheba about to receive the letter telling of the death of Uriah – with a degree of anticipation. Rembrandt's picture was painted in 1654 and shows her having read the letter, her face clearly showing her sadness. Both artists used their wives as models for Bathsheba.

Jewish Magdala – Michael Moss

by David Lobb

10th January



Michael Moss gave us an illustrated tour (by Zoom of course!) of the famous archaeological discoveries made in 2009 in Galilee, Israel, together with a brief but very interesting history of the period, which took place

before and after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Michael, who helped with the excavations, left us with an unforgettable feeling for the places and times he described. The highlight was his conclusion that a Jewish Priestly Course, as described in many classical Jewish sources, lived in the town, served in the Temple, and left behind their treasured "focus" in the form of the Magdala Stone. For us, he also cleverly linked our name - "Mosaic" - with the physical mosaics discovered in the ruins of buildings in the town.

Michael's illustrated book on the subject may be purchased at <https://jewishmagdala.wixsite.com/home>. And next time you are in Israel, Michael, who lives near the site, can be contacted at jewishmagdala@gmail.com. He might even tell you why he calls Magdala "The Pompeii of Galilee"!



Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries

From Michael Reik, Mosaic Reform BoD Representative

The following is from a presentation provided by Board of Deputies/ Israel Embassy/ and Harif on 1st December 2020

This was the first official involvement by Tsipi Hotovely, the new Ambassador. As the first speaker she confirmed approximately that one million Jews emigrated to Israel after being removed from Arab Lands.

She was followed by Edwin Shucker, Vice President at the Board of Deputies. He gave his story. For 2600 years Jews resided in Baghdad. At the turn of the 20th century 40 % of the population of Baghdad was Jewish. Following the UN approval of an Independent Israeli State on 29th November 1947 matters, slowly deteriorated for the Jews. In 1963 ID cards were provided (only for Jews) which they had to show wherever they went. In 1968 a number of Jews were hanged in the Public Square. All Jews were removed from public office. In 1971 Edwin Shucker's family decided enough was enough (leaving for Turkey) with almost the whole of the Jewish Community who fled for other lands. Many Jews never escaped.

Our next speaker was Rabbi Elie Abadie. His family came from Syria. Their problems also started on 29th November 1947. Jews were attacked and Jewish sites looted. The Syrians

were looking for any excuse to arrest Jews. Fortunately Rabbi Abadie's father was warned by a good-hearted soul that enabled him to escape by hiding on a train to Lebanon, where he then lived for 20 years. He fled to Mexico once he felt he was in too much danger in Lebanon. Today Rabbi Abadie is Chief Rabbi in the UAE.

Our final speaker was Ben Dror Yemim. He is a refugee from the Yemen. Interestingly pre-1948 it was the Jews who called themselves Palestinian (Jews). The Arabs only referred to themselves as Arabs. Factually 711,000 Arabs fled from the State of Israel and became refugees (mainly residing in camps). 850,000 Jews fled from Arab States becoming refugees and mainly resided in the State of Israel. 60 million refugees resulted worldwide from the various wars between 1913 and 1995. Only Palestinian Arab refugees still exist today and they have grown to 5.5 million.

30th November is to be considered as Memorial Day, the day Jews were driven out of Arab Lands or murdered in riots in those lands

Education is needed worldwide to explain how the [Continued on following page >>](#)

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Jews suffered first but on entering the State of Israel, their lives changed for the better with their integration into their new found homeland. Had a similar consideration taken place within the Arab World then the Palestinian Arabs could have integrated to their new found homeland and not continue to live their lives as refugees.

Marie Van de Zyl, President of the Board of Deputies Chaired the Event, with 234 attending by Zoom.

Board of Deputies Defence Division Meeting on Zoom 11/01/2021

Amanda Bowman Vice President Defence Division chaired the meeting. A few of the points discussed:

Bradley Langer from UJS provided his latest report. 27 Universities accept the IHRC report on Anti-Semitism but, despite pressure from the Government, many other Universities do not. There have been Anti-Semitic Incidents at Warwick, Coventry, Birmingham and at Leicester Universities. Anti-Semitism at one University led to a student leaving but then paid £15,000 in compensation. Bradley referred to the discussion/altercation at Limmud between John Mann and David Feldman about the IHRC definition.

We then debated Anti-Semitism in Sport as presented by Jonathan Metliss, Chair of 'Action against Anti-Semitism'. He related the case of on line abuse directed against the Celtic Player, Nir Bitton (an Israeli midfielder), following the Rangers-Celtic Football match, which Jonathan has taken up with the Celtic Football Club. Interestingly the rivalry between Rangers and Celtic normally includes Rangers' supporters supporting Israeli and Celtic

supporters supporting Palestinian causes. Jonathan related how particular Chelsea supporters still, during Lockdown, sing anti-Semitic songs when walking by the Chelsea Football Club. It is exceedingly difficult to achieve prosecution by the Police on Anti-Semitic Matters as against prosecution on Racial Black incidents.

Outside football there is little anti-Semitism except at directors from time to time within Cricket. Also other sports are better regulated. Jonathan is trying to have an increased relationship with 'Kick it out', an alliance which would achieve a lot.

The Board looking to introduce a Parliamentary Connections register (with members of Parliament and Civil Servants)

At present, by law, Faith Institutions are closed in Scotland (as against England where, for instance, Synagogues may open with limited numbers). It is noted that Chevra Kadisha persons are getting no preference for vaccines.

Future Zoom Events

Is there someone in your family or friendship circle who could provide a session on either Sunday or Tuesday afternoon? If you know someone who would enjoy speaking to Mosaic, please contact the office.

admin@choosmosaic.org

A tribute to Mosaic Reform member, Lawrie Nerva

by Harry Grant

I don't know if Lawrie Nerva was born into Progressive Judaism, or whether he 'converted' to it, as did so many of his generation. However, Lawrie found within it social and communal values which influenced him throughout his life and mirrored his political activity.



Lawrie Nerva with wife Ruby, (left), Dame Louise Ellman and Adrian Cohen)

Ruby and Lawrie joined Mosaic Reform, Middlesex New Synagogue as it then was, back in 1964, in the Synagogue's infancy, and have contributed much to our Community over more than 50 years.

They come from a generation of zealots, building from nothing a community which developed to more than 1000 family units in its time.

During that time, Lawrie has done so much, including serving as a warden, representing the Shul at the Board of Deputies, helping at our Friendship Club, where the average age of helpers has often exceeded that of customers, and generally being a very active contributor. And equally, if not more important than all of those, he was a sound moral compass. Outside of Bessborough Road, he served as a Councillor in Brent, and as Chairman of the Jewish Labour Movement, formally Poale

Zion.

Two words which epitomise Lawrie for me are Friendship, and Loyalty. He found it possible to be a leading friend of Israel, and of Mosaic Reform while being a just as close to his beloved Labour Party, mutual loyalties which less understanding critics might find hard to combine.

And being a friend, and being loyal, implies a duty to be honest, and to speak one's mind, which Lawrie did without fear of causing offence, as you knew Lawrie would only be speaking in your very best interests, even though they may be not quite so obvious to you, and causing offence would be the last thing on his mind.

He was upset about recent leadership issues within Labour and understood why they caused good friends to leave. However, Lawrie, together with many contemporaries, Jew and non-Jew alike, had invested decades building the party into what it was. Lawrie owned the right to remain within the party, acknowledging the core values so similar to those of his own much-loved religion, as well as those of the founders of the State of Israel. He had no

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intention of leaving the party to which he had given so much, as confusion grew within it over the distinction between reasonable criticism of extreme political leadership within Israel and Israel's very existential rights. While others left, he wanted to continue the fight from the inside, knowing that was where it must eventually be won.

I have fond memories of frequent verbal sparring with Lawrie, and two particular memories endure from my previous term as chairman. Going back 10 or 12 years, when his agility was starting to decline, he complained bitterly to me about the chairs in our Synagogue being armless and challenging to get in or out for those less physically able. I fobbed him off but he continued his campaign, succeeding in getting not one chair with arms, but several, as he knew the problem was not unique to him.

Around the same time our Synagogue was celebrating its 50th Anniversary, and we had a series of very successful events involving members who had joined throughout each of the previous 5 decades. Lawrie complimented me on the success of those celebrations, which I put down to having delegated to a large number of excellent organisers. Lawrie said "yes, but it happened on your watch." Seven words that have stuck with me ever since, endorsing Lawrie as a faithful and loyal friend, to me as well as to Mosaic Reform.

So I give Mosaic Reform's sincere best wishes, and wish long life to Ruby, to Neil and to Anne. Losing a lifetime soul mate or such a parental guiding light is not easy, no matter how much his declining health had made his death far from a surprise. But I also say thank you, thank you for sharing him with the wider

Jewish Community, with Israel and especially with Mosaic Reform Synagogue, which remains indebted for his services.

Your loss, and indeed ours will be tempered by fond and loving memories of a true mensch, unstinting in his commitment to the wider world.

Lawrie Nerva Remembered

As a present representative for Mosaic Reform on the Board of Deputies, Michael Reik reflects through the words of our own Judith Bara and the ex-Member of Parliament Dame Louise Ellman, two colleagues who worked with Lawrie. Lawrie was our own representative at the Board of Deputies before 1998. Louise is currently also a member at the Board and Judith followed Lawrie onto the Board representing Middlesex New Synagogue. I personally had the greatest of respect for Lawrie and very much enjoyed our political banter which we will have no more.

From Judith Bara:

Lawrie's representation at Poale Zion/ Jewish Labour Movement, on the Board of Deputies, the Harrow Council for Racial Equality, and the National Assembly against Racism illustrated his deep-seated belief in justice, fairness, equality and human rights. Lawrie worked tirelessly to bring about a better world at various levels and sought dialogue to foster understanding between people of different religious, ethnic, and political tradition. An example of Lawrie's work concerns the Stephen Lawrence enquiry in 1997, to investigate the response to Stephen's murder

and make recommendations for improvements within the Metropolitan Police. Poale Zion was invited to submit written evidence. For Lawrie this was both an honour and an opportunity to show that the Jewish Community has a recognised voice in the struggle against racism of all kinds, not only anti-Semitism. Lawrie's contribution was praised by the enquiry.

Lawrie was a member of the Zionist Federation. He believed of course in the natural right of the State of Israel to take its proper place in the World of Nations. But Lawrie thought outside the box and frequently castigated the Israeli Governments for their perceived shortcomings, which often faced criticism, even accused of being anti-Israel.

From Dame Louise Ellman

Lawrie's passing at the age of 98 is a profound loss for all who knew him, a kind man, always ready to share his knowledge and experience to benefit the Jewish and wider Community. His knowledge of the Labour Party and Labour Zionism spanned generations. He had that rare ability to relate easily to people of all ages and backgrounds, always ready to listen

to younger people. Lawrie's work in Poale Zion, together with Judith Bara who was his secretary, enabled Labour Zionism's voice to be heard in particularly challenging times, when the left started to turn against Zionism. Poale Zionism survived against great odds. Our meetings at Labour party Conferences were always packed out, covering topics such as promoting a negotiated 2-state solution to the Israel/Palestinian conflict and fighting fascist groups such as the BNP. Lawrie's foresight in changing PZ's name to the Jewish Labour Movement in 2004 facilitated new generations becoming active and addressing new challenges.

Lawrie's commitment to socialism was shown when a councillor and in his vigorous opposition to racism. He worked hard to build bridges with all ethnic groups, before it became normal practice to do so. Lawrie was always ably supported by Ruby, Neil, and Anne. Few people have been as politically engaged as Lawrie over so many decades. He was tireless in his determination to build a fairer world. Society is poorer with Lawrie passing and I have lost a good friend.



Mosaic Quizzes

*Sunday 31st January
4.00pm*

and

*Sunday 21st February
4.00pm*

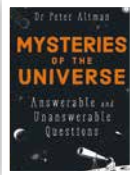
John Ashmele will present more entertaining on-line quizzes for the Jewish Mosaic Community. No winners, no prizes, just a lot of fun. Refreshments: whatever is left over from lunch!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Zoom Details for all the following events will be available on the weekly notices

Meet The Author – Dr Peter Altman

Tuesday 2nd February 2.30pm



Steve Levinson will interview Peter Altman at 2.30 pm. Peter qualified as a biochemist in the 1960s and spent 20 years in medical research, gaining a PhD and a DSc. After being made redundant in the 1980s, he went into medical book publishing, setting up his own medical publishing company which Peter ran for some 10 years.

He is also a Member of the Magic Circle and,

rather impressively, and without the use of magic, Peter has held not one but two Guinness World Records (for the fastest journeys round the London Underground [1979]; and the Moscow Metro [1989]).

Peter started work on Mysteries at least 15 years ago, and came up with the approach of framing each of the 14 chapters as a question; Does Alien Life Exist? Is Time Travel Possible? How Did the Universe Begin? Does Payer Work? etc., and provides a personal 'Best Guess' answer to each unknown.

At the end, he has included his first attempt at science fiction. This is a 3-part short story and, so as not to spoil the ending, Peter has hidden the last sentence in the Index. It's his thank you to those who buy the book...

Meet The Rocket Scientist – Sam Phillips

Sunday 7th February. 4.00pm



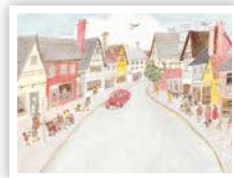
Mosaic members and friends are invited to meet Sam. who will share what it's like to work on rockets and ionocraft and answer the key question - how hard is rocket science anyway? (easier than you think!).

Sam grew up at Mosaic and is an engineering student at UC Berkeley, California. He is Business team lead and deputy propulsion team lead for STAR - UC Berkeley's Space Technologies and Rocketry team.

Sam will be joined by some of his colleagues from STAR's education and outreach team for breakout activities for children and teenagers. Please let us know in advance if you would like to join a breakout so we can help Sam and the team plan.

Visual Story Telling with Robyn Wilson-Owen

Sunday 14th February. 4.00pm



We are delighted that talented local resident and Pinner artist, Robyn Wilson-Owen, will be joining us to talk about and show her wonderful illustrations.

Trained in theatre and puppet design, Robyn is an artist and illustrator specialising in hand drawn and handmade images. She loves using dip pens, watercolours and pencil in bold but carefully chosen colours, and her work, however fantastical, is always rooted in everyday observations.

Robyn has illustrated both fiction and non-fiction including children's books No Longer Alone by Joseph Coelho and Bloom by Anne Booth.

In 2021 Robyn's book Close Your Eyes will be published, her first as both author and illustrator. You can see further examples of Robyn's work on her website: <http://robynwilsonowen.com/>

Meet The Author – Nadia Ragozhina

Sunday 16th February. 4.00pm



Steve Levinson interviews Nadia Ragozhina. Nadia was born in Moscow and moved to the UK in 2000. She is a senior journalist at BBC World News and has also

worked for BBC World Service Radio and France 24 in Paris. Nadia writes and blogs about sustainability and zero waste living, which, other than books and her family, is her passion in life. She lives in London with her husband and two daughters.

Worlds Apart is her first book: Two brothers grow up on the Jewish streets of Warsaw. At the turn of the twentieth century, Adolphe leaves to seek work

and start a family in Switzerland. Marcus moves east, inspired by his Communist beliefs. In Moscow, he is arrested and exiled. They would never see each other again.

A hundred years later, Marcus' great-granddaughter, Nadia Ragozhina, rediscovers the missing part of her broken family. Could she piece together the stories hidden for generations?

Love and separation, hope and paranoia – the lives of the patriarchs, their daughters and granddaughters are set against the Russian Revolution, Stalin's repressions, the persecution of Jews across Europe and the Second World War. Worlds Apart is a rare portrayal of the tumultuous events of twentieth century Europe, seen through the eyes of six women who fought for the survival and happiness of their families.

www.nadiaragozhina.com



Cooking With Judy Rose & Jackie Rose

Sunday 28th February

– 4.00pm

Join us at 4pm with authors Judi Rose, daughter of the

legendary Evelyn Rose, and her cousin, Dr. Jackie Rose, a GP nutritionist.

Judi will demonstrate some mouthwatering, easy-to-follow recipes from their book and Jackie will talk about what is good and healthy about their ingredients.

Those joining this zoom will be given a 25% discount code to buy their book 'To Life, Healthy Jewish Food' www.tolifebooks.com

Meet The Author – Maurice Collins, Obe.

Tuesday 2nd March 2.30 Pm



Maurice recently treated us to his presentation in January showing us just a small part of his personal collection of weird and wonderful objects.

Maurice will be

interviewed by Steve Levinson focusing on his latest book Minding our own Business – so why don't you

mind yours'. This includes his own life story and career and covers 25 others who started their own amazing businesses who equally have had their own journey.

Knowing Maurice, this will be informative as it follows the stories of many entrepreneurs relating their stories of their road to success.

Other books of his are 'Kith and Kids', 'Eccentric Contraptions', 'Ingenuous Gadgets', 'Bizarre and Outlandish Gadgets and Doohickeys' and 'Marketing History 1851-1951'.

Proceeds from the sale of the Book are in aid of Kith and Kids, a charity very close to his heart.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Meet Brian Gilbert, Actor & Director

Sunday 7th March. 4.00 PM



Join us at 4.00 pm for an interview with Brian Gilbert.

Born in London in 1949, Brian spent his formative childhood years in Sydney, Australia. He was a child actor, appearing several times on Australian television.

In 1969 he won an Open Scholarship to read English Literature at Oxford University, directing several plays while he was there, and then travelled, as an actor, to the United States with a semi-professional drama

company.

Returning to England, Brian appeared in repertory theatre and in the films, VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED and THE EXPLORERS, prior to spending three years at the UK's National Film and Television School (NFTS), where his graduation film, THE DEVOTEE, won several prizes and much acclaim, particularly from David Puttnam – who commissioned Brian to write and direct his first feature film, SHARMA AND BEYOND, for Channel Four's First Love series.

This led to many films directing a "Who's Who" of stars, including Stephen Fry, Jude Law, Vanessa Redgrave, Simon Russell Beale, Robert Hardy, Mel Smith and Michael Fassbender to name a few; and many film awards.

Since 2004, Brian has taught directing for the MA course at the NFTS; and since 2010, also the Directors Series there. In 2018, Brian became Co-Head of Directing Fiction at the NFTS and started a new course, 'Directing the Actor'.

Meet the Watercolour Portrait Artist – Harinder Sahota

Sunday 14th March. 4.00 PM

Join us at 4pm when Harinder Sahota will be showing us how she creates her watercolour portraits.

Harinder, a local Pinner artist and teacher, is an exciting and versatile artist whose genres span portraiture, landscape and still life. Her beautiful watercolours and oils range from the subtle and thoughtful to the vibrant and dynamic. In addition Harinder teaches popular and well-received Watercolour Classes at the Heath Robinson Museum and the Harrow Arts Centre. During her presentation Harinder will be giving us a fascinating insight into how she creates her watercolour portraits.

More details and links to Harinder's work can be found on Instagram and at Harrow Open Studios.



Meet Paul Solomon

Tuesday 16th March. 2.30 PM



Paul is the youngest son of Mosaic Liberal members, Janet and Alan Solomon. He is a Director of Communications & Public Affairs at Google and leads Google's Communications teams in Israel, the Middle East,

Africa, Turkey & Russia. Paul's team is responsible for telling the story of Google in these diverse regions: showing how Google makes people's lives easier, helps businesses grow and protecting Google's reputation in the media.

Before joining Google in 2011, Paul spent 10 years managing communications for Coca-Cola in the region, and was a media & political consultant at communications agencies in London and Tel Aviv.

Paul is married to Esther, who is the Opinions Editor at Ha'aretz.com. They made aliyah in 1998 to central Tel Aviv, where they live with their 4 children, aged 17 to 6, and their over-sized dog.

Steve Levinson interviews George Magnus

Tuesday 30th March. 2.30 PM



George has occupied a front row seat as events have challenged governments, economies and financial systems around the world since the

Great Financial Crisis in 2008. He is widely credited with having identified the trigger points leading to the crisis and with helping us to understand its lingering consequences.

Once the Chief Economist of UBS, George now works as an independent economist, author and speaker. His views and opinions appear regularly in the written and social media, radio and TV. He is the author of The Age of Aging (2008) which assesses one of our leading contemporary economic and social challenges, and of Uprising: will emerging markets shape or shake the world economy? (2011), which considers the rise of and prospects for emerging markets, especially China. His latest book, Red Flags: why Xi Jinping's China is in Jeopardy, was published by Yale University Press in 2018.

Meet Dr Johnson Beharry, VC COG

Sunday 21st March. 4.00 PM



We are honoured to have Dr Johnson Beharry joining us to talk about his life story and all the work he is doing through his Foundation.

Dr Johnson Beharry, VC COG really needs no introduction. A British Army soldier, born in Grenada, who on 18th March 2005 was awarded the Victoria Cross for valour in the

British and Commonwealth armed forces, for saving members of his unit, the 1st Battalion Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, from ambushes on 1 May and again on 11th June 2004 at Al-Amarah, Iraq. He sustained serious head injuries in the latter engagement.

In addition to still serving in the army within the London District, he is now very active with his charitable foundation set up in 2014. The JBVC Foundation supports youths in getting away from gang culture and helps rehabilitate former offenders, helping with training and getting them into sustainable employment in the future.

<https://jbvc-foundation.org.uk>

GENEUARY

January 2021 - Jewish Genetics Awareness Month



WHAT IS GENEUARY?

GENEUARY is a brand new month-long awareness campaign, designed to raise awareness of recessive Jewish genetic disorders and the importance of carrier screening in their prevention.

WHAT ARE JEWISH GENETIC DISORDERS (JGDs)?

JGDs are genetic disorders that are relatively more common among Jewish people. Jnetics focuses on 9 of the most common and severe recessive JGDs that are either fatal in childhood or cause chronic disability and shortened lifespan. 1 in 5 people with Ashkenazi origin is a healthy carrier of one or more of these devastating disorders.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT THEM?

Carrier screening identifies individuals and couples at risk of having a child affected by a severe JGD. 'Carrier couples' who are aware of their status prior to conception can explore several reproductive options available to ensure they don't pass the disorder on to their future children.

HOW CAN I GET SCREENED?

Jnetics offers subsidised screening, in partnership with the NHS, via The Jnetics Clinic. This is an entirely virtual service, running twice a month.



Find out more & sign up for screening
[Jnetics.org/screening](https://jnetics.org/screening)

Jnetics
Jnetics Reg charity no. 1134935

f i t @jneticsUK

MOSAIC CALENDAR

For zoom details for all the following events visit the mosaic website

<https://choosemosaic.org/whats-on/events/>

JANUARY 2021

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Sat 30 th | Shabbat Beshalach |
| Sun 31 st | 16.00 Quiz with John Ashmele |

FEBRUARY

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------|--|
| Tues 2 nd | 14.30 | Meet the Author – Peter Altman |
| Sat 6 th | | Shabbat Yitro |
| Sun 7 th | 16.00 | Meet the Rocket Scientist – Sam Phillips |
| Tues 9 th | 14.30 | JACS – Journalism, It's Not All Fake News! – Jonathan Braude |
| Sat 13 th | | Shabbat Mishpatim |
| Sun 14 th | | HaMakom Half-term |
| | 16.00 | Visual story telling with Robyn Wilson-Owen |
| Tues 16 th | 14.30 | Meet the author – Nadia Ragozhina |
| Sat 20 th | | Shabbat Terumah |
| Sun 21 st | | HaMakom Half-term |
| | 16.00 | Quiz with John Ashmele |
| Tues 23 rd | 14.30 | JACS – Boris the photographer |
| Thur 25 th | | Erev Purim |
| Sat 27 th | | Shabbat Tetzaveh |
| Sun 28 th | 16.00 | Cooking with Judi & Jackie Rose |

MARCH

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| Tues 2 nd | 14.30 | Meet the Author – Maurice Collins, OBE |
| Wed 3 rd | | Kehila copy date |
| Sat 6 th | | Shabbat Ki Tissa |
| Sun 7 th | 16.00 | Brian Gilbert Actor & Director |
| Tues 9 th | 14.30 | JACS – Jewellery & Precious Stones – Tony Weiss |
| Sat 13 th | | Shabbat Vayakhel-Pekudei |
| Sun 14 th | 16.00 | Harinder Sahota - Watercolour portraits |
| Tues 16 th | 14.30 | Meet Paul Solomon from Google |
| Thur 18 th | | Kehila distribution |
| Sat 20 th | | Shabbat Vayikra |
| Sun 21 st | 16.00 | Meet Johnson Beharry, VC COG |
| Tues 23 rd | 14.30 | JACS – Jewish Prisoners – Keith Simons |
| Sat 27 th | | Shabbat Tzav |
| | | 1st Seder |
| Sun 28 th | | 1st day Pesach |
| Tues 30 th | 14.30 | Steve Levinson interviews George Magnus |



Interim office needed

We need to consider where the Mosaic office will be situated in the interim period. Do you perhaps have an office with a spare room that is not too far from Stanmore? If so, please do talk to us about this.



The Mosaic office is
open 09.00-15.00
Monday-Thursday

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Email: admin@choosemosaic.org

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chairman@choosemosaic.org

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Chairman: Adrian Cohen
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