



Kehila

Mosaic
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Liberal | Masorti | Reform

The Magazine of the **Mosaic Jewish Community**

February 2025/5785



Cover Story: *Nie Wieder*/Never Again
Michael Marx accompanies his Holocaust survivor father
Kurt back to Germany and learns about his past

Kibbutz Re'im 75th Anniversary Celebrations
Plant a Tree for TuBiShvat
Mosaic Jewish Community News
Event Reviews and Forthcoming Events

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

Since our last issue

MOSAIC REFORM

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER:

Martin Issacharoff

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Lisa Newman
Robert Cohen
Rachel Solomon
Benno Stern
Gloria Faber
David Rauch
Jonelle Roback
Elaine Banks
John Benjamin
Michael Weiser

ANNIVERSARY WISHES TO:

Ruth and Malcolm Levison on their 65th anniversary

NEW HOME:

Clive Levy

THINKING ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE ILL:

Bertha Levy

CONDOLENCES TO:

Melanie Marsh on the death of her mother, Linda June Klinger
The family and friends of Lea Sinclair
Sonia Barnett on the death of her husband, John, and Jonathan Barnett on the death of his father

MOSAIC LIBERAL

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Aviva Butcher
Russell O'Donnell
Bryan Raven

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Michael Richman
Shirley Philipp
Jack Leon
Nicholas Leach

THINKING OF THOSE WHO ARE ILL:

Margie Goldman

CONDOLENCES TO:

The family and friends of Tania Drake
The family and friends of Kenneth Herman
The family and friends of Helen Jacob

MOSAIC MASORTI

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Sally Anne and David Ross
Ben Kaufman and Charlotte Melinek

MAZAL TOV TO:

Susan and Mike Leigh on the engagement of their son, Simon, to

Jessica Joseph
Lorraine and Jonathan Sarsby on the birth of their granddaughter, Avital (Tali)
Mazal tov also to Sharon and Martin Royce on the birth of their great-granddaughter
Caroline Alexander on the engagement of her son, Jacob, to Nicci
Neil and Sue Mendoza on their son Mike's engagement to Limor Baum

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS WISHES TO:

Stanley Brooks
Josianne Zane
Lore Lucas
John Mitchell
Melna Charin

ANNIVERSARY WISHES TO:

Frances and Edward Kafka on their 55th anniversary
Debbie and Dave Scott on their 45th anniversary

CONDOLENCES TO:

Eve Marmot on the death of her husband, Paul
Brian Balkin on the death of his mother, Pauline
Heather Eden on the death of her sister, Bernice Kisner

Next issue

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Send your articles,
pictures, letters to
newsdesk@choosemosaic.org

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Happy Birthday in January/February:



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Aviva Ashkenazi-Bakes, 12
Cici Rutstein, 15

Alexander Abrahams, 5
Nathan Morrow, 8
Ria Morrow, 8
Isaac Wolff, 12
Seth Scott, 2

The cranking cycle of the Jewish year

By Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill

As I write this – and, presumably, still when you read it – the weather outside is frightful. And yet, one blessing of the *Kehila* copy date is the reliable ‘noodge’ to keep looking ahead – now summoning our attention to this year’s Tu BiShvat seder (February 12th), and Purim (March 13th to 14th).



But here is something discordant: Tu BiShvat anticipates the harvest, Purim brings in the Spring season of redemption, but outside my window snow sits on the ground. Still, it is at least reassuring to feel the cranking cycle of the Jewish year pulling us towards brighter days.

Seeking to explain the precise timing for Tu BiShvat, the Talmud notes that, since crops do not visibly grow during the most intensely rainy months of the year, Tu BiShvat is well timed to fall after the majority of the rain has fallen (Rosh Hashanah 14a). Rashi sharpens the observation:

שכבר עבר רוב ימות הגשמים שהוא זמן
רביעה ועלה השרף באילנות ונמצא
הפירות חונטין מעתה

Once most of the rainy days have passed, after the rain has truly penetrated the earth, and once the sap has risen, then the fruits themselves can emerge.

I’m not a naturalist, but this seems quite a

different way to see the winter world. Cristina Rossetti, in her famous carol, described how: ‘*In the bleak midwinter/Frosty wind made moan/Earth stood hard as iron/Water like a stone.*’ Tu BiShvat reminds us that the snow-covered landscape is no inanimate scene (‘iron’, ‘stone’ etc) – now, precisely now, is when the sap is gathering,

when it is preparing to rise with ever greater force through the Spring, and producing this year’s fruit.

The story of Purim, too, draws our attention to a certain behind-the-scenes. Esther’s name describes hiddenness, associated by the Rabbis of the Talmud with God’s threat to hide the Divine face against the Jewish people’s sin (haster astir panai, Deut 31.18). So too is God hidden from view in the story of Purim: it is the biblical book which most closely speaks to our secularised world, with attendant political scandals. And yet, the story also speaks to a kind of miraculous ripening: of Esther to her task, of the Jewish people to their resistance, of a certain kind of moral order. For so much of the story the outer appearance of reality summons a species of despair – and only having read it do we perceive that, somehow, the sap is gathering.

The Jewish year, like the natural calendar, is plainly cyclical, and this is comforting. When

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the days are darkest, we know that things will get warmer and brighter; and even Tisha b'Av heralds a coming season of repentance and forgiveness. Human history, by contrast, at least viewed from our humble perspective, is in most senses linear. On former President Barack Obama's Oval Office rug was printed Martin Luther King's famous line: "*The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.*" But many feet were ground into that rug, and much liberal confidence in its sentiment has been eroded.

I think it is essential to Judaism, though, that we learn faith, and optimism, from the cycles of the year, and bring it to our understanding of the

world around us. We do not see the sap gathering, but we trust it is there – and will someday bear fruit.

This seems a moment of paltry harbingers for the Messianic age of human kindness and decency. But although it may tarry, we shall wait and wait: for how often does Jewish history teach us that a dismal reality masked a hidden gathering of potential, of sap. We wait, we hope – we build and we work - and we trust.



Why we should plant a tree for Tu BiShvat

By Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton

As we open this first *Kehila* of the New Year, we are getting used to living in 2025 and using our fresh-looking calendars (for those of us who still have paper calendars!). Whilst looking out for daffodils and other signs of Spring as well as the eagerly longed for lengthening of the days, we might start to wonder how we are going to keep the resolutions we made for 2025, knowing full well, how little progress we have made with the promises of teshuvah we made for 5785 only a few months ago.

Personally, I like the fact that we live in a reality that acknowledges at least two New



Years a year: Rosh Hashanah in the Autumn, and a secular New Year three months later. It emphasises our daily experience of navigating different realities simultaneously; realities marked by various cycles that all measure the passage of time in their own way.

Each time a new cycle starts, we feel compelled to contemplate the one that has just been completed and hold it up against the high hopes we have for the one yet to begin. Few of us are ever entirely satisfied with the past; it seems to be our human condition to hope for a better year, a new start, a better self...

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FROM OUR RABBIS

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through our own lifecycle, or when we start a New Year according to the various calendars we live by, we take the time to assess the one we completed, mark our successes and failures, and, if necessary and possible, make plans for a better run of the next one.

Living by a multitude of different yearly cycles comes naturally to us, as we have been doing since time immemorial. Just as we are used to navigate at least three different yearly cycles in our secular life (the calendar, academic and the tax year) so there were at least four different yearly cycles, or 'New Years' in Rabbinic times, each with a different purpose (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1):

There are four New Years: On the first of Nisan is the New Year for kings and for the festivals. On the first of Elul is the New Year for animal tithes. On the first of Tishri is the New Year for counting years, for Sabbatical Years and Jubilee Years, for planting, and for vegetables. On the first of Shevat is the New Year for the trees; in accordance with the statement of Beit Shammai. But Beit Hillel says: The New Year for trees is on the fifteenth of Shevat.

The four different cycles mentioned in the Mishnah reflect that our lives are multifaceted, connected to the world around us in a variety of ways: touching us socially, culturally, religiously, agriculturally and spiritually. Each aspect has its own cycle of renewal and growth.



The first of the New Years mentioned in the Mishnah is the New Year for Trees, commonly known as Tu BiShvat, the 15th of Shevat, as we follow Beit Hillel.

Most communities, us included, will mark Tu BiShvat with a Tu BiShvat Seder; a special meal which involves eating a variety of different fruits accompanied by readings and blessings: there is also a tradition to plant a tree on Tu BiShvat.

This is something we do not need to do communally. Although not everyone has the means to plant a tree or even a garden to plant one in, I hope many of us will resolve to plant a tree in their garden – or support the planting of a tree in one's street, as the residents in my street have done, or even to plant a small shrub on a balcony, or on a windowsill.

Trees are so important. They are our first defence in combating climate change and are vital for water regulation in urban areas, essential for biodiversity and our own mental wellbeing. It is our responsibility to look after them. Tu BiShvat reminds us of that responsibility. Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 7:13 states that when God created Adam, God took him and led him round the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: "Look at My works, how beautiful they are! Take care not to destroy My world, for if you do destroy it, no one after you will repair it."

Let us use this New Year to make our own small positive mark on this planet by planting a tree this Tu BiShvat.

Tu BiShvat gets its name from a date but it's far more meaningful

By Rabbi Daisy Bogod

Tu BiShvat, as many of you will know, gets its name from the date it falls on, rather than being known as, ראש השנה לאילן the New Year for the Trees (*Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1*). I haven't been able to find an explanation as to why this is the case, so here's mine. The author Elif Shafak writes, through the voice of a fig tree, in *The Island of Missing Trees*:

"Human-time is linear, a neat continuum from a past that is supposed to be over and done with towards a future deemed to be untouched, untarnished. Every day has to be a brand-new day, filled with fresh events, every love utterly different from the previous one. Arboreal-time is cyclical, recurrent, perennial; the past and the future breathe within this moment, and the present does not necessarily flow in one direction; instead it draws circles within circles, like the rings you find when you cut us down. Arboreal-time is equivalent to story-time and, like a story, a tree does not grow in perfectly straight lines, flawless curves or exact right angles, but bends and twists and bifurcates into fantastical shapes, throwing out branches of wonder and arcs of invention. They are incompatible, human-time and tree-time."

I disagree with her assertion that "human-time" and "tree-time" are incompatible, because the Jewish understanding of time is a combination of both: we also work in "story-time". Jewish culture is based on telling stories



of our shared past without the idea or intention that the past is over or complete; with each retelling and each new setting our stories grow and change. Jewish time is neither linear nor circular, but, perhaps, best understood as an ever repeating spiral.

So, let's tell, or retell, a story: there is an incident recalled in the Talmud, where the sage Honi

stops a man planting a carob tree, asking him how long it will be until the tree bears fruit. When the man replies that it will take 70 years, Honi questions whether he thinks he will still be alive in 70 years time to reap his reward. The man answers: I found a world of carob trees, because my ancestors planted them for me. Likewise, I am planting for my children. (b. Ta'anit 23a)

Our calendar is cyclical, built around the telling and retelling of stories to mark the times of the year. It mirrors the cyclical nature of the agricultural calendar; just as the tree's perennial nature means that the end of one year's growth signals the immediate start of the next, we go immediately from ending Deuteronomy to beginning again with creation, dancing around on Simchat Torah in "circles within circles".

So it is meaningful that this festival's name has become just a date, a signifier of time that is the same year on year, and not solely a "New Year"; straddling the worlds of the linear and the cyclical, and reminding us of the peculiarity of our Jewish relationship with both the past and the future.

105th birthday celebrations for Mosaic's oldest member

By Edwin Lucas

It was on January 7th 2025 when 50 per cent of Mosaic Jewish Community's centenarians met up, just like at Simchat Torah at Mosaic Reform, when two centenarians got together as Chatanim (see Chanukah issue of *Kehila*.)

Before I go any further, I think that we should have a Shabbat with all four centenarians in attendance, so we can toast those who represent 0.5 per cent of the total community with a true Mosaic l'chaim and sing my favourite of all brochas in the repertoire of brochas. It is recited on special occasions and was wonderful to hear at the candle lighting on the first night of Chanukah. It is so uplifting and positive.

Well January 7th was Lore Lucas's 105th birthday and she celebrated it in style at Elton House, where she has lived for six years. As our other centenarians know, passing through the century barrier is special, as the celebrant receives a signed card from the reigning monarch of the time. Lore has done one better than the other celebrants to date, as she is now on her second greeting from the reigning monarch and is delighted to have one from the late Queen Elizabeth II, in addition to the one just received from King Charles III and Queen Camilla.



Pictured left are our daughter Gillian's two grandparents, Lore from Mosaic Masorti and fellow centenarian Fred Stern from Mosaic Reform. Fred is so young at 101.4 years of youth. For the mathematicians amongst us, Fred is 2.5 per cent Lore's junior. Just in case you were wondering,

The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss, presented the card from King Charles III and Queen Camilla and talked about Lore's past, including her voluntary work with the WRVS, as well as filling sandbags on the day World War II broke out, which was also when she met her future husband, Reinhold. The Lord Lieutenant's address was most poignant, as



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his father came from Moenchengladbach, the same town in Germany where Reinhold originated. There was another strange coincidence when it was revealed that one of the residents at Elton House also came from Moenchengladbach and her mother came from Krefeld where Lore came from.

This was a Shehechyonu occasion for the Lord Lieutenant, as it was the first time he had attended a 105th birthday of one of his Hertfordshire residents and to celebrate this, as well as Lore's birthday, Rabbi Anthony recited the long awaited Shehechyonu blessing. To end the special day, Gillian baked and decorated her



first ever two-tier cake, which her granny and all the assembled guests enjoyed.

My Amazing Barmitzvah Day

By Alexander de Magtige



than I had before!

It was a bit nerve-wracking, but also fun, especially learning and preparing with the best teacher ever: Stefan!

I am very grateful for all the time Stefan put in with me to make sure I knew my portion well, so that I wasn't as nervous as I could have been.

It feels like it has been ages since I stood in front of the whole congregation to acknowledge this special moment in my life: the fact that I have become a Bar Mitzvah. It means that I have so many more responsibilities

It was also lovely to see so many familiar faces in the congregation, including many people of Mosaic Liberal, which was very special.

It was an amazing day. Thank you all for coming and helping make my Bar Mitzvah so memorable.

Alexander was Bar Mitzvah at Mosaic Reform on November 2nd 2024.

We would like to thank Mosaic Jewish Community and the many members of Mosaic Reform for their many kind wishes and wonderful support on the occasion of Alexander's Bar Mitzvah.

Kathleen and David

Mosaic holds first joint Liberal and Reform adult B'nei Mitzvah

Mosaic Reform Synagogue recently hosted what is believed to be the first joint Liberal and Reform adult B'nei Mitzvah.

Four members of Mosaic Reform, Toria Bacon, Gillian Goldsmith, Jeff Highfield and Beth Kingsley, joined Shaan Khan of Mosaic Liberal on the bimah in a single unified service.

None of the five had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the age of 13, and so the service was a testament to their dedication and commitment as they stood proudly in front of the Ark. Although the Mosaic Jewish Community is made up of Liberal, Reform and Masorti, this is the first time an inter-communal B'nei Mitzvah has been held. It is a sign of how things are changing as we form one united Progressive Judaism for the UK.

The service was led by Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton and highlighted the enduring nature of Jewish traditions. Rabbi Kathleen



said: "It was a great privilege to have shared and guided this special journey of learning and preparation that our B'nei Mitzvah undertook in order to be able to conduct a most joyous and emotional service together."



Shaan who previously ran Liberal Judaism's celebrated Rainbow Jews and Lily's Legacy projects added: "It was a wonderful and very special service.

"I have so much thanks and gratitude for my fellow B'nei Mitzvah travellers, and most of all Rabbi Kathleen and former Mosaic Rabbis Anna Wolfson and Rachel Benjamin."

This piece first appeared in the LJ Today January/February issue.

Mosaic Culture Hub presents....

An evening with
***Elvis Shmelvis &
Ricky Lopez***

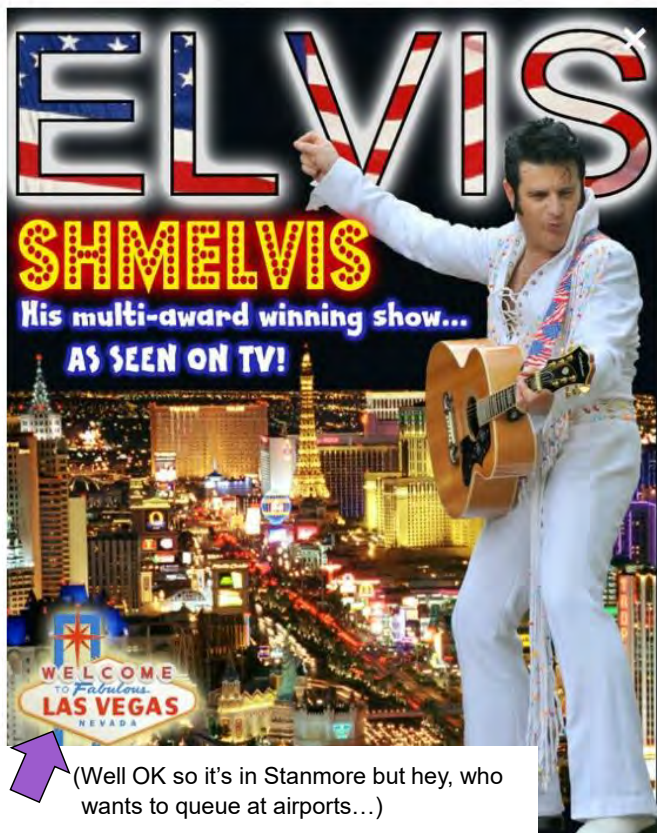
SUNDAY

**9th
March**

7.30PM

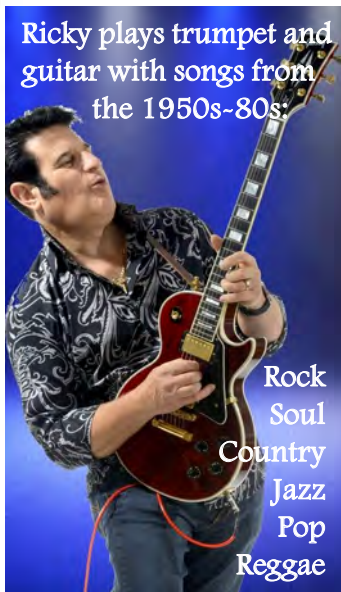
Doors open 7pm

Join us for a buffet supper with fabulous singing and entertainment
from Elvis Shmelvis and his alter ego Ricky Lopez!



(Well OK so it's in Stanmore but hey, who
wants to queue at airports...)

Ricky plays trumpet and
guitar with songs from
the 1950s-80s:



Rock
Soul
Country
Jazz
Pop
Reggae

*Make up a table of 8
or come and meet
new friends!*

And dress to sparkle!

Booking now at choosemosaic.org

Tickets including a buffet supper cost £19 until 20 February and £23 after that date

Mosaic Reform 2024 High Holy Day Appeal Benefits Charities

By Jeanette Leibling

One of our favourite responsibilities every year is to consider how to distribute the donations so generously given by members of Mosaic Reform Synagogue to the various charities members have nominated, or which have contacted us. All charities are worthwhile, they all need financial support, and there is never enough to go around. However we have agreed to donate to the charities below, and thank-you letters have already started pouring in.

Social Action Charities

We have chosen three charities to support financially as well as actively:

- **FirmFoundation** helps relieve the suffering of the homeless, while working with them to find a practical and sustainable solution to their needs
- **Goods for Good** delivers essential goods to vulnerable local communities
- **Volunteers on Wheels** delivers food and other supplies to local food banks and people in need

We have also made donations to:

Small local groups

- **Bereavement Care** supports bereaved families on the death of a loved one, both before and after it occurs
- **Harrow Mencap** provides support and services for people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs

- **St Luke's Hospice** provide a better quality of life and relief from symptoms and side effects for people with a serious illness
- **Karen Morris** provides facilities for leukaemia patients
- **Community Security Trust (CST)** protects British Jews from terrorism and antisemitism
- **Harrow Police Benevolent Fund** helps Harrow police officers and their families with financial assistance, medical costs, and other needs

Jewish and Israeli groups

- **Kibbutz Re'im** Our donation will help the community recover after the terrible Hamas terror attacks of October 7th, 2023
- **Leket Israel** a non-profit organization in Israel that collects surplus food and redistributes it to those in need
- **Abraham Initiative Interfaith** educates to create a more collaborative and equal shared society between Israel's Arab and Jewish citizens
- **British Friends of Israel War Disabled S & E branch** brings Israeli victims of war and terror to the UK to help with their rehabilitation
- **IMPJ Reform and Progressive movement in Israel** promotes the values of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state
- **Leo Baeck College** trains rabbis and

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educators, and provides opportunities for Jewish learning

- **Solutions not Sides** teaches young people to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a way that's respectful and solution-focused

This year you have all been very generous, many specifically asking us to send money to Israel to help the dreadful plight of our Israeli families and friends, so we have been delighted that Council agreed to send large donations to Leket and Kibbutz Re'im, the Kibbutz that was so disastrously attacked by the horrific Hamas attacks. We also feel extremely grateful to CST

and the Police for all the hard work they do keeping us secure and safe, so we suggested a large donation for each of them.

We always receive such appreciative thank-you letters particularly from the small charities who rely on the support we give them.

The synagogue itself has also benefited again this year. As always, donations are appreciated which enable us to buy those extras to beautify the building, make it more comfortable and enhance our new home.

A big thank you to you all from the High Holy Day Appeal distribution committee.

Jeanette Leibling is
Chair of the Committee

Progressive Jewish leaders invited to Downing Street Chanukah Party

By Michael Reik

Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, Chair of the European Union for Progressive Judaism, joined other Jewish leaders at a pre-Chanukah reception at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister hosted his first Chanukah reception at Downing Street in December, acknowledging the 'torture' hostages and their families have been forced to endure in Gaza. At the event, the Prime Minister reassured the Jewish community of his and his Government's efforts to bring the hostages home.

Guests included representatives from



Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council, CST, the Charedi community, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and Progressive Judaism leaders, as well as authors, actors and leading business people.

The EUPJ links more than 170 Liberal, Progressive and Reform communities within Europe. Its objective is to build up and increase the number of Progressive Synagogues and to obtain recognition by the European countries in

which the Synagogues exist. Mosaic members wanting more information should contact Michael Reik through the Synagogue office.

Harold Sanderson: A Stalwart Of Mosaic Liberal

Obituary by Alan Solomon

Members of Mosaic Liberal Synagogue were sad to say goodbye in November to their President, Harold Sanderson, at the age of 93. He and his wife of 65 years, Phyllis, who had died only ten months previously, were both greatly involved in the life of what was known as Wembley and District Liberal Synagogue when they joined around 1967.

Born in 1931, the oldest of the four children of Barnett and Pearlle Shenkman, Harold was brought up in Stoke Newington. Their house was bombed during the war, and the family moved to Carpenders Park. Harold went to William Ellis Grammar School, where he was not only bright but a really good sportsman. He did his National Service, during which he became an officer and changed his name to Sanderson; such name changes were common in the 1950s to counter discrimination and antisemitism.

On starting work Harold became a member of the well-known Oxford & St George's Club in the East End, where his good looks, sporting



prowess and motorbike (!) caught the attention of a certain Phyllis Krimgoltz, and they married at the Settlement Synagogue in January 1958. They bought a house in Kingsbury, and Harold looked after large fruit and vegetable patches both there and at his mother's house. Steven,

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Mandy and Wendi appeared on the scene in the 1960s. Holidays were mainly spent at the OStG Club Camp in Sussex.

Harold became a computer manager, and after working at various companies joined Mothercare in the mid-1960s. He was a key player in the development of their central IT, stock control and warehousing systems, later becoming the Data Processing Director until his retirement, when he was lured to the golf course. For his age, he became a very good golfer at the Bushey Golf Club, near to where he and Phyllis now lived, winning a number of tournaments.

The Synagogue became central to Harold's life. Initially involved with Membership, he joined Council, became one of two Treasurers and took over as Chairman in 1981. He held the position for four years, during which time he combined his characteristics of leadership, diplomacy, common sense and patience, and built a close relationship with the Rabbis. His approach was always straightforward, a worker not a talker or a politician, combined with a sense of humour. Harold also ran the annual Synagogue Bazaar, which raised considerable funds in the 1970s, '80s and '90s, served as the Funeral Administrator and was the gardener-in-chief, looking after the 'Wilderness' adjoining the old building at Preston Road before we built our new Synagogue on the site in 2004. Following the passing of our founder and President, Max Salter, he became only the second person to hold that office. Harold was also a former Chairman of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (now Liberal Judaism), and then a Vice-President.

Harold gave so much of his time and effort to the Synagogue and will be long remembered by all those who knew and worked with him, as well, of course, by his family which includes seven grandchildren and a great-grandchild.



Mosaic Masorti Women

Calling Mosaic Masorti Women - Join our WhatsApp Group!

A WhatsApp Group for women prayer leaders at Mosaic Masorti Synagogue to learn tunes and support one another in developing service-leading skills and shulcraft. A successful coffee morning was held in December 2024, which demonstrated the interest in this kind of initiative, and more such meetings are planned.

Join the group to find out more:

<https://bit.ly/MosaicMasortiWomen>

Kibbutz Re'im Celebrates its 75th Anniversary

By Gavin Dashwood

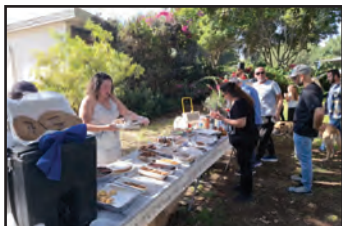
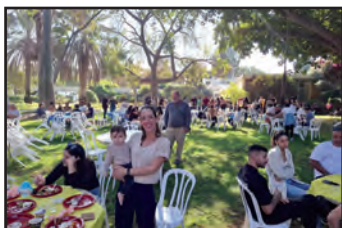
On November 27th 2024, a fleet of buses brought people from Tel Aviv as members, guests and visitors crowded into Kibbutz Re'im to celebrate 75 years since its founding. Families and children ate, laughed and played together. A year ago, it was hard to imagine we would ever see something like this here again,

Re'im was founded in 1949 by members of the Israel Boy and Girl Scouts Federation who were demobilised from the Palmach. After the devastation of October 7th, the entire

community was evacuated, but a few families have been returning.

Gavin is the son of Mosaic Masorti member Michael Dashwood. He and his wife Maayan moved back permanently on January 3rd, with their children Adam (10) Roni (13) and Leah (17,) who are now all back at school.

Gavin is settling in to his new job, looking after the chickens. You can read Gavin's regular updates in previous issues of Kehila on the Mosaic website.



Prison Grateful For Your Old Suitcases

Mosaic members responded brilliantly to my appeal for old suitcases in the Chanukah issue of Kehila. As the letter below shows, the donations were much appreciated by released men at HM Prison Wymott in Lancashire. Whilst we have not as yet advertised for clothing, we were donated a full carload of clothing and footwear by a member whose cousin recently passed away. Every donation makes a difference, and I have another carload getting ready to go up shortly. Thanks for your support.

Edwin Lucas



Dear Rabbi Anthony and Mosaic Jewish Community

I am writing to extend our deepest gratitude to you and your congregation for your incredibly generous donations of suitcases, bags and clothing. Your kindness and support have made a profound difference in the lives of individuals in need, particularly those who are reintegrating into society after incarceration.

The donated suitcases and bags are not just practical items; they symbolise a fresh start and a renewed sense of dignity for those who have spent years behind bars. Many of the men who leave prison have little or no support from family or friends. Without the basic necessities like clothing and luggage, they often face the world with little more than the clothes on their back, packed into a clear plastic bag, which unfortunately serves as a visible marker of their past. The donations you've made allow these men to leave prison as free individuals, carrying their belongings in a manner that preserves their self-worth and dignity.

By providing clothing — such as jeans, jumpers, coats, tracksuits, t-shirts, and trainers — you are not only helping with basic needs but also promoting their mental health and well-being. The ability to wear decent clothing enables them to feel more comfortable and confident, fostering positive self-belief and a belief in their ability to succeed. Many are able to use their limited funds to secure accommodation, rather than having to spend it on new clothes. This not only improves their hygiene and comfort but also alleviates a significant financial burden, allowing them to focus on rebuilding their lives in a more stable environment.

Your support also makes it possible for individuals to reintegrate into their communities with greater ease and dignity, as they are able to blend in like anyone else. This small but significant difference helps them feel a connection to the outside world and offers a much-needed sense of normalcy.

We are deeply grateful for your continued generosity, and if you are able to provide any further donations of suitcases, bags, or clothing, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for your compassion, support, and for fostering a more rehabilitative and positive future for those in need.

With sincere appreciation,

Jon Bottomley

Head of Business Development, Enterprise & Industry HMP Wymott

HaMakom contributes to Mitzvah Day

By Toria Bacon and Viki Kenton

Every year Mitzvah Day is such a wonderful event, the HaMakom children get so much out of taking part in a variety of activities, with Tikkun Olam at the heart of the day.

This year the older children went to Harrow Recreation Ground and worked hard to help The Friends of Harrow Weald achieve the charity's goal to create a carbon neutral, solar powered and plastic-free park.

Based at Kol Chai, the younger children donated books and toiletries and put together comfort cases for

children going into foster care.

HaMakom parents kindly donated Tesco vouchers and we then took groups of children shopping in order to buy a bag of nutritious food for families that benefit from the charity Give. Help. Share.

The children also made sandwiches that were delivered to the FirmFoundation charity on the Monday morning, decorated pots and planted bulbs for the older members of our community in addition to writing pen pal letters to children in Kibbutz Re'im.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable morning!



[Come and join us at HaMakom](#)

Children from 0 – 5 years welcome

Take part in fun activities with a Jewish theme

Make new friends

Join in break time with your older siblings/ friends

See a little of what we do at HaMakom

Meet other parents and grandparents

FREE to all Kol Chai and Mosaic members

Stay and Play at HaMakom



9:45 – 11:15am
9th March

at HaMakom chedar
1a Halsbury Close
Stanmore
HA7 3DY

HaMakom

Report of Board of Deputies November 24th Meeting



By Michael Reik, Deputy for Mosaic Reform

The meeting was held at Maccabi Manchester and online. Chaired by Louise Ellman, Jeremy Michelson, Vice President (from the Manchester area) welcomed all delegates who had come up from London. The first Zionist organisation in the UK started in Manchester under Chaim Weizmann. It was announced that £100,000 had been allocated by the Board for regional action, as part of the annual budget.

A minute's silence was held to remember the attacks on Chabad Rabbis in Mumbai and UAE. Rabbi Zvi Kogan was murdered in an antisemitic attack in the UAE recently. He was the nephew of Rabbi Holtzberg who had been murdered in Mumbai in 2008.

Great concern was raised at the indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant for supposedly creating a genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza. This despite no similar cases being pursued of non-democratic dictators and autocrats causing death and mayhem during the past 20 years. There was a request that Palestine Action be proscribed in the UK.

We then had a talk by Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester these past seven years. His speech included (1) Local police are working with Community Security Trust (CST) to combat hate crimes, particularly in the past year. The Police must deal with weekly marches, as well as recent criminal and unacceptable behaviour such as the cutting off the head of the Chaim Weizmann statue

at the Manchester Museum. (2) Social Care and Whole Person Care are major issues of concern. (3) He is involved with the Living Well Project. Too many calls to local Councils are for Social Needs rather than medical needs. One must be living well to be working well. The view of Manchester is to provide money to partners who support the Living Well path. Mayor Burnham believed the Maccabi Room in which the delegates sat could have greater use for inter-faith meetings.

We then received a presentation by the Treasurer of the Board of Deputies plan for the next five years. The regional weekend for 2025 was announced to be July 4th to 6th. From February 16th to 18th the UJIA will be funding a Board Leadership Trip for 15 Deputies and five younger members of the Jewish Leadership Council.

Two new membership applications were then made. After introductory speeches they were voted in as follows: Jnetics (cross-communal UK charity offering genetic testing) by 105 votes to 2. HIAS+ JCORE (exists to enable refugees and asylum seekers flourish in our society) by 100 votes to 11.

We were reminded of the next meeting on January 19th, when we would welcome the current President of the Union of Jewish Students, Sami Berkoff (who will have spoken at Mosaic the week before,) a high-ranking officer in the Metropolitan Police and a Holocaust survivor. We were also advised about Parliamentary Activity Day on February 11th.

Why the refrain Never Again must always be a call to action

By Michael Marx

The phrase *Nie Wieder* (Never Again) has been in common usage since the end of World War II following the mass-extinction of European Jewry by the Nazis and their associates. But as our world becomes obsessed with post-truth narratives, its meaning is increasingly blurred, distorted and ultimately misused. So who will take on the mantle of telling the truth about the Holocaust? And how have the children and families of survivors dealt with their history?



Kurt Marx in November 2019 with his younger self

Arriving home from a likely-final trip to Köln (Cologne) at the end of November last year with Kurt Marx, my 99-year-old

father, and my wife, Frances, the idea of *Nie Wieder* became a highly-likely reality. This trip, given its circumstances and the age and physical condition of those involved, was unlikely to be repeated.

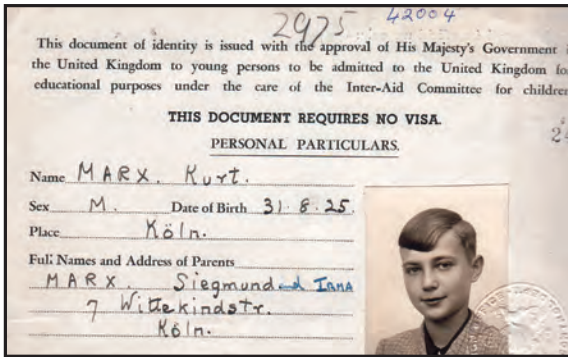
Kurt had been invited back to the city of his birth by the Mayor and municipality of Köln, to revisit what remained of the places he knew

when he was forced to leave the city. Aged just 13, he had a place on the Kindertransport, only a couple of months after Kristallnacht (now renamed the November Pogrom in Germany – one might only speculate why).

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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

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Kurt's UK entry permit 1939

Kurt's story is readily available, not least on the Association of Jewish Refugees' website, in numerous articles, broadcast interviews, and a soon-to-be-published book via the Spielberg Foundation. He has been painted, sculpted and turned into an interactive hologram to be used in an American Holocaust Museum's education programme.

He has been decorated by the late Queen Elizabeth II and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany for his contribution to Holocaust education, particularly in the UK, Germany and Belarus. He has been relating his experiences, particularly to young audiences for the last couple of decades.

"My mother was the kind that could not talk about their experiences: as opposed to the second kind of Holocaust survivor, who talked about little else"

Before that, he had maintained a position in support of his late wife, my mother, Ingrid Marx,

who, to generalise, was in the first of two typical categories of Holocaust survivor. She had survived almost three years in Auschwitz and was the kind that could not talk about their experiences at all: as opposed to the second kind of Holocaust survivor, who talked about little else.

My father maintained his position of solidarity with my mother for the entirety of their marriage, until her death in 2002. Out of respect for her inability to speak about her experiences, he maintained a stoic silence about his own.

This was a common position taken by first generation survivors in respect to what they passed on to their children.



Kurt (extreme right, front row) at Yavneh School

Many of these second generation survivors, who mainly believed that their upbringing had been "normal", did not know why they felt alienated, excluded and isolated.

The most common reason was claimed to be an act of protection, shielding offspring from the appalling experiences that had deprived the first generation of their childhood, youth, family, and a "normal" upbringing. There was no malicious intent, just a desire to do the best by the next generation, often living vicariously through them and with little or no awareness that making this kind of choice would have consequences.

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Thus, many second generationers had their personalities shaped by an inability to rationalise why they felt as they did: why they were not like their friends, why their family relationships (such as they were in the decimated Jewish circles established post-



Kurt and his father in 1926

1945) were not like the family relationships of their friends. Why they might have trust issues, why the nuclear family structure worked as it did (or not). It would only become clearer as significant amounts of time passed and as the withheld information was gradually uncovered.

As a second generationer, I was well into my 30s before I encountered other people remotely like me. (My wife tells me I am impossible: I deny this, but can confirm that I am highly unlikely.) This may seem difficult to accept, but if one considers the probability of encountering a child of parents, one a refugee from Germany at age 13, the other an Auschwitz survivor (also born in Germany), who met after the war in London, whose families (on both sides) were largely (at least 75 per cent) murdered in various locations between Poland and Belarus,

and whose parents withheld information about the past – the effect on the child/ren involved would likely be quite significant. Any notion of normality and stability could be distorted beyond recognition.

Many people like me/like us felt unique, isolated, without knowing why. I am now approaching 65 years old and only just starting to come to terms with who I am, where I came from and, perhaps, where I am going.

Hence the importance of this *Nie Wieder* trip.

“The reason we felt safe was not so good. Jewish institutions in the city were under permanent police guard”

In Germany, certainly over the last 30 years or so, there has developed a concept called *Erinnerungskultur*, literally a Culture of Remembrance.

Germany's *Erinnerungskultur* is not typical. In actual fact, there is no typical remembrance culture anywhere. The thing that distinguishes the German version is based on two things: first, that the Germans lost the war; secondly, that the Germans are serious. Aside from the UK, the rest of Europe can claim varying degrees of victimhood, which often colours how things are officially remembered.

The French, for instance, are keen to obscure their collaboration with the Nazis, renaming streets previously renamed for World War I veteran heroes who subsequently collaborated with their German occupiers during the second one.

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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

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Kurt's grandparents Manuel Neugarten and Sigmund and Irma Marx, murdered in Maly Trostenets, Belarus, Summer 1942

Poland has passed a law to prevent narratives of Polish complicity in the Shoah, sometimes inventing “facts” about individuals with dubious wartime pasts in order to bolster this position.

Belarus, where three of my grandparents were murdered, has an enormous memorial at the extermination site at Maly Trostenets (just outside Minsk).

The fact that the Nazis had transported hundreds of thousands of people (mainly Jews) to this place in order to be lined up in front of trenches and shot (this is part of what is known as “the Holocaust of bullets”) has not been permitted to enter the greater Belarusian consciousness.

Scrutinise the memorial forensically and one finds the absence of one word: “Jew”. While the memorial does show the numbers of the murdered by location of origin – Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Russia, etc., its creators deliberately excised the core motivator of the Holocaust. Any implication of local complicity in the project never arises.

In Britain, remembrance culture is

something totally different. As winners in the conflict, remembrance is largely reserved for the victorious dead and the vanishingly few remaining veterans of the war. Matters of conscience are largely absent. Everyone patriotically buys their annual poppy (for who could not?), and briefly demonstrates their gratitude to the fallen in ceremonies up and down the country, medals worn if available.

Germany is diametrically opposite. Shortly after the end of hostilities, the Allied forces started a process of forcing perpetrators and bystanders to confront what had been done in their name. In particular, many Germans were forced to visit the extermination and forced labour camps to see where and how Europe’s Jews perished.

Over time, the nation (initially West Germany) determined that denial and/or indifference to its past would not enable its population to move forward. So, the notion of an introspective *Erinnerungskultur* became the vehicle to confront and come to terms with it.

Huge efforts by the state and regional authorities, together with local and private

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COVER STORY

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projects, have set about piecing together an enormous body of information, documentation, personal and private stories. The extermination camps have been preserved, significant memorials built and archives established, to preserve the past and offer signposts for the future: this is what we did, *Nie Wieder*.

This is still government policy, though it became evident in our visit to Köln that events are placing a strain on it. Political, economic and demographic forces in Germany are undermining *Erinnerungskultur* today and going forward.

The reunification with East Germany in the 1990s, then the recent rise of the AfD (Alternative for Germany) and corresponding left-wing parties, are challenging the need to remember the exceptional nature of the Shoah. Angela Merkel's importation of hundreds of thousands of Syrian migrants has changed the nature of many German cities, to the point where recently the Chief of Police in Berlin advised people to refrain from appearing obviously Jewish or gay in certain parts of the city, to avoid physical threat. Perspectives and priorities change. The advocates for and

custodians of *Erinnerungskultur* feel under pressure, the resources for their work at risk.

Our trip to Köln had its significant moments and observations. We felt safe – a good thing. The reason we felt safe was not so good. Jewish institutions in the city were under permanent police guard. While this meant that the authorities took security seriously, the fact that the police presence needed to be so conspicuous was an indication of how likely an attack might take place in its absence.

We were impressed how the city was prepared to demonstrate its solidarity with countries that had suffered outrageous attacks. Outside the municipal offices, there were four flags flying in addition to the traditional city flag: Ukraine, Israel, Germany and the EU. How many national, regional or local authority buildings would do such a thing here?

The municipality took our visit very seriously. It was organised in minute detail; we were treated almost like royalty. We met most of the local movers and shakers, the press was often in attendance, with most of its focus on “the return of the native”. It was clear that the visit was of significance to the city and its history. It was equally clear that it would, in all probability, never be possible again.

But the most memorable moment of all came when we visited a local high school, where it became clear how, at least in part, the future of *Erinnerungskultur* in Germany is heading. For some years, preparation has been in process for the moment when the Holocaust is no longer within living memory. The survivors and the



Kurt and Michael at Köln documentation centre

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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY



Kurt and Michael talk to Köln High School students. perpetrators, within a few short years, will no longer be with us.

My father and I were both interviewed in front of an audience of some 600 16 to 18-year-olds. They sat and listened attentively for an hour and a half, something quite unthinkable in schools here, not least as the bulk of the interview was conducted in English. And it became evident that this event represented a “passing of the torch” – and I wondered whether I (and others like me, second generationers) would be up to the task.

“They sat and listened attentively for an hour and a half, something quite unthinkable in schools here”

Given the nature of the second generation experience, it brought to mind a story about the Baal Shem Tov, in this instance related by Elie Wiesel:

“When the great Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov saw misfortune threatening the Jews it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished and misfortune averted.

“Later, when his disciple, the celebrated Magid of Mezritch, had occasion, for the same reason, to intercede with heaven, he would go to the same place in the forest and say: “Master of the Universe, listen! I do not know how to light the fire, but I am still able to say the prayers.” And again, the miracle would be accomplished.

“Still later, Rabbi Moshe-Leib of Sasov, in order to save his people once more, would go into the forest and say: “I do not know how to light the fire, I do not know the prayer, but I know the place and this must be sufficient.” It was sufficient, and the miracle was accomplished.

“Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his armchair, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: “I am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story, and that must be sufficient.” And it was sufficient.”

“This event represented a “passing of the torch”. I wondered whether I (and others like me) would be up to the task”

The trip to Köln was cathartic in many ways, but in the end posed more questions than it provided answers. There is so much still to learn in order to take up the proverbial torch, but at least I know where to go and who to ask to do so.

How I became a German citizen

By David Wyman

Follow the tips on the German Embassy website to restore your citizenship

After the Brexit vote in June 2016 many people from the Jewish community in the UK sought to restore their German citizenship if they had parents or grandparents who had lived in Germany and had been stripped of their citizenship by the Nazi regime.

This was possible through Article 116 II of the Basic Law passed by the German Parliament which states Under Section 15 of the Nationality Act, persons who surrendered, lost or were denied German citizenship between January 30th 1933 to May 8th 1945 due to persecution on political, racial or religious grounds are entitled to naturalisation.

One of the most prominent Jews to apply for German citizenship after the Brexit vote was Baroness Julia Neuberger, despite members of her mother's family having perished during the Holocaust. A cousin of mine immediately applied for herself, her son and daughter and grandchildren. A number of our Mosaic community also applied straight away.

I was somewhat ambivalent about joining them. My mother fled to England in early February 1939. In a book called *Leben Danach* (*Life After*), a cousin of mine interviewed her about life in Germany and her experiences when she came to England. At the end of her interview she said: "You want to know how I feel about Germany? Well, I always had the feeling that I was once thrown out of there. You can't forget that. My children know very little about Germany. I have never spoken



David's German Passport

much about it. They sent me away from there; I actually wanted to forget it."

It was really only in September 2023 that I thought about applying for German citizenship. Although there are a number of companies that can facilitate the application process, I found their fees somewhat eye-watering. I decided that it would be more of a challenge and also fun if I could do it myself. The German Embassy website clearly explains what documentation is needed. I downloaded the application form which is mainly a tick box exercise. Some sections had to be filled out in German. Fortunately with my O level German and some help from Google translate and my *Collins English-German Dictionary* this was not too daunting. In the box of family heirlooms I found my mother's German passport with the red J on it.

Although I did not have my mother's original birth certificate from 1918, I discovered one issued in 1939! In a new 1938 law, the Nazi

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authorities decreed that by January 1, 1939, Jewish men and women bearing first names of “non-Jewish” origin had to add “Israel” and “Sara,” respectively, to their given names as seen on both the passport and birth certificate.

My mother lived in Stuttgart and I wanted proof of her address. Fortunately I found a letter inside the passport from the tax office with Wohnhaft (Resident), Stuttgart – N , Hauptmannsreute 6. At the top of the letter is the word Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung which in English means “Tax clearance certificate.” It was required from the Tax Authority in order to legally leave the country, as well as the certified payment of the Reich Flight Tax and other taxes. In Nazi Germany, the use of the Reich Flight Tax shifted away from dissuading wealthy citizens from moving overseas and was instead used as a form of “legalised theft” to confiscate Jewish assets.

On November 10th 1938, immediately after Kristallnacht, the German government introduced the Judenvermögensabgabe; the Jewish capital levy. Jews with more than 5,000 Reichsmarks (RM) in assets were required to pay a 20 per cent tax on all assets in order to meet a collective target of one billion RM. Despite inflated claims of Jewish wealth, the events of the preceding five years had financially crippled many of Germany’s Jewish population, and it quickly became clear that the target sum would not be met; therefore the tax was increased to 25 per cent in 1939.

The remaining necessary documentation I needed were copies of my parents’ marriage certificate, my birth certificate and my passport. The embassy did not want originals as they don’t return them, so I had to get the relevant documents certified by a notary which proved the main expense of my application.

I also needed to send a Criminal Bureau Check (DBS).

I sent an accompanying letter written in German with the form and documents, then received a reply, naturally also in German, that everything was in order. They said my application would be processed at the Federal Office in Cologne and I would wait at least a year for a decision. In fact the wait was 18 months. I was surprised to find that the acceptance letter arrived in the form of an email, which requested

that I make an appointment at the embassy in Belgravia to receive my certificate of German Naturalisation.

Mother's passport showing J



David Mother's Passport 1939

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FEATURE ARTICLES

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I remember the day well as it was the hottest day of the year and the temperature was already well into the thirties by mid-morning. After going through airport-style security I was ushered into a glass-walled waiting room. I had a reverie that I was a double agent from a novel by John Le Carré or Alex Gerlis. I was collected by a young lady and taken to a boardroom where she handed over my Certificate of Naturalisation.

She asked me how I felt about becoming a German citizen. I meekly replied that I was pleased. She then handed me a pin badge with the UK and German flags on it and a copy of *The Rough Guide German Phrase*

Book. My cover had obviously been blown!

I returned a month later to the embassy to apply for my ID card and passport which I received in the post within two months.

When will I use my new passport? I would like to go to Karlsruhe where the large Fuchs family initially resided and of course to Stuttgart. Watch this space.....



Renate Fuchs Birth Certificate 1939

Philippa Lester Honoured on Ribbons Sculpture

Mosaic Masorti member Philippa Lester's name is inscribed on Ribbons, a city centre sculpture by Pippa Hale that celebrates women who have made inspiring contributions to the city of Leeds. Gillian Gurner was intrigued to know why Philippa was honoured by inclusion in this illustrious list, alongside politicians, writers, musicians, athletes, Holocaust survivors and suffragettes

In 2010, events were held to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Leeds Jewish community, and Philippa offered to co-author a community book with Diane Saunders. Called *From the Leylands to Leeds 17*, it tells the story of the Jewish community



Philippa at the Ribbons Sculpture

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from 1860, when the first proper synagogue was founded, to the present day. The title refers to the 'Leylands' (low lying lands) where the community lived originally, then following a well-trodden path from marshy land to the leafier suburbs of 'Leeds 17.'

Wealthy Jewish German industrialists came to Leeds in the middle of the 19th century for the wool trade, followed by others fleeing the pogroms in Russia. These later immigrants were often unskilled but could find work in the burgeoning tailoring industry in the city.

The book was never meant to be a definitive history, says Philippa, but told the story through anecdotes and images gathered from more than 100 interviews with members of the community over two years.

Philippa and Diane sat together at a computer until the book was completed. They found a small independent publisher who provided a team of designers, illustrators and an editor to format their material. *From the Leylands to Leeds 17* was launched at a large community event in 2014, where the first print run of 800 copies was sold over one weekend. It has since been reprinted several times and is also available on Kindle. All the proceeds from the sales of the book have gone to charitable causes.

Philippa is delighted that the book has developed a life of its own. Although there is no intention to reprint, it has led to an academic study of the community by Professor Derek Fraser and an oral history project building on material from the book, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Leeds MiliM LitFest, which is now live.

The Ribbons project was instigated by Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves, MP for Leeds West, to create an innovative, contemporary sculpture that would redress the gender imbalance in public art in Leeds.



Philippa with book



Closeup of Philippa's name on Ribbons Sculpture

The resulting sculpture comprises five steel ribbons carrying the names of 383 women, both past and present, from a range of backgrounds, who were nominated for inclusion by public vote. The women are represented by their first and last names only (no titles,) and organised randomly.

Sadly, Diane Saunders died in 2020 without knowing that a friend had nominated them for Ribbons. Philippa was completely unaware of the citation until June 2024, when she was notified by Leeds Arts University, who organised the launch.

Philippa and her husband Simon joined Mosaic Masorti when they moved to Stanmore from Leeds. They have become active members of the Mosaic community bringing the same enthusiasm and commitment that they showed in Leeds.

An Elephant I'll Never Forget

By Cynthia Shaw

I first met Chang Thai in 1977 when he was five months old and living in Pattaya, Thailand, where we were on a family holiday. A trip was advertised to visit an Elephant Kraal (enclosure) where one could gain an insight into the day to day lives of working elephants. Having decided that a trip such as this was not to be missed, we booked our tickets for that very same day.

Upon arrival at the compound we were escorted (whilst slithering through paddling pools of thick slimy mud) to a clearing in a field, from where we would watch the show whilst seated on bamboo poles.

Less than five minutes into the performance I felt a nudge from behind me and thinking that it was my young son I didn't turn around. "Wait a minute," I murmured. Another nudge, and as I turned I was absolutely astonished to find myself nose to trunk with the smallest, most enchanting, adorable baby elephant that I have ever had the good fortune to meet!

Doubtless he was anxious to be seated somewhere, and the bamboo poles were not particularly comfortable, so he decided (wisely I concluded) that I would make a jolly good leaning post. So round he came and there he stayed until he caught sight of his mother, whereupon he left my side and ran up and down the auditorium copying her every move. When her act was over he reappeared to lean on me!



Chang Thai with Cynthia and son Russell

An elephant, I discovered, however small, is still very heavy and as I thought it best to avoid a hip replacement, I had to draw the line when he tried to sit on my lap. Having discussed the matter with him it was agreed between us that I would act as a leaning post and he qualified for the position of 'Chief Leaner'!

Chang and I immediately became best buddies although why he picked me out of the dozens of people who came to see the show

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I shall never know. But ours is not to reason why, and whatever his thinking was at the time he seemed not to want to leave my side; I must confess the feeling was mutual.

After the show we bought fruit to feed the various animals. When a child in the audience offered a banana to Chang he took one bite and immediately spat it out, because the banana benefactor hadn't realised that in order for this elephant to eat a banana it had first to be peeled! Apologies were offered and accepted and a peeled banana was gratefully received, eaten and enjoyed!

Before leaving the auditorium we spoke with the natives that were responsible for training Chang Thai, who was the youngest of the herd and whose future whilst living on the compound was assured.

The national animal of Thailand is the Thai elephant, whose predecessors are thought to have been in that country for the past sixteen million years. ('Chang' is the Thai word for elephant.) It is written that for 160,000 centuries Indian elephants have contributed to Thai society and culture and at the present time there exists four sub species of elephant: Sri Lankan, Indian, Sumatran and Bornean. The Thai elephant (*Elephas maximus indicus*) is classed as Indian.

We visited our delightful elephant friend every single day of our trip and each time we received the same heart-warming greeting.

One cannot fail to notice that elephants are one of the wonders of the world. To become close to one such as Chang was for me an unexpected privilege and one that I will always remember. Elephants are incredibly intelligent animals that will always remain close to my heart.

All good things must come to an end and on our last day in Thailand we went to say a fond farewell to the loveliest elephant in the world, who at the time was sucking his trunk. For one brief moment I thought I detected the hint of a tear in his beautiful eyes but perhaps it was just the reflection of the tear in mine.

It is said that elephants never forget and as for me there is no doubt that I will always remember that special little elephant Chang Thai who, in the short time that we spent together secured a place in my heart forever.



The Freddy Krivine Initiative: Peaceful coexistence through Tennis

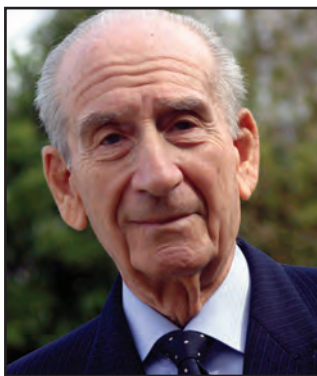
By Jacqueline Gross

The Freddy Krivine Initiative was set up in 2000 to encourage peaceful co-existence and collaboration between Arab and Jewish children in Israel through sport, particularly tennis.

There are some 150 grassroots programmes in Israel for Jewish and Arab children. The big difference here is that the FKI uses tennis, and works with smaller isolated Arab village communities where there is often little or no contact with their Jewish neighbours, unlike in large mixed cities like Haifa and Akko.

Using the tennis model, they offer after-school programmes, help with homework and learning Hebrew and English, which help children from these isolated Arab villages feel more comfortable mixing in Israel society. Week-long summer camps are filled with tennis competitions and community building activities, while Arab and Jewish children celebrate holidays such as Chanukah and Ramadan jointly.

Some 150 boys and girls aged between 5 and 17 attend weekly tennis coaching and



Freddy Krivine, 1920-2005

competitions. They come from villages near Caesarea, Kafr Qara, Fureidis and Jisr az-Zarqa/Beit Hanania.

Arab girls particularly enjoy tennis, as it is not a contact sport. Now a group of women have joined, giving girls and women a sense of equality, confidence and empowerment.

So far, since its founding, FKI has helped over

6000 children, some of whom have gone on to become doctors and tennis coaches and even a vet.

It was feared that after October 7th, 2023, small Jewish communities would feel threatened by their Arab neighbours. In fact, what happened was an increase in applications to join FKI from Arab and Jewish small northerly villages. The value to the whole of Israeli society, both Jewish and Arab, cannot be overestimated.

By using tennis to emphasise shared social activities between Jews and Arabs, FKI fosters unity, understanding and peacebuilding, so vital in these crucial times.

Freddy Krivine himself (1920-2005) – called in Israel 'Mr Tennis' – lived in Caesarea. To learn more about him, there is a lovely YouTube made by his daughter Jane Krivine: *Fred-die Krivine-His Life and Times*, and for more information on the Freddy Krivine Initiative, log on to <https://fkf-tennis.org/>



Freddy Krivine (right) and fellow visionaries from Israel, the United States, and the United Kingdom opened The Israel Tennis Centers in 1976

Meet the Author: *Spy novelist Alex Gerlis interviewed*

On Wednesday December 4th, Mosaic Culture Hub put on another very special event. Over fifty people enjoyed a delicious homemade soup, with roll, butter and cheese, followed by mini ice creams and fruit, before being treated to a really interesting interview of Mosaic Reform member Alex Gerlis by Steve Levinson, who is also a member of Mosaic Reform. Alex and Steve were both successful journalists for many years and even worked together at the BBC.

Alex talked about his new espionage novel, *Every Spy A Traitor*, the first in the four-book Double Agent series. Alex has already written eleven books set in the World War II, with three different series, and his agent suggested that he should write about another period, starting in the early 1930s and concluding just after World War II commences. Alex explained that publishers like series of three or four books rather than standalone novels. He said that 70% of his sales were on Kindle, and readers prefer a series as they can pre-order the next one in advance.

He told the audience a bit about his new novel, which begins in the early 1930s. It has

many characters, but two Englishmen stand out: one is Charles Cooper, while the other is the mysterious man code-named Archie. The focus is on British and Russian spies.

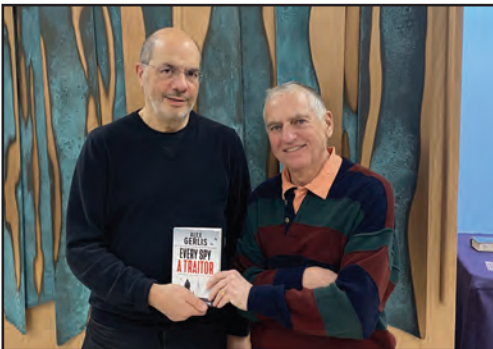
Cooper is a nice young man, around 25 or 26 years old, who inherits a lot of money and wants to work as a journalist. His father was killed in The Great War. Cooper is approached and recruited to work for the Russians and later works for MI6 to spy for the British. Archie is a man of mystery, identified as a high-ranking official within British Intelligence.

Steve said he enjoyed this book and felt it read very well and was quite different from Alex's previous novels. Alex explained that it took him about nine months to write it, whilst writing notes for the second and third novels, and he knew how he wanted the book to finish. Steve asked if he had a problem with writing fiction based on true-life facts, and Alex described how he uses poetic licence to embellish the facts. He does, however, have at the end of his book a section flagging up true events.

Alex then answered questions from the audience. Asked how he visits countries for his research, he said that he would be visiting Milan and Washington for research for book 3, but could not visit Moscow for book 1 because of the Ukraine/Russian war.

He said that some of his characters can be secondary people but can grow to become his real-life imaginary friends and become larger characters. Alex works and speaks with his editor very closely as a team. He is still waiting to see if any of his novels may be made into a TV series, but probably not as they are too expensive with all the various locations all around the world.

Report by Caroline Chadwick



Alex Gerlis (left) with Steve Levinson

Life Against the Odds: A heartbreaking performance by Anna Conomos



Anna Conomos (right) with Anna Golizin

When I first saw performance storyteller Anna Conomos present *Life Against the Odds* earlier this year I struggled to hold back my tears. Anna's performance recounts the story of the demise of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki in Greece caused by the Nazi occupation. After seeing her show then, I was moved to suggest to her that the performance be staged for us at Mosaic and was delighted that Jane Prentice and the Culture Hub were able to arrange this.

Having seen it once I was sure that I would not cry a second time. I was wrong.

Anna, accompanied by the dulcet tones of Anna Golizin, performed to a full house at Mosaic on Sunday November 24th 2024. Her narrative, interwoven with Greek and Hebrew song, took us on a journey through tempestuous times in Thessaloniki, portraying a once harmonious multi-cultural community, which included 50,000 Jews in the 1930s, as

it transitioned to one devastated by fear, occupation and deportation.

With great skill and artistry, inspired by the real-life narratives of the Jews in Thessaloniki between 1933 and 1945, Anna related the experiences of two families. They were neighbours and friends, one Jewish, one Greek. We heard the playful voices of the children – Samuel, his younger Jewish sister Erica and Eleni their Christian upstairs

neighbour – forging emotional bonds, untainted indeed enriched, by their different cultural backgrounds.

Anna swept us along a tide of emotion as we saw how the characters move from initial joyful naivety to ostrich-like disbelieving optimism. And finally, how that was shattered by the recognition of the unthinkable reality of occupation, humiliation, deportation and slaughter, and the resulting extinction of their once thriving community.

She also told of the unfaltering courage of Eleni's Christian parents as they chose to risk their lives to shelter Eleni in their home and to hide her from view for the duration of the occupation.

Anna's powerful and moving performance was a fusion of dramatic storytelling, songs and music from the Greek, Jewish and Balkan traditions. The fact that many in the audience were familiar with the events in Thessaloniki did not prevent a wave of emotion enveloping the room, and it was a haunting moment

Continued on following page >>

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when the audience spontaneously joined Anna's rendition of **הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב** (*Hine Mah Tov*.)

The tearful denouement was the recounting of the return from an Austrian concentration camp of a rake-like Samuel to the embrace of his sister and his childhood friend Eleni in Thessaloniki.

I noticed my tears were not the only ones shed in the Mosaic audience. In the 1930s,

many Jews refused to acknowledge the horrific consequences of the antisemitism that was sweeping across Europe until it was too late to stop its stealthy progress. *Life Against the Odds* shone a spotlight on the tragedies of the past and highlighted our need for awareness, vigilance and defiance to work to prevent this shameful chapter in history repeating itself.

Report by Michael Harris

Get Ready for Pesach

Our bumper Pesach issue will include the launch of our short story competition and a seasonal crossword, while young Mosaic members share their thoughts on why they joined our community and their hopes for the future.

We look forward to receiving your Pesach memories and recipes as well as news of your globetrotting for Travellers' Tales.

Try to keep general articles to around 500 words (although major features can of course be longer) and include pictures whenever possible.

Copy date is Monday February 24th.

We're waiting!

Andrea and Roberta

POETRY CORNER

New Year Greetings

By Bernard Fisherman



Another new year is off and running over here
 With rain and gusty winds
 A dreary start and gloomy way to cautiously
 begin
 No crystal ball or tarot cards to give the
 smallest clue
 To what's on offer for the next twelve months
 for aways
 Optimistic me and you
 Resolutions will be avidly made some sadly
 discarded ASAP
 So take each day as it comes always seems
 the very best way forward
 And look positively ahead to the coming New
 Year courageously

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 3rd February, 8.00pm

The History of Zionism with Michael Wegier

Is Zionism a continuation of Jewish life, just in a sovereign country, or is it a radical departure from Jewish history that sets it apart from all other dimensions of Jewish life in time and space?

This four-part course examines how Zionism evolved and what it became in more recent times. We will look at original sources to enrich our conversation such as art, poetry, diaries and fiction. These will all shed light on the different and competing forces that helped shape Zionism from a small minority interest into a dominant force within the global Jewish community.

The course continues on Mondays 3rd March, 7th April. Each session is 'stand-alone' and free of charge.

Michael Wegier has been Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies since 2021. He has worked as a Jewish Educator, Strategic Planner



and Chief Executive for Jewish organisations in the UK, Israel, and the United States. He has a degree in Jewish History from UCL and an MA in Contemporary Jewry from the Hebrew University. He is also a graduate of the prestigious Mandel Jerusalem Fellows for developing Educational Leadership.

Significant professional positions include Chief Executive of the Melitz

Educational Centres in Israel and two terms at UJIA, one as Director of Programme and later as Chief Executive, a position he held until 2019. Michael has also worked as a Strategic Consultant for several organisations including The Jewish Agency for Israel and World ORT.

Michael is an avid reader of Jewish, Israeli, and general literature as well as a keen cyclist and less keen runner. He is married to Daniela, originally from Chile and they have three grown-up children living between the UK and Israel.

Monday 10th February, 8.00pm

Film Mosaic: Serial Bad Weddings

Mosaic Culture Hub is thrilled to invite you to the film evening at Mosaic Jewish Community for a viewing of *Serial Bad Weddings*. Film Mosaic is open to anyone, why not bring a friend?

This very funny French Film was released in 2014 and shown at the London Jewish Film Festival to rave reviews. It tells of the Verneuls, a well-off, well-educated, well-intentioned, and well-thought-of Catholic couple and their ever expanding family. Everything would be perfect if three of their four daughters had not married young men of different nationalities and religions. So the day their fourth daughter tells them that she is marrying a Catholic fellow, they are on cloud nine. This is a very warm and funny movie, which is guaranteed to raise more than a smile. (In French avec subtitles)

There will be time for an informal discussion or a chat with friends, with tea, coffee and biscuits after the screening. Donations for our chosen charity would be appreciated if you care to give.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 12th February 10.30am

Melody Makers

Come together to sing at Mosaic. From musicals to Motown and everything in between. Requests welcome! Please contact angela@choosemosaic.org to register your interest.



Wednesday 12th February, 12.30pm

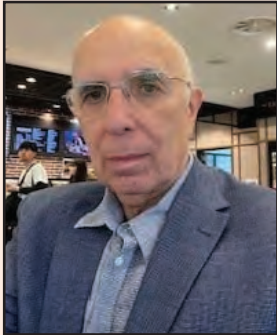
Meet Graphologist Michael Marx

Mosaic Culture Hub invites you to join us for a light lunch before Michael Marx, member of Bushey United Synagogue and a long-time friend of several of our members, will talk about Graphology and his amazing experiences of its various applications throughout a 40-year business career.

Graphology is the study of handwriting to determine someone's personality and other conditions. Michael's fascinating talk will take in an overview of how the science of

Graphology 'works', why our signatures are what they are, narcissism, lack of integrity, HIV, Israel's nuclear secrets, Jack the Ripper and more.

Below is the signature of David Ben-Gurion which Michael will be talking about in his presentation.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Dov Ben-Gurion', written on a light-colored background.

Please book via the Mosaic website by Wednesday 5th February for catering purposes. There is a £7 charge which will increase to £10 from 6th February.

Wednesday 12th February, 6.30pm

Tu BiShvat Seder

Tu BiShvat, the ancient agricultural tax year, was transformed by medieval Kabbalists into a celebration of life and creation in its many forms, which they marked with a Seder – structured around the drinking of four ritual cups of wine, as at the observance of Pesach. We mark this New Year for Trees with a Tu BiShvat Seder of our own at the shul – including some study, discussion and lots of fruit. We look forward to celebrating with you.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday 13th February, 7.00pm

Meet the Artist: Alison Imren

Alison Imren, a member of Mosaic Masorti, has been interested in all aspects of art since childhood having been inspired by her father who gave her his oil paints. Alison attended Harrow College of Art, specialising in Fine Art Painting. Whilst bringing up her children, she started doing large scale children's murals and other commissions. Since 2020, Alison has taken up painting full time and regularly paints portraits, still life and landscapes. She is a member of the St Albans Art Society and exhibits with them. You can follow her on Instagram at alijaneartist.



Saturday 22nd February, 10.45am

Shabbat Shira

We are delighted to invite you to Shabbat Shira, our family-friendly service, led by David Pollak and Rabbi Kathleen.

- Sing all the familiar and joyous Shabba Shira tunes
- See, touch and hear the Torah
- Help in dressing and undressing the Torah Scroll
- And hear the story of the week

The service is recommended for children under 11, but all ages are welcome and older siblings are invited to take a more active part in the service.



Monday 3rd March, 8.00pm

History of Zionism

See page 36 for full details



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 5th March, 12.30pm

Meet the Author and Playwright: Diane Samuels

Mosaic Culture Hub invites you to meet the author and playwright Diane Samuels.

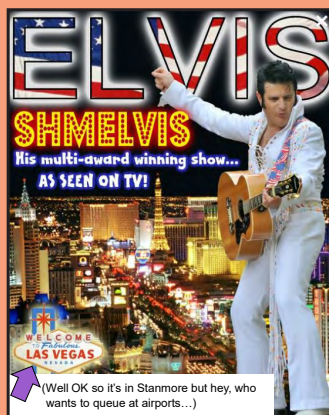
Join us for a light lunch before Diane Samuels will talk about how she combines life story and imagination in her writing with particular focus on her latest play *As Long As We Are Breathing* which premieres at the Arcola Theatre, Dalston, London from January 29th to March 1st.

The play is inspired by the life of Miriam Freedman who spent her childhood years in hiding with her family in Slovakia during the Holocaust. The play focuses on how she faced the trauma in adult life and came to a place of healing and forgiveness.

Please book via the Mosaic website by Wednesday 26th February for catering purposes. There is a £7 charge which will increase to £10 from 27th February.

Diane Samuels was born and grew up in Liverpool and now lives in London where she has been writing professionally for over 30 years. Her play *Kindertransport* won the Verity Bargate and Meyer-Whitworth Awards, and has been performed in the West End, Off Broadway and all over the world. Other work includes *The True-Life Fiction of Mata Hari* at Palace Theatre, Watford, 2002; *3 Sisters on Hope Street* with Tracy-Ann Oberman, at Liverpool Everyman and Hampstead Theatre, London, 2008; *The A-Z of Mrs P*, with composer Gwyneth Herbert, at Southwark Playhouse, 2014; *Poppy and George*, Palace Theatre, Watford, 2016; *This is Me*, snapshots of girlhood, interactive memoir as monologue, Chickenshed, 2018. Plays for BBC radio include *Woman's Hour* serial, *Tiger Wings*.

In 2005, she was Pearson Creative Research Fellow at the British Library. She has been involved in two Wellcome Trust award-winning projects in 2001 and 2016.



*Sunday 9th March,
7.30pm*

Elvis Shmelvis and Ricky Lopez

See page 11 for full details

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 10th March, 8.00pm

Film Mosaic: *Imaginary Witness*

Film Mosaic is open to anyone, why not bring a friend? There will be time for an informal discussion or a chat with friends, with tea, coffee and biscuits after the screening. Donations for our chosen charity would be appreciated if you care to give.

Hollywood was for many years effectively controlled by the major studios which were run by Jewish emigres from Europe escaping antisemitism. Yet, when faced with the emergence and rise of Hitler in the 20s and 30s, they did everything they could to maintain international "Box Office" by ignoring what was in front of them. They simply couldn't afford to upset their German market. It was not until much later that some brave producers and filmmakers were willing to risk their careers by making movies that showed the covert antisemitism on their own doorstep in America as well as that which existed throughout the ages in Europe and in particular in Nazi Germany. Brave film makers like Charlie Chaplin and Elia Kazan took the lead in changing this. This amazing documentary tells the story of how Hollywood and its moguls woke up to reality. (Subtitles are not available)



Thursday 13th March, 6.30pm

Erev Purim Celebrations

King David Leibling invites all the Rabbis and Chairs, the lay-leadership and the honorary presidents, plus the congregants of the provinces of Mosaic Liberal, Masorti and Reform, to his Purim banquet. Parallel Masorti and joint Liberal and Reform services will be followed by food and entertainment. Prizes will be awarded for the best fancy dress costumes, and please bring a bottle — alcoholic or not — to share.



Tuesday 18th March

Art at Mosaic: Judith Simmons' Exhibition Original Prints opens

Judith has always been interested in art, working in the areas of painting, drawing and sculpting. In 1998 she started attending printmaking classes at the University of Hertfordshire and now works from Bainbridge Print Studio in South London.

Her work has been shown in group exhibitions at Lauderdale House in Highgate and solo exhibitions at The Purcell School, at 'Romeo Jones' in Dulwich, at NPLS and at home as part of Harrow Open Studios.

Judith's inspiration comes from a range of observed sources. She produces small edition, series of prints on subjects that obsess her e.g.

Shadows, Quotations and Animals. She utilises photographs and drawings, often combining images, choosing the medium that feels the most appropriate.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 30th March, 3.30pm

Afternoon Tea with Phil Rosenberg, Board of Deputies President

Phil Rosenberg will speak about the work that the BoD is doing on behalf of the community to:

- Fight antisemitism
- Stand up for peace and security in Israel and the Middle East
- Defend our religious freedoms
- Make our community more united, more inclusive and more outward-looking; and
- Celebrate our faith, heritage and culture as British Jews

Join Phil for afternoon tea. £6 for Mosaic members. £8 for non-members. Tickets available on the website <https://choosemosaic.org/event/afternoon-tea-with-the-president/>



Wednesday 2nd April, 12.30pm

Meet the Auctioneer: Ian Shapiro

Mosaic Culture Hub invites you to join us for a light lunch before a presentation by Ian Shapiro, Senior Specialist at Spink & Son, with a display of royal photographs, original letters and historical items. Ian will talk about his work as a consultant to the prestigious auction house Spink & Son in London and how to value collectables with a good sprinkling of stories and anecdotes.

Born and raised in South Africa, Ian's interest in historical artefacts, particularly those related to the Anglo-Zulu war, has been a significant aspect of his career. Ian has a deep passion for royal and historical items and has established himself as a prominent collector and dealer in this niche. He is known for his insights into the value of autographs and memorabilia in today's digital age.

Please book via the Mosaic website by Wednesday 26th March for catering purposes. There is a £7 charge which will increase to £10 from 27th March.



Sunday 13th April

Pesach Communal Seder

Our communal Seder will take place on Sunday, 13th April (erev second day Pesach). Further details, including how to book, to follow. If you'd like to attend but don't have email, please contact the Mosaic office on 020-8864 0133.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Passover Seder Light - Wednesday 16th April

**Community Care Co-ordinators
Angela & Sandie
warmly invite**

Mosaic Members

**to a wonderful and uplifting
daytime short seder
led by the Rabbis followed by a delicious
light lunch,
Passover songs and music.**

**Come together at Mosaic to celebrate Pesach
12 noon to 2.30pm**

RSVP. 020 8864 0133

Angela@choosemosaic.org

Sandie@choosemosaic.org

Help with Transport available.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mondays	10.30	Creative Writing Class (Fortnightly)
	20.00	Talmud class with Rabbi Anthony (via Zoom)
Tuesdays	10.00	Mosaic Walks – email walks@choosemosaic.org for meeting point
	11.00	Mosaic Friendship Club
	20.00	Untangling our Tradition with one of our Rabbis
Wednesdays	10.30	Knit and Natter (First Wednesday of the month)
	10.30	Mosaic Melody Makers (Second Wednesday of the month)
	11.00	Tea and Torah
Thursdays	11.00	Chit-Chat b'Ivrit
	11.00	Music for Memory (Last Thursday of the month)
	14.00	Games Afternoon
Fridays	18.30	Shabbat Beiteinu (Second Friday of the month unless otherwise stated)
Saturdays	09.45	Masorti service (unless otherwise stated)
	10.30	Reform service
	10.45	Liberal service
Sundays	09.45	HaMakom (during term time)

FEBRUARY

Sat 1 st		Mental Health Shabbat
Mon 3 rd	20.00	History of Zionism
Sun 9 th	13.00	Tombstone consecration: Dennis Goodman, Edgwarebury Lane
Mon 10 th	9.00	Mosaic Art: Alison Imren's Art Exhibition opens
	22.00	Film Mosaic: <i>Serial Bad Weddings</i>
Wed 12 th	12.30	Culture Hub: Michael Marx on graphology
Thu 13 th	19.00	Meet the Artist: Alison Imren
Sat 15 th		Bat Mitzvah, Beth Witte. Mosaic Reform
Sun 16 th	14.00	Tombstone consecration: Edmund Goldstein, Western, Cheshunt
	14.45	Tombstone consecration: Warren Green, Western, Cheshunt
Sat 22 nd	10.45	Shabbat Shira
Mon 24 th		<i>Kehila</i> copy date
	11.00	Tombstone consecration: Richard Stanton, Woodland, Cheshunt
Wed 26 th	12.30	Book Club

MARCH

Mon 3 rd	20.00	History of Zionism
Wed 5 th	12.30	Culture Hub: Author and Playwright, Diane Samuels
Sun 9 th	19.30	Culture Hub: Elvis Shmelvis and Ricky Lopez
Mon 10 th	20.00	Film Mosaic: <i>Imaginary Witness</i>
Thu 13 th		Erev Purim
Tue 18 th		Mosaic Art: Judith Simmons' Art Exhibition opens
Sun 30 th	14.45	Tombstone consecration: Angela Samuels, Western, Cheshunt
	15.30	Meet Phil Rosenberg, Board of Deputies President

APRIL

Wed 2 nd	12.30	Culture Hub: Meet the Auctioneer, Ian Shapiro
Thu 3 rd	12.30	Pesach <i>Kehila</i> distribution
Sat 12 th	19.30	Erev Pesach. First Seder
Sun 13 th		First Day Pesach Communal Seder
Mon 14 th	19.30	Second Day Pesach



The Mosaic office
opening hours are:

Monday	08.00 – 17.00
Tuesday	08.00 – 16.00
Wednesday	08.00 – 13.30
Thursday	08.00 – 17.00
Friday	10.00 – 12.00

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Email: admin@choosemosaic.org

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chair@choosemosaic.org

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Angela Peters 07435 722600
angela@choosemosaic.org
Sandie Myers 07435 652328
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HaMakom (Religion School):

Toria Bacon and Viki Kenton
headteacher@hamakomschool.org.uk

Bereavement Support:

Bobbi Riesel 020 8428 7977

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Undertakers: Kings Funeral
Directors
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Gill Ross – 07428 162473

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