



Kehila



Liberal | Masorti | Reform

The Magazine of the **Mosaic Jewish Community**

Pesach 2025/5785



Cover Story: L'dor v'dor: From Millennials to Generation X

Community News

Talking Points and Travel Tales

Event Reviews and Forthcoming Events

Quick Cryptic Crossword

Short Story Competition

**MOSAIC JEWISH COMMUNITY WISHES YOU
A HAPPY PESACH**

About Our Members

Since our last issue

MOSAIC REFORM

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER:

Carolyn and Jonathan Woolf
Sharon Reilly
Daniel Grossman
Karolina Ziobrowska
Alan Sears
Angela Geller
Ruth & Roger Cole

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS:

Peter Butters
Arnold Gee
Ruby Nerva
Rosalie Tobe
Helena Grossman
Sarah Gore
Rabbi Kathleen
Ray Frost
Denis Hart
David Solomon
Jeffrey Rogers

MAZAL TOV TO:

Judith and Paul Russell on the engagement of their son, Jamie, to Lia Busby
Zella Milstone on the birth of her great-grandson, Reuben Ayal
Jean London on the birth of her great-grandson, Ori Shalev
Sandra Pentelow on the engagement of her daughter, Charlotte, to Matt Wesson

ANNIVERSARIES

Caroline and Lawrence Chadwick on their 45th anniversary
Margaret and Michael Abrahams on their 60th anniversary
Myra and Greg Wand on their 55th anniversary

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Jeffrey Lee
Paul Russell

CONDOLENCES TO:

Bertha Levy on the death of her husband, Harry, and Clive Levy on the death of his father
The family and friends of Rachel Young
The family and friends of Inge Norris
Alan Garfield on the death of his wife, Sheila
The family and friends of Fred Stern

Stefan Roos on the death of his brother, Fraser
Olga Zar on the death of her husband, Hymie
Helena Rose on the death of her husband, Martin
Caroline Chadwick on the death of her mother, Angela Kasin
Odeya Noble-Bougay on the death of her father, Izzy Bougay.

MOSAIC LIBERAL

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Joseph Finlay
Francine and Richard Miller

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS:

Philip Brand
Shirley Collins
Evelyn Felts
Ruth-Eva Fiegel
Joseph Jaffe
Millicent Levan
Brigitte Levin
José Mans
Sheila Martin
Joy Pearson
Stella Share
Andy Snipper
Richard Sontag
Howard Spencer
Edna Spielmann
Helen Sugarman

NEW HOME:

Olga Rosenbaum
Stanley Rosenthal

THINKING ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE ILL:

Bernard Spilfogel
Alan Slavin
Shirley Collins
Jackie Kaplan

CONDOLENCES TO:

The family and friends of Joscelyne Kenton

MOSAIC MASORTI

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Leah Fountain

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS:

Carole Carlton
Chanan Shuall
Melanie Peters
Maurice Axelrod
Sue Krisman
Jack Kushner
Nicola Manton
Michael Marx
Elaine Faber
Danielle Young

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Danielle and David Kosky on the birth of their grandson, Ori Shalev
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Gill & David Ross on the birth of their grandson, Alexander Peter

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Jackie and Anthony Alexander on their 35th anniversary

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Howard Carpus
Joe Newman

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We celebrate the first anniversary of **Sue Krisman's Creative Writing Course** with our Kehila Short Story Competition.

Travel Tales

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Rabbi Kathleen visits a new **Progressive Jewish Community in the Netherlands**, which needed a little help from their Christian Friends

Michael Leigh tells the story of the European Jews who followed a circuitous route to **Shanghai**.

David Wyman visits the magnificent new **National Library of Israel**

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Philip Silverton enjoyed a chilly **Mosaic Walk** walked along the Regents Canal to Camden Market

Harold Shupak summarises the debate by a panel of experts on **Israel's Wars and Increased Anti-Semitism in the UK**

Michelle Davis discovers an intriguing real life postscript to **Life Against the Odds**

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Jacqueline Gross summarises the first two lectures from **Michael Wegier's History of Zionism**

Forthcoming Events

Another packed programme of regular and one-off events including **Meet the Author**, the **Communal Seder**, events to mark **Yom Hashoah**, **Yom HaZikaron** and **Yom HaAtzma'ut**, plus a **Portrait Painting Course** and award-winning movies from **Film Mosaic**.

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A WORD FROM THE EDITORS

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this bumper issue of Kehila. It has been a pleasure to read about members' experiences and thoughts, and apologies if we didn't manage to include your article this time. We would also like to thank proofreader Annette Ashmele and the indefatigable Ann Simon for ensuring we do them justice.

At Mosaic, we are lucky to have a growing pool of younger members, and for our cover story we asked some young adult members to tell us what attracted them to the Mosaic Jewish Community. We would love to hear similar stories for future issues.

And if you think we're only interested in Millennials and Generation Z, we balance the books with an interview with Marion Bloom, who was 101 last September. Don't ever say Mosaic doesn't cater for everyone!

Mosaic members are great travellers, seeking out areas of Jewish interest all over the world, and we have experiences from five different countries this time, plus news, reviews and previews of the many activities for which the community is known.

Please do take part in our Short Story Competition, celebrating the first anniversary of Sue Krisman's Creative Writing Course, as well as the Quick Cryptic Crossword for Pesach — with prizes!

We try to balance the magazine to reflect the views of the community and all three synagogues. We may edit contributions, but will always discuss our proposed changes with you. So please put pen to paper (or fingertips to keyboard!) and send your articles and pictures to newsdesk@choosmosaic.org by May 27th.

We hope you enjoy this issue and wish you a Happy Pesach.

Andrea and Roberta



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Eden loves the sense of family and community in his Norwood home where he now proudly lives his own life. I no longer have to worry about him.



Who is Free?

By Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill

Shimeon ben Zoma was amongst the greatest scholars of the third generation of Tannaim — those teachers and students of the first centuries of the Common Era who produced the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and all the very first strata of Jewish law. To us, Ben Zoma may be best remembered for his teachings in the Haggadah; or else for that great Mishnah in Pirkei Avot (as expounded by Barbara Streisand in Yentl):

Ben Zoma said: **Who is wise?** He who learns from every man, as it is said: “From all who taught me have I gained understanding.” (Psalms 119:99) **Who is mighty?** He who subdues his [evil] inclination, as it is said: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city.” (Proverbs 16:32) **Who is rich?** He who rejoices in his lot, as it is said: “You shall enjoy the fruit of your labours, you shall be happy, and you shall prosper.” (Psalms 128:2) “You shall be happy” in this world, “and you shall prosper” in the world to come. **Who is he that is honoured?** He who honours his fellow human beings as it is said: “For I honour those that honour Me, but those who spurn Me shall be dishonoured.” (I Samuel 2:30)



to liberation is certainly not reducible to spiritual content; it is an urgent summons to concrete social, political and geopolitical action. If we sit at our Seder table and ignore the slavery-produced goods in our own home — for they are there, in your very own home — our observance is presumably to some extent hollow.

But Pesach does also want us to consider the freedoms and slaveries of the spirit: the slaveries of hatred, of bias, of prejudice, of addiction; the imprisonment of squandered potential and vanished opportunity. There is the slavery of fear, which grips the heart and narrows perspective. There is the slavery of despair, which perniciously convinces us that change is impossible,

and that no better future can be imagined. There is the slavery of indifference, which is not only the opposite of love, but also the denial of the very possibility of love and reconciliation.

By contrast, there is the freedom of those who emerge from the narrow places of their past, refusing to let pain or oppression define their pursuit of a better future. There is the freedom of those who, despite everything, choose dignity, generosity, and hope. There is the freedom of those who can recognize another's suffering as bound up with their own and who take responsibility for the world beyond their doorstep.

Eizehu Hofshi, who is free? Perhaps the closest we come in Rabbinic literature to an answer to our question comes somewhat later in Pirkei Avot [6.2]:

“And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved (Harut) upon the tablets.” [Ex 32.16] Read it not as “Harut,” but rather as “Heirut” (meaning freedom), for no one is free but One who studies Torah.

We need to understand this over-literally: Torah is defined broadly, and the Mishnah is saying that for Freedom to be maximally realized, it must include the freedom fully to develop one's mind, and so to move beyond social bubbles and ‘little boxes.’

Freedom is a casting off of whatever fetters our ability to see the world in its entirety; to recognize the human in the other; to build bridges across divided worlds.

The fight for freedom begins with releasing hostages and fighting slavery; but Pesach wants us to know that the struggle for freedom is not only ‘out there’; but also very much ‘in here’.

Wishing you a Chag Kasher v'Sameach.



Looking towards Pesach — and I am writing this towards the end of the first phase of Israel's ceasefire with Hamas; hostages are every week emerging from darkness in a process which feels both perilously fragile and deeply mired in moral hazard — I am minded to add a fifth question: **Eizehu Hofshi, who is free?**

Just now, this question is obviously bound up with some hierarchy of needs. Who is free? Most basically: one who is free to see the sky, one who is free to breathe the fresh air, one whose ankles are not shackled. Slavery is not, principally, a metaphor; captivity is not, principally, a metaphor. Some dozens of Israeli hostages remain in captivity. In the wider world slavery remains a moral stain and a human tragedy, affecting (depending on the precise definition one takes for ‘slavery’) some thirty to fifty million people. So Pesach's call

Embracing the Chaos

by Rabbi Daisy Bogod

The irony in the Seder being called just that — the translation of *seder* is 'order' — bemuses me. I used to think that it was only my family whose Seder brought forth utter chaos. Then I married into another one.

I suppose it shouldn't surprise me that large groups of Jews, especially when all related, have lots of different opinions about what we should and shouldn't be doing, and how long it's acceptable to go on before we start eating. The Talmud records a debate between Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiva about when we must have eaten from the sacrificial meat in order to fulfil the *mitzvah*; the equivalent in my grandma's house was whether there was an appropriate stand-in for the shank bone for our majority vegetarian gathering. Ever the controversialist yet not the *halachist*, grandma insisted on the bone. I swapped it for a toy sheep (see picture below.)



Everything about preparing for Pesach is both rigidly orderly and a little bit chaotic. I have never had to brave a last-minute trip to Kosher Kingdom, but I hear it's a scary place. Navigating the different stringencies and *minhagim* is challenging, and often particularly emotive when it comes to food. It's often said that building flatpack furniture together is the real test of a relationship; perhaps the Jewish equivalent is planning a Pesachdik home with your flatmates or partner for the first time.

I used to really struggle with my family Seder, thinking that we failed by not taking it seriously enough, and demanding an intentionality from distant family members that was never going to come. I appreciate some homes may be more pious, and I'm delighted for those of you who get to stay up until dawn discussing and remembering *yetziat mitzrayim*, the Exodus from Egypt. I

suspect a lot of you too, though, have to balance the needs and wants of intergenerational family members, who all come to the table for different reasons.

This year, I'm taking joy and comfort in the polarity of order and chaos. When everyone reads aloud together from different *Haggadot*, and therefore totally different texts; when everyone bursts into the *Dayeinu* chorus after different verses; the new guests, the new tunes, the new item to be added to our seder plate; the new supplemental readings offered by every single Jewish institution... these all bring ingenuity and variety to the familiarity of the night. Every year it is a little bit different, but we do ask: "*mah nishtanah ha'lailah hazeh mikol haleilot?*" This night is supposed to be different from all other nights.

Marking Pesach means remembering the past as though we ourselves had gone out of Egypt: *b'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mi-Mitzrayim*: 'In every generation, a person must view herself/himself as if s/he had gone out of Egypt' (Pesachim 116b). And if each of us really imagines ourselves coming out of Egypt, with our own fears, foibles, joys and expectations, it's not surprising that the Seder is varied and chaotic.

Bringing, and being, our whole selves enriches our *sedarim*: we all bring different traditions and our own particularities to the table, because we all experience the world differently. It may be chaotic, but I wouldn't have it any other way.



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Wishing You A Happy Passover



Should we Celebrate Purim?

By Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton

At my first ever interview for a Rabbinic position, I was asked an unexpected question by a member of the interviewing panel: 'What are your thoughts about Purim?' 'What do you want to know?' I asked in return; 'it is a festival'. 'Yes,' was the answer 'we know; but should we celebrate it?'

The community was a traditional Liberal one, and not everyone in the community was convinced that Purim should be marked at all, let alone celebrated with much levity, because the story of Esther is, most probably, not based on any historical facts. Those who were opposed to Purim also worried about the story's violent end which, they believed, a respectful and moral community should not publicly read nor celebrate.

Purim was nevertheless celebrated in the community, albeit not very exuberantly. The children were encouraged to dress up and the Megillah was read, but all the violent parts were left out.

Megillat Esther is a little bit like a Punch and Judy show, in which the 'good guys' win and the 'bad guys' get a good rollicking. For children, and I guess even for adults, it is quite satisfying to see great evil rightly punished. But we know that the world is not quite as straightforward as all that.

Perhaps that is where the tradition comes in: to drink on Purim 'ad de lo yada' — until one cannot tell the difference between 'cursed be Haman!' and 'blessed be Mordechai!' — a Talmudic requirement, which also worried the community. Encouraging drunkenness and the misuse of alcohol seems irresponsible at any given time, especially if there seems to be so little ambiguity between 'cursed be Haman!' and 'blessed be Mordechai!' It would mean that one should drink a considerable amount of alcohol and get seriously inebriated!

Perhaps, however, the distinction between good and evil is not as clear cut as we are made to think. Of course Haman the Aggagite, descendant of Amalek, was an evil man, and Queen Esther saved her people, but what about Mordechai? When given the power, did he use it well? There is also considerable moral ambiguity when we review King Achashverosh. The King, though imbued with immeasurable power over a vast kingdom, knows little about what goes on in it, nor even in his own palace. He relies entirely on his closest advisor, even abdicating his own responsibility by handing his signet ring, first to Haman and then to Mordechai, to do as they see fit. He also perpetuates an ancient and blatantly unjust law that stipulates that any laws ratified by the King's signet ring cannot be abrogated. Thus, when Haman issues an edict that all the Jews should

be murdered on a certain date, even King Achashverosh, despite all his power, cannot undo it.

It leaves Mordechai and Esther no other option than to warn the Jews of the realm to arm and defend themselves against those who had been told to murder them. And so, in the city of Shushan alone, the Jews killed 800 of their assailants, and 75,000 in the other Persian provinces!

And this is where the moral ambiguity comes in, and where my Liberal friends felt uneasy about celebrating Purim and reading the 'Ganze Megillah' (the whole Megillah). Wasn't there any way this slaughter could have been averted, or did Mordechai intend to have all those enemies slaughtered? The Book of Esther, if taken seriously, can be an extremely disturbing story which, in

the wrong hands, can and has inspired Jewish extremists to murder those they regard as modern day 'Amalekites.' We are reminded, for example, of the abhorrent act of terrorism perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein, who murdered 29 Muslim worshippers and wounded 125 on Purim 1994.

Drinking only a little to remind us how morally ambiguous the world can be, Purim invites us to not take it all too seriously for once. The world is so complex, and often so painful, that it is good once a year to parody the messy world we live in and to dream of a world in which the baddies are easily identifiable and defeatable, before we resume yet again our much more difficult task of making the world a better place....





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Mosaic Social Action Hub organises successful drop-in collection

A big thank you to the many Mosaic members who dropped in toiletry items on Sunday, February 23rd. With an estimated value of £450, they filled six large containers, and will be distributed to people in need by our charity partner, Goods for Good.

We also received a large quantity of beautiful pre-loved clothing, shoes and accessories for Labels for Good. These will be sold through the charity's eBay and Vinted sites to generate funds for their work supporting vulnerable communities in the UK and abroad.



Some of the hub team who volunteered at the drop-in

Volunteering opportunities

If you are thinking about committing some of your time to volunteering, please get in touch with the Mosaic Social Action hub socialaction@choosemosaic.org

Our partner charities are:

Goods for Good – Supporting people to thrive by delivering essentials such as clothing, footwear, bedding and hygiene goods.

Volunteers on Wheels – Distributing food and other supplies to over 30 food banks and up to 20,000 people each week.

Firm Foundation – Helping to relieve the immediate suffering of the homeless, while working with them to find a practical and sustainable solution to their needs.



Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to Aimee Pidgeley and Brandon Bordoley on their joint conversion ceremony, conducted at Mosaic by Rabbi Rachel on January 25th. They will be married later this year.

TIKKUM L'ET SHAVUOT

SAVE THE DATE:
SUN EVE, 1 JUNE 2025

- Erev Shavuot Service
- Chavurah Supper
- A choice of sessions throughout the night

THEME: 70 FACES OF TORAH

LOCATION: RADLETT REFORM SYNAGOGUE, 118 WATLING STREET, RADLETT WD7 7AA

Mosaic Liberal and Reform communities are once again joining with other local progressive synagogues to celebrate Shavuot. On June 1st, after a musical Erev Shavuot service and dinner, there will be multiple study sessions running throughout the night, concluding with a sunrise shacharit. Registration will open soon.

Volunteering

Mosaic Masorti member Carole Orchover (right) joined other volunteers packing up donated clothing, shoes, bedding and toiletries at Goods for Good (GfG), one of Mosaic's partner charities.

For more information on volunteering, see the Social Hub article on page 9.



Parking on Stanmore Hill

By David Leibling

Chairman Mosaic Jewish Community

Harrow Council has been considering introducing very restrictive controls on parking in the Stanmore area. Harry Grant, Lawrence Chadwick and I had a very positive meeting with our two local councillors, Mr and Mrs Ashton, about the severe impact their proposals would have. We subsequently presented them with evidence from a local parking survey, which they had not seen, showing there was ample parking even on Saturday mornings. They have now withdrawn the proposals and there will be no change to the existing parking controls.

We must, however, continue to take great care not to upset the neighbours, as it might trigger another request for increased control. So:

1. Come by bus if you can — the 142 stops outside the door.
2. Share a car — it reduces the demand for space.
3. Always park with consideration for our neighbours — not in front of their drives or in their private car parks.
4. Always read the parking signs.
5. You can book a space for £5.75 all day and evening in the Sainsbury's car park at [Horizonspaces.co.uk](https://www.horizonspaces.co.uk). Search for "Stanmore" and then "Sainsbury's" This link will take you to the website <https://www.horizonspaces.co.uk>



Mosaic Masorti Women's Group Continues to Expand

By Gill Ross

Since 2018, Mosaic Masorti Synagogue has been fully egalitarian in its practice, building on its original foundations of the inclusion of women in services, leyning and reading Haftorah. More recently, we have been encouraging and helping women to lead services, and we have been enjoying a pool of skilled and musical female daveners on a Shabbat morning.

The synagogue now has greater numbers of highly skilled and knowledgeable women, and others who are starting out on aspects of prayer leadership. Our second coffee morning was very well attended, and these occasional meet-ups, alongside our WhatsApp group, encourage members to share ideas, broaden knowledge and support each other. We signpost training and learning opportunities and challenge 'imposter syndrome,' which women often suffer from when they enter previously male-dominated areas.

We are always looking for more involvement, from younger women especially, and hope that support and encouragement — over a cuppa or on WhatsApp — will deepen our commitment to our Jewish journeys.

If you would like to be part of this growing movement, talk to me after shul, or join the WhatsApp chat by logging on to <https://bit.ly/MosaicMasortiWomen>.

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Happy Purim Extravaganza at Mosaic

By Joan Pollack

I had the most memorable, special, celebratory time ever at Mosaic Liberal on March 13th.

The service was incredible and told everything in such a short time. It was interactive, participative, a lot of fun, fast-moving and just incredible.

Some of the costumes were brilliant — Popeye, Esther and Haman included — and the happy contented babies there were so cutely dressed. The noise-making musical instruments provided robust tools to assist adequate booing.

The lovely compact wooden-cased Megillah was a beautiful centrepiece for Rabbi Daisy, who led the service beautifully with it. I was given a portion to read; never mind it was in English, I felt elated to rally the congregation. Better than a silent vigil in Whitehall!

The food and catering were faultless, especially the choice of hamantaschen; I particularly enjoyed the poppy seed variety.

And to conclude, a very polished, jazzy, Rabbi ensemble added great atmosphere to a thoroughly enjoyable, fun Purim experience. It would be hard to follow that and could be a Broadway hit!

Thank you, Mosaic Community.



A Cautionary Tale...

By John Ashmele

If you are planning a raffle as part of a fundraising event (known as an incidental lottery). Whilst you don't need a licence to run this kind of lottery, you must make sure you follow the rules specified by the Gambling Commission; see www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk.

You should be particularly aware that all raffle tickets must be offered at the same price, for example £5 per ticket or a strip of tickets. You may not offer, say, '£1 a ticket or seven tickets for £5.' I have attended several functions where this has occurred, and the practice should be discouraged. As an aside, if you are selling a strip of five tickets, it should be made clear if this is one chance of winning one prize or five chances of winning five prizes.

Good Luck!

John Ashmele



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at HaMakom chedar
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Mosaic baby Luciana Berger joins the Lords

By Antonia and Howard Berger

Tuesday March 4th was a most prestigious occasion. Our daughter Luciana had the honour of joining The House of Lords with the title of **Baroness Berger of Barn Hill**.

We were privileged to be present at the Investiture Ceremony, as were other members of our family. Lord Parry Mitchell nominated her and also present was the Leader of The House of Lords, the Rt. Hon. Baroness Smith of Basildon.

Luciana, as a former MP, has continued to work tirelessly behind the scenes and especially in the area of mental health. She is currently chair of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance.

We are extremely proud of her achievements and were delighted to be with her to share the occasion of her Investiture.

After the ceremony a tea was held in The House of Lords with many members of our family, including Luciana's children Amélie and Zion. Also present was our son Alexander, his wife Ayelet and their two boys Reuben and Doren. They flew in from Nashville especially. Other MPs, supporters and friends were also in attendance.

We are so proud and privileged to have such an amazing daughter! A truly magnificent day that will stay in our memories forever.

Antonia and Howard are members of Mosaic Reform and Luciana grew up in the community



Baroness Berger of Barn Hill



Luciana with her family

Mosaic Choir sings at Harrow Holocaust Memorial Service

The Mosaic Choir played a significant role in Harrow's Holocaust Memorial Day event on January 28th, organised by Harrow Interfaith under the chairmanship of Mosaic's Bobbi Riesel. People of every Faith or no faith were invited to Harrow Arts Centre, where around 400 people heard first-hand accounts of the Holocaust, genocide and other forms of identity-based hostility.

The evening was compered by Steve Levinson, and Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton led the lighting of candles to remember those who died in the Holocaust and in genocides since World War II.



Picture by Michael Reik.

FINANCIAL TIMES FEATURES MOSAIC

When the Financial Times ran a feature on how demographic changes and costs are making religious groups reinvent places of worship, one of the case histories they chose was Mosaic Jewish Community.

FT reporter Robert Wright interviewed Rabbi Anthony, who described how migration of Jewish congregations into suburban Hertfordshire had encouraged the three synagogues to come together, creating a unique community and building. The article revealed how the main space can form one large venue but also has sliding, soundproof walls that allow the holding of three separate, simultaneous services or events. "What brings people in is community events, children's playgroups, religious schools, social justice activities," Rabbi Anthony explained. "For that, it's essential that the space can move and be open to all of the various possibilities of Jewish community life."

To read the article, go to the Financial Times website www.ft.com and search for 'Urban congregations put their faith in development projects,' February 11th 2025.



Rabbi Anthony pictured in the FT article (© Esan Swan)





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Prime Minister's Special Adviser for
Faith, Communities and Civil Society

21 January 2025

Dear Friends,

I wanted to write to share the Prime Minister's reflections following his recent visit to Auschwitz.

"Nothing could prepare me for the sheer horror of what I have seen in this place. It is utterly harrowing. The mounds of hair, the shoes, the suitcases, the names and details, everything that was so meticulously kept, except for human life.

As I stood by the train tracks at Birkenau, looking across that cold, vast expanse, I felt a sickness, an air of desolation, as I tried to comprehend the enormity of this barbarous, planned, industrialised murder: a million people killed here for one reason, simply because they were Jewish.

My visit today has also shown me more clearly than ever before, how this was not the evil deeds of a few bad individuals. It took a collective endeavour by thousands of ordinary people who each played their part in constructing this whole industry of death. To build the tracks, drive the trains, extract the hair and teeth, conceive the method of mass murder – each stomach-churning step rooted in the hatred of difference. The lessons of this darkest of crimes are the ultimate warning to humanity of where prejudice can lead.

My wife was equally moved by what she saw today. It was her second visit, but no less harrowing than the first time she stepped through that gate and witnessed the depravity of what happened here.

Time and again we condemn this hatred, and we boldly say "never again". But where is never again, when we see the poison of antisemitism rising around the world in aftermath of October 7th? Where is never again, when the pulse of fear is beating in our own Jewish community, as people are despicably targeted once again for the very same reason, because they are Jewish.

The truth that I have seen here today will stay with me for the rest of my life. So too, will my determination to defend that truth, to fight the poison of antisemitism and hatred in all its forms, and to do everything I can to make "never again" mean what it says, and what it must truly mean: never again."

If you would like to see some photos from the visit, you can view them by scrolling right from [here](#). The Prime Minister is deeply committed to the fight against antisemitism. He appreciates the issues faced by the Jewish community in the UK today and has admiration for its resilience during difficult times. I would like to thank you for your continued engagement with this Government on tackling these issues and working to fight hatred and prejudice in all its forms.

Yours sincerely,

Joy Johnston



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Pesach and the promise of renewal

*By Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Rabbi Josh Levy
Co-Leads of Progressive Judaism*

Pesach is the festival of renewal. We tell the story of our journey from slavery to freedom, from oppression to hope, and from darkness into light.

Each year, as we sit around our Seder tables, we do more than retell an ancient narrative — we commit ourselves to the ongoing work of transformation, both personal and collective.

This year, as we move towards one Progressive Judaism, we embrace that spirit of renewal in a profound way. We are uniting as a community, drawing strength from our shared values, and finding new ways to engage, innovate, and build the Jewish future we believe in.

Pesach arrives with spring — when nature reminds us that life is resilient. The Song of Songs, traditionally read at this time, declares: “For behold, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The blossoms appear in the land, the time of singing has come.” (Song of Songs 2:11-12) These words resonate not only with the beauty of the natural world but also with the cycles of hope that define Jewish time. Just as the earth renews itself after the barrenness of winter, we too are called to refresh our souls, renew our commitments, and embrace the possibilities ahead.

This Pesach, the need for renewal extends far beyond our personal and spiritual lives. Our civil and political worlds are fractured, often defined by fear rather than hope. Yet, Pesach teaches that transformation is possible.

The Exodus was not just a moment of liberation but the start of a journey — a slow, often frustrating process of building a society based on justice, equality, and shared responsibility. This is the challenge of Pesach, not only to celebrate freedom but to take responsibility for helping the

world renew. Leonard Cohen’s well-known lyric reminds us: “There is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in.”

Pesach is a festival of optimism, not because suffering is absent, but because redemption is always possible. The Seder does not shy away from struggle, but it insists on hope — on a future that is worth striving for.

As we gather this year, let us find inspiration in renewal — of nature, of society, of Jewish life. Let us take up the challenge of transforming the world, knowing that through cracks, through struggle, and through change, the light of renewal shines brightest.

Chag Pesach Sameach!





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Chag Pesach Sameach **from everyone at CST**

After everything we have been through lately, our Pesach will feel very special this year. The Haggadah tells us of persecution, redemption and hope for a better future. The story impacts us, because these things have continued throughout Jewish life: but here we are, facing the challenges together with courage.

At CST, our only mission is to give strength and comfort to British Jews. We do this so that you and your family can lead the life you choose.

Since that dreadful day of 7 October, CST has faced unprecedented demands and challenges, but despite it all, Jewish life has intensified and grown stronger than ever before. CST has been very proud of its part in making this happen, but we need you to continue supporting us too.

Over the last 18 months, many hundreds of men and women have joined CST following intensive security training. This means we can better protect our community, making it stronger and more confident.

Our commitment to you is constant. Thank you for placing your trust in us. The future remains uncertain, but together, we will keep on facing whatever lies ahead.

There are many ways you can support CST. You can contribute by becoming a volunteer, reporting antisemitism and donating to us.

From all of us here at CST, we wish you a
Chag Pesach Sameach

Report suspicious activity and antisemitism to CST at cst.org.uk/report

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SCAN TO SIGN UP



An unexpected Seder in Mexico

By Jocelyn Axelrod

About ten days before Pesach last year, on a Thursday night, we had a phone call from our daughter Joely, saying: "I'm OK, but....." She had broken her ankle very badly whilst in the middle of nowhere on a tour of Mexico, and she was four hours from the nearest suitable hospital. By the next morning, now hospitalised, she had been told that she needed surgery before she could fly home. So my mission of mercy began. While my husband Maurice was booking me on a flight, I had literally half an hour to pack a case and be out of the house. It's amazing what you can do when you have to!

I flew to Cancun, got a taxi to Playa del Carmen (at night, on my own, in Mexico; I was not thrilled), just in time for Joely's operation the next morning. Luckily, she was in an excellent, brand new, state of the art hospital with a top ankle surgeon. Thank goodness for holiday insurance!

The surgeon said that Joely would be able to fly home within a week, which would have got us back just in time for Pesach. However, it was not to be: 'medical repatriation' was one of the many new phrases we became very familiar with. British Airways was insisting on flying two nurses over to escort her back home, and the whole package would take some time to put in place.

Once it became apparent that we would not be home in time for Seder night, Joely suggested that I contact Chabad and, as she rightly predicted, they can be found everywhere. There was a local branch in the centre of Playa del Carmen, a few miles away. I made contact with the rabbi, who was very helpful, and he said that we could come to the communal Seder at Chabad House. A lovely thought: however, it was not possible for Joely and I wasn't going to leave her in hospital alone whilst I enjoyed Seder night in town.

So having taken a taxi into the centre of town, I located Chabad house and walked straight in and up the stairs (no visible security!) It was a hive of activity, with the aroma of a delicious fleishig meal being prepared for sixty people. Sadly, it wasn't yet ready, or the rabbi would gladly have given me two meals to take away. The best he could do was a box of matzah (*Shemura*, no less!), the largest bottle of grape juice, a big tub of charoset, a disposable Seder plate, two kiddush cups and two *Haggadot*. He also insisted on giving me two tealights, although I said I wouldn't be able to light them in the hospital room.

So, the Seder: we worked our way through the *Haggadah*, punctuated by four glasses of grape juice and copious amounts of matzah and charoset. We were disappointed to find that the *Haggadot* we'd been given didn't contain all the songs at the end, which are an integral part of our Seder at

home. But we found them online and sang with gusto, hoping that none of the hospital staff would come in and wonder what was going on!

The next morning, we decided to hold a service; not because we are so *frum*, but because we were far from home in very difficult circumstances, and we just wanted to make it 'feel' like Pesach. Courtesy of Reform Judaism's online Pesach *machzor* (thank you very much!), we davened some of *Shacharit*, the Torah service and *Musaf*. My training to lead a Torah service (thank you Rabbi Anthony) came in very useful, although we had to do without the *leyning*; I'd need rather more lead time for that!

The next day, finally, we were on our way home. We'd done our best to 'keep' Pesach in the circumstances. We arrived home to find that Maurice had done a sterling job preparing the house for Pesach. Luckily, I had bought all my Pesach provisions a day or two before I'd set off for Mexico. It wasn't long until I was elbow deep in making matzah brei, coconut pyramids and so on.

Our Mexican sojourn is now but a distant memory. Joely made a full recovery, and my thanks go to everyone for their concern and good wishes at the time.





Pesach Message from the President 5785 / 2025

From Phil Rosenberg

Pesach is the festival of freedom, where we celebrate our departure from Egypt. None of us needs to be reminded of the bitter parallels we have been experiencing since October 7th 2023, with hundreds of hostages taken on that awful day and held in captivity in awful conditions.

Since the signing of phase one of the ceasefire agreement we have experienced some joy and much heartbreak. There has been celebration as hostages have emerged from their ordeal to be reunited with their families – among them fellow Brit Emily Damari. There has been concern at the condition of hostages who were released in ugly Hamas ceremonies emaciated and unwell. And of course, we all mourned as the coffins of hostages murdered by their captors were received by their distraught loved ones, including the precious Bibas family and Tsachi Idan, cousin of Board of Deputies' staff member Adam Maanit. It has been our absolute determination to campaign until the last hostage is out; with our Adopt a Hostage campaign and vigils outside Downing Street and the Scottish Parliament.

Since October 7th we have all suffered a surge of antisemitism. The UK community needs to feel safe, secure and protected. This is why we have set up a Commission on Antisemitism, led by the Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism Lord Mann and former Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt. The Commission will investigate the rise of antisemitism in the UK and make far-reaching recommendations for how to fight antisemitism on our streets, in university campuses, in the media, online and in our workplaces.



Another key pledge I made in my election campaign was to tackle extremism and enhance interfaith relations with the Muslim community. Last year we launched the Optimistic Alliance between Jewish and Muslim communities in which we are tackling anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hatred; challenging extremism and supporting mainstream voices; defending shared religious freedoms; confronting societal challenges like poverty and climate change; and finding ways to engage better over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I was proud to join rabbis from across the UK Jewish community as we presented the far-reaching Drumlanrig Muslim-Jewish Accords to King Charles III in February. There is a long way to go but we have made a determined start.

I have spoken about the problems we face. However, we should also be celebrating our community and its achievements. I am pushing forward plans for a British Jewish Culture Month, with a proposed launch in 2026. In order to inoculate the public against the virus of antisemitism, we need to celebrate and educate about the contribution of our community to our country's society, economy and culture. I hope there will be much more to celebrate in the coming year.

We have gone through one of the toughest periods for the Jewish people in our living memory, but we have resilience in our DNA and we will come back stronger.

It just remains for me to wish Pesach Sameach to you and your families from everyone at the Board of Deputies.

Am Yisrael Chai!

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This year, 1 in 4 people at the Seder table will be living with mental illness or distress.



Charity Reg. No. 802559

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By supporting Jami you will enable us to provide vital mental health services to those in the community who need it most. Thank you.

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*26% of respondents to the 2023 JPR Research Panel reported personally experiencing some degree of mental distress, including mental illness or trauma, currently or within the last three months.

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A Once in a Generation Moment: Why We Must Stand Together This Yom HaShoah

*By Neil Martin OBE
Chair, Yom HaShoah UK*

Five years ago, on the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Shoah, our community came together for the largest-ever virtual Holocaust commemoration. The pandemic forced us apart, but it did not stop us from uniting. From living rooms across the country, thousands of people logged on to honour our survivors, lighting yellow candles in their homes as a solemn tribute to those who perished.

Last year on Yom HaShoah, it felt important to stand together in person once more — gathered at Victoria Tower Gardens with the Houses of Parliament as our backdrop, shoulder to shoulder, in defiance and in unity. We had just witnessed the darkest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. The pain of October 7th was raw, yet as a community, we stood firm, ensuring that as proud British Jews our commitment to remembrance and hope remains unwavering.

Now, as we reach the 80th Anniversary, we stand on the cusp of history once more. On **Wednesday 23 April 2025, the eve of Yom HaShoah**, thousands will return to Victoria Tower Gardens for what will quite possibly be the last major anniversary where Holocaust survivors and refugees will be present in meaningful numbers. This will be a defining once in a generation moment — not just of commemoration, but of commitment.

For 80 years, Holocaust survivors and refugees have willingly carried the burden of memory. They have spoken in schools, in synagogues and in Parliament. They have told their stories with unimaginable strength, not for themselves, but for us. To ensure we would never forget. But in the years ahead, their voices will sadly fade. The responsibility of remembrance will no longer rest with them — it will be ours alone — and they want us to continue their legacy. It is said that every Jewish soul was present at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. This 80th Anniversary National Commemoration is our Mount Sinai moment. Future generations will ask us: Where were you when the last survivors bore witness? Did you stand alongside them? Did you hear their testimony? Did you take the flame of remembrance into your own hands?

Victoria Tower Gardens is not just any venue. It is the proposed site of the new UK Holocaust Memorial, a place where the memory of the Shoah will stand in the heart of British democracy.

On this historic evening, we are asking our community to gather there in unprecedented numbers. Holocaust survivors, refugees, young leaders, dignitaries and families will stand together in a solemn yet powerful act of remembrance. We will hear from some of the last of the witnesses. We will watch the next generation of British Jewish children perform a moving musical tribute — over 300 primary school children, lifting their voices in a solemn pledge that Never Again truly means Never Again.

And through the power of technology, our commemoration will be amplified beyond the park. Since lockdown, tens of thousands have joined via livestream — whether in care homes, schools, regional communities or from abroad. This will ensure that Yom HaShoah is not just seen and heard by those physically present, but by the entire Jewish world.

This is not just another event. This is not just another Yom HaShoah. This is the moment for our community to come together in numbers never seen before. If we don't, when will we?

In 2015, five thousand people came together for the 70th anniversary. Last year, thousands stood in unity following October 7th. This year, we must surpass them all. We need everyone — synagogues, schools, youth movements, charities, families — to make it their priority to attend. We need leaders from every corner of our community to mobilise, spread the word, and ensure no one is left asking "Why didn't I go?" We need you!

In years to come, when people speak of the 80th anniversary, they will ask who was there. They will look to the images, the recordings, the testimonies of that night. They will see thousands of British Jews, standing before Parliament, standing before history, standing before our inspirational survivors and refugees, pledging that we will carry their memories forward.

And when the question comes: Did you stand with them? Let our answer be: Yes. In our thousands. We stood together, as one.

Join us on **23 April 2025**. Make history, honour the past and inspire the future!

Book Your FREE Tickets now at www.yomhashoah.org.uk



Board of Deputies January 19th Online Meeting

By Michael Reik, Deputy for Mosaic Reform

Karen Newman introduced all the speakers as independent chair for the day. We started with questions to the President following his report.

The first question was how do we ensure that Jews are safe to take part in Pride (LGBT) marches? Phil has been conferring with Arab ambassadors in the UK in the hope that when Israel's wars are over, the relationship between the Arab states and Israel will be restored as it was before.

The delegate for World Jewish Relief spoke about how they spend the money which is raised around Europe. This talk was followed by the deputies for Mitzvah Day and Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade (JLGB), who explained the work they do, and in particular how difficult a junior doctor found her work when confronted by blatant antisemitism and antizionism. These speakers illustrated how the Board is welcoming organisations that are not Synagogue related

in purpose. A deputy then explained her concern at being reprimanded for expressing a different point of view to the accepted norm. As a new Board member, this was deterring her from working at the Board. Phil made it clear that all deputies have the right to express a different point of view. This is essential, as an illustration of the diversity of views held within the UK Jewish Community.

Olivia Marks Waldman, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Trust, spoke about **Holocaust Memorial Day**, which was due to take place in eight days' time. The national project was to light 80 candles to commemorate 80 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. Joan Salter, a Holocaust Survivor, told us about her journey, starting from Brussels, then to Paris, and then her escape to the Spanish Border, finally ending up in America.



We then moved to the main item of the day: a new **Commission on Antisemitism** launched by the Board, but with Lord John Mann, the UK independent commissioner on antisemitism, and Penny Mordant, ex leader of the House of Commons, chairing the Commission. The findings of this Commission will reach the highest level in Government and will tackle the current situation in England. This followed the Panel Debate at Mosaic last January.

Many proposals were submitted to Lord Mann and Penny Mordant by Board delegates. These included: the need for a national curriculum in schools on Holocaust education; dealing with antisemitism in NHS Hospitals; looking at why antisemitism seems to have become normalised in British society. A proposal was submitted in light of the extreme problems found within Leeds, to consider holding a week there devoted to all the current major problems. A proposal that education on the history of Zionism be provided through educational facilities, preferably by a non-Jewish person (to avoid any influence of bias.) There needs to be a greater explanation of the links between Judaism and Christianity, especially with reference to the Old Testament. There is some concern that many school teachers have so little knowledge of Judaism. We discussed what should be done to enable Jews (and Muslims) to openly display their religion — the wearing of kippot, for example. If this Commission proves successful in its work, we should consider expanding it to other religious organisations. Andrew Gilbert gave a vote of thanks, especially to Penny Mordant, for providing her experience to help the UK Jewish community.

A document on guidelines for submissions has been circulated to all Deputies who wish to give evidence to the Commission. There are four strands of focus:

1. Review all hate crime legislation, policing, and prosecutions
2. Pursue means of addressing the failings of civil society since October 7th 2023
3. Tackle the threat of extremism from Islamists, the far right and the far left, to Jews and wider UK Society
4. Boost education, training, and interfaith outreach to defeat ignorance and antisemitism

All Deputies have had the opportunity to present their own comment to the Commission, so if you want any more information please contact your Deputy at Mosaic Masorti (Brian Balken), Liberal (Paul Hart) or me at Mosaic Reform.

Sami Berghoff (the president of UJS), who had addressed the Mosaic Jewish Community the previous week, stated that 1500 young Jewish leaders had been trained to combat antisemitism at universities. Engagement with Israel and the enablement of Jewish life are essential parts of Jewish students' time at university. 200 students voted in the election for the next president of UJS. (Sami received a standing ovation after her talk.)

Finally, Sir Mark Rowley, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, spoke to us. It should be noted that the police do not have the power to ban protests, nor to allow protests. The police are obliged to work within the Human Rights Act. They have to allow people to express their views within the law. Note, expressing support for terrorist organisations is an offence. ("From the River to the Sea" is not deemed to be an illegal comment.) The National Security Act that came into force a few years ago generally meets all current legal requirements.

Karen was commended by Phil for having dealt so ably with the meeting during the last four hours.

February 23rd Online Meeting

Karen Newman again took the Chair for this session. President Phil Rosenberg first recalled the dreadful events of Israel/Gaza last week, particularly the way the returning hostages were treated. He also commented on the disgraceful hour-long BBC programme about the children in Gaza, which was narrated by the 14-year-old son of a Hamas official.

Although congratulated on the setting up of the Muslim-Jewish 'Optimistic Alliance,' concern was raised that it needed the Muslim Imams to condemn the events in Gaza last week. The point was also made we should have events with Muslim and Jewish speakers at the same time.

A crowd-funding promotion had been made during the past week which had raised approximately £200,000 to help support the Ukrainian Jewish Federation. It was suggested the Board should send a delegation.

A unanimous vote was taken to make The Focus Forum from the Manchester area a member of the Board.

We then had a debate on the subject, 'How do we promote Peace and Security for Israel and the Palestinians?' The vast majority were discussing how to set about a two-state solution: for the Palestinians to have their own viable state alongside a safe Israeli state. I and maybe two others made the point that after October 7th the Israeli population could not see how to work with the Palestinians, and according to an article in The Times, 90% of Palestinians only wanted a one-state solution with no Israel. I also raised the point that Palestinian children are taught in their school textbooks that ultimately there should only be the one state (a Palestinian one.) This must change for any discussions on the future.

On a positive note, Phil announced there would be a Board weekend away in early July in Brighton.



Pictured left, Members of the Muslim-Jewish Optimistic Alliance.

L'dor v'dor: From Millennials to Generation X Getting to know younger Mosaic Members

Where are the young people? That's the question being asked by ageing congregations all over London — and for all we know in every other corner of the Jewish universe. At Mosaic, we are lucky to have a growing cohort of members in their twenties, thirties and forties, many of whom have joined our community since we pitched our tent on Stanmore Hill. So what attracted them to Mosaic? Some of our Millennial, Generation X and Z members tell us in their own words why they joined Mosaic, what they enjoy about the community, and what they would like to see going forward.

Mosaic is the perfect fit for Alex and Daisy

Hil! We're Alex Karet and Daisy Cooper. I'm a copywriter and Alex is a Senior Solutions Architect in a tech company. We met at a pub quiz and found we had a lot in common ... the rest is history.

Alex is Jewish by birth and grew up in Bushey, attending Hertsmere Jewish Primary School (HJPS) in Radlett and Yavneh. I'm from Middlesbrough and am currently converting under the Masorti Beth Din. We live in Ruislip but spend Shabbat and Yom Tov in Bushey.

Tradition is one of the aspects of Jewish life I found myself enjoying a lot with Alex's family, but I knew I'd want somewhere more egalitarian than the United Synagogue. So when I decided I wanted to convert, Masorti Judaism felt like the perfect fit for me.

It was somewhat similar for Alex: he wanted a community that upheld a lot of the traditions he grew up with, but he enjoys sitting beside me in Shul — and Masorti suits both very well!

Then it came down to finding the perfect community. Luckily, Mosaic is a brisk walk away from Alex's family up the hill, so we decided to check it out. Mosaic Masorti ticked all the boxes: a welcoming community with engaging services, and family connections too: Alex's great aunt, Juliet Grainger, belongs to Mosaic Reform. The fact that it's so local is the icing on the cake — it's wonderful to have this community so accessible to us.



Alex and Daisy enjoy a Masorti Fundraiser dinner

Now that we're members, we both love it. We feel very welcomed, and have made amazing friends and connections here. It's great to have friends from each of the three synagogues, and it helps to create a lot of bridges.

"V'ahavta l'rei-acha kamocho" — Love your Neighbour as Yourself.

That's something Mosaic does really well. The rest is Torah, which is where our 'differences' lie, but what's important is that a caring community has been created. We have three fantastic rabbis, who are all friendly and brilliant at what they do. No matter what questions we come up with there'll be an answer, and room for discussion too.



The 'Untangling Our Tradition' lessons on a Tuesday evening are a real highlight: it's great to learn more about how things happen in the Reform and Liberal movements, and it's also very thought-provoking. The community dinners are also always lovely events. We both get so much out of having a strong community, and it's something Alex has always treasured about Judaism. He also likes the milky kiddush with KitKats and Maltesers!

I'm a huge fan of the library. Every time I'm in the building I come away with more books added to my 'to read' list — and I've read some amazing books.

I'm on the social media team, which has been an incredible way to get involved with the community. It's amazing to be able to promote the fantastic happenings here. I enjoy being able to create graphics for a variety of events — from book talks to educational opportunities, political discussions and beyond.

I think I would like to see more educational opportunities in the future. I recently attended David Kosky's lectures on Shabbatai Tzvi, which were fascinating. There's so many interesting aspects of Jewish history to explore, and I'm sure we have many other members who could give similar lectures.

Daisy Cooper

Mosaic Reform suits these Generation X couples with young children

Hi everyone. I'm in my 40s, as is my wife Stephanie. Our daughter Emma has just turned one year old, so we are in the thick of toddlerhood!

I grew up in Pinner and work in social housing for the Barnet Group. I was a member of Pinner United as a child but hadn't attended services since my Bar Mitzvah. When I met my now-wife, we decided that we wanted our children to grow up with faith and religion. Stephanie, who is Belgian but grew up in France, has always been spiritual and had an interest in Judaism, so it made sense for me to reconnect with my faith and for her to begin her conversion journey.

I joined Mosaic because I wanted to connect with a community that shares similar values and interests, and I was looking for opportunities to engage in meaningful activities, both educational and social. I was also really intrigued by the concept of bringing together three communities — Liberal, Reform, and Masorti — and exploring how they could collaborate and share experiences.

My mother Denise, although not a member, has had a long history with the community. She originally worked in the office when Mosaic Reform was Middlesex New Synagogue in Harrow. She worked as an administrator for the religion school for over a decade and has continued to be part of the team that organizes the catering for the weekly Friendship Club. Additionally, she has recently taken over the Treasury duties. When we started looking for a community to join, she recommended Mosaic.

I enjoyed attending the Seder, Shavuot & Hanukkah events arranged by Mosaic. Additionally, we've both been participating in the weekly Untangling our Traditions classes as part of my wife's conversion journey. It's been a meaningful process for us both. Our daughter also enjoys the Shabbat Shira services.

So far, I haven't encountered anything I don't enjoy. The atmosphere is welcoming, and there is a wide variety of engaging activities available to cater to different interests and preferences.

James Meltzer



Sam and Sharon

Igrew up in Golders Green and lived in Israel for a few years when young. I run my own Mortgage and insurance company. I have a partner called Sharon Reilly and we have a daughter called Maya who is four months old now.

Sharon is 36 and is now a full time mum, which she says she really enjoys. Before Maya came along she was a senior nurse.

My mom was Sephardi and more orthodox, while my dad and his family were always Reform. So a mixed background. I'm in my 40s now, and I initially chose to join Mosaic because it was the nearest synagogue to my house.

Sharon and I enjoy the Cultural events, while Maya loves the toddler group. There are really no activities we don't enjoy, but we would like to see more couples and baby activities to unite the two. Sharon started attending a baby toddler group on Mondays which she enjoys a lot, but not many people go. It would be good if maybe more people knew about it. [Thanks, Sam, we'll plan a feature for the next issue. Ed.]

Maybe for younger couples it would be nice to maybe arrange a games night or something, where everyone could get to know each other?

Sam Neuman



James Meltzer with Stephanie and Emma

Elliot and Leah found a welcoming and inclusive community

We are a recently engaged couple, who have been together for a long time. My partner Elliot Alexson is a professional musician. He grew up in a secular household with membership of the United Synagogue in Mill Hill. I come from a non-religious Christian family and am in the early stages of conversion, after being around Elliot's family and the extended community for the last twelve years. I work in Retail Operations for a brand called Tapestry.

Masorti Judaism interested us as a couple, as it keeps the traditions of Orthodox Jewish life but encourages us to question why we keep these traditions. We were interested in Mosaic as it is close to home, which is in Bushey, but the three communities being together was also appealing, as it would give me an opportunity to learn more about the Reform and Liberal branches of the religion. After my first meeting with Rabbi Anthony, I felt that it was a shul that I would enjoy my conversion process with.

The Mosaic community has been incredibly welcoming, and we have felt included every time we have been to shul. Members have taken the time to come and introduce themselves and learn about us as a couple and why we have chosen Mosaic. We really enjoy how the three communities come together for Kiddush every Saturday and are encouraged to get to know each other and celebrate the milestones from each group!

I have been to multiple events so far, including the Tu BiShvat Seder night and the 'Untangling' classes each week, which have provided a more in-depth insight into Jewish life. They're taught by the rabbis from each of the three synagogues, which has been incredibly insightful as you have the opportunity to learn about a different perspective. I've really enjoyed the classes and often go into work the next day and fill my colleagues in on what I've been learning — they've all been very supportive and interested in my conversion journey!

I was asked if there were any activities I'd like to see more of at Mosaic. I believe that there are games afternoons, and if these were ever hosted in the evenings then I'd be really interested in attending!



As a couple we have been attending Saturday services at least every other week, building on my understanding of Shabbat services and introducing Elliot to the community. We have both commented on how welcomed we have felt in these services and how Rabbi Anthony makes it accessible and guides us through the readings. We're looking forward to continuing to integrate more into the community and get more involved with shul life. I am going to begin to have more regular one-to-ones with Rabbi Anthony and further my knowledge, practise Hebrew and progress with my conversion, while Elliot is going to join me at community events, as we both continue to get to know this wonderful community.

Leah Fountain

The Social Media team started a young people's WhatsApp group last year and they hold semi-regular Shabbat dinners, either in the Synagogue or at someone's home. In the summer, there was a 'Torah on Tap' event put on by the rabbis, which was a great way to chat in person.

"It's nice to have a mix of self-organised and rabbinical organised events," says Daisy Cooper, "as it gives

us the confidence to lead, but is also a great way to get to know our rabbis!" There are about thirty young adults in the chat at the moment, but it's growing as word spreads. The group is made up of members from all three synagogues, and it's a fantastic way to create closer bonds, share important news, or find out about events ran outside of shul. If you would like to join the chat, just scan the QR code. You will be very welcome.



Karolina found Mosaic on Google!

I grew up in a lovely seaside town in Poland and moved to the UK in 2014. Now in my early thirties, I work in a non-clinical role in the NHS; however I'm looking for a career change, so I started my Yoga Teacher Training this year. I'm hoping to be qualified by December. I have recently become a member of Mosaic Reform.

I came to the UK on my own, without my family. My half-brother lives in this country but we're not very close. I stayed with him initially in East London, lived there for few years, then moved to Southend-on-Sea, and then back to London when I met my fiancé Simon in 2023. Eventually I'd like to live by the sea again.

Simon and I now live in Stanmore with our two cats — Bagel and Crumpet. Simon is training to be an accountant and works in a small family-run firm in Hendon.

I didn't have any particular religious upbringing in Poland, as opposed to Simon, who was brought up Modern Orthodox in Borehamwood. I chose to join Mosaic Reform as I've always been Reform. When I lived in Southend-on-Sea I was a member of the Reform shul over there. Back in London I initially joined EHRS, but once we moved to Stanmore I wanted to be a part of a more local community.

I found Mosaic on Google! I attended a few Shabbat services and events before joining and I found the community to be so welcoming and friendly, and we're just down the road from the Shul.



Karolina with her fiancé Simon, plus Bagel and Crumpet

I didn't know anyone prior to joining, but it turned out that Simon knows a couple of people from Mosaic Liberal. He isn't a regular shul-goer and doesn't feel the need to be a member of a synagogue at the moment, although he might join me sometimes for the services or other activities.

It was lovely to meet other members at the kiddush. Loads of people always come up to us and introduce themselves — such a lovely community. Very different to some other London communities that are quite closed.

I haven't done many activities at Mosaic just yet because I am working full time at the moment. I went to the Walk Talk Bake event with the Rinkoff family, though, and really enjoyed it. I know there's a huge uptake for the daytime activities, but it would be nice if there were more evening or Sunday events so that I could join them. I'm sure they would attract other demographics, including younger full-time workers like me.

Thinking ahead, I would like to see more opportunities for Hebrew study — either reading or beginner level. Any cooking or DIY events are always nice, as well as activities like arts and crafts or book clubs.

And I'd definitely be up for introducing some Yoga classes in Mosaic when I qualify!

Karolina Ziobrowska

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A FORCE OF NATURE

By Andrea Morgale

If you're a regular reader of Kehila, you will know that Marion Bloom is 101 years old, attended Haberdashers Aske's School and was Mosaic Reform's Kallat Bereshit in 2024. If you participate in Israeli dancing or the Friendship Club, you may have seen her on the dance floor. I was curious about what drives this centenarian, so she kindly invited me for coffee.

My first thought, when she opened the door, was that this couldn't be Marion. Apart from a certain stiffness when walking — she uses sticks for balance since undergoing back surgery a few years ago — she is as alert and vigorous as most people half her age.

That impression was explained to some extent as she told me about her versatile life, in which a keen sense of independence and a spirit of adventure were the foundations of her underlying philosophy from an early age: "I never learned to say no."

Marion was born in 1923 in Ealing, where she lived above her parents' dress shop. They later expanded to a boutique in Mayfair, where they dressed debutantes and a selection of wealthy young women. In 1939, she and her Haberdashers schoolmates were evacuated, first to a Dorset village and later into town, but "I wasn't happy; it was boring, so I so came home." Although her parents urged her to stay at school, at the age of 17 she took herself off to do a bilingual secretarial course at the Lycée Français in Kensington. "Perhaps I should have gone to university?" she mused, but it got her started on a versatile career.

As a fluent French speaker, during World War II she got a job in the advertising department of France, a daily newspaper for French expats living in London. And when her French boss,



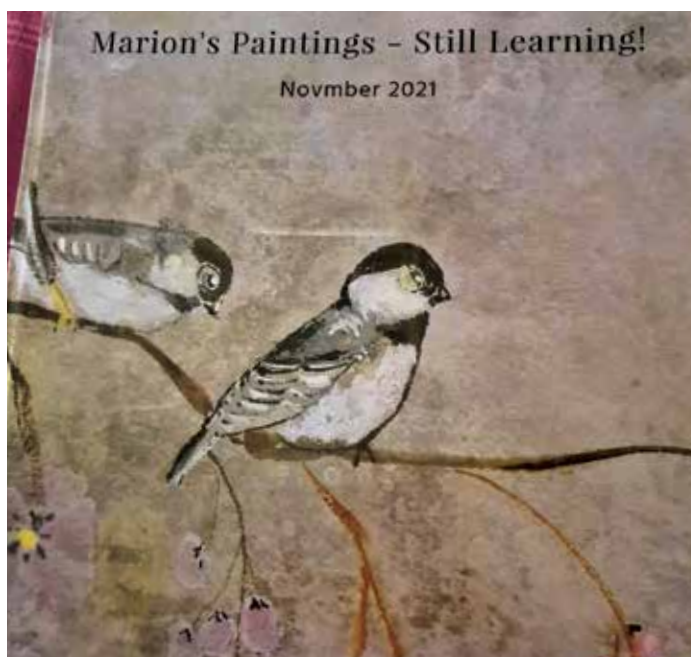
André Bernheim, joined up and said: "You'll have to take over," she did, managing the department and translating ads into French. All while the doodlebugs were flying overhead.

After the war, Bernheim reopened his theatrical agency on the Avenue George V in Paris, while she became a director of his British company, based in Regent Street. Another challenge from her boss: "Go and see Michael Balcon at Ealing Studios, because our client (the famous French composer Georges Auric) is doing the music for a film, and you need to arrange the contract." So she did. "I was privileged to meet many of the elite in the French theatre and cinema, also in literature and art."

She got married in 1947, and when her husband Emil started an insurance business just off Regent Street, she used to pop across the road and bring back paperwork, allowing him to get on with dealing with clients. As the balance of work changed, she worked mainly in the insurance office, popping across to look after the agency.

She continued carrying a full workload while also bringing up her two sons. "I didn't neglect my kids; they took priority." A maternity nurse taught the au pair how to prepare bottle feeds, so Marion would do the morning feed, go off to the office and be back for the 5pm feed.

Her older son Tony, born in 1951, a dentist who lives in Canada with his family, takes after his mother — "a complete extrovert," says Marion. Andy, a talented amateur guitarist who lives in London and will be 70 this year, is quieter and more retiring — "like Emil." Marion now has six grandchildren, two in the UK and four in Canada, and eleven great grandchildren; until mobility problems put a stop to her travels, she loved visiting her Canadian family.



Emil suffered from Parkinsons for several years, so they moved from their house in Wembley to a flat in Harrow on the Hill, where Marion was his prime carer until Emil died in 2018 at the age of 99.

A new challenge at 70



Marion and Emil on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in 2007

Having previously been members of Wembley Synagogue, after the move Marion and Emil joined Middlesex New in Harrow, where the Rabbi was Simon Franes: “Jeanette Leibling was the first person I spoke to!” Having come from a typical United Synagogue, “I was amazed at how learned the women were in this Reform shul.”

Everyone was friendly

and welcoming. She gradually got used to opening the ark and eventually to being called up for an Aliyah as a Cohen: “I mugged it up to get the words right!” Marion happily migrated to Mosaic and now attends services on Zoom when she can’t get to shul. As Kallat Bereshit last year, she leyned the first five verses, after a great deal of practice and support with her reading from Linda Holman and Jeanette.

The world’s least retiring woman, she has joined in many shul activities since Emil died; “everybody was very kind, drawing me into the community.” She particularly enjoys the Culture Hub events, and gets to Stanmore when she can organise transport. She sometimes attends the Friendship Club, and finds it difficult to sit still when the musical entertainment comes on: “I just have to get up and dance!” She has also joined in Israeli dancing; provided she has a partner or someone holding her hand — “to make sure I don’t fall over,” — she can dance with the best of them.

Speaking of dancing, Marion was part of a multi-age, multicultural Indian Dance group, including four ‘oldies,’ and in 2017 they staged a special celebration dance for the Queen and Prince Philip, when the royal couple visited Harrow on their Sapphire Jubilee tour.

So how does she spend her time now? Sitting in a chair and looking back at the past? Hardly! She studied Chinese painting for ten years at Harrow Arts Centre and her walls are covered with work by herself and other artists she admires. She attends regular art classes, and a friend recently produced a book of her paintings.

She started Tai Chi with U3A and now does it weekly on Zoom; her teacher is an actor who lives in Vermont. Zoom has

been a godsend, as her back makes it hard to get about and she no longer drives. She joined Spanish and French sessions on Zoom during lockdown and is learning Ivrit: ‘One of my carers, a Filipino, spent five years in Israel and spoke Ivrit, so I decided to learn too.’ She also joined Rest Less, a digital community for the over 50s, and participates in a variety of their activities.



One of Marion's flower paintings

Marion and Emil got married in the same year as Queen Elizabeth and in 1997, along with other couples married in 1947, they were invited to a garden party held by the Queen and Prince Philip to celebrate their 50th anniversary. There was a lot of press interest, and she was interviewed for the Guardian — so she is no stranger to the media.



She is still of press interest: this January, *Times Money* ran a feature — ‘Five things I have learnt from my 30-year retirement’ — in which Marion talked about financial security and living well after retiring at 70.

Drawing and painting, Tai Chi, languages, Indian dancing.... the woman is a force of nature! What makes her so vigorous? “Good genes, I suppose.”

It was an honour to spend a couple of hours in her company.

My secret pleasure

By Tony Allan



me that congregants used to walk to different synagogues depending on who was singing, with some having standing room only.

Completely by accident, I had the privilege of being taught my Bar Mitzvah by Reverend Solomon Forscher, reader and chazzan of the Great Synagogue, Aldgate. Born in Czechoslovakia in 1911, even at this stage of his life his voice was still resounding. The Great Synagogue had been bombed in 1941, leaving just part of the front standing, and the Synagogue I remember



Reverend Solomon Forscher

About a year ago I made the decision to sell my large LP record collection, dating back to the early sixties. It was painful, but I had made the choice and so spent hours packing them into boxes ready for the carrier to take to the Liverpool auction house. I had accumulated over 800 albums; my 300 singles would wait for another day.

My musical taste is not what you might call eclectic: it contained 6 Bad Company albums, 37 Beatles (many of which were bought for investment), 16 Dylan, 9 Captain Beefheart (including a rare clear vinyl), 10 The Cure, 14 David Bowie, 12 Eric Clapton, 16 Hawkwind (including an amazing 5-page pull out cover) and 19 Jimi Hendrix (including the rare puppet cover). This gives you some idea of my musical preferences, a taste that has never changed; my 'go to' radio station is Planet Rock.

While I was packing, I started to put aside those I couldn't bear to sell, which amounted to about 60 records, mainly those that held memories. However, ten LPs I kept revealed my secret passion: Chazanut recordings.

It started in the 1980s, when I went to a concert at the Logan Hall, Marylebone. It brought back memories of the wonderful chazanim I had heard, first at Hampstead Synagogue in Dennington Park Road when I was 6 to 9 years old, then moving to the Great Synagogue at Dukes Place, Aldgate, aged 10 to 14. These were men who had learnt their craft in the age of the great cantors of Europe — names like Marcus Hast from Breslau, Abraham Katz from Odessa, Simcha Kusevitsky from Poland and many more. I remember my father telling

attending was a temporary building at the rear, erected to continue serving the community and the Chief Rabbi, whose shul it was. (Unbeknown to my mother, her great-grandparents were married at the Great in 1829.)

This was my early background and the sounds of a chazzan brought these lovely memories back. So, having re-found my love of this music and passed on my passion to my wife Jean, we went each year to special concerts organised by Rabbi Reuben from Golders Green. They had four or five cantors from all over the world singing Shabbat and festival songs, mixed with a few nonreligious tunes. It was then that I started looking out for other ways of hearing cantorial music, and began my search for the old cantors on record. Remember, this was before the days of YouTube.

What makes these cantors so good is the feeling they put into every word. I unexpectedly came across a reader last Yom Kippur who displayed this vocal dexterity. As Masorti was using a temple in Stanmore for services, which was a bit too far for us to walk, I went to Kol Nefesh and to my joy, the Yizkor, Musaf and Mincha services were sung by Gilead Limor, a Shaliach Tzibbur who I'd not come across before. I wouldn't put him in the same league, but he had the same passion for the words and music, leading to a lovely service.

After Musaf I went for a break into an adjoining room, only to be joined by Gilead, who was absolutely exhausted after his beautiful rendition. How he did this and on a fast day I do not know; my thoughts of being hungry left me after seeing him.

The recordings I had collected included Moshe Koussevitsky, Moishe Oysher (my father's favourite), David Roitman and, I suppose, the best and most well-known cantor, Yossele Rosenblatt, who sang in the original Jazz Singer film (1927). When he died in 1933, he left several recordings of his versions of *Kol Nidre*, *Hineni*, *Avinu Malkenu*, an amazing rendition of *Tal* and many more.

I hope you'll forgive me, but Wikipedia describes Rosenblatt's voice better than I can:

'He was known for his extraordinary technique, for the sweetness of his timbre, and for his unique ability to transition from normal voice to falsetto with hardly any noticeable break at all. His technique in cantillation was unique. Notes were hit remarkably accurately at high speeds. Fiorituras, similarly, were struck near perfectly, both rhythmically and on pitch. His fame spread so far that Toscanini appealed to him to sing the leading role in Fromental Halévy's La Juive, but Rosenblatt replied that he would only use his vocal gift for the glory of God, in service to his religion. Notably, he turned down a

'golden hello' from the Chicago opera house because it violated his religious principles. It is told that upon hearing Rosenblatt sing "Eli Eli", Enrico Caruso was so moved that he ascended the stage and kissed him.'

Thanks to YouTube, we can all now hear this great tenor whenever we want.

P.S. While writing this I've been listening to Rosenblatt singing *Rachem Na*; I dare anyone not to be moved when listening to it.



Yossele Rosenblatt

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Michele's Story

By Jewish Blind & Disabled

Michele's health suddenly deteriorated, and she couldn't walk so had to use a wheelchair for the first time in her life. As well as facing a life-changing diagnosis, Michele, who is in her 60s and lives in northeast London, also had to tackle the very real difficulties of using a wheelchair in a home not designed to accommodate one.

Not only could she no longer get into her kitchen, but she was also finding it tricky to manoeuvre her wheelchair in the bathroom, with her chair knocking tiles off the wall each time she went in.



Jewish Blind & Disabled client Michele

Jewish Blind & Disabled's occupational therapist visited and identified Michele's needs and supported her to secure funding from her local authority to install a fully accessible wet room – and to adapt her kitchen so she could get in it again.

Michele said: "I was really struggling in my own home. I'm delighted JBD's 'at-home' service meant I don't have to leave my lovely flat. I could have all my doors widened and my kitchen and bathroom customised to accommodate my wheelchair."

The story of Pesach is one of liberation and the journey to freedom. In 2025, as many of us prepare our homes to celebrate this festival, there are people in our community struggling to live independently in their own homes due to a lack of support and access to vital aids and home adaptations.

Whilst government policies have increasingly focused on supporting people to live independently in their homes for as long as possible, waiting lists to access support, aids and home adaptations can be extremely challenging.

If we, as a society, are going to encourage people to remain living independently in their own homes, then we need to provide them with the support they need to ensure that they are safe and have a good quality of life.

Jewish Blind & Disabled's Independent Living Advisory Service is another example of where we as a community are stepping in to plug the gaps for underfunded and under-resourced government services.

Thanks to funding from our principal supporter, Wohl Legacy, together with generous individuals from across the community, the charity has been able to offer, grow and develop this service to ensure everyone who is eligible for the service can access it and receive timely support.

Accessing the service couldn't be easier, with a simple online or printed form to complete. Once the form is complete, a visit from an occupational therapist is arranged. After the visit, the occupational therapist will send a full report of recommendations for any aids or home adaptations they think will help the individual. Some of the items might be provided by the local authority, and if larger adaptations are needed, the service can help clients apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

The service is open to Jewish adults living with a physical disability or vision impairment within the M25.

If you or anyone you know would benefit from Jewish Blind & Disabled's Independent Living Advisory Service, please contact toni@jbd.org or call 020 8371 6611 ext. 620. For more information about Jewish Blind & Disabled, visit www.jbd.org

A UNIQUE FRIENDSHIP

By Cynthia Sharpe



Martin and Cynthia with Major

in Manaus, Brazil, taking in Rio de Janeiro, Iguassu Falls and most importantly the Amazon jungle, where we were hoping to view wildlife.

The Amazon has the world's largest rain forest and river system that contains millions of indescribable species, but since the year 2000 there has been a severe decline in rainfall, so much so that if the current rate of deforestation continues, by the year 2030 it is estimated that much of the Amazon's ecological community will be without trees. The Amazon is one of the last refuges for jaguars, pink river dolphins and harpy eagles, a tropical species of eagle which includes the Papuan eagle that is endemic to New Guinea and where, in a tropical rain forest its habitat lies undisturbed and breeding takes place every second year.

It was early morning when our flight touched down in Manaus, and after securing our luggage we took a taxi to our chosen hotel. The following morning we went by riverboat to the jungle village where we were booked to stay for the next couple of weeks.

Upon our arrival my husband Martin let it be known that we were keen to see wildlife, to which the tour manager smiled and replied as he left: "I guarantee you'll see wildlife alright!"

A short time later he reappeared carrying a blanket, wherein there nestled a young jaguar that had fallen from a tree and damaged its back legs so badly that veterinary attention to several broken bones and various other injuries had been urgently required. Having survived the surgery, the jaguar was now convalescing in the confines of this rather high grade hotel!

According to the tour manager the jaguar's name was Major, and now that we were all acquainted we continued our association on first name terms.

Jaguars are the largest of South America's big cats. A fully grown adult can weigh as much as 158 kilos (approximately 20 stones) — although there is variation in size across the species

It was in the late 1980s when my husband and I had a sudden yearning for some warm sunshine. So without further ado we booked ourselves a

two week sojourn

range — and with a body length of 1.85 metres (just over 6 feet) it is the largest cat species in the Americas and the third largest cat in the world. They are beautifully marked, with fur the colour of tan/orange that is dotted here and there with black rosettes, so named because of their rose-like appearance.

Unlike other members of the cat family, jaguars are excellent swimmers and are at home both in and under water in rivers and streams where their water based prey includes fish and small alligators. Jaguar cubs will stay with their mother for approximately two years and in order to survive the tropical heat, the jaguar uses its swimming skills as a cooling system.

As far as appetites are concerned Major wasn't a fussy eater and his menu included birds, fish and the occasional armadillo. With a bite more powerful than that of any other big cat, Major used his strong teeth as a vital tool when hunting his prey.

It is well known that jaguars are potential killers, but Major was the exception to the rule, and we spent much time playing with him, stroking and cuddling him, all of which he seemed to enjoy — and I hasten to add, so did we.

I suspect that not very many people have been as fortunate as we to strike up a friendship with a jaguar and I consider myself extremely lucky to have experienced such a relationship with a wild but gentle animal who is so easy to remember and impossible to forget.



Major eating out of our hands

One year later our son Gary visited the area and was introduced to Major, who by that time was fully grown and very powerful. Though habituated to people, Major remained a wild animal with limited patience for human interaction. and although he was certainly approachable he didn't react in quite the same way as previously.

On one occasion whilst Gary was stroking Major's paw he made it clear that he'd had enough petting by taking Gary's hand in his mouth and although he did this very gently and without any aggression whatsoever, the immense strength of his jaw was revealed by the small puncture marks that were left on Gary's hand.

As a happy postscript, we learned some years later that after a series of operations Major had regained the use of his damaged legs, although he would never have been capable of returning to the wild and as far as is known he lived out his life not as a wild animal but as one with minimal human contact.



Live better for longer at home

Caring for someone can be overwhelming. Suddenly you're faced with all sorts of questions: How do I prevent falls? What if my mum starts having eating difficulties? Where can I find funding for carers? What should I do when my mum living with Dementia keeps asking me the same question?

At Reach by Nightingale Hammerson, we take the guesswork out of caregiving. Our goal is to reduce anxiety and empower individuals, families, and caregivers with the confidence to provide effective care at home.

For over 180 years, Nightingale Hammerson has been at the heart of exceptional residential care in England. Across our two care homes, we proudly offer a wide range of services for older Jewish people, including residential care, dementia care, nursing, rehabilitation, respite, and palliative care.

But times are changing. More people are choosing to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. While staying at home offers comfort and familiarity, it can also bring new challenges. Many families step into caregiving roles without the training or experience to navigate the complexities of ageing leading to stress, uncertainty, and tough decisions.

To support this growing need, we created **Reach by Nightingale Hammerson**, a **free** digital platform designed to provide individuals and caregivers with expert-backed advice for ageing well at home. In a world overflowing with information, Reach acts as a trusted one-stop shop, delivering clear and practical guidance exactly when you need it.

Our practical advice covers a range of topics, including:

- **Mobility:** Tips to support daily movement such as climbing the stairs or getting into a chair
- **Sleep:** Guidance on nighttime routines, addressing sleep problems, and creating a restful environment, along with other helpful resources
- **Nutrition:** Advice on staying hydrated, using adaptive tools, and much more to support healthy eating habits
- **Engagement:** Creative activities specifically designed for individuals living with dementia, plus additional ideas to stay connected
- **Funding:** Discover options for funding care

We continually update our resource library because care needs are always evolving. Explore our latest advice at <https://nightingalehammerson.org/reach/practical-advice/>.

JOHN ASHMELE TOASTMASTER



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Celebrating a Year of Mosaic's Creative Writing Class

In March 2024, Mosaic Masorti member Sue Krisman launched a new Creative Writing Class that she had created and developed for Mosaic. The fortnightly course has gone from strength to strength, becoming a popular feature of the monthly Events Calendar. Now Kehila is celebrating the first anniversary of the Class with a short story competition open to the whole community.

Portsmouth-born Sue Krisman is a published novelist, playwright, book reviewer and lecturer. She was formerly Creative Writing Fellow at Reading University and has lectured at Limmud and Spiro's Ark. Herself the winner of the 2018 Short Story Competition in ESRA Magazine, we are excited to announce that she has kindly agreed to head our judging panel.

"Over the past year of the Creative Writing Course I have lighted upon, and hope I have encouraged, some amazing hidden talent that it has been a joy to discover," says Sue, "but the whole community will be full of those who love writing stories, and this is their opportunity. There will be no favouritism, as all entries will be anonymous. The judges will be the magazine editors and me, and no amount of bribery will help you!"

"I am so looking forward to reading your work and I know it is going to be a hard task choosing the best."

All stories must be original, and should be a maximum of 750 words. There are no age limits, and we welcome entries from the youngest HaMakom pupils up to members of the Friendship Club. You do not have to be a member of the Creative Writing Course. The prize will be the opportunity to call yourself a published author,

as we will publish the winning adult and children's stories in future issues of Kehila.

So does Sue have any tips to offer?

"All you have to do is write from the heart. As it is for our Mosaic magazine, I think the subject would best be about Jewish life, or have a Jewish theme, or even the slightest whiff of Judaism. I would suggest that you focus on a small number of people in your story, and that it keeps the reader interested from the first moment to the last; to put it another way, it should have a good beginning and a very final end. But the most important thing to keep in mind is that this is your own invention — write it your way."

The closing date is 5th July, giving you plenty of time to perfect your story, and we'll give you a last-minute reminder in the next issue. Please email your entry as a Word document to newsdesk@choosemosaic.org where your identity will be carefully hidden before your story makes its way to the judging desk.

The results will be announced in the Rosh Hashanah issue.

Good luck to you all.



703

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The Revival of a Jewish Community... with a little help from their Christian Friends

By Rabbi Kathleen Magtige-Middleton

About thirty years ago, I was asked by a German fellow student at the University of Amsterdam if I was interested in taking over a Kerk and Israel (Church and Israel) group in Culemborg, a municipality on the outskirts of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Kerk and Israel is perhaps most comparable with the CCJ, the Council of Christians and Jews, here in the UK.

The theology student, who had been studying Biblical Hebrew with me, was planning to return to his homeland and was looking for someone with adequate knowledge of Hebrew to continue teaching the group scriptural reasoning and a little bit of basic Hebrew. He assured me that it would be an enjoyable experience, as the members of the group — all devout Christians — were keen to learn the Bible in its original language and the Jewish interpretation of it.

A year later, when I prepared to leave for London to study for the Rabbinat at Leo Baeck College, I in turn looked for a new teacher to keep the group going. I asked my mother, who already had experience in Jewish-Christian dialogue and study groups. She happily took over and has been teaching the group ever since.

This connection with Culemborg proved fortuitous when my parents became involved in the creation of a new local Progressive Jewish community. When my mother mentioned en passant that she was looking for a suitable location to hold their services, one of the members of the study group suggested the new community could hire their church, as not only was it a very neutral building (without any overtly Christian symbols or depictions,) but the building itself happened to be Culemborg's former synagogue!

The building still had all the hallmarks of a traditional 18th Century Dutch synagogue, with a small rickety staircase leading up to the wooden 'women's balcony' (currently used as a storeroom and an organ loft.) It still had its original wooden floor, high vaulted, unadorned windows and a large candelabra hanging from the ceiling. Best of all, in the Eastern wall there was

a recess where the *Aron Hakodesh* would have been, in front of which the church had built a wooden pulpit.



An emotional homecoming

The first Shabbat service in the old synagogue building was an unexpectedly emotional moment for the new community, as they discovered that the founders of the synagogue, whose names were etched in the 1867 foundation stones at the entrance, were the ancestors of some of their members! To be granted the use of the beautiful old synagogue building thus became an unexpected homecoming.

By March 2024 the community managed to purchase their own *Sefer Torah*, which they welcomed with a joyful *Channukat Ha-Bayit* service, to which the church elders were also invited.

In the absence of an *Aron Hakodesh*, the community placed the Scroll on a small table in the recess, behind a removable curtain. The church elders asked if they could help them figure out

a more permanent and secure way to keep their Scrolls, but because there wasn't much space in the recess behind the pulpit, there was no possibility of installing a movable cupboard that was sturdy enough yet easily dismantled for when the synagogue was transformed back into a church. So the church offered to build the Jewish community a permanent Ark! One of their members created a beautiful little Ark to fit three Scrolls, matching the wooden interior of the building, and adorned it on each door with a small *Magen David*. And so, in the church without overtly Christian signs, there is an *Aaron Hakodesh* with a *Magen David* on each door!

My family and I just happened to be visiting my parents at the joyous inauguration of the new Ark. The service was of course attended by representatives of the church, which included one of my original pupils from the study group I taught thirty years ago!

Soon the community will celebrate its first *Bat Mitzvah*, poignantly that of a descendant of one of those founders of the synagogue whose names are engraved on the foundation stone. Support by the church is ongoing: they are now proposing to fix a plaque with the words '*da lifnei mi attah omed*' (know before whom you stand) above the recess and the Ark in time for the *Bat Mitzvah*.



Rabbi Kathleen (right) and her parents (left and 2nd right) at the inauguration of the new Ark

The story of the Jewish Community in Culemborg is a remarkable tale of revival, but also of inspiring Interfaith collaboration.

Cooperation between the church and the synagogue continues. When, after the October 7th attacks, antisemitism grew in the Netherlands, the church contacted the community to ask if there was anything they could do to make them feel safer and immediately agreed to purchase and fix a security camera at the door. Even so, they found it quite shocking to see two police officers wandering into the shul to check if everything was okay at the beginning of the service. Incredulously, they asked if this had ever happened before, only to be told it was in fact quite a regular and welcome occurrence, as it made everyone feel safer.

Thirty years ago, many of my Jewish friends here were sceptical about my involvement with the CCJ. They thought I was wasting my time and wondered what I could ever get out of it. To them I was simply fulfilling a Christian indulgence; for surely, they added, there is no reciprocity. Perhaps I couldn't quite formulate then the true value of interfaith dialogue; I just felt it was the right thing to do. Now I would have been able to say that it is not about trying to convert one another, nor about showing the other who is right. Interfaith work, meeting and learning together

and mutual listening, affords greater insight and acceptance of one another's world view and motives, as well as one's own.

At times of growing antisemitism, deepening divisions in society and mutual suspicion between various groups and faiths, we tend to turn inwards.

The story of Culemborg's Jewish community is an example of the importance of turning outwards: of building strong and trusting interfaith connections, engaging with our neighbours in a deep and meaningful way. As faith groups, surrounded by an increasingly more vocal secular society, dialogue, sharing and learning together deepens our shared faith in God, our shared humanity, and above all, a shared goal in making this world a better place.



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An unlikely City of Refuge: When the Final Solution washed up on the shores of the East China Sea

By Michael Leigh



Jewish Refugee Museum, Shanghai

It is a well-known fact that history repeats itself.

I was reminded of this when Susan and I visited Shanghai recently. We were delighted to have the opportunity of an escorted tour of Jewish Shanghai, which took in the newly renovated Jewish Refugee Museum, housed in the complex incorporating the historic Moshe Synagogue.

We found references to several extended families of the Mosaic community, but I was drawn to a minor feature buried amongst the avalanche of details spanning the brief flowering of Asian Jewry.

You may be familiar with the fact that in the run-up to World War II — when virtually every country closed their doors — thousands of European Jews were saved by following a circuitous route to Shanghai, the only city which had no barriers to immigration.

The map below shows how the Polish Jews from the Mir Yeshiva were forced to flee halfway around the world, crossing Siberia to reach safety. There were other routes favoured by German refugees via the Balkans, with some even going via South Africa.

On arrival in Shanghai, the Jewish refugees were forced to cluster in a small district (no more than three quarters of a square mile) designated an 'Area for Stateless Refugees.' Like any Ghetto, it was full of unsanitary, crowded housing, but at least they were allowed to live and practise their Judaism.

The Japanese, who by 1943 had overrun China, had no



Circuitous route from Poland to Shanghai

specific animus towards the Jews, classifying them as 'Stateless Aliens'. However, into this tale enters the figure of Josef Meisinger, who was despatched

by Himmler to be the Gestapo liaison with the Japanese. Known by the soubriquet 'The Butcher of Warsaw,' he lobbied hard with the Japanese authorities to expel the Jewish population — or at least the German-born ones — to the death camps.

The Japanese military police (Kempeitai) were persuaded to consider anyone deemed anti-Nazi to be anti-Japanese and they agreed to intern the Jews in the Ghetto. For this effort, Himmler rewarded Meisinger by promoting him to Colonel of Police in 1943.

Meisinger was not content with merely corralling the Jews; he wanted the Japanese to follow the Final Solution. The Japanese were regarded by the Nazis as 'honorary Aryans,' but did not share the visceral antisemitism of Meisinger.

In a throwback to the famous Disputation of Barcelona between Nachmanides and Dominican Friar Pablo Christiani at the time of the Spanish Inquisition in 1263, Military Governor Ghoya summoned a deputation of learned Jews.

Amongst their number was the renowned Amshinover Rabbi Shimon Shalom Kalish. The Governor quizzed him: "Why do the Germans hate you so much?"

In a remarkable act of wisdom, the aged Rabbi, aware that the fate of the whole community hinged on the inscrutable Japanese soldier, replied: "They hate us because we are short and dark-haired."

This struck a chord with Governor Ghoya, who smiled at the self-recognition. The order to expel the Jews was never given.

The Jews continued to scramble an existence in the compact Hongkou district of Shanghai until the Ghetto was liberated on September 3rd 1945. In total, more than 20,000 Jews survived in this safe haven in China.

Will anyone in the years to come describe this as the 'Manipulation of Shanghai?'



A Magnificent Achievement: The National Library Of Israel

By David Wyman

While Jacqueline and I were in Jerusalem last August we visited the new National Library of Israel. A magnificent building from both inside and outside, it was only opened to the public in October 2023.

The collection had been stored in a number of sites before arriving at its present location: opposite the Knesset and a very short walking distance from the Israel Museum.

According to the website, the collection started life in 1892 as the B'nai B'rith library, located on B'nai B'rith Street, between the Mea Shearim neighbourhood and the Russian Compound, and was the first public library in Palestine to serve the Jewish community. Ten years later, the Bet Midrash Abrabanel library, as it was then known, moved to Ethiopia Street. In 1920, when plans were drawn up for the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, the collection became the basis for its library. In 1948, when access to the university campus was blocked, most of the books were moved to the university's temporary quarters in the Terra Sancta building in Rehavia. Then, the university collection included over one million books and for lack of space, some of them were placed in storerooms around the city. In 1960, they were moved to the new Jewish National and University Library building in Givat Ram.

The library's mission is to secure copies of all material published in Israel, in any language; all publications on the subject of Israel, the Land of Israel, Judaism and the Jewish people, published in any language, in any country in the world; and all material published in Hebrew or any of the languages spoken in the Jewish Diaspora (Yiddish and Ladino, for example.)

To visit the Library we would recommend joining one of the English tours, and it is wise to book well in advance. We actually wandered around the building on our own. There are eleven floors, of which three are open to the public. At each level there are interesting works of art. There is also a permanent exhibition which includes a thousand-year-old Torah manuscript known as the Damascus Crown, an edition of the Mishnah with Maimonides' own handwritten corrections, and an illustrated Passover Haggadah circa the 1270s, discovered by the city archivist in Worms, Germany during Kristallnacht. It was hidden in a cathedral for the duration of the war. There are also temporary exhibitions throughout the year.



Circular reading room

We tagged onto an Israeli group, whom we followed down to the basement to see the robots! Through windows one can observe them working. The robots have been programmed how to get a specific book from millions of books arranged in carefully and precisely organized boxes. We were so captivated by them that the group had disappeared and we were unsure of the exit, which was not very obvious. Happily, we found a lift which took us into the majestic circular reading room. This is one area where one is not allowed unless you have obtained a reader's card! We started browsing many of the English editions on display.

At the end of our visit, we enjoyed lunch in the restaurant on the terrace. There is also a café. The library website is very informative, and we suggest you navigate it before your visit.

According to the website, the architects Herzog and de Meuron and Mann Shinar 'strove to construct a building representing the essence



Exterior of the NLI ©Stav Tsur



The Millisle Children

Between 1938 and 1948, many young Jewish refugees fleeing the horrors of the Holocaust found a safe haven in an old farm on the outskirts of Millisle, County Down

*From our Northern Ireland correspondent Neil Goodman,
by kind permission of Scott Edgar, wartimeni.com*



The Safe Haven Sculpture in the grounds of Millisle Primary School takes the shape of a Star of David, commemorating the Jewish refugees who came to the village.

Before, during, and after the Second World War, a dilapidated old farmstead near a coastal village in Northern Ireland took on a vital role. Sometimes referred to as Gorman's Farm or Ballyrolly House, those who lived and worked there between 1939 and 1948 knew it simply as 'The Farm.' It was a working agricultural enterprise, but more than that, it was a place of refuge and a safe haven for hundreds of young Jews from occupied Europe.

In the late 1930s, many Jewish children and young people fled the horrors of Nazi persecution on the Kindertransport. A number made their way to the United Kingdom, risking their personal safety and often leaving family and friends behind. Of those who made it to the UK, many would find their way to the village of Millisle, Co. Down. There, alongside a handful of adults and members of Zionist youth groups, they found a home away from home and a place of tranquillity and safety.

In May 1939, President Barney Hurwitz, Leo Scop and Maurice Solomon of the Belfast Jewish Community met with Lawrence Gorman, the owner of a run-down farmstead on the outskirts of Millisle. Over a drink in Mooney's Bar, Cornmarket, Belfast, Hurwitz and Gorman put pen to paper, signed a lease, and the story of 'The Farm' began.

The first of the Jewish refugees arrived in Millisle during the summer of 1939. They found an almost barren 70-acre plot of land. The stone farmhouse, known as Ballyrolly House, had seen better days, and the surrounding barns and outbuildings were derelict. Despite arriving in the height of summer, the young people quickly grew accustomed to Northern Ireland's weather, as torrential rain and heavy winds battered their leaking tents. They were cold; they were wet; but they were safe.

Building a Community

With help from the Jewish community in nearby Belfast and local neighbours in Millisle, 'The Farm' became a much more habitable abode. By the second night in Northern Ireland, the refugees took shelter in a newly whitewashed cowshed. A run-

down old stable had become a makeshift kitchen, but outdoor privies made do until the digging of latrines.

Much more digging would soon be under way. Older children cleared fields while the younger ones gathered stones and uprooted weeds. Adults tilled the earth, planting grains and vegetables. In time, the farm would run like a Kibbutz or co-operative. Even the youngest children worked on the farm and received a shilling per week. This would later rise to half a crown [two shillings and sixpence or 12.5 pence in today's decimal currency.]

Before long, they built long wooden huts as dormitories and bedrooms. A cleaned out cistern and the installation of a rotary hand pump enabled showers and flushable toilets. Once settled, the fledgling Jewish community built a recreation room with billiards and table tennis. There were offices for administration and a synagogue for worship.

One of the final buildings was a large twin-gabled structure. This included a cattle byre, workshops, and a place to store what few valuables the refugees owned. Adolf Mundheim, a civil engineer from Hanover, Germany oversaw the completion of this building project.

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Life in Millisle

By 1948, around 300 people of all ages had passed through 'The Farm.' At any given time, up to 80 residents – adults and children – made their home in what became a thriving community. Although wartime restrictions sometimes thwarted travel plans, the young refugees integrated with the local community in Millisle.

When not working on the farm, the Jewish children attended the nearby Public Elementary School. After the age of 14, they would move on to secondary schools across Co. Down such as Bangor Grammar School, Bangor High School and Regent House Grammar School. Others attended night school in the nearby coastal town of Donaghadee, or joined the Scouts, the Red Cross and the local Air Training Corps.

Working the Land

The manager of the farm was Eugen Patriasz, a Hungarian with a degree in agriculture from the University of Vienna, although before moving to Millisle he had little practical experience of farming matters. The farm administrators were Franz and Edith Kohner, who were from the Sudetenland and came to Northern Ireland with their two young children. They looked after the day-to-day running of the farm, buying supplies, managing rations, and enforcing the blackout. This inexperienced team received help from friendly locals who taught them some farming skills.

By October 1940, the farm had two Clydesdale horses, seven cows, and around 2,000 chickens. There were also 16 acres of vegetables and cereals. The fields produced oats, barley, wheat, carrots, sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, potatoes, onions, turnips, and maize. In 1941, the farmers acquired a Ferguson tractor with the aid of government grants and a donation from the Dublin Jewish Community.

With the farm at full production, they operated a dairy where some of the children churned cream and butter. Others worked in the kosher kitchen, sewing room, laundry, or repair workshop. Among the roles filled on the farm were a carpenter and a shoemaker.

Leisure time on 'The Farm'

At first, some in Millisle looked at their new neighbours with an air of suspicion. Soon, however, the fledgling Jewish community ingratiated themselves with the locals and firm friendships were made that endured long after the war ended. The farm received visits from members of Jewish communities in Belfast and Dublin, and some visitors volunteered on the farm during the summer months.

Children on the farm would play football with locals or go swimming at Millisle Beach. Occasionally, they would hire a rowing boat and spend the evenings fishing for herrings. On 'The Farm,' they enjoyed ping pong, billiards, and card games.

Occasional concerts and dances were held. A transistor radio tuned to the BBC World Service and a wall map allowed them to track the latest news from the Second World War. Many of the older children feared the possibility of a Nazi invasion of Ireland in 1940. For lighter listening, there was a gramophone that played classical, swing, and jazz records. Some of the older residents would enjoy a game of German or Austrian Monopoly.

The children at Ballyrolly House rarely heard from their families. With the outbreak of the Second World War, postal services from Europe ground to a halt. An occasional letter smuggled through the USA or Switzerland would reach Northern Ireland. For the most part, updates came from Red Cross messages limited to 14 words. Many of the children heard nothing from their loved ones for many years, if ever again. It would be 1945 before the older children saw the horrors of the Holocaust. Newsreel pictures of the liberation of the Nazi camps flashed across the screen of the Regal Cinema in the nearby town of Donaghadee.

From time to time, the children enjoyed trips to Belfast for shopping or recreation. Some were lucky enough to visit families in Dublin, Ireland. In general, travel during the Second World War was not easy. A lot of administration was needed, and fuel was in short supply and heavily rationed. Short journeys by foot, bicycle or in a horse-drawn cart were the norm.

Life after the War

The Jewish Resettlement Farm in Millisle closed in May 1948. Some refugees were still there, although many had left at the end of the Second World War. Some of the teenagers had joined the British Army's Pioneer Corps, some got jobs in the local area, and others went on to further education at Queen's University Belfast. Edith Jacobowitz studied nursing and went on to work at Newtownards Hospital.

After the end of the Second World War, many of the Millisle refugees found out they were orphans. Some learned that their entire families had been killed in the Holocaust. A lucky few would find relatives in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada. Most left the safety of Ballyrolly House and the Millisle farm ready to face a post-war world on their own.

WARTIMENI

This story first appeared on wartimeni.com - a digital platform for all things Second World War related in Northern Ireland. The website is edited by writer and photographer Scott Edgar, who is also founder and host of the *A Wee Bit Of War* podcast.



Mauritius Jewish Museum Reopens

By Philippa Lester

Following on from Maurice Axelrod's article about the Jewish Detainees' cemetery near Port Louis in Mauritius (Kehila, Pesach 2024), I can report that the small museum at the site is now open again and thriving. It was closed for fear of reprisals after October 7th, 2023, but Simon and I

were able to visit this very interesting museum on a recent trip to the Indian Ocean tropical island.

To recap on the story told by the Axelrods, 128 Jews — mainly from Czechoslovakia — were interned in a camp on Mauritius from 1941 until 1945. The conditions were basic at best, and the British rulers cruelly didn't allow male and female association for the first year. Men and women were housed separately in very poor conditions. The situation only improved from 1942 onwards, when married women could receive a pass allowing them to visit their husbands, and indeed 60 babies were born between 1943 and 1945.

The detainees were allowed full freedom of religion and there was both Liberal and Orthodox community worship in separate synagogues in two separate stone buildings. There was even a kosher kitchen at the camp.

All healthy detainees between the age of 18-55 were required to work, initially without pay, performing chores such as gardening,

cleaning and maintenance. They also ran workshops providing for their needs such as clothing, shoes and kitchen utensils. Doctors and nurses among the detainees also worked for little or no remuneration at first.

Some detainees were lucky enough to receive parcels of support and funds from abroad, but communication with the outside world was patchy and this was an issue which gave rise to many complaints from the inmates.

The cemetery and museum tell the sad story of how so many of the detainees died from tropical diseases as a result of the poor conditions, lack of proper sanitation, food and medical help at the camp. So were they better off in Mauritius than in Europe at that time?

The answer is probably that they were. From 1941 the South African Jewish community, only 6,000 miles away from this isolated island, supported the detainees with funds, books and religious items so that in time they developed a thriving Jewish community at the camp. A few even stayed on after WW2, when they were finally allowed to go back to the land of Israel, having been denied entry as illegal immigrants during World War Two.

The small museum in the St Martin Cemetery, Beau Bassin, tells this story through informative display panels and artefacts and is well worth visiting, but I would recommend checking opening days and times before you go. The website is <https://jewishdetaineesmauritius.com> and the email address: detaineemuseum@gmail.com

Your Jewish grandparent might just save your life.

The NHS Jewish BRCA testing programme is now in its third and final year, offering free BRCA gene testing for anyone over 18 with at least one Jewish grandparent.

By identifying an elevated cancer risk early on, we can prevent more cases of cancer and ultimately save more lives.

To sign up or find out more about the NHS England Jewish BRCA testing programme visit jewishbrca.org today or scan the QR code.

Don't delay. Get your test today.





The Purim Fantasy Tale

By Rosemary Wolfson

Thick and fast —
they came in droves —
the marchers of the
Purim parade —
first, and foremost
an Esther lookalike —
an ecstasy of crowned
beauty, with a bridesmaid's
lace dress and proper
expensive ballet shoes.
Another bridesmaid's
dress followed — a kid of
equal beauty, but I heard
one or two unkind mums
saying when she opened
her cherry red lips — slightly
buck teeth — dentist untreated!
Next, a coat of many colours
seen by all on older brothers'
former Purim parades!
Then followed the Mafia twins —
black guns sticking out of
waistcoat pockets — (without a
teacher to reprimand!)
On came the clowns — one
masked only, for ease of removing —
after all — a clown's face
could be distressing for a girl,
next to pretty Queen Esthers!
Then, a child, who had dressed herself —
a blue lacy skirt, draped in yellow and
pink spotted blanket and wellingtons;
a Donald Trump masked black coated
boy followed, and Taylor Swift girlies:
beaded, lipsticked and sequinned,
plus a placarded Mordecai with a beard
and trilby hat; thank goodness no Hamans
were to be seen (such a very nasty man)!

All finally enjoyed their Purim goodies
with Hamantaschen, even though the pretty
little food boxes were quickly shredded
by grabbing small hands
But all ended so very, very happily —
the photographer competently
managed the whole queue —
he dealt well with
competitive kids and their parents!



Ill Met

by Janet Byrne

When I was up in town today
I was really surprised to see
Someone I'd not seen for years
Though she didn't recognise me
It's true she looked much older
And had changed the style of her hair
She'd also gained a pound or two
But I'd have known her anywhere.

"Hello Sophie, remember me?
We were in the same class at school"
She stared at me unknowingly
And her reply was more than cool
"We've never met," was her response
"I've never seen you before"
"Of course you have," I answered back
"For a while you lived next door."

"Surely you haven't forgotten," I said
"The times we sneaked out of class,
The detentions we had, the lines we wrote,
The exams we didn't pass?
And what about the crush you had
On Emma's older brother?
When you wrote a note to meet him
And he bought along his mother!"

I was laughing at the memory
And the expression on her face
As she just stared back silently
With a seeming lack of grace
Just then someone approached her
"Hi Joanna," I heard him say
As with my face flushed crimson red
I turned tail and sped away!



The Bald Facts

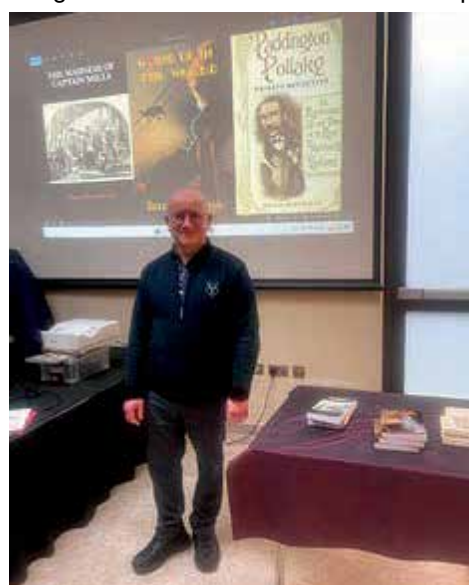
by Bernard Fisherman

The one wish I would earnestly ask for
That I think would be truly great
Is to wake up one bright sunny morning
To find a crop of thick new hair
Growing on my hairless pate
I'd certainly make an arthritic rush
For a handy comb and a soft bristle brush
Instead of a quick wipe over and a cursory groan
I'd be back once again euphoric
Using a brush and a fine tooth comb
Maybe a modern style would be a good idea
Like a Tony Curtis or a Beatles special
I would certainly take my time to hide that sorry shine
No more a quick wipe over but a salon special
In an upmarket barber's chair
No hat required just a head of most welcome hair
But it ain't going to happen feeling sad and sometimes foul
I'll continue treating my situation with a warm and friendly towel

Meet the Author: Bryan Kesselman reveals the Truth behind his Fiction

Amongst Bryan's many talents (mostly musical), he is the author of three exciting fiction books which contain true historical facts; a fourth book is imminent.

He commenced his talk by explaining how late one night he was on his way back from a Gilbert and Sullivan concert. He was singing in the car when he noticed a line in a convoluted song that mentions various famous people of the G&S



age, including someone called P a d d i n g t o n Pollaky. Bryan had never heard of this person, but his curiosity led him to investigate and subsequently to write a book about Pollaky. He even sung us the piece from Patience which mentions Pollaky. (We would have liked

him to have sung us some more!)

The book *Paddington Pollaky, Private Detective* is about the individual mentioned in Gilbert and Sullivan's song, who was a famous private investigator before Sherlock Holmes usurped his fame. Born in Bratislava, the son of a shamas, Pollaky devoted his time to investigating cases of missing women and girls. He moved to London and lived at 13 Paddington Green. He had links to the American Civil War, raising money for the Confederates to buy weapons, uniforms and so on.

The Madness of Captain Mills is a story (again historical fiction,) that covers a tale of emigrants going on Captain Mills' ships to Australia and New Zealand, and on a second voyage to Canada. Bryan showed a few gruesome photos of what it might have been like on the ships for the emigrants. He would not reveal the story, but it related to eleven young girls (referencing the white slave trade) who were sent to far-off lands in the 1800s.

Bryan then read out some pieces from his latest book, *Going Up in the World*, a fictional story about a hotel on the South Coast. Bryan explained that he had to do a great

deal of research for all his books, so that no one could question the accuracy of the historical events mentioned. For example, the hotel guests in 1931 had been listening to *The Last Night of the Proms*, so he had to check what had been in the repertoire that year.

Bryan peppered his talk with stories and people of the times portrayed in his books. A great and thoroughly interesting afternoon.

Report by Juliet Granger

Mosaic Walk on February 4th

It was a chilly February morning when all 13 of us met at Warwick Avenue Station and walked along the Regents Canal to Camden Market.

We walked through part of Regents Park, passed some huge, impressive houses (one on sale for £24 million pounds!) and then through London Zoo.

The walk ended with coffee in the market, after which Judy and I had a great shawarma in Mazel, a kosher restaurant opposite the market.

Another time we could perhaps extend the walk through to the revitalised Kings Cross development.

Report by Philip Silverton



Israel's Wars and Increasing Antisemitism In The Uk



On Sunday January 12th, Mosaic hosted a fascinating, well-attended discussion which was addressed by a knowledgeable panel of experts.

Michael Reik briefly introduced the speakers and the Chairman, Mosaic member Steve Levinson. The panel consisted of well-known journalist Alex Brummer, City Editor of the Daily Mail, who previously wrote for The Guardian for 26 years and is also a Jewish News columnist; Sami Berkoff, President of the Union of Jewish Students; Hannah Weisfeld, Executive Director and a founder of Yachad, and David Hirsh, Professor of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. David is also the Academic Director of the London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and co-founder of Engage, a campaign against the academic boycott of Israel. Michael explained that unfortunately Fiyaz Mughal, founder of the organisation Tell Mama, was unable to attend as he was ill.

Each of the four panel members began with an introductory statement.

David Hirsh said that the current situation was disastrous, not only for Jews and their democratic wish to be protected from antisemitism, but also for the people of Gaza. This was because Gaza had been forcibly taken over and ruled by Hamas, an antisemitic organisation which had invaded Israel and then fled back into Gaza with Israeli hostages. Hamas threatened that if the Israelis chased them into

Gaza, the hostages would be hidden among civilians in Gaza, thereby subjecting Israel to worldwide adverse propaganda if the Israelis killed any Palestinian civilians. The Israelis were not prepared to tolerate Hamas killing more than 1,000 Israelis on the day of October 7th, and sent the IDF into Gaza.

David stated that a statement can be considered antisemitic if it recreates old antisemitic tropes, such as conspiracy theories involving Jews and the mediaeval blood libels. He also said that conduct is deemed to be antisemitic if it results in Jews being barred from organisations — for example, where Jewish members are required or pressured to condemn Israel (as referred to in the findings of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report on the Labour Party) and as also exemplified by occurrences at meetings of the left-wing feminist women's group, Spare Rib.

Hannah Weisfeld explained that Yachad is a UK organisation, which seeks to encourage the British Jewish community to favour a political resolution of the Israel/Palestine dispute, working with human rights activists, and to provide a platform for the advocacy of such views. She acknowledged that this was rather difficult territory, especially because, by and large, each side struggles to believe that the other has a legitimate argument or even knowledge of the true facts.

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Sami Berkoff highlighted the Union of Jewish Students' role in providing leadership development and support to University Jewish societies in the light of the tragedy of October 7th and the subsequent virulent conduct towards Jewish students on campus by supporters of Hamas, which seemed to spread from campus to campus. UJS's objective was to enable Jewish students to enjoy normal student lives and to be proud of being Jewish students.

Alex Brummer said that one must not forget that in the UK, the BBC sets the media narrative for people over 40 and it is their primary source of information. He mentioned that the BBC's website is one of the most viewed websites in the world; he pointed out that some of the BBC's interviews with Gazan officials seem to create an atmosphere which impacts on British Jews. He criticised the BBC for cases where their journalists made comparisons which were often not very realistic. Although he thought that there was quite fair coverage of the Israel/Gaza conflict in the Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mail and The Times, many people over 40 did not see what was going on in social media; this was hugely important. He also commented that TikTok's huge influence on students in the USA was unhelpful in relation to Israel's reputation. This has changed the attitude towards Israel of young students, including even that of some young Jews. He criticised the way in which the critics of Israel have sought to appropriate the language of the Holocaust; the Islamic Human Rights Commission had written to 460 town halls in the UK, asking them to mention Palestinian suffering in their Holocaust Memorial Day events.

Chairman Steve Levinson commented that all these developments seem to polarise the situation, because people adopt extreme views and are not prepared to accommodate any others. He asked whether a two-state solution for the Israel/Palestine conflict was viable and whether there was a trend towards extreme right-wing parties.

David Hirsh responded that there was a crisis of democracy and of democratic thinking. Universities in the West were facing allegations from students that democracy itself is fake and there is no real defence for democratic states. David explained that the Enlightenment, which had arisen in Europe in the eighteenth century, advocated a series of ideas including equality before the law, liberty, freedom of assembly and other new democratic values. He went on to say that the right wing considered that the values inherent in the Enlightenment were 'bourgeois values' and were part of an ideology which endangered the whole planet. There were also elements who claimed that Western policy was a source of evil in the world and that the villains were European states and the USA. Such elements not only claimed that this was part of a global oppressive machine, favouring colonialisation, but portrayed Zionism as being its central control.

Hannah Weisfeld said that social media bore responsibility for extremist views and was a fertile breeding ground. She said that it was difficult to be able to identify the facts and that social media encouraged confirmation bias. Many of the posts by activists on social media are anti-Israel, which is a problematic situation. She thought that one needs to be able to say that what is good for the Palestinians will also be good for Jews, because it is not a zero-sum game. Serious rephrasing regarding discussions about the Israel/Gaza conflict are needed. At the moment there appears to be a race to the bottom, so that people are being asked merely: whose side are you on? There is a fundamentalist flavour in discussions and a big challenge to the post-World War II order. There are questions in the Jewish community about the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. She questioned whether they were inherently anti-Jews and anti-Israelis and, therefore, antisemitic.

Sami Berkoff said that going to university usually gives students the opportunity to speak out on questions of social justice without fear of repercussions. However, many students may simply adopt the one view promulgated on TikTok. This makes it incredibly challenging for Jewish students to resist. It leads Jewish students to shy away from discussing the Israel/Palestine conflict on campus. UJS tries to provide resources for Jewish students to be able to resist the flood of anti-Israel criticism; it is proving a real struggle for the UK Jewish community. The British media has misdescribed the UK campus situation by highlighting what has been going on at US university campuses; the UK campus situation is, however, completely different.

Alex Brummer said that he wasn't anti-Palestinian. Work was being done in Israel to allow Jews and Arabs to work together. People in the USA get the impression



that the situation for Jews in the UK must be terrible with British Jews being under total siege. What's going on in the Middle East has been refracted via the UK media to UK schools.

Steve Levinson then raised the question of boycotts and referred to comparisons with the anti-apartheid movement. He asked Alex if he dismissed the value of boycotts per se, or just in relation to Israel.



Alex replied that he thought there was a lot of unnecessary hostile activity towards Israeli companies operating in the UK and against UK companies operating in Israel. The British newspapers are full of scathing criticism of companies operating in Gaza and the West Bank. He questioned whether this was justified.

Hannah Weisfeld asked whether there was a UK law prohibiting UK companies from dealing with the settlements on the West Bank. She mentioned that the International Court of Justice had given an advisory opinion that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank was illegal and that third parties to the Israel/Palestine dispute were legally obliged to cease any activity which supports the occupation.

Sami Berkoff said that unfortunately some British universities have severed links with Israeli universities and that for several years, BDS motions have been proposed at British universities.

Among the comments and questions from the floor was one which made the point that, as night after night UK television shows pictures of destruction in Gaza with women and children injured and dying, it was unsurprising that sympathy in the UK for the people in Gaza led to the rise of antisemitism in the UK. It was intriguing, however, that hostility to Jews in the UK arising from the Israel/Hamas conflict started just after the October 7th massacre, but before Israeli forces went into Gaza!

David Hirsh said that it was fascinating that we as British Jews don't know how to feel in relation to the war. Although we all say that the UK is one of the best places for Jews

to live, we sometimes find it difficult to listen to the Today programme on BBC Radio 4.

Steve Levinson commented that Fiyaz Mughal, the founder of Tell Mama, had written to him, making the point that one in three Muslims living in the UK had said they were thinking of leaving. Hannah Weisfeld said that in the UK's current multicultural society, no foreign policy issue has as much impact as the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Sami Berkoff referred to recent polling which indicated that a higher number of 18-to-25-year olds favour the Palestinians in Gaza rather than Israeli Jews.

In response to a question on the Jewish UK media, Alex Brummer said that the first 14 pages of The Jewish Chronicle seemed to report an unrelenting negativity in the UK regarding Jews and Israel. He went on to say that he would love to see some positive narratives and that they were trying at Jewish News to provide a much broader focus on what was going on.

Sami Berkoff mentioned the impact of social media on Jewish students. Following the event and as a result of October 7th, their safe place on social media had been taken away.

The meeting concluded with Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton giving a vote of thanks to the panel on behalf of the audience.

Report by Harold Shupak

What are the Odds?

By Michelle Davis



Every summer, Lydia leaves Israel and takes the family to spend a month in Thessaloniki. When there she stays with her parents and visits her sister. Lydia is my daughter's sister-in-law.

One evening at Lydia's home in Israel, she brought a large book to show me. It was written by her uncle and describes the life of the citizens of Thessaloniki prior to World War II. The book painstakingly catalogues the many thousands of Jewish families who lived there and lists the names of all those who were killed.

In November, I went along to Mosaic to watch the performance of *Life Against the Odds* by Anna Conomos. The true story

she told concerned the period of WWII in Thessaloniki and followed the experiences of a boy called Heinz Kounio, his sister Matyka and the family who helped them. It was a very moving account. The audience was informed that after the war Heinz spent considerable years researching the names of all the Thessaloniki Jews who perished during the war.

As soon as I returned home, I called Israel and asked the name of Lydia's uncle. It was Heinz Kounio!

Editor's note: Anna Conomos explained at the performance that *Life Against the Odds* was inspired by interviews, which she combined to create a seamless narrative. Heinz Kounio and his sister Matyka were the inspiration behind the main characters in the story, Samouel Levi and his sister Erika, while Eleni their Christian neighbour gave permission to use her actual name. In the slideshow, she named the real characters next to their photos, with their character names in brackets. You can read a review of the performance in the February issue of *Kehila*.



Heinz Kounio, Thessaloniki 2014



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The Hand that Writes ... Michael Marx explains Graphology

By Harold Shupak

On Wednesday February 12th visiting speaker Michael Marx (not the Mosaic Masorti member with the same name!) gave a very interesting talk on graphology. Before he retired, Michael had used graphology extensively during his long business career. He did so by consulting Anna Koren, who was the top graphologist in Israel and probably one of the top two or three in the world. Michael said that he had never found her to be incorrect in any of the graphological assessments she undertook for him or his colleagues.

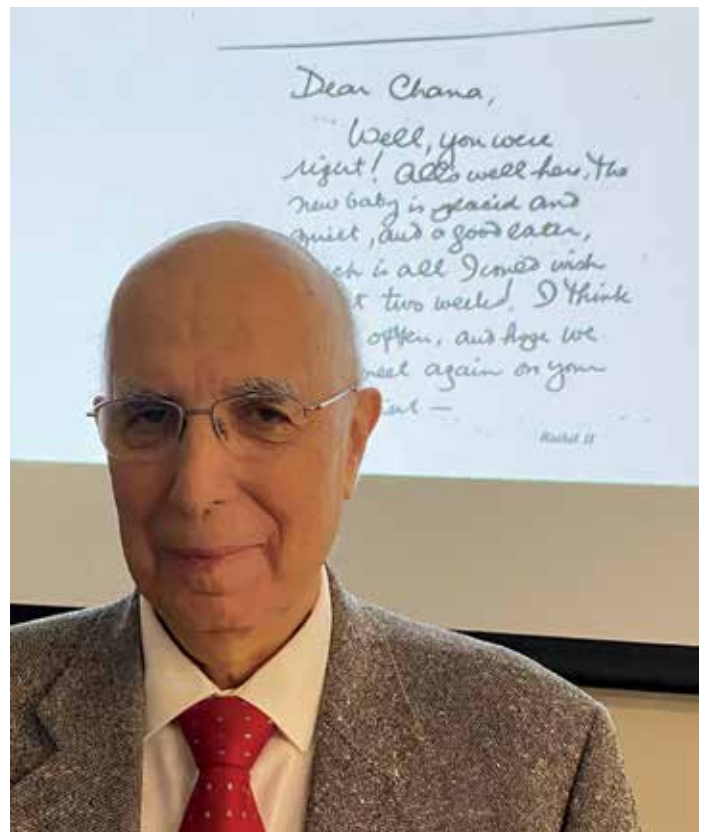
Graphology is the study of handwriting and is used to determine someone's personality traits and other conditions, such as health. Michael said that handwriting is deemed to be the writing of the brain and is merely the product of the brain's instructions. The hand that writes is the brain's 'pen,' whose movements reflect what is going on in the brain. In this sense, handwriting analysis is an X-ray of the brain, which enables us to understand what is happening in the writer's body, mind and soul.

Michael explained that, for the purpose of analysing a sample of someone's handwriting, a graphologist would divide it into three zones. The upper zone would reveal the writer's desires, hopes and aspirations, the middle zone would reveal the writer's view as to where he or she was in his or her life, and the lower zone would reveal darker matters such as the writer's sexual inclinations and behaviour.

He mentioned that it was possible for a graphologist to determine any part or parts of the writer's body which were causing them pain or otherwise affecting their health; this is seen in the position of any dots adjoining words or individual letters in the handwriting sample being examined. By way of example, Michael spoke about an instance when Anna had deduced, having examined the handwriting of a woman who was having difficulty conceiving, that the woman had in fact become pregnant only a few days before her visit.

He also gave us examples of cases where a graphologist had been able to deduce from a handwritten sample the lack of the writer's integrity or that the writer was a drug addict.

Michael emphasised that the analysis of people's signatures was different from analysing their handwriting. He explained that whereas a graphologist's examination of a handwriting sample could reveal who the writer was, and/



Michael Marx at Mosaic

or what had happened to the writer during his or her life, a graphologist's analysis of a signature could reveal the writer's self-image. He commented that someone who underlines his or her signature does so to reinforce his or her image, and may betray a sense of insecurity or anxiety. During his talk Michael put up on screen and commented on examples of several people's signatures, including David Ben-Gurion and Salvador Dali as well as those of a cardiologist and a Holocaust survivor.

He also mentioned that, whilst he and other people placed great store on graphology, many in the medical profession disagreed as to its value.

Michael's talk prompted many questions from the fascinated audience.

The History of Zionism

Michael Wegier examines the forces that shaped Zionism

January 6th saw the first of a four-part lecture series developed for Mosaic by the Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies, Michael Wegier, asking the question “Is Zionism an extension of Jewish thought and life in a sovereign country, or is it a departure from previous Jewish history?” Jacqueline Gross summarises the first two lectures for Kehila.

Michael Wegier started by posing a question to the audience: It's 1903, and in the face of rising antisemitism and pogroms in Eastern Europe, which of the following options would one take: Assimilate? Remain and become Orthodox? Emigrate west — mainly to the US? Zionism? Diaspora Nationalism? Doing nothing? or Socialism?

Not surprisingly, most of the votes were for emigration and none for Zionism, which did not really begin to emerge until 1880, and then not as a force until 1918. Michael then took the audience on an illustrated tour of sources to examine the options.

The Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, which started in the late 18th century and ended around 1881, allowed Jews to embrace modernity. An increasing separation between religious and ordinary everyday life would eventually lead to a certain amount of assimilation. In Russia, Judah Leib Gordon (1830-1892) wrote poems and articles in Hebrew, trying unsuccessfully to reconcile Jewishness with being Russian.

Meanwhile, in America, Emma Lazarus (1849-1887) tried to reconcile Zionism with American Nationalism. Her poem *The New Colossus*, encouraging people to emigrate, includes the lines “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses,” which are inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty.

The New Colossus - Emma Lazarus 1849–1887

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowed world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”
cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired,
your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”



Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916) wrote *The Railroad Stories*, which recounts the lives of Jews travelling from shtetl to shtetl within the Pale of Settlement. His most famous character is Tevye the Milkman (*Fiddler on the Roof*) who, in spite of trying to fit in to the Russian way of life, is forced to flee with his family to Israel.



The Jewish Proletariat in Russia — The Bund — started in 1897. It became a huge movement, the General Jewish Labour Bund, and was one of three ways to be a socialist in Russia, the other two being Socialist Zionism or joining the Russian Socialist movements, Bolsheviks or Mensheviks. The Bund used Yiddish for its language and writings.

The Russian Bund was incorporated into the Communist Party in 1921, but oddly the Zionists lost out to the Polish Jewish Bund in 1930 elections in Poland. The Bund did not survive The Shoah in a significant way.



Zionism was a reaction to increasing antisemitism and the Haskalah, which could have been regarded as assimilationist. Theodore Herzl (1860-1904) was the founder of Political Zionism. A middle class Hungarian living in Vienna, he came to the realisation that emancipation had failed and that an alternative had to be found. The Dreyfus affair, which he witnessed unfolding in Paris where he was a journalist, drove the message home most forcefully. He instigated the First Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 with the words: "We are to lay the foundation of the home which is to shelter the Jewish Nation."

In 1902, Herzl wrote a book about the ideal state called *Altneuland*, having previously written *Der Judenstaat* in 1896. Zionism for him was a political movement for the masses; Judaism was not very important. He published an article on Zionism using the allegory and image of a boiling kettle with steam issuing from the spout.



Zionism in the first half of the 20th Century

Poetry played a huge part in the Zionist influence from about 1903. That year is significant, because the Kishinev Pogrom took place in April in Moldova. It was not the first Pogrom, nor was it the most deadly, but it was the most widely publicised of its time. It had a huge effect on several well-known poets and writers of the time, the most famous of whom is Haim Nachman Bialik (1873-1935), pictured above, who had moved to Odessa, the cultural capital of Judaism.

Bialik's poems *In the City of Killing* and *On the Slaughter* had an enormous effect, not only on the Jews of Europe. He condemns Jewish men on their cowardice in the face of terror, not protecting their women and resorting to religious practices to excuse themselves. The effect was felt in the US Jewish Community, and influenced the establishment of the NAACP — The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People — in 1909. Bialik subsequently moved to Germany, where he became very rich, and moved to Palestine in 1925.

The Pogroms sparked the 2nd Aliyah before World War I and the 3rd Aliyah after 1919. They were mostly young people. The thinker A.D. Gordon (1856-1922) could be called a founder of the Kibbutz movement and Labour Zionism and the ideologue of the 2nd Aliyah. In his writings, *People and Labour* (1911), he said that Jews in Palestine must be in contact with the land, grow its produce and build on it, not just be merchants and salesmen. The first Kibbutz was established as a training farm in Kinneret. Ten Yemenite families also settled there, but sadly elements of racism amongst the Ashkenazim forced them out.

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Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927) was an intellectual, who felt that the problem was not Jews but Judaism: rabbinic Judaism had lost its way. Rather than Jews setting up an agrarian society in Palestine, as had been mooted by Herzl, culture and universities and the Hebrew language should be the priority. His Cultural Zionism was in complete opposition to Herzl's Political Zionism.

SPECIAL EVENT REVIEW

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The poet Rachel [Bluwstein] (1890-1931) was born in Russia but moved to Palestine and worked in the women's agricultural school. She was very influenced by A.D Gordon and dedicated some of her poems to him. All her poems were written in Hebrew. She died after contracting tuberculosis and was buried in the beautiful cemetery that overlooks Lake Kinneret.



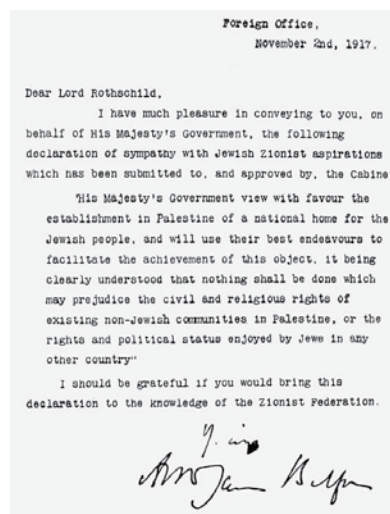
Another writer of that time who wrote exclusively in Hebrew, Abraham Shlonsky (1900-1973), is considered as one of the greatest Hebrew poets. Born in Ukraine and moving to Palestine in 1922, he was completely secular and anti-religious. His poem Toil (1928) glorifies getting up early and working on the land. He almost made a religion of labour.

By 1909 many Jews had moved to Palestine — not to the Kibbutzim, however, but to the new burgeoning city of Tel Aviv. Many architects came from Odessa, including Akiavah Arie Weiss. By 1920 Tel Aviv had grown enormously.

After World War I, the Zionist idea moved to London, into the hands of Chaim Weizmann. As a scientist at Manchester University, Weizmann had helped the British war effort by devising an efficient biochemical method of producing acetone — an important ingredient of the explosive cordite — from maize. Weizmann was instrumental in the writing of The Balfour Declaration by the then Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour. The British Government hoped that this document would rally Jewish opinion in the US to the side of the Allies. It was also hoped that a pro-British Jewish population in Palestine would help secure the Suez Canal, which was vital route to India.

A new danger was soon to be out in the public domain — the notorious forgery The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Report by Jacqueline Gross



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Until Tuesday April 29th

Art at Mosaic: Original Prints Exhibition by Judith Simmons

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, Highgate and in solo exhibitions at The Purcell School, at 'Romeo Jones' in Dulwich, at NPLS and at home as part of Harrow Open Studios.

Her inspiration comes from a range of observed sources. She produces small edition, series of prints on subjects that obsess her, for example Shadows, Quotations and Animals. She utilises photographs and drawings, often combining images, choosing the medium that feels the most appropriate.



Tuesday April 8th, 8.00pm

Film Mosaic: Wakolda



Join Mosaic for a viewing of Wakolda. This Argentinian-Spanish-French-Norwegian co-production was released in 2014 and was also known as "The German Doctor." A taut, well-made thriller, it is based on a true event.

A German doctor meets an Argentinian family and follows them on a long desert road to a small town where the family will be starting a new life. Eva, Enzo and their three children welcome the doctor into their home and entrust their young daughter, Lilith, to his care, not knowing that they are harbouring one of the most dangerous criminals in the world. At the same time, Israeli agents are desperately looking to bring THE GERMAN DOCTOR to justice.

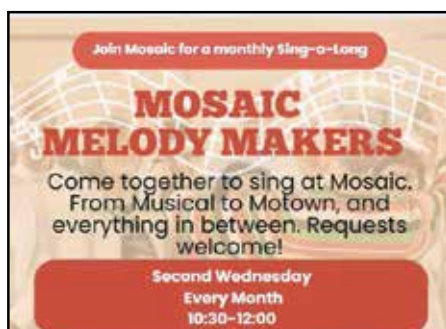
(Spanish and Hebrew with English subtitles)

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.

Wednesday April 9th, 10.00am to 4.30pm

Pesach Bake-In

In preparation for Pesach, there will be two sessions of baking our favourite family Pesach recipes. The goodies will be enjoyed at our Communal Seder and during the Pesach kiddushim. Come and enjoy baking amongst friends old and new. Please let the office know if you are coming and whether you will attend the morning or afternoon session. admin@choosmosaic.org



Wednesday April 9th, 10.30am

Melody Makers

Come together to sing at Mosaic. From Musical to Motown and everything in between. Requests welcome! Please contact angela@choosmosaic.org or ring 07435 722600 to register your interest.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Wednesday April 9th, 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 final session will examine 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.

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.

Sunday April 13th, 1st day Pesach **Communal Seder, 6.30pm**

We invite you to join our Communal Second Night Seder.

Mosaic members £20 each. Non-members £25. Children £10. Closing date Sunday 6th April. Please book now to secure your places.

Volunteers who would be happy to help with laying tables, or clearing up tables would be much appreciated and should contact the Mosaic office admin@choosemosaic.org



Wednesday April 16th, 12.00 midday **Passover Seder Light**

Our Community Care Co-ordinators, Angela and Sandie, warmly invite our senior members to a wonderful and uplifting daytime short seder led by the Rabbis, followed by a delicious light lunch, with Passover songs and music.

RSVP: 020-8864 0133; angela@choosemosaic.org or sandie@choosemosaic.org

If you require a supervised meal, please let us know. • **Help with transport available.**



Saturday April 19th, 10.45 am **Shabbat Shira**



We are delighted to invite you to Shabbat Shira, our family friendly service, led by David Pollak and friends. Sing all the familiar and joyous Shabbat 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; older siblings are invited to take a more active part in the service.

Wednesday April 23rd, 8.00pm

Yom HaShoah

A short memorial service commemorating the destruction of European Jewry, featuring readings and songs; poetry and prayer.



Wednesday April 30th, 11.00am

Hand in Hand

Come together at Mosaic for a newly launched friendly, caring social group for those in their 60s and 70s who are bereaved and have lost a loved one in recent years.

RSVP: Bobbi Riesel: handinhand@choosemosaic.org or ring 020-8864 0133.

Refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday April 30th, 8.00pm

Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzma'ut

This evening will provide a bridge between Yom HaZikaron — remembering the sacrifices of Israelis past and present for the cause of a Jewish State — and Yom HaAtzma'ut, a rededication to the cause and mission of Israel's Declaration of Independence. There will be a short ritual/service, and light refreshments.



Wednesday May 7th, 12.30pm

Mosaic Culture Hub Invites You To Meet the Author: Oliver Kenton

Join us for a light lunch before Mosaic member Oliver Kenton discusses his first novel, Midnight Run.

Oliver, a Creative Director from NW London, has realised a lifelong ambition by writing his first novel and seeing it become a bestseller on Amazon. He had always wanted to write a novel and after a couple of false starts and years of procrastination, a friend finally dared him to just start writing something ... Midnight Run was born.

Midnight Run is an action-adventure story, with a sci-fi twist, in which Leon Aronofsky's life as an ordinary, overlooked planner at a London media agency takes an unexpected and potentially life-ending turn after he passes out at an office party.

Please book via the Mosaic website by Wednesday April 30th for catering purposes. There is a £7 charge which will increase to £10 from May 1st.

Monday May 12th, 12.45pm

Portrait Painting Course

Adam Ashton, who recently held an exhibition of his work at Stanmore Hill, is running a Portrait Painting Course at Mosaic. The course will cover landscape silhouettes with paint on canvas and the art of portraits in pencil, charcoal and paint.

The course will be held over eight Mondays in May, June and July and will cost £120. The first session is on Monday May 12th and there are limited places. For further details, please contact Adam on 07913 806951. Visit the Mosaic website for the link to book this course.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Monday May 12th, 8.00pm

Mosaic Film, American Pickle

Mosaic Culture Hub is thrilled to invite you to the film evening at Mosaic Jewish Community for a viewing of American Pickle. The year is 1919, and Herschel Greenbaum (**Seth Rogen**) is a struggling but optimistic labourer who together with his wife escapes antisemitism by emigrating to America to build a bright future for his beloved, growing family. One day, while working at his factory job, Herschel falls into a vat of pickles, where he's trapped for 100 years until, preserved by the brine, he emerges after 'a bad day at work' in present-day Brooklyn, not a day older. Herschel connects with his only surviving relative, his great-grandson Ben (also played by Rogen,) an easy-going app. developer. The pair's attempts to bridge their 100-year gap lead them to reconsider the true meaning of family - and the value of a really good pickle. Released in 2020, this is a funny and moving movie that will bring more than a smile to the face. (with audio subtitles).

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.



Wednesday May 14th

Melody Makers, 10.30 am

Come together to sing at Mosaic.

From Musical to Motown and everything in between.

Requests welcome! Please contact angela@choosemosaic.org or ring 07435 722600 to register your interest

Saturday May 17th, 10.45 am

Shabbat Shira



We are delighted to invite you to Shabbat Shira, our family friendly service, led by David Pollak and friends. Sing all the familiar and joyous Shabbat 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; older siblings are invited to take a more active part in the service.

Wednesday May 21st,
11.00am

Brunch and Movie at MJC



Angela and Sandie and the MJC Care Group are delighted to invite you to attend a screening of the film Hampstead. A funny, touching and charming film, it stars Diane Keaton, Brendan Gleason, James Norton and Lesley Manville.

Brunch served prior to the movie and ice creams during the interval!

For catering purposes, please RSVP by Monday 12th May.

Email: Angela@choosemosaic.org or Sandie@choosemosaic.org

Help with Transport available on request.



Wednesday June 4th, 12.30pm

Mosaic Culture Hub Invites You To Hear The Story of Beloved Infidel



Join us for a light lunch before Sandra Myers presents the fascinating story of Beloved Infidel. Shielah Graham was born in 1904 in Leeds as Lily Shiels into abject poverty, and brought up in a Norwood orphanage. She later became F Scott Fitzgerald's lover.

Sandra has an MA in Jewish history from University College London. She has been involved in Holocaust Education for many years, initially as part of the Spiro Institute in Hampstead, and then as a director of the London Jewish Cultural Centre. At present she is writing a history of the Norwood children's charity — soon to be published — and is currently a guest presenter with the Lockdown university.

Please book via the Mosaic website by Wednesday May 28th for catering purposes. There is a £7 charge which will increase to £10 from May 29th.



Monday June 9th, 8.00pm

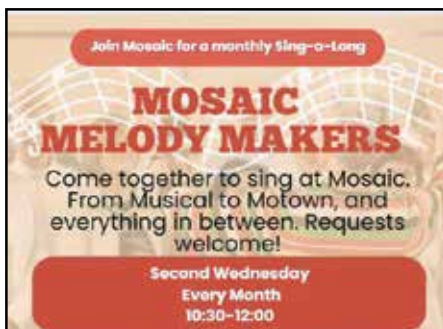
Mosaic Film, A Real Pain

Mosaic Culture Hub is thrilled to invite you to a film evening at Mosaic Jewish Community for a viewing of A Real Pain.

A Real Pain follows mismatched cousins David (Jesse Eisenberg) and Benji (Kieran Culkin) as they reunite for a tour through Poland to honour their beloved grandmother, but their adventure takes a dark turn when the odd couple's old tensions resurface against the backdrop of their family history and the holocaust.

Academy Award Winning A Real Pain is a warm and affectionate look into the relationship between cousins and their shared recent family past, that will make you smile and even give pause for thought. (with audio subtitles)

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.



Wednesday June 11th, 10.30 am

Melody Makers

Come together to sing at Mosaic.

From Musical to Motown and everything in between.

Requests welcome! Please contact angela@choosemosaic.org or ring 07435 722600 to register your interest



Wednesday June 18th, 8.00 pm

Sing for Israel

Since 7th October 2023, Ivor Goldberg from Shir has been conducting singing sessions for the community. These Sing For Israel evenings prove to be very valuable for many people who feel the need to connect with other Jews and to the community, and of course to Israel during these endless difficult times.

Come and sing some of your favourite Israeli songs together in the true Israeli tradition of Shira B'Tzibur. Hopefully this will help us all to shine some light in the darkness.

Singing together is always good for the soul, spirit and for the universe. Lyrics will be projected on screen.

£10 per person. See the Mosaic website to buy your ticket.

Quick Cryptic Prize Crossword For Pesach

by Tony Simons

Following our first Quick Cryptic Crossword in the Rosh Hashanah issue, Mosaic Masorti member Tony Simons has come up with another brain teaser for Pesach.

And this time there will be prizes! Tony has generously donated a bottle of Palwin for the first adult correct entry out of the hat on Friday 9th May, and there's a box of delicious Pesach chocolates for the first correct under-16 entry.

To enter, email a scan of your completed grid to mosaiccrossword@btinternet.com or if you don't have access to a scanner, post it to the synagogue office, marking your envelope **CROSSWORD**. Remember to include your name and age category as well as a contact email address or phone number.

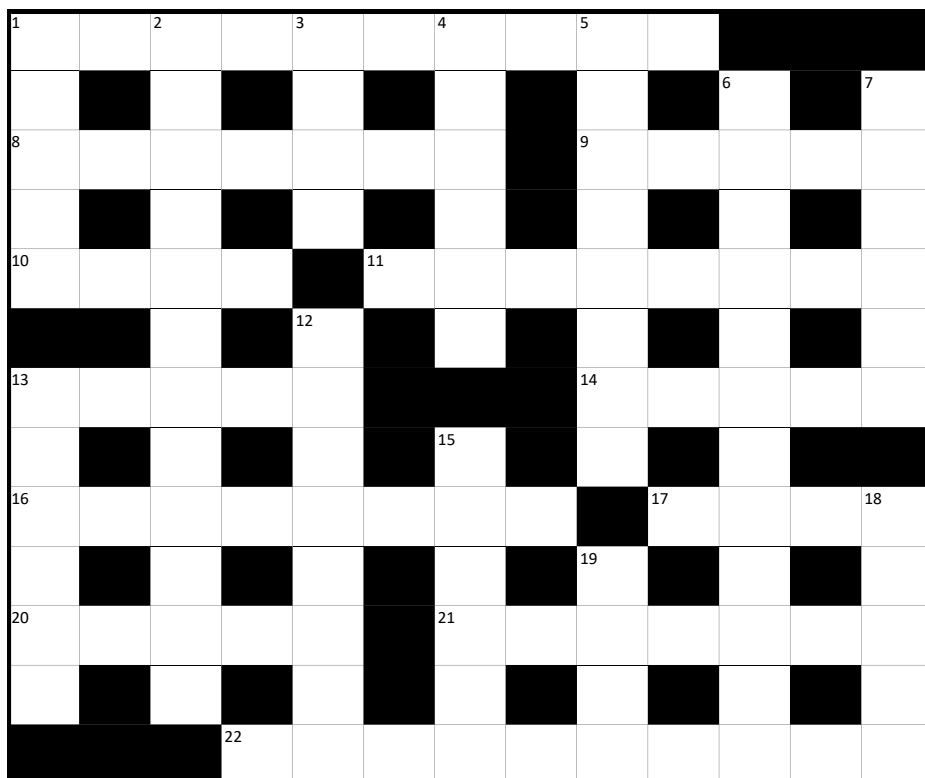
A few hints to get you started:

- Clues begin or end with a straightforward definition of the answer, so read each one carefully.
- As well as the simple definition of the answer, there is also a cryptic element or possibly a second or third less obvious definition.
- Signposts: 'conceals' or 'some' could mean the answer is hidden in parts of words (consecutive letters) to make a new word or words.
- Look out for anagrams, and words that sound the same as other words but are spelt differently.

The solution will appear in our July issue.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 What card players yearn for, and necessary to leave Egypt (6,4)
- 8 Mr. Lynam takes duo to end of tether (7)
- 9 Street recording for choose carefully (5)
- 10 Slippery swimmer by river gives instrument for angler (4)
- 11 Teach group model engines (5,3)
- 13 Some enact ordinary player (5)
- 14 Armies do this for start of Spring (5)
- 16 Elvis hit and pursue more than once (5,3)
- 17 Needed for USA an overheard Jewish heroine (4)
- 20 Saucy dance? (5)
- 21 Experience nudge or collapse (7)
- 22 Beer and oregano on Pesach? (6,4)



CLUES DOWN

- 1 It wouldn't be Pesach without broken reeds (5)
- 2 With due regard, sixth sense in play area followed by complete inside thank you (12)
- 3 Well ordered nun eats inside (4)
- 4 Yuval or Ethiopian State (6)
- 5 Number initially, with slim few busted for breakout movies (3,5)
- 6 Not quite in the team (but nearly) premier modesty (5,7)
- 7 "Hi" chat explodes into problem (1,5)
- 12 I read tax whilst dancing and occasionally seen in town with passengers (1,3,4)
- 13 Struck by shock, having seen an apparition with Oscar replaced by Adam (6)
- 15 Grasshopper and in Numbers a plague (6)
- 18 Capable of mass destruction, Mike invades a hair style (1,4)
- 19 Balkan river, poetic river (4)

Mondays	10.30	Creative Writing Class (Fortnightly)
	13.00	Drop In and Play Group
	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
Wednesdays	10.30	Knit and Natter (First Wednesday of the month)
	10.30	Mosaic Melody Makers (Second Wednesday of the month)
Thursdays	11.00	Chit-Chat b'Ivrit – Beginner & Intermediate levels, alternate weeks
	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)

APRIL

Sat 5 th	10.45	Children's service
Sun 6 th	13.30	Tombstone consecration – Ann & John Kent, Woodland Cheshunt
Tue 8 th	20.00	Mosaic Film Wakolda
Wed 9 th	10.00	Pesach bake-in
	20.00	History of Zionism – final session
Sat 12 th		Erev Pesach. 1st Seder
Sun 13 th		1st day Pesach
	18.30	Communal Seder
Mon 14 th		2nd day Pesach
Wed 16 th	12.00	Passover Seder Light
Fri 18 th		Erev 7th day Pesach
Sat 19 th		7th day Pesach
	10.45	Shabbat Shira
Sun 20 th		8th day Pesach
Wed 23 rd	12.30	Mosaic Book Group
	20.00	Yom HaShoah Service
Sun 27 th	09.45	HaMakom, Summer term begins
Wed 30 th	11.00	Hand in Hand
	20.00	Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzma'ut

MAY

Thu 1 st		Yom HaAtzma'ut
Sat 3 rd	10.45	Children's Service
Wed 7 th	12.30	Culture Hub – Meet the Author Oliver Kenton
Mon 12 th	12.45	Portrait Painting Course begins
	20.00	Mosaic Film American Pickle
Sat 17 th	10.45	Shabbat Shira
Sun 18 th	15.00	Mosaic Liberal AGM
Wed 21 st	11.00	Brunch and Movie Screening
	20.00	Mosaic Masorti AGM
Wed 28 th	20.00	Mosaic Jewish Community AGM

JUNE

Sun 1 st		Erev Shavuot
Mon 2 nd		1st day Shavuot
Tue 3 rd		2nd day Shavuot
Wed 4 th	12.30	Culture Hub – The Story of Beloved Infidel
Mon 9 th	20.00	Mosaic Film, A Real Pain
Wed 18 th	20.00	Sing for Israel
Sat 21 st		Bat Mitzvah – Amy Phillips. Mosaic Reform
Sun 22 nd	11.15	Tombstone Consecration – David Paerse. Western Cemetery

Next issue - Copy date: Tuesday 27th May
Publication date: Thursday June 26th
Send your articles, pictures, letters etc. to
newsdesk@choosemosaic.org



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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Liberal Judaism:
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Directors
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