

# HIGHLight

Bromley Reform Synagogue newsletter

## Come to the Fair



The BRS Klezmer Band will supply the music at the Chanukah Fair on Sunday, 8 December

## Safeguarding Human Rights

**Human Rights Shabbat**, celebrated this year on **7 December**, marks the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted by Henri Casson in 1948. This year it is focusing on the theme of **Hate Crime** and asking the question 'what does a Jewish campaign to tackle hate crime look like?' With rising hate crime across our society, this issue is particularly important to the Jewish community.

Our visiting rabbinic student, **Mati Kirschenbaum**, will address the theme in his sermon.

*All are welcome at the service, which begins at 10.30 am.*

December 2019 - Chanukah 5780

## Welcome everyone to our annual CHANUKAH PARTY FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART



**GILBERT GIGGLES** will be there to entertain us! Hot dogs, latkes and sufganiyot (Chanukah doughnuts) will be served - all with dreidels and chocolate coins to play with!

There will also be a teens room, with movies, snacks and games

Bring your chanukiah to light and we'll do the rest.

**Sunday, 22 December, 4.00 - 6.30 pm**

## In This Month's Highlight

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## Celebrating Chanukah and a Kosher Christmas - View from the Chair

This year the first night of Chanukah is on Sunday, 22 December, so the festival runs over Christmas. I wonder if this will cause a dilemma or is it a blessing for the Jewish community, especially ours with so many interfaith families. I wonder if what was once a threat is now an opportunity and what was once a feeling of weakness can now show itself as a day of great Jewish confidence and pride. Chanukah is no longer in the shadow of Christmas, there is a giant Chanukiah in Trafalgar Square, the festival is taught in schools and there is even a “Mensch on a Bench” instead of “Elf on a Shelf”! This is a sign that Christmas is no longer the lone holiday of the winter season, and that Chanukah is now a contender. It reminds us that this time of year we should celebrate with our Christian friends, neighbours and family, just as we hope they celebrate Chanukah with us.

Does a kosher Christmas include a Christmas tree? It is really a personal preference. There are some Jewish families confident in their Judaism, who do not feel threatened by the presence of a tree in a family member's home or even their own. There are others that are happy not to have to clear up pine needles. A kosher Christmas complements our Chanukah observance because it reminds us that just as we welcome others into our community, we also believe in being welcomed into those communities who invite us to celebrate Christmas with them as Jews. It is a season focused on singing in the community, eating latkes and doughnuts alongside fruitcakes and mince pies. Most importantly, it should be a season focused on the beauty of our traditions and the value of respecting all the traditions we may find within our family and in the wider community. Judaism has long been, and certainly is today, too strong to be threatened by the presence of trees or Christmas gifts given to Jewish children or grandchildren.

It is not a season of dilemmas. It is a season of dedication. Dedication to love our family, dedication to religious rights for the minority faiths as well as the majority, dedication to bring light to the darkest days of the year and to stand tall and proud around our chanukiah. This year and for years to come, let us mark Chanukah at Bromley and recognise Christmas as a beautiful holiday for our friends and, in many cases, for members of our family as we show them that our pride for Jewish tradition is certainly open minded enough to allow us to honour the beauties of both Jewish and Christian traditions.

This year the **Chanukah Fair** is on Sunday, 8 December and the **Chanukah Party** for Cheder is on Sunday, 22 December. Thanks to Judi, there will also be various home candle lightings to celebrate Chanukah together.

The month of November has seen a lot happening at the shul. There was an “Estate Planning Workshop” arranged by **Joanna Koenigsberg**. I know it does not sound the most exciting way to spend the evening but I went along to listen to Jeremy, a solicitor, speak. I left with so much knowledge and information. Although there was talk about wills and Lasting Power of Attorney, for me the most important aspect was how to look after my family. What we should all be putting in place for our children, how to look after ourselves and also our parents. It really was a superb presentation and the next time Jeremy comes I would advise you all try and come along. As I write this there is also a visit by **Mohammed Fahili**, the Director of the Clore Jewish-Arab Community Centre, Akko, which is one of our High Holiday charities. It is not too late to donate to any of the charities, including the shul.

I cannot finish my view from the Chair without acknowledging the departure of **Rabbi Koster**. However, you will be pleased to hear that we have an abundance of visiting rabbis.

Rabbinic student **Anna Posner** was with us at the beginning of November and she will be back in December,



January and February. We also have Leo Baeck final year rabbinic student **Mati Kirschenbaum** with us on 7 December and, hopefully, next year too. As well as Anna and Mati we have experienced **Rabbi Danny Newman**, who officiated at Joanna Biggin's daughter Connie's baby blessing and the Senior Rabbi of Reform Judaism, **Laura Janner-Klausner**, who was with us at the end of November. So look out in *Highlight* for all we have planned for the future. We recognise our congregation needs a Rabbi and, with the support of the Reform Judaism, we will be initiating the recruitment process in due course.

**Michelle Brooks Evans**, Chair

### **Bromley WIZO Eretz Upcoming Events**

**Sunday, 1 December at 2.30 pm:** Our ever popular **Bridge and Games afternoon**, hosted by Marilyn and Joe. Please contact **Barbara Fizzon** to book your place: 020 3685 0945 or bafizz@virginmedia.com. Donation £10.

Phone **Marilyn Burchell** on 020 8658 4776 for more information.

### **Antiques Road Show Monday, 13 January 2020**

2.00 for 2.30 pm at Catford Shul

**Donation £15.00**

**Tim Anthonisz** will tell us about his interesting life as an antique dealer. He has also agreed to give valuations. So bring your treasures along.

*Refreshments will be served.*

## Cheder News

It's nearly the end of 2019 - where did that time go? With so much happening in our shul, the months just flew by! So, what's new?

1. Our Cheder children and the wider community celebrated national **Mitzvah Day** on 17 November with a wonderful event when children's author, **Helen Peters**, visited to give a talk and sign copies of her book, *Anna At War*. Tying into the book's theme of refugees, we celebrated the mitzvah of helping others in need and organised a collection of clothes and food for local refugee families – a big thank you to **Flora Spiegel** for co-ordinating this and a huge thank you to everyone for all your generous donations.
2. The wonderful parents of HOORAY CHEDER are running this year's **Chanukah Fair** on **Sunday, 8 December** from 12.30-3 pm. Lunches will be on sale, as well as doughnuts, Judaica, toys, books and everything you need for a happy Chanukah! Each class will be running its own stall and there will be old favourites such as Jolly Jars and new ones, such as the Secret Gift stall, where kids can buy presents for family and friends. Simon will also be back to take fantastic Chanukah photos. The money raised will help support the Cheder and other Shul events, so before you leave with your kids that Sunday, please pop downstairs and have a look. And if you can spare an hour of your time to help out at the fair, please contact Amanda Penn: a\_penn@yahoo.com.
3. Also, on **Sunday, 8 December**, Joe Parks and the BRS **Klezmer Band** will be playing for our entertainment so please stay and enjoy the performance by our brilliant Cheder musicians. All members of the community are welcome to come and share in this Jewish music as a thank you for supporting the Chanukah Fair.
4. Our **Chanukah Party** will take place on the first night of Chanukah, **Sunday, 22 December**, from 4-6 pm. Gilbert Giggles will be there to entertain us all with latkes, sufganiot (doughnuts), dreidels and chocolate gelt everywhere. We'll end the evening with communal candle



*Helen Peters signing copies of her book, Anna at War during her visit to the Cheder on Mitzvah Day*

- lighting – please bring along your own chanukiah if you'd like to take part. Youth Club will have its own party going on that day so please contact Rachael Ashmore for details: rachael.freida.ashmore@gmail.com.
5. A reminder that your children's *tzedakah* pennies will go to support **Jewish Child's Day**, which supports both Jewish and non-Jewish children suffering neglect, abuse or other hardship in the UK. Please send in your spare change to support this very worthy cause, as next term we'll be supporting a different charity chosen by Kittah Chet.
  6. Please check the **Security Rota** on this page to see if we are expecting you to show up for security. Any problems, please contact **Katia Pisetzky** at: pisetzky@gmail.com.
  7. Last but not least, our final day of Cheder this term will be **Sunday, 15 December**. Cheder will resume on **Sunday, 12 January** (we are having a teacher training day on Sunday, 5 January!).

That's all for now. I wish you all a very happy end to 2019 and look forward to seeing you all in 2020.

*L'Shalom,*

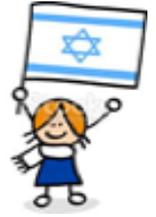
**Danielle**, cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk

### Cheder Security Rota – Sukkot Term

| Sundays     | Name                                     |
|-------------|--|
| December 1  | Harriet and Dan Posner                   |
| December 8  | Elizabeth and Nigel Megitt               |
| December 15 | Michael Abrahams – Cheder Term ends      |
| December 22 | Chanukah Party – security to be arranged |

## Hooray Cheder PTA The Chanukah Fair

The Chanukah Fair is approaching fast and will be on **Sunday, 8 December** this year. It's an event for all ages so do come and bring your family and friends! We had a record turnout last year so we are expecting to see you all again this year.



The fantastic photographer **Simon** will be back to take Chanukah-themed professional family portraits. They are a bargain, so bring a brush to freshen up and make it an annual tradition.

The **BRS Klezmer band** will be also back - even bigger and better! Old favourites will of course be there, like **Judi's beautiful cards**, and we promise there will be more bagels this year! We will also have some new stalls - you will have to come to check them out.

As part of the Chanukah Fair we want to raise funds for the Cheder. This year we are holding an auction which we hope will include some fantastic items. So if you can donate an item, a skill, vouchers, a promise of babysitting, gardening, a pilates class or any such service, please let Michelle know so we can include it in the auction. You can email Michelle at michellebrooksevens@gmail.com.

And, finally, it's having fantastic volunteers from the BRS community that make the fair possible. If you can donate 1 hour of your time to help at a stall that day, please go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040d4ea4a728aafa7-chanukah> You'll still have plenty of time to enjoy the fair.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

**Amanda and Sonia**  
Hooray Cheder PTA

## Remembering Valerie Cohen: September 1933 to November 2019

Valerie Cohen was born in September 1933 in Winchmore Hill in Enfield, north London, the first child of Elsie and Albert Napper. Her brother David was born a few years later. They grew up in Palmers Green, part of that first generation of London Jews to become firmly 'lower middle class' and 'English' rather than 'recently Russian, Polish or Lithuanian'. Nor did my mother or her brother have any personal experience of their parents' and grandparents' tougher immigrant beginnings in the East End of London.

Because David was the natural rebel in that family, our mother took the role of peacemaker. In the ongoing, sometimes titanic, character clash between David and my grandfather Albert, Valerie was the go-between and the bridge-rebuilder. David's difficult relationship with his father certainly had an impact on our mother's take on life, in particular, her dislike of family conflict.

Valerie didn't enjoy school or think much of her teachers. They succeeded not in building her self-confidence but in knocking it down. Self-belief became something she struggled with throughout her life. In her late teens she went to Pitman's Secretarial College in central London to learn typing and shorthand. She had a number of jobs, including working for the Burberry clothing company and the Rank film distributors. She admitted she was a slow but conscientious typist. She regularly stayed late at the office to get her work done.

I never had the impression she regretted leaving this work after she married Lionel in 1961. They settled in South London, on our father's side of the river, and I suspect she never liked being so far from the rest of her mother's extended family. The Sunday teas at the homes of our mother's aunts and cousins, where the extended Maissel family would gather to catch up over bagels, herring and chopped liver, were highlights of the year.

On both sides of our family there are many accomplished communicators of one kind or another. Teachers, writers, journalists, painters and poets. Valerie's grandparents on her father's side were both teachers at the Jewish Free School in Hackney; her brother David became a successful advertising copywriter. Valerie too was one of our family's great communicators. Her preferred 'genre' was



*Lionel and Valerie Cohen toasting each other at a function*

the family letter and the family phone call.

As I grew up in Bromley my strongest memory of our mother is of her sitting at our dining room table with her blue felt tip pens and her Basildon bond notepaper (for domestic use) and the ultra-thin airmail paper (for international correspondence). If she wasn't writing to aunts, cousins and in-laws, she was 'phoning them, seeing how they were, sharing family news, sympathising, consoling, and occasionally offering advice. There was always a 'to-do' list of correspondence and Valerie would feel guilty and frustrated if she wasn't working her way through it.

And I was her postman. I would be entrusted as a small child with a clutch of her latest epistles and sent to the pillar-box on Elvington Green to send them on their way. Later I would deliver the Christmas cards she would write to our neighbours all around the Hayesford Park estate. Valerie, without knowing it, was an early pioneer of local, non-academic, interfaith dialogue. I don't think it ever occurred to me that there was anything unusual or inappropriate about a Jewish boy delivering Christmas cards to the neighbours.

Some of this religious ecumenicalism came from her school days and her discomfort at being taken out of morning assemblies because she was Jewish. She never had a problem with being Jewish. But she did have a problem with feeling excluded, or picked on, or in any way made to feel uncomfortable through being different. Over the years, this sensibility would assert itself in various ways. For a start, it meant Suzy and I both got starring roles in infant school Christmas nativity plays! More seriously, I think it gave her a heart for the underdog and the outsider in any situation.

Valerie was also a keen follower of the news. (My own interest in current

affairs and politics and my decision to go into journalism had much to do with my mother's interests.) This didn't mean she held strong political views or was in any way active in party politics. For her, it was the great national story of the country that she wanted to follow. It was a soap opera. She knew the names of all the characters in this great nation story: the MPs, the cabinet members, the world leaders and their wives and husbands and children.

In our house, Suzy was the troublesome rebel and the challenge to our mother's authority - at least as a toddler and a small child. My sister's exploits are now the stuff of family legend. Locking our mother in the bathroom with only a bath towel around her, leaving her to call for help from the bathroom window was one of the best of these stories.

In later years, as Valerie's health problems grew, we seemed to be playing a tag team of good cop, bad cop to encourage our mother as she battled that long-standing lack of self-belief in her abilities. She could be anxious and over-sensitive, but these were not the important characteristics. What remains strongest in the memory is a woman who constantly showed great kindness and who had a talent for making people feel welcome and at ease. Valerie was easy to speak to, she was sociable, there were no hard edges you had to navigate. You could relax in her company. These are precious gifts to have and to share.

She had to face much illness through her life, particularly in later years, but she remained immensely resilient, maintaining her character and good nature (at least in front of visitors and care workers) even when disability caused her world to shrink to the four walls of bedroom for the last three years of her life. I doubt many people could have kept their mental balance under such conditions for long.

Through these last few years it was Suzy, supported by Jonathan, who made sure our mum and dad were safe and secure and had all they needed to stay as independent as possible for as long as possible. It was Suzy who phoned each day to check on them and made the regular visits across London to see them. And Suzy who bore the brunt of the their frustrations brought on by age and illness. Suzy, thank you for all you have done to care for our parents.

*continued on page 6*

Remembering Valerie Cohen  
continued from page 5

Over the last few months there was a rapid decline in Valerie's health. Her memory and her capacity to cope finally began to fail. She was anxious and confused. The TV news no longer interested her, despite there being so much of it. The national soap opera had lost its meaning. When I visited she didn't want me to read out family letters to her or show her the family photograph albums. When I tried to remind her of her great letter writing days, she had no recollection that she had ever done such things. In short, she was no longer herself. This week her body seemed to know it was a good time to call it a day.

So for me and Suzy, this is the final goodbye to both our parents.

They loved and cared for each other, through the ups and downs of a marriage that lasted nearly 60 years. They played their part in building and sustaining the Jewish community in South London. They were indeed known by their good works and their good deeds. Most importantly, they created a loving home in which we grew and thrived and learnt kindness, compassion and respect. Our parents were in many ways ordinary and average British Jews, typical of their generation. But at the same time they were gentle, noble, exceptional, and outstanding human beings. They brought strength and light into the world and gave warmth to all who came into contact with them.

This is a sad day and we are sorrowful at their departing. But we give thanks for Valerie and Lionel and for all they created together. As it says in our liturgy: may God now take them under his wings and give them eternal shelter. Amen

*This is an abridged version of the hesped spoken by Robert at Valerie's funeral.*

## JEWISH MUSEUM LONDON

### Charlotte Salomon Life? Or Theatre?

Discover one of the most powerful artistic achievements of the 20th century – the masterpiece by German-Jewish artist, Charlotte



Salomon  
129-131 Albert Street,  
London NW1. 020 7284 7384

## Celebrating Chanukah



On Sunday evening, 22 December, Jews all over the world will light *chanukiot*, the 8-branched candelabra used to celebrate the

festival of Chanukah. It commemorates the regaining of the Jerusalem Temple in 164 BCE and its rededication after the occupying Seleucids had defiled it while imposing Hellenic culture over their empire, prohibiting any other religions. The story of the successful revolt by a small group of pious Jews against the large military power of its day has a touch of the miraculous and, sure enough, the narratives first found in the apocryphal first two Books of Maccabees have evolved in their retelling, well beyond the original event.

The dark threads of the story are eclipsed by the reframing in the Talmud, which saw Chanukah as less of a human story of oppression and guerrilla warfare and more as a demonstration of the divine presence in history. So today we celebrate the miracle of oil staying alight for 8 days rather than one, and we eat foods cooked in oil and play games of chance that refer to the miracle, we give presents each night and generally make merry with friends and family and think very little of the origin of the rebellion against assimilation with the dominant power.

The date of Chanukah – 25 Kislev – moves around the calendar a little but is always around Christmas. And the

date is not the only similarity. Both are festivals rooted in pagan winter solstice, where lighting the surrounding darkness is central. Both use tree symbolism – the *chanukiah* is based on the Temple Menorah, which bible describes using botanical terms – clearly a Tree of Life, while Christmas uses evergreens – holly, ivy, fir trees – to proclaim Everlasting Life. Both stories are set in times of oppression – the Seleucid Empire and the Roman one – and both embed hope that human oppression is vanquished by divine activity. Both signal God's presence in the world and both stories have a mythic quality of redemption.

And there are other similarities. In modern times the minor post-biblical festival of Chanukah has taken on some of the less wholesome aspects of Christmas in a bid to compete for Jewish attention. Both now struggle against commercialisation overpowering their religious message, both become overindulgent. On Chanukah the '*gelt*' that began as a way to give children small change to use when playing *dreidl* quickly grew into a present every evening as more assimilated communities noticed the joy that Christmas presents brought. Chocolate coins took over. What can you do when your child looks at all the glittering baubles with awe and desire? The festival marking rejecting the dominant culture has assimilated it perfectly. As my young son said to his friend when discussing their different Decembers: "What? **Only one** night of Christmas? Poor you."

**Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild**

## Social Centre News

If there's one social event at the synagogue I'd never miss, it would be the wonderful music sessions with **David and Tom**. For example, on Wednesday, 13 November they delighted us with a whole range of music from the soothing, inspiring classical world of Mozart, Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Strauss and an introduction to the beautiful flute concerto of Joseph Haydn's younger brother, Michael, through old familiar friends like Danny Kaye and the Andrews Sisters, Fritz Kreisler and Dusty Springfield to the cool jazz of Benny Goodman and Nat King Cole.

But the climax of all this pleasure came with Frank Sinatra singing 'You Make Me Feel So Young' He certainly did! In fact, it was impossible not to get up and dance! What sensuous joy! Please come back soon, David and Tom.

**Binnie Yeates**

The Social Centre will next meet on **Wednesday, 11 December**, when we will have **Judi's latest quiz** (on places in Bromley borough), but not on 25 December. In January the centre will meet on Wednesdays, 8 and 22 January from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm, for which dates programmes have yet to be arranged.

## Social and Personal

**BIRTH** - A hearty mazal tov to **Emma** (née Burgess) and **Joel Salomon** on the arrival of **Savannah**, a sister for Caitlin and a second grandchild for **Suzanne** and **Ian Burgess**.

### DEATHS

We are very sad to announce the death of our member, **Corinne Alexander**, widow of Anthony Alexander, after a long and debilitating illness. We extend deep condolences to her children Emma, Grant and Joanna and their families.

We are also very sad to announce the death of our member, **Valerie Cohen**, widow of the recently deceased Lionel Cohen, and we extend deep condolences to her children Suzy and Robert and their families.

May the memory of Corinne and Valerie be for a blessing.

A *hesped* for Valerie appears on page 5 of this *Highlight*. The *hesped* for Corinne will appear in the January *Highlight*.

### GET WELL SOON

**Pauline Jeffree** writes: We send get well wishes to any member of our synagogue, friend or family member who is unwell at this time. Please let the Caring Community know by contacting Pauline through the synagogue office (020 8460 5460) if you would like to hear from us.

### The Book Group

The Shul book group will meet again on **Thursday, 9 January** in the shul library at 7.45 pm

We have become a really lively, stimulating and enjoyable discussion group and have read three books, including a memoir.

Our next book is *The Cut Out Girl* by Bart Van Es. This book is a very moving true story of a young girl placed in a safe foster home with a non-Jewish family in Holland. It is a remarkable exploration of two lives and two families in the aftermath of war.

*All are welcome even if you haven't read the book.*

**Judy Woolfe**: through the synagogue: 020 8460 5460

## Chanukah Candle Lightings 2019/5780

Venues as below but please note – and it is extra important this year because of the way that the dates fall – we are also willing to come to you. If you cannot get out to a candle-lighting, whether at shul or in somebody's house, but would like to celebrate Chanukah with a BRS member or two please let us know so that we can try to match you with somebody local: 020 8460 5460

**Sun 22 Dec – Bromley**: Chanukah Party at BRS (see front page of *Highlight*) AND candle-lighting in **Beckenham** with Janet and John - details and directions, 020 8460 5460

**Mon 23 Dec - Greenhithe** – Marilyn – an oasis of peace minutes from Bluewater, so if you are over that way for shopping or the cinema this will be an ideal stop-off to mark Chanukah and miss the home-time traffic. Please contact Marilyn by **18 December** for address and directions and so that she knows how many to expect: 020 8460 5460

**Tues 24 Dec, Wed 25 Dec, Thurs 26 Dec, Fri 27 Dec** – public holidays/Shabbat, but volunteers are welcome and details will be sent out via e-light

**Sat 28 Dec – Beckenham** – bring and share at Judi's from 6 pm - details and directions: 020 8460 5460

**Sun 29 Dec – Orpington** - teatime at Dianne's, 3 pm – details and directions: 020 8460 5460 AND

**Blackheath** – with Linda and Matthew, 4-6 pm – details and directions: 020 8460 5460

## An Investiture at the Tower



*Pauline shaking hands with the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa, after the awards ceremony*

On Friday, 15 November, John Posner, Matthew de Lange and I had the great pleasure and honour of accompanying **Pauline Jeffree** to the Tower of London, where we joined 35 other recipients with their families and friends to receive their well-deserved British Empire Medals, medals given to those people who have demonstrated hands-on service to their local community in a wide variety of fields

We were welcomed by the Constable of the Tower and the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London. They

were quick to put everyone at ease at what could have been a rather daunting event but which was, in fact, a very relaxed and happy occasion.

As we sat listening to the citations, read as awards were bestowed, we were struck by the great variety of people and the reasons for which they were honoured. It was a truly inclusive cross-section of our little corner of the country. There were the 100 year old bell-ringer, the Buddhist monk, a representative of the Tamil community and the Windrush generation, young doctors, ex-boxers and cricketers all doing their best to serve their local community. For us, however, it had to be the five Holocaust survivors, now devoting their time to education, who, with Pauline and a dedicated scout leader, made up a total of seven recipients from the Jewish community. How proud we felt to be part of this group quietly demonstrating the good side of Judaism and, in fact, in today's climate of racism and antisemitism to recognise and celebrate the dedication of all the award winners. If you think someone you know deserves recognition, don't hesitate to put them forward for an award – show them their dedication is not unappreciated.

**Barbara Kurtz**

## Meet the Board

Do you know who is on the Board of BRS? I would like to tell you about our Board, who is on it and what they do. At BRS we are proud that we have a real representation of our community on the Board. It is made up of 17 members, there are ten women and seven men and, of those, five are Cheder parents.

**Michelle Brooks Evans** – Chair of BRS and Cheder parent.

**Kieron Hyams** – Vice Chair of BRS and Cheder parent.

**Lisa Lewis** – Synagogue Secretary.

**Stephanie Alberti** – Chair of the Religion & Ritual Committee and Senior Warden.

**Barbara Kurtz** – Chair of the Education Committee and a warden.

**Sandra Hurley** – Treasurer, Cheder teacher and b'nei mitzvah teacher.

**Graham Harris** – Security and Premises Co-coordinator.

**Nigel Springer** – former auditor for the BRS.

**Heidi Small** – co-leader of Gan (nursery) and Cheder parent.

**Matthew de Lange** – 3 Faiths and b'nei mitzvah teacher.

**Elka Carr** – former Cheder Head teacher and organiser of kiddushim for b'nei mitzvah.

**Adrian Jackson** – Chair of the Security and Safeguarding Committee.

**Dan Posner** – warden and Cheder parent.

**Marilyn Freeman** – instructor in Judaism for visiting schools and warden.

**John Posner** – co coordinator of Shabbat security and b'nei mitzvah teacher.

**Pauline Jeffree** – Chair of the Caring Community, organizer of Knit and Natter, tea parties, and b'nei mitzvah teacher.

**Flora Spiegel** – 3 Faiths and Cheder parent.

Then in attendance at Board meetings we also have:

**Janet Burlem** – Synagogue Administrator.

**Danielle Woodward** – Cheder Head teacher and Cheder parent.

These Board members are all active in making things happen at BRS and are not just making Board decisions without being hands on. The Board is part of the community and it is only with the support and help of you, our members and volunteers (past and present), who are too numerous to mention, that BRS has been here since 1964 and will be here for generations to come ...

**Michelle Brooks Evans**, Chair  
chair@bromleyshul.org.uk

**Editor's note:** Go to pages 2 and 11 of *Highlight* to see photographs and contact details of some of the people named above.

## Bromley Knitters, Stitchers and Natterers

We would love you to join us. Even if you cannot knit or stitch there are many other ways you can help this busy group.

**Dates for your diary:**

**Thursdays**, 12 December 2019,  
2 and 30 January 2020

10 am to 12 noon at: Pauline's.

For more information please just ask any of us who meet to help very tiny, sick babies their siblings and parents.

**Pauline Jeffree**  
020 8460 5460

## Adult (Modern) Hebrew Classes at BRS

In case you haven't seen this on WhatsApp, we are trying to organise a **Hebrew for Adults class**.

The class will take place next term between January and March for 10 weeks and will cost approximately £130 per person (that price may go down a little, depending on the number of people per class). If you would like to be placed on the "I'm interested" list, please let me know the following:

1. Preferred evening (Monday-Thursday)
2. Current level of Hebrew (Beginner? Improver? Advanced?)

To register your interest, please email me at: vickiashmore@icloud.com

Thank you!

**Vicki Ashmore**

## Baby Blessing



*Baby Constance, daughter of Joanna and Patrick Biggin, was blessed in the synagogue during the Shabbat morning service by visiting Rabbi Danny Newman on Saturday, 23 November.*

## SE10 and Beyond

SE10 and Beyond will be celebrating with the **deLanges** at their Chanukah candle lighting in Blackheath on **Sunday, 29 December**.

On **Thursday, 23 January** we are being hosted in Greenwich and the inspiration for the discussion for the evening has come from the book "Civilization - The West and the Rest" by Niall Ferguson. The book makes the point there have been a disproportionate number of Jewish Nobel Prize winners, Oscar winners and Pulitzer Prize winners etc. Why is this?

You don't have to live in SE10 to come, the invitations to all our evenings are open to everyone. Come once, twice, all the time, we would love to see you. Our usual format is drink, talk, eat, talk more, drink and eat more. Bring something to share or just bring yourselves.

Please email **Michelle** at chair@bromleyshul.org.uk or call 020 8460 5460 for details.

All are invited, members, non-members, locals to SE10 and, of course, beyond!

### 3 FAITHS FORUM

Our synagogue, along with Keston Mosque and local churches have created a very active inter-faith group supporting local refugee families and running events to educate and break down barriers.

We are now putting on a five-session series examining "Forgiveness", the concept of which is fundamental to all the Abrahamic religions but the approach and understanding differ widely.

Each session stands on its own:

**Session 2** – Tues, 3 December 2019 at Al-Emaan Centre, Keston

*Forgiveness in Judaism* presented by our very own **John Posner**.

**Session 3** – Tues, 14 January 2020 at Bromley Reform Synagogue

*Forgiveness in Christianity*

**Session 4** – Tues, 11 February 2020 at St John's Church, Park Road, Bromley

*Forgiveness in Islam*

**Session 5** – Thurs, 2 April 2020 at Al-Emaan Centre, Keston

*Panel discussion*

All sessions run from 7.15 to 9 pm including refreshments.

Further details from **Matthew de Lange** at [matthew.delange@metaforepartners.com](mailto:matthew.delange@metaforepartners.com)

### BRS Education Committee Dates for your diary

#### Introduction to Judaism

The last two sessions of this term will be held in the synagogue on **Sundays, 1 and 15 December**, starting at 10 am. They will be led by **John Posner**.

**Further details** from John or Barbara through the synagogue: 020 8460 5460.

*There will be a small charge for non-members.*

Please contact the synagogue office to register your interest: [admin@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:admin@bromleyshul.org.uk)

**Shabbat Study Session** – we are delighted that **Student Rabbi Anna Posner** has agreed to lead a study session following the Shabbat morning service on 18 January. Further details in next month's "Highlight".

## SERVICES

**December 2019 – Kislev/Tevet 5780**

**Friday evening service at 7 pm on the 2nd Friday of the month**

**Saturdays at 10.30 am, unless otherwise stated**

**Friday 6 December**

**Saturday 7 December**

**Vayetze - Human Rights Shabbat**  
Service led by Student Rabbi **Mati Kirschenbaum**

**Friday 13 December**

**Saturday 14 December**

**Shabbat evening service at 7pm**  
Service led by **Sally Rosebery**  
**Vayishlach** (16 Kislev)  
Service led by **Barbara Kurtz**

**Friday 20 December**

**Saturday 21 December**

**Vayeshev** (21 Kislev)  
Service led by Student Rabbi **Anna Posner**

**Sunday 22 December**

**First Candle of Chanukah**

**Friday 27 December**

**Mikketz** (28 Kislev)

**Saturday 28 December**

Service led by **Judi Sheffrin**

**Sunday 29 December**

**Rosh Chodesh Tevet**  
**Last Candle of Chanukah**



Thanks to gifts in Wills we can make sure Abraham, Helen and many other people like them can stay in touch with their Jewish roots whenever they like.

**We depend on gifts in Wills for £1 in every £4 we need to raise. For more information about leaving a gift in your Will and our free Will Writing Service call Alison Rubenstein on 020 8922 2833 or email [legacyteam@jcare.org](mailto:legacyteam@jcare.org)**

# Dates for Your Diary

## December

|    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| S  | 1  | <b>Introduction to Judaism</b> - 10 am at the Shul<br><b>Bromley WIZO - Bridge and Games afternoon</b> - 2.30 pm at the Burchells                          |
| M  | 2  |  |
| T  | 3  | <b>3 Faiths</b> meeting on <i>Forgiveness in Judaism</i> , 7.15 to 9.00 pm at the Al-Emaan Centre, Keston  |
| W  | 4  |  |
| Th | 5  |  |
| F  | 6  |  |
| S  | 7  | <b>Vayetze - Human Rights Shabbat</b>  |
| S  | 8  | <b>Chanukah Fair</b> - 12.30 to 3.30 pm at the Shul  |
| M  | 9  |  |
| T  | 10 |  |
| W  | 11 | <b>Social Centre</b> - 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul - Judi's quiz about Bromley borough   |
| Th | 12 | <b>Knitters, Stitchers and Natterers</b> - 10 am to 12 noon at Pauline's   |
| F  | 13 | <b>Shabbat evening service at 7pm</b>  |
| S  | 14 | <b>Vayishlach</b>  |
| S  | 15 | <b>Introduction to Judaism</b> - 10 am at the Shul<br><b>Cheder term ends</b>  |
| M  | 16 |  |
| T  | 17 |  |
| W  | 18 |  |
| Th | 19 |  |
| F  | 20 | <b>Limmud Shabbat</b> begins in Birmingham   |
| S  | 21 | <b>Vayeshev</b>  |
| S  | 22 | <b>Chanukah Party</b> - 4 to 6.30 pm at BRS<br><b>First Candle of Chanukah Candle Lighting</b> in Beckenham<br><b>Limmud Festival</b> begins in Birmingham |
| M  | 23 | <b>Candle lighting</b> at Greenhithe   |
| T  | 24 |  |
| W  | 25 | <b>NO Social Centre meeting today!</b>   |
| Th | 26 | <b>Limmud Festival</b> ends  |
| F  | 27 | <b>NO Friday evening service!</b>  |
| S  | 28 | <b>Mikketz - Candle lighting</b> at Beckenham  |
| S  | 29 | <b>Rosh Chodesh Tevet Last Candle of Chanukah</b> - Lightings at Orpington and Blackheath  |
| M  | 30 |  |
| T  | 31 |  |

## January

|    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| W  | 1  |   |
| Th | 2  | <b>Knitters, Stitchers and Natterers</b> - 10 am to 12 noon at Pauline's  |
| F  | 3  |   |
| S  | 4  | <b>Vayigash</b>   |
| S  | 5  |   |
| M  | 6  |   |
| T  | 7  |   |
| W  | 8  | <b>Social Centre</b> - 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul  |
| Th | 9  | <b>Book Group</b> - 7.45 pm in the shul library   |
| F  | 10 | <b>Shabbat evening service at 7pm</b>   |
| S  | 11 | <b>Vayechi</b>  |
| S  | 12 | <b>New Cheder term begins</b>   |
| M  | 13 | Bromley <b>WIZO - Antiques Roadshow</b> - 2 for 2.30 pm at Catford Shul   |
| T  | 14 | <b>3 Faiths</b> meeting on <i>Forgiveness in Christianity</i> , 7.15 to 9.00 pm at Bromley Reform Synagogue                     |
| W  | 15 |   |
| Th | 16 |   |
| F  | 17 |   |
| S  | 18 | <b>Shemot - Shabbat study session</b> after the service   |
| S  | 19 |   |
| M  | 20 |   |
| T  | 21 |   |
| W  | 22 | <b>Social Centre</b> - 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul - plus <b>Hi Kent Hearing Aid Clinic</b> , 10.30-11.30 am in the Library |
| Th | 23 | <b>SE10 and Beyond</b> - Book discussion in Greenwich   |
| F  | 24 | <b>Shabbat evening service at 7pm</b>   |
| S  | 25 | <b>Va'era</b>   |
| S  | 26 |   |
| M  | 27 | <b>Rosh Chodesh Shevat Holocaust Memorial Day</b>   |
| T  | 28 |   |
| W  | 29 |   |
| Th | 30 | <b>Knitters, Stitchers and Natterers</b> - 10 am to 12 noon at Pauline's  |
| F  | 31 |   |



Come and see me at the Chanukah Fair on 8 December - Seasonal cards, greetings for most occasions and many with no message. To pre-order a particular card/quantity please ring 020 8460 5460

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**Discover Something New  
LIMMUD FESTIVAL  
Sun, 22 – Thurs, 26 December**

The Festival will be taking place in the hotels surrounding Pendigo Lake, south of the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.

The programme is always at the heart of any Limmud event – and Festival 2019 is no exception. From Hillel to Hummus, we've got something for everyone this year. With the programme brimming with options all day, this is an opportunity for you to cultivate a personal Jewish experience, and learn from presenters you might never come across outside of Limmud.

**BOOK NOW:** [limmud.org/festival](http://limmud.org/festival)

Every year, Limmud participants old and new come together for an enriching Shabbat to kick off Festival. This year, Shabbat will be bigger and better than ever and will take place from Friday 20 – Saturday 21 December.

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