

# HIGHLight

Bromley Reform Synagogue newsletter

## View from the Chair – 6 feet away of course!

Unprecedented, unique, once in a lifetime, these are all phrases I have said and heard again and again over the last few weeks. Usually to me they are associated with something special or something to look forward to. However, unfortunately, this time it has not been the case with the virus Covid 19. The AGM has been postponed, events put off to another date, services are to be streamed, and Cheder is moving to an online system. Yes unprecedented, unique, once in a lifetime, but we as Jews have been faced with many challenges and, once again, we will overcome them.



Most of you will be viewing this *Highlight* online and others who do not have internet access will still get their copy delivered by a volunteer or posted if they are too far away. Within hours of the decision that the doors of Bromley Shul must be closed, via the Cheder parents' WhatsApp group there were over 20 volunteers offering their time and services. If you are able to join this group of volunteers please email me at [chair@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:chair@bromleyshul.org.uk) or phone me 07956 234309, or if you would like to receive a call or need help with your shopping, or are just feeling a bit anxious or lonely or would like a chat contact me. We are working closely with **Pauline Jeffrey** and the Caring Community to ensure we have continuity with the fantastic pastoral care that they offer, and that we are able to meet the needs of our community.

We are very lucky that we already have the ability to stream BRS services and this is what we will be doing from now on. As I write this, our senior warden, **Stephanie Alberti**, is mustering the troops and, thanks to our tech wizard **Kieron Hyams**, all this will be in place, so we will continue with Saturday services as usual. It will be different, but through this channel we will once again be united "virtually" and, as we all know, prayer has no boundaries. If you have never used streaming before all you have to do is to go to YouTube search "Bromley Reform Synagogue" and subscribe to the channel or use the following address:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BromleyReformSynagogue/live>

Although the **Communal Seder** has been cancelled for this year, I understand **Vicki** is trying to set up an online Seder for the children and families on the second night of Passover on **Thursday, 9 April** and **Senior Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner** is also inviting those who would like to join her and her family online at a Seder on the second night. Please look out for future *e-lights* containing details.

*continued on page 3*

## In This Month's Highlight

Puppets at Purim.....	2
The (postponed) AGM.....	2
Improving the Shul Garden .....	2
Cheder News .....	3
The Social Centre .....	3
Adult Hebrew Class.....	3
Passover Seders (poem).....	3
Passover Customs and Rituals .....	4
Prayer for a Pandemic .....	4
Comms in a Time of Crisis .....	5
South London Community Support Service.....	5
Social and Personal .....	6
RJ:TV .....	6
Lehrhaus@Leo Baeck College.....	6
Knitters, Stitchers & Natterers.....	6
Three Readings, lots of firsts .....	7
These Uncertain Times .....	7
Our Jewish Cemetery in South London.....	8
Services .....	8
The Book Group .....	8
Linking Past and Present at BRS .....	9
Advertisements .....	10

April 2020 - Pesach 5780

**REFORM JUDAISM**  
**RJ:TV**  
ONLINE COMMUNITY FROM REFORM JUDAISM  
WEEKDAY PROGRAMME

8:30AM: SHACHARIT  
MORNING SERVICE

9:30AM - 10:00AM: FUN FOR FIVES AND UNDER

11:00AM - 12:00PM: CORONA, COFFEE AND CARE

12:30PM - 1:30PM: ADULT LEARNING

2:15PM - 3PM (TUES ONLY): PARSHAT HASHVUA  
TORAH STUDY

8:30PM (MON-THURS): MA'ARIV  
EVENING SERVICE

ONLINE [WWW.ZOOM.US/JOIN](http://WWW.ZOOM.US/JOIN) BY PHONE 0203 481 5237  
USE MEETING ID 738-454-9476

More Information at  
[REFORMJUDAISM.ORG.UK/RJTV-ONLINE-COMMUNITY-FROM-REFORM-JUDAISM/](http://REFORMJUDAISM.ORG.UK/RJTV-ONLINE-COMMUNITY-FROM-REFORM-JUDAISM/)

**View from the Chair, cont. from page 1**

The children at Cheder are getting an extra two weeks holiday but we are using this time and the school holidays to work with the Cheder Head Teacher, Danielle Woodward, and the new co-chair of the Education Committee, Vicki Ashmore (she is joining Barbara Kurtz), along with the teachers and helpers of the cheder to move teaching to an online system ready for when term starts again on Sunday, 19 April. So parents, teachers and helpers please help us by answering emails and phone calls from Danielle and Vicki and bear with us while we get this up and running.

The whole world is in anguish during this difficult time, and while we talk of our community at BRS we must also think of our family and friends in the UK and around the world, and members of the global community, we are all inextricably linked. Our tradition and values place community and mutual responsibility high in the agenda of life. We must use this to take care of ourselves and others, particularly the elderly and vulnerable and those who find themselves lonely or without supplies. This is the Jewish spirit and, if we maintain it, it will take care of us.

*“A little bit of light pushes away a lot of darkness” – Jewish Proverb*

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

**The (postponed) AGM**

Readers will be aware that the synagogue AGM, scheduled for Tuesday, 17 March, has been postponed but our Chair had already written her Report to the AGM. It has now been uploaded to the synagogue website, where you can read it at:

<http://www.bromleyshul.org.uk/?p=13163>

While you are surfing online you may also care to read or download the online Siddur if you do not already possess a Siddur of your own: <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/408118/>



*Chag sameach Pesach to all our readers*

**Puppets at Purim**



*The puppeteers take their bow at the end of the Cheder Purim puppet show on Sunday, 8 March*



**Improving the Shul Garden**

Have you seen how the garden at BRS has been improved? **Matthew de Lange**, in the role of Head Gardener, has worked tirelessly to remove unwanted plants (weeds) from the steep sloping flower beds, clear ivy climbing over the fence and tidy up the space.

On Sunday, 15 March the children from our Gan had the opportunity to help by sowing wild flower seeds.

While Matthew prepared the ground for the seeds, **Alona** met the Gan children. She had brought two packs of wild flower seeds and a small bucket with compost and sand. Children explained to the adults that seeds need water, soil and sunshine to grow. They took turns to mix the seeds with the contents of the bucket before going out to meet Matthew.

After Matthew showed where to scatter the compost and seed mix, each child spread a scoopful of the mix onto the ground. The seeds were watered in. Hopefully, some of the plants will grow and flower this summer, adding colour to the garden.

**Alona Sheridan**

## Cheder News - April 2020

You will have seen the recent e-light announcement that Cheder has been given an extra two weeks' holiday. With developments in the world changing by the day, we do have plans for the terms ahead, but please be aware of the potential for things to change at short notice and keep an eye on your email and text messages for updates.

We are planning on using the extra time off from teaching at Cheder to set up 'virtual lessons' and online resources. If you haven't already, I suggest you look to familiarise yourself with Skype and Zoom. After the school holidays, we plan to start Cheder 'virtually' on **Sunday, 19 April**, so parents please check your emails.

Here's a reason to rejoice, as it seems that kindness is just as infectious as the virus! Many Cheder parents are volunteering their time to help needy people in our community, who are self-isolating, with their shopping or just a friendly 'phone call. Huge thanks to everyone who has volunteered and our Chair, **Michelle Brooks-Evans**, for organising this.

1. We celebrated **Purim** this year in style with a fantastic Megillah puppet play, directed by our own talented Vicki Ashmore and starring the equally talented students of Kittot Vav and Chet, Vav teacher **Simon Samuels** and music teacher **Matt Sear**. Everyone dressed up in their finest costumes and we baked and ate copious amounts of delicious hamantaschen. Thank you so much to everyone who brought in *matanot le'evyonim* (food for the needy) which was gratefully received by the Trussell Trust Food Bank in Greenwich.
2. On **Yom Ha'atzmaut on 26 April**, we hope RSY-Netzer leader **Ella Janner-Klausner** will be joining us virtually to do a 'Cheder Takeover'. More details to follow.
3. **Advance notice of summer events:** on **Sunday 5 July**, we are planning a **Cheder trip to the Jewish Museum** in Camden. More details to follow, so please keep an eye out for emails in the coming weeks. On **Monday, 27**

and **Tuesday, 28 July**, RSY-Netzer will be running *Garinim* (day camps) at Bromley for 5-10 year olds. There will be activities, such as drama, singing, cooking and science, plus crafts to suit younger kids and fun learning sessions. More information to follow.



Obviously the events we have planned for the summer are all dependent on the current situation, but we will keep you updated.

That's all for now.

*B'Shalom,*

**Danielle**, Cheder Headteacher

### Saying Thank You to Lizzie



*On Sunday, 15 March the Cheder held a special kiddush at the end of the morning to say thank you to security guard **Lizzie**, who works so hard to keep everyone safe. Lizzie is seen here cutting the very special cake made for her by teacher Janvier.*

### The Social Centre

**Dianne Mathews** writes:

In view of the current situation with the Coronavirus the Social Centre is cancelled until further notice. We hope to meet again in the not too distant future.

### Always wanted to read and speak a bit of Hebrew?

Do you have some free time on your hands?

#### Beginners/Improvers

#### Hebrew for Adults

10-week online course

**Sarit Chen** is an expert in GCSE Hebrew and teaches both biblical and modern Hebrew.

She is currently Head Teacher of the Cheder at South London Liberal Synagogue and teaches our Adult Hebrew course.

#### Hebrew 1: Hebrew for Beginners

Thursday evenings

from 26 March – 4 June

(excluding 9 April, second night of Passover)

From 6-7 pm

#### Hebrew 2: Hebrew for Advanced Beginners/Improvers

Thursday evenings

from 26 March – 4 June

(excluding 9 April, second night of Passover)

from 7.30–8.30 pm

**Cost:** £100.00 Members

£130.00 Non-Members

To join us, RSVP by emailing **Vicki**: [vickiashmore@icloud.com](mailto:vickiashmore@icloud.com)

### Passover Seders

Passover Seders are like the night sky: A moment of moments long past and just gone;

Starlight years old next to planets nearby Shining as though joined in one joyous song.

Over our heads is a book of the ages Vividly chanting the stories of old, Even as under our fingers are pages Resplendent with light come from cauldrons now cold.

So may we gaze at the past in the present, Each prayer a jewel in a darkness undone,

Destined to light on our eyes in a moment Embracing all slaves out from Egypt as one.

Rejoice, then, in this living graveyard of light,

Singing the words, that they last one more night.

*Copyright by Nicholas Gordon*

*Source: "Poems for Free" website*

## Passover: Customs and Rituals - The Seder

The Seder is the centrepiece of any Passover experience. A Seder is a festive meal that takes place on the first night (and in some families also on the second night) of the holiday. Family and friends join together to celebrate. The word Seder literally means



the Sephardic tradition, reminds us of the bricks and mortar made by the Hebrew slaves

- **Greens, karpas**, symbolises spring, the time of year when Passover takes place

- Also place on the

table:

- **Three matzot** (plural of matzah), on a plate with a cloth or napkin cover
- **Salt water**, a reminder of the tears shed by the Hebrew slaves
- **Cup of Elijah, Kos Eliyahu**, symbolizes the hope for a redemptive future

Along with these traditional symbols, families may choose to include a **Cup of Miriam, Kos Miriam**, a special goblet filled with water, on the holiday table. This symbol honours Miriam, the sister of Moses, who played a vital role in the history of our people. Many families and congregations add an orange to the Seder plate, too, as a symbol of inclusion of the LGBTQ community and others who feel marginalised in Jewish life (not, as the story has often been told, as a symbol of women in the rabbinate).

The **Haggadah** contains the text of the Seder. There are many different haggadot: some concentrate on involving children in the Seder; others concentrate on the sociological or social justice aspects of Passover; there are even historical haggadot and critical editions.

The **afikomen** is half of the middle matzah that is broken in the fourth step of the Seder, *yachatz*. It is customary to hide the afikomen, and the person who finds it gets a prize. The afikomen is eaten last of all at the Seder, during step 12, *tzafun*.

**Editor's note:** the above is an extract from a much longer article which can be found at <https://reformjudaism.org/passover-customs-and-rituals>

“order,” and the Passover Seder has 15 separate steps in its traditional order. These steps are laid out in the Haggadah, the book used during the Seder. Many congregations hold a community Seder during at least one night of Passover. There are also synagogue services held on the first day of the holiday, and Yizkor (remembrance) services held on the last day.

### Ritual Objects

The **Seder plate** contains various symbolic foods referred to in the Seder itself. The contents of a Seder plate vary by tradition, but most of them contain a shank bone, lettuce, an egg, greens, a bitter herb and charoset, a sweet mixture of fruits, nuts and spices.

These symbolic foods should be placed near the leader of the Seder. During the course of the Seder, they are pointed out and explained:

On the Seder plate (use either a special one for this purpose or a regular dinner plate), include:

- **Shank bone, zeroa**, symbolises the lamb that was sacrificed in ancient days
- **Roasted egg, beitzah**, represents the Passover offering of ancient days, as well as the wholeness and continuing cycle of life
- **Bitter herbs, maror** (horseradish and/or romaine lettuce), a reminder of the bitter lives of the Hebrew slaves
- **Charoset**, the mixture of apples, nuts, sweet wine, cinnamon and sugar in the Ashkenazic fashion or dates, nuts and sweet wine in

## Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
Remember those who must choose between preserving life or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
Remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money

In the tumult of the economic market  
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country

Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other

Let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.

**Amen.**

*The above prayer was received on Facebook from **Rabbi Jason Holtz**, who wrote: “Author unknown, shared with me by Gigi. Thanks Gigi!”*

*And thanks, Rabbi Jason, now at Temple Kehillat Chaim - Roswell, GA*

### The dream

Moshe was talking to his psychiatrist. "I had a weird dream recently," he says. "I saw my mother but then I noticed she had your face. I found this so worrying that I immediately awoke and couldn't get back to sleep. I just stayed there thinking about it until 7am. I got up, made myself a slice of toast and some coffee and came straight here. Can you please help me explain the meaning of my dream?"

The psychiatrist kept silent for some time, then said, "One slice of toast and coffee? Do you call that a breakfast?"

*Source: The Jewish jokes of [www.awordinyoureye.com](http://www.awordinyoureye.com)*

## Comms in a Time of Crisis

Things are moving so fast that this will be out of date before I finish writing it, so please keep watching out for the **news flashes** from our brilliant Chair and Vice-Chair, who must have been on quadruple espressos to keep everything going as they have done; check the **website** ([www.bromleyshul.org.uk](http://www.bromleyshul.org.uk)) for updates; and read carefully future e-lights. Rather than promoting physical events, we plan to bring you links to **virtual events**, on-line classes, skype meetings and so on. My thanks to our indefatigable e-light editor for trying to keep on top of this. You will see elsewhere that until further notice our **Shabbat services** are to be “led” by individuals sitting on their own but accessible through the wonders of Skype + streaming at either <https://www.youtube.com/c/BromleyReformSynagogue> or <https://www.youtube.com/c/BromleyReformSynagogue/live>, so do log on at 10.30 on Saturday mornings and keep them and each other company.

### A fantastic team

Thanks to the postponement of the AGM, we were unable to hand out some much deserved literal and metaphorical bouquets. However, **Michelle** has agreed that I can do it here before the moment is lost. Comms has not had that much to do in the past year due to the fact that she is such a keen communicator. Her speed and **Kieron's** thoroughness are a winning combination, whether contacting the entire community, special interest groups or individuals, so may I thank them for lightening our load. However, I did praise my amazing team and mentioned particularly **Ronnie Goldberg**, who has sent out *e-light* and *e-light extra* almost every week despite having had a very difficult year himself. So a big hand, please, for Ronnie!

### 40 years of Bob

Every year I mention **Bob Symonds'** dedication; attention to detail; determination to meet every deadline, however inconvenient; timely, helpful and courteous reminders; and consistently high standards but this year I must give him more than just a mention. In March he completed 40 years – forty! – as *Highlight* editor. I

think I am right in saying that he has only once missed sending it out in person during that whole time. That was due to illness and, even then, he made sure it was ready for others to complete, print and distribute. We did give him a present after 25 years but it's high time we thanked him again for his contribution to BRS, which also includes photographing almost every occasion going back to the 1960s, especially B'nei Mitzvah, and producing the annual *luach* (calendar), a very fiddly job. Bob, we were hoping to make a formal presentation to you at the AGM but, as that has been postponed, please, for now, accept an even **bigger** vote of thanks than ever from all your readers and contributors. I hope that we will soon be able to gather together in person to salute you as you deserve.

### Constant change

Although Bob and Ronnie do an amazing job, we know that the way people access information is constantly changing, so we regularly review how and when we let members know what is going on. If you can help with any

of our media or have ideas for new approaches, please contact me. As well as ideas, we do need practical help, especially with the website. Kieron is a spectacular webmaster but he has many other even more important jobs within BRS and outside, and it would be good to free him up to focus on them. Ronnie, too, sometimes needs a break, so it will be helpful if somebody can act as occasional e-light editor to give him a breather. And now Bob, after *only* 40 years, is starting to consider passing on his baton. Could you carry it forward? He'd be happy to let you shadow or job-share so as to learn the ropes.

We know there's a lot of talent out there. Many of you have experience with the written and spoken word, editing, publishing etc. Please don't be shy if you think you can help with any of the above. We won't overload you and will be thrilled if you have suggestions as to how we can be more efficient and resilient.

Keep well.

**Judi Sheffrin**  
([judishef@aol.com](mailto:judishef@aol.com))

## Our South London Community Support Service Can Help You!

The South London Community Support Service is jointly funded by Jewish Care and Nightingale Hammerson to help you find the support and care you or your family may need.

Jewish Care is the largest health and social care organisation serving the Jewish community in London and the South East. Together with 1500 dedicated staff and 3000 generous volunteers, we run over 70 centres and services, caring for more than 7000 people every week.

Nightingale House is one of the largest care homes in Europe. It is a leading provider of residential, nursing and dementia care to older members of the Jewish community. The Clapham home has a 170-year-old history and is renowned for its excellent facilities, dedicated staff and high quality care: [www.nightingalehammerson.org.uk](http://www.nightingalehammerson.org.uk)

### We can help you:

Call us directly or ask a relative or friend to do so. We take referrals from local GPs or health or social care professionals. Our team comprises qualified community support practitioners and experienced and knowledgeable volunteers who can help you.

Call us now via Jewish Care Direct helpline: 020 8922 2222, please quote **Stephen Ison** to filter your call to our South London Community Support Service. For more information visit [www.jewishcare.org](http://www.jewishcare.org)

**Further information** can be found at [www.southlondonjewishservices.org.uk](http://www.southlondonjewishservices.org.uk), a website in partnership with Jewish Care and Nightingale Hammerson which provides information on local Jewish facilities, events and services.

nightingale hammerson

**JEWISH CARE**

## Social and Personal The Covid Virus Pandemic

A message from the Caring Community

Dear Synagogue Members,

Undoubtedly these present times, with regard to the risk posed by the virus which is sweeping the world, are very worrying and frightening.

The Caring Community and others will be keeping in regular touch by telephone, e-mail, text or slow mail to make sure each and every one is well and has all they need.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, Pauline, Chair of Caring Community, either by leaving a message at the Synagogue office 020 8460 5460 or telephoning 07745 740114. Any message you leave will be followed up.

**Pauline Jeffree**  
pauline.jeffree@btinternet.com.

### CAREER SUCCESS

A hearty mazal tov to **Justin Golberg** who, we learn, has been promoted to Group Director, Government Solutions - Defence & Security at Jacobs UK Limited.

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

**Dr. Eileen Fry** of Blackheath.

## RJ:TV – a Message from Reform Judaism

**RJ:TV** is our interactive broadcasting platform for these challenging times. From Monday we will provide a range of interactive programming that you are invited to join – from daily prayer services and adult learning sessions to fun for all ages and casual catch-ups. Whilst physical events and activities at our synagogues have been postponed, we can still come together virtually to share in learning and meaningful interaction. Find the latest RJ:TV listings at <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/rjtv-online-community-from-reform-judaism/>

**RSY-Netzer** are temporarily re branding to 'Remote Synagogues Youth' and will also be broadcasting interactive activities for children from Monday. Register for this virtual RSY-Netzer experience at <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/rsy-netzer-remote-synagogue-youth/> and you will receive links to participate along with weekly schedules.

Good wishes from everyone at Remote Synagogues Youth & RJ:TV

**P.S.** Everything can be joined on the telephone so please do share this with those isolating friends and congregants who may not be as confident online.



Founder member **Hilda Lask**, who celebrated her 90th birthday on 17 March. Sadly, the festive kiddush to celebrate the happy occasion had to be postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic, but we hope it will be held in the not too distant future.

Please turn to page 10 of this Highlight for Judi Sheffrin's appreciation of Hilda's contribution to BRS over 56 years.

## Knitters, Stitches and Natterers

Pauline writes:

The scheduled Bromley Knitting, Stitching and Nattering meetings are cancelled because of the current health risk.

I have been in touch with King's College Hospital and the staff of the Intensive Neonatal Unit and we continue knitting and sewing as usual please!

The **Tea Parties** held at my home are also cancelled until future notice.

**Pauline Jeffree**, 020 8650 4860



Chag sameach Pesach  
(Happy Passover)  
to all our readers

<b>LEHRHAUS @ Leo Baeck College</b>	
Home of Adult Jewish Learning Spring 2020 On-Line Courses (more still to come)	
<b>Duration &amp; Dates</b>	<b>Course &amp; Teacher</b>
Refer to the LBC website	Modern Hebrew Ulpanim: Beginners and Intermediates <b>Liat Aharonovich</b>
4 weeks 4 - 25 May	Levinas and Us: Ethics, Politics, Religion and Art <b>Dr Jakub Kowalewski</b>
4 weeks 29 April - 20 May	Wandering Jews <b>Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen</b>
4 weeks 6-27 May	The Warsaw and Lodz Ghettos: Archivists and Photographers as Witnesses and Recorders <b>Rabbi Dr Frank Dabba Smith</b>
4 weeks 14 May - 4 June	The Origins of Jewish Mysticism <b>Dr Alinda Damsma</b>
For all information about the courses, enrolment and payment: visit us - <a href="http://www.lbc.ac.uk">www.lbc.ac.uk</a> email us - <a href="mailto:lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk">lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk</a> call us - 020 8349 5600	

## Three readings, lots of firsts and no congregants

Our first virtual Shabbat service was on 21 March, when Matthew and I had the interesting challenge of trying to cover several unique circumstances in one go. It was our first service with no congregant whatsoever visible to the leaders; we were making up for the fact that it was the day on which the whole community had been due to meet one of our rabbinic candidates while also celebrating the 90th birthday of **Hilda Lask**; there were three scrolls to read between the two of us; and we had inadequate experience of the new sound system. Plus, of course, we were only too aware of the reason for all these "firsts", the virus that was keeping congregants at home, and we wanted to reflect the anxiety that that was engendering while also exuding the joy of Shabbat. Going by the amazing response on email and WhatsApp, it seems that we managed most of that. We had literally too many delightful messages to answer each separately - thank you all - but I was thrilled to see the words "meaningful" and "inclusive" in a number of them, as that is what we were aiming for, not to mention three or four spellings of *she'koach*. IS there a right way?

## Now Wash Your Hands

Before I get to the point, I forgot to mention while holding up the hand-washing diagram that, if you are getting fed up with singing Happy Birthday, God Save the Queen or your favourite nursery rhyme, try "*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech Ha'Olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim*", the blessing for hand-washing (see the diagram at foot of col. 3). I also got muddled about the date of the new moon - been indoors so long I have lost track - it is/was on 26 March.

This was our first virtual Shabbat service. We are delighted that so many of you tuned in. For the foreseeable future, all our services, like all our classes and other activities, will be online only, but from now on they will be led from people's homes rather than the synagogue building so that as many people as possible have an opportunity to participate.

## Help us make things even better

If you have any comments or suggestions - things you would like to see included or left out, ideas about how to make them more inclusive, whatever - please send them to the Board or to our Senior Warden, **Stephanie** (rrc@bromleyshul.org.uk).

## These Uncertain Times

The following message has been received from Reform Judaism

18 March 2020

Dear Members,

Our faith and our communities are part of our lives to bring us joy, but more importantly, equip us for times of difficulty. The ongoing coronavirus situation is concerning, but while many elements of daily life are shutting down, our Jewish values will ramp up. Whilst we are having to distance ourselves physically, our communities can come closer together than ever before. We are here to do all we can to support our members and communities to not only get by, but thrive to the best of our ability no matter what the current situation brings.

The physical doors of the synagogue may be closed, but our communities are open. We are meeting with communities on a weekly basis to do all we can to offer our help as we all adapt to the current situation.

On the Reform Judaism website, you can access our Covid-19 advice and resources page, which will be updated regularly with the latest information and a wide range of opportunities to engage in Jewish life during this time. Our Reform Judaism siddur and haggadah will shortly be available online and many communities are streaming services which all are welcome to join virtually. Our Youth Department and RSY-Netzer, our youth movement, will also be making activities and resources available for our children. All of this can be accessed through the dedicated page on the Reform Judaism website:

Everything is new and experimental, so your input and feedback are vital and very welcome. Services can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/c/BromleyReformSynagogue> and, in case you don't have your own book, the very accessible on-line RJ siddur is at <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/408118/>

Finally, massive thanks again to our wizard webmaster Kieron, who has gone well above and beyond his duties to make all our online events possible in such a short time and who has put up with my technical incompetence with such fortitude.

**Judi Sheffrin,**  
07968 324981

<https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/covid-19-information/>

Pesach, the celebration of our freedom, is also on the horizon and the current guidance on gatherings may prevent your usual celebrations from taking place. Many communities will be running an online second night Seder for all of their members to give everyone the opportunity to join with others at this special time of the year. If your community is not running their own online, you are invited to join Senior Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner virtually for second night Seder - please email [sonia@rjuk.org](mailto:sonia@rjuk.org) to register and for more information.

At the Pesach Seder, we read that, in every generation, our community has faced challenges, but our tradition and our community have enabled us to overcome them. That remains true today - our values as Reform Jews are as vital now as ever. We must recall the ultimate value of life and ensure we do our bit to suppress the spread of this illness to save lives. Then we must see the vulnerable in our communities and do all we can to help them. There seems to be a lot needed today to complete the vision of *tikkun olam* - repairing our world. Together, we can make a crucial start.

May we soon see an end to these uncertain times,

**Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner,**  
Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism

**Rabbi Fabian Sborovsky,** Chair,  
Assembly of Reform Rabbis & Cantors



## Our Jewish Cemetery in South London

Dear Members,

We wrote to you a few weeks ago about setting up a Jewish cemetery in Kemnal Park, a cemetery local to our community. So much has happened since then and we did not have the opportunity to explain to the membership at the AGM how this scheme would operate and the extra costs involved.

We want to stress that this project is adding another option for our members – burial at either of the Cheshunt cemeteries or cremation is still available and all reserved plots will be honoured. However, a number of our members have said that they would very much like the option of being buried locally according to the Jewish tradition and Kemnal Park would fulfil that need.

Kemnal Park have offered a dedicated enclosed area large enough for 50 plots, with a surrounding hedge, gate and shingle path to be maintained by them. They have priced the first 20 double-depth plots at £3,700 each. Members can have the option of paying up front to lock into the price or their estate can pay at the time of death. There would be no further costs for a second interment in the same plot. Undertakers' costs, digging fees etc. and all arrangements for burial would be handled by the shul and the JJBS, as is the case with a Cheshunt burial.

You may be interested to know that if you choose to be buried in the general area at Kemnal Park the costs would be more than doubled and you would be looking at something in the region of £8,000 for the first interment and, of course, you would need to handle all the arrangements.

If you are interested in considering this option, whether you pay up front or would prefer to wait for your estate to pay, we would appreciate your contacting us. There is no obligation if you register your interest.

Please contact either

**Janet Posner:**

janet.posner@outlook.com

07841 373309 or

**Adrian Jackson:**

ade1380@outlook.com

07877 577737

## SERVICES - April 2020 – Nisan/Iyar 5780

**Shabbat morning services will be continued in an online/streamed format only, beginning at 10.30 am. Please subscribe to BRS' YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/BromleyReformSynagogue/live>) for further information. Do not come to Highland Road.**

**Saturday 4 April**

**Hagadol** (Tsav - 10 Nisan)

Leviticus 7:22

Malachi 3: 4-24

**Wednesday 8 April**

**Erev Pesach - First Seder Night**

**Thursday 9 April**

**First Day of Pesach -**

**Festival service at 10.30 am**

Exodus 12: 37-51; Deut: 8: 10-18

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

**Saturday 11 April**

**Chol Ha-moed Pesach**

(Ki Tisa - 17 Nisan)

Exodus 13: 3-10; Deut: 10: 12-19

Song of Songs 2: 1-17

or Jeremiah: 45: 13-28

**Wednesday 15 April**

**Seventh Day of Pesach**

Exodus: 14:30-15:18; Deut: 4: 32-39

2 Samuel: 22:1-7, 17-31

**Saturday 18 April**

**Shemini** (24 Nisan)

Leviticus 10: 1-15

2 Samuel 6: 1-12

**Tuesday 21 April  
7 pm**

**Yom Hashoah** service led by John Posner and Marilyn Freeman

**Saturday 25 April**

**Atzmaut** (Tazria-Metzora)

**Rosh Chodesh Iyar**

Leviticus 13: 47-59 to 14: 1-20

Genesis 1: 14-19; Deut: 11: 8-12

2 Kings 7: 3-20



*Batman led the festival service on Erev Purim*

## The Book Group

Members of the book group are busy reading Aron Lansky's book "*Outwitting History*", on how he rescued a million books, saved a vanishing civilisation and established the National Yiddish Book Centre in New York.

Instead of gathering in the Shul library to discuss it on **Thursday 14 May at 7.45 p.m.** the discussion will take place via Zoom. Please email **Judy Woolfe** to add your name to her list. .

**Details: Judy Woolfe:**

jwoolfe@ntlworld.com

or 07989 091066 / 020 8464 8909.

## Linking past and present at BRS via *Parashat Vayakhel* and a special matriarch

One of the many casualties of the move to self-isolation and social distancing was the eagerly anticipated Kiddush on 21 March to celebrate the 90th birthday of **Hilda Lask**, which had taken place a few days earlier, so when I found that I was “leading” the service that day I took the opportunity to reflect on her role at BRS. This is entirely a personal view. I hope the shul as a whole will have the opportunity to salute Hilda very soon.

When my sisters and I joined the thriving Bromley cheder one cold November morning in 1965 we had no sense of time. The shul had been running for only a year but so far as we were concerned it might as well have been there forever. And the reason the cheder and the shul seemed so established after such a short time was the dedication of its founders. Among our “patriarchs”, who brought the shul into being by a combination of their intellect and the work of their own hands was Ivor Lask, a keen and talented amateur builder, who was part of the team of lay members that converted our present building. He later became, among other things, Hon Secretary and Editor, so there was no question about his intellectual ability either. If you are familiar with the portion *Vayakhel*, you might see where this is going ....

### Bromley's strong women

And the BRS “matriarchs”? Then, as now, our leadership included a huge cohort of strong, competent women. Just like the Children of Israel in *Vayakhel*, our founding members were called upon to bring their valuables – the 1960s equivalents of gemstones, precious metals, animal hair and skins to spin and dye, acacia wood etc – or their skills or both. Verses 21 to 26 tell us, “And they came, every one whom his spirit made willing ... men and women ... and brought [all those valuables] ... and all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun the goats' hair ....

### Skill, ability and knowledge

The commentary to verse 25 adds, “Throughout our history, Jewish women have contributed to ‘*Hiddur Mitzvah*’, the practice of giving the *mitzvot* an aesthetically pleasing context in their homes and synagogues through the skilled and creative work of their hands,” while that for verse 31 explains

“... the one singled out by the Lord has skill, ability and knowledge. Rashi defines “skill” as what a person learns from others; “ability” as the result of one’s own insight and experience and “knowledge” as divine inspiration, ideas that suddenly come to a person from an unknown source.”

### Dedication

By a wonderful coincidence we read this portion in the week of the 90th birthday of one of those BRS matriarchs who dedicated her willing heart, her skill and her hard work to this shul all those years ago and whose children and grandchildren continue that family tradition in so many amazingly varied ways. I’d love to embarrass every Lask and Mittelman by enumerating their skills, kindnesses and contributions to BRS and the wider world but that would take another 55 years.

### Tradition

More to the point, it would be to ignore the work of our remarkable current generation of leaders and members, men and women, who are not only sustaining the Bromley self-help ethos so strongly implanted by our founding generation but expanding it, never more demonstrably than in this testing time. As our extraordinary Vice-Chair Kieron -- whom I am happy to embarrass any time and who embodies that combination of physical ability and intellect called for in *Vayakhel* – posted within days of the announcement of the first restrictions: “We have been touched by the overwhelming generosity of a volunteer list that has already ballooned beyond expectation.”

### What's in a name?

Verse 30 states that B'tzalel was singled out by name. Prompted by this verse, the Midrash speculates on the importance of having a good reputation, a good name. “A person’s first “name”, we are told, is based on the reputation of his parents and family. But one can go only so far based on inherited merit. A person then acquires a second “name” based on his or her communal activity. However, there is a danger that that can be the result of superficial factors. Therefore, ultimately, it is only our living a good life that establishes our name.” That teaching is reflected in the poem by

Zelda, some of which surely applies today: “Everyone has a name given to him by his stature; and the way he smiles; and given to him by his clothing ... given to him by the stars; and given to him by his neighbours. Everyone has a name given to him by his love ... and given to him by his work.”

### Hard work and humour

So what is in a name? For the first nine years of my life, Hilda meant only one thing to me: she was my mother. The only other people I’d heard of by that name were Corrie’s Hilda Ogden and the Lancashire character actress Hylda Baker, best known for playing malapropism-fuelled gossips. Then I met Hilda Lask. At first glimpse she could not be more different from those last two: elegant, beautifully spoken, educated, discreet. But think about it: she has a great sense of humour; is tenacious in looking out for those she loves; generous to anyone in need; a ferociously hard worker both in her own home and anywhere else she puts her mind to it; a great cook; and a famously loyal, steadfast and dedicated friend to many around the globe. I am one of them and I thank her for showering me with love and generosity for more than 54 years. For most of that time, Ivor, with *his* skills, ability, knowledge and humour was by her side. His absence is tangible today.

### Mazal tov, Hilda

On top of the coincidence of this portion and Hilda’s special birthday, on 21 March we were due to welcome Rabbi Schell, a potential leader for BRS as it continues to evolve in its second half century. How utterly appropriate that Hilda, who was there at the inception and birth of the community, who brought to it her gold and acacia wood and spun for it her goats hair, who nurtured it and has seen it grow and change over the years, should be among those standing ready to welcome him and find out how and where he might lead us. She is a *mensch* and it is a privilege to know her.

Judi Sheffrin, written 16/3/2020

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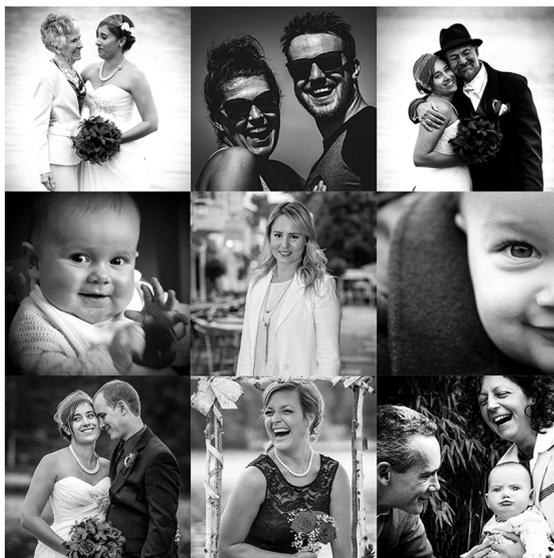
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