

## Another Very Busy Month



*Cover Girl Sue helped BRS to raise over £3,600 for Macmillan Cancer Support before, during and after the coffee morning in September. More on page 8.*

If you thought November was a quiet month, think again! This month we meet our new Cheder Head and learn what will be going on on Sunday mornings; find out how Chanukah 5781 will be extra special; and read about yet more talented people and innovative events and services.

Many members and visitors enjoyed the music over the High Holydays, so you'll be pleased to know that a CD is now available, all proceeds going to the synagogue. To buy your commemorative copy for £14.99, please contact [chair@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:chair@bromleyshul.org.uk) / 07956 234309. More on Community pages.

Talking of Chanukah, our brilliant parents' group, Hooray Cheder, has arranged lots of alternatives to the usual Chanukah Fair and party, including entertainment by Gilbert Giggles ... brief details on page 10.

There will be a Zoomed Chanukah candle lighting every single night. As our Rabbi says, we have lots of amazing people at BRS, far too many for a mere eight nights, but one person *will* take the lead for each, telling a story, shedding new light on the festival or putting his/her own spin on it (candles and dreidels not included). And as the Shabbat in Chanukah is also Human Rights Shabbat, expect something special from Rabbi Mati that morning too.

### Extraordinary General Meeting

Thursday 12 November at 7.30pm via Zoom, to seek ratification of the following, as advised to all members by email on 23 October. Please contact the office for the Zoom link if you do not have it.

**“An area within GreenAcres Kemnal Park has been demised to Bromley and District Reform Synagogue under a Lease and has been designated for the personal use of Bromley Reform Synagogue and its members. Pursuant to the Lease, Bromley Reform Synagogue is permitted to use the designated area for 50 Bromley Reform Synagogue grave places. The Lease runs for a term of 125 years for which BRS will pay £1 per annum.”**

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# Thoughts from the Rabbi

## Time to try new things...

**“Get back to us after the festivals!” This is the response of any Israeli institution to queries submitted from early September until mid-October. In this season, religious Israelis prepare for and participate in festivals while the secular ones go on holiday. Understandably, synagogue life outside of Israel follows the example of the former rather than the latter. This means that after the festivals, anyone involved in Jewish life feels like they need a break.**



Luckily, both the secular and Jewish calendars give us some opportunity to catch our breath. After Simchat Torah, there are no Jewish holidays until Chanukah; plus many of us use the half-term break as an opportunity to take some time off. As a result, under normal circumstances, many of us are then ready for November. Yes, its days might be shorter after we turn our clocks back in late October, but long and rainy November evenings invite us to get cosy and warm at home.

In many ways, this November will be similar. The days will be getting shorter, and it will probably rain a fair amount. However, this year we will experience it differently for two reasons. Firstly, we enter November after a very unusual seven or eight months. Since March, we have all spent much more time at home this year than we ever thought we would. For many of us, home has also become our workplace. For those of us belonging to vulnerable groups, home was designated as a safe(r) space and we were encouraged to stay in if possible. Even after these restrictions were temporarily eased, for many of us home still has felt safer than navigating social distancing in public spaces.

Secondly, this year we won't be meeting friends and extended family indoors, which prevents us from inviting them round for a cuppa or going out to a restaurant together.

When I first realised how different this year's November will be from that of years past, I felt a bit down. But then I found a number of silver linings...

First and foremost, we have each other. As a community, we have found ways to virtually support and celebrate our members. Soon, we will be able to take pride in the strength of our community as we celebrate **Max Campling's Bar Mitzvah on 7 November**. I hope many of you will watch this service on YouTube to support Max and join in the joy with his family.

Just one week later, on **14 November**, we will invite friends from local Christian and Muslim communities to join us for the Shabbat of Interfaith Week. During the service itself and in the study session that follows it, we will take the opportunity to draw on the wisdom of all three Abrahamic traditions. All will be welcome to watch and/or join in.

Secondly, the ban on seeing people indoors can actually motivate many of us to exercise more outdoors. Under normal circumstances, November weather does not encourage us to go for a walk or a run. Now, when our social lives are largely limited to socially-distant outdoor meetings, we might warm up to the idea of long November walks. You never know... socially distanced walks with friends could be a good way to keep us healthy and connected.

Thirdly, there are always a thousand things that we have always wanted to learn or do but keep putting off. Now – after we have come back from our outdoor walk – we can finally try them out. Luckily for us, the opportunities for online learning are truly limitless these days. My family is a good example of how you can take advantage of the learning that is available: my dad takes drawing classes; my mum subscribes to YouTube baking tutorials; my aunt is learning to play the saxophone, and my brother is attending a course on the history of Israel. Now that the festivals are over, I am thinking of taking up French. *Très bien!*

So what will your project be? If you are considering learning something new about Judaism, I am here for you. Please keep a look out for education sessions scheduled for this month in this issue of Highlight. I truly believe that if we embrace the opportunities that this November offers us, we will be in for a real journey of discovery, and self-discovery. I am excited to see where these journeys will take us – both as individuals and as a community.

**I hope and pray you all stay safe, healthy and busy trying out new things!**

**Rabbi Mati Kirschenbaum**

# View from the Chair

## “The Crack in the Water Bucket” – a traditional Jewish tale

As I was reading at bedtime to my son from a book of old Jewish stories, I came across one which really made an impact on me. I have paraphrased it here:

A long time ago before modern plumbing, there was once a water carrier; a big, barrel-chested man who would carry his two large water buckets on either end of a long pole, which he slung over his shoulders, the buckets hanging down over each side. Every day, he would go to a stream to fill up the buckets of water and carry them along the narrow roads back into the village. He would do this again and again, day after day. It wasn't the most interesting way to spend the day, but it was his job.

What made it even more difficult was that one of the buckets was cracked. It wasn't intentional and the cracked water bucket felt awful about this. She knew if it wasn't for the crack, the water carrier would have to make far fewer trips to and from the stream. It didn't help that the other bucket was quick to remind the leaky bucket how superior he was to her. One day, the poor leaky bucket couldn't take it anymore. She complained aloud to the water carrier that she was so sorry and she just wanted to do her job. She couldn't understand why the water carrier hadn't thrown her out, and she wanted to know how she could be a better bucket for him. The water carrier listened for a while and simply said, “let's talk about this tomorrow morning”.

The next day, the water carrier took his two buckets on either side of the long pole and carried them down to the stream where he filled both of them with water. When he began to walk down the path to the village, he turned to the bucket

without the crack on his right and asked: “What do you see?” The bucket said: “All I see is the path we walk up and down every day. There is dirt and nothing else.”

The water carrier then turned to the leaky bucket on his left, and asked: “What do you see?” The bucket replied: “Oh, it is beautiful. There are wild flowers and berries growing by the side of the road and everything is lush and green.”

The water carrier said to her: “I know that you leak, I know that life is hard sometimes, but I also knew that the place where you were cracked could be a blessing. I planted seeds along your side of the road. You and I watered them together each day as we travelled into the village. They brought great joy to me over the years and to others in the village as well.” He concluded by saying to the leaky bucket that she may be a little bit broken, but that is also precisely what can make for a blessing in the world.

I know this is a children's story, but it really made me think about the cracked world we live in right now, and the cracks I see in myself; how we judge ourselves, and how it is worth being more gentle and kind to ourselves and others around us.

There has been an abundance of kindness around BRS. After the success of the High Holydays and the beautiful music, Vicki and Olly Ashmore have produced BRS's first CD: “Bromley Reform Synagogue Community Choir sings Music of the High Holydays”. There is a limited number of CDs, and details of how to buy one can be found in this issue of Highlight – all money raised goes towards our shul. This is a great example of how, even



though there was a massive crack in our normality, our community and Rabbi created the best High Holydays for us.

The Caring Community members have been busy with ideas, so look out for Pauline's Tea Parties and Knit & Natter sessions. The Social Centre has been up and running for a while via Zoom. To enable these wonderful and essential events to take place, we are looking for volunteers. This could just be an hour to talk to the Social Centre, or to deliver care packages to those who could do with a little extra.

As Chanukah approaches, we are also looking to support the Cheder PTA in an alternative to the Chanukah Fair. Sonia Hyams has lots of wonderful things planned, so look out for announcements. I will be running my usual online auction, so please send your donation of skills, promises or gifts to me.

On Multifaith Shabbat, Rabbi Mati will lead a study session to which friends from local churches and mosques have been invited. Details on the Rabbi's page.

That only leaves me to say thank you to every one of you who makes BRS such a special place.

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

# Cheder News: Welcome Frankie!

## The new Head of Cheder, Frankie Gruzd!



**Frankie is BRS's Cheder headteacher. She took time to talk to Cheder parent and writer Amelia Kyazze about her background, her vision for Cheder and even her favourite emoji.**

*AK: Welcome to BRS! We're really happy to have you here. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your background?*

FG: I'm a graduate of Leo Baeck College; wanting to make a real difference to cheder education I decided to take their MA in Jewish Educational Leadership. As someone who had been involved in designing curricula for educational charities, I wanted to be ready, aware of trends in Jewish education and better prepared for the challenges of cheder teaching. As a cheder teacher and experienced headteacher, I am a reflective practitioner, always learning with my team, and most of all from the pupils themselves.

I'm originally a North Londoner like many other Jews, but Judaism was not a strong part of my childhood. It was only when I went to Leeds Uni, to study politics, that I really started my Jewish journey. My late husband, Colin, was a South African Jew. His ruach, the warm spirit of Judaism, inspired me and continues to inspire me today.

I started out as a parliamentary lobbyist, working with the Anti-Apartheid movement. Later, I worked with the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, and so I know some sign language. I then also worked for the NSPCC, so pursuit of social justice is close to my heart.

I am a storyteller. I love to incorporate stories, and to write new ones, as part of the cheder curriculum and lesson plans.

*AK: What are you looking forward to with BRS Cheder?*

FG: Even before I officially started at BRS, I joined a teacher training event on Zoom and popped into HomeShul classes. It was great to see first-hand the HomeShul team's commitment to making the Cheder experience the best it can be for the pupils, even in these strange times. I'm looking forward to working with them, building on Vicki's great legacy, and learning how best to align my talents to BRS's own distinctive community character and ethos. I am looking forward to getting to know people. However, with social distancing, all those wonderful quick chats and in-the-moment greetings can't happen just yet.

I'm going to work with Rabbi Mati to ensure we can support the teachers with progressive modern, accessible stories and angles on Torah texts that they can use in the classrooms. So when, for example, we look at patriarchs and matriarchs, we have stories or interpretative angles which show their human flaws and mistakes; they are people who we can certainly learn from, rather than just deferring to them or putting them on a pedestal.

*AK: What kind of support do you want from parents?*

FG: Cheder learning works best when there is a good partnership between home and Cheder. On a simple basis, it would be so helpful for us if parents could ensure their Zoom label has the child's name and class. It also helps all our teachers if any materials are ready to hand each week.

I'm glad that there is a Hooray Cheder group that brings together parents and teachers. We need to have feedback so we continually improve and are responsive to pupils' own learning journeys.

Kieron is going to set up a dedicated Zoom space for me during HomeShul, so parents can come and chat with me. So if you would like to pop in to "Frankie's Virtual Office", or have any issues you'd like to raise, let me know on [cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk). I am also contactable (Tuesday-Thursday) on 07564 715079.

*AK: When will the children be allowed back in the building?*

FG: Not soon enough! In my first week, Vicki met me at the building to look around it and pick up essential supplies. It is a beautiful space, but it was odd to see it so quiet. Once it is deemed safe, I would like to have everyone back as soon as possible. We'll have a warm welcome for all the children on that day, with new displays for every class to reflect the great learning that has been happening.

*AK: I asked some Cheder children if they had questions for you, and these are some of what they came up with. First of all, what is your favourite Jewish holiday?*

FG: That would have to be Rosh Hashanah. I love its theme of renewal, the food, the honey cake, the sound of the shofar and – in normal years – getting together with friends and family.

*AK: How do you say “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” in Hebrew?*

FG: That’s an interesting question. I would probably Google it first! Ivrit is a living language and includes some words from other languages anyway... so it might be the same, just with a different accent! I would say to the youngster asking the question: make a start yourself! Saying it in biblical Hebrew would be a real challenge. Though with a compound Hebrew word of that length I would probably say it very slowly. Let’s have a go together. Perhaps, the nearest equivalent would be to blow a tekiah gedolah like on Rosh Hashanah.

*AK: What would you rather be, a bee or a butterfly?*

I’d rather be a bee, because they make honey for Rosh Hashanah. They play a seemingly small but vital role for our planet pollinators, and the life-cycle of flowers, plants and crops. Bees are hard working but they do get to visit lots of flowers.... which would you rather be(e)?

*AK: What is your favourite emoji?*

FG: That’s hard; I don’t use emojis very often. However, I think it would have to be the party popper with little streamers. I use that one to say Mazel Tov, “happy birthday” or “congratulations” for exams, or for blessings.

*AK: What is your vision for BRS Cheder?*

FG: My vision is an holistic one: Cheder should be a place where we can help Jews find in their Jewishness ways to live more purposeful, meaningful lives. Cheder can play a formative role in helping us explore and make connections to the Jewish parts of our identity, and it can be where we nurture a sense of pride and confidence in that identity. I like to talk about the head and heart. We support the head by teaching knowledge, Hebrew and history. We support the heart when we teach values and make space for discussion and long-lasting friendships.

Coming from a social action background, I also talk of hands and feet, doing and stepping up to help others or make a stand. It’s important that we encourage pupils to take their Judaism or Jewish values into their everyday lives, to see its relevance and purpose beyond the classroom.

Gosh! That sounds a lot to pack into a relatively short time for Cheder! I am, of course, talking about ensuring a range of activities and experiences across the cheder term or year. Flexibility and a sense of humour are important!

## From Frankie’s desk:

**In November, we will be heading towards Mitzvah Day on the 15th, and will be exploring what the Genesis stories of Avram and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, flaws and all, can teach us about how to behave towards each other. And we will be looking at the epic tales of sibling rivalry between Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel – not all was so quiet and peaceful in their tents!**

HomeShul will continue on Zoom from 10am until further notice. You can log on from 9.45am – in fact it’s best that you join us from then so we don’t have everyone trying to join at the same time. You can always log in at 9.45am, allow Kieron to put you in your virtual classroom and then go make a cup of tea, ready to begin at 10am.

It would be especially helpful at this time if you join us with your children’s names and classes in their Zoom.

**PLEASE STAY WITHIN EARSHOT OF YOUR CHILD DURING HOMESHUL.** We can teach your children remotely, but we can’t make sure they behave!

**Helper development** will continue during HomeShul at 10am. Please make sure all Helpers have signed in by 9.55am to make sure we start on time.

And remember to check for an email from your teacher every Friday before the Sunday of HomeShul. Occasionally you may receive one even earlier if the teacher will be asking you for things you may need time to collect (shoeboxes, egg cartons, toilet roll tubes, that sort of thing). Your regular Friday email will still talk about the theme of the week and will always have the Zoom link to HomeShul, which is the same every week.

## Chanukah is Coming

### Look out for details of the

#### Promises Auction

Opening on 2 November

#### Family Quiz

Saturday, December 12, 6.00pm, including candle-lighting, all welcome

#### Gilbert Giggles online

Sunday 13 December, 5.00pm, including candle-lighting for all.

# Education

## Remember When....

We were able to meet in the Garden Room after a Shabbat morning service, share a lunch followed by a study session? Well, how about joining us for a virtual version? Rabbi Mati will be leading a study session on **Shabbat, 14 November**, starting at 12.30pm. We can enjoy the service on YouTube then either have our lunch or bring it along to eat as we study via zoom. At this first session we will be joined by the **Three Faiths Group** and we are extending a cordial invitation to members of **Keston Mosque and Bromley Churches** to join us.

**Other study session dates** for November are as follows:

Wednesday, 4 November – Pirkei Avot, continued

Thursday, 18 November – More Broyles in Bromley, topic to be announced

Tuesday, 24 November – Parashah Study.

All will be led by Rabi Mati and will begin at 7.30pm.

**The zoom link for all the rabbi's study sessions is**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81044309130>

So far, all our Adult Education sessions have been led by Rabbi Mati. We are looking to vary things somewhat in future, with something musical for example. If there is anything you would like us to arrange, or would like to offer to lead, please get in touch at [education@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:education@bromleyshul.org.uk)

Thank you. Barbara.

## Home Sukkot den-building!

Children from across the synagogue sent in their photos of their valiant efforts to build a sukkah at home, and, due to the weather, the indoor variations were particularly imaginative this year:



## Prof Bernie Cohen

**will be appearing shortly on your screens with his talk: *Were the Sages the First Post-structuralists or What were the Rabbis doing in the Garden?***

Starting from the mysterious Talmudic tale of the four sages in the Garden (*Chagigah 14b*), and its fictional retelling by Milton Steinberg (*As a Driven Leaf*, 1939), we examine the historical attempts to construct a proof for (or against) the existence of God and the influence on Western philosophy of these interactions between spiritual and rational thought.

With this in mind, we re-examine the words of the Sages in *Pirke Avot* and find their messages remarkably similar to those of such post-structuralist philosophers as Sartre, Levinas, Foucault and Lacan.

Join us on zoom on  
**Thursday, 3 December, 2020,  
at 7.30pm**

The link will be provided nearer the date. Please contact Barbara for further details  
[a.bkurtz@talktalk.net](mailto:a.bkurtz@talktalk.net)

# In Our Community

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## SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

### Bar Mitzvah

A hearty Mazal Tov to **Max Campling** and his family and teachers on the occasion of his bar mitzvah, which he will celebrate on Saturday, 7 November, *Shabbat Va-Yera*. All are welcome to view the service on the synagogue's usual YouTube channel.

### Welcome to new members

**Victoria Hart** of Sidcup  
**Oren Marshall** and daughter Raquel, of Lee Green  
**Simon Dahdi** and son Solomon, of Orpington

### Bereavement

Condolences to all the family on the death, in the United States, of **Jean Solomon**, grandmother of Vicki Ashmore, grandmother-in-law of Olly and great-grandmother of Rachael, Aimee and Jemma. May Jean's memory be for a blessing.

### Thanks for condolences

Heidi Small and Bob Symonds would like to thank the many members of the congregation who sent condolences following the death of Heidi's great aunt and Bob's aunt, **Lilian Stern**, in Cleveland, Ohio at the age of almost 101. Lilian's passing marks the end of an era for the family as she was the youngest of 12 siblings, the first three of whom were born in Poland before the family emigrated to London in 1906 to escape the pogroms of those days.

**Heidi Small and Bob Symonds**

### Zug Torah – Couple of the Torah



A special Mazal Tov to **Stephanie Alberti** and her supportive husband, **George**, who were honoured at Simchat Torah by being named Zug Torah (Couple of the Torah) in recognition of all of Stephanie's hard work as Senior Warden, loyally supported by George, in ensuring that all the services went off smoothly during this year's very unusual High Holydays.

### Thanks from Stephanie and George

Dear Shul members

We would like to thank the BRS congregation for the great honour of our being "Zug Torah" during this year's Simchat Torah celebrations. To share the occasion with the whole congregation being B'nei Bereshit was particularly special. We are hugely proud of having been a small part of the way BRS has created its COVID-proof community – for which neither of the commonly used descriptors of "virtual" or "remote" are at all appropriate. Our support for each other and our Zooms and streams are both real and close. Nothing that we have achieved as a virtual community would have been possible without so many people in the congregation going many extra miles to make things happen and we thank you all for making us part of that.

With very best wishes  
**Stephanie and George Alberti**

### Pauline writes on behalf of the Caring Community:

We are thinking of all synagogue members, their families and friends at this very difficult and challenging time as we face the changing Covid scenario and have other health worries too. The Caring Community would like to hear from you if you want to talk and share. The Caring Community is about all of us, of course, so it is important to share how we are feeling. We are here for each other.

We are planning various happenings for the near future, where we will meet socially via Zoom and by telephone and e-mail. Watch this space!

## SOCIAL CENTRE NEWS

*Social centre members go on a virtual tour of the farm, swap recipes, hear about lockdown in care homes and make Dianne blush*

There we were, looking at our screens and enjoying seeing our friends greeting and waving at us once more.

Sue mentioned that she had made an apple and honey cake, making us drool. Valerie Holden had even managed to join the meeting by courtesy of a helpful neighbour. Denise told us about the wonderful party her family had organised for her and her husband's 60th wedding anniversary, even showing us her card from the Queen. *Congratulations!*

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## Cider, Chickens and Climate Change

Wednesday, 16 September

We were treated to an interesting talk by **Talia Chain** about her job working at the **Sadeh Farm**. Talia took us on a Zoomed tour of the farm where we saw volunteers making cider from the apples grown on the farm trees. Then we were led alongside a willow fence, indicating that all natural and available materials were used where possible on the farm. Then we were led to the chicken area where rescue chickens were happily living next to the compost heap.

Talia was proud of the vegetable garden, where they were growing many different varieties of produce. The damson trees were giving prolific amounts of fruit so Talia could use her preserving skills.

In the grounds is Skeet Hill House, which is 500 years old (reputedly haunted as confirmed by Talia and some visitors) and is the dowager house to Lullingstone Castle.

There are many fruit trees and other varieties of tree, many planted during celebrations of Tu B'Shvat in previous years. A field had remained unmown in order to create a meadow habitat for wild life and, especially, butterflies. A neighbour was keeping bees, which produced honey that was sold on the farm. The farm is supported by generous donations of money and even furniture.

Talia had recently been on a multi-faith forum discussing climate change. We are grateful to her for her interesting talk and thank her for showing us around the very interesting projects at the Sadeh Farm.

**Maureen Pearlstone**



## Care, Crafts and Choir

Wednesday, 30 September

Social Centre members were delighted to welcome an old friend of BRS at their Zoom meeting on 30 September. **Stephen Ison**, Jewish Care's representative in South London is based at Nightingale, though he has been working from home since the Covid restrictions began, coping with the many calls for help heading Jewish Care's way.

He told us that the ten Jewish Care Nursing Homes went into lockdown very quickly, resulting in fewer Covid cases and bereavements than the average. Thanks to high-powered trustees with contacts, they were fortunate to secure a plentiful and continuing supply of PPE and tests. One unit at Nightingale had to be put into lockdown. New residents are quarantined for two weeks with a dedicated carer who looks after their welfare.

Currently visitors to their homes

are allowed, once per week by appointment, outside if possible, otherwise the resident remains inside with their visitor outdoors, while Nightingale has a designated area for visitors. Volunteers are still going into Nightingale and their activities continue as far as possible as normal.

Their day centres continue on Zoom, as do telephone meetings. Their diligent organiser sends out activity packs weekly in preparation for discussions on music, literature and craft. They have befriending volunteers phoning regularly, as do we at BRS through the Caring Community. As is the case with other charities, their financial situation is very bad. Though generous donations continue to arrive, more appeals will have to be made in the future.

Then members spoke of their enjoyment of our HDD services and their appreciation of the hard work of the Rabbi, Choir (thanks to Vicki and Olly Ashmore) and the R&R committee. Stephen told us tales of how the Orthodox and Charedi communities in North London and beyond had coped.

Barbara reported that the amount raised at the Macmillan Coffee Morning had reached £3,300, thanks in great part to the wonderful Sue who braved the shave. Sue joined us wearing one of her many wigs and removed it to a round of applause – she looks good without it!

**Barbara Kurtz**

## Hear about Eileen's journey

Barbara writes: We will meet on **Wednesdays, 11 and 25 November and 9 December**, all at 3 pm, on the usual Zoom link. I am not sure yet about 23 December.

On **25 November** we will be joined by new member **Eileen Fry**, who has offered to come and talk to us about "My journey in joining Bromley Reform Synagogue".

# In Our Community

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## A final word from Dianne

“I do want to thank Maureen for all her very kind words but without the cooperation of the loyal team of helpers the Social Centre could not have happened and my thanks go to them too. It has given me a great deal of pleasure to be with the members and to see their smiling faces. They have taught me a thing or two during the discussion groups and even made me blush. So if you think it's a dull group, please forget that; older people can be fun too.

Let's hope the Social Centre can reconvene in the Shul very soon and continue to give pleasure to more members.”

## To all our Knitters, Natterers and Stitchers ...

A virtual Knitters, Natterers and Stitchers meeting is planned for **Thursday, 19 November**. It is obviously going to be some time before we can get together as an actual group, so let's meet virtually over a cup of coffee and knit and chat together. I will be sending a Zoom link through to you and please pass it on to any friends I might have inadvertently missed. I look forward to seeing as many as are able to join us.

Meanwhile, happy knitting and stitching and keep safe and well.

**Pauline**

## The Virtual Macmillan Coffee Morning

For some 13 years a small group of us has been getting together annually to plan a BRS Macmillan

Coffee Morning, sending out flyers, inflating balloons, asking for donations of cakes, plants and raffle items and welcoming people with drinks, cakes and competitions on the day. We have raised some £9,000.

This year, we were challenged. The need was huge; so many people were waiting for their cancer treatment to be started or re-started and many more were waiting for diagnosis. We knew that referrals for diagnostic tests were down by some 21%; there had been a 25% drop in the number of people starting cancer treatment and almost a quarter of people with cancer felt they had nobody to talk to. How could we turn a successful “actual” event into an equally successful virtual one?

Then along came **Sue** offering to have her hair shaved off. Her comments and reflections are below. In addition to Sue's wonderful effort we decided to sell a virtual cake recipe book. This has been hugely successful. Details are at the end of this report.

## *How could we turn a successful “actual” event into an equally successful virtual one?*

At 10.30 am on 25 September Pauline welcomed everybody and invited them to drink tea and coffee, to eat virtual cakes together and to help make this our best ever virtual fundraiser. Our Rabbi, **Mati Kirschenbaum**, personalised his message about the importance of supporting cancer charities by

saying how he had lost family members to cancer. He welcomed everybody and thanked them for their kind support.

## *Support*

Our own **Harriet Posner**, a senior Macmillan staff member, spoke of the range of Macmillan information and support services available to people with cancer. These include over 5,300 Macmillan nurses and the Macmillan Support Line, which provides physical, emotional, financial and work support and information by 'phone. Harriet also talked about the breadth of information available on the website, the new online Personal Account and the Online Community bringing people together for peer support.

## *Progress*

**Dr John Posner**, who works in clinical research on new medicines, spoke about the enormous progress both in diagnosis and in many treatments – including surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy - over the past few decades, changing many forms of cancer into something that patients are able to live with rather than die from. For example, immunotherapy, which doesn't attack the cancer directly but enables the body's immune system to recognise and fight the tumour, has revolutionised the treatment of malignant melanoma and is contributing to the effective treatment of cancers such as lymphomas and tumours of kidney, bladder and lung.

Sadly, because of the restrictions currently in place, some of the physical has had to be paused. However, in response to the pandemic, Macmillan has

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developed new services, including the volunteer telephone buddies and the wellbeing coaches who cater to the emotional and physical wellbeing of the individual. On top of everything else, Macmillan has had a sharp decline in opportunities to fundraise. The cancellation of established fundraising events could mean it losing up to half its income this year, at a time when pressure on its services is growing.

## Vital Funds

With patients living longer and having a better quality of life, the ongoing support of Macmillan nurses in the home is needed more than ever. Events such as ours are vital to raising funds that will help them to continue to provide critical support to people with cancer. Thank you to everyone involved in making it happen, not least to Sue, and to everyone who has contributed.

## We raised how much?

At the time of writing we have raised £3,560. To collect such an amount at a BRS Virtual Macmillan Coffee Morning is absolutely amazing and beyond our wildest dreams. You can still contribute by making a cheque payable to: "Macmillan Cancer Support" and sending it to the synagogue at 28 Highland Road, Bromley, BR1 4AD (mark envelope "Macmillan Coffee Morning Appeal").

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If you donate an extra £5 and let Elka know at [elkacarr@gmail.com](mailto:elkacarr@gmail.com) she will e-mail you an electronic copy of the cake recipe booklet.

### Pauline Jeffree

### Braving the shave

**Sue Bowyer** writes:  
Wow, didn't we all do well raising all that money for Macmillan Cancer Research! I want to thank everyone who sponsored me. It was always on my bucket list, as my lovely husband Ron died of bowel cancer in 2006 and I nursed him at home.

Barbara and Pauline asked 'how did I feel when I was having it done?' I was quite happy, knowing I was doing it for a good cause after losing someone I loved to cancer. I am surprised it is growing back really dark. I thought at my age I would be grey or white. I have also got some lovely woolly hats coming for the winter.

*"Thank you to everyone involved in making it happen, and to everyone who has contributed."*

- 1 Look out for details over the next few weeks of all our Chanukah events ... 2
- 3 Communal Candle Lightings (on Zoom) led by a different person each night 4
- 5 The Quiz on 12 December and Gilbert Giggles on 13 December 6
- 7 The children's challenge to be sponsored to do eight things 8

# In Our Community

Page Contact:  
Bob Symonds:  
[comms@bromleyshul.org](mailto:comms@bromleyshul.org)

## Remembering Madeleine Harmes – 24 March 1933 - 18 September 2020



Madeleine grew up in the rural region of Hungary called Hordmesavadjadhay. She was the daughter of bakers and had a younger brother called Yossi. In 1944, with Fascism rampant in Europe, the entire family was taken to a concentration camp. Many died but, luckily, Mum, Yossi and their mother were still alive when their camp was liberated in 1945 by the Russians.

They returned to Hungary and, after schooling, Mum became a foundry technician – a good but physically tough job. When she was 19, she married and had her first son, Robi. Madeleine had a thirst for travel but, as Hungary was still behind the Iron Curtain, crossing the border was very risky and so, when her marriage ended, she had to leave her son behind with his paternal grandmother.

Initially, Mum went to live and work in a kibbutz in Israel, later moving to France to further her education. She then moved to England, living and working in London.

One day, on her journey to work on the tube, she noticed a dashing young man sitting opposite her. They saw each other frequently during those rush hour journeys until he started to speak to her in French. After a bit of persuasion, they agreed

to meet later, and so began a partnership that developed into a marriage of more than 56 years.

As their relationship got more serious, they moved in together. Renting at first in some rather run-down places including Clapham – it was a bit different then! Times were very tight but thanks, to a company mortgage scheme, they were able to buy their first home in Harrow – 81 Manor Road. They made some good friends in the area and eventually had their son, David. In the latter part of the 70's, it was time to move on, this time to South East London. After seeing quite a few houses, they settled on 51 Sandiland Crescent. It required some budget stretching, but they got it. It was near to a good school, Hayes, and had a very friendly and welcoming synagogue nearby too. Life was good, Dad got promoted and Mum did some part-time jobs to help out, including being the synagogue secretary for a while.

Mum and Dad always loved music, particularly classical. As well as going to concerts on the South Bank, they became members of 'Quest', a locally based music society. Members would put together programs about particular composers, genres or periods of musical history and presenting to the other members of the group. It was an inspired way of sharing the music they loved and giving an insight to those gathered to listen. They loved doing programs and put together quite a few.

Unfortunately, as the membership got older, fewer and fewer members were able to attend and the group eventually ceased to meet – a real shame for my parents and something they greatly missed.

Their other joint love was gardens and gardening. They were members of the National Trust and the majority of our holidays involved a number of visits to houses and castles and their associated gardens. Many hours were also spent in their own garden,

making it a truly beautiful space and ball games were certainly not permitted! Well, not until the grandchildren came along.

When my parents married, the ceremony was held in a registry office as Mum was Jewish and Dad was Christian. A few years later, Dad decided he felt the time was right to convert. He took the classes and was duly accepted. This allowed my parents to renew their vows on 2 February 1997 in Bromley Reform Synagogue – a celebration they both cherished.

Their latter years were beset by ill health. Dad broke his leg and underwent open heart surgery and Mum lost the use of her legs overnight to a mysterious illness. Initially, they did what they could to stay living in Sandiland Crescent, where they had been for over 30 years. The downstairs had conversion work completed for Mum and they had carers, initially popping in and finally living in.

Eventually, both Madeleine and Bob decided that they wanted to live somewhere where they were fully looked after and could forget the strains and stresses of running a household. In 2015, Nightingale Care home was chosen and they moved in – having rooms next to each other. As avid collectors of mementos, pictures, cd's and plates, leaving their home and vastly reducing what they could have in Nightingale proved very difficult, particularly for Mum.

Bob's ill health continued and he left us in April 2018. This hit Mum very hard and was a loss from which she never fully recovered.

Mum's early and final years were difficult, challenging and sometimes traumatic. The intervening 75 years or so, however, were filled with love, happiness and devotion to Bob and that is how I will remember her. May she rest in peace.

**David Harmes**

# Books, Art, Music, Theatre and ...

Compiled by Judy Woolfe and Marilyn McKeever.

Please send contributions to [marilynjmckeever@icloud.com](mailto:marilynjmckeever@icloud.com)

## Bromley Book Group

Our lively book group meets once every two months and we choose only inexpensive, readily available paperbacks, mostly novels, but sometimes non-fiction, of Jewish interest.

**The next (zoom) meeting is on Thursday 19 November at 8pm.**

We will be discussing *The Golem and the Djinni* by Helene Wecker. It is described as a work of historical fiction with elements of fantasy set in 19th century New York. Do join us if you are interested, even if you haven't been before, as we are a lively, friendly group. Contact Judy Woolfe - 07989091066 [jwoolfe@ntlworld.com](mailto:jwoolfe@ntlworld.com).

**Orchestra of Exiles : Wednesday 4 November at 9.30pm**

The story of the rescue of some of the world's greatest musicians from Nazi Germany who went on to form The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. This is a free online film from The Jewish Music Institute [www.jmi.org.uk](http://www.jmi.org.uk)

### Exhibitions

The following museums are open to visitors and have exhibitions of interest to all of us in Bromley. You will need to pre book a timed entry ticket and information about this is on all the web sites listed below.

**The Weiner Holocaust Library** [www.weinerlibrary.co.uk](http://www.weinerlibrary.co.uk) has an exhibition called Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust until 30 November. It is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 11.00am -3.00pm

**The British Library;** [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) has a major exhibition called **Hebrew Manuscripts, Journeys of the Written Word** until 11 April 2021. Cost £8 (some concessions)

The Victoria and Albert Museum; [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk) has a free display called **Concealed Histories**

### Paul Celan Centenary Celebration

Paul Celan was a renowned Rumanian Jewish poet. His life and work will be celebrated in a free Zoom event on **Monday 23 November 7.30-9.30pm**. Details and registration: [www.jewishrenaissance.org.uk](http://www.jewishrenaissance.org.uk)

### JEWISH BOOK WEEK

Author Philippe Sands will be in conversation with novelist Elif Shafak in a live stream event at 7.00pm on 15 November.

They will discuss his new book, *The Ratline*, the story of the Nazi governor of Galicia Otto Von Wachter, who presided over the mass murder of Jews and others in the region. He became a fugitive and was given refuge by The Vatican.

Tickets are £9.50. More details from [www.jewishbookweek.com](http://www.jewishbookweek.com)

### SUNRISE FOR OUR JULIE

BRS's Julie Binysh writes: "I am delighted to tell you that *Sunrise, not Sunset* (a film in which I play the daughter of elderly parents, screening on 9 November at 7.30pm) has been chosen for this year's Jewish Film Festival. The selectors said they found the film extremely powerful.

"The Jewish Film Festival is a BAFTA-qualifying festival. Full details of the festival (5 to 19 November) and of many other films and shorts available are at <https://ukjewishfilm.org/>

"As well as the promotion of our film within the industry this will also raise awareness about the Human Rights Act which is under threat again. The film will also promote the work of Rene Cassin, the Jewish human rights charity for which we made the film."

All of the following have on line events /courses/films

[Jw3.org.uk](http://Jw3.org.uk) The Jewish cultural Centre has some very interesting online courses. Some have a literature focus and others look at historical/topical themes

[www.jmi.org.uk](http://www.jmi.org.uk) for music events

[www.jewishbookweek.com](http://www.jewishbookweek.com) has an archive of on line talks

## Celebrating Simchat Torah



Rabbi Mati found the place while Stephanie and George Alberti, our Zug Torah, read for the Zoom service on 9 October. Above, Deuteronomy, below Genesis. With renewed thanks to John Posner who made it possible for the rabbi to use our own scrolls. See Community pages for Stephanie and George's thoughts and thanks.



### Brief reflections on the High Holydays 5781 at BRS

This year's High Holydays were certainly different from previous years but there was much in them to celebrate. We came together as a community, from our youngest to our most senior members; were informed and inspired by Rabbi Mati and our lay readers and sang our traditional melodies joyfully in or with our choir and our lovely quintet. *Hashanah ha ba'ah*, we really hope we will be able to be together in space as well as time but perhaps there are things we can take from the experiences of this year into the future.

If you have thoughts about this year's services that you would like to see inform the plans for next year, please do get in touch. And may 5781 be a year of healing and recovery for us all.

**Stephanie Alberti, Senior Warden.** rrc@bromleyshul.org.uk

## Services November 2020 : Cheshvan/Kislev 5781

**Friday evening** candle lightings will continue via Zoom at 7pm, unless otherwise indicated, at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/578441665>

**Shabbat morning** services will continue in an online/streamed format beginning at **10.30 am**. Please subscribe to BRS' YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/BromleyReformSynagogue/videos>

**Please do not come to Highland Road**

Fri 30 Oct Sat 31 Oct	Shabbat Lech Lecha Genesis 17: 1- 21 Isaiah 59: 1 -22 Led by Rabbi Mati, with Larry, Joanna and Judi
Fri 6 Nov Sat 7 Nov	Shabbat Vayera Genesis 21: 1 – 21 Isaiah 51: 1 – 8 Barmitzvah of <b>Max Campling</b> , conducted by Rabbi Mati
Fri 13 Nov Sat 14 Nov <i>Blessing for Kislev</i>	Shabbat Chayyei Sarah Genesis 24: 53-67 Samuel 1: 19: 1 -1 8 Led by Rabbi Mati, with Andreas and Sally Interfaith Week Shabbat. Study Session 12.30pm
Fri 20 Nov Sat 21 Nov	Shabbat Toledot Genesis 27: 1- 29 Judges 8: 22 – 28 Led by Rabbi Mati with David, Sheila and Marilyn
Fri 27 Nov Sat 28 Nov	Shabbat Vayetze Genesis 31:36 – 32:3 Hosea 11:7-12.9* Led by Rabbi Mati with Stephanie and Judi  <i>Service leaders/readers are correct at time of compilation but subject to last-minute substitution</i>



Bromley Reform Synagogue Yizkor/Neilah Live Stream - 28 Sept 2020

90 watching now

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# BRS AND BEYOND

Events involving organisations associated with but not part of the synagogue

Page editor:

Marilyn McKeever:

please send contributions to [marilynjmckeeper@icloud.com](mailto:marilynjmckeeper@icloud.com)

## The Genesis Prize: have your say

Help choose the next Genesis Prize Laureate. The Genesis Prize is an annual award celebrating Jewish achievement by honouring world-renowned individuals for their professional accomplishments, commitment to Jewish values, and contribution to improving the world. All previous Genesis Prize Laureates have chosen to direct their \$1 million awards to NGOs to address issues of importance.

The Genesis Prize encourages the broadest possible participation in the selection process. From over 4,000 nominations by 45,000 people, seven have been selected as finalists.

- Lord Jonathan Sacks, Writer and Former UK Chief Rabbi
- Elena Kagan, U.S. Supreme Court Justice
- Barbra Streisand, American Singer and Actor
- Sacha Baron Cohen, Actor, Writer and Activist
- Gal Gadot, Israel's Star in Hollywood
- Steven Spielberg, World Renown Cinema Director
- Marc Benioff, Founder of Salesforce and Owner of Time Magazine

You can help to choose the next Laureate by clicking here to vote. Please share this link with your friends and family too.

### "Joseph of the Bible (Genesis 37-50)"

with Rev John Barton FBA, and

**Rabbi Mati Kirschenbaum, Bromley Reform Synagogue**

*Under the auspices of the Council of Christians and Jews, SE London Branch*

**Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 6.30 pm via Zoom**

There will be the opportunity to ask the speakers questions.

If you are interested, please pre-register by **Monday 9 November**.

To receive a link to this online meeting, please contact Stephen Weil:

[stephenweil6@gmail.com](mailto:stephenweil6@gmail.com) 020 8299 4141

## AJEX Remembrance Ceremony, Shabbat and Campaign

Even in the face of Covid 19, AJEX is committed, as ever, to remembering the sacrifice and dedication of our ex Servicemen and Women. Sadly, the pandemic means that the AJEX Annual Parade and Ceremony at The Cenotaph cannot not go ahead this November in the usual way. The Remembrance Ceremony will instead be held online **at 2.30pm on 15 November at** [http://www.youtube.com/ajex\\_jma](http://www.youtube.com/ajex_jma) Details of all AJEX events, and updates on this one, may be found at [www.ajex.org.uk](http://www.ajex.org.uk)

## Three Faiths Forum

Nearly 30 people attended the (virtual) meeting of the Bromley 3 Faith Group at the end of September to talk about their favourite festivals and to meet the interfaith coordinators for the local Borough and the police. Please contact Matthew de Lange: [matthew\\_delange@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:matthew_delange@yahoo.co.uk) if you would like to receive information about the group's activities. Oh, and by the way, Matthew said his favourite festival was Christmas - because "we get to do all the fun stuff without having to go to shul!" He did then go on to choose shabbat!

## Music Matters

Free Lecture-Recitals are available to view online throughout the Autumn season. Presentations include; Songs of the Trombone, Beethoven in the City and Duos with a Difference. To request the links via email, contact Margaret Archibald [margaret@everyone-matters.co.uk](mailto:margaret@everyone-matters.co.uk)

## AJEX Branch Closure

**SW London and Surrey branch of AJEX has closed and future communications will come from Head Office. The organisation explains: 'AJEX is dedicated to helping our veterans and serving Jewish armed forces people and their dependants, preserving our rich history of service to this country, educating future generations and remembering those who have fought in successive wars and conflicts.'**

## Calendar: November/December 2020 – Cheshvan/Kislev/Tevet 5781

November	
Sun 1	Half Term
Mon 2	Hebrew 1, 7pm Launch of Online Auction of Promises
Tue 3	
Wed 4	Ulpan 6pm Study Session, 7.30pm, Pirke Avot
Thur 5	Hebrew 2, 7.30pm
Fri 6	Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 7	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am <b>Barmitzvah of Max Campling</b>
Sun 8	Cheder 10.00am
Mon 9	Hebrew 1, 7pm
Tue 10	CCJ Meeting, 6.30pm
Wed 11	Social Centre, 3.00pm Ulpan 6pm
Thur 12	Hebrew 2, 7.30pm EGM regarding burial plots 7.30pm
Fri 13	Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 14	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am Post-service study with Rabbi Mati, focusing on Interfaith Week. 12.30pm. Bring your own lunch!
Sun 15	
Mon 16	Hebrew 1, 7pm
Tue 17	
Wed 18	Ulpan 6pm Study Session, 7.30pm, More Broyges!
Thur 19	Virtual Knit, Natter and Stitching with Pauline, 10.30am – noon Hebrew 2, 7.30pm Book Club 8.00pm-9.30pm
Fri 20	Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 21	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am
Sun 22	
Mon 23	Hebrew 1, 7pm
Tue 24	Study Session, 7.30pm, Parashah
Wed 25	Social Centre, 3pm, Talk by new member Eileen Fry ; Ulpan 6pm
Thur 26	
Fri 27	Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 28	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am
Sun 29	
Mon 30	

December	
Tue 1	
Wed 2	
Thur 3	Talk by Prof Bernie Cohen, 7.30pm
Fri 4	Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 5	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am
Sun 6	
Mon 7	
Tue 8	
Wed 9	Social Centre, 3.00pm
Thur 10	<i>Chanukah 1st Candle</i> – Candle Lighting with Rabbi Mati 7pm
Fri 11	Shabbat Candle Lighting 7pm <i>Chanukah 2nd Candle</i>
Sat 12	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am Human Rights Shabbat <i>Chanukah 3rd Candle and</i> Family Zoom Quiz 6.00pm
Sun 13	<i>Chanukah 4th Candle and</i> Gilbert Giggles Online, 5.00pm
Mon 14	<i>Chanukah 5th Candle</i> Communal Zoomed Candle Lighting 7.00pm
Tue 15	<i>Chanukah 6th Candle</i> - Communal Zoomed Candle Lighting 7.00pm
Wed 16	<i>Chanukah 7th Candle</i> - Communal Zoomed Candle Lighting 7.00pm
Thur 17	<i>Chanukah 8th Candle</i> - Communal Zoomed Candle Lighting 7.00pm
Fri 18	Shabbat Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 19	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am
Sun 20	
Mon 21	
Tue 22	
Wed 23	
Thur 24	
Fri 25	Shabbat Candle Lighting 7pm
Sat 26	Shabbat Morning Service 10.30am
Sun 27	
Mon 28	
Tue 29	
Wed 30	
Thur 31	

**BROMLEY REFORM SYNAGOGUE** 28 Highland Road, BR1 4AD : 020-8460 5460 : [www.bromleyshul.org.uk](http://www.bromleyshul.org.uk)

**Office** open 9.30 am to 12.30 pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Email: [admin@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:admin@bromleyshul.org.uk)

**Minister:** Rabbi Mati Kirschenbaum ([rabbi@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:rabbi@bromleyshul.org.uk))

**Chair:** Michelle Brooks Evans ([chair@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:chair@bromleyshul.org.uk))

**Vice Presidents:** Ronnie Goldberg, Dianne Mathews, Sally Rosebery, Bob Symonds, David Zerihan.

## Meet the Highlight and e-light team

**Bob Symonds:** since retiring as editor, Bob has been responsible for the Community pages, still at the heart of every Highlight.

**Danielle Woodward:** our former Cheder head is now making sure that the Chair and Rabbi have their pages ready every month.

**Amelia Kyazee:** as a writer and a cheder parent, who better to look after our Education and Cheder pages?

**Marilyn McKeever:** having been a cheder teacher for 20 years and a lawyer for something like twice that time, Marilyn needs a change of scene, so she is in charge of the "Beyond BRS" and Books pages, with Judy Woolfe providing some of the material.

**Judi Sheffrin:** for a date-obsessed pedant who likes topping and tailing, editing the front, back, diary and services pages is the ideal job, and co-ordinating everyone else's is a bonus.

**Joanna Biggin:** having recently improved the look, layout and content of e-light, Jo also proofreads everyone's pages.

*And for the very final word, who else but our wonderful*

**Kieron Hyams,** webmaster and now zoom-master extraordinaire, who creates the link that we send you so you can access and print your very own Highlight every month.

*So that's eight or nine people to do what Bob did all on his own, year in, year out. The least we can say this month is **Happy Birthday, Bob!***

But don't worry about who does what. You can use one e-mail address,

[comms@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:comms@bromleyshul.org.uk),  
for any or all of us.

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