



## Interpreting and living Reform Judaism in 21C South London

We often celebrate the fact that, here in Bromley, we have such a deep well of knowledge from which to draw, as was demonstrated particularly during lockdown. More recently, our experienced speakers, alternating with guest preachers and Rabbi Laura, have continued to stimulate. But it's not just them: Our current B'Mitzvah cohort, supported by DY, now Rabbi, Stern and, more recently Rabbi Laura, has demonstrated exceptional insight and maturity and a real grasp of what it means to be a Jew in 21st century Britain, and how to make that meaningful and relevant in daily life. DY's formal farewell service and presentation was on 18 June. He's pictured above with most of the BM group, his elder daughter and Rabbi Laura.

Long before this group's parents were born, Helen Aronson learned to value the kindness of others. She has gone on to practise that throughout her 95 years and you can read her interview with Judy Woolfe on page 5, followed by a report of one of the things that's always been at the heart of BRS: our Caring Community. That group's formal work is supplemented daily by the acts of kindness of so many, and one cannot think of them without remembering Pauline Jeffree, who inspired us for so many years. Funds are still being collected in her name; contact: [matthew.delange@metaforepartners.com](mailto:matthew.delange@metaforepartners.com) - to know more.

In just three months, Rabbi Laura seems to have re-energised every single corner of the shul. If you can join one of her services or events, don't miss it! Have a safe, happy and healthy summer, and if you'd like to contribute to the Rosh Hashanah HighLight, details are on p.12.

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**Meet a BRS celebrity in her nineties on p5...**



*...and find out about some of our celebrities of the future pp 10 - 11*



*If you go down to the woods today, what'll you find? See p 10.*

# A View from the Chair from Jerusalem

As I write this from Jerusalem, I have had the chance to reflect on the past and look to the future. I realise many of my views from the chair have been about hope for the future for our community and being optimistic. I feel our resilience and patience are now being rewarded with our new Rabbi, Laura Janner-Klausner, having joined us in April, and our new Board firmly ensconced. It amazes me what our volunteers at BRS do, but I am thankful we now have a rabbi in place, a rabbi who gets what BRS is about, and who infuses the atmosphere with energy. When I say the future is exciting and the possibilities endless, they really are.

You may wonder what I am doing in Jerusalem. I am lucky to be able to visit my eldest, Lilinaz, who is studying here, and to take the children to see what their big sister is up to. It gave Ezra a chance to put into perspective what his upcoming bar mitzvah in October is about. It was also very poignant for me, as I remember going to a wedding with my mum in Israel, and this was my first visit after her passing. We went to the Western Wall to pray for both my parents. The visit was a chance to catch my breath and enjoy my children and it enabled me to prepare for the stone setting of both my parents at our new Kemnal Park cemetery.

Little did I know when we were working at establishing BRS's cemetery that my parents would end up there so soon. However, it reinforces to me now how

important it is for us, if we wish to have somewhere close by for the final resting place of our loved ones. My thanks go once again to Janet Posner, who helped me and my family so much last year with both my parents passing away, and to you, my community, for all the comfort and care you gave us and continue to give us.

Later this year, at 5pm on Sunday 27 November, our whole community is invited to come together to share memories of loved ones who died during the pandemic. This memorial service will be led by Rabbi Laura, and a special tea will follow it. Please let her know the names of all those to be included at [rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk)

We recently bade our student rabbi, David-Yehuda, a fond farewell. He has been with us since October 2021 and leaves behind a bnei mitzvah group well established under his guidance. DY's bnei mitzvah breakfasts have been enjoyed by the children and parents, and his performance on the bimah is now renowned. I am not just talking about his Torah readings and sermons, but getting the children all on the bimah to perform. Working with DY has been a pleasure, and I wish him the very best for the future. His new community at Radlett Reform are very lucky to have him.

I would like to finish by congratulating Danit and Alex on a triple whammy. The baby blessing of their daughter, Ella,



Alex going to the Beit Din and being formally welcomed to BRS and then, on 14 June, their marriage in Wales. DY officiated at his first wedding as a rabbi, and Danit and Alex are now Mr and Mrs Brooke. Mazel Tov!

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

## מִמַּעְמָקִים

*Out of the depths*

Following what Michelle says above about how important it is for BRS to have its own cemetery, you might like to know the outcome of the discussion on 14 June about the wording to go on the gates. Should it be traditional, new, a combination? The debate was a demonstration of progressive Judaism in practice. A small group led by Rabbi Laura found a perfect solution that it is hoped will bring comfort to all who enter those gates. The inscription will begin with the first few lines of Psalm 130: *"Out of the depths I called to You, God. God, hear my voice,"* and continue with the second paragraph of the Amidah, which enumerates ways in which God supports us in life and *"renews life beyond death,"* a phrase that people interpret in many ways. **You can find the psalm and prayer on pages 225 and 678 of our siddur, "Forms of Prayer".**

# Rabbi Laura: Looking ahead with joy while mindful of our responsibility to the past



It is a total joy, privilege and delight to be your rabbi. Every single experience, without fail, in the last few months has been affirming, interesting and a real blessing. Even the more tricky challenges which exist in every community, we've solved together in partnership.

The care, dedication and love that this unusual community is built on underpins so many activities – from the social centre to the Caring Community, via cheder, Gateway to Judaism, services and so many more experiences that are sprinkled with a hearty **appetite for innovation**.

Bromley has been brilliantly resilient during the past few years of pandemic and the changes in rabbis. This is because of you. This is because of a **dedicated, resourceful membership** and open-hearted, open-minded, and outstanding leadership. A key part of that leadership has of course been Michelle, our steadfast Chair, and the Board.

Additionally, this year has been given a beautiful boost by our **student Rabbi, David Yehudah Stern, "DY"**, who has taught

enthusiastically and inspiringly. DY is being ordained on 3 July and we wish him a massive mazal tov as he goes to Radlett. Thank you, DY, from all of us.

Next year we'll be getting a student-rabbi-booster (new job description!) from a great Italian student rabbi, Martina Lorregian, who is studying at Leo Baeck College.

We can now start to relax – this means to enjoy, but not inactivity. This is now the time for replenishing and renewal, heading away from so much change. We've returned to our building, to our core activities, and it has been a joy to see people greet each other who have really missed just hanging out together, praying together and looking after each other properly in person. But there's so much on the horizon that's glorious...

As well as regular weekly online Friday night candle lighting, we've rekindled (bad pun) Friday night services once a month in person and online. These services are accompanied by a **potluck vegetarian supper**. Please just come - no need to register formally as you might want to spontaneously stay afterwards for food of the body and soul.

The online Tantalising Talmud class is full but if there are other things that you would like to learn, please let me know. We are also planning a **residential community weekend** next June and a series of Shabbatonim (overnights over Shabbat) for our young people in collaboration with RSY (Reform Synagogue Youth) and Wimbledon Reform.

I'm also greatly looking forward to my **induction** on a Shabbat afternoon with Havdalah (the short and lovely service that concludes Shabbat) and much joy, songs and food (I've already experienced Bromley's generous gastronomic hosting). It will be on **Saturday 19 November**.

Looking forward to the future at Bromley is uplifting but we also have a profound responsibility to the past. Our new cemetery in Kemnal Park is beautiful and honourable and already we have held our first stone setting for Farideh and Alan Brooks (z"l – zichronam l'vracha, may their memory be a blessing). We will be **consecrating the cemetery** later this year. I am so grateful to the group of people who had the vision, tenacity and resourcefulness to bring this vital mitzvah about. Whilst we honour our dead by accompanying them to their resting place, we also treat our holy texts with love and dignity by **burying texts** with God's names in them that are used for religious purposes.

I will be placing a **geniza** (a collection place for fragments of books, mezuzah scrolls, old prayer books) in the hall and if you have some at home, please bring them in so we can bury them appropriately.

This is just the beginning. It is the beginning, I am certain, of a fabulous period of renewal and I am so very blessed to be alongside you in this. If I haven't met you yet, please be in touch: rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk

Warm regards,

Laura



# Tea, services and suppers - everyone is on song!



Rabbi DY Stern promised the Bnei Mitzvah group that at his farewell Shabbat morning service he would get their parents to sing Adon Olam with "air" instruments. On 18 June, all of these game parents helped him make good his promise. Before that, he was joined on the Bimah by his wife, Robin, and daughters for some very moving words and blessings from Rabbi Laura (see below right). You can see the whole service, or just parts of it, on the BRS You Tube channel.

## Musical tea party fun for all ages

As mentioned on page 1, our BM cohort understands that Jewish theory has little value unless it's translated into practice. This was never better demonstrated than on 22 May when, along with the klezmer group, it ran a tea party for older members of the community. BM Co-ordinator Judy Taylor, who supervised, says, "They arranged the tables, prepared food and provided entertainment and conversation. Most importantly, they worked together on clearing up afterwards and did a fantastic job!"

Here are some of the comments from participants at both ends of the age scale, starting with a BM student:

"It was a really fun experience working together as a group to organise and set up the tea party. It was so nice to be able to talk to the older members of the community, and there was so much effort put in to make it special. The entertainment was wonderful, with some music from the klezmer band and some soloists, and some lovely poems were read out. We allocated each other roles to do welcoming, cooking, room preparation etc. A real display of what team work is all about."

Guests were also enthusiastic:

**"What a wonderful Sunday afternoon,** lovely company, delicious food, on beautifully decorated tables and fantastic music. All the B'nei Mitzvah class were so welcoming to us."

**"Thank you for the invitation** to a lovely afternoon. The music was great and all company was a delight."

**"Such a lovely afternoon!** It was a pleasure to meet all the group - such talented, charming young people!"

**"Congratulations** to all ...for a beautifully presented, organised and helpful afternoon of refreshments and entertainment. Such a treat ... Well done!"

**Here's to many more BRS inter-generational collaborations in future.**

Thanks to Bob Symonds for the screen grab and Sara Taylor for the graphics on this page. There are some photos of the tea party on p.8.



## Are you a keen singer?

Lend us your voice for the High Holydays! Come and join us on **Sunday 10 July from 6 to 9pm** for an informal workshop and shared supper. More information from [judyelias.taylor@gmail.com](mailto:judyelias.taylor@gmail.com)



## Singing on Friday nights with Rabbi Laura...

Talking of singing together, Rabbi Laura's musical Friday nights with bring-and-share pot-luck suppers for all continue monthly throughout the summer. Please check weekly e-Light for dates. The services are accessible via the regular Friday night candle lighting Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/578441665>

## ... and schmoozing on Saturday nights, too!

Starting on 27 August, we'll also have a monthly Saturday night dining club. Join Rabbi Laura and other members for a catch up.

Dates: 7pm on 27 August, 24 September, 22 October, 19 November and 17 December.

Please let Rabbi Laura know if you are interested:

[rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk)

# Helping others, individually and communally



*Helen with her portrait, daughter Annie, son-in-law Quentin and tall grandchildren*

## Portrait of a lady: meet Helen Aronson

*Our roving reporter, Judy Woolfe, had an unusual assignment this time.*

**JW:** It is such a pleasure to speak to you, Helen. Bromley Synagogue is so proud that you were one of seven Holocaust survivors to be chosen for the Portraits of the Holocaust project commissioned by Prince Charles.

**JW:** First, could you tell me something about your memories and early life as a child in Pabianice, Poland?

**HA:** Well, I remember, when war broke out, my father worked in Lodz, which was quite a way from our home. He was an accountant in a factory. I had a very happy childhood, being the youngest of three children, but it was not very religious. I had lots of non-Jewish friends, too, and I don't remember experiencing very much antisemitism. At our school, we used to help with providing tea after school for children from very poor families, even though I was not much older than them myself. Life was sweet. Sadly, my sister left our family to go to Palestine when she was just 16.

**JW:** It must have been not only bewildering but also terrifying to arrive in a foreign country as a refugee. What were your first impressions of arriving and living in the UK?

**HA:** I remember thinking that all the houses looked the same. I had no English when I arrived here in 1946 and it was arranged that my uncle would come to get me and take me back to his large family home in Willesden. He was really well off, with servants, and already had a television! It was very traumatic as he was a stranger to me. My schooling had stopped at 12 years so he sent me to a free adult evening class in English, where a very nice teacher taught me by drawing pictures.

**JW:** So, Helen, how did you meet your husband?

**HA:** Well, on the boat coming here I met a very nice woman, Mrs. Aronson, who lived in a boarding house in North London. We got on very well, so swapped addresses. So, I went to visit her as it wasn't far from Willesden,

and we became friends. Her son was a serving officer in the British Army and that's how we met. I remember we used to walk past Horse Guards Parade looking at all the horsemen. 'The rest is history'!

**JW:** Helen, you spent many, many years visiting community groups and schools, sharing your testimony as a survivor. How has this helped you and why do you think it's important to do this?

**HA:** I think it is extremely important to learn from history so that people can understand what intolerance can lead to. I hope that my survival and work shows how necessary it is to be tolerant. The best school I went to is the Catholic St Ursula's school in Greenwich.

**JW:** How did you hear about being chosen for Prince Charles's project and what did it feel like to sit still for a portrait painter?

**HA:** I got a phone call from the Holocaust Trust to tell me that Lord Rosslyn from Prince Charles's office was going to ring me on a particular day at 4pm and I would need to have a family member with me. Well, my daughter Annie came on the day. I was crying and laughing all at the same time as I didn't know how to take it all in. I met the artist Paul Benney, who is a renowned portraitist for the Royal Family. He painted me in five sittings in my house and we chatted all the time about my life while he was painting.

**JW:** Meeting Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, must have been quite something. What was she like?

**HA:** She was extremely nice and said the whole project was her husband's idea. She then spoke to all my family and commented on how tall my grandchildren are. Prince Charles *Cont. overleaf*



# Helping others, individually and communally

asked me a lot about the camps and the Lodz Ghetto so I told him about my father, who I have always regarded as my 'unsung hero'.

**JW:** Looking back over your long life, [Helen had just turned 95 when Judy spoke to her] what do you think has been its most important lesson?

**HA:** The most important lesson is try to be nice to people and help anyone you can, whatever their background, religion or race. I greet everyone in the same way, as a person is a person whoever they are. I have a lovely close family, who help me all the time and I am also very grateful for everything that the UK has done for me.

**JW:** And, now, my last question is: What is your favourite food and who, apart from your family, would you like to sit down to eat it with?

**HA:** Chicken soup with Simon Sebag Montifiore, as I have a lovely photo of him right here!

**JW:** Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and some of your experiences with all our readers at Bromley Shul. It's been a real pleasure.

## Another way to fly the flag of concern for others

Tom Thelander, known to Shabbat morning regulars as an almost constant security man and frequent scroll carrier, and to Social Centre members as a caring helper and schlepper, has in recent months become a familiar figure at protests against "Putin's war", not least because of his desire to make it clear that he attends these not just as an individual but as a Jew, in what some might find, sadly, the potentially dangerous proud act of wearing his tallit in public.



## Remember our loved ones together on 27 November

Over the last two and a half years we've missed out on the opportunity to mourn together and to comfort each other. Comforting mourners is one of the fundamental privileges and duties of a Jewish community, so let's be together now that we are finally able to mourn and remember together loved ones who died during the pandemic. We'll come together on Sunday 27 November at 5pm to share memories and for a memorial service and tea. Please let Rabbi Laura know the names of those to be included:

[rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk)

## Caring Community: looking after BRS



*As Helen Aronson says, the most important thing is to help anyone you can, and Bromley's Caring Community volunteers have done that for many decades. Meet the current team and find out what they do and how you can help.*

### What is the Caring Community?

We are a group of volunteers who provide outreach to members of BRS in need of some friendly, informal support. This could include, but is not limited to, members who are elderly, isolated, grieving, injured, unwell, or just going through a stressful time.

### Who is in the Caring Community?

Right now, there are 12 of us, including Rabbi Laura. We are all women so we would really welcome some volunteers who could add a little gender diversity!



*Top of column, Amanda Penn; above Tracy Frankel, her immediate predecessor. The remaining photos are in a random order, so please don't read anything into it!*

# Helping others, individually and communally

**What kind of outreach do you provide?** One of our key activities is simply checking on community members with phone calls and home visits, including visiting members and friends of the community in the hospital or in care homes. We don't provide any kind of professional support services but can help find appropriate referrals where this might be helpful.

Where information has been disclosed, we send birthday and holiday cards to members over 80 and for other milestone birthdays and life events.

Finally, we coordinate and host social events for community members that may be isolated or unable to get out often, such as the Social Centre that runs on Wednesdays, and tea parties.

**Do you only interact with older community members?** While the activities we organise have focused more on older community members, our outreach is available to anyone regardless of age. For example, we've provided support for families who have just had a baby. We would like to understand a bit more about what kind of support younger members of the community would welcome.

**Are there any opportunities to get involved in the Caring Community or its events?**

Any member of the shul is very welcome to join the committee, but you don't have to be a member of the committee to get involved. Could you volunteer to make monthly calls to check in on shul members, or make an occasional home visit? Could you give a short talk or presentation on art, books, or travel? Maybe you can provide some musical entertainment or organise a quiz at one of the regular Social Centre gatherings? Whether you can help regularly or as a one-off your time would be most welcome.

Probably the most important way to get involved is to let us know if you or someone you know would appreciate us reaching out to them.

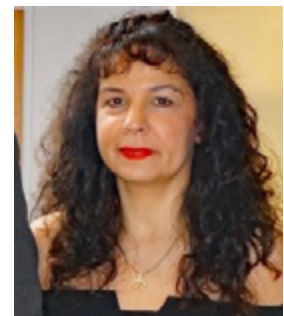
**How to contact the Caring Community:** You can call the team via the BRS office (020 8460 5460) or email [caring@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:caring@bromleyshul.org.uk)



Shane



Jackie



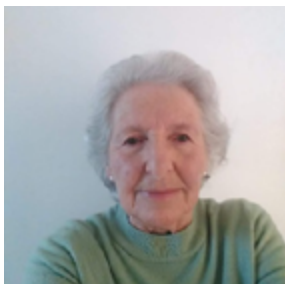
Michelle



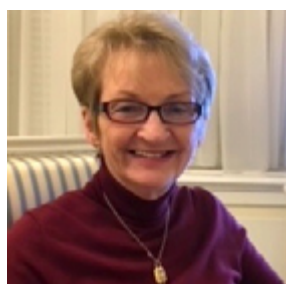
Rabbi Laura

This dedicated dozen is just the tip of BRS's caring iceberg. Together, they have given the best part of 350 years of service of all sorts to BRS, while bringing up families and pursuing a wide range of careers and other interests. Mini biographies of each of them appear on the next couple of pages.

**You can join them and other volunteers by calling or emailing – see opposite.**



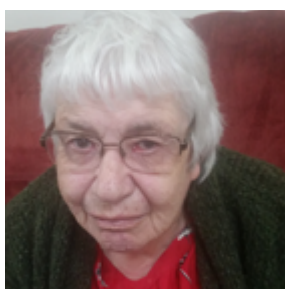
Dianne



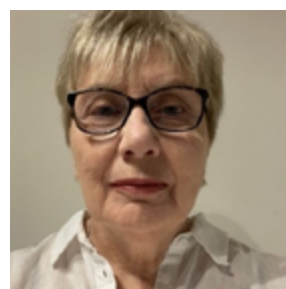
Barbara



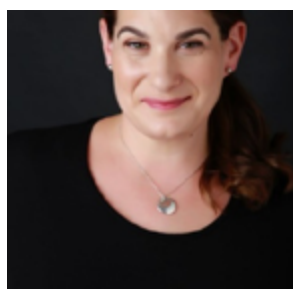
Sue



Judy N



Janet P



Judy T



# IN OUR COMMUNITY

Acting together, we  
can make music and  
maintain memories

*Did you know have two  
memorials of Jewish  
interest in local parks?*



In Beckenham Place Park, the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) has planted a beautiful sapling to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and its own 80th anniversary, while thanking the British people for helping Jewish refugees. Only a few months ago, it was not recognisable as an oak. Today it's a sturdy young tree. And in the Queen's Gardens in Bromley, a spherical stone, visible from shops upstairs in The Glades, marks our own tree planting on Holocaust Memorial Day 2001. We have also planted many trees in local parks on Tu B'Shvat in more recent years.



## Making tea and music



As Judy Taylor explains on page 4, when the BM cohort and klezmer group (there are many overlaps) hosted the May tea party for members of the Social Centre and other invited guests, they didn't just play music and chat. They prepared the tea and – crucially – cleared up afterwards.



Thank you, Judy, for the photos.



## Caring Community

Some mini biographies

*You will have seen the news and photos of our CC team on pp 6/7. Here's a little more about them.*

**Amanda Penn** – Member since 2014. Married with two children in Cheder. Ran Hooray Cheder, recently joined the BRS Board. Originally from NY. Works in sustainable trade.

**Barbara Kurtz** – Former Hon. Secretary and Chair of the Education Committee and of the Board. Currently a warden, heads the helpers team of the Social Centre and organises the Knit, Natter and Stitch Group.

**Janet Posner** - Joined BRS 1982. Past Chair of Education and Board. Now Funeral Officer responsible for Kemnal Park, is subscription secretary and helps with the Tea Parties.

**Judy Taylor** – Joined BRS 2013. Husband David and children Sophie and Sara. Joined RRC and Board, B'nei mitzvah coordinator, BRS Klezmer band member. Singer and musician. Day job: Dramatherapist.

**Dianne Mathews** - Founder member, served in many roles. Choir member, convener of the Social Centre for 15 years.

**Rabbi Laura** of BRS, 2022 – see profile in last Highlight.

**Michelle Brooks Evans** - Born to a Persian mother, British father, grew up attending an Orthodox shul; found BRS at age 15. Married, four children, lives in Greenwich. Joined the Board in 2017, Chair since 2019.

*Continued on p.10*



# IN OUR COMMUNITY

Page contact:  
Bob Symonds:  
comms@bromleyshul.org

## Birth

A hearty mazal tov to Sam de Lange and his partner Charlotte on the birth of their daughter, Pearl Lily de Lange, on 19 May. Mazal tov also to the proud grandparents, Linda and Matthew, on the arrival of their first grandchild.



*Sam de Lange and Charlotte with their daughter Pearl*

## Death

We are very sad to report the death of our member **Phyllis Taylor**, and extend sincere condolences to her daughter Claudia Goodman, son-in-law Jonathan Goodman and their children, James, Matthew and Seb. We wish them all a long life.

## Welcome to the Jewish Faith and Baby Blessing

On Saturday, 21 May (Shabbat Bechukotai), we were delighted to welcome into the congregation **Alex Brooke**, partner of Danit Klibansky. The induction ceremony was followed immediately by the blessing of Danit and Alex's baby, Ella. The couple will shortly be marrying in Wales, and we wish them every future happiness.

## Are you a keen singer?

Lend us your voice for the High Holydays! There will be an introduction session on **Sunday, 10 July** - details on p.4



*Rabbi Laura with Danit, Alex and baby Ella on the bimah after the baby blessing*

## B'nei Mitzvah

A hearty mazal tov to **Mercury Hodges** and **Maya Jones** and their families on their respective b'nei mitzvah, which they celebrated in the synagogue on 9 April (Shabbat Hagadol) and 30 April (Shabbat Atzma'ut), respectively.



*Mercury Hodges reading from the scroll at their b'mitzvah*

A hearty mazal tov also to **Keo Kyazze** and **Noah Wilkins** and their families on the occasions of their b'nei mitzvah, which they will celebrate in the synagogue on 16 July (Shabbat Pinchas) and 30 July (Shabbat Mas'ei), respectively.

**Mazal tov** to RABBI DY Stern, who has now received semicha. We wish him every success in his new community in Radlett.



*Maya Jones' parents, Caroline and Laurence, helped to adjust her new tallit during her bat mitzvah on 30 April*

## Refua Shlema: Get well soon

to **Marilyn McKeever** and **Malcolm Parker** (husband of Joanna Jaeckel) following their recent operations. We wish both of them, and all who are ill or undergoing treatment, speedy recoveries.

## Thanks for condolences

**Janet Burlem** writes:

My extended family and I would like to thank the members and friends of BRS for all their sympathy and kind words on the unexpected death of my husband, Maurice. Particular thanks go to Janet and John Posner who supported me through all the anxiety and sadness leading up to his death and, although my husband was no longer a member of BRS, together with the JJBS organised the funeral to ensure that my husband had the best end to his life we could provide.

# IN OUR COMMUNITY

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

**Claudia Goodman** writes:

Dear Rabbi Laura and Bromley Shul Community, I would like to send my heartfelt gratitude to all who supported me following my mother's death on 25 May.

Janet Posner was enormously helpful, guiding me efficiently to complete various administrative procedures and tasks as well as providing much needed empathy and understanding.

Mitzi from the JJBS provided incredible 24 hour practical support at a difficult and stressful time. You also suggested suitable venues for family and friends to gather afterwards.

Special thanks to Michelle Brooks Evans, our Chair, and Tracy Frankel from the Caring Community for your wonderful on-going support and comfort.

Huge thank you to Rabbi Laura, who kept in close contact with me daily and kindly recommended the wonderful Rabbi DY who spent time going over everything on the phone prior to the funeral. He conducted such a beautiful, traditional service which I know my mother would have appreciated.

Finally, thank you to members of the community who have sent me cards and condolence messages. I shall be writing to you all individually if I haven't already done so. Best wishes, **Claudia**.

## Good wishes in your new homes to many of you

We learn that **Martin** and **Alex Pachter** have recently moved to Newport Pagnell and **Beverley** and **Peter Saunders** have moved to Bewdley, while **Joanna Biggin** and family and **David** and **Judy Noyek** have moved more locally. We hope they will all be happy in their new homes.

## Welcome to new members

Joseph and Madhumita **Abram** of Blackheath, with Zoe and Thea; and Noga **Kogman** of SE6, with Dvir.

## Sharing a Simchah

If you or someone in your family is marrying or has recently had a baby, or has enjoyed a sporting or academic success, why not share your nachas with the congregation through HighLight? Please contact us at the comms address above, including a photo if possible. And, of course, if you'd like to mark the event with a **special Kiddush** do contact the lovely Janvier: [jndpalmer@gmail.com](mailto:jndpalmer@gmail.com)

## Social Centre News

The Social Centre is getting together fortnightly and members are enjoying meeting up with one another. We have the usual programme of cards and chat followed by a delicious lunch. We are delighted to be welcoming back **Andreas** to our meetings to knock us into shape again with his exercises, as he hopes to join us from July.

Our old friends **David Coronel** and **Tom Shiels** joined us in May with their usual eclectic choice of music, from the familiar songs from the shows and well known singers to classics that were new to us all. It was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. It was David and Tom's first visit to us since the pandemic and, to make up for lost time, we have booked them again for 28 September and for our Chanukah Party on 14 December. In the meantime, we continue to meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month – look out for details in e-Light.

**Barbara Kurtz**

## Knit, Natter and Stitch

The Knit, Natter and Stitch group continues to meet monthly. We are pleased to have found homes for our efforts at the PRUH and we are already starting to knit for the "shoe boxes", even though it's a long time to November. I reckon that the current situation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries who are housing refugees will mean our knitted items will be even more needed.

Our next meeting is on Thursday, **14 July** at Barbara's home. New knitters and stitchers welcome.

**Barbara Kurtz**

## Concluding (for now) our mini- Caring Community biographies. Would you like to join them?

### Tracy Frankel

Joined BRS in 2009 after leaving South Africa for Kent. Married with four children and one fur baby! Gan teacher while children were part of Cheder and held various roles on a number of different BRS committees.

### Jackie Harvey

Member 15 years. Social Centre helper and co-ordinator.

### Shane Lask

Involved in BRS since age 13. Runs the Judaica shop, and coordinated support for 999 homeless centre. Husband Hugh, two daughters.

### Sue Bowyer

Gan teacher since 2008 and helps in the Social Centre. Outside of the Shul, rescues dogs.

### Judy Noyek

Joined BRS in 1974. Became a Cheder teacher then served on the Board, and became treasurer for the Social Centre.



# 'CHAI SCHOOL' CHEDER AND GAN

## Head teacher Frankie writes:

Our term began in the wonderful surroundings of BRS member Margaret Brearley's home for our Family Pesach Scavenger Hunt. Each family followed a series of clues, then completed challenges, to find the elusive chocolate afikomens.

Helpers and pupils worked together in the kitchen to make our pizza matzahs garnished with a light sprinkling of herby za'atar. Pupils made this their own project and kept the canapés coming...

## Jazz and Jenga

Seven weeks later, we were back again, celebrating Shavuot with ice-cream, cheesecake and the gift of Torah. Packed into Margaret's elegant piano room, we learned songs and this time shared some Jazz, too. Families also competed at giant Jenga and Connect Four and bowled a few pins down.

These were the first of three family mornings this term, something new that we have introduced to Chai School this year. These mornings bring us together to learn, play, sing and socialise. Our Sadeh Farm trip was yet another opportunity for pupils and parents to enjoy and experience the strong



community spirit that thrives at BRS. Parents – led by Sonia Hyams, chair of our Hooray Cheder parents group – gathered for a lively nosh and drosh session during cheder one week.



*Teacher Rachael has her face painted*

After the half term break, we marked Yom HaShoah. Our older pupils read aloud the words and poetry of survivors, rescuers and those who perished – a poignant candle-lighting service shared with the whole community. As part of the term's history theme some lovely parent and grandparent visitors shared their family stories with the children across our junior kittot. For Yom Haatzma'ut, Gan went on a virtual trip to Israel, while Limmudim did a tour of its flavours. Pupils stepped back to ancient Temple times, and travelled forward to explore contemporary dilemmas.

We looked at the origins of Kashrut and what's important about food choices.



As we close the academic year, our Tzedakah activities are still continuing... This year we have collected over 1,000 items for local food banks, £300 for the WJR Ukraine Appeal and £133.55 for Deaf Plus. We are still collecting for Safe Passage, a charity that seeks to reunite lone child refugees with their families.



After our final session of the year on 3 July, we will be on our summer holiday break, returning on **Sunday 11 September**.

If you or your child/ren would like to be part of Chai School's Sunday morning programme from September or would like to try us out, please contact Frankie: [cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk).

## A GOOD YEAR FOR B'NEI MITZVAH

As mentioned elsewhere, we are delighted to have such a large and active B'nei Mitzvah cohort this year, and very proud of their individual and group successes.

So, what is B'Mitzvah all about in a Reform synagogue in 5782/3? Young people mark symbolic entry into Jewish adulthood at age thirteen. The b'mitzvah is usually celebrated on the Shabbat closest to the person's thirteenth birthday, the date having been scheduled anything up to a couple of years in advance, giving the family plenty of time to plan for the day.

At BRS, b'nei mitzvah may conduct all or part of the service, read or chant the b'rachot over the Torah (an aliyah), read a section from the Torah portion for that week, read or chant the b'rachot for the haftarah, read a section from the haftarah, and deliver a d'rasha - an explanation of the portion and, often, what it means to them personally.

In recent years, growing numbers of families have chosen to travel to Israel to celebrate their simcha at the Western Wall in Jerusalem or at the top of Masada. While this may limit the number of family members and friends who can attend, these can be powerful Jewish experiences.

### HOW FAR IN ADVANCE SHOULD PREPARATIONS BEGIN?

For b'mitzvah to be a meaningful Jewish moment, it is essential that it be based on more than a crash course of study. Several years in the religious/Hebrew school of a synagogue prior to b'mitzvah is recommended as a minimum of requisite Jewish education. In addition to Jewish history, observance, and the study of Torah, children learn how to participate in and lead worship. As part of the preparation to become a b'mitzvah, most synagogues ask boys and girls to participate in a mitzvah project. In doing so, they apply their Jewish learning to help make the world a better place. Some students also choose to twin their ceremonies with those of young people who have been unable to celebrate their own b'nei mitzvah, due to restrictive regimes, war or other conditions beyond their control.

Note: B'nei Mitzvah is the plural of Bar Mitzvah, and can be used for boys or boys and girls. B'not Mitzvah is the plural of Bat Mitzvah. At BRS we like to use the inclusive term b'mitzvah, which covers everybody.

**BROMLEY REFORM SYNAGOGUE 28 Highland Road, BR1 4AD**

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**Vice Presidents:** Hadassah Britz, Dianne Mathews,

Sally Rosebery, Bob Symonds, David Zerihan

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (in the event of a bereavement)

please contact Janet Posner (07841 373309)

or Stephen Weil (07764 475209)

## CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ROSH HASHANAH HIGHLIGHT

[should be sent to comms@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:comms@bromleyshul.org.uk)

**by 22 AUGUST 2022**

We are keen to showcase **less regularly covered aspects of the community, and of people's lives**, so if you have an idea for a regular or one-off feature, or a skill that you can bring to the production of HighLight or its online weekly companion, e-Light, please let us know

## USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS

**Reform Judaism** Our umbrella organisation offers a wealth of information, training, courses and resources, such as the invaluable flipping books we have been using for online services, seders etc.:  
[www.reformjudaism.org.uk](http://www.reformjudaism.org.uk)

### JW3 – Jewish Cultural Centre

Events in person and online including talks, films, musical events, courses, health and fitness:  
[www.jw3.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.jw3.org.uk/whats-on)

**Community Security Trust** Trains people to undertake security duties and acts as a community watchdog, reporting antisemitic incidents and recording issues of concern: [www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk)

**Limmud** Originally a once-a-year conference, now a year-round series of educational events of varying lengths at different venues around the country and, of course, online: [www.limmud.org](http://www.limmud.org)

### The Jewish Museum

Permanent and temporary exhibitions, real and virtual tours: [www.jewishmuseum.org.uk](http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk)

### Jewish Music Institute

Organises events and summer schools in music, particularly klezmer, and Yiddish: [www.jmi.org.uk](http://www.jmi.org.uk)