

# HIGHLight

Bromley Reform Synagogue newsletter



The parents and children of the Gan celebrated Yom Ha'Atzmaut by sampling Israeli food

## Come and welcome Rabbi John Franken during the weekend of 22 to 24 June

He is the first of three candidates to fill the vacancy left by the departure of Rabbi Jason Holtz.

He will participate in the Shabbat service, lead an adult study session and spend some time with the Cheder.

He will come to find out whether our community is one that he would like to lead and we will get to know whether we think he will be right for us.

So please come along and play your part in deciding the future of our community.

## BRS Annual Jubilee Lecture

**Sunday, 15 July**

**Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko**

Director of Council of Christians and Jews  
will speak to us on



***“How living in Jerusalem for 23 years changed my understanding of the Middle East: One Woman’s View”***

Do join us in the synagogue  
**3.30 pm refreshments, 4.00 pm talk**  
followed by a question and answer session.

Further details from **Barbara Kurtz**  
or **Stephen Weil**  
through the synagogue

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## Taking chances

### Our Rabbi says Farewell

Dear friends,

Thank you for the trust you placed in me.

When I first began, I gave a sermon on taking chances. I acknowledged that the synagogue took a chance by selecting me as their rabbi. I was a foreigner and, with just a few years of experience, I also said that I hoped it wasn't the last chance that the synagogue took. Taking chances is nothing more than making bold decisions and claiming ownership over the future.

Not every instance of taking a chance involves big changes. One time, we took a chance by changing slightly the formula for our Passover sederim. We moved the start time earlier (and thus the end time) and adopted a new Haggadah. Coupled with a few other tweaks here and there, our sederim became true multi-generational events—certainly much more than they had been in the recent past.

Other changes are much larger. In the last few years, we have begun to welcome as members those Jews whose claim to being Jewish is through their father. We have had our first same sex wedding in the synagogue.

Many dual-heritage families have become a part of our synagogue community, in part because of the welcome and acceptance that they receive. The underlying principle is that our synagogue is committed to being an inclusive community.

We have worked hard to build bridges with other faith communities. In addition to the wonderful work CCJ has done in the past and continues to do, we have helped to found a Three Faiths Forum. One successful initiative from that forum is a multi-faith babies' and toddlers' playgroup that meets alternately at the synagogue and the Al-Emaan Centre. The goal was simply for people to meet one another and maybe even develop friendships. That has happened, and it's marvellous.

The time for taking chances will never end. Soon the synagogue will be called upon to take a chance on someone else as it engage its next rabbi. Together, the members and the next rabbi will

*continued at the foot of col. 2*

## A Time to Seek - View from the Chair

*"Everything has an appointed season and there is a time for every matter under heaven".* So begins Chapter 3 of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) and a few verses later *"A time to seek and a time to lose"*. That's how it is and always will be.

So, we have lost Rabbi Jason after a marvellous five years. With his rabbinic leadership, our community has gained so much. His knowledge of Judaism and his ability to apply it, his learning and enthusiasm for others to gain from it, his wisdom from which so many of us have benefited, above all, his compassion and ability to show kindness and consideration; he's a real mensch. We are truly sad that he and his lovely wife Jodi and little Asher are leaving but grateful for everything they have given to us. On the other hand, it is good that they will be near family. There is nothing more important, so we are happy for them.

Perhaps that is enough of the 'time to lose'. We have already moved on to a 'time to seek'. The search for a new rabbi began a few months ago. There are no new graduates from the Leo Baeck College this year and we had just three applicants, all from the United States. After conducting interviews on Skype, we have invited **Rabbi John Franken**, currently based in Maryland, to spend a few days with us over the weekend of 22 to 24 June. He will participate in the Shabbat service, lead an adult study session and spend some time with the Cheder. Most importantly he will find out whether our community is one which he would like to lead and we will get to know whether we think he will be right for us. So, if you are not going to Chagigah, the biennial Reform event, do please come along to the shul that

*continued in next column*

### *Our Rabbi says Farewell, continued*

then continue to take chances—all in an effort to promote Bromley's unchanging mission of being a centre for Jewish living and learning in South East London and beyond.

I will always remember my time with Bromley fondly, and I look forward to hearing great things from Bromley in the future.

*L'shalom*, to peace,

**Rabbi Jason Holtz**

weekend and play your part in deciding the future of our community.

However things work out, it will take time and for the next few months at least we can expect to manage by ourselves. Fortunately we are a great DIY community. Lay readers for services are lined up, Cheder and Gan will run as usual, educational events, the Social Centre and our Caring Community will function more or less as normal and the office will operate with its usual efficiency. We have already arranged for visiting rabbis to lead part of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services if needed.

Just a reminder about the new Data Protection regulations. If you haven't yet consented to receive e-light and other communications from BRS please do so. We are not really doing anything different but we are taking measures to make sure our data are secure and we do need your express consent, whether by e-mail or by post. Thanks.

**John Posner**, Chairman

## Jewish Roots Workshop

by Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies  
at JW3, 341-351 Finchley Rd, London NW3

**Sunday, 17 June**, 10 am – 6 pm

This workshop will address your most important questions about researching and travelling to find your family roots in Eastern Europe.

There will be 5 themes: Heritage, Genealogy, Holocaust, Memory, and Travelling. Each theme will have a short presentation given by either an expert or an experienced amateur, with IPJS historians on hand who specialise in the history of Jews in Eastern Europe.

The experts are: David Kosky, Michael Tobias, Carol Elias, Elaine Sinclair, Norbert Hirschhorn and Astrid Schmetterling.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to this event, and to the conversations we will have together.

If you would like to contact us about this workshop, to ask questions or make suggestions, please email us at [jewishrootsworkshopipjs@gmail.com](mailto:jewishrootsworkshopipjs@gmail.com).

**Registration is £15.** Lunch is not included but can be purchased at the JW3 (either at the café or the restaurant Zest) or at the many eateries in the area.

## Fifty-five killed and over 1200 wounded

I'm writing this post for my good friends, my moral, humane friends, and for all those who are concerned and angry over today's deaths and injuries on the border with Gaza.

Regarding Israel's exodus from Egypt, when the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea just before overtaking the Israelites – our sages say that God scolded the angels and prevented them from singing and rejoicing, saying “my creations are drowning in the sea and you are singing?!”

I write these words with great caution and from a sense of mission. I can understand and identify with all of those good and moral Zionists who fear that the many Palestinian victims may be our fault, the result of mistakes made by our side. I'm writing because I am one of the few who was there – in uniform, in the reserves, but I was there. Yes, right there on the fence where the demonstrations were happening. It was last Friday – but I saw it with my own eyes. I was on our side but I could see and hear and understand everything. I want to testify from my first-hand knowledge, not a theoretical point of view. Because I was there. I want to testify that what I saw and heard was a tremendous, supreme effort from our side to prevent in every possible way Palestinian deaths and injuries.

Of course, the primary mission was to prevent hundreds of thousands of Gazans from infiltrating into our territory. That kind of invasion would be perilous, mortally dangerous to the nearby communities, would permit terrorists disguised as civilians to enter our *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* and would leave us with no choice but to target every single infiltrator. That's why our soldiers were directed to prevent infiltration – in a variety of ways, only using live ammunition as a last resort. The IDF employs many creative means of reducing friction with Gazans and uses numerous methods, most of which are not made public, to prevent them from reaching the fence. In addition, over the last few weeks there have been serious efforts to save the lives of children and civilians who have been pushed to the front lines by the Hamas

– who are trying to hide behind them in order to infiltrate and attack Israel.

When there is no alternative and live ammunition must be used to stop those who storm the fence – the soldiers make heroic and sometimes dangerous efforts not to kill and only to injure those on the other side.

The IDF is stationing senior commanders at every confrontation point to ensure that every shot is approved and backed up by a responsible figure with proper authority. Every staging area has an especially large number of troops in order to make sure that soldiers are not put into life-threatening situations where they will have no choice but to fire indiscriminately.

A situation where thousands of people rush you is frightening, even terrifying. It is extremely difficult to show restraint, and it requires calm, mature professionalism. Fifty-five dead is an enormous number. But I can testify from my first-hand experience, that every bullet and every hit is carefully reported, documented and investigated, in Excel spreadsheets. Literally. I was there and I saw it with my own eyes.

This isn't the time or place to discuss the situation in general and the desperate plight of the residents of Gaza. I'm not interested in starting a political discussion here, although I do have a clear position. What I'm trying to do is to present, for everyone who really wants to listen, the extent of the IDF's enormous effort to protect Israel's borders while minimizing injuries and loss of life on the other side.

And despite all this – the situation on the border with Gaza is deteriorating. I hope that we won't be called up again soon for reserve duty to protect our country. But if we are, we will go with the knowledge that we are serving a just and morally correct cause. We do not rejoice when we must go to war, but we also don't go like sheep to the slaughter. Not any more.

*The above article was sent to our Chairman, John Posner, and was published in the Times of Israel. The author is Kinley (Moshe) Tur-Paz, who is the founder and CEO of the Kibbutz HaDati [religious] Educational Network.*

## The Silver Line – a helpline for older people

The Silver Line Helpline, which was founded by **Dame Esther Rantzen**, is the only national free and confidential helpline for older people, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Silver Line offers information, advice and friendship through its helpline and services.

More than half of people over 75 live alone and some of them are very lonely. Silver Line offers somebody to talk to in the strictest of confidence – they say there is no question too big, no problem too small.

Most of the people that Silver Line speaks to are over 60 and if you or somebody you know could receive help from this service do look at its website: [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk) or call it for free on 0800 470 80 90

Other services which it provides include Silver Circles – a call between a group of older people on a shared interest or topic and Silver Line Connects – help with informing and connecting an older person with national and local services.

I am leaving some leaflets about this excellent service in the synagogue lobby. If you would like me to send you a leaflet please contact me on 020 8778 5938.

**Ann Fried**

## See The Music Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, Sunday, 24 June at 5 pm

Bromley's very own **Joe Parks** is putting on a concert called *See The Music*, bringing together students from the RCM and the Royal College of Art for the first time in recent years.

All the music is entirely original, having been composed or arranged by Joe himself. It will be performed by RCM musicians, including singers, string players and percussionists. The RCA artists have created works in all kinds of media from traditional sculpture to electronic installations.

**Tickets are free but required** and can be booked online by visiting <http://www.rcm.ac.uk/events/details/?id=1456214>

Or you can ring the box office, which is open on weekdays from 10 am to 4 pm, on 020 7591 4314.

## Cheder News

Hello, all of you interested in our Cheder News! Somehow we are halfway through our summer (Kayitz) term at Cheder and the time continues to fly by. But nothing stays the same for long around here, so this is what you need to know:

1. We start with a Hip Hip Hooray for our new **Hooray Cheder leader, Amanda Penn!** Amanda was a parent member of the Gan for many years and now has two children at Cheder in Kittot Dalet and Aleph. Amanda is volunteering her time to make sure our children's events run smoothly, so please do look out for (and respond to) her emails. Your help means we'll have a Cheder that's less like school and more like a community that our children will want to be a part of and, hopefully, always remember. Her deputy is **Sonia Hyams**. If you want to contact them to offer support, please email them at hooraycheder@gmail.com.
2. By now you should have received temporary **Security Cards** from our lovely security lady, Lizzie. From now on parents must show Lizzie a card when entering the building during Cheder hours, even if she knows you! This will help us keep an eye on who is accessing the building while Cheder is in session. Anyone who does not have their security card will be asked to sign in and out so please save yourselves some time and bring your cards.
3. This term the charity we are supporting is called the **Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation**, which was chosen by the children in Kittah Chet. At assembly they explained all about how the foundation looks after animals and we all agreed it was a good charity to support. Please keep sending in those Tzedakah pennies so that the children can keep this valuable mitzvah.
4. Our next **Cheder School Trip** will take place on the last day of Cheder, **8 July, at Sadeh Farm!** We'll be spending the morning learning about working the farm and all about bees, all under the theme of *Olam Chesed Yibaneh*, ("A world of Kindness will be Built").
5. But before you think we have too much fun at Cheder, we'll be

assessing the Hebrew skills of the older children this month, the results of which will be in their **end of year reports**.



In fact all parents of children in Kittot Aleph through Chet will receive this report, which will also include \*ehem\* their rates of attendance. (Nuff said...)

6. Last but not least, please check the **Security Rota** on this page to see if we are expecting you to show up for security. If you realize you cannot attend on the day you've been allocated, please contact **Katia Pisetzky**: pisetzky@gmail.com

Enjoy a happy June,  
**Vicki**, Cheder Head Teacher



*Mums and children in the Gan prepare jointly for Yom Ha'Atzmaut on Sunday 22 April*

### Cheder Security Rota Kayitz/Summer Term

Sundays	
3 June	Half term
10 June	Sune Shulman/Aaron Markowitz
17 June	Gary Brown/Chiara Messineo
24 June	Philip/Joanna Burchill
1 July	Benjie/Kerry Butler
8 July	Janine/Len Campling

## Social Centre News

**Zelda Stone** writes:

The weather was cold for our meeting on Wednesday, 25 April but we still managed to attend and have an enjoyable time.

Games were played with much discussion after each game.

**Andreas**, our registered osteopath, came for our usual gentle exercises, which encourage improved mobility. They involve some standing, some sitting and relaxation at the end, and are always popular with everybody.

Lunch was a favourite dish - spinach and mushroom bake - with second helpings for anybody who wanted it. This of course cancelled any benefit we had from the previous exercises.

On Wednesday, 9 May the good weather obviously encouraged more people to come to the Social Centre and there was quite a lively crowd playing card games and scrabble and just talking. We do not need speakers to entertain us, although it is nice when somebody comes along with an interesting subject.

**Andreas** came to conduct the exercises and lunch was served. This was delicious as usual: good food and pleasant company.

Rabbi Jason popped in with Jodi and Asher, who delighted us by blowing kisses at everybody.

**Social Centre Diary Dates for June**  
Wednesdays, 13 and 27, 10.30 am – 2.30 pm in the Garden Room. *All are welcome.*



*Lunch at the Social Centre*



*Exercises with Andreas at the Social Centre*

## Peace Walk and a Piece of Cake

Howard Binysh writes:

The **Bromley 3 Faiths Group** is planning its next event, which is going to be a walk starting at the Synagogue at 3.00 pm on **Sunday, 22 July**. We will be walking as a group to Beckenham Place Park Manor for tea and cake (lots of cake). We will be walking in support of the refugee families who have arrived in Lewisham for whom we have been doing collections - the families are being invited to join us.

If people are unable to walk, they are welcome to join us at the Manor House, where Beckenham Place Park have kindly donated the use of a room.

So what we need now is:

1. People to spread the word - everyone is welcome and you can bring dogs (we will be bringing ours).
2. We need people to bake cakes
3. The mosque has volunteered to provide the equipment (kettles / cups / plates) but we will need helping hands to make tea and cut cakes

Hopefully you will be able to come and bring family and friends.

We will be sending out more detailed information later, but wanted people to be aware of the date so they can add it to their calendars

Please feel free to contact me through the synagogue if you have any questions.

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## Summer camp at Sadeh for ages 5 - 10

Come and join our Jewish outdoor education summer camp, where we combine Judaism, environmental education and food growing with creative play and fun.

Activities include: Learning about bees, circle dancing, challah making, pond dipping and lots of other fun!

**Date: Monday, 30 July – Thursday, 2 August**

**Time: 10 am – 2 pm**

**Place: Sadeh Farm, Skeet Hill House, Skeet Hill Lane, BR6 7QD**

**Price: £10 per day.**

**You can come for all the days or just some.**

email [talia.chain@sadehfarm.co.uk](mailto:talia.chain@sadehfarm.co.uk) if you would like to attend

## Bertha Sokoloff, née Markovitch, 15 June 1919 to 16 April 2018

Growing up in a close-knit Jewish family of Romanian background in Brady Street Mansions in the East End of London, Bertha's experience of poverty and fatherlessness shaped a radical spirit. In 1930 she won a scholarship place at Central Foundation Girls' School in Spitalfields, where she made lifelong friends, but she was obliged to leave school at 16. Already a member of the Young Communist League, her memory of the Battle of Cable Street anti-fascist demonstration in 1936 was vivid. It was a family joke that her apolitical elder sister Faye got arrested as a bystander whereas Bertha, who had been chalking slogans and running errands, was not. Bertha worked as a secretary, first at the Royal Institute of International Affairs and then at Gollancz publishers, finding both a bit posh for her liking. Later on she worked for Stepney Borough Council. She met **Stan Sokoloff** in the Young Communist League in 1936 and they married in 1940 just before his Army posting to Africa. He was away for four years.

Bertha said that her promotion within the Communist Party was due to all the men being away from London during the war. She proved an able and efficient branch secretary and was the party agent for **Phil Piratin** who successfully entered Parliament as the UK's second ever Communist M.P. in 1945. She herself was elected as a Stepney councillor in 1945. In 1943 she took up work in a war factory, where management noticed she was clumsy on machines but good at maths and at inspiring others: they made her a productivity officer. In 1949 the Sokoloffs with their two young daughters moved to St Paul's Cray, a new London County Council estate in South London. Bertha's radicalism continued after she left 'The Party' in 1956 over the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary. Whether it was CND, helping run a campaign for a nursery at Woolwich College, volunteering as a Housing Advisor in Bromley after she retired, or protesting in 2013 against the closure of Pocklington House,



*Bertha kindles the lights at the Communal Seder a few years ago*

a home for the blind in Northwood where she lived, Bertha was always articulate and ready to do the legwork.

Returning to education to train as an infant teacher in the 1950s and then studying sociology from the mid-1960s, Bertha graduated as a mature student from London University in 1971 at the same ceremony as her younger daughter. She said that her years of greatest happiness were the 1970s, when she taught sociology to mature students at Woolwich College, and the 1980s when she and Stan had their five grandchildren to stay for many half-term holidays. In old age she reconciled with Judaism, joining Bromley Reform Synagogue and taking an active role in its social life. Never happy with historians' use of her life and experiences, she wrote her own story and ideas into the biography of the dedicated social worker and Stepney community leader, **Edith Ramsey** ('*Edith and Stepney: 60 Years of Education, Politics and Social Change*', 1987), that she authored.

Bertha made and kept friends at every stage in her life. Her drive for life was strong to the end but she worried about the elderly being faced with a poor quality of life in their latter years. She felt that the NHS was the last bastion of the spirit of equality that she had fought for as a young woman and that had been put into action in the East End of London in the 1940s.

*With thanks to Bertha's daughter Sally, who kindly supplied this obituary.*

## Social and Personal Bat Mitzvah Girl

**Bat mitzvah** - A hearty mazal tov to **Ella Osborne-Smith** and her family on the occasion of her bat mitzvah, which she celebrated on Saturday, 19 May, *Shabbat Bemidbar*.

**Get well soon** to **Dianne Mathews**, **Sally Rosebery** and all affected by the recent onslaught of the dreaded lurgy. **Pauline Jeffree** adds: We are thinking of and wishing well to all those who are unwell, attending hospital for treatments or recovering from surgery.

**DEATH** - We are very sad to announce the death of our member **Louis Sidlin** and extend sincere condolences to his children, **Mandie** and **Mark**, and their families.

**Welcome to New Members** - **Jamie Barnett**, son of long-standing members **Ian** and **Samantha Barnett**, **Miss Elizabeth Canter** of **Forest Hill** and **Mr and Mrs Stephen and Michelle Weiner** of **Sydenham**.

### Party Time



*The tea party held on Sunday, 6 May to say goodbye to Rabbi Jason, Jodi and Asher was much enjoyed. A cake in the form of a travelling trunk made by Janvier Palmer formed the centrepiece of a traditional English teatime spread.*

**Knit and Natter**  
will meet on  
**Thursdays, 7 and 28 June**  
from 10.00 am - 12 noon  
**Pauline Jeffree**, through the  
synagogue



*Ella Osborne-Smith with her teacher, Vicki Ashmore, after celebrating her bat mitzvah on Saturday, 19 May.*

### Machane Shemesh (Shemesh Summer Camp 5778)

**Shemesh** is the summer camp for RSY-Netzer! Shemesh is a chance for your child to spend two weeks (or 10 days if on Briyah – age 10-11) in a Reform community. On each camp there is a range of fun activities to join in with, as well as space to chill out and relax.

Our volunteer leaders were themselves participants on Shemesh and have been involved in RSY-Netzer for a number of years. Our leaders provide a friendly face to educate, inspire and encourage your children. All this while being part of an active, friendly and supportive RSY-Netzer community.

It's not yet too late to sign up and have an incredible summer with RSY-Netzer. To apply and for more information go to: [rsy-netzer.org.uk/shemesh-summer-camp](http://rsy-netzer.org.uk/shemesh-summer-camp), or pick up an application form in the synagogue.

### Only Us

Only us. That's all-of-us. All there is, is an us until there isn't an us. Maybe it'll be one-of-us that goes, or some-of-us, or in the end the all-of-us who were once here. So, all that we've got is either us, or not-us. Nothing in-between. Or out-there. It's an us-for-a-while, then a not-us. In our case there was one-kind-of-us, one kind of a way of being us, and now, with one less of us, there's another-kind-of-us. When that hurts I'm better with the me, when it's in some kind of us, even if it roars with being a new-us.

**Michael Rosen,**

### Benidorm Synagogue an Invitation

Dear Bromley Reform Synagogue  
*Shalom*

I'm writing to make you aware of our small, but very welcoming and friendly, synagogue in Benidorm. We are really keen that any Jewish people from the UK, including those living in the Bromley area, are aware of our shul for whenever they are visiting the Costa Blanca, should they wish to attend our lovely Friday night service whilst they are away. Or maybe they simply would like to connect with the Jewish community here in Spain.

We would be grateful if you would please highlight our shul to your members to help raise awareness of our small, but very lovely, synagogue abroad.

If you would like further information, please visit our website [www.comisral.com](http://www.comisral.com)

With many  
thanks  
**Ian Imber**  
Benidorm  
Synagogue  
Administrator



## Surviving in Warsaw – my Wartime Experiences by Wlodka Blit Robertson

*Continued from the May issue of Highlight*

Five weeks after we escaped, during the Passover and Easter holiday of 1943, German and Ukrainian troops surrounded the Ghetto and entered supported by tanks. They started systematically setting fire to buildings with petrol and flares. I saw people shot whilst trying to escape with their clothes burning. Everyone outside the Ghetto knew of the armed Jewish resistance which was maintained for four weeks. Michael Klepfisz fought in the Ghetto and died there. The Dubiels became afraid to keep two Jewish-looking children and I was taken by Wladka Meed – another Bundist courier – to a railwayman's family outside Warsaw. When that did not work out, because of the hostility of their daughter. I went back to Warsaw to a caretaker's family called Serafin. Here the young husband became drunk and violent almost every day on home-distilled vodka, and often beat his wife. I was frightened of him but he never harmed me or their small daughter.

In the street I was often recognised as a Jew, usually by taunting teenagers, and had to run away. Wladka Meed normally came to pay for me once a month, and I waited impatiently for her visits as I had no contact with anyone else I knew, except for occasionally meeting my sister secretly in the street.

I was excited when the Polish Warsaw uprising began in September 1944 but knew that it was still very dangerous to be recognized as a Jew. The Germans were obviously on the run now and we could hear the Russian artillery getting nearer. However, the uprising was put down after heavy bombing, and the Germans evacuated Warsaw of all its remaining inhabitants. The Serafins and I were put on a train, but managed to jump off when it slowed down and went to a village where the Serafins had distant relatives. There we were sheltered by very poor and hungry peasants who lived without electricity or running water. They guessed that I was Jewish and often made anti-Semitic remarks, but treated me not that much worse than their own children. They were never paid by anyone.



*The Blit family remembered on the 45 Aid Society Holocaust Survivors quilt*

By chance, Wladka, who had also escaped from Warsaw, met the Serafins in the small market town near my village. She could not offer any money because the contact with the underground was now broken. I hoped that she would come and collect me when the war ended.

When the Russian soldiers finally arrived. I thought I was the only Jew left in Poland, apart from Wladka. For some weeks no one came, and I felt completely helpless. The Serafin family and I eventually set out that winter to walk back to the ruins of Warsaw. My only footwear was a pair of torn sandals. We found a habitable room but, without proper shoes, I could not go out. At the same time, my sister Nelly came back to Warsaw from another village. She was still with Mrs. Dubiel and together they found a Jewish committee set up to help survivors. There she recognised Wladka, and soon another underground Jewish courier, Ala Margolis (wife of Marek Edelman), one of the surviving leaders of the Ghetto uprising), came to look for me.

I was reunited with my sister, and later – miraculously – with my two young cousins. I did not know that they had escaped from the Ghetto through the sewers just a few days before the liquidation of the Ghetto. In 1946, aged 14, my sister and I came to London to join our father. It felt strange to meet him again after those terrible six years. Strangely, we hardly talked about what happened.

The rest of my family whom we left behind in the Ghetto were all murdered. They were my grandparents Mordechai and Lea Herclich, Fela and Wolf Blit, my aunt Pola Blit, my young aunt Bella and her fiancé Jozef, my aunt and uncle Gucia and Jacob Felenbok, who looked after the children of the family so selflessly, uncle and aunt Leon and Nusia Herclich, who had the means to escape but would not abandon their parents, and my mother Fela Herclich Blit, who tried to help the starving children in the Ghetto and is praised for it by Professor E. Ringlenblum in his diaries *The Chronicles of the Warsaw Ghetto*.

*From We Remember: Child Survivors of the Holocaust Speak*

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/We-Remember-Child-Survivors-Holocaust/dp/1848767870>

*This text was delivered on behalf of Wlodka Blit Robertson by Ruth Rolle at the Yom Hashoah service on 15 April 2018 and reproduced in Highlight with Wlodka's kind permission.*



**The Jewish Museum, Camden Town  
10 May - 30 September**

An immersive and playful exhibition that explores the unique imagination of the co-creator, with Albert Uderzo, of the Astérix comics.

René Goscinny's story, from a childhood in Argentina to a glittering career that began in New York and flourished in Europe, is brought to life through rare original scripts, storyboards, photographs, films, sketches, dressing up stations, games, and more than a little wild boar.

Adapted from the exhibition originally produced by the Museum of Jewish Art and History in Paris in partnership with the Institut René Goscinny.

This exhibition was made possible thanks to the exceptional loans and collaboration of the Institut René Goscinny.

### **Opening Hours**

Daily 10am - 5pm

(Friday 10am - 2pm)

Last entrance is 30 minutes before closing.

## Modim anachnu lach (We are truly thankful)

For the expanding grandeur of Creation,  
Worlds known and unknown, galaxies  
beyond galaxies,  
Filling us with awe and challenging our  
imaginings,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

For this fragile planet earth, its times and  
tides,  
Its sunsets and seasons,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

For the joy of human life, its wonders  
and surprises,  
Its hopes and achievements,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

For human community, our common  
past and future hope,  
Our oneness transcending all separation,  
our capacity to work  
For peace and justice in the midst of  
hostility and oppression,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

For high hopes and noble causes, for  
faith without fanaticism,  
For understanding of views not shared,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

For all who have laboured and suffered  
for a fairer world,  
Who have lived so that others might live  
in dignity and freedom,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

For human liberties and sacred rites:  
For opportunities to change and grow, to  
affirm and choose,  
*Modim anachnu lach.*

We pray that we may live not by our  
fears but by our hopes,  
Not by our words but by our deeds.  
Blessed are You, Eternal One: Your  
name is Goodness, and You are worthy  
of thanksgiving.  
*Baruch atah, Adonai, hatov shimcha  
u-l'cha na-eh l'hodot.*

*Mishkan T'Filah, A Progressive Siddur,  
p.257  
World Union for Progressive Judaism  
Edition*

*This beautiful prayer/poem was read  
by Susan Oliver-Edwards during the  
Shabbat morning service at which her  
grandchild, Arthur Oliver-Welsh, son  
of Sam and Eva, was blessed in the  
synagogue.*

*Susan tells us that the Rabbi told her that  
by coincidence he used to read it every  
Shabbat in his home town.*

## SERVICES

**June 2018 – Sivan/Tammuz 5778**

*Fridays at 7 pm, unless otherwise stated.*

*Saturdays at 10.30 am, unless otherwise stated*

**Friday 1 June**

**Saturday 2 June**

**Beha'Alotecha** (19 Sivan)

**Friday 8 June**

**Saturday 9 June**

**Shelchah Lecha** (26 Sivan)

**Thursday 14 June**

**Rosh Chodesh Tammuz**

**Friday 15 June**

**Saturday 16 June**

**Korach** (3 Tammuz)

**Friday 22 June**

**Saturday 23 June**

**Chukkat** (10 Tammuz)

**Friday 29 June**

**Saturday 30 June**

**Balak** (17 Tammuz)

## A Revolution at the Board – Joe Millis reports

There's been a revolution at the Board of Deputies – three out of five Honorary Officers are now female, including the new president, a Reform Movement member. It's the first time in the Board's 258-year history, the majority of its HOs are women.

Employment lawyer **Marie van der Zyl**, who serves on the management board of West London Synagogue, was elected president on 13 May. She is only the second woman to hold the post after Jo Wagerman who led the Board from 2000 to 2003.

Joining Marie on the top table are vice presidents **Sheila Gewolb**, who received the most votes for the post and will therefore be Senior VP, and **Amanda Bowman**. Add to that the fact that the Board Chief Executive is former Labour MP **Gillian Merron** and the organisation's glass ceiling has been well and truly shattered.

Making up the top table are **Edwin Shuker**, the third Vice President, and **Stuart MacDonald**, the Treasurer, a deputy for Liberal Judaism.

Marie led the Board's campaign against London Coroner **Mary Hassell's** "cab-rank rule" for releasing bodies for burial - which discriminated against Jews and Muslims because

of their need for swift interment. She said the senior coroner "must now consider her position. If she cannot carry out this basic function of her role, she must vacate her position."



*Marie van der Zyl, newly elected President of the Board of Deputies*

This new line-up is likely to shift the focus of the Board, as all have championed interfaith work and, especially in Amanda's case, been involved in social welfare campaigns.

Marie, who will now represent the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, is passionate about youth engagement in the community. She has pledged to launch "a youth engagement strategy" that will include the establishment of an annual youth plenary session. So, if any Bromley youngster, whether part of RSY or not, would like to get involved in this, please could they contact me so that I can pass on their details to Marie.

**Joe Millis**

# Dates for Your Diary

June

F	1	
S	2	<b>Beha'alotecha</b>
S	3	<b>Cheder Half Term</b>
M	4	
T	5	
W	6	
Th	7	<b>Knit and Natter</b> , 10-12 noon at Pauline's
F	8	
S	9	<b>Shelach Lecha</b>
S	10	
M	11	
T	12	
W	13	<b>Social Centre</b> , 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul
Th	14	<b>Rosh Chodesh Tammuz</b>
F	15	
S	16	<b>Korach</b>
S	17	<b>Jewish Roots Workshop</b> , 10 am to 6 pm at JW3
M	18	
T	19	
W	20	
Th	21	<b>Midsummer Music</b> by <b>Everyone Matters</b> , 7 for 7.30 pm at 21 Stone Road, Bromley
F	22	<b>Weekend visit</b> by <b>Rabbi John Franken</b> begins <b>Chagigah 2018</b> begins at Eastwood Hall, Nottingham
S	23	<b>Chukkat</b>
S	24	<b>'See the Music'</b> - concert at the RCM, South Kensington, at 5 pm
M	25	
T	26	
W	27	<b>Social Centre</b> , 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul
Th	28	<b>Knit and Natter</b> , 10-12 noon at Pauline's
F	29	
S	30	<b>Balak</b>

July

S	1	
M	2	
T	3	
W	4	
Th	5	
F	6	
S	7	<b>Pinchas</b>
S	8	<b>Last day of Cheder Term</b> - Visit to Sadeh Farm
M	9	
T	10	
W	11	<b>Social Centre</b> , 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul
Th	12	
F	13	<b>Rosh Chodesh Av</b>
S	14	<b>Mattot-Mas'ei</b>
S	15	<b>Annual Jubilee Lecture</b> given by Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko, 3.30 for 4 pm at the Shul
M	16	
T	17	
W	18	
Th	19	
F	20	
S	21	<b>Chazon (Devarim) Erev Tisha B'Av</b>
S	22	<b>TISHA B'AV</b> <b>3 Faiths Peace Walk</b> , leaving the Shul at 3 pm
M	23	
T	24	
W	25	<b>Social Centre</b> , 10.30 am to 2.30 pm at the Shul
Th	26	
F	27	
S	28	<b>Nachamu</b> (Va'etchanan)
S	29	
M	30	<b>Sadeh Summer Camp</b> begins
T	31	



# Chagigah 2018

**22 JUNE - 24 JUNE**

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Being part of something bigger*

**Chagigah** is our biennial celebration of Reform Judaism. It reflects the special atmosphere we will create over a weekend away, celebrating Reform Judaism and being part of something bigger. We look forward to welcoming you as one big Community for Chagigah 2018, 22-24 June at Eastwood Hall near Nottingham. All enquiries to [chagigah@rjuk.org](mailto:chagigah@rjuk.org)

**Chagigah Programme**

Last Chagigah we launched our *Re-imagining Leadership Initiative*, through which over 170 leaders have been trained. Our Communities that Care initiative has been directly responsible for raising awareness to the issues of loneliness and isolation and creating care teams in at least two of our communities. This year, as well as continuing the development of those initiatives, we have listened to, and worked with, our communities to launch our newest Initiative: *Re-Imagining Leadership: Money for Values- Re-thinking Synagogues' Finance*

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