



## Light in darkest days in two ways for BRS this winter

*Bromley's Vicki Ashmore is one of just two members of Reform shuls to have been recognised this autumn by the Jack Petchey Foundation Leaders Awards Scheme for their 'incredible commitment and support for young people'. It couldn't have happened to anyone more deserving of recognition. Mazal tov, Vicki.*

### In this issue

What's on at BRS - 1  
Thoughts from the Rabbi – 2  
View from the Chair and BRS Area Groups – 3  
Chai School Cheder – 4-5  
Endowment Fund, latest – 6  
In Our Community – 7 & 9  
Remembering Eunice 8 & 11  
Contact Information and conclusion of Nuggets – 10  
Board of Deputies – 11  
Fuller Chanukah details and theatre review – 12

### Candle Lighting Parties Chanukah 5784/2023

**1<sup>st</sup> Night:** Thur 7 December  
Outside M25 – see page 3  
Bickley, 6.30pm  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Night:** Fri 8 December  
During Shabbat Zoom (link in weekly e-Lights)  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Night:** Sat 9 December  
Orpington, 3pm  
**4<sup>th</sup> Night:** Sun 10 December  
Sevenoaks, 4pm  
Blackheath, 5-7pm  
**5<sup>th</sup> Night:** Mon 11 December  
Forest Hill, 4pm  
**6<sup>th</sup> Night:** Tue 12 December  
Lower Sydenham, 7.30pm  
**7<sup>th</sup> Night:** Wed 13 December  
Lewisham Council party 6.30pm  
(Rabbi Laura participating)  
**8<sup>th</sup> Night:** Thur 14 December  
Bellingham, 7pm

**Cheder's** Chanukah event is on morning of **10 December**. Pre-registration is required for security purposes. See p 5.

**Social Centre party is on 13 December**. See p.9.

*Fuller details of each venue (what to bring, whom to call, on p 12).  
More details judishef@aol.com*

## CHANUKAH : FOOD, GIFTS, KLEZMER AND CANDLES

As usual in December, our main focus is on **CHANUKAH** – the fabulous fair brought to us by Sonia and her team and the home candle lightings. The fair is on **Sunday 3 December, 12:30-15:00** in the Goldberg room, where you can buy Judaica, bagels, tickets for our fantastic raffle and lots of lovely Chanukah gifts from our artisan stalls. We will be entertained by our amazing **BRS Klezmer band at 2pm**. The Fair is the only event in the year that raises money to go towards security, learning materials and resources for our children.

A brief list of **candle lighting venues** is on the right and there's fuller information on p.12. Sadly, security, always on our minds, is paramount this year, so please don't be offended if your host asks who you are.

There have recently been developments at **Kemnal Park**, where BRS has a number of burial plots. Janet Posner, our tireless rep, reports on p.7. You may not need the information for years, but it's well worth knowing.

With extraordinary timing, given that it had been many months in the planning, Tracy Ann Oberman's **"Merchant of Venice 1936"** came to Bromley's Churchill Theatre just weeks after the 7 October atrocities. Our review is on p 12. The nature of current events and the long lead time for HighLight mean that we cannot report on the war here, but please check your weekly e-Light and e-Light extra for links to updates and briefings.

Vicki, above, was so busy preparing for the **Jewish Living Experience Exhibition** in January that her award came out of the blue. "It's a total honour," she said. "It's been a privilege getting to know the children and I consider myself very, very lucky to have them in my life." Vicki is looking for a few **more volunteer exhibition guides for JLEE**. Fuller details on p. 9.

**The next gathering at BRS with Rabbi Laura specifically for Hebrew speakers** will be on **Saturday 9 December**. Watch e-Light for time and other details and please tell anyone you know who may be feeling isolated to get in touch with the rabbi direct or via the office. Contact info is on page 10.

# “10 Jewish Resilience Nuggets” by popular request

*Rabbi Laura explains: At times of war, bereavement, illness and just everyday stresses, it might really help you to return to 10 great Jewish resilience ideas.*

I am writing this from Israel, where I am for a week, and so these ideas, which I also shared in the service on 4 November, are particularly pertinent, and I'm doing my very best to hold onto them for myself as well! Each has a resilience principle first, and then a link to our Shabbat morning liturgy to ground it in its Jewish context.

- **Breathe out more than in**

How good are your tents - Mah tovu ohalecha. When you sing, you breathe out more than you breathe in. We start our services by singing - a perfect example of breath inducing self-calm. Whatever breathing exercises you may find useful, a simple, effective way of self calming that is easy to remember is to breathe out more than you breathe in. You can quite quickly calm your nervous system.

- **Body performs such wonders**

u'mafli la'asot. The first prayer we say is the prayer that appreciates our bodies functioning properly in order to stay alive. The first resilience rule when you are off kilter, anxious or under pressure is “body first.” What you might experience as an emotion may be exacerbated or the result of physical discomfort. Have you eaten enough? Have you had too much caffeine? Have you slept enough? To self-calm, do these first, then consider about how you might be feeling. Our feelings aren't always the truth – sometimes it really is just too much coffee.

- **Purity, pure soul**

nishmah tehorah. For me, the most beautiful Jewish belief is that we are created good and pure. When we feel disapproved of, reminding

ourselves that our essence is pure helps avoid internalising criticism, shame or dislike that's directed towards us.

- **Appreciation** lifting up those bent low, zokef kefufim. Appreciation of what is good that is also true lifts us up and raises our spirits when we feel bent low. Two practical appreciation ideas are the question that I have as a fridge magnet:

“What shall I practise today, gratitude or resentment?” and “What is the data of what is really happening showing me rather than just what I feel?” Our feelings may mislead us and they may make us feel far more anxious or concerned than reality shows. Always checking what is factually true rather than what our emotions may lead us towards can really help lift us up.

- **Jettison** A song for Shabbat, mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat. Shabbat is about preserving ourselves by letting go and getting rid of work or other physically and emotionally depleting commitments. Whatever has happened in the week, we still sing a psalm for Shabbat and break from our normal routine. Both the rest itself but, more importantly, the knowledge that we can jettison what might deplete us is a fabulous resilience building practice.

- **Mantra: Hear oh Israel**

Shema Yisrael. A mantra is a short, highly memorable phrase that contains us and takes us forward when we are under immense stress. Jews have used the mantra “Shema Yisrael” for millennia to strengthen ourselves when we are frightened and to say before we die as well, of course, as twice daily to bookend our days. My favourite mantras under emotional pressure are “This is information” (this separates me from the experience/person and turns it into learning, distancing me from the experience itself), and

“right now” (this helps me think that something might be temporary). I find that the most useful mantra is “this is practice” (for when something might be worse, and so it has meaning interwoven into the experience).

- **I can control only myself**

Stop me talking. We end our central prayer of the Amidah like that. What matters is that we control our own words, and, of course, actions. Knowing what is and what isn't in our power to influence is a psychological gift under pressure.

- **Power of quiet** Let me be silent, nafshi tiddom. Stimulus, whether sound or sights or snails can be both strengthening, but also profoundly depleting. In this war between Gaza and Israel, the video images have been shown to be psychologically very hard to process. Alternatively, silence and quiet are deeply nourishing and replenishing. During the 30 days following a burial, we are not meant to listen to the radio or go to entertainment, and that quiet helps the mourning process considerably.

- **Things will change** To witness soon, lir'ot m'herah. At the core of religious resilience is the belief that things can change for the better. Not only do we know that things have to change (sometimes for the worse), this future facing, outward facing possibility that we say at the end of our services in the Aleinu prayer, encapsulates Judaism's belief that hope can change reality as it changes our attitudes and therefore, of course, our actions.

- **Meaning** Repairing the world, l'takken olam. If we keep our own purpose, the meaning for our actions and our beliefs as a North Star in our lives, this can bring resilience when we feel pressured and depleted. *Conclusion of this nugget and simple bullet-point checklist on page 10.*

# View from the Chair



7 October 2023, a date that has changed all of us. The horrific massacre that happened that day in southern Israel is beyond comprehension, and there are many within our BRS community who have family and friends in Israel who were directly affected. The reverberations worldwide continue to ripple, and the rise in anti-Semitism is frightening. Personally I feel like I am sitting shiva, a sense of loss so strong it is sometimes unbearable. However we do what we do best and that is stick together and carry on. Continuing with our lives and our communal lives at BRS is a testament to our faith, a statement that we are strong and that we are proud Jews.

Services, cheder and events will carry on as normal so please come in the knowledge that security has been assessed and increased. We have had huge support from the Metropolitan Police at Bromley and the CST, Graham Harris our Head of Security, Lizzy, our security guard, and you, our volunteers at BRS.

We are committed to Israel and to peace in the region, the pursuit of democracy, human rights and religious pluralism. Our community has always been known for being tight knit and at this time I ask for your care and compassion for those around us who are feeling upset, scared and isolated.

**Now for the BRS news...**

The generosity of our community has meant that from our Kol Nidre appeal we have donated £4,352 to Sadeh Farm, £3,188 to Leket Israel and £3,133 to Roundabout. All the charities have expressed their thanks and appreciation. This money will make a real difference and have a positive impact on many lives.

As Chanukah approaches and we think about lighting our candles, let's reflect and rejoice in the light in our community and at BRS. We have a vibrant and growing community, a Rabbi totally dedicated to us, a cheder full of beautiful children and wonderful teachers, the Chanukah Fair bringing us all together, hosts opening up their homes for Chanukah candle lightings, a growing number of Area Groups, a fantastic Youth Worker, Einat, who has rejuvenated the youth group "Youth22", and volunteers too numerous to name. You are all magnificent.

These are just eight examples, I am sure you have your own to add. As we celebrate Chanukah I hope the festival brings light, joy and warmth to your homes. I pray that by the time you read this the hostages taken from Israel will be in their own homes and with their families.

Happy Chanukah. I wish you all peace and light during this holiday season.

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

## BRS Area Groups Round-Up

### Last issue we heard from area groups BR5&6 and SE10&Beyond.

As we went to print, BR1, 2, 3, 4 and 7's Andrew Goldman and Margaret Brearley were planning coffee and cake for a "splendidly large group". Because this group involves those living closest to the synagogue, it hopes that parents and grandparents of cheder pupils, even if not from the area, will be able to join Sunday morning events during cheder.

**Beyond M25 group** enjoyed a fantastic visit to Ightham Mote. Next up is a guided visit to the Chagall Windows at All Saints Church, Tudeley on **Sunday 10 December** at 1.30pm. Please contact Toby for details and if you need help with travel. Toby says that there are some very different, unique decorations at the St Thomas a Becket church in Capel, a short distance away.

**Chanukah plans for the area:**  
**Thursday 7 Dec** at 6pm with Toby, Viv and Sara in Bidborough. Latkes will be served. Contact Toby (**see above right**) for "how to find us", and... **Sunday 10 Dec** at 4pm with the Citron family in Sevenoaks. Contact jscitron@gmail.com for "how to find us" and other details.  
**Coming in 2024:** visit **Salomons House;** a "Jewish Canterbury" guided tour; a seaside trip to include the **Montefiore mausoleum** in Ramsgate and a **Welcome 2024** gathering in the pretty village of Yalding with members Gillian and Mark.

If you know anyone living near you who is Jewish but not linked to the shul, they are welcome to come to these groups. If you know of any local gems such as parks or galleries that might be of interest for a group visit, please contact the area group reps. For BR1+ that's [zachor9@gmail.com](mailto:zachor9@gmail.com) or [appgoldman1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:appgoldman1@yahoo.co.uk); for Beyond M25 [toby.allin@gmail.com](mailto:toby.allin@gmail.com)



# Chai school addresses everything from joy to grief



*Pupils, parents, teachers and helpers enjoyed decorating and using the Sukkah back in October. Photos here are from Kittot Dalet and Hey*



## **Seasonal celebrations from Rosh Hashanah to Chanukah**

Our Tishri festivals season started off, as ever, as a time of reflection packed with apples, honey and seasonal songs. Behind the scenes, our team of mensches worked like bees to prepare the family services for the High Holydays. Heidi fetched two huge round challot from Ed the Baker's for our excited challah fans.

Our families and little chaverim (friends) filled the Goldberg Garden Room with their new year wishes and happy singing. Sue cut up carrot coins for our "buffet of blessings" which we ate washed down with pomegranate juice to symbolise our hope for a sweet and happy new year ahead.

Parent Ben Ross woke us up with his shofar calls as we explored the meanings of the different blasts and calls for us to stir, to return and to answer the shofar's timeless call. There was a lovely kehillah (community) feel and during our Yom Kippur session heartfelt apologies were shared and accepted among us. Michael Zerihan, Noah B and Bela helped prep the Sukkah banner crafts, getting them ready for all to assemble and hang. Thanks to their efforts, our Sukkah was the best for many a year. The invitingly hung fresh and hand-made fruits and vegetables, garlands and branches were enjoyed by members and guests who came to the Macmillan Cancer coffee and cake morning at the start of Sukkot.

### **Key to success? Fabulous parents and helpers!**

Key to our success and the happy engagement of our yeladim (children) is the involvement of parents at every event, level and way. We are so fortunate this year to have parents joining the team as Morim (learning leaders). Hazel Sado brings a real flair for craft projects and Maria Sonino's baking has added a delicious dimension to the morning Kiddush, bringing a real sparkle and the willingness to share their own Jewish

learning and journeys with our yeladim. Our tradition encourages us to teach as well as to study and we are fortunate that Alex Waterman and Mani Layward Wells, two adult BM students, have joined the team, taking on this mitzvah and now, in turn, teaching our yeladim.

The term started with a nosh and a natter, a chance to stay and socialise organised by Sonia Hyams, our Hooray Cheder! Parents group leader.

### **Dealing with shock and grief**

After half-term we began dealing with our profound sense of grief, shock, anger and disorientation following the terrorist attacks in Israel on 7 October. For most of us, in south London, it's not always so easy to find time to talk and share our feelings with fellow Jewish parents, so we're now opening the Sanctuary on a regular basis after drop-off (from 10 am each week) for all to have space to gather, listen and support each other. Guided by our BRS Board and CST, Lizzy, Graham and I have been discussing and putting into place enhanced security measures for cheder. **We are asking parents not to congregate around the entrance to our shul or in the road nearby.** We will also require everyone to register in advance for certain events such as our festival party mornings.

### **Providing a safe Jewish Space**

Now, more than ever, it's important that our Chai School Cheder and Gan provides an uplifting and safe Jewish space for our yeladim and parents to learn, grow and build kehillah together. So we marched onwards with our joyful cheder Simchat Torah parade, pass the etrog games, Hebrew brachot and food bank drive.

Our second half of term culminates in our Chanukah party morning on 10 December, when we hope to bring light, latkes and a few sufganiyot (doughnuts) to strengthen all!

**Frankie Gruzd, Head Teacher**  
[cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:cheder@bromleyshul.org.uk)



*Mabel, Mia and Alma, just three of the most recent BM recruits who helped Rabbi Laura during Simchat Torah before being presented with*

*their Siddurim from the Goldman Trust. This delightful tradition was initiated by and now honours BRS founder members Derek and Margaret Goldman*



# Cheder events, looking ahead and back



Above: Head teacher Frankie (standing, in black) takes the lead at Rosh Hashanah celebrations. Below: teacher Robert with some of the oldest pupils, and some of the youngest pupils share what they've learned about the Tower of Babel



## BRS Chai School term dates 5784 - 2024

### AVIV/SPRING TERM 2024

#### Team Training:

Sunday 7 January

#### Yeladim term starts:

Sunday 14 January

#### HALF TERM:

Sunday 11 February

#### Term Ends:

Sunday 24 March – Purim

### KAYITZ/SUMMER TERM

#### Term starts: Prepping for Pesach:

Sunday 21 April

#### Bank Holiday Weekend

No Session - Sunday 5 May

#### HALF TERM:

Sunday 26 May

#### Term Ends:

Sunday 30 June

## Chanukah Party

**Sunday 10 December**

*Our end of term finale of*

## Lights, latkes and songs

*Due to heightened security measures it is, sadly, essential that ALL those wishing to attend register in advance for an e-ticket. Entrance will be by ticket only. There will be no ad-hoc places on the day this year.*

### BRING A DISH TO SHARE

A savoury or finger food dish e.g. sandwiches, pizza bagels, cheese, fruit platter or latkes

### BRS CHANUKAH MAKE & BAKE OFF

The best in each of the following categories will win a prize – how will your family fare in our Chanukah culinary show-down?

- Home-made latkes
- Home-made doughnuts
- Your own edible Chanukah (model or on a plate)

### REMEMBER TZEDAKAH AND THE GIFT OF GIVING

Donate non-perishable items, toiletries and Christmas biscuits, chocolates etc.

### ENJOY THE LIGHTS, DISCO AND GAMES

- Make your own Chanukah souvenir, card or ornament
- Year 5+ compete to be this year's ninja spinja dreidel champion and solve the Maccabee mystery quest
- Sing along with our Chanukah songs



### TICKETS ONLY FROM EVENTBRITE

Places are limited so please book early to ensure you are part of the morning:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdxxaxvw>

# Potential support won for all BRS young people

## Successful Endowment Fund bid makes RSY-Netzer activities available to all who wish to apply

The BRS Endowment Fund has approved an application, led by Amelia Kyazze, BRS parent of two, and Chair Michelle Brooks-Evans, to improve, formalise and democratise the process by which the shul makes grants to individuals for RSY-Netzer events.

The aim is that this should serve as a transformative push to help BRS children forge an ongoing and deep connection with Reform Judaism and their own British Jewish identity. This is important not only for the individual children, teenagers and young adults growing up in today's UK, but for their families, BRS and the wider Jewish community.

The fund will support up to 50% of any costs of a BRS child wanting to attend RSY-Netzer events, whether Shemesh summer camp, Choref winter camp or the Israel Tour (when running).

### What is RSY?

RSY-Netzer is the Reform Jewish community for all young people across the UK. Its aim is to create inclusive and accessible spaces through day and residential events that immerse young people in Reform Jewish values to live by. The vision of the RSY-Netzer kehilla (community) is to build well informed and active young leaders both outside of and within Reform synagogues across the UK. All programming is structured around its four pillars of ideology: Reform Judaism, Reform Zionism, Tikkun Olam (fixing the world) and Livluv (to blossom), ensuring that RSY-

Netzer is a space where young people can develop.

### Why should I sign my children up for RSY-Netzer?

Don't take our word for it! Listen to what boys and girls who have been to recent RSY-Netzer events have to say:

*"It's the best way to spend two weeks. So much fun."*

*"I loved making new friends. The movie nights and zip line were especially fun."*

*"I loved going to camp with my BRS friends but also meeting up with friends from around the UK."*

*"I liked the way they were democratic in their decision making, allowing us to contribute to the RSY activities."*

*"Sign me up for the winter! I would love to train as a leader."*

### What support is available from the Synagogue?

Thanks to this new grant, any parent/carer who is a member of BRS is able to contact the Chair and request funding for up to 50% of the cost of RSY-Netzer events for each child.

The first step for parents/carers is to visit the RSY-Netzer website (<https://rsy-netzer.org.uk>) and fill in an application for each child. At that point they do not need to pay a full deposit for the event; if they wish, they can contact RSY-Netzer and explain that they are from BRS and seeking support.

Once proof of application to RSY has been shared, the process for BRS to support parents/carers is fairly quick. For more information, email [chair@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:chair@bromleyshul.org.uk). Families with additional needs may be able to obtain further

financial support from BRS and/or direct from RSY-Netzer.

### Are there any obligations on families who receive grants?

We hope that children who attend events will each give us feedback about RSY-Netzer and their own experiences. Perhaps you and/or your child/ren could make yourselves available to answer questions from those who might want to attend future events.

### Paying it forward

For the scheme to be self-sustaining, we ask parents/carers to consider "paying it forward", soon or in the future. *The bid for Endowment Fund support for RSY events was approved on a four-year basis, so this is an important element in its being considered a success.* It would be wonderful if recipients of support from the Endowment Fund were able to donate some funding back to BRS to be earmarked for future efforts linked to the stated aim of this grant: to help BRS children forge an ongoing and deep connection with Reform Judaism and their own British Jewish identity.

This is not obligatory; we understand that not everyone will be able to contribute. However, if you were able to support activities in the future, the scheme could really be considered a success.

*Any questions? Please write to [chair@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:chair@bromleyshul.org.uk)*

### How do I get Endowment Fund support for another project?

The next round of funding bids will open in **February or March**. Criteria and procedure will be publicised in e-Light nearer the time or, for advance details, email [soniahyams@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:soniahyams@yahoo.co.uk)



# IN OUR COMMUNITY

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## BEREAVEMENTS

We are sad to record the death of founder member **Eunice Carp** and wish long life to her son, **Jonathan** and daughter **Malva** and their families. *Hesped on pp 8/11.*

We wish long life to **Greg Liebenhals** on the death of his father, **Zvi**, in October.

*May the memories of Eunice and Zvi be for a blessing.*

## Welcome to BRS to...

**David and Susan Bossick** of Purley; **Anna Barnett** of Chislehurst; **Benjamin Katz-Crowther** of Tonbridge and family; **Jessica Lee Beaumont** of SE3; **Bernard and Amanda Davis** of Beckenham.

**MAZAL TOV** to **Dianne Mathews** on the birth of great-grandchild, #3, **Theodore Malcolm**, born to Scott and Elise on 27 October.



## REFUA SH'LEMA

We wish all members who are ill or incapacitated a speedy recovery. It's been a particularly busy autumn among BRS members for hospital admissions, flu and Covid as well as many other accidents and problems. We hope everyone is on the mend. **If you need help or know of someone who does, don't think twice: email [caring@bromleyshul.org](mailto:caring@bromleyshul.org)**

## LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER



*Mazal tov to Sarah Binysh (above, with her mother, Julie), who formally graduated with a post-graduate diploma in Adult Nursing from the University of the South Bank on 8 November. She is working as a nurse at Guys & St Thomas' Hospital Trust. Julie was also a nurse in her youth.*

## ANNUAL CHANUKAH FAIR 3 DECEMBER 2023, 12.30-3pm



## Ash Memorials Now Available at Kemnal Park

Just over three years ago, Bromley Reform Synagogue purchased a dedicated area at GreenAcres Kemnal Park cemetery to set up a Jewish burial ground for our community. We operate the only active Jewish burial ground in South London. The area is beautifully maintained and the graves are well cared for by the management.

We have now developed an area within our burial ground for the interment of ashes. Often, grieving families have no idea what to do with the cremated ashes of their

loved ones, so we are providing the option of interment within our burial area. We have installed 10 ash memorials (see photo). Cremated ashes will be interred in a special urn under the memorial. The ground around the memorials will be landscaped and maintained by Kemnal Park. Each memorial can contain two urns of cremated remains and above the memorial is a place to engrave a commemoration to a loved one (*sample below, left*)



The cost of an ash memorial for BRS members is £1,850. These can be reserved by payment in full to the synagogue. If membership of BRS is ongoing, there will be no further funeral expenses at the time of the member's death unless there is an outstanding Late Entry payment. Engraving costs are not included. For more information, please contact [sharon@bromleyshul.org](mailto:sharon@bromleyshul.org)



*The recently consecrated tombstone on a regular burial plot to the unique Pauline.*

Even though it is only two years since Pauline died, we realise that our many newer members who did not know her may wonder what made her so special. Ask any old timer why we cherish her memory. Ed.



## Eunice Carp, 1937 - 2023

Eunice Tilly Finkle was born on 28 April 1937 to Lilly and Max in Hackney, East London. Lilly was forthright, especially with her opinions, and Max was gentle with big sense of humour. Eunice inherited the best parts of both. An only child born relatively late – for those days – she was a much loved and, dare I say, slightly spoilt, daughter and niece to her much loved but childless Uncle Barney and Auntie Rai.

Eunice loved being at Finkle Grocers in Brick Lane. She often described the atmosphere – smells, barrels of pickled cucumbers, smoked salmon hanging, queues at the door. But mostly she loved listening to her grandfather's stories of his early years in Eastern Europe and the family history. She, in turn, would often tell us these stories, over and again. Eunice was a keen listener and throughout her life took a keen interest in other people's life stories.

Eunice grew up with a close set of friends, some of whom remained with her throughout her life. They were always so important to her. She attended secondary school in Hackney, which she enjoyed, although she did mention the odd days of truancy – her father's influence, I believe.

At 17, she was invited to a party which she didn't want to go to but was persuaded by her mother. She met a medical student called Gerald Carp – a few years older than her – and they started chatting. They started laughing at the same things that night and didn't stop for the next 65 years. Eunice and Gerald were married two years later, in 1956, after

Gerald qualified. Eunice embarked on a secretarial career in the City while Gerald gained experience as a new doctor. They lived on in Hackney, and in 1962 welcomed their beloved daughter, Malva

1964 was a big year for them. Their wonderful son Jonathan – that's me – was born. That same year, Gerald managed to buy into a general practice in Peckham. This meant a previously unthinkable move south of the river, away from family and friends, to a new home in Broadoaks Way, Bromley. Bromley was to be their home for the rest of their lives.

They embraced the move south – followed, in time, by some friends from "the east" – made new friends, and joined the newly created Reform shul as founding members. Here, they formed a large circle of friends, including Brenda and Stanley, Joy and Norman, Gloria and Ronnie, so important to them that they would be considered more like family than just friends. Eunice and Gerald threw themselves in to establishing the BRS community. My father was a council member and Eunice was, for a few years, Chair of the ladies guild. The synagogue has not, I promise you, the seen so many flowers around the Bimah since those days or events so lavishly catered.

From the 1960s to late 1980s Gerald was involved in the world of professional boxing – not fighting but as a medical officer – and became a proud member of the British Boxing Board of Control. Eunice supported him totally, although it often meant, for him, three very late nights a week after a day's work. However, Eunice more than enjoyed participation in its glamorous

occasions, where she would mix easily with the celebrities of the day. Often, in later years, we might bring up a celebrity name and she would say "Oh, they were okay. I used to dance with them."

Our parents loved travelling – in style. They loved Italy – in fact, they went to Italy for their honeymoon, paid for with the cash presents from their wedding rather than saving them for a rainy day. They loved cruises. I really cannot tell you how many they went on. Later, whenever we spoke of a country or city, Eunice would say "We've been there." It only recently dawned on me that they had, indeed, been to these places but only for a day. But that was good enough for them.

Eunice's life was not always a bed of roses. Suffering from arthritis from an early age she spent six months in hospital at around the age of 10. In her forties she beat bowel cancer and in her fifties had both of her hips replaced. This accelerated Eunice and Gerald's 1987 decision to move from the family home to a flat – although, as I had just moved out, I always thought it had something to do with ensuring I did not return. They enjoyed living there for about 35 years - unfortunately a few years less for my father – until Eunice's mobility and health forced the difficult decision to move to Beckenham Place Care Home. She really enjoyed visits there from family and looked forward to seeing friends such as Hana and Stanley on a regular basis. Although the move had been a hard decision, Eunice's compensation was the 'luxury' living and unbelievably wonderful care she received right up to 10 October 2023. [Concludes on p.11](#)

# IN OUR COMMUNITY

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## Social Centre: so much on!

We continue to meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month in the shul's Goldberg Room. Members enjoy coffee and chat, Rummikub and Scrabble before a session of gentle exercise with Andreas gives them an appetite for lunch. A much appreciated variety of **tasty, nutritious food** is provided by our four cooks.

Our first September meeting saw members enjoying a special Summer Party lunch followed by **wonderful musical entertainment** from Roland Perrin and his friend Jeremy – heart-warming, foot-tapping music from many genres from jazz to klezmer to classics.

We have also been joined several times by representatives of **Bromley Healthwatch**, keen to hear members' views on health provision in Bromley. Members are very happy to tell of their experiences. As they keep asking to come back to us, Healthwatch must find their visits worthwhile.

**Author Sonia Case** gave us an illustrated talk on her new book *Burying the Ghosts*. She began by asking members about their backgrounds – many of us have families who settled here fleeing from persecution – before introducing her mother's story. She read extracts to whet our appetite for what was obviously going to be a fascinating insight into how difficult it was for refugees to settle into a different way of life. Many of us bought copies of the book and look forward to discovering the full story.

**December 13** will see the very welcome return of our old friends Tom Shiels and David Coronel, who will bring their music to make our **Chanukah Party** go with a



*A Social Centre favourite : Rummikub*

swing. This is the only meeting in December, and we'll start all over again in the new year on **10 and 24 January, 2024**. [Barbara Kurtz](#)

*"Thank you" to Barbara and the hard-working team who've made our Social Centre such a success story. The next item is also from Barbara, who can give you more information about both activities: [barbarakurtz42@gmail.com](mailto:barbarakurtz42@gmail.com)*

## Knit, Natter & Stitch

Our small, friendly group has been meeting monthly – to natter, knit and stitch in that order! We continue to provide the prem baby unit at the PRUH with a selection of **blankets, quilts, cannula mitts and toy animals**. Val Barnett is our champion animal maker and her large variety of small toys is much appreciated initially by parents who love to see them in their babies incubators. And I'm sure the babies love them as they grow stronger and able to leave to go home, taking the toys with them. The quilts and blankets are also taken home by the parents.

We are currently **completing hats, scarves, knitted bears, pencil cases** etc to add to shoeboxes filled by school children. They then go to Eastern Europe to give Xmas cheer to disadvantaged children and their families.

**New knitters and stitchers are always welcome**, as are donations of double knitting wool, especially baby wool and fabric with children's designs suitable for quilts. [Barbara Kurtz, 7/11/2023](#)

**Best wishes in your new homes** to **Ros Clayton, Monty Schwartz** and **Judi Sheffrin**, all within Bromley borough, to **Joe Berg**, now in SW2 and **Eric Lewis**, now in Caterham, and to **Ian and Suzanne Burgess**, who have transferred to Edgware.

## JEWISH LIVING EXPERIENCE EXHIBITION at BRS, January 16-26

The "Experience" is a travelling exhibition aimed primarily at school groups. Designed by education experts, colourful and well resourced, it enables visitors to gain an insight into Judaism as a living faith. Visitors at previous venues have said, *"Exceeded my expectations, comprehensive and beautifully presented..."*

*"It showed that Bar/Bar Mitzvah has a joyful side as well as being spiritually significant."*

*"I cherish the moment I was allowed to sound the shofar..."*

We're hosting it over nine working days with sessions 10am - 12pm and 12.30 - 2.30pm each day. Ideally two **volunteer guides** should be on hand for each. This is a timely opportunity to spread a positive story about Jews and Judaism in general and, through our warm BRS welcome, about those in Bromley in particular. Vicki has a great team but a few more helpers will make all the difference.

If you can spare two hours for a session and 90mins for training on Mon 15 January, please contact [education@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:education@bromleyshul.org.uk)

# BRS CONTACT INFORMATION

## Oh, DREIDEL, DREIDEL, DREIDEL...

Every year there's a dispute about how to play this simple game. So, what's it all about? Along with the chanukiyah, the toy top known as a dreidel is one of the most recognisable items associated with Chanukah. But this hasn't always been the case.

Though there are plenty of stories placing dreidels in ancient times, according to scholars they are more folklore than fact. It's unclear where or when playing dreidel originated, but historians point out that it didn't make an appearance in Jewish writings until the 18th century. By then, European Jews had likely adapted the game from similar ones played in Christian, German-speaking parts of the continent.

Each of the four sides of a dreidel is marked with a different letter—in German: G for “ganz” (all), H for “halb” (half), N for “nisch” (nothing) and S for “schicht” (put)—and that dictates whether the person who spun the top should take all, half or none of the coins in the collective pot, or put some in.

Because Yiddish is closely related to German, the four original letters continued to serve as the instructions for the game. They also happen to be the first letters of the words in the Hebrew phrase “nes gadol haya sham,” or “a great miracle happened there,” referring to the story of Chanukah, in which one day's worth of oil lasted for eight days.

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

**020-8460 5460 : [www.bromleyshul.org.uk](http://www.bromleyshul.org.uk)**

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

**Administrator/Administrator and Community Co-ordinator**

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

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

**Pesach HighLight : Please send contributions to [comms@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:comms@bromleyshul.org.uk) by 15 March**

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, or you have news and photos of recent events/activities, please tell us at the same address.

## 10 JEWISH RESILIENCE NUGGETS

Here's the at-a-glance (or cut-out-and-keep, if you like) version of the Nuggets that Rabbi Laura shared in November, plus the remainder of the tenth, Repairing the World:

“ For me, the meaning of life is to repair the world in partnership with the Divine. Each person has their different meaning, but if you can identify in a sentence or less what you feel the meaning of life is for you, and remind yourself of it when things are hard this may give you strength when you really need it.”

- **Breathe out more than in** How good are your tents  
*Mah tovu ohalecha.* מה־טֹבוֹ אֹהֶלְיֶךָ
- **Body** performs such wonders  
*u'mafli la'asot* וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת
- **Purity** pure soul *nishmah tehorah* נִשְׁמָה טְהוֹרָה
- **Appreciation** lifting up those bent low  
*zokef kefufim* זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים
- **Jettison** A song for Shabbat,  
*mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat* מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
- **Mantra** Hear oh Israel, *Shema Yisrael* שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל
- **I can control only myself** stop me talking,  
*n'zor l'shoni* נָצוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי
- **Power of quiet** Let me be silent  
*nafshi tiddom* נַפְשִׁי תִדְדֹם
- **Things will change** To witness soon  
*lir'ot m'herah* לְרֹאוֹת מְהֵרָה
- **Meaning** Repairing the world,  
*l'takken olam* לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם



# How's the Board of Deputies done in recent times?

*This is probably the last column I'll write as your representative on the Board of Deputies of British Jews as I intend to stand down when the current three-year term ends next June.*

*And it is not the column I had initially intended to write – not by a long chalk – but more of that later in the piece.*

*I am sure you, like me, are deeply concerned about the situation in Israel post the Hamas terrorist rampage through the towns, villages, and kibbutzim on the Gaza border on 7 October. Most of us have friends and family there or have lived there for long or short periods of our lives. We all have a deep emotional connection with Israel, even if we do not agree with the policies of this government or that.*

*One thing I can say is that the Board has taken the lead on British Jewry's response in a mainly responsible and positive way. For instance, president Marie van der Zyl has been a human dynamo leading on countering perceived bias in the media, whether it be the BBC, ITV, the Guardian or other broadcasters and newspapers.*

*The Board has also produced guidance for Jewish teachers and parents of Jewish children in non-Jewish schools. And it has published on how to navigate issues for Jewish employees at their places of work where the staff and management aren't Jewish. And, most importantly, the Board and its partners have published tips for those needing psychological help with understandable stress, anxiety, and fears. I know these tips have helped me hugely.*

*Even before the war began, the Board had made strides to be more accommodating of Progressive Jews. For example, Marie met the Israeli diaspora affairs minister, Amichai Chikli, on his visit to the UK, but refused to have a photo taken with him and made clear to him the Board's displeasure at his comments about Progressive Jews, LGBTQ+ people and Palestinians. The Board has also worked hard on interfaith relations and reaching out to other minority groups to see how we can all work together.*

*But here comes the "more of that later" bit.*

*It still suffers from a severe democratic deficit, despite all the good done by the Board and the current set of Honorary Officers. Sometimes I wonder what deputies are there for. We meet eight times a year and usually we have the top table read out part of their reports (which we get in advance) and then they usually answer questions. Rarely does a deputy get a straight answer. Equally rarely is there a debate about policy with a vote.*

*There are supposed to be elections in May for a new set of Honorary Officers — although this could be delayed because of the situation in Israel. No one wants an election campaign while the situation in Israel-Palestine is dire. And we don't know yet who the runners and riders will be — but the situation at the Board is unlikely to change, because doughnuts don't vote for Chanukah.*

*However, if anyone still wants to talk to me about being the next deputy, should Bromley want one, please contact me on 07980 573160 or at joemillis1959@hotmail.com. **Joe Millis** (please be aware: written late October)*

## REMEMBERING EUNICE CARP

*continued from p.8*

*Visiting Eunice at the home was no hardship and she was always happy to welcome anyone.*

*Eunice herself was a class act. She had a rare ability to listen to people's stories and offer sound and caring but honest advice – she got people, and there were no flies on her. She was no nonsense and would say it how it was. She often found herself standing at a bus stop with a stranger and by the time the bus had come had their life story. She was sharp witted and humorous; she liked to laugh. My own friends would often go to her for advice. Malva spoke with her every day from her own marriage until Eunice's death. Neighbours would visit to tell of their latest issues. She knew all the staff at the care home and would listen to their stories and give her wise, no-nonsense advice.*

*Eunice was more than a loving and caring lady. She cared about everyone. She moved her mother and auntie Annie south in their later years so they could be near her and she could be there for them; she adored her father, who unfortunately died too young. She loved her friends, and she loved Malva and Dorian, Fiona and me unconditionally. She absolutely adored her grandchildren, Joshua, Natalie, Samuel and Jordan, and told anyone who would listen how proud she was of them and what they'd achieved. In return, we all loved her enormously. She was so looking forward to Joshua and Hadas's wedding next March; she was so happy about that. I could say so much more. But, above all, she loved my father Gerald more than anything. Thankfully they are now back together. ✨*

**Hesped spoken by Jonathan Carp at his mother's funeral in October**

# Chanukah contact information and theatre review

## **The Merchant of Venice** **1936 at the Churchill** **Theatre – by Alison Scammell**

Many of us went to see Tracy-Ann Oberman's production at The Churchill Theatre. I thought it was an excellent interpretation of one of Shakespeare's most controversial plays and wanted to share some thoughts. Spoiler alert (it's still on tour) - I give away the ending here.

This is the first time a woman has played Shylock (pioneering and a bit surprising in itself). Oberman's Shylock is an elegant, charismatic, hard as nails matriarch running a pawn-broker business in London's East End. The play is set in 1936, when the Jewish community and a coalition of anti-fascist groups resisted Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists' attempt (aided by the police, let's not forget) to march through Cable Street. In the current climate of protest marches and increased antisemitic incidents this was an uncomfortable watch.

A female portrayal is one way of presenting Shylock more sympathetically. The truly shocking antisemitic insults of the other characters were magnified when directed at a woman. Dressed as fascists, complete with swastika-like armbands, Antonio (the merchant), Bassanio his friend (Portia's suitor/husband) and others were clearly positioned as villains. Tracy-Ann Oberman, on the other hand, looked graceful and stunning (excuse my girl-crush) as she opened the play, lighting candles and reciting the blessing for the start of the Passover Seder.

*'Why is this night different from all other nights?'* might as well have meant 'why is this play different from all those other plays?'

Academics disagree about whether the play is antisemitic or is explor-

ing/ shaming antisemitism. Given the context of Shakespeare's life, times and the sources he used it's hard not to see it as antisemitic. But the text is far from black and white and few of the characters are sympathetic. The Christian characters are so hypocritical (as Shylock continually and convincingly points out). Everyone is affected by complicated issues of money and wealth.

For me it was Hannah Morrish's performance as Portia that was the game changer in this production. I've been used to seeing her not just as chic and razor-smart but little short of saintly. But here she is a kind of Mitford-sister-socialite, entertaining fascists in her plush salon. When Shylock's daughter Jessica (who has run away from home to elope, converting to Christianity in the process) arrives, Portia can barely contain her disgust. This is all done with body language and facial expressions.

Portia's 'quality of mercy' speech would have a lot more validity if mercy were extended to Shylock at the end of the play. A twist to traditional productions is that Shylock stays visible in the final scene. The ending is turned back into 1936 Cable Street with Oberman (accompanied by other members of the East End Jewish community) unfurling the banner 'They shall not pass'. There's hope here as Oberman entreats the audience to stand and metaphorically join her behind that banner. And that's exactly what we do.

*Not everyone, even fans of the show, was quite as enthusiastic as Alison. For example, I found the accents as difficult to understand as their deployment, given that the show was set in London. Why put up barriers to comprehension? (Ed).*

In the interests of balance, if you have another view, do please write to [comms@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:comms@bromleyshul.org.uk)

**And now... THE ALL-IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION for your fabulous line-up of Chanukah hosts**

**Thur 7 December, BIDBOROUGH**  
6pm with Toby, Viv and Sara. Latkes will be served. For "how to find us", contact [toby.allin@gmail.com](mailto:toby.allin@gmail.com)

**Thur 7 December, BICKLEY**, 6.30pm with Angie, Paul, Sam and Daniela. There will be plenty of food and drink. Bring your chanukiyah. For directions and other info, contact [paulstanton30@btinternet.com](mailto:paulstanton30@btinternet.com)

**Fri 8 December, ONLINE**, 7pm.  
Join the Friday night gang via: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/578441665>

**Sat 9 Dec, ORPINGTON**, 3pm with Di. For directions and what to bring: [diannem3@googlemail.com](mailto:diannem3@googlemail.com)

**Sun 10 Dec, SEVENOAKS**, 4pm with John and family. Food will be provided. Just bring your chanukiyot. For where to go: [jscitron@gmail.com](mailto:jscitron@gmail.com)

**Sun 10 Dec, BLACKHEATH**, 5-7pm, with Linda, Matthew and family. Bring chanukiyot. Where to go? [lindascottdelange@googlemail.com](mailto:lindascottdelange@googlemail.com)

**Mon 11 Dec, FOREST HILL**, 4pm. BIG gathering, no space restrictions. **All in SE6/23/26 and area welcome.** Bring your Jewish friends, whether or not BRS members, to join Einat, Laurence and family. It's **imperative to check the location in advance**, so contact [e.aronberg@gmail.com](mailto:e.aronberg@gmail.com) asap.

**Tue 12 Dec, LOWER SYDENHAM**, 7.30pm with Aurelie, one of our quirkiest hosts, and massive amounts of cheese. Please bring chanukiyah, chutney, crackers and a bottle. Directions: [a.stutz@live.com](mailto:a.stutz@live.com)

**Wed 13 Dec, LEWISHAM**, 6.30pm – pre-registration essential. Get link from [admin@bromleyshul.org.uk](mailto:admin@bromleyshul.org.uk)

**Thur 14 Dec, BELLINGHAM**, 7pm in Tom's atmospheric allotment setting. The food and drink is always plentiful. Bring your chanukiyot for a great last-night glow. **Contact:** 07496 203727.

**We encourage guests and hosts to be in touch, not least in case there are last-minute changes. Don't be shy.**