



Part of Bromley's record cohort at this year's Reform Movement summer school. More in Chair's report on page 3. Do ask if you are interested, for yourself or a family member. It's great fun and there's every chance of making lifelong friends.

Still cheder after all these years

Chai School is still the cradle of so much that BRS has to be excited about

In this very spot in the last issue we touched on the shul's longstanding desire to make anyone and everyone who comes within its walls feel safe and comfortable. Since then, we've had our Pride weekend, when many members and friends celebrated key life events together. And *now...*

we're preparing to host the Board of Deputies' **Jewish Living Experience Exhibition** from 15 to 26 January. This came about as a direct result of cheder parents' conversations about religious education in local schools that were picked up by our Education Committee, which was in contact with the Board of Deputies. Within weeks, the show was booked and most of the 20 available sessions taken. Now, all that's needed are a few more **volunteers** to "staff" the exhibition. No special knowledge or expertise is needed, just the confidence to make visitors welcome and show them around during one or more two-hour sessions. Training will be given. Apply to education@bromleyshul.org.uk. More on p.13.

ROSH HASHANAH is a time to reflect on the past year and to look forward to the challenges of the one to come. In this issue, we're looking "back" at some former cheder students and where they are today and forward to opportunities for engagement in all sorts of activities and causes in the coming year within our own walls and without. There are suggestions on pages 6, 11, 13, 17 and 20 to name just a few. Meanwhile, a **very happy, healthy and peaceful new year to all our readers and those they love!**

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HIGH HOLYDAYS 5784

- Selichot** - Saturday, 9 September (Evening)
- Erev Rosh HaShanah** - Friday, 15 September
- Rosh HaShanah** - Saturday, 16 September
- Kol Nidrei** - Sunday, 24 September
- Yom Kippur** - Monday, 25 September
- Erev Sukkot** - Friday, 29 September
- Sukkot** - Saturday, 30 September
- Erev Simchat Torah** - Friday, 6 October
- Simchat Torah** - Saturday, 7 October

By the time you see this HighLight, you should have received everything you need in relation to these services. If you haven't, please contact admin@bromleyshul.org.uk

Living between the Green Pastures and the Shadow of Death

Rabbi Laura provides suggestions for sustenance and comfort as she urges us to cherish life



Rabbi Laura with Sue Blackie at the Kiddush to celebrate her 60th birthday in August

RATHER than the image of the Book of Death and the Book of Life resonating for me in our High Holyday period, I envisage this time particularly as living between Psalm 23's Green Pastures and Valley of the Shadow of Death:

"Though I walk through a Valley of the Shadow of Death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me."

In this Valley, which may feel frightening and intimidating, we're accompanied and comforted by the Source of Life's rod and staff. The midrash on Psalms sees the 'rod' as the suffering that escorts but also can console us. It recognises that pain and suffering are present in all of our lives, in different forms, with different intensities and often unequal distribution. The 'staff' – that long curved stick – also accompanies and reassures us in the Valley and is understood as the sustenance we can receive from Torah, Judaism – from our spiritual lives.

Resilience

I love these interpretations because they align with what the psychology of resilience confirms that **if** we recognise that difficult things will happen in all of our lives and we **will** suffer and that this is normal, it strengthens our capacity to be resilient. But if we

don't recognise the Valley or the rod, if we're surprised, outraged or flummoxed by suffering and ask, "How **can I** be suffering?" it makes it so much harder to integrate hurt and work out how to live in that shadow of pain and so to fully also experience the replenishment of the Green Pastures.

Balance

The balancing of the rod and the staff, our pain and our spiritual enrichment has the capacity to both accompany but also console and comfort us.

I'm greatly influenced by the thought of the 20th century philosopher Martin Heidegger, who taught that if we want to really experience truth, we should spend more time in cemeteries. He believed we can glean a particular wisdom and even uplift from touching mortality – our own or others' – which, in turn, brings our own mortality and the preciousness of our own lives into the forefront of our minds, souls and bodies.

The more time we spend in graveyards, the more we might think about how we are in the world, how our past informs our present and in which ways we might see our future.

Cemeteries enable us to reflect on our own being and on others and the way they were in the world. However hard this might be to contemplate, living between those Green Pastures and the Shadow of Death is what we all have in common. It unites us.

This idea is echoed in the thought of the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rav Kook, "*When we contemplate*

the Valley of the Shadow of Death, it brings us to the spiritual life that we yearn for; we're strengthened by its power, its impact, so we can build our own lives, drawing on other's lives for inspiration to reinforce our spirituality and cultivate the power of our energy, so that those strong souls live on in us forever." For Judaism, thinking about death while we cherish life doesn't have to be depleting or avoided. It enables us to cherish life. Living in the shadow of death gives life its sanctity and can inspire us and galvanise us.

But it's not always easy.

It requires us to choose. To choose how we respond to our awareness of death, of our mortality and the mortality of people we love.

Choice

The Source of Life is also the Source of Death and calls on us to choose life when we're aware of death or, maybe, better translated as *because* we're aware of death. As we read on Yom Kippur, "*I've put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life."*

At this time of year, you might want to consider strolling gently in a cemetery – any cemetery – to be with what arises in your mind, heart, body – soul. To consider what happens when you read the inscriptions, when we do the maths of the dates that someone lived and died. It can be, paradoxically, *enlivening*.

And then we return to our spiritual home – our Bromley community – as it replenishes us and gifts us emotional and ...

Concludes on page 11

“Fight fair, call mum and other tips for life”

Grandma's wisdom reproduced by popular demand after Michelle read this at a Shabbat service in July

My grandmother, Sultan Rahban, was born in 1916 in Tehran. She was one of the first women in the country to get a degree. Grandma Sultan worked as an English teacher in a Jewish school in Tehran before leaving as a refugee to go to the USA. She was the matriarch of the family and she was not shy to share advice, which was surprisingly modern for someone born over a century ago. She wrote some of her words of wisdom in a notebook that I now have. I read some of it at the Pride Shabbat. After many requests, I am sharing some of her words:

Give people more than they expect and do so cheerfully;
When you say, “I am sorry,” look the person in the eye;

Be engaged at least six months before you get married. Love deeply and passionately;
Don't judge people by their relatives;

When you realise you have made a mistake take immediate steps to correct it;

Marry someone you love to talk to and laugh with. As you get older conversation will be one of the principal elements of your relationship;

Never let your mouth get ahead of your head;

Open your mind to change but don't let the new dilute your principles;

Live an honourable life. When you get older you'll be glad you did;
When you don't know what to do, pray. You'll be surprised at how much it will help you decide;

A loving atmosphere in your home is important. It will also help keep your children from needing therapy;

Trust in God but lock your car.

And now for the BRS news...

By the time you read this the High Holydays will be approaching, but before we look forward I would like to look back at the summer and thank Margaret Brearley and the Social Committee, especially Lisa Williams and Sue Blackie, for putting on a fantastic summer garden party at Margaret's beautiful house in July. Lisa and Sue were assisted by their husbands Keith and Ian, and there was a great turn out. Please do look out for further events that the Social Committee put on.

The summer also saw 12 children, a bumper number of youth from BRS, attend the RSY summer camps. These camps enable our children to learn and have fun in an enjoyable and nurturing Jewish environment. Being located in south-east London it is common for our children to be the only Jews in school, so being able to attend such summer camps is invaluable. Thanks to the Donor Trust, all families are supported if they would like to send their children, so do consider this for next summer. *See also pp 1 & 13.*

Two of our “older youth” attended Azara, the first ever cross-communal yeshiva programme in the UK, held in Edinburgh. Azara welcomes people of all backgrounds, genders and levels of experience to join in a month-long exploration of Talmud and other Jewish texts. There is no upper age limit to attend, so if you are 18 to 118 you're welcome. This is another experience you might want to consider for next summer: <https://www.azara.org.uk>

With the High Holydays approaching, the shul will be especially busy with services and singing. Full dates and timings will

be given but, for the second year running, we will be in our Synagogue with our Rabbi Laura. The choir welcomes anyone who would like to join, for some or all the services. Our Kol Nidre charities this year are Sadeh Farm (the Jewish farm and retreat centre in Orpington), Roundabout (a charity dedicated to transforming the lives of the vulnerable using the creative power of drama therapy to enhance mental health), Israeli food bank Leket Israel and our own synagogue. This year, our synagogue has been in need of considerable building work to keep it running. Please give as generously as you can.

Our chatanim for Simchat Torah this year are Larry Shall and Heidi Small. Each is the epitome of the word “mensch”, a person of strength, integrity and compassion. They both do so much for our community. So, this Simchat Torah we will not only celebrate the conclusion of reading the Torah and the beginning of a new cycle but honour Larry and Heidi (see p.8)

I'd like to end by wishing you all *l'shanah tovah tikateivu v'techateimu*, “A good year, and may you be inscribed and sealed [for blessing in the Book of Life].”

Michelle Brooks Evans
chair@bromleyshul.org.uk



Michelle with husband Bill and daughter Esther on Esther's recent graduation day.

More intergenerational opportunities ...

Sharing blessings

While our cheder children – many of them children or descendants of refugees – enjoy happy occasions almost every week at cheder, new generations of unaccompanied refugee and asylum-seeking children have left such things behind. Maybe some of us can help them to regain them. [See JUMP item on p.5](#)



Summer term ended with two outdoor events: the Gala at Margaret's...

On Sunday 2 July, the cheder students and parents were welcomed by Margaret Brearley, who had generously offered to host the annual gala marking the end of another school year. The event was host to good weather and equally good company; the children played fun games like bowling and 'guess the Jewish object', while a delicious lunch fuelled everyone up for an afternoon sing-along.

Most importantly, it was a heart-warming celebration of the achievements that our community had accumulated during the year, such as the graduation of our wonderful yeladim. While we said farewell to some of our staff, we congratulated our dedicated morim Sam Hyams and Keo Kyazze, who will become co-teachers next year. Thanks to the hard work of morim and ozrim at cheder, particularly the commitment of head teacher

Frankie Gruzd, the gala was a perfect round-off to a wonderful year at the shul, welcoming the start of a well deserved summer break. **Hannah Bekman**

...and a perennial favourite:

*The previous week, the cheder caravan had made one of its regular visits to **Jewish eco-farm Sadeh**. Our report is from **Talia Chain**, its chief executive, below, surrounded by pupils:*

We have so loved hosting BRS and Chai School at Sadeh over the past few years. We feel a really strong connecn with the lovely BRS community members, who have been so supportive ever since we started in 2018. We have enjoyed attending your services, and being able to share our land and our Jewish farm knowledge with the children has been so special.

One of my favourite comments was from a ten-year-old boy, who turned to me after lying in the meadow and said, "I have never felt so relaxed in my life." Life can be so busy for children and adults and we feel privileged that we can provide a moment away in the flowers and with the chickens for a community that also nourishes us through so much help, support and kindness. Frankie tells me that Sadeh has a special annual place in your Chai School calendar. Like other BRS friends she says, "It's hard to imagine a cheder year without at

least one trip to Sadeh ... and, with a little support from our lovely parents, perhaps more in future... for our festivals such as Sukkot, Shavuot and Tu Bishvat which connect to harvests, fruitfulness and our relationship with nature."

We were so lucky this year with the weather; it was baking hot and sunny... it was such a highly memorable morning of cheder family learning and togetherness. There's something rather lovely about sitting together singing Hieni Ma Tov in a field. Or talking about values such as Tza'ar ba'alei chayim (avoiding cruelty to animals) and bal tashchit. (avoiding waste) surrounded by nature. Not forgetting a chance to collect wild flower bouquets, and play on the zip wire.

I was relieved and excited at the lifting of the threat to our future at Skeet Hill, which many of you will have heard about last year. We have long-term funding, as well as charging for services, away days and retreats when we can - though we aim to never turn anyone away due to lack of funds and consistently fundraise to provide subsidised places and youth internships to whoever needs them. The donors to our small community charity provide the seeds for our future and keep making this possible.

BRS SUPPORT FOR SADEH IN 5784

*Frankie particularly wanted to include Talia's words in this issue, as **Sadeh is one of BRS's causes this year**. See p.3.*



... inside and outside the BRS community

BRS Chai School term dates 5784 - 2023/24

STAV/AUTUMN TERM 2023

Term starts for pupils:

Sunday 10 September

Rosh Hashanah: Shabbat,

Saturday 16 September

Yom Kippur:

Monday 25 September

(no cheder on 24th)

HALF TERM:

Sundays 15 and 22 October

Mitzvah Day:

Sunday 19 November

Then every Sunday up to and including Sunday 10 December :

Chanukah Party

AVIV/SPRING TERM 2024

Team Training:

Sunday 7 January

Yeladim term starts:

14 January

HALF TERM:

Sunday 11 February

Term Ends:

24 March – Purim

KAYITZ/SUMMER TERM

Term starts :

Sunday 21 April - Preparing for

Pesach session

Bank Holiday Weekend

No Session Sunday 5 May

HALF TERM: 26 May

Term Ends: 30 Jun



Cheder and Gan pupils, parents, teachers and helpers enjoyed their visit to Sadeh as part of BRS's "Weekend away at Home"

"Befriending Asma is the most rewarding activity that I do," says Ann, a JUMP befriender

A what? Imagine arriving alone in the UK as a young person seeking asylum. You might have experienced violence, persecution and human rights violations in your country of origin or journey to safety – and arrived in a country where you might not know anyone or even speak the language.

This is the situation many on the JUMP befriending scheme find themselves in. Inspired by the Kindertransport, JUMP was set up over 15 years ago and pairs unaccompanied young asylum seekers and refugees with a trained adult volunteer befriender.

"My befriender feels like my relative"

In today's increasingly hostile environment towards people seeking sanctuary, the support JUMP befrienders provide is more important than ever. The young people we work with face a huge number of challenges as they navigate life in a new country, and are forced to take on a difficult and confusing asylum system. However, through the provision of one-to-one befriending, they're offered a regular, stable and structured friendship – and, perhaps most crucially, provided with a safe space where they can explore their interests and regain some control over their own lives.

JUMP pairs commit to meeting every fortnight for an hour (and sometimes more!) for at least 12 months. What they do depends on both people's interests: some meet regularly for a coffee and chat; others may help with more practical issues like registering with a GP, or filling in asylum support forms. Above all, JUMP is about building a sincere and supportive friendship. One young person on the project described his befriender as helping

him to turn his life around.

Critically, this impact is two-way. JUMP befrienders often highlight how personally impactful their volunteering is. One said "I'm happy I had a chance to get to know such an amazing person as my 'befriender'. One can learn a lot from him, in terms of approach to life."

Inspired by Jewish values and refugee experience, and want to get involved?

As we move into the new year, JUMP is proud to be embarking on a major expansion of the project. So, this Rosh Hashanah, could you volunteer to befriend a young asylum seeker or refugee?

JUMP befrienders are active listeners who are both empathetic and approachable, and of **all ages and backgrounds**. If you're looking to give something back in the new year and want to take action to support people seeking asylum, please email jump@hiasjcore.org

SHARING THE JOY WITH SCHOOLS



During the summer term, Marilyn and Anne-Marie [above with Jennie (seated) and pupils] hosted 90 Year 2s from Hither Green. Parent Becky, who was also present, commented on their kindness and openness (not only because they let her boy pace the bimah, acting out everything the entire time). She said, "Thank you for pitching it so perfectly; covering everything from the relationship between Judaism and Islam to the fact that it was not Chinese written on the walls. The collective gasp of awe when the Ark was opened was precious. Thanks to Ed the Baker, who baked challah for all." If you'd like to encourage your child's school to make a term-time visit to our shul, do contact Marilyn – details on page 10.

IN OUR COMMUNITY

Page Contact:
Bob Symonds:
comms@bromleyshul.org

BEREAVEMENTS

We wish long life to **Marilyn McKeever** and family on the death of her beloved mother, **Anita Baker**,

and to **Melissa Noakes** and family on the death of her much loved father, **Keith White**,

and to **Matthew de Lange** and family on the death of his aunt, **Loretta de Lange**.

May the memories of all your loved ones be for a blessing, *Zichronam L'vracha*.



MAZAL TOV to Dr Jack and Mrs **Rebecca Binysh**, above, who were married in June 2022, and, below, Jack's sisters, **Sarah (L)** and **Elana**, who turned 30 in July 2023. Their former teachers are in denial!



Welcome to BRS (and the world)



MAZAL TOV to **Talia James** and **Jon Warshawsky** on the birth of Aviram, 'Rami' (above) on 11 July,

and to **Mike** and **Iva Diamond** on the arrival, on 26 November 2022, of Emmanuel Samuel (**Manny**)

and to **Jessica Rout** (nee Ash) and husband David on the birth, on 29 June, of **Annabelle Hope** (below), a granddaughter for Steve and the late Marcia. Jessica was at BRS cheder in the 1990s.



ANNUAL CHANUKAH FAIR
3 DECEMBER 2023, 12.30-3pm
What can you do? Turn to p.11

SELICHOT : 9 September, 8pm
A short but lovely musical service to prepare for the High Holydays.

Norman and Joy made shul fun, says their son



Naming the function room at Highland Road for his parents, Mark Goldberg explained, "This room is dedicated to Norman and Joy Goldberg, founder members of Bromley Reform Synagogue, who, from making the first minyan, helped to create, develop and grow our community while initiating charitable events from sponsored walks to Chanukah fairs, helping to build the Sukkah to facilitating seders, Purim plays and Israeli dancing and, most importantly, making it all fun.

Norman led services, taught cheder classes, helped to set up and organise the youth club, assisted with b'mitzvah classes and, for many years, led conversion classes while being a shining guide, counsellor and mentor to so many. *אותך ישכחו לא* You will not be forgotten."

Thank you to all the Goldbergs for this vivid reminder of their parents' early contribution to our shul. A shining example. Ed.

REFUA SH'LEMA

We wish all members who are ill or incapacitated a speedy recovery. If you need help or know of someone who does, please don't be shy to contact caring@bromleyshul.org.uk

IN OUR COMMUNITY

Page Contact:
Bob Symonds:
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Academic, Agricultural and Automotive success!

(slightly broad definitions, maybe, but allow a girl a little alliteration)



MAZAL TOV

to **Dr Jack Binysh** (above) who was awarded Bath University's 2023 Peter Troughton Research Staff Prize for his research, "Animate Materials: From shape-shifting robots to living matter". (It's fascinating stuff and totally topical. Look him up!) He will shortly be leaving Bath to take up a Marie Curie Research Fellowship at the University of Amsterdam... *and to all who have graduated or achieved other academic success this year...*

including... **Rabbi Dr. Helen Freeman** (nee Horn), who attended BRS cheder even longer ago than Jack and his sisters. She gained her doctorate on 29 June.

Also to **Jonathan Goodman** (above right with yellow tie). Why? Remember last issue we speculated on what hat **Claudia Goodman** might wear to the Palace, following her receipt of a Coronation Champions award? Well, here it is. More on her husband and son across on p.8.



SUMMER WEDDINGS and SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES



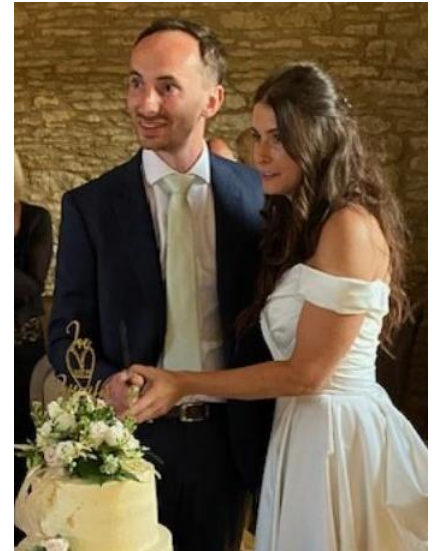
Meg and Lizzy with daughter Drew



A BIG BRS MAZAL TOV

to... **Joanna Koenigsberg**, a former BRS Chair, and **Tim Miles** (above), who celebrated their Ruby wedding anniversary around the time the last HighLight came out; *and to* past and future BRS Chairs **Matthew and Linda de Lange** (middle of next column), who also celebrated their Ruby anniversary recently; *and to* **Alex and Zoe**, **Lizzy and Megan**, whose weddings were celebrated at the pride Shabbat service on 15 July; *and to* **Jennifer** (nee McKeever)

and **Joe Russell** (below) and **Adam Dallimore-Levinson** and his bride **Laura**, who married in July (bottom photo, along with Adam's parents, Louise and John); *and to...* **Avi Shonberg and Shiri Yonash**, who were married on 11 August. Every happiness to all.



Many of the people on this page and page 7 were involved in BRS cheder in the early 2000s. If you don't remember them from there, you might have come across Jack helping out behind the bar at Bromley Little Theatre, where his mother, Julie, has been involved in all sorts of roles over many years.

BRS CONTACT INFORMATION

So, what is Tashlich?

We are often encouraged to participate in this ritual, but what is it and why should we do it? Tashlich (Hebrew: תשל"ח "cast off") is a customary Jewish atonement ritual performed on Rosh Hashanah. In some Judaeo-Spanish-speaking communities it is referred to as *sakudirse las faldas* ('to shake the flaps [of clothing!]) or just *faldas*.

It is performed at a large, natural body of flowing water (e.g. river, lake, sea or ocean) on the afternoon of the first day of the Jewish New Year, although it may be performed until Hoshana Rabbah. If the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, Tashlich is done on the second day. The penitent recites a Biblical passage and optional additional prayers. During the Tashlich prayer, worshippers symbolically throw their sins into a source of water. Some people throw small pieces of bread into the water, though many rabbis consider that practice itself on Rosh Hashanah to be forbidden by halakha.

The name "Tashlich" and the practice itself are derived from an allusion in Micah 7:18–20, recited at the ceremony: "You will cast (tashlich) all their sins into the depths of the sea."

Josephus (c. 100) refers to the decree of the Halicarnassians permitting Jews to "perform their holy rites according to the Jewish laws and to have their places of prayer by the sea, according to the customs of their forefathers". However, there was an ancient Jewish custom to site synagogues of the Jewish diaspora on the seashore as an expression of desire to return to Zion.

The Zohar (c. 1290) states that "Whatever falls into the deep is lost forever ... it acts like the scapegoat for the ablution of sins." Some believe that this is a reference to the tashlich ritual.

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Chanukah HighLight : Please send contributions to comms@bromleyshul.org.uk by 15 November

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 אֹהֲלֵיךָ
- **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 מֵהֵרָה
- **Meaning** Repairing the world,
l'takken olam לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם

Coming at BRS this autumn...

Chanukah Fair: 3 December

Don't miss this annual delight, 12.30 to 3pm, straight after Cheder, with attractions including **Judaica**, lots of lovely **gifts** from our **artisan stalls**, **bagels** and a **raffle**. The Fair is the only event in the year that raises money that goes directly towards our Cheder pupils' learning and security.

How can you support this important event? **1)** attend and spend money!

2) run a stall yourself selling your own artisan goods or unwanted (good condition) books/gifts (we'll ask for a donation from stall holders towards our fundraising target)

3) Join the planning committee.

Have questions or want to run a stall? Email soniahyams@yahoo.co.uk



Schmoozing with Rabbi Laura at Kiddush

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO DO A NEW YEAR MITZVAH

Volunteers are always needed in every aspect of shul life. Could you help with security on Shabbat or Sunday morning; prepare Kiddush; stream services, do gardening, wardening or anything else? You'll be given all the help you need. Not sure how or where to start? Contact admin@bromleyshul.org.uk

THE STONE SETTING FOR PAULINE JEFFREE

will be on **Sunday 1 October** at 2.30pm at GreenAcres Kemnal Park Cemetery, followed by afternoon tea at BRS.

DISCUSS LIFE-CYCLE EVENTS

An adult education session will take place at BRS on **Tuesday 3 October** from 7pm. Fuller details will be in your weekly e-Lights once finalised.

What are the core elements of our services?

What are the major prayers about?

What is necessary and what is optional?

Rabbi Laura will lead an explanatory Shabbat morning service from 10.30am on **Saturday 9 September.**

All are welcome in person and online.

"Green pastures and shadows"

Rabbi's column concluded from page 2 ...spiritual green pastures, knowing that this House of the Eternal as well as the Shadow of the Valley can sustain and comfort us all the days of our lives and fulfil the words of the Psalmist, "Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Eternal for many long years."

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner

August 2023 / Elul 5783

Saturday Dining Club

Meets monthly to bring and share supper. **New diners are always welcome.** For details of the next meeting and to say you're coming: rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

"Continuing My Journey"

Rabbi Laura would love to offer four follow-up sessions for anyone who has converted in the past 50 years (!) to think about how conversion impacted on their lives and in what ways they would like to continue their learning and Jewish journey that we can create together. Interested? Please email rabbilaura@bromleyshul.org.uk

Darcydog can't be the only truly Yiddishe Hund out there. So, what makes your pet a Jewish pet? We need to know!



As many of you will by now know, our Administrator, Jennie, is absolutely nuts about her Darcydog, the most beautiful and intelligent dog in the world!! Okay, that might just be a Jewish Hoomum talking, but we know there are other Jewish Hoomums and Hoodads out there who want to show off their 'babies'.

Well, here's your chance. Submit pics of your four-legged furries doing things only Jewish pets might do... eating challah, helping to light the Shabbat candles - even maybe wearing a yarmulke... you get the idea... and shep nachas as only we can in the December HighLight.

Deadline 15 November.

Photos and captions, please, to comms@bromleyshul.org.uk

REGULAR MODERN HEBREW CLASSES AT BRS

with keen, friendly teachers and students

We're often asked whether the shul runs such classes. YES! And newcomers are welcome. More advanced students study with Sarit, a very experienced teacher, and have been supporting each other for nearly four years, while beginners work with Joe and his enthusiastic group, mainly online. Details are available from Jennie: admin@bromleyshul.org.uk

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And there's more coming at BRS this autumn...

Meet, celebrate and make new friends

A group of 21 from BRS's oldest "area group", **BR5&6 and Friends**, got together on 13 August – 32 years to the day since it first met – to celebrate. Sheila Zerihan, one of its founders, recalls, "Originally we were just BR5&6 but later, due to its popularity, 'and friends' was added. We've done all sorts of different things over the years – coffee mornings, games evenings, quizzes, **walks**, normally ending with pub lunches, boat trips up the River Thames, treasure hunts and visits to museums. We had a **wine tasting** competition which Nadia won - the irony being that she didn't drink! We've been to **Tudeley** to see the Chagall Windows – so close, but many people don't know about them. We also remember going to Salomons Estate in Tunbridge Wells. Groups of us went to **Prague** and the **Edinburgh Festival**, staying in student accommodation, and we've celebrated **birthdays** together in big and small ways.

With three good rules, still having fun a full 32 years on

"We've also celebrated **Pesach** together, and **Sukkot**. We've had lunches at Jewish New Year and seen the secular **New Year** in a good few times. I remember that when the group started we established some **rules**. After all this time, I don't really remember exactly what they were except that we'd **never clash** with anything the synagogue was doing; most events would be **cost free** as not everyone was in a financial position to pay; and any event that involved food would be **meat free**. We've always stuck to those. Sadly our numbers are diminished

now and many of us are less mobile, so what we can do is quite limited and often arranged at short notice but we're still here, still going, still having fun (if we're not talking about the 'joys' of getting older!) whenever we can."

Food and camaraderie

Meanwhile, **SE10 & Beyond** will mark 11 years as a group in December and the success of these area groups will be rolled out to the rest of the BRS community even sooner. Michelle Brooks Evans, writing in a private capacity as someone who started the SE10 & Beyond group, writes, "I can testify to the camaraderie and fun we have. We have trips to the **cinema** and theatre, **picnics** in the park, afternoon **teas**, evenings with themes including music, **poetry**, food, and **family history**. I have made new friends and celebrated Jewish holidays and meals. So, if you have volunteered to run an area group, bravo! If you see a group meeting near you, do go... Remember, it is open not just to BRS members but to anyone who's Jewish."

More area groups soon

Area group leaders will be in touch during September to introduce themselves, says our Community Builder, Einat. The aim is to get regular events running in many geographical

areas from October, enabling more members to enjoy all that Sheila and Michelle have described, to offer mutual support if needed and to build friendships. Activities will vary depending on group members' preferences. Do say "Hi" when they call and tell them any ideas you might have.

Jewish Living Experience Exhibition (continued from p.1)

Re-written and expanded this year, JLEE covers topics such as the Jewish calendar and festivals, life cycle events, Shabbat and diversity within the community, both ideological and geographical. It includes new panels on religious and cultural dress as well as Israel. Although it is aimed at (non-Jewish) school groups from Years 3 to 10, BRS members will have the chance to **visit over the weekend of 20/21 January**, while teachers and volunteers will be invited to January's launch night.

Studying sacred anarchism and diving into the swimming pool of Torah

One member's very different summertime

"This summer," says **Lloyd Evans**, "I went to **Azara**, a four-week summer yeshiva project in Edinburgh. It aims to create a cross-communal learning environment where everyone can learn Torah, no matter their background. We were in... *cont. p.19*



Out and about: Not strictly an area group but some BRS folk, several of whom had met only a few months earlier, enjoying a summer walk and lunch together

A very different new year for progressive Judaism

continuing the letter from Rabbis Josh Levy and Charley Baginsky and looking at other expressions of Judaism

(cont. from page 10)

We are talking about not merger but co-creation, in which we reaffirm the importance of movement, of being stronger by working together. We see the possibilities that are created when we ask what we can build together, to take this opportunity for renewal and imagination.

And that is where you come in.

We need you to help us develop the vision; to help us imagine what a shared, sustainable and effective movement will look like. To help us think through how we have a more powerful voice in the Jewish, faith and national spheres, how we invest in what makes Jewish life flourish, how we recognise the centrality of our synagogues and communities and support their development, and how we ensure that we have growth and breadth for the future.

After the High Holydays, we'll be visiting Reform and Liberal communities, asking what we can build, sharing ideas and answering your questions. Everyone's voice here is essential if we are going to get this right and build the movement we all deserve. When we visit your community later in the year, we very much hope you will join us as we shape the future together.

As the vision grows [we will look in detail at issues such as] governance, finance, assets, communities, status and outreach, youth, rabbinic bodies, education and leadership. We will soon have an active website with opportunities to contribute, regular updates and information.

We are delighted by the leap we have taken and the progress we

have already made in the short time our movements have been working together... With your input, support and commitment, the year ahead will be one in which we build together an exciting future for Progressive Judaism in the UK.

Children of The Book or books? Which books? BRS Book Club, Rabbi Laura and others consider reality and identity ☆

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

While the last BRS Book Club book, *Paul Auster's *American Trilogy*, elicited strong responses, such as "*Weird, weird, weird and bonkers. Would not like to be in that guy's head,*" and "*The total shambles of a deranged mind,*" a passage in our own Siddur (p.544), by 20C Hungarian Marxist philosopher, literary historian, literary critic, and aesthetician György Lukács, addresses some similar themes very succinctly and poetically. Rabbi Laura pointed out the beauty of the bit in bold below when she read it at one Shabbat:

*"The questions pile up, the doubts come down and the lost possibilities whirl around... everything whirls - dream and life, wish and reality, fear and truth, the **lying denial of pain and the courageous confrontation sadness.** What is left, what is sure in this life of ours? Where is the place ... where a man may strike solid roots?"*

Where is there anything that does not trickle away like sand between one's fingers just when one would wish to lift that thing out of the formless mass of life and hold it fast, if only for a brief moment?

Where is the dividing line between dream and reality, the "I" of the world, deep meaning and fleeting impression?"

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Make sure you have a printed Siddur or Kindle so you can still follow services after 1 September

In recent months, Rabbi Laura has urged those of us who don't have our own copies of the Reform Siddur to buy them, as **the free online flipbook version**, which was only ever meant to be a temporary emergency response to the pandemic, **will be removed from 1 September**. Hard copies are available from our own Judaica cabinet (ask in the BRS office if you can't see any) or Manor House Books, or you can get a **Kindle** copy for electronic devices. *Haggadateinu*, for Pesach, will also soon be available on Kindle (and in hardback).

Funeral liturgy still online

Liturgy for funeral and shiva will remain available online: <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/> and the old High Holyday Machzor will remain online until 2024 when the new **Forms of Prayer: Days of Awe** will be available in hardback and on Kindle. *If don't want to handle money on Shabbat, you can use the bank details on the lid of tin in the Judaica cabinet later on.*

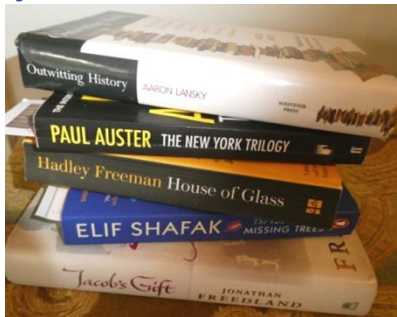
Sponsor a dedication

Reform Judaism is inviting community members to sponsor dedications in the new book (max 18 words, suggested donation £180, deadline 6 November 2023)

*More on *American Trilogy* on p.15 ☆

Shylock and a shy bookseller in Bromley this autumn

From *City of Glass* to *House of Glass* with BRS Book Club



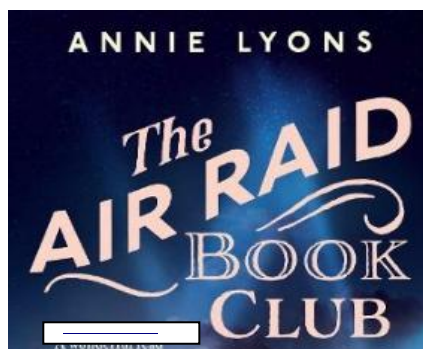
A very, very animated discussion on *New York Trilogy* took place at the July meeting. Was it intriguing or meaningless; clever, beautiful, musical writing or boring, formless nonsense; enjoyable, gripping and seductive or inconsequential and purposeless? A dozen different views were expressed and quoted passages used to support totally contrary opinions! If you're intrigued, seek out the interview with author Paul Auster on BBC World Book Club, which sheds a bit of light on his writing style.

One of the themes that most members *could* agree on, identity, also features in *House of Glass*, which will be discussed by BRS Book Club on **Wednesday 4 October**. When journalist **Hadley Freeman** found a shoebox filled with her French grandmother's cherished belongings, she embarked on what amounted to a treasure hunt across Europe and the USA, resulting in this deeply moving memoir following family members throughout the course of the twentieth century. *House of Glass* is a story of courage and sacrifice, assimilation, identity and home. It's available in paperback from several online retailers.

At the following meeting on **Tuesday 5 December**, the book might be by David Baddiel, Anita Brookner or even Marc Chagall. To find out which and where, contact Judy : jwoolfe@ntlworld.com

A different take on wartime experiences, set in the UK

London, 1938. Bookseller Gertie Bingham is facing difficult times, having lost her beloved husband, Harry, and with a lingering sadness at never having been able to have a child of her own. Struggling to face running the bookshop she and Harry opened together, Gertie is preparing to sell up and move away when she is asked if she would be willing to take in a young Jewish refugee from Germany.



Gertie is unsure and when sullen teenager Hedy Fischer arrives, Gertie fears she has nothing left to give the troubled girl.

But when the German bombers come and the lights go out over London, Gertie and Hedy realise that joining forces will make them stronger, and that books have the power to bring young and old together and unite a community in need in its darkest hour...

Meet author Annie at BRS

Annie Lyons will join us on **Saturday, 11 November** from 2pm to discuss her moving and uplifting story about family, friendship and the power of books, starting in conversation with shul member (and book maven) Danielle Woodward. Entry is free and tea/coffee and cake will be on offer, but if you'd like Annie to sign a copy of *The Air Raid Book Club* for you, we ask you to buy your own and bring it with you.

Shylock as you may not have seen her before!

Tracy-Ann Oberman is starring in *The Merchant of Venice 1936* at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley from **Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 October**. The production is set in the East End of London at the time of the Battle of Cable Street and she plays Shylock. Some BRS members are going as a group on 26 October and tickets should still be available: <https://churchilltheatre.co.uk/Online/tickets-the-merchant-of-venice-bromley-2023>

As we went to print there was news that the theatre's future was in doubt. Please keep an eye open if you value this local amenity.

... and real books to take home with you – for FREE

Thank you for all your interesting comments and suggestions for the shul's Josef Hausmann Library. We are following them up and have slightly adjusted our plans as a result. Meanwhile, some of the duplicates that were languishing on the shelves have been moved out of the library to small bookcases in the lobbies. They should be clearly signposted by September and everyone, young and old, is invited to have a look through them and take away anything they fancy. We hope to bring you more news by the next HighLight and lists of books available to take away in e-Lights prior to that. Thank you for your support and patience.

BRS library review team

SEND US ALL YOUR NEWS

We're always asking not only for your news but for that of former members and the children and/or parents of current ones, so we're delighted to have several such items in this issue. Thank you for all your contributions. Do please keep 'em coming. Happy news is always welcome at comms@bromleyshul.org.uk



IF YOU NEED GUIDANCE, SUPPORT OR INFORMATION WITH A HUMAN FACE

Our Helpline can help you find the answers to the most challenging problems. We can tell you about our services: care homes, community centres, support for people living with dementia and their families or online events and activities. And if we can't help you ourselves, we'll help you find someone who can.

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JEWISH CARE

More ways to get involved in and around BRS



Above and below: The new (to us) lightweight scroll continued to enable people who could not previously carry and/or elevate Torah scrolls to participate more fully in services, during the BRS “Weekend at Home”, which was also marked at members’ homes and in educational settings.

Trial: longer on-line Friday night services once a month

Starting on **8 September**, Rabbi Laura will lead a slightly longer service (6.30-7.15pm), still in the comfort of our own homes, once a month for five months. The other dates are **20 October, 17 November, 15 December** and **12 January**. The trial period will be to test out the format and the timing. Please watch out for further details as the experiment progresses.



LOOKING FONDLY BACK AND HOPEFULLY FORWARD

Sally Rosebery (right) led those remembering her sister and brother-in-law **June and Martin Posner** during the service on 8 July with more than a few affectionate anecdotes, after which a plaque was dedicated in their memories. Standing ready to build on the strong foundations bequeathed to us by June, Martin and so many others, meet Einat Aronberg, who introduces herself above right. *To arrange for a plaque on the memorial wall in the BRS atrium, please contact Jennie: admin@bromleyshul.org.uk*

PUTTING THE FACE TO THE NEW ROLE AT BRS



“My name is **Einat** and I have recently joined Bromley Reform Synagogue in the role of Community Builder on a part-time basis. I became a member of BRS at the beginning of last year, along with my husband Laurence and our daughters (currently in cheder).

The purpose of my role is to engage with families in London boroughs, reaching out to BRS and potential new members. I will also be organising events to strengthen and increase our wonderful community.

In my other role I work as Campaigns / Project Manager for an IT Support Company.

I look forward to meeting most of you within the next few months. **Einat Aronberg**



AROUND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Partners in Peace : What is BRS's role in this sunny scene?



Mohammad Fahili (centre, back), founder and director of the Sir Charles Clore Jewish-Arab Community Centre in Akko, which BRS has supported for some years, writes: “In August, thanks to your support, we completed our annual Partners in Peace Summer Camp for 100 Arab and Jewish children, a significant number being new immigrants from Ukraine and Russia. These young people will have met during the school year at our Centre and continued to develop friendships over the summer. [They are in] separate educational systems, and therefore would never meet but for our Centre. For the majority of these children from economically disadvantaged homes, this camp is their only chance to have a real holiday during the long and hot summer vacation. They came together daily for 15 days, swimming, enjoying sports and taking day trips – the first for many of them – guided by counsellors who are their role models. On the last day, the area was transformed into a ‘water park’ with inflatables of all shapes and sizes. What joy was felt as all the local children ran from their homes ready to enjoy this wonderful activity; Arab and Jewish children and their families laughing together.” **Many thanks to Matthew de Lange, to whom Fahili sent this heart-warming message, for having passed it on so that we can have a glimpse of the impact our donations make (or go to ajcenter.org.il). Coincidentally, we have below a contribution on a related but very different matter from a former member.**

WHAT WAS ONCE A UNIFYING ISSUE HAS BECOME A DEEPLY DIVISIVE TOPIC ...

“...and one that we prefer to avoid much of the time,” says former BRS member Robert Cohen, now a member of Sinai Synagogue, Leeds, and not to be confused with our current member of the same name, a star of Sunday mornings during cheder term time. Leeds Robert is undertaking PhD research into how empathy with the Palestinian people is leading some young Jews to reshape and reimagine their Jewish identity and expressions of Judaism.

In the course of his research, he’s found that, “For many younger UK Jewish adults, concern and disaffection with Israel and, indeed, Zionism has been growing for many years. However, the subject remains under-researched and the individuals involved misunderstood. Often, such dissent over Israel is seen as a sign of poor Jewish education, a distant relationship to mainstream Jewish life or a desire to fit in with broader progressive politics. My early research suggests that much of this is convenient myth-making.

“Many of the young Jews I’ve spoken to are **not ashamed of their backgrounds but profoundly connected to their Judaism and their Jewish identity**. They’ve been raised in synagogues and Jewish youth movements. They’ve done the Israel tour, have the t-shirt. For some, their understanding

of the Palestinian experience leads to a reshaping and reimagining of their Judaism but certainly not an abandonment of it. Others are seeking **a way to assert a lost or forgotten Jewish identity and ethics** that avoids an emphasis on Zionist thinking and politics.

“**The implications could be profound**, not only for the individuals concerned but for the Jewish institutions (local and national), that raised these young people and look to them as the next generation of leaders.

“My research (at King’s College London) is now at the stage of original data collection and I’m looking for young UK Jews aged approximately 20-30 (Generation Z) who find themselves in some form of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

“I have an online survey that can be completed in around 10 minutes and I’m looking to conduct interviews too. Anonymity in the final write-up is guaranteed. **If you’d like to take the survey**, or know someone who might, please email robert.a.cohen@kcl.ac.uk for the survey link or contact me through Facebook messenger.”



LONDON JEWISH MUSEUM: END OF AN ERA *cont from p. 6*

... And he was enthusiastic. Volunteers like enthusiastic visitors. Allegedly, there were 300 visitors on the final day – and the closing ceremony felt like celebration and heartbreak.

A lot of people travelled a long way to experience the end of this chapter in the history of London’s Jewish Museum. I hope the next chapter will open in five years’ time.

Rambling Reporter

Even more ways to get involved...

After Rabbi Laura's Green Pastures, time to think about WIZO's Garden of Dreams

At a recent WIZO lunch, Countdown's **Rachel Riley** recounted her journey from maths geek to TV presenter, showing that brains + glamour + a sense of humour is a perfect equation. She spoke of her family background and how she became a vocal opponent of antisemitism.

But what IS this group that was once known as the Women's International Zionist Organisation today? Yes, it's run by women, but what does it do?

The factual answer is that it's the largest independent social welfare organisation in Israel, committed to improving and empowering the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens, at every stage of life, with over 50 fundraising branches worldwide supporting 800 projects and programmes across the country. However, a better question, say its members, is **'Who is WIZO?'**

They answer: WIZO is the young mother who has walked hundreds of miles, knocking on doors collecting vital funds for vulnerable families; it's the dedicated groups, women who working long hours preparing, organising and clearing up after fundraising events; it's decades of devoted supporters, who have remained steadfast in their passion for its work and for Israel.

For many, WIZO is also a way of passing on a legacy of changing lives through its social welfare and education projects just as WIZO's supporters, men and women, have done since it was founded in 1918. Its **'Garden of Dreams'**, an educational outdoor space in Jerusalem, will allow members to create a 'living legacy', passing on their passion for WIZO by connecting with future generations. You can find out more about the UK groups, which run many high-profile activities, at wizouk.org



All are invited to join an outing to **Ightham Mote on Wednesday 4 October** with South East London Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews. **Amanda-Jane Doran**, Collections and House Manager, will speak from 12 to 1pm on **"Searching for and concealing religious identity: remarkable stories of ... an English country house during times of enormous change"** based on her unexpected findings while preparing the exhibition "Country Houses, Jewish Homes" (18 September to 31 October). This will be followed by self-guided tours of the house (including two chapels), gardens and exhibition. Admittance is free for National Trust members, £15.20 per non-member. For booking and travel information, contact Stephen Weil: 07764 475209 / stephenweil6@gmail.com



Studying sacred anarchism...

continued from page 13

...Edinburgh University's School of Divinity, in the New College. This prestigious space was the perfect jumping board for my fellow students and me to dive into the swimming pool of Torah, coached from the poolside by our teachers. They balanced their expertise with a warmth that allowed everyone to open up and explore new ideas together.

"We translated and learned Talmud, specifically Masechet Kiddushin, in the mornings and the afternoon classes went into the detail of a specific area of Torah or explored more philosophical ideas. These classes included one with Rabbi Dr Elisha Ancselovits, a teacher at an orthodox yeshiva in Israel, on understanding Halakhah using his own method and one with Rabbi Dr Judith Rosen-Berry, a Liberal rabbi and theology lecturer at the University of Oxford, on Sacred Anarchism and the ideas of Martin Buber.

I really appreciated the diversity not only in the teachers and topics but in the students who attended. We had people of all ages from New York, Amsterdam and London, and even locals from Edinburgh. Despite differences in culture, custom and belief, Azara was a space where everyone felt welcome and could express their Judaism in their way.

The culture was that students can be teachers, and teachers students. An example of this was our weekly community Beit Midrash, a time when students or teachers from Azara offered lectures, discussions or activities to other participants as well as the local Edinburgh Jewish community. I got the opportunity to give my own lecture/discussion on 'The Soul-Making Theodicy and the Retributivist Approach as resolutions to The Problem of Evil'. Opportunities like this really made me feel able to be myself in study and prayer alike. Importantly, I'm very glad to say that I've made many new friends (which makes holiday accommodation in New York a lot cheaper now).

Having not participated in formal Jewish learning for years, I was slightly apprehensive at spending a month doing exactly that, in a new city, with new people. Now I can't wait for next year to come round.

WISHING THE COMMUNITY A HAPPY AND SWEET NEW YEAR

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“A DREAM COME TRUE”

Dekalim High School in Be'er Sheva is a special educational school for teenagers and young adults. It currently accommodates 74 students, but opens its gates to 110 students daily, due to the high demand and lack of alternatives. These students' challenges vary, and many are physically disabled. The school provides speech therapy, physiotherapy and other vital treatments. These services are provided on the school premises, but the facility lacks a sports hall, classrooms and treatment rooms. JNF UK and the local municipality joined forces to construct a hall and treatment rooms. The Head Teacher called it “a dream that's coming true after many years of expectation”. She believes the new building will benefit the children, so they can flourish.

The new facility is funded through the legacy of a client, supported by KKL, JNF UK's Legacy Department. KKL offer executorship, trusteeship and other legal assistance, as well as extensive pastoral services.

For further information or to arrange to meet someone, please contact 020 8732 6121 or enquiries@kkl.org.uk

Swab event at BRS on October 7

*Could you be the one to save someone's life?
Turn to page 6 NOW for fuller details.*

CST: LOOKING AFTER THE COMMUNITY

Might you be able to help as well as benefiting..?

You will all be aware of the great job done year in, year out on our behalf by the Community Security Trust. Its message this Rosh Hashanah is that it is concentrating more than ever on those three words: **Community**, including the people it serves and those who volunteer; **Security**, what it provides so that every British Jew can live a safe life; and **Trust**, the charitable trust that underpins every aspect of its work and, more than donations, the basis of its partnerships with community, government and police. To find out more and to **pledge much valued support** – financial or physical – go to www.cst.org.uk (24-hour emergency number 0800 032 3263)

COULD YOU BE A NUMBER CHAMPION?

No, not an advanced maths don but someone who can **communicate with children** and help them to **make sense of numbers and so gain skills and confidence**, leading to better opportunities in life. Number Champions, a charity that started in north London, is now expanding into some southern boroughs, including Bromley. Numeracy, just like literacy, is a crucial life skill. Trained in-school volunteers use games and other creative activities in one-to-one sessions with children aged 6-8. Find out much more at numberchampions.org.uk