FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

“Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in.”
The Godfather: Part III

Yes, I’m back as editor and this year not only did I have the services of Adrienne Powell as editorial director and Josephine Lewin as advertising manager but also Emily Theodore as art director. I thank them all. Emily has joined the team and we’re all extremely grateful to her for presenting our efforts in the most dynamic way. Thanks too to Beverley Ostrin for keeping my chair warm for the last two years. She thinks she’s escaped but we’ll pull her back, mark my words. See her excellent article on page 35.

This edition of Hampstead Review marks the enormous contribution of Michael Haringman. There is a fitting tribute by our rabbi on page 8 together with Michael’s own reflections and final review of the year starting on page 6. We also acknowledge on page 15 the sterling work of Joyce Saffron on her retirement. They also think they’ve escaped. Little do they know!

Of course Rosh Hashanah is about renewal. Michael Helfgott and Adrienne Powell as our co-chairs explain on page 4 their exciting plans for Hampstead in the year ahead. Based on this, we look forward to their retirement in 2033. Well didn’t Michael Haringman have eighteen years?

Michael and Adrienne acknowledge that our most important asset is our members. We at Hampstead Review know this only too well. Without your excellent articles we would have no magazine and so my biggest thanks go to all our contributors, advertisers and most importantly, you our reader.

I wish all in the Hampstead ‘family’ a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Gabriel

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT
WWW.HAMPSTEADSHUL.ORG.UK

CANDLELIGHTING TIMES
YOM TOV 5776

ROSH HASHANAH NIGHT 1
Sunday 13th September
Before 7.05 pm

ROSH HASHANAH NIGHT 2
Monday 14th September
After 8.05 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT
18th September
Before 6.54 pm

KOL NIDREI NIGHT
Tuesday 22nd September
Before 6.45 pm

SUCCOT NIGHT 1
Sunday 27th September
Before 6.33 pm

SUCCOT NIGHT 2
Monday 28th September
After 7.32 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT
2nd October
Before 6.22 pm

SHEMINI ATZERET NIGHT
Sunday 4th October
Before 6.17 pm

SIMCHAT TORAH NIGHT
Monday 5th October
After 7.16 pm
The Hebrew root ‘shanah’ – comprising the letters shin, nun and heh – is ambiguous. It can mean ‘to repeat’. But it can also mean ‘to change’.

The advent of the new Jewish year, Rosh HaShanah 5776, brings with it a challenge to every thoughtful Jew. Will we simply repeat the old year, remaining stuck in the same routines, making the same mistakes? Will we live our religious and ethical lives in exactly the same way as last year? Or will we rise to the opportunity, using the Divine gift of the New Year for positive and meaningful development and growth in our lives, so that we strive to become better Jews and finer human beings in the year ahead?

The fast-approaching High Holydays offer us the chance and the space to reflect, to pray, and to crystallize our spiritual and ethical goals and resolutions for the new year. They allow us the time to connect with our own deepest and most noble aspirations for ourselves and our families. We look forward, as always, to having each of you with us in our outstandingly beautiful synagogue on these most important occasions in the Jewish calendar.

I am very excited about the year ahead at Hampstead. It has been a real pleasure to begin working with our dedicated and talented new Co-Chairs Michael and Adrienne and their team, and we have a really varied and stimulating programme of events planned for this year including some exciting initiatives. With your help, we aim, please G-d, to surge further ahead in the coming year in the development of our Shul and community.

Judith and the family join me in wishing all members of our community a happy, healthy and successful year. May you all be inscribed in the Book of Life, Blessing and Peace.

RABBI DR. MICHAEL J. HARRIS
The real privilege of being co-chairs of Hampstead Synagogue is that we have a great deal of contact with our members, and what we find time and time again is our members acting with great kindness, care, compassion and thought for others. We are really fortunate to have the the best of people and so many of the best values at the heart of our community and we certainly feel honoured to lead you.

The front cover of this year’s magazine is by way of a tribute to Michael Haringman. Perhaps Michael's greatest achievement during his eighteen years as chairman was the restoration of the Shul to its full glory. In truth, however, this tells only a small part of the story. Michael was at the centre of so much. His tireless endeavours kept everything together. He was and remains a central pillar of our community. We both worked closely with Michael when he was chairman and have continued to do so since our election as co-chairs in May of this year.

In this magazine Michael reflects on the many changes that took place during his tenure. Our aim is to preserve the best traditions of our community whilst at the same time modernising and introducing an informality which reflects the changing times and requirements of our members. We are extremely proud that Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks has agreed to join us on the Shabbat of 9th January 2016 to honour Michael, but in truth nothing we say or do will be sufficient to thank him for all he has done.

The year ahead already promises a great deal. We are delighted to announce that Dina Brawer has agreed to be our Community Scholar for the next twelve months. She will be speaking for the first time on Friday night of Shabbat UK (23rd and 24th October). The following day we are delighted to host our newly elected MP Tulip Siddiq.

On Simchat Torah, we will be celebrating with a difference with both our chatanim, Richard Abramson and Daniel Domb and with our Eshet Chayils, Sandra Conway and Shelly Guttman. With your help we will double the celebrations.

On 12th November we welcome the distinguished Lord Justice of Appeal Sir Brian Leveson to give the annual Isaiah Berlin Lecture.

In a new venture Josh Zaitschek will be leading some alternative minyanim in October and November for younger age groups.

October also sees the launch of “Faith without Fear” by Rabbi Harris. We are and will remain very supportive of our rabbi in his brave and articulate efforts to tackle the challenges that face modern orthodoxy. We believe that Rabbi Harris has come into his own with this book and we congratulate him on doing so. For a taste of what the book is about you should read Marc Nohr’s excellent interview with him on pages 10 - 11.

We welcome your ideas and please do make sure you let us know them so we can put them into action. And please take a leaf (no pun intended!) from our own Joan Horwitz who asked to clear the weeds outside the shul and then quietly set out about creating a lovely little garden which you will see in full bloom as you walk between the gates and the main doors. Well done Joan, you are an example to us all.

There are too many other people to thank by name here but to so many of you who contribute so much as part of Team Hampstead, we thank you.

Most importantly may you and your family enjoy peace and happiness in the year ahead. May it be sweet and successful for you all. We look forward to wishing you this in person on Yom Tov.

Adrienne Powell & Michael Helfgott
CO-CHAIRS
Rosh Hashanah is a time for family.
So it’s time to help a family with 7,000 members.

Last year, we directly supported over 7,000 people and their families every single week.
We also helped over 2,600 people living in their own homes.
Our Community Centres received 170,000 visits.
We served over 1 million hot kosher meals.
And we sent out 13,500 Talking Books, newspapers and magazines to visually impaired members of our community.
This year more people than ever will use our services, yet many of these services will receive little local authority funding.
Which is why we simply cannot do what we do without your help.

So please this Rosh Hashanah, remember one of the largest Jewish families in the UK and respond generously by calling 020 8922 2600 or visiting jewishcare.org/donate
REVIEW OF THE YEAR

“The shul is hugely grateful to everyone who contribute to the wide range of activities currently on offer. Without this support the community would not be as attractive to prospective new members nor would we have maintained the high level of respect we currently have in the United Synagogue.”

MICHAEL HARINGMAN at his final AGM as chairman

SERVICES Rabbis Michael and Shlomo work hard to maintain the high standard of our services and Anton Eriera has been a welcome guest Chazzan. We have a very good corps of Baalei Koreh and Lawrence Lederman and the Choir (now including Noah Max) just gets better and better. We continue to hold weekday Shaacharit services jointly with Shomrei Haddath on Rosh Chodesh and when a member has Yahrzeit.

FESTIVALS & SHABBAT The High Holyday services were excellent as ever and featured a Yom Kippur children’s lunch arranged by Judith Harris. On Simchat Torah the Chatanim were Malcolm Ziff and Josh Zaitscheck. They both gave really entertaining speeches at the celebration lunch. The hakafot were particularly high spirited. We also had a wonderful Eshet Chayil Lunch to pay tribute to the great work which Victoria Dahan and Carmel du Parc Braham have done. On Purim the megilla reading was very well attended by a particularly young audience and was followed by the children’s fancy dress parade and party. The thirteenth joint Tikkun Leil on Shavuot was held jointly with Shomrei Haddath Synagogue at our place. The pre-kiddush talks on Shabbat have proved hugely popular. There were also talks given exclusively by members organised by Tony Ostrin. A testament to the talent which the Hampstead family continues to embrace within its midst. Nina Geller organises the Kiddush week in week out at its continuous high standard. We played a full part in the first Shabbat UK with events throughout the day culminating in a spectacular Havdalah. On AJEX Shabbat we conducted a ceremony before the war memorial in the vestibule.

EDUCATION Rabbi Dr Harris gave an impressive range of shiurim including a series at his home for younger members. The lecture series “Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People” was simply outstanding. We also hosted a gathering of eminent rabbis in a programme entitled “Judaism: Behind the Labels.” The annual Isaiah Berlin Memorial Lecture was so popular that we had to move it into the Synagogue. The speaker was Deborah Lipstadt and her topic was “Remembrance in the 21st Century”. Noah Max’s film of the occasion can be seen on our website. This year’s lecture is to be given by Lord Justice Leveson. Natalie Goldwater arranged a session on Mindfulness and we had a talk on the Kitchener Camp, the story of the rescue of German Jewish men to Britain in 1939. We also joined in the 70 Days for 70 Years project to commemorate the Holocaust. For our children the joint Cheder with St John’s Wood Synagogue has thrived under the leadership of new Head Teacher, Rabbi Ronen Broder. The Parents’ Association led by Patricia Abram (a JC Mensch of The Year) ran the highly successful annual Quiz Supper. Yocheved Zaitscheck continues to organise children’s services throughout the year.

SOCIAL GROUPS The local group of the Jewish Lads’ and Girls’ Brigade is now settled at our shul and its regular meetings here on Tuesday evenings are well attended. For the 20/30 age group Josh Zaitscheck has continued to work miracles, with Friday night dinners, Shabbat lunches and other packed out events. This year Josh introduced a series of Onegai after dinner on Friday nights. The Den attracts large numbers, many of whom have since signed on the dotted line. Josh’s Cholentfest and Summer Barbeque are becoming annual events for the community at large and his occasional ‘special’ Kiddush renders it unnecessary to have lunch at home on Shabbat. One of the most exciting projects of the year – building on the Lads’ and Dads’ Tefillin Breakfasts – was the creation of the Junior Den. The first two sessions have been held on Shabbat mornings and the feedback has been most encouraging.
THE BUILDINGS  We shall construct a new state of the art Community Centre and we’re fortunate in having the pledge of a major part of the requisite funding. A consultation will be held with the community to decide on the facilities to be included.

COMMUNICATION  We had another excellent shul magazine last year; a result of the superb work of Beverley Ostrin. So many visitors remarked on its quality. We have since created a new website involving much hard work by Adrienne Powell with assistance from Gabriel Herman. Carmel du Pare Braham created the exhibit on the shul’s distinguished history which elicited much interest.

SECURITY  Security is more important than ever and Michel Selby and Tony Tigner-Orchudesch have been working to ensure that our security arrangements are appropriate for these troubled times. We thank them, the police and the CST.

ADMINISTRATION  As part of a change in United Synagogue policy regarding administration, Ivor and Marie were honoured at Kiddushim to mark the end of their employment with us. In their place, Candice Janet joined us (and Golders Green) as a joint shul administrator. She has been supported by volunteers, particularly Beverley Ostrin and Jennifer Ziff. Melissa Levitt from the US provided part-time financial administration. The new arrangements have not proved successful and happily Candice is likely to become our exclusive full time Community Manager.

REFLECTIONS ON BEING A CHAIR

Eighteen years ago Henry Grunwald, Bruce Lewin and I entered an empty Wardens’ box – the previous HO’s had all retired. We were dressed in our black jackets and striped trousers and wore top hats. There followed a service rich in the traditions of the United Synagogue but with little participation by the congregants. The shul has become a much warmer and less formal place. Our relationship with the US has changed completely. When we started they made it clear that it might well be better if we closed. At a recent US meeting we were described as “a jewel in the crown”.

In eighteen years there have been some huge events like Sir Isaiah Berlin’s Memorial Service and subsequent Annual Lectures and of course the five unforgettable Midnight Selichot Services with Lord Sacks.

Rabbi Harris became a dear friend. I have learned and gained spiritually from him and we have seen the community evolve together. We are very fortunate to have a man of his intellect. Chazzan Shlomo transformed our services so that they are now warm and participatory. His davening is an inspiration. Ivor knew what I was thinking before I thought of it. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the community was a great aid. With his endeavour we made sure that everything ran like clockwork.

At the United Synagogue Jeremy Jacobs always supported us, Stephen Fenton championed us and Peter Sheldon took the historic decision in the face of opposition that the shul restoration should go ahead. Steve Pack honoured the community by presenting me with the President’s Award.

Thanks go to my colleagues past and present: Henry Grunwald, Bruce Lewin, William Geller, Tony Tigner-Orchudesch, Thea Helfgott and Michael, Adrienne, Madelaine and Tony. Adrienne has been a wonderful Vice-Chair and will now provide great support to Michael Helfgott. He will be a great Chairman and I know I am handing over to the right man.

The style of services is changing, the demands of members to meet their particular requirements are increasing and it is more difficult for young families to live in the area. I believe that we will have the leaders to navigate this great community to a glorious and successful future. For my part G-d willing I am not going anywhere and I shall do all I can to help and support them. It has been a great privilege to serve you as your Chairman for a much longer period than I ever intended. I thank you for your support and I wish the entire Hampstead Family well for the future.

MICHAEL HARINGMAN
Although there will please G-d be further and fuller opportunities to pay tribute to Michael Haringman’s work for our Shul I wanted express my deep thanks to him for everything he has done for Hampstead.

The beautifully renovated main Shul building that we now enjoy and which attracts the admiration and sometimes the wonder of visitors is perhaps the most visible element of Michael’s legacy as Chairman. It was he who drove and masterminded the project, showing incredible dedication, determination and persistence over a decade of fundraising, planning and building. I well remember the times when one difficulty or another with the project seemed insurmountable, but Michael found a way through them all. The result is a Synagogue chamber which we sometimes slip into taking for granted but which is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful in the entire Jewish world. Of course other people donated most generously of their time, money or both in attaining this magnificent goal. But above all, it is Michael’s achievement.

Much else has developed a great deal over Michael’s term of office. When Michael came into the ‘box’ in 1997 and I was the very new rabbi of the Shul, our services and style were very formal and many would argue somewhat dated. Inevitably, Michael and I did not always agree about the detail and timing of every change. But we worked together and under Michael’s chairmanship we evolved at a sensible pace. I believe it is fair to say that Michael’s approach resulted in much positive change achieved over time in a way that took the community with us.

The fact that we have become less formal has not meant a dip in the standards of running Synagogue services, and there again Michael is the central figure. Smoothly running services appear to involve little preparation, but those on the ‘inside’ know that that is not the case at all. Michael’s hard work and attention to detail have immensely enhanced our services and made possible some truly memorable special services and occasions.

So much else could be mentioned: the untold hours that Michael has devoted to all aspects of Shul life; my personal debt of gratitude to him for a long, harmonious and productive working relationship and deep personal friendship; and the United Synagogue award to Michael a couple of years ago recognising him as the outstanding Shul Chair of the entire organisation.

We look forward to Michael’s continued close involvement with our Shul in exciting new ways and projects, thank Barbara for the long loan of her husband, and wish them both and the family every continued success and blessing.

RABBI MICHAEL HARRIS
Best Wishes

FROM

THE MELLER FAMILY
MARC: The title of your new book is Faith without Fear. Which suggests that “faith” and “fear” usually come as a pair. Is that right and how should we understand the title?

Traditionally in Judaism there is a type of “fear” which should go along with “faith”. This is what is known as “Yirat Shamayim”, “fear of Heaven”, i.e. awe and reverence before G-d. Certainly I don't want to argue in the book that that kind of “fear” is inappropriate. But I feel that too often Orthodox Jewish faith, particularly Modern Orthodoxy which is the focus of this book, is paired with different and unhealthy types of fear. One is lack of self-confidence. As the book tries to show, Modern Orthodoxy has at least as much claim as the main ideological alternative in the Orthodox world, namely Haredi Orthodoxy, to be considered a legitimate heir of pre-modern Jewish tradition. Sometimes Modern Orthodox Jews seem to have something of an inferiority complex vis-a-vis Haredi Orthodoxy. This is one kind of fear we should jettison. Another kind of fear we should do without is lack of courage. Modern Orthodoxy needs to have the courage to face up to the huge challenges presented by modernity such as the welcome revolution in the status of women in the modern world.

The book tackles a series of questions. What made you choose these particular topics rather than other potential candidates? Is it because you consider them to be relatively unexplored or because you think we have lacked the courage to date to tackle them head on?

I chose some of the topics in the book, such as Modern Orthodoxy’s attitude towards mysticism and its messianic hopes, because I feel that these issues are relatively neglected in the oral and written discourse of the Modern Orthodox community both here and abroad. But although neglected, I think they are very significant because they shed light on some of Modern Orthodoxy’s deepest commitments such as its universalism, i.e. its emphasis on those strands of Jewish tradition which most value the non-Jewish world. In the case of other topics discussed in the book such as the role of women and Judaism’s attitude to other religions, much has been written about them, but they are unresolved within the Modern Orthodox world and I have views on these issues that I wanted to express just as another voice in the debate. In the case of one issue, Torah from Heaven, to which the longest chapter of the book is devoted, I do think that far too little attention has been given to it at least partly because of a lack of courage, and I want to encourage further discussion of it.

That’s not to say that the book covers every major unresolved issue in Modern Orthodoxy. Two particularly important areas not discussed in the book which will continue to be debated are attitudes to homosexuality and attitudes to non-Orthodox Jewish denominations.

Why did you not decide to tackle those last two particularly given how contested those debates are within the broader Jewish community? Are we not crying out for some intellectual leadership on those issues?

As Pirkei Avot, the Ethics of the Fathers, famously says: “lo alecha hamelacha ligmor” - one person can’t be expected to do the whole job! I honestly don’t think I’m qualified to deal with every major issue facing Modern Orthodoxy – I feel confident only to try and contribute to the debate on some of the issues. I find the issue of homosexuality particularly difficult to deal with adequately from a Modern Orthodox perspective and am still struggling with and thinking about it. My colleague Rabbi Chaim Rapoport wrote a very good book about Orthodoxy and homosexuality a decade ago – I don’t think it’s the last word on the subject but it’s a very helpful contribution to the debate. Regarding Orthodoxy and
non-Orthodox denominations, actually I wonder if, especially in the UK context, we need not so much intellectual as practical leadership. That I have tried to play a part in by attending Limmud Conferences over the last two decades and engaging in public dialogue with non-Orthodox rabbis in different forums.

Courage is clearly one of the abiding themes of the book, as its title suggests. Why, in your opinion, has courage been so lacking on the issue of Torah from Heaven and how would you characterise the view you take in the book?

I think that Orthodoxy, including Modern Orthodoxy, has tended to shy away from the issue of Torah from Heaven for at least two reasons: 1) The theological stakes are very high, as the idea of Torah as Divine Revelation is one of the most fundamental principles of Judaism; 2) Attacks on the idea of “Torah from Heaven” are rooted in parts of the academic world and in disciplines and vocabularies which are utterly foreign to the vast majority of the Orthodox world and to which most Orthodox rabbinic scholars and leaders are unable and unwilling to respond. In the UK in particular, an additional factor is the spectre of the “Jacobs Affair” of the 1960s which still haunts Anglo-Jewry. I argue in the book that shying away from the issue is intellectually dishonest and no longer even feasible in today’s society in which we can access the conclusions of academic biblical criticism via a few clicks on Google. To try and summarise in one sentence the view I present in the book, it is that our tradition contains resources which can allow us to be both intellectually honest and to propound a view of Torah from Heaven which may be unconventional but is still Orthodox.

What is your point of view on the role of women that you felt had not yet been adequately expressed elsewhere?

I don’t feel that there have been enough Orthodox rabbinic voices putting forward the view that feminism is essentially a positive phenomenon, that all kinds of apologetics are problematic and that male and female halakhic scholars need to work to develop the Halakhah as it pertains to women in a way which is substantial but which is also gradual, responsible and faithful to the halakhic process. There have been enormous positive developments in women’s roles and opportunities within Orthodoxy in the last few decades and I believe that there are many more to come. The momentum is unstoppable and I welcome that fact.

Modern orthodoxy can be reticent on messianic matters compared to Haredi Orthodoxy. What kind of messianic future does your book suggest should we might look forward to?

I suggest that Modern Orthodoxy should anticipate a messianic future in which international peace and economic prosperity reign and all human beings are treated with dignity. This may sound like stating the obvious, but there are strands in our messianic tradition, often responding to terrible anti-Semitic persecutions in the Middle Ages, which perceive the messianic era as a time of Jewish supremacy and even revenge. We need to side with and promote the ethical voices in Jewish messianic thought. The last point touches on an overall theme of the book. The Jewish tradition we have been privileged to inherit is a very long, complex and rich one. It is no surprise, therefore, that on a wide range of major issues it contains different strands and opinions. Sometimes there is no alternative but to promote (or ‘privilege’, as philosophers would say) one strand over another.
“On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on the fast of Yom Kippur it is sealed.” This is the central refrain to *Unetaneh Tokef*, probably the most famous prayer in our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. The haunting melody that accompanies these words entices us to reflect on our actions and attitudes of the previous year.

But why use the metaphor of *writing* and *sealing* to describe our judgment?

The simple answer is that we are comparing the proceedings of the Heavenly Court with that of an earth-bound human one. Though a judgment may have been written by a human judge, it is only sealed and acted upon if there has been no successful attempt to appeal. Similarly, on Rosh Hashanah our judgment is only written, but if we commit to improve our ways before the end of Yom Kippur then there is a chance it might be changed before finally being sealed.

To bring these words up to date we might, I suppose, say, “On Rosh Hashanah it is typed, and on the fast of Yom Kippur it is uploaded.” Nevertheless, I think there is something important about the actual metaphor of writing. It says in Ethics of the Fathers (Pirkei Avot 4:25):

“Elisha ben Abuya said: When you learn as a child, what it is like? Like ink written on clean paper. When you learn as an adult, what is it like? Like ink written on blotted paper.”

The message of this little aphorism is clear – children learn more easily as there is less cluttering their minds. Blotted paper is paper that has been written on a number of times with ink and then erased. Thus the paper is dilapidated and it will be harder for new ink to adhere to it when written upon again. Similarly, we find it harder to learn and recall as adults than when we were young.

I would like to suggest that this might also apply to the books that G-d, metaphorically, writes us in on the High Holy Days. If every year we regret our mistakes, aim to improve come Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and then just fall back into those same mistakes again right after, then our names are constantly being written and erased in G-d’s books. And that means that every year it becomes harder for our names to stick. They become fainter and more difficult to identify.

For me, this is a profound image. The inability to commit to a consistent and growing religious path undermines the strength of your *name* – that is, who you are, your very identity. Only commitment to a path, a *derekh*, allows you to really have a name. And the pace of progression is much less important than the fact you are actually on a path at all. I think this might be why Maimonides placed the following verse on the top of the introduction to his *Guide for the Perplexed*, probably the most profound book on Jewish philosophy ever written:

“To the person who sacrifices a thanks offering to Me [G-d], and sets a path for themselves, I will show them My salvation” (Psalms 50:23) In other words, G-d will respond to a person who is willing, (a) to recognise and appreciate G-d, and (b) to commit to a sustained plan of action and growth.

With this in mind, Rosh Hashanah cannot just be a repeat exercise of the previous year. It must become a reinforcement and gradual development of a consistent path. i.e. we should be going somewhere rather than just coasting.

The final irony is the personal life of the author of the Mishnah from Pirkei Avot mentioned above. Elisha ben Avuya, left the Jewish path, rejecting G-d and Torah. Though he was learned and insightful, religious patterns of behaviour and commitment never sealed in him. He was constantly rewriting himself until his very name was lost. Eventually he was just known as *acher*, literally, ‘other’.

Rosh Hashanah is the day of Jewish identity: when we admit what we truly value, when we reveal our real commitments, when we live up to our names. May we all be inscribed for Life.

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*For more information, visit www.lsjs.ac.uk.*
It was not easy to find Marc, writes Gabriel Herman.

First, I took the wrong exit out of Liverpool Street Station. Then – slightly disoriented – I went down a road blocked for security reasons. Double-backing on myself, I eventually found the right street but couldn’t find the building. (This was rather strange because it was a whopping big skyscraper). Once inside, I was directed to a very long escalator designed to induce vertigo. This led to a bewildering number of lifts – not all of which would go to the correct floor. Having spent five minutes trying to choose the right one, the lift was so fast that I thought that I would have a nose bleed. My hearing had gone by floor 20.

And so it was that I found myself twenty minutes late, half-deaf and not a little-stressed at the reception desk of Reed Smith expecting that I had got the wrong day. It’s a measure of the man that Marc put me completely at ease and proceeded to lead me down some stairs – I feared that we were going to walk the thirty-odd floors back to the ground floor – to a canteen with glorious 360° vistas of London reflected in bright sunlight. This was the backdrop to my interview but it took the form of a convivial chat over drinks.

Marc is making a number of changes in his life. He will soon be joining BT – I own three shares so I will effectively become his boss. But sadly for us, he and Sophie are also moving to Mill Hill and this means he will be leaving our shul where he has been an active member for ten years. It was this reason why we thought it would be a good idea to hear his memories of our community.

Ten years ago, Marc moved to NW6 from Leeds. He was not alone because his friends were also attracted to live here; it was the fashionable thing to do. Naturally, they also became members of our shul. Marc was instantly attracted to the warm welcome he received and it was this, rather than the then poor state of the building that he would always remember.

It didn’t take long for him to offer to lead children’s services because this was something he had done in Leeds and so about every two or three weeks he would try to keep the attention of ten to fifteen kids on Shabbat. This rose to around sixty children on the Chagim.

Provision for the 20s and 30s centred around Friday night dinners and Marc was central to the Launch Committee that helped host them. In truth, he knew many of the people who came because they were largely his friends in the area but on one occasion he met a young lady he hadn’t seen before. Her name was Sophie and he found that he couldn’t stop talking to her the whole night. He was completely smitten.

One thing led to another as they say in the classics and Sophie and Marc were married in 2013 under the auspices of Hampstead in Saltaire near Leeds. Rabbi Harris doing the honours at the chupah. (Is this the furthest wedding from Hampstead that we have officiated for our members?) Indeed, Marc was keen that Rabbi Harris would be involved in his marriage ceremony because of the deep respect he (and Sophie) have for him. Marc recalls that it was a sermon given on the Darfur Crisis and the fact that Rabbi Harris attended Limmud and espoused modern, liberal Orthodoxy that hooked him to Hampstead.

By way of a rehearsal Marc was Chatan Bereishit in 2012, a year before his wedding. Part of the duties included making an address to the community. His speech was well received, as was his earlier pre-kiddush “speakeasy” talk on the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange, a charity which he is involved with as a trustee.

His crowning glory at Hampstead should have been reading Haftarah in the presence of the newly installed Chief Rabbi Mirvis who paid us an early visit. To his horror, he was told at the last minute that because we were commemorating Rosh Chodesh (a new month) he had practiced the wrong one. Luckily, Marc was able to struggle through and the congregants thought his stumbling was down to nerves. The Chief Rabbi later reassured Marc that the same thing had happened to one of his uncles.

Marc and Sophie will soon realise that they are now part of Hampstead’s extended family and although they leave us now, they will always have an open invitation to visit and receive the warmest of welcomes when they do.

Now, how do I make my way back home?
I was an only child, brought up in an artistic and musical émigré society and so when I was given drawing materials a lifelong habit was born. My style was influenced by various experiences. While I studied dancing in my teens I used to make swirling and rhythmical mosaics and collages. At the Camden School for girls I learned observational drawing and worked in many different materials. I soon got to grips with colour theory and experimented with complementaries in an age of Pop Art. I studied glass mosaic at the City Lit, which led to many years of working with fused glass. At Trent Park College of Education I was lucky to meet David and discovered that I shared his love of landscape. He drove me and my art materials all over England.

I am passionate about old barns, and take every opportunity to draw and paint them. There is an air of loss when they are no longer in use, and a sense of memories of the activities and life in them. I like to portray the textures of tile and brick bravely held up by wooden beams and ready to tumble into the undergrowth. I observe the intensely dark spaces with shafts of bright light, and the surprising shapes and juxtapositions. Sometimes I peer right in to the gloom with chinks of light and hints of sheep, cows and straw. What I enjoy is the unexpected imagery.

I have also drawn and painted wonderful old boats, the more crumbly and damaged the better. One watercolour called the Red Boat has a jaunty character, using strong bright reds divided by the rope shapes, and leaving the space around it light and ambiguous. It seems to be floating again.

The colours in Israel are very gentle and I try to capture the bright light without enhancing or changing the colours. I leave the white paper as the lightest part of a watercolour, and sometimes express the subject with a fluid, lyrical line. Over the years we have made many trips with historians, painters, or the family. Working in watercolour in a hot dry climate allows one to use water to its best advantage, and the drying time is quick.

Although I love travel, I also find it exciting to find subjects in our local environment such as people in public spaces, parks and markets. I usually work in watercolour and pencils, but sometimes work in acrylics or oils and canvas.

The Pergola at the Hill Garden is a favourite haunt and I have done many studies in and around it. One hot sunny day as I was approaching it from a new angle I was taken with an unusual medley of shapes and colours, so I settled down under a tree and worked in acrylics which dry quickly and the colours stayed very fresh and intense.
As in many organisations, often the most valuable roles are carried out in the most quiet and discreet manner. In our community, the work by Joyce Saffron for the welfare of our members exemplifies this.

For more than thirty years Joyce always acted with great warmth and kindness to ensure that regular contact was maintained with those no longer able to attend services. With the support of her dear, late husband Tony and a team of willing volunteers, she regularly checked to see that they were well, and arranged gifts before the Chagim – honey cakes before Rosh Hashanah, and boxes of Matzot for Pesach. Visits were arranged where possible. She also hosted a beautiful annual Purim tea in her home, with hamantaschen in abundance, and it was an afternoon greatly enjoyed by all those who attended.

Her commitment has been hugely appreciated and she will be hard to replace. We send our sincere thanks and gratitude for everything she has achieved. Not only with us but for her other interests such as B’nai B’rith and the Stepney community.

Looking ahead, we are very keen to build on the strong foundations that Joyce has established and want to expand the welfare support that our Shul can offer to members. It is central to any community to involve as many people as possible in helping each other. If you have any suggestions please get involved and share your thoughts. On a practical level, could you spare an occasional hour – for instance to help an elderly member of the Shul with shopping, or perhaps pay a hospital visit?

Finally, if you, or someone you know in the community would welcome some support, please contact Nina Geller on 020 7794 8138.

We used to live near Oakhill Avenue and one great old oak tree was cut down near the top of the hill, so I felt I must paint the second one before it too disappeared. I worked on the spot, but made a number of changes to the painting at home. First I simplified the design. Then I felt I wanted to enhance the colours, making the sky a stronger blue, and a complementary orange for the ground. I darkened the trunk of the tree against a glowing white lower sky. I like to consciously employ complementaries and contrasts. The end result became more dramatic and generalised than a basic portrait of a tree, suggesting continuity strength and defiance against the changes to the Hampstead landscape.

One day I noticed that our flag irises were blooming in the garden. I sketched them in oils as they appeared, but I felt like playing with the intervening shapes and used flat colours and abstract divisions.

There is a tension between the figurative and the abstract which I am exploiting more in my current work. The light falling on the painting also creates movement, and sometimes the irises seem to come forward and at other times they recede.

A number of years ago, a group of us did some drawings in the shul when it was dark green and a bit tumbleown, which appealed to me. I made one study from my seat looking up to the swirls on the ceiling, and another by leaning my canvas against the central pillar and sat on the steps looking down. The windows appeared to glow more against the darker colours.

Currently, I attend the Hampstead School of Art (where I am doing an external diploma) and workshops at the Ben Uri Gallery and the Slade Summer School. I visit many exhibitions, go to lectures on art, and take sketchbooks and materials wherever I go. This gives me great pleasure.

You are invited!

Sunday 8 November

We will be hosting an afternoon tea party to thank Joyce for all her hard work. Please join us to share the celebration. If you would like to come but will need help with transport, please let us know and we will try to help.

RSVP Nina on 020 7794 8138
SATAN MEKATRIG

BY RABBI RAYMOND APPLE

The Harry Potter books and films have fed an interest in a particular type of fantasy novel. The genre includes James Blish’s “The Day After Judgment”. It raises a modern theme, “Is G-d Dead?” The debate involves Satan Mekatrig, “Lord of Hell, Great Enemy, Prince of Darkness”, who says that if G-d is no longer there, Satan would do a better job.

The name Satan Mekatrig is of course originally Hebrew and recalls rabbinic passages in which Satan, the devil’s advocate, is indeed mekatreg, man’s accuser. Mekatrig – with the meaning of public prosecutor – has hebraised the Greek kategorein. The word figures in the poem Salachti on Kol Nidrei night, when the accuser, the sanegor, speak his piece.

The notion of Satan bringing charges against human beings is found in Jastrow’s Dictionary of rabbinic words and developed in Israel Zangwill’s story, “Satan Mekatrig”, published in 1888, four years before the author’s famous “Children of the Ghetto”.

Joshua Trachtenberg’s “Jewish Magic and Superstition” traces the folkloristic fear of Satan and the means used in order to stop Satan in his tracks – amulets, Bible verses, Torah study, etc. A weapon employed against Satan is the blowing of the shofar, and indeed there is a series of verses before teki’at shofar the initials of which form the words, K’ra Satan – “Destroy Satan”. Not that Judaism was universally fearful of Satan. The rationalists regarded him as a mere symbol; only the folklore tradition took him seriously. The Bible has no independent being with the name Satan, not even in the Book of Job (ch. 1) where “Satan” accuses man before the Divine Judge. Satan is not a real person or an evil angel but an adversarial personification, a poetical expression for the evil fate that some people bring upon themselves.

Not everyone took the K’ra Satan idea literally, even though Rabbi Yitzhak (Talmud Rosh HaShanah 16b) warned us l’arbev hasatan, to confuse Satan. Rashi says that Israel and its satanic enemies are engaged in a tussle. The Tosafot add that when Satan hears the shofar, he fears for his own future. Since the story of Bif’am (Num. 22:22) uses l’satan as a word for “to oppose”, it could indicate any form of opponent. There was a time in ancient history when enemies (the Romans?) were alarmed when the Jews blew the shofar and they misconstrued it as a call to arms (Talmud RH 32b). The shofar-blowing was moved from its original early position in the Rosh HaShanah service in order to confuse the enemy and show them that this was a spiritual call to repentance, part of religious worship and not a military call to battle.
Shana Tova

FROM

QUASTEL MIDGEN LLP
“SUSHI COLLEGE AT THE ZAITSCHEK’S WAS VERY ‘RICE’. A GREAT EVENING WAS HAD BY ALL, MANY THANKS TO JOSH AND CHEV FOR INVITING US INTO THEIR HOME FOR A FUN EVENT.”

DAN FENTON
The Hampstead community has become our family for nearly four years. We truly enjoy being a part of a community that is growing so much each year. This has really been the most successful and exciting year yet. We have had dozens of social and educational events for all ages, including some great new ones.

The Den has now been going strong for two years with top notch speakers, delicious dinners, and a great atmosphere attracting up to eighty young professionals each week. Speakers have included comedy writer and producer Ashley Blaker of Little Britain, Steve Burg, Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, Scott Saunders of March of the Living, Holocaust survivor Renee Salt and our very own Henry Grunwald.

Our Friday night dinners have now gone to the next level! As many tickets as are made available will be sold. We now regularly have up to two hundred guests at a time. There might be a cocktail bar or a sushi chef, but there will always be a great crowd and a fantastic atmosphere.

Oneg on the Rocks now runs throughout the Winter months. One hundred and fifty people have come to celebrate Shabbat, mingle and have a Single Malt L’Chaim (or two) late into the night.

Hampstead has become synonymous with good food and great events; from our famous Cholent Fest to sushi courses, mega BBQs to hot Kiddush-Lunches. If you like food you’ll love Hampstead!

The Chagim always seem to create such a special atmosphere in the shul. We have so many great celebrations, parties and discussions surrounding the different festivals. Events like our Rack in the Shack Succot Party with over two hundred people, a Chanucah reception in the Jewish Museum, a Community Purim Party, Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations, and many more.

Friday nights in shul are really something special. Now that we have a whiskey Kiddush with a Carlebach style service it’s no wonder that there is a magical feel in the most beautiful shul in town. Come join us and be a part of that magic! This year, I am also pleased to announce the launch (from Shabbat UK) of a trial run for ‘Minyan@The Den’, a new young persons’ service for people to sing, meet, and become part of our amazing community here at Hampstead.

JUNIOR DEN Our Junior Den and Teens Programme is now in full swing. We have monthly Teen Services involving discussion groups on the sedra and chagim, talks about real life issues, fun games and great food.

We also have created a young committee with an active Facebook group to share ideas and ask questions. This year we look forward to trips away, Junior Den lunches and much more.

MAZAL TOV! Mazal tov to all of our new couples and couples to be, on finding their other halves. Nothing makes me happier than when a couple tell me they met at one of our events. Thankfully this year we have had quite few couples and we want more!

Thank you to you who is reading this now, for being here, and for making our community as great as it is. It wouldn’t be the same without you.

Wishing you a year filled with good health, happiness, and success in all you do. May our prayers be answered and may we know what it means to pray. Let us know only peace and may we merit a Shana Tova!

JOSH ZAITSCHEK
### Ingredients

- 2 cups of basmati rice
- 2 cups of frozen or fresh green peas
- 2 cups of finely-chopped dill (can be combined/replaced with dried dill)
- 2-3 tbsp of vegetable oil
- 1/3 tsp of turmeric
- 1 tsp of cumin
- 1 small potato, sliced length-ways

### Saffron Dressing

- 1/2 tsp of saffron
- 2 tbsp of hot water
- 2 tbsp of vegetable oil
- **To Make Dressing**: dissolve saffron in hot water and add oil

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### Preparation

1. Mix the dill and peas in a bowl to set aside
2. Wash rice with cool water (repeat a few times)
3. Soak rice in 4 cups of water, add 3 tablespoons of salt and set aside for at least 2 hours. This can also be done overnight

### Cooking

1. In a non-stick pot, bring 5 cups of water to boil
2. Drain rice and pour in boiling water
3. When the rice starts to soften (after around 10 minutes) remove and drain rice from boiling water using a sieve
4. Wash the empty pot and return to heat
5. Add the vegetable oil, followed by the cumin and turmeric
6. Add 1 layer of rice as a base, then a layer of the sliced potato, then add a layer of the dill and peas mixture. Continue to layer the rice and the dill and peas mixture until complete
7. Pour the saffron dressing over the dish
8. Cover the dish and cook for ten minutes at a medium heat. When you can see steam emerging, lower heat and steam the dish for an hour
9. Dinner is served! The dish is ready to eat straight away
10. Serving Tip: You can enjoy Polou Shevid with yoghurt or salad in true Persian style

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR AND SHANA TOVA TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY ALL OVER THE WORLD!**
PREPARATION

1. Wash and soak both quantities of rice in 2 separate bowls for 30 minutes
2. Wash the whole chicken. Cut off the tip of the parson's nose and pat dry
3. After cleaning the inside and outside the chicken, loosely stuff the chicken and close the opening with a skewer of salt

COOKING

1. In a heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil and sauté the onion until limp and transparent. Stir in the chopped tomato and salt and cook for 2 more minutes
2. Place the chicken (dry) in the pot, cover and cook on medium heat for around 25 minutes. Turn and prick the chicken occasionally until golden allover
3. Pour boiling water over the whole chicken, covering half of it. Stir in the tomato paste, the stock, cardamom pods and salt. Cook for about 1 hour
4. Remove the chicken from the pan. Measure the remaining liquid and top it up to 700ml if less. Return the chicken to the pot. Bring to the boil and add the rice around the chicken. Return to the boil again. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook for 20 to 25 minutes
5. Now turn the heat to a minimum and with a heat diffuser beneath the pan cook for another 20 minutes
6. Either transfer the pot to a preheated oven at 80°C and let it slow cook for another 2 hours or more or cook on the stove
7. Before serving immerse the bottom of the pot in cold water. This will make it easier to detach the bottom crust
8. Serving Tip: Spoon the t’beet into a large serving dish, with the chicken in the middle and the crust on top. Enjoy with tomato salad!

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5/2 kg chicken (with skin)
- 2-3 pieces of cut lemon
- 700 ml of basmati rice
- 3 tbsp of olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp of tomato paste
- 1 cube of chicken stock
- 4 whole cardamom pods & 3 cloves
- Salt and pepper to taste

STUFFING

- 2-3 tbsp basmati rice
- 1 large tomato (diced)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp cardamom
- salt and pepper to taste

This alternative to Cholent is a staple dish of Iraqi Jewish cuisine. T’beet (coming from the Arabic word tabayit, meaning overnight) is made from a whole chicken, stuffed with rice and spices, cooked overnight in a pot of even more rice.

It is customary to cover the dish with a plate of boiled eggs, which give you deliciously cooked and brown t’beet eggs; that’s Shabbat lunch and breakfast in one!
I am interested in all kinds of DIY, including constructing model railways. A few months back I decided to set up a small business making homemade bow ties. This was partly inspired by my father, Robin, who as you may know has an extravagant collection of bow ties which he wears on a daily basis. My other inspiration came from the need for sustainability: upon finding a child's tie and an old straight tie, I decided I could use the remaining useable material to make a double sided self-tie bow tie. I sewed the first tie by hand, which included buttons and buttonholes, taking me over ten hours. Fortunately, when my grandmother saw my enthusiasm for sewing, she bought me a sewing machine for Chanucah. Within a week I had mastered all the necessary techniques and was producing higher quality products. I buy the silk from charity shops, upcycling straight ties. A different tie is used for each side of the tie producing a tie that can be worn in four different pattern combinations.

FIND OUT MORE: artisanpowell.wordpress.com
theop@dial.pipex.com

THE MAYOR OF CAMDEN 2015/16
COUNCILLOR LARRAINE REVAH INTERVIEWED BY TONY OSTRIN

The Mayor of Camden this year is Councillor Larraine Revah who is a member of Hampstead Synagogue. She was born in Glasgow but spent her early years in Israel. She returned to this country when she was 9 and attended the Simon Marks Primary School and then JFS. Her husband is an Israeli, who she met on a kibbutz and they have a daughter and a son.

Larraine has a severely disabled daughter and this encouraged her to involve herself in voluntary work, especially children with disability. She gave a helping hand whenever she could. She was asked to consider putting herself forward for the Council. Larraine agreed to this as it would enable her to do those things she strongly believed in. She was elected as a Labour councillor for Gospel Oak in 2010. Her work was obviously noted by her fellow councillors who put her name forward to be mayor. She then spent one year as deputy mayor where she learnt about the required protocol and - she laughed when she told me - “How to make a speech!” She tells me she is thoroughly enjoying her year in office which enables her to support in particular her pet charity KIDS. She made it clear to me that this was close to her heart and she is keen that as many people as possible are made aware of those who suffer disability. Her staff mentioned that she is a “real ambassador and asset for her charity KIDS and that her involvement is much appreciated by the wider community”. Larraine’s interests are not limited to children as she is the Chair of a number of committees dealing with social problems relating to older people.

Larraine is doing valuable work for Camden Council but this does not stop her maintaining her strong links with her own family. She is seeing more of her family now as Mayor because her husband is her consort and occasionally her son deputises for him.

She informed me how keen she is to work in matters of interfaith and there is no doubt that her Jewish background encourages her in this direction. She is proud that so many people living in Camden are of many different faiths. She says: “We should look at each other as normal human beings and overcome politics.”

I enjoyed interviewing Larraine because I feel not only is she an asset for Camden but for the Jewish community. I have no doubt that our synagogue will support her during her year of office.

ARTISAN POWELL AT HAMPSTEAD

THEODORE POWELL

I am interested in all kinds of DIY, including constructing model railways. A few months back I decided to set up a small business making homemade bow ties. This was partly inspired by my father, Robin, who as you may know has an extravagant collection of bow ties which he wears on a daily basis. My other inspiration came from the need for sustainability: upon finding a child’s tie and an old straight tie, I decided I could use the remaining useable material to make a double sided self-tie bow tie. I sewed the first tie by hand, which included buttons and buttonholes, taking me over ten hours. Fortunately, when my grandmother saw my enthusiasm for sewing, she bought me a sewing machine for Chanucah. Within a week I had mastered all the necessary techniques and was producing higher quality products. I buy the silk from charity shops, upcycling straight ties. A different tie is used for each side of the tie producing a tie that can be worn in four different pattern combinations.

FIND OUT MORE: artisanpowell.wordpress.com
theop@dial.pipex.com
A SNIP AT OVER £6K

After my A-levels I decided to cut my hair for charity. As you do. The haircut was sponsored and I chose for the money raised to go to Hammerson House, a Jewish old age home in Hampstead Garden Suburb. This was because it was where my Grandpa had lived for four years before he passed away in May last year. So far I have raised over £6,600 and donations are still coming in. I’m overwhelmed by how much money I have raised so far. By the way, my twelve inches of hair went to a Jewish children’s Cancer charity that turns hair into wigs for children who have lost their own due to chemotherapy.

YOU SAY SHLEPS, WE SAY SHEPS!

Our readers are not shy about correcting errors in this publication but Hampstead Synagogue members often correct other titles too. Frieda Berger recently had a letter published in the Jewish News berating an editorial that used poor Yiddish. She had to remind them that one “shleps a shopping trolley, but one sheps nacher when a family member achieves success.” If only they had consulted their regular contributor Rabbi Schochet of Mill Hill who is an authority on this subject.
Hampstead Synagogue member Morris Beckman died this year aged 94. He will be long remembered for his commitment to telling the stories that he felt were missing from the histories of Anglo-Jewry and the consciousness of the younger generation.

During the war, Morris had served in the Merchant Navy and was aggrieved that the bravery of his colleagues was not recognised at par with the Royal Navy. Had the Merchant Navy not kept operating for the duration, Britain would have been starved in to submission.

Although he did not live long enough to know about the neo-Nazi rally in Golders Green – it was moved to Central London at the eleventh hour – he would have been clear about the type of communal response necessary.

Morris had been part of the '43 Group', a militant anti-Fascist organisation that operated after the war. The forty three founder members (trained to fight in the British armed forces) were outraged by the anti-semitism of post-war Britain. They decided to continue the war against fascism by battling the ‘foot-soldiers’ of British Fascists. Beckman frequently spoke about these experiences and wrote well-received books on the subjects. He wasted no opportunity to introduce the themes at Hampstead Synagogue.

Readers of this magazine will recall a number of features on the late Morris Beckman and the books he wrote. His attempt to leave a record for Anglo-Jewish historians was therefore successful and will ensure that his colleagues in the wartime Merchant Navy and the 43 Group will not be forgotten. Nor will he be by us at Hampstead.

Vernon Mark was born in Magdeburg but came to London aged 11½ to escape the worsening political situation in Germany. He boarded a boat in Holland, possibly in Flashing, to make the sea journey to Harwich where he was met by his brother. Together they went to London where Vernon noticed that everybody was wearing a sort of flower, red, in their button holes ... it was Poppy Day. The next morning he was introduced to porridge which to him looked like wallpaper paste.

Vernon first visited Hampstead Synagogue in 1954 when he moved to lodgings in Canfield Gardens. He liked what he saw, heard and felt, and gradually became a more regular congregant. He appreciated the decorum and said that he was made to feel most welcome. There were very formal services when Vernon first joined but latterly he appreciated the more modern, relaxed style that slowly evolved.

His prescient move from Germany to England would save and change his life but he never publicly expressed anger or bitterness towards his mother country. Instead, he stressed loyalty and appreciation for his life in England. His love of humanity showed in his eagerness to share a joke with relative strangers, his liberal outlook on life and his support of the Hampstead Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews. He will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

TONY OSTRIN writes,

“I have many fond memories of Vernon Mark. He could always be relied upon, rain or shine, to be in shul on Friday nights for Kabbalat Shabbat and would be one of the first to arrive on Shabbat morning. His love of music was well known and many enjoyable evenings were spent in his company at the Royal Festival Hall. He will be remembered by many members for his fund of ‘corny jokes’ which would amuse us during kiddush. When he came for lunch one Shabbat he entertained us to stories about his childhood and escapades on his scooter. For the past few years he had been absent from shul as he was in a residential home near to his niece in Sevenoaks. Hampstead Synagogue has lost a special person but Vernon Mark will always be remembered.”
We are gearing up for some significant change as our elections take place in November. Once every three years, they provide a chance to change the make-up of the Executive, with familiar faces stepping down and new women, bringing ideas and energy, joining. Two people who will be saying goodbye are our co-chairs Dalia Cramer and Leonie Lewis. They encouraged the creation of the ‘Female Jew’ educational roadshow, attended by hundreds, giving members of the United Synagogue a chance to learn more about Halacha and women’s participation in the community.

Dalia and Leonie have been role models for girls and women getting involved in the community and they are not resting on their laurels. Dalia has already committed to hosting this October’s Great Challah Make for Shabbat UK following on from the success of last year, and Leonie carries on as Director of JVN (the Jewish Volunteering Network).

A new group of people offering different skills and experiences will make the organisation stronger and more successful for us all. What can you bring to US Women to help the next generation of United Synagogue girls feel passionate about their Judaism? Are you a creative mind that can help initiate new campaigns and programmes to ensure more women connect? Perhaps your planning skills are already renowned – we just need them for our elections! Or maybe your leadership skills at work are second to none – now is the time to use them in the community.

If this year, the Jewish year 5776, is a time you would like to change something for the better and help our community grow stronger, contact us about the forthcoming elections and how you could get involved.

Lauren Hamburger sits on the US Women’s Executive. The Elections and AGM will take place on Tuesday 24th November.

EMAIL USWOMEN@THEUS.ORG.UK TO TELL US ABOUT YOUR IDEAS

The guest speaker at the US Women Annual Dinner held in May at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue was the Rt. Hon Lady Hazel Cargrove CBE, Scotland’s first legal lady. Susan Reizenstein arranged a table for Hampstead Synagogue and our group were fascinated by Lady Cosgrove’s insight into her career at the Bar and latterly as a judge, including some of the barriers she experienced being a woman and someone who was managing a family.
An informal meeting of Anglo-Jewish leaders was held at New Court in the presence of Lord Rothschild and Nathan Joseph, the most influential person on the Russo-Jewish Committee, the consensus being that it was inadvisable to call a public meeting. Again, the matter was discussed at a meeting of the Conjoint Committee; communications of a private nature had been disclosed which later turned out to be untrue but which influenced a negative decision. A day after the annual meeting of the Board of Deputies, its President D. L. Alexander went with Claude Montefiore of the Anglo-Jewish Association to see Lord Rothschild in order to persuade him to hold a public meeting, only to encounter his continuing opposition to such a proposal.

An increasingly important figure in the campaign on behalf of Russian Jewry was Carl Stettauer (1859–1913), a wealthy leather merchant, who represented Britain on the travelling Commission and, on his return, was co-opted on to the Russo-Jewish Committee. As he was due back in Britain in a few days, Natty agreed to reconsider the matter after consulting with him. Stettauer’s view was that ‘things were very bad indeed in Russia ... [His] opinion was that a public meeting would do no good but at the same time it could do no harm.’ Thereupon Lord Rothschild withdrew his objection to the holding of such a meeting.

On 8 January 1906, Lord Rothschild presided over a huge public demonstration of support for Russian Jewry in the Queen’s Hall – which could hold 2,500 people – reversing his previous policy of persuasion by secret negotiation. The platform was graced by the presence of religious leaders of all denominations, a cluster of peers including Lord Milner, the Lord Mayor and all three Rothschild brothers.

Messages of goodwill came from the new Liberal Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, ‘expressing sympathy with the Jews in Russia, and horror at the cruelties that have been inflicted upon so many of them’, and from Arthur Balfour, who declared that ‘The treatment of their Jewish citizens ... is certainly the darkest blot on the history of Christendom ... I earnestly trust that the outcome of this appalling Russian tragedy may be to make Security, Liberty and Equal Rights, the inalienable birthright of every Russian Jew.’
Natty not only accused a coterie around the Tsar of stirring up the Russian people against the Jews to invalidate the case for reform and a new constitution, but publicly announced himself in favour of equal rights for Russian Jewry.

All of the nineteenth century tropes about ‘the organised massacres and outrages perpetrated upon the Jews in Russia, which, in the opinion of Englishmen, without distinction of creed or party, are an offence to civilization and a disgrace to humanity’ were aired once again, so that the meeting on the surface was a resounding success.

The bankers at the helm of the philanthropic organizations, Schiff and Natty, were coordinating their policy, boycotting loans to Russia and begging other bankers not to participate, desperately trying to stem migration into Western Europe and the Americas, and espousing equal rights for the Jews in Russia. Natty decided he had to take care, however, not ‘to be too violent or to say anything which might be disagreeable ... to the Czar and Mr Witte’.

Looking back on these events, Nathan Joseph remembered somewhat gloomily that ‘There is absolute indifference on the part of the press & the public, even when the worst pogroms are reported. Even a protest meeting has to be artificially “got up” by the Jews and there is a difficulty in obtaining a few speakers – Christians – to speak openly.’

Not everyone among the Russian emigrants to Britain had a flattering appraisal of Natty’s response to the pogroms. Writing to Vera, his future wife, Chaim Weizmann vented his rage, exclaiming:

“I wish you wouldn’t ask how English Jewry is reacting to all this. They are petrified. They are committing a second pogrom. They have given money on condition that their unfortunate Russian brethren do not emigrate to England ... Yesterday in Leeds, and 3 days ago in Liverpool, I blasted them before a crowd of three thousand. The meetings were tremendous, such as England had never witnessed before. The squalid Press will attack me for undermining the authority of ‘Lord Rothschild’, but I spit on them. I shan’t keep my mouth shut.”

The Book Group was set up in the winter of 2014 and has become a very enjoyable addition to the social life of the community. Over the last 18 months the featured books have ranged from Amos Oz to George Eliot and from Robert Harris to Gary Steyngart. In the Spring, Gabriel Herman was invited to our discussion on Amy Levy’s Reuben Sachs to share insights from his own MA thesis on the development of Hampstead’s Jewish community in the 19th century.

On average between eight and fifteen members attend each session and we meet every couple of months to discuss one or two books of Jewish interest. We have discovered a lot about ourselves and our heritage at these meetings. Often, individual members appreciate being introduced to books they have overlooked in the past by accident (or deliberately) and then later enjoy listening and contributing to a range of opinions from the group on that title. Several people have remarked that the most interesting discussions were about books they haven’t liked so much!

The influence of the translator has become a recurring theme as we read several books in translation including Fateless by Imre Kertesz, Scenes from Village Life by Amos Oz and Hotel Savoy by Joseph Roth when we struggled together with concepts of meaning and allusion.

Through the Book Group we have become good friends, our connection with the Shul has been strengthened - at services and more generally - and we look forward to welcoming more members, reading more widely and deepening our connection with our heritage through more stimulating discussions and plenty of tea and cake. Later this year we are particularly excited by a session where we plan to meet the author. Michael Mail is coming to talk to us in December when we have all read his book Exposure and possibly Coralena too.
The scene: A few years ago on a busy Monday morning in my flower shop. Vases to wash, flowers to cut, Sue my florist and I were busy getting the shop ready for the day’s trading. I was arranging the window display when I saw a large black limousine pull up outside; the driver got out and walked towards the shop. We were in a bit of a mess when he came in. He surveyed the shop and then turned around and walked out. I looked at Sue and said: “Win some, lose some!”

No sooner had I said that than he returned followed by two women dressed in black. He introduced himself as Mr. Dimitri and that the two women were Russian. He did mention their names but to be honest I couldn’t understand him as his accent was so strong. One of the women was an interpreter and she would be speaking for the other lady.

Her friend’s husband had died and she wanted to order funeral flowers. I showed them several books of funeral flowers and she chose about a dozen of them. I asked for details, time, date and where but she said nothing had been arranged as her husband had collapsed and died and there had to be an autopsy. So until the body was released she couldn’t give me the details I needed. She then said that she would need many more flowers, pedestals etc., would this be possible? “Of course,” I agreed.

I thought that this was all that she wanted and started to calculate how much this would cost. After an exchange in Russian the interpreter said there was more. “You need to visit the Brompton Church with us as something has to be done to the walls as they are in a very bad condition.” She explained that her husband was a fanatical supporter of Chelsea Football Club. She wanted him to be buried at the Brompton Cemetery because the cemetery backs onto the football ground and thought he would like a view of the club!

I must admit I was very surprised at her request but arranged to meet them the following morning at the cemetery. All the walls were chipped and peeling. I didn’t think flowers were the answer, a good paint job maybe. She said she wanted all the walls from ceiling to floor covered with red material. I am not an interior designer but even I could see that this would be an enormous and extremely expensive job. I suppose I should have said I couldn’t do it but I knew people who specialise in this type of work. I would take measurements and get back to them. I got in touch with my friends at a theme company and after discussing all the logistics of such a job they agreed to come in with me. We agreed on a price of £10,000 plus the cost of all the flower arrangements.

The next day I contacted Mr. Dimitri and told him how much it would cost. He said he would inform the Russian lady and get back to me. Later that day he called saying she had agreed. I then said I would need a deposit of £5,000 with the balance to be paid two days before the funeral. Two days later I received a cheque for £1,500. I called him and said that this was not enough. He said not to worry, as money was no object. I would be receiving more very soon. A week later I was getting worried as I still hadn’t received any more money and the material and flowers had to be ordered and there was still no date for the funeral.

The following week I was watching TV when there was an item regarding a Russian who had collapsed and died whilst out jogging in Surrey. There were tests going on to see if he had been murdered. I realised that this was the man whose funeral I was arranging. After talking it over with my husband I decided to have nothing to do with the arrangements. They were messing about with the payments; if they didn’t pay I was worried that I would be responsible for all costs. I called my friend at the theme company and informed him that I wasn’t going to be involved with the funeral. I then spoke to Mr. Dimitri and told him of my decision. He was very angry and demanded the deposit back. As I hadn’t banked the cheque it would be returned. So that was that. I was just glad not to be a part of it anymore.

A week later I was visited by detectives from Scotland Yard. They asked me if I had been intimidated by the Russians. “How do you know about the visit to my shop?” I asked. But they said they were not in a position to tell me. So I told them all that had happened and they seemed pleased that I hadn’t gone ahead.

A few weeks ago whilst watching the 10 o’clock news the last item made me sit up. ‘Second post-mortem on Russian whistle-blower found dead in Surrey’. He had exposed corrupt officials in a £144m tax scandal in Russia. He had been poisoned!
Peacocks as well as making a huge amount of noise tend to take off and fly to unknown destinations. Some many years ago there was a pub on Fortune Green Road with peacocks in the garden which proved to be quite a feature, maybe increasing the beer consumption. These birds would exercise their flying skills and land in the neighbouring graveyard causing many complaints from mourners and visitors to the cemetery. I was called in to try and rectify the situation and do something to prevent further aerial invasion. I caught the birds with the help of the bar staff and trimmed the flight feathers of one wing per bird. Peacocks need all their feathers on both wings to fly successfully. Peace had been restored and no more peacocks trespass at the cemetery.

One Sunday morning one of my clients excitedly informed me that there was a punk dog in the waiting room. Sure enough an agitated non-punk owner was in charge of a Black Labrador with a large shiny fishing hook through his nostrils. One man and his dog went to Hampstead fishing ponds and the Labrador had been inadvertently hooked. I clipped off the barb to remove the fashionable piercing.

Some years ago there was a rather pointless scheme to neuter Pitbull dogs and permanently marking details on the inside of the animal’s thighs, so I armed myself with an elaborate electric tattooing machine which has a fine bundle of reciprocating needles to be dipped into coloured inks. Pitbull Terriers ended up with all sorts of additional decoration including flowers of various hues at the owner’s request but never a tattooed Magan David.

Panic phone call from a rather grumpy actor. His pet, a large handsome Bernese Mountain dog, had collapsed in the rear garden. Together with the practice nurse and box of tricks we drove to the address given and sure enough the patient was panting and unconscious with a temperature completely off the scale. This had occurred on a warm summer day so no great decision required: heatstroke. The owner was not convinced but I went ahead giving a cold wash, intravenous corticosteroids and dextrose saline. Within fifteen minutes or so the dog was on his feet and with his temperature much reduced, well on his way to recovery. We were all happy including Mr Grumpy.

I hope all pet owners know not to leave their animals in cars on sunny days and to be careful not to encourage a lot of running about on hot days. Perhaps this is a space for more advice. Keep dogs away from rough ground where wild barley grows and ripens in the Summer months. The wild barley awns break from the stalks when disturbed by dogs moving through this sort of vegetation and can find their way into car canals, eyes and enter the skin in various parts of the body. This barley awn problem can cause a lot of distress to the dogs and very often will require removal from various parts of the body under general anaesthesia.

My very fortunate and enjoyable spell at Glasgow University Veterinary School allowed me to marry Rose Sarna at now defunct Queens Park Shul as well as becoming acquainted with the Islay Malt whiskies. Rose was a student at The Glasgow School of Art in the famous Rennie MacIntosh building but was not responsible for the recent catastrophic fire in the building.

May I recommend those members of the Shul who have not visited Glasgow go to the Burrell Collection, Kelvin Grove and Hunterian museums and the University. The surrounding countryside, Loch Lomond, the Trossocks, Ayrshire coast and Culzean Castle cannot be more picturesque.
As we approach Rosh Hashanah it is a good time to take stock of what has been happening in the US. Our wonderful Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, has now been in this role for two years and he continues to inspire and support our communities and as an ambassador to the wider world. It is a great privilege to work with him and also with the highly respected Dayanim of the London Beth Din. Our new Chief Executive, Dr Steven Wilson, has been with us almost a year. He is already making a massive contribution to the professional team and together with many other staff and lay leaders, he is driving the implementation of the actions in our Strategic Review. Our Trustee Board has completed their first year and I am in my fifth year of six as your President. The months and years fly by and we are impatient to implement the recommendations aimed at ‘building vibrant, engaged communities at the forefront of British Jewry.’ Once again I would like to thank everyone who played a part in the Strategic Review, led by the indefatigable Marc Meyer.

We have also benefited from several new Rabbinic appointments both at Senior and Assistant levels. Our Rabbonim are the key agents of change for our Shuls and we see many examples of communities being transformed under their leadership. We already have some great examples of strengthening of our local shul communities. Thanks to two forward-looking mergers this year we have welcomed Redbridge US (previously Clayhall and Newbury Park) and Woodford Forest US (previously Wanstead & Woodford and Waltham Forest Hebrew Congregation) into our family of communities. They are now going from strength to strength helping their members to lead fuller Jewish lives. Meanwhile, major milestones have been marked this year with Golders Green celebrating its centenary and with Borehamwood & Elstree and Alei Tzion their 60 year and 10 year anniversaries respectively. These amazing communities are jewels in the crown of our organisation and I wish them a hearty Mazel Tov and continued success for the future. Membership of all these communities and many others is increasing and we welcome our new families warmly.

The passion and enthusiasm in US shuls is so important in building the vitality of the wider Jewish community. When only a couple of months ago, a group of neo-Nazis tried to organise an antisemitic rally in Golders Green, the Jewish communal response was united and robust. I believe that the vibrancy of our local communities played a crucial part in this. We continue to be challenged by a small number of extremists who are intent on disrupting our lives. Together with our partners in the CST and the police, we are responding to these challenges as vigorously as we can, whilst recognising that the vast majority of British society are peace-loving people who are equally concerned about these extremists.

Every day throughout the United Synagogue our staff, lay leaders and countless volunteers work together to produce outstanding activities that touch the whole of UK Jewry. One fine example of this is Shabbat UK, which we are all gearing up for on 23rd and 24th October 2015. Last year it was wonderful to see thousands of people embrace Shabbat UK with their friends and families. This year Shabbat UK is set to be even bigger with the opening event, the Great Challah Bake on 22nd October, set to break all records.

Finally, as always, we look to our future; our youth. Through the work of Tribe and Young US we are investing in inspiring and engaging the next generations of our community. The Tribe activities are more popular than ever and are including more of our youth. They are supported by US Futures whose fundraising efforts this year included the wonderful ‘Run Rabbi Run’ team at the Maccabi Community Fun Run.

Cheryl and I wish you and your family a Shana Tova Umetuka - a happy, healthy and sweet new year.

Stephen Pack 
President, the US
At the height of our High Holyday services we will declare: “Penitence, Prayer and Charity can avert the evil decree”. We will recognise that prayer is a central, fundamental and transformative ingredient of our Jewish experience. According to the Talmud, prayer is “worship of the heart” and one of the pillars upon which the world stands.

During the past year I have enjoyed wonderful prayer services in numerous communities across Great Britain and the Commonwealth. In recent months I have begun engaging with our Rabbis and other community leaders to explore ways in which we can stimulate added enthusiasm for tefilla, including, for example, seeking to encourage Batmitzvah and Barmitzvah celebrants to have greater knowledge of and proficiency in our tefillot.

The Hebrew term tefilla, is, however, significantly different from the English “prayer”, which is derived from the Latin precari, meaning to beg or entreat. The root of tefilla is the Hebrew word “pileil,” meaning to judge. It is found in the Torah in situations in which action has been taken or an intervention has been made. For example, in recounting the famous Biblical story of Pinchas’ intervention when he encountered a couple engaging in an adulterous relationship, the Book of Psalms states ‘Vaya’amod Pinchas Vayefalel’ – “Pinchas stood up and intervened”.

From here we learn that tefilla is far more than words spoken in supplication to or in praise of God. The reflexive “lehitpaleil,” means to judge or to analyse oneself. Through self-evaluation we engage in a constructive and healthy activity that can re-fashion our lives. Tefilla affords us the opportunity to take a long, hard and honest look at ourselves in the Divine shadow of God’s presence, where nothing can be denied or hidden; to differentiate between what we want and what we need; and to give voice to our deepest hopes and aspirations, resolving to work passionately to achieve them.

Sometimes, those for whom tefilla is second nature can pray as a matter of routine and can struggle to find genuine meaning in what they are saying. Conversely, those with less grasp of the liturgy sometimes find that a catchy melody or special atmosphere provides them with great inspiration. It is revealing that as we finish the ‘Amidah’ we say, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You.” Neither the words nor the sentiment alone are sufficient – both are required together to be truly impactful. This is something that every one of us can achieve.

5775 has been a challenging year for Jewish communities at home and abroad. Murderous attacks on Jewish communities in Europe have left many feeling vulnerable and concerned. None of us can change the world overnight, but we can change ourselves, which, in turn, does indeed transform the world we live in. Tefilla provides us with the key to unlocking that potential if we can approach it with the requisite humility and vigour.

May we all merit to discover the great beauty and value of tefilla, so that we begin 5776 with renewed positivity and sense of determination. Valerie and I extend to you all our very best wishes for a happy, healthy, peaceful and fulfilling New Year. Shana tova.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
September 2015 • Ellul 5775
“We could do with something here”. All eyes turned to a patch of soil next to a wall in front of the Shul. This chance remark was overheard by a passionate gardener. Suddenly this dull scrap of land blossomed with a colourful display of flowers and shrubs.

This transformation was due to Joan Horwitz. Twenty years ago during a time of sadness Joan found solace in gardening. She found it very therapeutic, working in the garden tending to the plants, taking cuttings and cultivating seeds. Over the years Joan has won a silver medal from The London Gardens Society and cups from The Hampstead Horticultural Society; but her love of gardening is not about awards. In her garden with the scent of roses, the bright colours of the herbaceous border, the clipped topiary and the gentle murmur of water as it flows into a small pool, Joan has created a peaceful haven.

So when you visit Hampstead Shul take a moment to enjoy the colourful border that has been created. Thank you Joan, your hard work and dedication in turning a neglected space into a work of art is very much appreciated.

As David had always wanted to leave South Africa because of the political situation, we came to London on holiday and once we could find work decided to stay. The year was 1976. Our parents encouraged us to stay abroad and in March of that year we announced our engagement. I then had the exciting and daunting task of organising my own wedding without the support of family and without a familiar network. We knew just one other person in London, a friend of my aunt. This lady was forty years older than me, but Nora, as she was called, was immensely helpful with details such as where to order a wedding cake and, of course most importantly, she suggested a couple of synagogues. Hampstead Synagogue was a favourite of hers because it had beautiful stained glass windows.

Rabbi Solomon married us there on the 29th of August 1976. My memories of that day were coming out of the Bedeken Room on my father’s arm and the smile on his face showed that he was bursting with pride. Both David and I were extremely young and naive. We were all of 22 and 23. Although the windows were beautiful they did not show off to their best as the painted sludge green walls and wooden furniture made the Shul rather dark!

We didn’t go into that Shul for another thirty three years. When our daughter Natalie and Nicholas were planning their wedding they chose to get married in Hampstead without any prompting from us. We had the added history that Nicholas’s grandparents were members of the Shul and of course his uncle and aunt, Steven and Wendy Goldwater are long standing members too. On the 28th April 2013 I walked out of the Bedeken Room for the second time - this time as the mother of the bride and my heart bursting with joy! As the doors were opened my eyes were immediately lifted to the beautiful stained glass windows of the shul so prominent now because of the white painted walls!

As Natalie and Nicholas are now members of Hampstead Shul, David, Greg and I decided to spend Shabbat with them at Hampstead. We were made to feel very welcome and have experienced warmth, friendship and civility from all. We have been fully fledged members for two years now and look forward to Shabbat here each week. It is a haven where we can be ourselves and are valued for who we are.
This year JLGB celebrates its 120th anniversary, and since it was formed it’s strived to provide children and young people with many opportunities. Members can take part in fun activities, learn useful skills, boost confidence, make friends from around the world, become active citizens in the community, learn leadership skills and much, much more. Wall climbing is just one example of many exciting activities that we offer, pictured above.

Back in September 2014 JLGB were provided with an opportunity to make their great organisation even greater thanks to a government grant, which is enabling them to enhance their existing youth groups and create new youth groups across the UK. Alongside that, JLGB are working hard to ensure that their programming is innovative, fun and is driven towards helping communities through a range of social action projects.

JLGB has had many groups based all around London for decades, and earlier this year they launched a group in Hampstead, which now means they can offer opportunities to children in or around the region.

JLGB’s Hampstead group is run by their wonderful volunteers, whose commitment allows children in Hampstead to access all the fantastic benefits that JLGB offers, including dynamic programming, leadership training, national events and much more. However, to make JLGB’s great opportunities possible they need volunteers!

Whether it’s on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, if you’re aged 18+ and have any interest in helping our groups to run, either working directly with children or behind the scenes, then contact Ricky Kaplan. Ricky is JLGB’s Programming and Recruitment manager, and can be reached by calling 020 8989 8990 or emailing ricky.kaplan@jlgb.org.

Hampstead JLGB runs on a Wednesday evening at Hampstead Synagogue and it is totally FREE to give it a try! If you want to find out more please contact JLGB HQ on 0300 123 2363 and ask to speak to a member of the recruitment team!

Alternatively, email us on: getinvolved@jlgb.org

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**GILBERTO ESPINOSA**

**AT HAMPSTEAD FOR...**

Three years

**TOP FILM CHARACTER**

Johnny Depp as Sweeney Todd in Demon Barber of Fleet Street

**PICK A SUPERPOWER**

To make global equality

**GUilty PLEASURE**

Working too hard

**DRINK OF CHOICE**

Cuban Rum

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**CHARLES DELROY**

**TOP FILM CHARACTER**

Mrs. Doubtfire (Played by the one and only Robin Williams)

**BEST KNOWN FOR**

Performing cheesy magic tricks

**DREAM SUPERPOWER**

Definitely flight

**DRINK OF CHOICE**

Something fruity!

**GUilty PLEASURE**

Cheesy 80s pop music

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Cheesy 80s pop music
RUTH BLOMENBERG

My Bat Mitzvah sedra, Chayei Sarah, was very personal to me and to my family. The parashah introduces us to Rivkah, the second of the four matriarchs. My Hebrew name is Rivkah Tovah after my great-grandmothers, Rivkah and Taube. One of my great-great-grandmothers was named Sarah. I was fascinated by these family links with the parashah and was delighted that my Bat Mitzvah came at this time.

The sedra of Chayei Sarah is about continuity within families. When Rebecca marries Isaac, she proceeds to continue the customs started by Sarah, his mother. For example, Rebecca would light Shabbat candles in her tent and welcome visitors into the home.

My Bat Mitzvah was an incredible celebration of becoming a Jewish woman. My entry into Jewish adulthood marks the beginning of being able to contribute to the Jewish life of my family, my community and the Hampstead Synagogue. In this way I hope to always live up to my Hebrew name by conducting my life as a Rivkah Tovah, a good Rivkah.

I really enjoyed working with my parents in the study of the parashah. I would like to thank Rabbi Harris for his guidance and inspiring words and Chazan Gerzi for ensuring that my favourite melodies were included in the service.

It meant a lot to me to celebrate my Bat Mitzvah on Friday 14th November 2014 with a Shabbat evening meal in the Community Centre, surrounded by my family and friends, enjoying Josh and Yocheved’s delicious cooking.

HUGO MAX

A year or so ago I embarked upon the great journey of studying my Bar Mitzvah portion, Chukkat, with my teacher, the wonderful Johnny Wolf. During the year I had been developing the skill of sight-leining, as well as understanding the joys and wonders of being Jewish. Johnny’s teaching was fascinating and I have many fond memories of Sunday morning lessons discussing my portion: the sacrificing of the red heifer and the serpent upon the pole, as well as talking about upcoming festivals and their meaning.

Out of nowhere, my Bar Mitzvah weekend arrived. My first experience of reading from the Torah scroll was on the previous Monday evening. This gave me a chance to become familiar with the layout of the text and to apply what I had learned over the past year, as well as to get the feeling of leining in that atmosphere. The rehearsal went smoothly and I stayed as calm as possible; of course my emotions were mixed at that time, excitement building with concerns, but I realised that there was no need to worry.

The next opportunity for me to read from the Torah was on Thursday morning. This was my first experience of being called up before a congregation and I began shakily and quietly, as well as starting at a rather high pitch! I got more and more comfortable singing and, by the end, I was enjoying it greatly. It was wonderful to see many family members and friends supporting me on that early morning. After Shacharit we all enjoyed the delicious taste of pastries from Daniels bakery.

Then the weekend was upon us. The service was hugely enjoyable, blessed by the blissful voices of Chazzan Schlomo and the choir. I threw my heart and soul into my leining and sang away, making sure each moment was cherished as much as it could be. It was wonderful to be with my family and friends who had all come to show their love and kindness to me on my Bar Mitzvah weekend.

Before I knew it, it was all over. The service raced by and the party appeared like a ship upon a glowing horizon. Once again, the warmth of my family surrounded me and I realised the true meaning of this milestone in my life: a chance to celebrate my achievements and truly understand the joys of being Jewish.
As soon as I said the words I knew I would regret them and it happened earlier than I anticipated. Tony and I were visiting our son Geoff and his family in Switzerland and were on a day trip to their local mountain, the Niederhorn (1963m/6440ft). I was looking forward to reaching the top as I had been told of the wonderful view of the Bernese Oberland, in particular Lake Thun and Interlaken. As the cable car was gently moving towards the summit, I felt very relaxed; until the car stopped. “This is where we get off,” said Geoff, who went on to say, “Mum says she needs more exercise”.

There they were; those three words. I said I thought it would be too much for the children of 7 and 3½ but was reassured that they would be OK as it was only an hour’s walk. They went off with Melanie, their mother, leaving Geoff to help the ‘old folks’.

Thirty minutes of clambering over boulders and avoiding muddy patches we found the children taking a rest and eating peaches; after a few minutes, off they skipped to continue the walk. Tony and I were slowing up as it was becoming steeper. Geoff tried to be encouraging by saying: “You certainly are getting...”

I cut him short I did not want to hear those words again. “I know what I said” I gasped: “but I didn’t mean this, this is just a cheaper form of Dignitas”.

Another thirty minutes went by and it was just Geoff and I as Tony had marched ahead. I was tired, irritable and in pain. On the pretext of watching the paragliders drifting down to Interlaken I kept stopping so I could rest. As we neared the top the sky darkened and it began to rain.

“I can’t go on,” I moaned. Geoff gave me a pitying look as he pointed out that I couldn’t stay on the side of a mountain in the pouring rain. He then felt the need to add: “It was you who said you wanted...” My look stopped him from finishing the sentence.

Slowly I limped on and at last I reached the top but where was the promised view of mountains and lakes? All I could see were grey clouds. Wet, cold and weary I opened the door to the café to be met by a cheer from the family. As I sipped a hot drink I slowly began to revive and became aware of a conversation taking place between the grandchildren and Geoff.

“What are we going to do tomorrow daddy?” When I heard the reply; “We’re going to Fribourg to play 18 holes of golf around the city,” I thought he was joking.

He wasn’t!
The Board of Deputies has been the voice of British Jewry for over 250 years and remains to this day the only democratic body in the community able to influence and shape events. It comprises nearly three hundred deputies directly elected every three years by around one hundred and thirty eight synagogues and thirty four communal organisations. There are a further thirty three under-35 observers appointed to ensure that we build a new generation of communally minded activists.

Lay leaders and professional staff produce policy papers, develop campaigns and host debates and meetings. They lobby politicians, policy makers and opinion formers and empower members of the community to engage with the political process. They also work in partnerships within and outside the community to realise the goals of the Board.

The Board represents. It helps public bodies including the national government to better understand Jewish communal interests. The Board defends. Extremism is one of the community’s foremost concerns. The Board robustly and vocally challenges all forms of antisemitism, racism and bigotry. The Board safeguards Jewish life. It monitors and responds to policy and legislative changes to ensure that they are conducive to our community’s ability to function freely.

The Board plays a central role in the cross-community campaign Shechita UK to protect the religious slaughter of animals and it helps ensure that mainstream medical practice such as organ donation or genetic screening is not in conflict with Jewish ethics. Milah UK was recently established to help protect the practice of male circumcision.

Whilst the Board does not run any schools itself, it pioneered the Pikuach inspection service for Jewish religious education – the statutory equivalent of OFSTED – to inspect and monitor our schools. It also works with educational publishers to ensure that teaching materials about Judaism and Israel are checked for errors or misrepresentations.

The Jewish Living Experience Exhibition is seen by thousands of people every year in schools, colleges, public buildings and synagogues. It travels around Britain, from Cornwall to Carlisle, and is designed to give a positive impression of Judaism. Jewish Living Tours give thousands of pupils a year a fun way of learning about Judaism by facilitating visits to Jewish communities.

There are a number of projects to encourage participation in the democratic process. Jewish Connection helps establish productive links for the fifty thousand Jews who live outside of the main centres of Judaism. Women in Jewish Leadership was set up to advance gender equality in Jewish communal Life.

Other projects run by the Board include helping individuals who face problems at work or study due to religious observance. It also oversees eighty disused cemeteries across the country. Israel advocacy and promoting good interfaith and inter-ethnic relations is an ongoing brief.

Income each year is just over £1m – Jewish Care in comparison has an annual income of over £50m – but the Board punches above its weight. It’s a fascinating body to be involved with. My first impression (at the Vice Presidential elections) was not good. The level of vitriole, the spitefulness and bitter tones of the questioning astonished me. However I kept going to meetings and signed up for working groups and special interest groups. I stood for election for a Division but was unsuccessful, but at least I had a go. I went to a Social Action meeting. It was a bit of a shambles really, so I joined the management group and when the opportunity arose, I put myself forward to jointly chair it. I also joined the committee of the Women’s Group and together with Social Action hosted a joint meeting at the House of Commons on Poverty and Diversity.

I now attend Community Division meetings and have therefore contributed to the European and British Election manifestos; the organisation review and the debate about closer collaboration with the Jewish Leadership Council. So in my own small way I think that I helped to influence things for the better.
Merkaz Libi is a little-known charity in Israel that helps young Jewish women in vulnerable situations. Its ideology is deeply rooted in the significance given to the strength of the Jewish woman in the Bible. The charity therefore strives to build up a robust sense of inner-strength and self-confidence among young girls as they face the challenges of growing up and searching for their identity. It connects and works across the socio-economic and religious spectrums; some girls from the Charedi community may feel repressed by strict parents and seek rebellion, while secular girls may be neglected by low income parents in full-time employment.

According to Efrat Dadoun, the founder of Merkaz Libi, wealthy families may be the picture of contentment — yet inner turmoil can linger underneath a veneer of happiness, undetectable to the human eye. Take the story of Chana*, a girl from a prominent and seemingly happy Charedi family, whom Merkaz Libi found in a dangerous state. Having been abused by a neighbour since she was young and feeling neglected by a large family, she had always suffered from emotional problems. As she grew into her teens she began to seek distractions by meeting with a young man. The emotional deficit of her home-life was filled with the affection given to her by this man, with their relationship growing ever more serious. Her fragility increased as she embarked on wild nights out, becoming intoxicated and allowing herself to be sexually abused. Merkaz Libi managed to intervene in time to convince Chana of the danger of her situation. She was sent away to a secret centre to ensure her safety and her recovery has been successful to an extent. She is back to some sense of normality, currently studying a BA in Art in Jerusalem. However, the scars of her experiences are eternal, as states of extreme guilt and emotional disturbance dominate the themes of her artwork.

Despite the success of Merkaz Libi in saving girls, Efrat strongly emphasises the need for more to be done at the outset to prevent young girls from entering into these harmful situations in the first place. Their organisation describes their method as ‘prevention treatment’, aiming to give young girls the strength at the start of their lives that will allow them to strive for a more positive future. They run sessions after school in which young women are taught principles of self-worth and valuation, the integral parts of the strength of a Jewish woman, and the activities they co-ordinate are fun and engaging, yet with strong underlying educative themes. Holding these activities after school is extremely beneficial as it provides girls with an alternative to hanging about on the street or growing bored and alone at home.

The work of organisations like Merkaz Libi are essential, as the Israeli government is still relatively unaware of, or unwilling to intervene in, social problems affecting school-age teens. Efrat also stresses communication, which is an essential in forging positive relationships between teachers, pupils and parents. She feels that issues facing teens are still taboo subjects in many places within Israeli society, from within the insular Charedi community and throughout Israeli governmental bodies. She chastises the government for its failure to have open discussions about educational problems which affect so many, and which, if not dealt with, can cause long-term alienation from studies and issues with self-esteem.

However, one of the many impressionable things about Efrat is her sense of unrelenting optimism for a brighter future. She feels that must-needed change within the Charedi community is beginning to occur, as it grapples with integration in an ever-evolving, modern Israeli society. Awareness among government officials is also beginning to increase. No doubt this is partly due to the work of Merkaz Libi, and as long as the incredible work of this organisation continues to be further celebrated and publicised, this progress will only continue.

*Names have been changed
There is no doubt that it is beneficial and interesting to learn about contemporary issues in our society, such as food poverty. However, simply acknowledging these phenomena is not enough. I strongly believe that for our time in academia to be worthwhile, we must strive to make a real difference, and translate what we have learnt into action.

It was with this in mind that, in February, I set about in collaboration with the Student Green Unit, a project aimed at reducing food waste and helping the local food bank simultaneously. A few weeks later and the ‘Yes We Can’ project was started. This actively encouraged students to donate their unwanted non-perishable food items to food banks, thus reducing perfectly good food being wasted and sent to landfills. We have also increased people’s awareness of food poverty and helped them make more informed choices to help alleviate the problem.

We organised a collection service whereby people could have food picked up from their student houses and we put collection boxes in one of many successful collection points in all the private halls. ‘Yes We Can’ has only been going for a few months, but the results are already evident. It is important to note that this is not a ground-breaking project; it is simply giving students a vehicle and means to do what they know to be right. It is community action that everyone can be involved in. Everybody wants to reduce food waste and help those in poverty, it is simply whether they have the means. Students are notoriously lazy and simply require some gentle nudging, and this project was aimed to cover just this. I implore other university students to get involved in similar schemes or start their own.

This project will carry on next year and I hope after I have left Exeter that it will continue onwards and upwards to greater things!

A brief word on Exeter University:

Not often seen as a good choice for North London Jews. However, speaking from experience, I cannot praise it enough. Not only is it a chance to get as far away from your parents as possible, but it is a lovely change from the urban stress of London, with a beautiful campus and surrounding countryside. It has a strong academic reputation and a small but thriving Jewish Society, which is both friendly and accommodating.
**SPORTS: SHOMREI SHARKS SINK**

After a year’s break from the annual cricket derby, the Hampstead and Dunstan Road joint team was again raring to get one over their local rivals the Shomrei Sharks. After winning the toss and deciding to bat, two wickets were lost cheaply, but we were never going down without a fight. Hampstead Harrier’s own, Freddy Powell steadied the ship, going on to score a wonderful 82, supported by a cast of Dunstan Road batsmen. The beautiful stroke play and powerful six hitting will live long in the memory of die-hard Hampstead fans. The fightback was completed by his brother, Barnaby Powell, coming in at number 7, scoring a quick fire 44 not out, helping get Hampstead a mammoth total of 198 off 25 overs. A brilliant batting display on what was undoubtedly a bowler’s wicket.

The Shomrei Sharks were not going to give us an easy ride. Their strength lies in their deep batting line-up and they put up a valiant effort. However, at the start, hampered by some excellent bowling from our own Benji Ross, Shomrei looked to be well off the pace. Yet, despite Barnaby and Gideon Mendel putting in some solid bowling spells in the middle overs, with Gideon grabbing two wickets and Barnaby frightening the batsmen with his fierce bouncers, Shomrei accelerated nicely.

However it was not to be their day. Despite a few nerves in the middle overs, in the end they never really looked like winning. Excellent bowling from Dunstan Road members (the Powell duo managed to pick up a few wickets) restricted them to 175. Hampstead won by a margin of 23 runs.

It was a fantastic effort from all of those involved, including an honourable mention for the stalwart at the top of the order, Rabbi Michael Harris who provided incredible insight and mentoring for young and old players alike.

**ADVERTORIAL**

**BANISH MORNING TANTRUMS FOR GOOD!**

In the corporate world, I have to make hundreds of important business decisions on a weekly basis - but stand me in front of my wardrobe and tell me to choose an outfit that doesn’t consist of the same, black, reliable wrap dress I wear practically every other day - it’s often near to impossible!

I wasn’t sure about the whole concept of a wardrobe stylist. Was this admittance that I had no sense of fashion? That I was somehow failing in my pursuit of being able to organise myself into a suitable outfit? No. I simply wanted someone to come into my home, sort through my wardrobe and make my decision process in the morning a lot easier. Not only do I wear twenty percent of my wardrobe eighty percent of the time, but my shopping habits are inconsistent, leaving me with clothes that still have labels on and odd tops and skirts that don’t match. Although I am an organised person in life, my wardrobe did not reflect this and because I had left it so long, I didn’t know where to start. This is when I spoke to Sara, founder of Personal Style London, who said she could help.

Having had an initial consultation on the day of the wardrobe session, it was bin bags at the ready. Sara came over and we both got straight to work. She took everything out of the wardrobe and we went through each and every item, placing them into three piles: keep, give away or sell. The changes were instantly recognisable. Sara demonstrated how to maximise my wardrobe by categorising my clothes, organising and utilising the space and ensuring I knew how to mix and match what I had.

I cannot recommend Sara’s service enough. The whole process itself was non-judgmental and I was left feeling empowered to make decisions when it came to dressing and feeling good in the morning!

For further information or to book a free consultation,

**CALL** +44 (0)7817 732 896  
**E-MAIL** sara@personalstylelondon.com  
**WWW**.personalstylelondon.com
Wishing the Hampstead community a L’shana Tova and well over the fast
- Madeleine & Richard Abramson

Wishing all our family & friends a happy & healthy new year
- Shirley & Maurice Samuelson

Wishing the Hampstead community a L’shana Tova and well over the fast
- Adrienne, Robin, Freddy, Barnaby & Theodore Powell

Wishing everyone a happy and sweet new year

Wishing everyone a happy new year
- James, Laurelle & Liv Abrams

Wishing a happy and sweet new year
- Jenny & Malcolm Ziff

Happy New Year
- The Geller Family

Happy New Year
- Beverley & Tony Ostrin

Happy New Year
- Joyce Saffron & Family

Wishing everyone a L’shana Tova and well over the fast
- David & Carmel du Parc Braham

Happy New Year
- The Grunwald Family

Happy New Year
- The Grunwald Family

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