



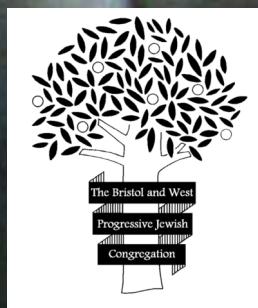
ALONIM

علוניيم

Winter Issue

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2015, January,
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ALONIM Contributions & Editorial Policy.

The editorial policy is to encourage contributions from all Synagogue members and  ALONIM readers, concerning any aspects of communal and Jewish life, including cultural and communal reviews, information concerning synagogue activities, letters and feedback, and articles of Jewish cultural and religious interest. Typically, contributions of approximately **500 words** are preferred, and PC format submission by e-mail is particularly appreciated.

The editor will NOT print anonymous or unattributed articles. Contributors are asked to be aware of the need to protect the copyright of others. Opinions expressed in  ALONIM do not necessarily reflect those of the synagogue Council or the Editors.

Contributions and communications can be sent directly to the **Editor** at alonim@bwpjc.org. For postal contributions please contact the editor on **07989 974133**. Copy date deadline for submissions is notified opposite. Submissions after this date cannot be guaranteed to appear in the next issue. If you are intending to send in unsolicited material please let the editor know ahead of the deadline.

Editorial

Sheila Brill, Editor



With the unseasonably warm weather, it's hard to believe Hannukah is upon us and it's the Winter issue of Alonim. We have a new take on an old feature—My Creative Life—now about the wonderful children in our community. It's high time their talents were acknowledged in our synagogue magazine - this is the time when you can happily share how your children spend their spare time. See page 26.

Membership News

**Sheila Wilson,
Membership
Secretary**



Becky Eastley



As we write this we are looking forward to Hannukah and some lovely community celebrations have been planned thanks to the hard work of the organisers. The Hannukah party at Bannerman Road takes place Sunday 6th

December 3-6pm and a shared Hannukiah lighting at the Watershed, will be held Sunday 13th December 4.45pm.

We try to keep up to date with important events but please do let us know directly if you would like anything included in the membership news.

New members Jerry and Lynn Sampson, and friend Douglas Saker have joined our community and we are delighted to welcome them.

We wish mazeltov to Sheila Yeger and her partner, Roger Stennett, on the birth of their granddaughter, Mabel Violet, to their son, Sam, and his wife, Jo.

Mazeltof to Joe and Rachel Joseph on the birth of their grandson, Finley Jesse Joseph.

With sadness we give our condolences and wish a long life to Derek Brown on the death of his mother Eileen.

And to Jill Pomerance and daughter Abi Hirschmann on the death of Abi's partner Wayne Middlerush.

Letter from the Chair

Ben Weinberger



The synagogue AGM is fast approaching. This year, it will be held on Thursday, 28th January. If you haven't previously attended the AGM and are able to join us for it, you really should. You will be able to hear first-hand about upcoming initiatives, the current state of synagogue finances, ask questions of the Council members about anything regarding the operation of the synagogue, and play your part in electing new members to Council. If you have any interest in serving on Council, now's the time to express that interest and participate. For those unsure about what that entails or why they'd even want to join Council, I thought it best to take this opportunity to share.

I joined Council because I wanted to both contribute to and support what was taking place in the synagogue

community. I have plenty of my own ideas about how things should be run, but, I also consider it my responsibility as a 'steward' of the community to ensure that we operate and provide the appropriate activities and services that are aligned with our purpose. In a community like ours that includes such a diverse range of views, that can often prove challenging, but, knowing that it's for the common good ensures that we aim to achieve an appropriate balance. I, of course, have a vested interest in many activities, such as the cheder and services, but also know that we offer many opportunities to participate beyond those two .

What do we do on Council and what are the expectations of anyone who's interested in becoming part? The answers are: it varies, and, it depends. First, Council meets regularly - one week night (usually starting at 7pm and lasting two hours) per month.

Additionally, there are times when we need to have brief discussions, share information, or make decisions in between. In those cases, we send around an email. To participate, it's helpful to be able to check email daily – not because it's a common occurrence, but, because, there are times when decisions need to be made on short notice. Of course, there are a variety of other actions for which Council is responsible.

Specific positions such as Secretary and Treasurer have defined roles and specific, defined responsibilities. Regular members of Council, technically speaking, do not have the same specific, defined responsibilities; nevertheless, Council members have tended to get involved in most activities in some capacity – whether it's from the standpoint of identifying and recruiting people to organise an activity, promoting it, or actually organising themselves. Further, some Council members typically serve on various other

subcommittees, such as the Rabbinic Support Committee or the Rites and Practices Committee, which have defined remits.

There are numerous functions, events, and activities that go on at the synagogue. There are various management responsibilities for the community, such as maintaining the building, updating and communicating with the community via the weekly email and the website, and responding to various requests from the community – either from members or external entities. Though there are numerous members of the community doing their part to ensure continuity of synagogue operations, it's the responsibility of Council to oversee everything that goes on at the synagogue, ensure that things happen, and address any issues that arise.

Thus, some of what Council does and is responsible for really just depends on what's going on at any given time.

Dancing to the Beat of a Jewish Heart

Rabbi Monique Mayer



This week has truly been overwhelming and emotional – listening to and reading accounts of the murders in Beirut and Paris, the escalating violence in Israel, and the most recent attack in Mali. The skewed focus of news broadcasts and articles communicated that the whole world was exploding and imploding; I was overcome with emotion over the brutality, the suffering and loss of life. Beneath my despair, emerged a sense...a clarity that I could not remain powerless, and that we cannot be powerless. I sought both solace and answers in our sacred texts for something to restore my faith, and I found them in the story of Jacob's dream (Gen 28:10-22).

After having stolen his brother Esau's birthright and his blessing, Jacob is fleeing for his life to Haran. He sets down for the night and dreams of a ladder (or some say stairway) between earth and heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it. God speaks to Jacob in the dream, repeating the blessing given to Abraham and Isaac, and promising to protect Jacob and return him to Canaan. Jacob vows to take the Eternal One as his God if God fulfils his promise.

Our tradition provides many interpretations of the dream and the significance of the ladder. Rashi explains that the ladder stood at the boundary of the Land of Israel and the Diaspora. Those angels who accompanied Jacob in Israel were not permitted to leave the land; they ascended to heaven. Angels which were to minister to Jacob outside of the land descended to accompany him.

Midrash Exodus Rabbah (29.2) teaches us that Jacob sees the princes of various enemies of the future Israelite people rising and falling on the ladder, predicting their future power and loss of power over Israel. God then tells Jacob that he, too, will ascend the ladder. When Jacob grows fearful, God says “Fear not, O Jacob My servant” (Jer 30:10) though you go up, you will never experience a coming down.” God promises that Jacob’s power will always be rising. And in *Midrash Tanhuma* (*Vayetse* 2), the ladder signifies the history of mankind; the rungs represent kingdoms that ruled the earth, one succeeding the other.

Underlying these teachings is the belief that history will unfold as it will, God will ensure our future and protection, and we should have faith. Perhaps for some, this might be enough. Not for me. Not for us. None of these interpretations provide a clue as to how we can be in the

world as we seek light in the darkness of current events.

As most of you know by now, for the better part of a year I have been part of a group engaged in daily practice of *Mussar* – Jewish Ethics. In *Mussar*, we seek to fulfil the commandment *kedoshim tihiyu* (*Lev 19.2*) – you shall be holy – by refining our character and elevating our soul in order that we become a *mensch*. A key element of *Mussar* practice is to reflect on texts in our tradition and how they can inform our behaviour, our thoughts, and sometimes even our faith. As I considered the story of Jacob’s ladder, with its ascending and descending angels, it suddenly became evident that the story had a personal message unexplored by the interpretations I mentioned earlier. Praying and having faith is not enough. In Jacob’s dream, God reveals that Jacob could elevate his soul by rising above his previous misdeeds and becoming a better person, or he could sit back and let his

soul descend into even worse behaviour. Indeed, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief Ashkenazi rabbi of the Palestine Mandate, wrote that when – after 20 years of working for his Uncle Laban – Jacob asked to leave, it was because Laban's behaviours which he previously loathed started to become acceptable to him. Jacob didn't want to become like Laban, so he chose to leave.

Throughout our life, we are presented with choices, or *bechirah* points. We can take the high road (literally go up the ladder) and behave in supportive, patient, compassionate ways with each other and our neighbours, or we can follow our natural animal inclinations and slide into selfishness, fear, and hatred. Our tendency toward negative behaviours can become exacerbated when we are subject to stress, which can be internal or external. And, often, those closest to us can bear the brunt of those negative behaviours, having a

ripple effect around us. The way that we climb Jacob's ladder is through *mitzvot* – commitments which reinforce our connection with God and our relationships with and to those around us. *Mitzvot* are there for a reason. They ensure that we do things that, left to our own devices, we either wouldn't bother doing or we would actively avoid doing, particularly when we are feeling stressed or threatened. *Mitzvot* demand that we review our biases before judging, our words before speaking, and our motives before acting.

When all is said and done... any elevated idea of the spiritual goal comes down to a simple Yiddish notion: You are supposed to be a mensch, i.e., "a decent human being." That one Yiddish word conveys the full measure of the integrity, honor and respect that a person can hope for in life. The great chassidic teacher, the Kotzker Rebbe (1787-1859), comments on the verse, "Be

holy people to me." In Hebrew, the word "people" comes before "holy." On this the Kotzker Rebbe declared: "Fine, be holy. But remember – first one has to be a mensch."

– Alan Morinis

In these dark times, we must strive be a mensch. We must not give into fear.

On Tuesday, 17th November, 200 souls from across Bristol came together in community for a candle-lit vigil for Peace at College Green. The vigil was organised by a number of local agencies and religious organisations to stand united against any act against our multi-cultural and multi-faith, widely-diverse Bristol community. The weather was blustery and threatened rain, but we gathered shoulder to shoulder as faith and organisational representatives and local officials spoke passionately and movingly. We huddled together and embraced others among us, openly declaring that we would live in peace with them. Inside the cathedral, we lit candles and stood silently and strongly as the wind howled outside, and storm gathered in the rest of the

world. As we approach the festival of Hannukah, preparing to bring physical light into the darkness, will we add to the turmoil in the world, or will we become human beacons of light shining?

We have a choice in how we are in the world. We must look within ourselves and flood our relationships and interactions with kindness and compassion, taking extra care of those around us who are vulnerable, speaking kindly to each other, especially but not only those close to us. And – most importantly – we must come together in community. At times of peril, the Jewish community is like a bundle of twigs bound together. Each twig, on its own, is vulnerable. Together, we support each other and are stronger than all our parts combined. It starts with you. Climb the ladder. Be a *mensch*.

Shabbat shalom.

Peace vigil

Peter Brill



This speech was given at the a peace vigil on 17th November in College Green, Bristol.

It's said that talk is cheap. Certainly the media has devoted millions of words and hours to the Paris atrocities. Behind locked doors, politicians worldwide are discussing how to legislate against such horrors. And national security services are trying to understand how to prevent people from carrying out such terror again.

But, the reality is, that however much you strengthen legislation, however high you build your walls or secure your borders; misguided governments, misguided groups or misguided individuals will **always** find a way through. And they'll hide behind whatever distorted version of political, religious or cultural ideology they need to achieve objectives that seem **incomprehensible** to right-minded people.

But talk is **not** cheap. In fact, it's the most powerful weapon we have. And it's not the rhetoric of the media, **or** of politicians, **or** of

those battling to keep us safe. It's *our* conversations, *our* dialogue, *our* words - spoken between each of us here this evening, between our friends and our communities. It's the act of looking each other in the eye, of sharing our views and opinions, of gaining an understanding. And it's about listening - not just to the words, but to the meaning behind them.

We may not agree with each other, but, in the simple act of dialogue, we are also unlikely to kill each other. And, by understanding, we will learn that the acts of the misguided minority are **not** supported by the majority, and that we, the majority, can say with confidence "**not in our name**".

Finally, to those in France who are trying to understand what has happened:

Nous ressentons votre douleur et nous vous souhaitons tous la paix. Restez forts, et maintenez le dialogue.

We feel your pain and wish you all peace. Stay strong and maintain the dialogue.

Thank you.

Calais refugees and migrants: our response



Madge Dresser
Valerie Russell Emmott

Members of our community were already being asked to dig into their pockets for the deserving charities of this year's Yom Kippur Appeal when an additional request was put on them to consider the plight of the refugees stuck in 'the Jungle' camp in Calais and those facing hardship and dangers to get from Turkey and Greece to Hungary, Austria and Germany.

The Collection

On the last day of Sukkot, when we remembered with gratitude the permanent shelters and housing we are privileged to inhabit, four of our members (David Dwek Valerie Russell

Emmott, Madge Dresser and Julia Gardos worked for several hours to sort through



and label all of the goods which our community had donated at short notice and were pleasantly surprised at how much there was.

Here is a rough listing:

- 12 pairs of men's shoes, including trainers and hiking boots
- 5 blankets and 4 sleeping bags
- 4 Turkish coffee pots
- 6 men's jumpers
- 15 - 20 t-shirts
- 8 shirts
- 6 pairs of trousers
- 8 sets of thermal underwear
- 8 women's cardigans
- 5 women's warm jackets
- 5 men's winter jackets
- Several sets of new socks and underwear
- Toiletries including toothbrushes, combs, bars of soap, tissue

- 2 rucksacks
- 5 umbrellas
- a big box of non-perishable foodstuffs
- some children's clothing
- and so on

The men's items were sent to Calais on the 16th October and the women's items are being delivered to Refugee Rights in Bristol this month.

Other Activities



In the meantime a number of congregation members appeared at some of the rallies and vigils which took place this Autumn supporting refugees and paying public respect to those migrants who had died in their desperate attempt to find sanctuary in Europe. Valerie Russell Emmott and Madge Dresser spoke briefly at some of these events, letting people know of the Bristol Jewish

community's involvement in refugee work which dates back to the 1880s. Madge also attended Bristol City Council's 12th November meeting convened by the mayor about how the city is to welcome the 150 Syrian refugees who are coming to Bristol in the next few months. At the meeting, she made contact with the representative of Bristol's Syrian community who said he would be pleased to come and meet us. Valerie, David and Madge will keep the congregation posted on how we might best be included in the city's programme of supporting not only the Syrians but those refugees and asylum seekers who are already in the city , a number of whom are literally going hungry.

Since October, efforts are also being made for representatives of our congregation to meet with members of Bristol's mosques (who have already organised convoys to Calais and elsewhere) to see if we might partner a joint project partnering refugees.

The Bristol bookworms

David Memel



I have been a member of the Bristol Jewish Book Group for the last five years, and for this week's meeting we are discussing a book that I suggested, *Herzog* by Saul Bellow. I came across it recently when clearing out my mother's flat. It was the first Penguin edition, published in the 1960s, and I remember that it made a big impact on my father when I was a teenager, with him telling us about the latest chapter he had read over the dinner table.

The arrangement for our group is that the person who has chosen the book, also does a short introduction. Some in the group seriously give a mini-lecture, but that's not my style. So I jot down a few of my thoughts, and remember that there were a couple of good articles about Bellow in the last issue of *Jewish Renaissance*, and an interesting discussion on Radio 4's *Start the Week*.

Meetings are held at people's

homes every two months, and although it was started ten years ago by several members of Bristol Progressive Congregation, it now includes people from both Liberal and Orthodox congregations, as well as those who are more secular.

There are eight of us this evening at Ruth and Simon's house. After coffee and cake (and an optional glass of wine) I start my introduction, and a heated discussion quickly ensues. Most of us have found the book a tough read until the last one hundred pages, when dramatic events start to happen, culminating in Herzog crashing his car and being arrested for possessing a loaded gun and a large quantity of Russian roubles. For the first two hundred pages, the story goes on largely inside Herzog's head, including narrating a lot of letters to all the people that have done him wrong over the years. Simon aptly describes him as an "Academic Buffoon", much better at intellectual thought than common sense.

Discussion turns to why the

book does not seem to have the same appeal to us, as it did to my father and many others fifty years ago. The first addition sold over 150,000 copies in hardback alone, whereas there has not been a new edition since 2001. Maybe the children of American Jewish immigrants turning middle class and introspective does not seem fresh and novel anymore after all those Woody Allen films? And his portrayal of women are very two dimensional.

Some of our best discussions have been when there has been a tenuous Jewish connection. Examples are *Martha Quest* by Doris Lessing which featured as minor characters a Jewish family running a grocery store in the South African outback, and Sathnam Sanghera's *The Boy with the Topknot* which looked at the immigrant experience of a Sikh family in Wolverhampton.

What about our next meeting? Ruth has noticed that there is a revival of Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* at the Bristol Old Vic in October. We will all go and see it, and then discuss it at

our November meeting. So another work by an American Jewish Icon from the mid 20th century. Will it have stood the test of time better than the Bellow book?

The next Bristol Jewish Book Group meeting is on Thursday 14th January 8pm, when we will be discussing *The Family Moskat* by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Contact Ruth Baker ruth.baker@btconnect.com, or call 0117 973 8744.

This article appears in the current issue of Jewish Renaissance, a quarterly magazine of Jewish culture.

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My working life

Lisa Marrett



Receiving Glass Paper Weight and Certificate for giving 30 years service to the NHS

I work as a mental health nurse with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Partnership Trust. My Trust has 4500 staff and covers a large geographical area – Weston Super Mare, Bristol, Bath, Swindon, Devizes, Salisbury, South Gloucestershire.

I trained as mental health nurse at Claybury Hospital, North East London during the late 1980s in a huge Victorian asylum that was being closed down with the dawning of the era for “care in the community”. It still had 1000 patients while I was training. I lived in the nurses’ home and I loved it. My family thought it was a very strange and unusual choice of career for a Jewish girl and indeed I was the only Jewish nurse in the hospital.

I left nursing for a while in the early 90s to pursue academia and undertook a degree, masters and lectureship in Bristol. I returned to nursing and my career went forward in great strides with my years in academia enabling me to stand out. I worked on wards caring for adults newly admitted, also a rehabilitation ward and then with older people in-patients.

My first Community Psychiatric Nurse post was in St. Pauls in Bristol in a Crisis Service – I worked there for seven years and it was an incredible time in my life with many challenges including just getting in and out of the office on City Road – running the gauntlet of the drug dealers, sex workers, discarded needles, and the cordoned off pavement with police in forensic white paper suits after yet another firearms incident. In the first week of November one year, I failed to get into the office at all because some local residents were throwing lit industrial fireworks down the street - the police advised our team not to

use our office so in early November every year from then onwards, the very kind staff in A and E at the Bristol Royal Infirmary with whom we did lots of joint work, found us a desk to work from. I did many assessments and support visits literally on the street, in the rain and snow with homeless people, and I went into crack houses on occasion to do my work, also bail hostels, Salvation Army, the night shelter - and I used to go searching for people who had missed their appointments in the local betting shops and pubs on Ashley Road. I once found a discharged bullet cartridge on our office balcony. I felt it was all normal for a day's work in the life of a CPN and I was happy to be a familiar face to the local community on the streets of St. Pauls. I did shift work during those years because The Crisis Service operated until 10 pm every day and right through every weekend and bank holiday. One New Year's day I needed to take a young homeless man for coffee somewhere and I could not find a café anywhere

open at all. I ended up taking him to the Hilton Hotel. He managed a small smile that day!

I am often asked now "do you work in the community or in a hospital?" The answer is both. My job title is Lead Nurse for Standards and Compliance. I work all over the Trust with every type of service, assessing how they would perform in a real Care Quality Commission inspection – so that they have a chance to "get ahead" of the CQC and understand what they need to work on. I give lots of support and advice as I go around on how to make the required improvements and I share the good practice that I have seen elsewhere in the Trust and in other parts of the country. I often carry out inspections jointly with mental health service users (no longer referred to as patients) and carers too, to get their perspective on the quality of care that my Trust is providing and take account of what for them needs to be improved on. I also work on a consultancy/

freelance basis for the CQC as an Inspector of Mental Health Services and this is always in the North of England, well away from my own Trust.

There is a great deal of staff training and development involved in being a Lead Nurse including being a Diversity Awareness trainer for my Trust. This is a great passion of mine. It is all about getting away from labels and connecting with our own beliefs, prejudices, assumptions and stereotypes. The stigma of mental illness is everywhere still and the way that people with mental health issues are presented in the media is almost always negative - I feel compelled to challenge this in every way that I can. One of the principles that underpins my work with Diversity is about valuing the uniqueness of every individual, as opposed to being led by their diagnosis, label or visible/non visible characteristic such as skin colour, physical disability or sexual orientation.

Consider this well known saying for a moment "I treat people as *I* wish to be treated". For me, this contains a potentially damaging assumption - that what is right for you is right for others too. I promote that we change this to "I treat people as *they* wish to be treated". How will we know how they wish to be treated? We will ask them, we will listen - and their unique needs and perspectives will be taken into account and acted upon.

Last year I was presented with a personalised, engraved glass paper weight (so useful...!) for having given 30 years' service in the NHS. I am as committed and passionate now about mental health nursing as I have ever been.

It is true that one in four people in their lifetime will experience mental health issues. Enough said. If you are interested in becoming a mental health nurse, the course is a three year BSc Nursing (Mental Health Nursing) degree at the University of the West of England and there are

Access programmes for mature students might not have the three “A” levels. Enter this into your search engine to find out more: [Courses at UWE Bristol](#) / Nursing (Mental Health Nursing)

Kadimah memories

Mischa Marrett

LJY Netzer is an amazing experience where I learnt songs such as the Sh'ma and more. I also learnt lots about Israel and other non-Jewish things like Tikkun Olam (repairing the world). LJY also does other types of prayer such as mamuds and hashkivanu.

I love LJY because it's a place where you can be friends with every one and not feel left out or judged in any way.

Saskia Marrett

My experiences on LJY have honestly been the best of my life. LJY has shaped me religiously by teaching me about Zionism and all its branches, I have learnt what it means to be a reform Zionist. LJY has also taught me the

main prayers in Judaism such as the Shema, Barachu and the Amidah as we partake in a Ma amad (small service) daily. I also know Birkat Hamazon as it is said after each meal on camp. I have taken part in heated debates on the pillars of Liberal Judaism and the factors that make it what it is.

However LJY has also shaped me as a person for it has made me a feminist after learning how sexist our modern society is, and how liberal Judaism is such a progressive religion in it being so equal for both genders. LJY has also made me a much more passionate vegetarian after teaching me unknown things about the meat industry and why it is so vital that LJY boycotts it. But also LJY has provided me with my absolute best friends, here in Bristol and stretching out to London, Brighton and Yorkshire. The non-judgmental and equal community on LJY mean that everyone is friends with everyone making it the perfect community.

Rabbinic committee

The Rabbinic Committee was set up when Rabbi Monique joined the congregation. At the time the terms of reference were published and the latest version of these is copied below. The current membership of the committee is: Ben Weinberger (chair), Robert Hurst, David Jewell and Karen Warren. If you would like to talk to a member of the committee, feel free to contact them

Terms of Reference

Version Control

Version	Authors	Date
Initial ToR	David Jewell Lisa Saffron Karen Warren Rabbi Monique Mayer	January 2014
V2015	Robert Hurst David Jewell Karen Warren Ben Weinberger Rabbi Monique Mayer	November 2015

Rabbinic committee

1. Purpose

The Rabbinic committee is a sub-committee of Council. It is delegated to act on behalf of the community and work with the Rabbi in order to:

- Agree priorities for the Rabbi's work;
- Support the Rabbi, and help her to be effective;
- Consider, and if necessary, moderate the demands placed upon the Rabbi by the community;
- Encourage open communication between the Rabbi and the community as a whole; in order to ensure that the Rabbi keeps in touch with and responds to the needs of the community.

2. Method of working

2.1 Composition

The Rabbinic committee will consist of three or four members appointed by council in consultation with the Rabbi, at least one of whom will be the Chair of the Synagogue

Council. Council will need to ensure that there is continuity as well as change in the membership from time to time.

2.2 Meetings

The committee will hold formal meetings with the Rabbi quarterly, and will review progress on the agreed priorities. There will be informal meetings as circumstances dictate. The quarterly meetings will be timed to fall 1-2 weeks before Council meetings to enable the committee to report (see below). The committee will consult with Cheder, Rights and Practices and other groups and individuals within the synagogue so that it can more effectively agree priorities with the Rabbi.

3. Scope

The scope of the committee will include:

- Pattern of working hours and time allocated to different activities;
- Extent of service taking;
- Agreeing holiday dates;

- Procedures for pastoral care;
- Content of activities for continued professional development;
- A forum for discussion of the rabbi's own ideas for new initiatives;
- Agreeing sabbatical dates.

4. Reporting

A formal report will be presented to Council after each quarterly meeting. At other monthly meetings of Council the Rabbi will be expected to present short oral reports. Any comments from members of Council will be noted. It is hoped that there will not be lengthy discussion in Council, but that comments made will be discussed further by the Rabbinic committee.

5. Appraisal

There will be an annual appraisal, undertaken by the Chair of the synagogue and an independent member of the congregation (who is not on the committee). Prior to the appraisal, feedback will be sought from the congregation.

6. Communication

The committee feels that it should not act as a barrier between the community and the Rabbi. Members are encouraged to share their feelings, positive and negative, directly with the Rabbi. Only where this is likely to be difficult should the comments be passed to members of the committee. This view would, we felt, be best expressed by the Rabbi herself in communication through Alonim etc. It is also important that the existence and workings of the Rabbinic committee are publicised throughout the community.

7. Review of the system

The committee will reflect on the above and how best to carry out its activities from time to time.

Opportunities for Involvement and Volunteering

Iris Segall



There are a few groups/ organizations in Bristol that deal with different aspects of interfaith, whether it is learning more about the various religions or whether it is promoting a better wider community cohesion through knowing and understanding better the cultural and religious background of each individual community.

- The Avon Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) meets once a month and usually has an invited speaker.
- The Bristol Interfaith Group (BIFG) meets a few times a year and organizes an annual Lord Mayor of Bristol Celebration, for which each faith group chooses a representative to give a very short talk or other

presentation such as a reading/ poem/ song etc.

- The Bristol Multi Faith Forum (BMFF) organizes various events and meetings dealing with more immediate issues affecting Bristol as a city of diverse faith and often would like to get feedback from the various faith communities.

I feel that it is important for us, as the Jewish community in Bristol to have visibility at these events, to forge good relations with the other ethnic and religious groups, to show an interest in being involved and integrated into the wider community of Bristol.

I have only taken over the role of inter faith representative recently, as Valerie needed to dedicate more time to other projects she is now involved with. As I live closer to Bath than to Bristol, I tend to participate more in inter faith meetings and events in Bath and Wiltshire than in Bristol and so it would be wonderful if other members of our

congregation could attend some of those taking place in Bristol.

In addition to the above, which usually take place in the evenings, I am involved with hosting educational visits to the synagogue and going into schools to take assemblies about Judaism. These take place mostly during day time.

If anyone would like to get involved or find out more, please get in touch.

Iris Segall
Jewish Inter Faith
Representative
BWPJC Educational Visits Host
and Coordinator

Tashlich Reflections (On Halfpenny Bridge: River Frome) *Rosh Hashanah 5776 -* *14th September 2015*



David Goldstein

Facing upstream I see the future

- What is coming towards me -
What I must meet, do,
experience, endure,
What is, in fact, unseeable
Until here.

Facing downstream I see
What already has been,
And think:

How much time I spend facing
this way,

Looking at my past,
And with my back to the
future!

Perhaps I should turn round,
Face where I am going, and
what is to come,
Re-orient myself,
Let my past be behind me ...

Doing so, though,
I feel unrooted:
The flowing river is only *one*
metaphor
For how we are in time;
The tree growing on the
riverbank
Is another:
Its deep roots holding it in
earth,
Its trunk year-on-year layered
Embodying its history,
Its leaves year-on-year
renewed
Reaching for the light ...



My creative life

Ella Shishkaryov (aged 7)

This feature is the first in our new series celebrating the creative lives of the children in our community.

We're asking families to send in images of activities your children do in their free time – it can include anything they've made, invented, drawn, glued or painted. It can be pictures of them dancing, playing an instrument or performing.

If you would like to send in some words to go with the images, that would be great.

Thanks, Sheila



Self portrait

November 2015



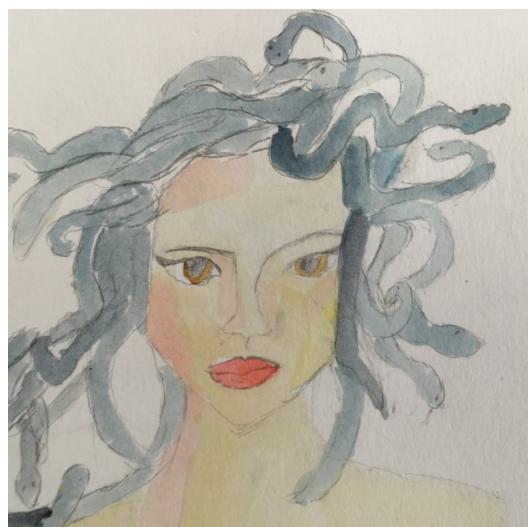
Polar bear

November 2015



Bird

November 2015



Medusa

May 2015

Hannukah party at the synagogue



A busy Hannukah party...and everyone (well almost everyone)
following the script!



Judging the Hannukah bake-off is
a serious business!



The Hannukah party is a great
opportunity for a serious catch-up!

Ben Uri exhibition

Marlene Sutton

Many of you were present at a fascinating presentation by Ben Uri curator Sarah MacDougall on “Art, Identity, Migration: 100 years of Ben Uri in London 1915 – 2015”, at a DAVAR evening in April.



This was prior to the Ben Uri Centenary “Out Of Chaos” exhibition at Somerset House, London, a unique collection of paintings including works by world-class artists such as Auerbach, Bomberg, Chagall, Grosz and Soutine. Sarah MacDougall’s illustrated talk explored related issues of identity and migration during the last century.

I first saw some of these paintings here in Bristol at a Ben Uri exhibition at the Royal West Of England Academy 20 years ago, where Clive Lawton, then of Jewish Continuity, gave the inaugural address at the launch of DAVAR, encouraging us to “talk to one another”. The paintings also ‘spoke’ to me.

Inspired initially by the impressive Self-Portrait of Lily Delissa Joseph and amazed by her colourful life-story, as well as by other artists’ works and diverse backgrounds, I wrote this poem – in the middle of the night! – shortly after that event.

Here, Oh Israel – Hear!

"Talk to each other"

Clive said.

We did.

And, powerfully, *they* spoke

To us too: Solomon Solomon,
his sister Lily Delissa Joseph.

And Abraham, Rebecca
and Simeon Solomon, David Bomberg,

Mark Gertler, Jacob Kramer,

Jacob Epstein *et al.* Powerfully
with their strong physical statements
of mass and form

excluding all irrelevancies. Only
the basics, to sway, move
and inform.

Reminding us who we are.

Giving us their legacy.

The spirit of Lily Delissa Joseph
gently recalling her fight for Rights,
liberty and freedom.

Denied the right to be present
at her own exhibition Preview, being
"Detained at His Majesty's Pleasure".

The candlesticks shine
Remind us of our heritage,
of her, of our Enlightenment,
This self-same portrait assuming her presence
then as it does now.

I am in awe.

I shiver at the thought
that *she* fought
for my privilege to be
here, to see
her graceful contribution.
She was not thus free.
Her portrait
no indication here of
her privations, personal courage,
the indomitable spirit of
the imprisoned suffragette.

Freeing herself
and those to follow
from constraints.

Freeing herself in middle years
by driving to the Promised Land
in the emancipating early era of
the automobile.

Liberating spirit, here
in this place, now,
the message clear:
Spirit frees.
Free spirits, Hear!



Lily Delissa Joseph
Self-Portrait with Candles

David Bomberg's *Ghetto Theatre*

Impressive.

The theatre an integral part
of the envisaged Art Society
"to enrich and ennoble".¹

The rich ensemble
wanting all for many
to give, participate, share.

Ethos of Bundist socialists
emanating from these figures.

Solid citizens, worthy
earthy, earnest
passing on their intense enthusiasm
Active, as the actors on-stage below
in this ghetto theatre.²

Powerful statements here.

The mass, en masse,
giving through being.

We hear their statements now.

¹ Judah Beach, Ben Uri Catalogue, 1930

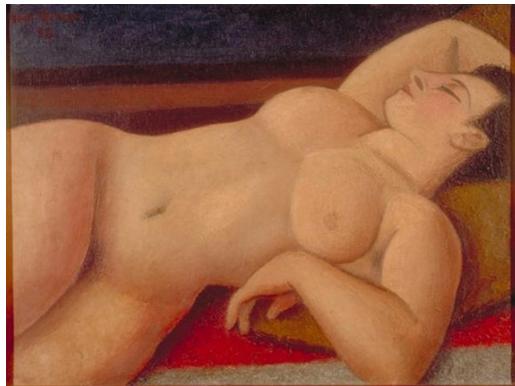
² Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel, London



David Bomberg

Ghetto Theatre

Mark Gertler's solid *Nude* reclines.
The heavy, flesh-pink sculptured figure
casts no hint, no tinge
of his inner complex feelings,
conveys no unsatisfactory love triangle
or tempestuous liaison
with Carrington,
drawing him within the Bloomsbury fringe.
In 'Thirty-eight', brings no forewarning doom,
no gloomy premonition of his
unresolved sad end, untimely, soon
in the ominous 'Thirty-nine'.



Mark Gertler
Nude (1938)

Marlene's remaining two poems will be published in the next edition of Alonim.

Images courtesy of Ben Uri Gallery.

Donations to BWPJC

Karen Warren
Synagogue Treasurer

The Yom Kippur Appeal is still open for donations. In 2014 we received £9,615 of which £4,328 went to the synagogue. At the time of writing, so far this year we have received £4,205 of which £1,816 is going to the synagogue.

If you've not yet given, please consider adding to this total. If you are unable to give at this time, please consider volunteering your time. There is a link from the regular Wednesday email to the *Mitzvah Corner* which tells you some of the things we need volunteers to do. Alternatively, please talk to a member of Council.

Yom Kippur charities

Julian Trust Night Shelter
<http://juliantrust.org.uk/>

Hand in Hand

[https://
www.handinhandk12.org/](https://www.handinhandk12.org/)

BWPJC Please contact Karen via email to
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