

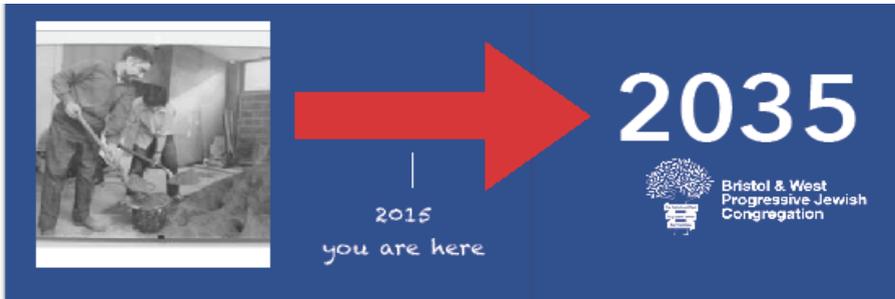
ALONIM

Newsletter of the Bristol & West
Progressive Jewish Congregation



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עלונים



Spring Issue

 ALONIM & ELONIM copy date

Month	Copy date
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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 **0117 907 8922**. Copy date deadline for submissions is notified above. 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.

Raise funds for BWPJC! www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/bwpjc

Editorial

Judy Goldsmith, Editor

This issue is rather unusual in that it has a theme, which Daren explains in the next article.

Adults and young people were both asked to share their favourite experience at BWPJC. Adults were also asked to say what they would like to pass on to future generations, while young people were asked how they see the synagogue in 20 years time.

Others are being recorded on video answering the same questions.

The articles from the young people are in the centre pages.

We hope you enjoy this innovative issue.

PS At the back is the Pesach message from the Board of Deputies. There is no Membership News in this edition.

L'dor Vador: From generation to generation

Daren Gordon

You'll read wonderful stories within these pages.

Members were asked to describe a time when something special happened to them in our community. A moment they treasure. The stories are very moving.

They are a reminder of what an amazing community we are.

But, there's a blunt truth here. If we want these treasured moments to be experienced again in the future; if we want our children to tell similar stories when they are leading the community, then we need to sort out our finances.

The theme of this Alonim is *l'dor vador* - from generation to generation. Its aim is to inspire each of us to make our community more sustainable. At the moment, it's not. As Ben Weinberger has explained, we have an operational deficit of £10,000 per year; we are not saving for rainy day costs; and we are completely reliant on a few extraordinary donations.

The theme of *l'dor vador* makes us think about what type of community we want to pass to our children. Or, from the next generation's point of view, what type of community they want to inherit. Nobody wants to give or receive a community that is financially insecure.

Soon you will be sent information about the **BWPJC Giving Tree**. It is a breakdown of all our expenditure, everything from building repairs to Lamdeinu art resources; Alonim printing to community weekends. You will then have the opportunity of sponsoring one of these items. There is more information about the **BWPJC Giving Tree** in the pages to follow.

I'm lucky because my 'special moment' repeats every Shabbat. I

find the assembly for Lamdeinu extraordinary. There's an almost impossible number of kids considering the size of our community. I sit on the floor, amidst the masses, next to my two kids, looking up and listening to the teachers – and marveling how blessed I am to have access to a cheder which is so well led, so well organized and taught with so much love.

Now that's the kind of cheder I want to hand down to the next generation. *L'dor vador*. And that's the reason why I will be looking for something to sponsor on the **Giving Tree**.

I hope you are similarly inspired by your own special moment and by the stories you read in this special Alonim.

Letter from the Chair

Ben Weinberger



For my article this month, I was asked to talk about the synagogue's financial situation. For the past several years (and for quite some time prior) we have been running a

budget deficit. The synagogue costs more to operate than it collects from subscriptions. Thankfully, through the very generous support of a couple of individuals, we have been able to "make ends meet." However, this is hardly a plan for fiscal stability and long-term success. It is not entirely unusual for a congregation to rely on the generosity of just a few to help

meet some specific obligations or to fund a major project, but it's not sustainable or healthy in our current situation.

Two years ago, we significantly drained our capital reserves in order to complete crucial building repairs and maintenance. Though we own the building outright, like any other property, it will always require some sort of regular work to maintain its structural integrity and inhabitability. This year's projects involve minor aesthetics on the interior as well as some additional security-related improvements. It would be irresponsible to assume that the building won't again require significant repairs at some stage in order to maintain it. If we continue to operate a budget deficit and then rely on only a couple of donors to meet that annual shortfall, it will leave no room for building capital reserves to prepare for future maintenance. Further, relying on just a couple people is a risky strategy; in the event of one being unable to provide that significant donation one year, we will find ourselves in the untenable position of being unable to meet our obligations.

Compared to other synagogues our size, our dues are relatively low. More specifically, they are low in comparison to those synagogues who employ rabbis. Nevertheless, we don't want to radically raise those dues if we don't have to – nor must we necessarily do so. I am convinced that we have the desire and ability to address the shortfall as a community! This past year, in our Yom Kippur appeal, we asked for donations to fill the gap – and the community responded. As we launch a new and significant fundraising campaign, I believe that we all care so much about this community – and what it means to each and every one of us – that we will find a way to make up the difference. We are looking at a number of ways in which we can raise sufficient funds to close the gap through voluntary contributions. By asking everyone to contribute in whatever meaningful way they are able to do so, we should be able to achieve a balanced budget.

Assuming we are able to balance our budget through sustainable fundraising, any extraordinary contributions we receive can be put to better use replenishing the capital reserves in preparation for future maintenance. Better yet,

once we achieve a sustainable level of fundraising, a balanced budget, and have rebuilt our capital reserves, we could, ideally, rather use any such extraordinary donations for specific improvement projects.

We have a remarkable community that means a lot to me. It is an important part of what has made this move to Bristol for me and my family so enjoyable and comfortable. We have made many friends – good friends – through the shul. We celebrate

holidays and spend time on Shabbat with others from BWPJC. We spend almost every Saturday morning at the synagogue itself. We've inherited a caring and healthy community that was started a little more than 50 years ago. It has grown significantly since that time. It's now our duty, all of our duty, as the current caretakers of this community, to ensure its continuity, from our generation to future generations. L'dor v'dor.

Dancing to the Beat of a Jewish Heart

Rabbi Monique Mayer



One of the most rousing prayers our community recites during the Shabbat morning service is located on page 142 of *Siddur Lev Chadash*, in the middle of the *Amidah*, or standing prayer. The melody--composed by Cantor Sol Zim--lends itself to an enthusiastic burst of song, repeating the opening phrase *L'dor vador nagid godlekha*.¹ As one

is prone to do with catchy music, we may easily lose ourselves in the tune and overlook the meaning and importance of the words themselves: *L'dor vador nagid godlekha* – “from generation to generation we will make known Your greatness”.

The significance of these words cannot be lost on us. We are each a link in an unbroken chain over 4000 years in the making, bestowing both privilege and responsibility. Our privilege lies in making known God's greatness through living and celebrating Jewish life, Jewish culture, Jewish traditions. The verse in the prayer continues: *u'lnetsach n'tsachim*

kedushat'kha nakdish – to the end of time we will proclaim your holiness. Our responsibility is ensuring that we pass on our traditions and our values to the children of our community, and they to their children after them. We turn again to our liturgy for the source of that responsibility.

Every Shabbat evening and morning in our synagogue we recite our core declaration of faith – of trust – and acknowledging a power greater than ourselves:

Shema yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echaad – Hear, O Israel: the Eternal One is our God, the Eternal God is One” (Deuteronomy 6:4). And then (translated): “You shall love the Eternal your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. (6:5) Let *these words*, which I command you this day, be always in your heart. Teach them diligently to your children” (Ibid, 6:6-7, emphasis added). Our Sages argued over the meaning of “these words”: Are they the whole *Torah*? The first line of the *Shema*? To “love

the Eternal your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might”? Ultimately, there is an understanding that we are charged with educating our children in the ways and words of *Torah*. This task is incumbent upon Jews of any denomination, and can pose a greater challenge for us as Liberal Jews because we have the dual responsibility of raising our children to live Jewish lives while encouraging them to question and explore and develop their own meaningful connections with Judaism.

Medieval commentator Moses Maimonides (Rambam) teaches us that the first Jewish prayer that should be impressed upon a child is the first verse of the *Shema* (*Hilchot Talmud Torah* 1:6). The words are shared as part of the bedtime ritual, being the last words parent and child recite together before the child drifts off to sleep. More verses are gradually added and stories are told from our tradition, imparting collective wisdom and knowledge, grounding the child in positive Jewish values, and teaching her to be a true

mensch – a caring, ethical individual with a strong Jewish identity who contributes to the life of the community.

L'dor vador – I mentioned at the beginning that these words are found in the *Amidah*, which is known as *ha-Tefillah*, or “the Prayer”. *Ha-Tefillah* is the central prayer in our liturgy, expressing themes of praise, petition and thanks. From the very beginning, it links us to the past: *Barukh attah adonai eloheinu v'elohai avoteinu v'imoteinu: elohei avraham elohei yitzchak, velohei ya'akov; elohei sarah elohei rivkah elohei racheil velohei le'ah*--“We praise You, Eternal One, our God and God of our ancestors: of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah”. We acknowledge our connection with the God of Israel through our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents; reaching back to our forefathers and foremothers. Those not Jewish by birth join the slipstream of Jewish history, inheriting our ancestors and their legacy. From Abraham and Sarah down to us and to the next generation, each time we recite the *Tefillah*, and enthusiastically sing *L'dor Vador*, we affirm our own importance in the chain of

tradition, and the part each one of us – adults and children-- must play to ensure that our community--with its history, worship, life cycle events, music, and celebrations--continues for many generations to come.

American Jewish Singer-Songwriter Josh Nelson offers his expression of the deepest and lasting meaning of *L'dor vador*. (see the next page for the words of this beautiful song)

L'dor vador – may these words be a blessing and a hope, and may they inspire each of us to do our part in ensuring and securing the future of our community. *Kein y'hi ratson* – may it be God's will.

[1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkuL95hrJ3Y)You can listen to a recording of the melody here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkuL95hrJ3Y>

L'dor vador

We are gifts and we are blessings, we are history in song.

We are hope and we are healing, we are learning to be strong.

We are words and we are stories, we are pictures of the past.

We are carriers of wisdom, not the first and not the last.

L'dor vador nagid godlecha

L'dor vador... we protect this chain

From generation to generation

L'dor vador, these lips will praise Your name

Looking back on the journey that we carry in our heart.

From the shadow of the mountain to the waters that would part.

We are blessed and we are holy, we are children of Your way.

And the words that bring us meaning, we will have the strength to say.

L'dor vador nagid godlecha

L'dor vador... we protect this chain

From generation to generation

L'dor vador, these lips will praise Your name²

Music and lyrics by Josh Nelson. © 2007 Josh Nelson Music (BMI). Video can be viewed on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzV0Y4MkIBQ> (as of 8th March 2015)

Supplied by Rabbi Monique, see previous pages.

Yael Ben-Akiva

We moved to Bristol in 2007, having emigrated from Jerusalem, where we lived for nine years. We have been members of the community since 2008. I must admit it was a difficult adjustment to make. There was an enormous gap between the experience of living in Israel, a Jewish country by definition, to what appeared at the time a scarce Jewish life in Bristol.

In hindsight I realise I possibly went through a grieving journey on the first year of life in Bristol. There was a loss to be mourned before I could start to appreciate our Synagogue at Bannerman road.

I also had to make some adjustments in terms of having to clarify my position in relation to Orthodox Judaism and Liberal Judaism. I had occasionally taken part in Conservative services in Jerusalem but I have to admit, having experienced mostly Orthodox Judaism, it was rather unclear to me where I fitted in. On arrival to Bristol, I ventured into both Synagogues and I have to say it was a difficult choice. Orthodox Judaism and services seemed more familiar based on background.

However, Park Row synagogue didn't have an appealing family life. On the other hand, BWPJC had a thriving and young community, but I wasn't sure we would fit in ideologically. And, so we joined the latter, but unsure how it would work.

Our kids, Rafael -4- and Amit -3-, were really young back then. Too young to be in Cheder and too loud to be in services. I found the services unfamiliar and didn't like the fact that English was used so regularly. So services didn't really appeal to me either at that time.

However, what I really needed was to have a sense of a Jewish cell in Bristol, where I could just breath in some Jewish atmosphere. This is what I mostly found in BWPJC, a Jewish spot in Bristol, where I could just mix with other families and adults. I came to appreciate it didn't really matter which Judaism umbrella I was under. If you had asked me at the time to make a choice between Liberal, Masorti or Orthodox, I don't think I would have chosen Liberal Judaism. However, BWPJC was by definition the most suitable choice for young families and the only synagogue that catered for children in Bristol, so we had to adjust and accept that a Liberal

synagogue would become Our Synagogue, although ideologically we didn't particularly fit in. Soon enough, I realised, we weren't the only ones who were members without the ideological framework.

For me this is the **greatest gift of our community**: to welcome Jews from all walks of life, with or without beliefs, with or without ideological or spiritual framework. Jews who just wish to

meet other Jews, no matter whether religious or not, or even what type of religious beliefs or disbeliefs you have. This is, in my opinion, the strength of our community: the free spirit of Judaism and Jewish life. A community where exploration of Jewish identity has no boundaries or restrictions and where everyone is most welcome to join in, take part and be present.

Yoav Ben Shlomo

When someone asks me how long I have lived in Bristol it doesn't take me too long to answer. I just think of the age of our son Elie and a few months. We arrived in April 1996 when Jeanette was almost starting her last trimester and had the birth in St. Michael's Hill. We quickly discovered the synagogue having been members at South London Liberal Synagogue, Streatham. Whilst Bristol has a far smaller Jewish community we found a vibrant and energetic community with paradoxically far more engaged members than our

London community. Our daughter Eva arrived a few years later and soon we had two children who could attend cheder classes, which naturally led to me becoming a cheder teacher.

We have accumulated many wonderful memories of the community over the years. From the first family weekend at Wick court, Purim and Chanukah parties and of course both our children's Bnei Mitzvot. These last two events without doubt remain the pinnacle of our joy, pride, honour and but most of all the feeling we really belong to a

community. Both Jeanette and I have family in other countries and other than my parents and one sister we feel rather isolated with no uncles, aunts, cousins or nephews in the UK. It is natural that at the time of a bar or bat mitzvah you are joined by your extended family as well as friends to celebrate this wonderful rite of passage. In our case we feel privileged that so many members of the community attended thereby being the extended family that was not there. In fact for Eva, we had not one but even two Rabbis help with the service! David Jewell who ended up teaching both our children has

literally become the surrogate Uncle that they don't have and someone for Elie to natter with about rather esoteric topics.

For us BWPJC is far more than a place of worship, education and socialising, but a place of belonging. However our children decide to lead their own adult lives, we hope that their experiences at Bannerman Road will be remembered as warm, filling and nourishing - a little like chicken soup - and they will want their own children to share these joys and pleasures.

Sheila Brill

Six years down the road and the memories are as potent as ever. Six years ago, because Kathy Berry thought it would be a good idea, we had a Batmitzvah for our daughter Josephine. In the scheme of life-affirming events, there are really no words which can truly express our feelings then and now.

Josephine is profoundly disabled.

She couldn't walk over to the Bimah, she couldn't say, let alone sing, her portion. She couldn't see the tears of pleasure and pride on our faces or her little brother Asher proudly carrying a flag with her name on it as he paraded around the shul following the Torah scroll. But she could hear Rabbi Ron sing and read Hebrew words of prayer, she could hear her father Peter sing her portion, she could hear me faltering as I sang the prayer for the *Haftarah*.

She could feel the gentle wind as Rabbi Ron lifted his tallit over her head.

Afterwards, reclining on a beanbag in our garage converted into a palatial suite for the event, she greeted her guests with an occasional murmur and raise of her right hand in recognition of a familiar voice. She responded beautifully to touch massage offered to her by a trusted friend and she listened with great attention to the Hebrew spoken and sung in our beautiful marquee glistening with stars for our very own young star.

Good friends and family spoke

Irit Canzini

We officially joined the community in 2005 as our children wanted to find out more about their heritage and what it meant to them. Initially, as a family, we didn't expect it to be so significant to our everyday life but just thought that we are adding another ingredient to our Jewish identity. However, very soon we started to take part in Cheder on a weekly basis and felt, after a long time living in the UK, connected and understood. This is

lovingly about our Jose, recognising the impact she has on others. I watched Jose visibly relax as she listened to Peter's acappella group sing.

I can't remember whether Jose gave any of her legendary roars that day; but I do know that the day meant everything to me and made me realise that this was more than just acceptance of my daughter into the community; it was a celebration of who she really is. And it was a rite of passage for us as a family.

This article was originally published in the Jubilee edition of Alonim.

something that we don't take lightly as living here for so long has made us appreciate that our social and non-social aspects of life are built around the Shul and its members.

Some very special moments for me, after becoming a member, were the milestones for my children, Eytan and Maya had their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and Lia had her naming ceremony. However, it was not just the celebrations which made these

memories so unique and memorable, but the joining of the congregation as they came together and celebrated the event with us creating a huge and genuine sense of a community.

This sense of community, for us as a family, was also reflected in the weekends away with the congregation which actually magnified how my family felt safe and part of a bigger thing even in my absence. These events bringing together all generations, in our community, where everyone is actively taking part and caring on so many roles of responsibilities. There is always a sense that we all have a role in a bigger picture when it comes to our community, and I always feel that the leaders of this community included all generations in activities, decision-making, Cheder activities and much more.

This sense of togetherness and us all taking part of creating our community make us all active members of this unique congregation and is something I'd like to pass through the generations, *L'dor Vador*. What makes this experience more unique and exceptional is that we are all taking this remarkable

practice for granted and we wouldn't have it any other way. We are all volunteers and we all take on various roles that ensure our continuity as a community and we are aware that this is the most important lesson that we can pass on to our children.

Our legacy, in my opinion, for our children and next generations is not only how many services we attended or how fluent we are in reading the Torah but most importantly how we interpret our shared history and actually practising our Jewish values by cooperation and inclusion. My feelings are that this dynamic and creative community is successfully passing on meaningful Jewish experiences for all generations together and by that creating Jewish spirituality *L'dor Vador*.

Dan Colman

As a father of four, I think that the key memorable moments for myself would be seeing my first two children being bar mitzvah at the synagogue and looking forward to the next one in October 2015.

It's wonderful to celebrate this event with family and the BWPJC community.

With both of the bar mitzvahs that we have already enjoyed it has struck me, as I've looked around the synagogue on the morning of the services, that there has been a genuine warmth and good will from all of the community. There has been a tangible sense that together we are sharing and celebrating the arrival of a new 'adult' member to the Bristol Jewish community.

To celebrate one of the community's children's bar mitzvahs is to celebrate for us all the vitality and commitment of a community which sees its children educated by community members in Cheder, bar mitzvah lesson taught by community members and led by the community's youth workers. In 20 years I would hope that our settled and expanded Jewish community can enjoy, across the generations, a sense of shared history, permanency and confidence about being Jewish in the South West, as our Jewish children and youth, now grown up, enjoy watching the next generation preparing together for their bar mitzvahs. A generation which will have grown up together through Cheder and communal participation, having Jewish friends and rooted in a dynamic and caring community.

Yvonne Crawford-Palmer

I was invited to synagogue by a friend four years ago. On arrival I was welcomed with such warmth. I was amazed because I

had heard so much negative things about the Jewish community which I found to be untrue. I kept going the Synagogue and became a part of it because I found a home of love and acceptance. This was emphasized more so when my son and his family had a very

bad accident. My pain was the community's pain; they stood with me with love, help, prayer, comfort and encouragement. Over the years I see the children's love and joy in coming to Shul and their joy of learning our tradition. I am blessed to see some of them grow up and take their place in the community

Keren Durant

After agreeing to write something for this issue of Alonim on the theme of my most memorable moment at BWPJC and my hopes for the future of the community, I've been thinking about what to write, how to start, why did I agree and other such diversionary thoughts.... but in fact I've never had any doubts about what moment to pick.

For me it was my daughter Emily's batmitzvah in August 2002 when she led the service with great confidence and panache and the synagogue was full with our family, friends and members of the congregation.

We joined the synagogue when we moved to Bristol in 1995 as I

after having their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Progressive Jewish congregation of Bristol is my home. I have learnt so much and I don't want to be anywhere else.

knew I wanted Emily to learn about Judaism and for our family to be part of a welcoming and supportive Jewish community. Emily was six and she joined cheder - as it was called in those days before the recent and excellent change of name to Lamdeinu. It wasn't long before I started teaching at cheder, I was probably just a few pages ahead of my class - it was a learning experience for me to - and then I took over as head of cheder from Yuval Keren.

As many of us have found, we are a small community and we all need at different times to get involved and do our bit, so with Emily growing through the classes and making some good friends along the way, I joined Council, became for a time editor of Alonim and later still, Chair of

Council.

John too played his part, taking on the maintenance of the building for many years.

Meanwhile as Emily got nearer batmitzvah age, she was lucky indeed to have Sam Jewell as her teacher. Sam was only 17 then and studying for his A-levels, so he showed great commitment taking this on, and we all had the support of his father David. As well as doing an excellent job teaching Emily her portion and how to lead a Shabbat service, Sam introduced Emily to tandem bike rides, which she thought was just fantastic – whereas I can still feel the pure terror of the ride of my very short go, sitting behind Sam as we seemed to fly down the hill behind our house!

Now, thinking to the future and my hopes for the future of our

community, it's quite simply that it carries on here in Bristol so that new families and individuals can join and find what our family found.

Perhaps more specifically that the children in our community reach their bar/batmitzvah and find out that what they have learned and experienced from the Rabbi, their teachers and their friends, is a part of who they now are and they take all of that into their future as adults wherever and however they go on to live their lives.



Thoughts from our young people

The next four pages are from people who are or have recently been members of the Youth Group.

We asked members of our youth group:

- Describe the most special moment you/your family have had in the community
- Imagine our synagogue in 20 years time. What do you hope it will be like?

Maya Canzini

There have been so many special moments that I've encountered which I wouldn't have experienced if I was not part of the community but one that stands out the most is my Bat-Mitzvah as I was able to celebrate it with my family, friends and the Jewish community. I felt a great sense of achievement at the end of that service and was so glad to be surrounded by people who understand how big a deal this was as they have similar backgrounds to me. Another special moment is the weekends away that I'm glad I've attended as it has been an amazing experience which has allowed me to further explore my culture and take part in group activities which is something I've thoroughly

enjoyed and created memories that I'll always cherish and remember.

In 20 years time, I hope our synagogue will be as welcoming and friendly as it is now to new members and a place people will look forward to attending, as I did. I hope that festivals and events are still planned with the consideration and deliberation that they are now, as these are the things that have made the Jewish holidays exciting and stimulating for me and my family and have made me a person who is proud of my religion and the background that I come from.

Marcus Weinberger - In 20 years time I don't want much to have changed, if the synagogue is bigger and more people came it would mean that we could afford nicer stuff like computers and better printers to make the synagogue run smoother. But in the end every moment spent in the synagogue is special because I'm with my friends.

Daisy Horne - At synagogue I have lots of special moments especially with my friends like at Deanfield when we all had a massive water fight and played in the tunnels - It was fantastic!! I would like the synagogue in 20 years to listen to music played by guitars using new tunes like the ones we sing on LJY. Also I think that it will probably be in a new bigger building because hopefully there will be more members and kids.

David Peel - The most special moment I have at synagogue is when there is a festival and there is a great party. I like it when everyone is together and having fun and all my friends are laughing. In 20 years time I would love it if the synagogue

would be more modern but still had a traditional culture and feel about it. Also I would like it if the services were fun and could appeal to everybody. But I wouldn't change much about it because there is a very good close community and the youth is as important as the adults.

James Colman-Deveney - To me the shul is a place for me to come to, to pray and to socialise. It's a safe and calm environment and a loving atmosphere where I can rely on my peers to give me support when I need it. It's got a beautiful service which makes me feel complete as a person and helps me connect to God. It also brings out my Jewish soul and I can fully relax.

The youth group, which I am part of is a place for me and I have lots of fun. The cheder is a place for children to come to and learn about their Jewish heritage. Without it they wouldn't now know what it means to be Jewish or know anything about their ancestry.

In conclusion the shul is a special place for me and I hope it carries on so it brings the same happiness it brought to me and my kids.

Madsy Paulson – Shul is where I feel myself. I am most comfortable and relaxed there and it is truly my home away from home. The people there are my family (especially my Jew Crew) Saturdays are literally the best!! Whenever I come to shul I have such an amazing time. Literally Jew Crew are my family. I feel safe at shul.

Rufus Colman-

Deveney – Shul means to me what a family means to a Dog – EVERYTHING. The Shul completes me not just as a place to

Oz Moller

I enjoy coming to synagogue because it gives me an opportunity to outlet, and talk to friends outside of school. Also, as I know regularly volunteer in Cheder, I get to talk to some of the people that I wouldn't have talked to normally. This has resulted in me meeting new people, and also learning new things, as I think the skill of teaching, and how the lessons are taught have greatly improved since I myself was a member of

pray but a place to feel sage and at home. I always love coming and making every moment count. Without it I would not have found myself.

Mia Harris – Without the Shul I would not be complete. It is a wonderful part of my life and I would have a hole in my heart without it.

the classes. It has also helped me want to come to synagogue, as it once was an unpleasant experience, encroaching into free time over the weekend, when I would rather be sat down in front of the computer. Now it is rather the opposite, providing me with an opportunity to get away from the homework that I haven't quite managed to keep up with. As I mentioned before, I am volunteering, which is contributing to my Duke of Edinburgh award. On top of this, I think the general organisation

has improved, leading to more enjoyable, focused lessons, themed assemblies and better involvement with the congregation, even taking part in the congregation.

Recently, although I can't always take part, the Youth Group, led by Natan and Louis has been a highlight, as the activities they arrange for the Bar/Bat Mitzvahs further the learning that we have all gone through in Cheder and during the process of preparing for our Bar or Bat Mitzvahs. As well as this, the weekends at Oxenwood and Deanfield, while I don't always have the time to attend, are great banter. Finally, the parties at Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah and other festivals,

Asher Brill

I think my most remembered moment in the community is when we were at Oxenwood. Me, some of the younger kids and a youth movement worker were playing a football tournament on the grass. I guess it's just something I can think of when someone says "Oxenwood".

while I think the quality has gone down in recent years, as the parties become aimed at wider audiences and some of the activities are replaced changed or removed entirely, are very fun and rather amusing.

I think that my generation doesn't have as much input as it deserves. It is our religion as well, and while tradition is important, the world is changing, people are changing, and religion has to change with it.

Synagogue in 20 years. I hope that it will start later than 10.00 and I hope that the kids will have fun lessons that will inspire them and make them think. That's all really. I just want to see what happens!

See the next pages for 'what should we be passing on to future generations?'

Alicia Gold

We came to Bristol three and a half years ago. A great experience for a family of three from Los Angeles we thought. Could be for one year, could be longer. We did not know. But in the spirit of adventure we packed up our house, found homes for our pets and with visas in hand, we hit the road.

The first few months were stressful. New job, new school, new banks, where to live? But we were in England. In beautiful Bristol of all places. And we would do our best to make the most of our year abroad. Our daughter, Madeleine, was nine when we arrived. She'd been attending Sunday school at our neighbourhood shul in LA and we figured she should probably continue if she were to work toward Bat Mitzvah. My husband, Jack discovered BWPJC. We attended a Chanukah party and were delighted to find a warm and welcoming atmosphere. "Lets join!" Jack said. I hesitated. It would take time to settle in and we would likely be returning to LA in a matter of months. I didn't see the point of making the effort. So we didn't. And a year

passed quickly. My friends in Los Angeles teased me. "So, are you the only Jew in Bristol?" "Of course not" I told them, "there are at least five or six others!" We chuckled.

My contract was renewed for a second year. And again the question of shul. We were busy. My job was demanding. "Will we even go?" I wondered. Jack pushed a little. "Why not?" he asked. I pushed back. "I'm not even observant!" I declared. "I'm not sure I even want to go. It's not that important, is it?" Jack, who is not Jewish, but is, according to my friend Paula Goldberg, a lover of things Jewish, seemed disappointed. But once again, I decided that it didn't make sense. We would be leaving in the end anyway. My experiences in the conservative synagogue of my childhood hadn't been great. If I was going to practice at all, which I hadn't done properly since my Bat Mitzvah, why would I do it here? What was the point of practicing Judaism in a city where no one had ever heard of Chanukah? I needed a real Jewish home - New York, Los Angeles -- a place where everyone used the words nebbish and schmaltzy, knew to say "happy

holidays" in December rather than Happy Christmas and loved to eat bagels and lox for brunch on Sunday. Bristol was a lovely place that I had grown fond of -- but there was a limit.

My contract was renewed for a third year. By now, Madeleine was almost twelve. And we were still in Bristol. And we were still "shul-less" and Madeleine needed to begin her studies if there was any hope of a Bat Mitzvah. So, it was, with some reservations that I finally agreed to join.

We attended High Holiday services. And our first Shabbat service. My plan was to drop Madeleine off at cheder each Saturday and then duck out. I would grab some precious "alone time" and pick her up after the service was over at kiddush. As we arrived for Madeleine's second cheder class, another mother casually mentioned that it was a good idea for parents to attend Shabbat services on a regular basis, rather than say, dash out. Not wanting to make a bad impression, I stayed. And stayed again the next week, and the next. I wasn't wild about spending my Saturday morning in synagogue, but I was doing it for Madeleine.

Then one Saturday morning, I realized that I was actually looking forward to going to shul. I was learning things. My Hebrew was terribly rusty but I was working hard to decipher the alphabet that I had learned so long ago. The melodies were different, but I was starting to know the tunes. Though it all felt a bit different to me, it was also comfortingly familiar. And then I realized that I was learning something else. Something completely unexpected and more important. I realised that I was learning about being Jewish. About what it means and why it matters and why going to shul here in Bristol matters more. More than I knew. More than it does in LA and New York. And I learned that my culturally rich Jewish life in LA had made me complacent. And because I was cloaked in the cultural trappings of Jewish-ness that I understood what it meant to be Jewish. But I didn't -- not really. Because to be Jewish in LA or NY can be simply about bagels and lox.

But to be Jewish in Bristol takes intention and commitment. It means coming to shul each Shabbat to pray together as a community. To share and

connect. To practice the rituals that our people have performed for centuries. It is these rituals, passed down from generation to generation, that keep our Jewish faith and identity alive -- in spite of the fact that we are a small minority. With or without bagels and lox.

I feel more deeply Jewish than ever before. I feel connected to my ancestors. I am aware of the preciousness of our teachings and of the tiny Jewish communities across England and Europe that

have survived the horrors of war and pogroms and will continue to survive. Shabbat services on Saturday morning have become a refuge where I find a sense of connection and peace, of warmth and fellowship. And most of all, I am grateful, that our daughter will grow up for however long we are here, in this Jewish community that is so small, so vibrant and so special.

David Memmel

Probably the most special moment that I have had in my 32 year membership of the synagogue was last Yom Kippur at the Memorial Service. I stood in front of the Ark with my son Jonathan as the names of my mother and my wife were read out, who had died six and two weeks previously. We had read the comforting words "If there is to be birth, there must be death. Unless there were departures, a time would quickly come when there could be no arrivals, since the area of the finite earth would be filled", and I felt the warmth of the community supporting me.

However you will have rarely found me in the synagogue over the last 32 years. I feel my sense of identity as a Jew very deeply, but I have found that I do not really believe in God, and do not find comfort in prayer. I thought that this might change during my mother's and Deborah's illnesses, but it has not. Yet I drew comfort from both the tradition of my mother's Reform Jewish funeral, and Deborah's Humanist approach to life and her funeral. And I continue to enjoy celebrating Chanukah and Pesach with my family.

Instead of coming to synagogue, I play my part in the Jewish community by helping to run Davar, the Jewish Cultural Institute, and

belonging to the Book Group, and now that I am retired I will probably find others. As someone who has contributed so little to the synagogue, I feel that I have little right to answer the question, "What aspects of the synagogue do you feel are the most important to pass onto the next generation?"

However I have been asked, and so I will answer. The first is to simply exist,

and to be such a welcoming place to all the different types of Jews that there are in Bristol and the West. And the second is to try to appeal to both the Believers and the Non-Believers, and to be a place to explore the wider questions such as "Does my life have a purpose?" and "How should I lead a good life?" Thirdly to teach the history and traditions of Judaism. But of most of all the synagogue should be a place for meeting and sharing.

Hanan Moller

We moved to Bristol in the autumn of 2006 and, if my email history is at all accurate, we became members of our congregation in April 2007. What interesting (almost) eight years those have been!

It is very difficult to choose one, or even two, special moments we have had in the community.

For me, one special moment was not really one moment, but rather spread over about three years of being actively involved with Cheder. I think it wasn't until after the community weekend in Slimbridge in 2008 that Iris and Irit "twisted my arm" and persuaded me to get involved (and thus forming, or certainly extending the "Israeli Mafia" of Cheder teacher, as some people

referred to us!)

This period of time was very interesting and rewarding. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to get know so many of the children (and their parents and carers) who are now a core part of our growing community.

Another special event is the annual community weekend. We managed to attend the last Slimbridge, a few Oxenwoods and a day at Deanfield. Those were all special for many different reasons. The excitement of trying to get there in daylight; trying to get the tent up in the rain; all of us having a Friday meal together. Breakfast on Saturday. And barbecue on Saturday. I don't think I have ever had Havdalah before - what a wonderful ceremony it is.

Every time I walk into our

sanctuary, or just sit in service, I am reminded of what we can achieve working together – just look at the Aleph-Bet on the wall and at the stained-glass art work the children, young and older, have created.

The last moment I want to share here is Oz's Bar Mitzvah service and the time leading up to it. Those of you who came to share this special day saw the outcome of many weeks of hard work and dedication on Oz's part, and importantly, David Jewell's part. Sure, there were ups and downs, but persistence prevailed and I think Oz was very proud of himself. I can only hope that he

will remember this for many years to come, much as I remember being taught for my Bar Mitzvah all those years ago.

What I see as a common thread to my special moments, what I think we should pass down to the next generation, is the sense of community we have built. We are not just coming to Synagogue for Friday or Saturday service. We take the time to get to know each other and our families. We support each other in times of need. We help each other learn;

“You shall teach them diligently to your children.”

Frieda Pass

I was born in Glasgow in 1925 and lived there until almost six years ago when I came to Bristol to be near my dear children and grandchildren.

When in Glasgow I was a member of the Orthodox shul but did not participate in any activities. On coming to Bristol I decided to join BWPJC and this has made a big difference to my life. This form of Judaism means a lot to me and seeing my children and

grandchildren being part of this community is very uplifting.

At my age I may not always participate in activities but seeing the family doing so means more to me than I can say. This community makes people who are members most welcome and I am sure this will always be the case. This is the way that Judaism should be now and in the future.

Jill Pomerance

I came to Bristol in 1957 for three years as an undergraduate in the University of Bristol's Drama Department. Having grown up with family membership of Sheffield's Orthodox community, I became a member of Park Row as a somewhat intermittent attender.

I returned to live in Bristol following my marriage in 1965 to ex-fellow graduate David Hirschmann by then teaching in the University. When our present congregation was formed, it originally met weekly in the Library at Friend's Meeting House in Redland. Our daughter, Abigail was born in December 1969 and shortly after her first birthday in 1970 I went to the Chanukah party, held in the main hall of the Meeting House. The celebrations were on the last evening of the Festival with highlights of the event including a line up of our children in an orderly (because each was accompanied by a parent!) crocodile, stage left, to move one by one to centre stage each helping to light one of the candles. Abi being the youngest

and still a babe in arms was the final official lighter with the privilege of igniting the last and newest candle. Holding my hand carefully and steadily over hers whilst firmly and safely holding her in the crook of my other arm I leaned us both forward and together in what felt like a blaze of glory our mitzvot was achieved. You should know, dear reader, that it had been Abi's birthday the afternoon before and her party - eight dotting adults and a peer group small cousin - had encouraged her to be confident about blowing out her candles. Without missing a beat, as soon the Chanukah candles were all ablaze the assembled Liberal Progressive guests were treated to her final contribution, a gasp-creating blowing out of the five chanukia candles (including her own) nearest to her. Convinced that the only place for us was outside the door and now, I was deeply touched to realise instead the mirth and smiles were for us - this this warm and wonderful congregation was allowing us to stay. My sense of "belonging remains" to this day.

This article was originally published in the Jubilee edition of Alonim.

Allan Schiller

I, and my first wife Judy, came to Bristol in 1978. We had been members of Finchley Progressive Synagogue for about five years so naturally looked around for a progressive Shul to join here. We were fortunate to meet dear Neville Lewissohn, and the warm welcome he, and then others, gave us was the start of a happy association of nearly 40 years.

Those were the days of the single house and small numbers at services – how proud it makes me feel when I see the expansion that has taken place, both in space and, more importantly, in numbers. At the recent High Holy Days I could hardly believe my eyes at the number of children attending Cheder.

Recalling special occasions, two memorable moments for me were the Barmitzvahs of my older son Adam in 1987 and then my own 50th anniversary re-enactment. I saved the congregation a deal of pain by NOT singing my portion of the Torah!! Other times that come to mind include a mens' knobbly knees competition at a summer party (I was narrowly beaten by Henry Harris), a muddy

Pesach walk many years ago and a Shabbat Service conducted by some very young members. Remarkable!

Which takes us on to thinking of the future. Of course, nothing in life stays the same and I am in no position to predict how our community will develop further. It seems to me that with the number of clever youngsters coming up through their Hebrew education we will be in very safe hands. I hope that the love and friendship to all within and without our community will remain. One of the most wonderful things is how welcoming we are to all who come through our doors.

Our Shul is only here today thanks to the hard work and dedication of our own 'pioneers' – certainly we stand as a fine example of 'from tiny acorns mighty oaks grow' – and, hopefully the new generation can build further on their laudable achievements.

Brenda White

When the Rabbi agreed that I could attend his classes, the relief was huge. The most special moment was during the service when I was accepted into the community. It was a moving experience and awesome to be likened to Ruth. During the service the Rabbi amusingly said that the angel in charge of putting souls into bodies had made a mistake by putting mine into the wrong body, but I have to say that it actually felt like that. At last it was as if everything was being put right. My daughter was accepted with me and she too was thrilled, and my son and his fiancée were there to witness it all. Right from the start members welcomed us warmly.

It has been wonderful to have been accepted, just as we are, into such a caring community, and of course we have made many lovely friends.

I am thrilled when I see such a lot of lovely children, so happy in their learning and playing together. We are blessed with some wonderful children's teachers who are able to impart Torah and Hebrew truths to them. I think children learn well in a happy atmosphere as it gives them confidence in their own fresh ideas and eventually, in turn, to be able to teach others. Also there are a great number of activities in shul which are so interesting and not just for the young but for every age.

Jack Woolf

BWPJC became part of me and my son's lives a couple of years ago when I first started seeking a Jewish community to be part of in my local area - I had previously been in contact with a Rabbi and a few people in London and Brighton, but quickly realised that this was not good enough - I wanted a shul I could attend on a

regular basis and where my son and I could quickly come to feel that we were part of a community.

There have been many memorable moments since - but I think the one that sticks most in my memory was when Lu and I were visiting Oxenwood for the community weekend a couple of years ago. It was a beautiful, sunshine filled weekend - exactly

the weather you want if you're canoeing, as he and I were, and I don't think we had a drop of rain.

But this had been the year of the interminable winter and the floods, and although the ground was dry in most places, there were still patches of flooding - as a group of us found out when we went for a walk across the fields.

Gary led us away from the road along a footpath he had trodden before, and within minutes we were walking through tall wheat and among flowers, talking and enjoying the glorious views across the local landscape. None of us paid too much attention to where we were going until we reached the corner of a field and realised that the footpath had vanished; Gary knew roughly where it was supposed to go, but whether it ran down the side of the field we were in or the one alongside was a mystery. We turned left, and followed the farmer's track through the wheat, still chatting happily. Eventually we reached the exit - and then the effects of the months of flooding made themselves apparent. Between us and the road was thirty feet of two feet deep, stagnant, muddy water and no Moses to part it for us!

Girding our loins and pulling off our flip flops, one by one we

plunged in and waded to the other side through the stinking mire, emerging plastered in black slime and deeply grateful that nobody had fallen in! Amazingly, I don't think anyone even lost a shoe - though I came quite close. And no-one lost their sense of humour either - even when the one person who had had the wit to look for another exit from the field emerged completely unmuddied from the hedge about twenty feet in front of us!

I hope that as a shul we will have many more such moments in the future - being quite an outdoor person I love walking, even when things seem to go wrong - but more than that, the laughter that ensues from moments of stress like this brings us closer together. When we face challenges and overcome them with a smile, we are always stronger for it.

The BWPJC Giving Tree



What is the BWPJC Giving Tree?

The tree is a list of the main things the synagogue spends money on. Members are invited to sponsor the annual cost of one of these items.

What are these items and how much to they cost?

Items range from £12 (or £1 per month) to £6,000 (£500 per month). For example £180 (£15 per month) would cover the printing and postage of one issue of Alonim. Other examples include: Rabbi Monique's time to do pastoral care; building repair; Lamdeinu (Cheder) art resources; and wine and challah for Kiddush.

Why do we need a Giving Tree?

Our synagogue has an operational deficit of £10,000 – ie we are spending £10,000 more than our guaranteed income each year. We are also saving no money for a rainy day – for example, some significant building repair work in a few years' time. The only reason we are afloat this year is because we have, luckily, received a few 'extraordinary donations'. It is not wise to rely on such one-off donations for the basic functioning of our synagogue. Unless we take action now, we will be handing down a financially insecure community to our next generation. The **Giving Tree** gives members an opportunity to put the synagogue on a more sustainable footing.

Why are there not new and exciting things to sponsor like a new building or new communal event?

That's because our challenge is to cover the existing or planned expenditure of the synagogue. If we ignore this and focus on 'shiny new' things, our deficit will just get worse and we will become even more financially insecure.

What are my payment options?

You can pay:

A one off donation for a year's sponsorship of the item.

A monthly direct debit to cover the annual cost. You can cancel this payment at any time, or keep it as an ongoing direct debit.

Cheque or online payment?

You can use the online **Giving Tree** to make an online payment, or pay by cheque. It is much easier, administratively, to manage payments via the online **Giving Tree** – so please choose that option if you can.

What about Gift Aid?

The online fundraising site we are using will apply for the gift aid on our behalf and this will be added on to your donation.

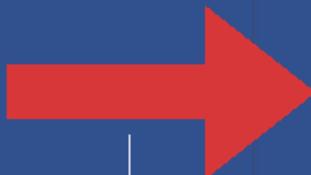
When will the **Giving Tree be launched?**

Pesach time – early April. You will receive a paper version of the **Giving Tree** and a link in the weekly synagogue email to the online version.

Who should I contact for more information?

Please contact Philippa Gordon on 07939 026727 or email philppagordon@sky.com

What is your vision of our community in 20 year's time?



2015

you are here

2035



Bristol & West
Progressive Jewish
Congregation

Saturday 25 April

The Synagogue: lunch (bring food) till 2:30

L'dor Vador

From Generation to Generation

Our youth group will be presenting their vision of our community. Bring your ideas so we can make this an invaluable, inter-generational conversation about our future:

- How many children will be enrolled in Lamdeinu and how will we cater for them?
- How will we care for those who need support?
- How will we study? How will we teach? How will we pray?
- How will we socialise?
- What will our building look like?
- What role will we play in the local community and society?
- What else do we need to think about?

Choices: In 2035, decisions will need to be made. We have to prioritise. So, in small groups, we will work through some challenging scenarios. What would you do if.....? In your group, you will have members of the youth group, who could be on Council in 2035.

Why have this debate now?

Our shul is running an operational deficit of £10,000 per year. We are afloat this year only because of a small number of 'extraordinary donations'. At the moment, we are passing to the next generation a community that is financially insecure. This event will help us think about what kind of community we do want to pass to the next generation and inspire us to raise money to turn that vision into reality.

President's Passover message

THE BOARD
OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS
PROUD TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY



As I write my final Pesach message as President I reflect on a period of great challenges and achievements. The challenges are obvious; the achievements made possible with our new team, new premises and new leadership are becoming ever more so.

First within a matter of weeks there is the General Election. We at the Board have been attempting to seize on a historic opportunity to ensure our programme of Ten Commitments, that summarises our key policy asks, is adopted by as many MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates as possible. The 2015 General Election: A Jewish Manifesto has already been sent out to all selected candidates and there has been a hugely gratifying response. We have also been urging our Deputies and members of the community to join our online campaign, launched in association with We Believe in Israel. By using a new online tool you are able to enter your postcode and simultaneously write to all prospective parliamentary candidates to request their support for our Ten Commitments. We hope these efforts will result in a Parliament with MPs aware and responsive to the needs of our community.

In the meantime whilst there has never been a boring period during the last two triennia no time has been quite as challenging this. . At the time of writing we have just received the report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Antisemitism - their first since 2006. This followed the awful events in Paris and Copenhagen. The community itself has been rocked by the upsurge in antisemitic incidents which in 2014 exceeded all previous years for which records have been kept. Paris and then Copenhagen remind us all how terrorists can easily be inspired by one another.

In the face of this upsurge we have had a continuous dialogue with the Government over the measures we hope will ensure the continued safety of our community. Alongside our communal partners we have met the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Communities Secretary and Education Secretary. In addition we have met the Shadow Home Secretary and London's Deputy Mayor for crime

Raise funds for BWPJC www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/bwpjc

and policing. It has been gratifying to see the firm response of the government and of all the mainstream political parties and particularly pleasing that the Home Secretary and **Communities Secretary were prepared at very short notice to attend our plenary meeting, reassuring Deputies of their continued commitment to stand “shoulder to shoulder” with the Jewish community in the fight against antisemitism.**

The Board have been at the forefront of tackling antisemitic attitudes – from politicians, the media and clerics. Yet we see also that though the level of reported antisemitic incidents was up, the proportion of violent incidents was down with only one incident of extreme violence and according to the research carried out by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU, the UK remains the most secure place for Jews in Europe. The APPG report mentions this as well and also specifically commends the Board’s outreach to the Muslim community. Nevertheless we cannot afford to be complacent.

Anti-semitism, however, is not our only problem. The campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions directed against Israel is going to get stronger as will the calls for the UK to recognise a Palestinian state independent of any peace or even negotiations with Israel.

Directly but also through the Fair Play Campaign Group, we fight a constant battle against the growing anti-Israel campaign whether on campus, in the media, the unions, local authorities or anywhere else it may arise. Although some question whether that the Board has a role to play on Israel, we recognise its centrality to the community and the consequent need for the community’s representative body to speak out on Israel’s behalf.

On the domestic side, the challenge to shechitah is growing with calls for a ban even from quarters normally sympathetic to our community. In education matters, many of our schools have come under pressure

because of reasons utterly unconnected with them. We continue to challenge misunderstanding and malicious attacks with clarity and vigour.

There are however, plenty of positives for Jews in the UK. Britain is also home to a community which for its size is probably the most vital in the diaspora. Our schools are flourishing with outstanding standards and ever greater numbers of pupils. The Board through its advice and above all through Pikuach, its inspectorate, is playing an important role here. Our service to small communities, Jewish Connection, sustains a fulfilling Jewish life for the approximately 20% of the Jews of this country living in communities too small to support a minister.

Throughout the country, at cross communal events such as Jewish Book Week and Limmud, the Board has been active in making presentations and appearing at more events than ever before. The Board also continues with its work with the Jewish Living exhibition- attended by over 8,000 adults and school children in the past year alone - explaining Judaism to the outside world.

Finally we should mention our efforts to reach out to parts of the community not previously represented on the Board. We have increased substantially the representation of students and young people and are working with the Israeli community in London. The Charedi community remains largely outside the Board but we work very closely with them and by their account our relations with them have never been as good as they are now.

Pesach is our festival of freedom but it is also the defining seminal event in our history. Whatever the challenges the Board will be determined to meet them and we know that this country continues to offer benefits that few other Jewish communities boast. Of that we continue to be proud.

Chag sameyach.

Vivian Wineman
President,
The Board of Deputies of British Jews

L'dor vador

Peter Brill

The literal translation is: "From generation to generation" L'dor vador is, arguably, the most well-used phrase in Judaism – only eclipsed by "eat, eat!" and "my son/daughter is still single."

In fact, l'dor vador represents many things. It's a statement of duty; a call to action; a plea for continuity; delegation; buck-passing or, quite simply, an historical commentary on the Jewish people.

Whatever the interpretation, this phrase instils a very strong sense of responsibility and becomes a feature of one's upbringing from an early age. As the years pass, the nature of that responsibility changes. As a child, it is generally a recognition of the thousands of years in which generations of Jews have played a part. Through teens to thirties, it is about establishing a Jewish identity that matches personal values and finding ways to maintain it in a modern world – or even reject that identity altogether.

From middle age onwards the responsibility becomes one of 'pay-back'. This is not simply financial, it is about handing knowledge and life-experience down to younger generations in order to help the community thrive and grow.

Keeping any community alive and dynamic is major challenge, whether based on faith, culture, country of origin or political belief. It requires generations to work together, recognise the issues that arise and find ways to overcome them without alienating the majority. Bristol's Jewish communities have never been a significant percentage of the population. Yet they have played key cultural, commercial and faith roles within the city for hundreds of years. Now, the two main communities – Orthodox and Liberal (Progressive) – are facing generation-testing challenges certain to make members question their responsibilities.

For the Orthodox community, the issue is balancing tradition with a modern society. Dwindling numbers have created an age-old challenge: evolve or die. They recognise this and are already taking major decisions that, while potentially alienating the ultra-traditionalists, could ensure the survival of one of the oldest Jewish communities in Britain.

The Progressive community's challenge is almost the opposite. A thriving, expanding community - admittedly boosted by an acceptance of significantly less traditional views, rites and practices - it is running out of space and the finances to support the plethora of

activities now happening during and away from the religious services. The f-word (fundraising) is now being regularly heard in synagogue. These challenges are daunting but exciting and are, without question, about the continuity of Judaism in all its forms l'dor vador – from generation to generation.

This article was previously published in the Bristol Post in December 2014

Editorial	<i>Judy Goldsmith (Editor)</i>
and	<i>Sheila Brill (proof reading)</i>
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Team	

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43-47 Bannerman Road, Bristol BS5 0RR. E-mail: alonim@bwpjc.org

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