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Out of the Twilight Victory in Israel



Proud project manager Surat-Shaan Knan at the Twilight People exhibition launch at Islington Museum, as the team join with VIP guests (pictures by Mary Humphrey and Em Fitzgerald)



LIBERAL JUDAISM has played a key role in creating Britain's first ever exhibition highlighting the heritage of transgender and gender nonconforming people of faith, which launched in February.

Part of our movement's Twilight People project, a collection of photographs, recordings and artefacts exploring this 'hidden history' are on display at Islington Museum until March 5. The exhibition will then tour around the country.

A successful launch saw the Deputy Mayor of Islington, Cllr Kat Fletcher, and Cllr Osh Gantly – one of very few openly transgender elected representatives in the UK – among the invited guests. Liberal Judaism was represented by chair Simon Benscher and senior rabbi, Rabbi Danny Rich, as well as Rabbis Janet Burden and Janet Darley.

Danny said: "One of Liberal Judaism's tasks is to prod at least the Jewish community, and arguably wider society, to think about things in a different way. We also have a responsibility to be a voice for those whose voices are often not heard, and to make clear the stories that are often hidden.

"That is why I am proud of this exhibition and proud that Liberal Judaism hosts the Twilight People project."

Twilight People: Stories of Faith and Gender Beyond the Binary captures the voices and images of more than 40 trans people from different faith backgrounds – among them Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Pagan – and interprets them in a heritage context. The exhibition – which is running as part of LGBT History Month 2016 – combines oral history with portraiture by photographer Christa Holka, film and memorabilia objects.

Guests at the launch enjoyed drinks courtesy of Barefoot Wines and a live audio installation produced by Roundhouse Radio and SOAS Radio with young people from Gendered Intelligence, LJY-Netzer and other youth groups.

Twilight People project manager Surat-Shaan Knan said: "This has been an amazing journey on so many levels and I invite everyone to come and be part of it."

Twilight People is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund. To find out more, please visit www.islington.gov.uk/heritage and www.twilightpeople.com

RABBI DANNY RICH, the senior rabbi of Liberal Judaism, has hailed a huge victory for Progressive Jews around the world, following the Israeli government's historic ruling to establish a section of the *Kotel* (Western Wall) where men and women can pray together.

The decision follows a 27 year battle, led by Women of the Wall, for equal prayer rights. Previously, with the site controlled by the Orthodox, women were forbidden from praying with men, praying aloud, reading from the Torah or wearing a tallit. The new area will accommodate 1,200 worshippers and be administered by government officials.

Danny led the response of worldwide Progressive Jewry, being quoted everywhere from *The Guardian* to the *Jewish Chronicle* to the *South China Morning Post*.

Danny said: "This is a landmark decision for Jews across the globe. It recognises that Judaism is an inclusive religion with a variety of different, but valid, expressions. At last Liberal and Progressive Jews can celebrate a Judaism in keeping with the modern world at our most holy site."



Anat Hoffman (pictured), Women of the Wall chair and a speaker at last year's Liberal Judaism Day of Celebration, said: "We have been fighting for 27 years. We were single when we started; we are grandmothers now. And what we have done is liberate another part of the wall that will be open to all. It will be tolerant and equal and friendly."

Biennial scholar and schedule revealed



Scholar-in-residence Rabbi Dr Dalia Marx

By Rabbi Charley Baginsky

AS WE ENTER 2016, and with thoughts becoming more focused on Liberal Judaism's Biennial Weekend, we are delighted to announce the first details of what is in store for delegates at our movement's biggest event of the year.

This year, for the first time, we will have a scholar-in-residence: Rabbi Dr Dalia Marx, the associate professor of liturgy and midrash at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. As well as her many research projects and a passion for promoting Progressive Judaism in Israel, she was the editor of the new Israeli Reform Siddur. Dalia is a wonderful teacher and educator and her workshops promise to inspire.

This Biennial will offer a packed schedule of thought-provoking tracks, involving rabbis, writers, artists, musicians and leading Jewish voices, which we can now also reveal.

These will include 'media and the Jewish press' - with speakers from the BBC, Board of Deputies and local newspapers - and 'alternative culture', featuring presentations from museum curators and our Twilight People team. A track on 'film and literature' will include creative writing workshops and talks from authors, while 'music' sessions will explain how to engage your community and tell stories through song. There are also tracks on everything from 'social action' - including youth engagement and supporting refugees - to everyone's favourite, 'food'. Plus, as always, there's a jam-packed youth schedule run by LJY-Netzer, and crèche facilities.

Perhaps the most exciting sessions, for a Biennial that is titled 'Thinking Outside The Book', will be on 'prayer and liturgy'. In these we will look for inspiration, sources, language and new ways to pray.

Liberal Judaism is in the initial stages of thinking about developing a new Siddur. The process of thinking about the need, content, context and methodology is in itself an exciting opportunity. This conference is not aimed at producing a Siddur, but rather a chance to go 'Outside the Book' and talk about all the things which engage and motivate our communities and drive our theology, practice and engagement.

To give you a taste before we release the final programme in the next issue of *lj today*, we will ask questions about: identity and the future of community; the

intricacies of where liturgy emerges from and whether it has the potential to lead to action; what social action projects have worked and where we could do more; when grassroots activities are the best way forward.

We'll also ask why food brings people together and speaks to our deepest sense of self, how we use language and music to inspire prayer and what is the place of film, art and culture in our communities.

One thing we are looking for right away is seven people, from seven different communities and countries, to talk about their Jewish identity and engagement via a favourite recipe - perhaps even sharing the dish at the Biennial. Please get in touch with Rabbi Sandra Kviat by emailing s.kviat@liberaljudaism.org if you are interested in taking part.

With our Early Bird discounts only running until the end of February, now is the best time to book your place for an essential weekend where you'll see old friends and make new ones, learn, discuss, share, sing and pray in a warm and friendly environment.

The Liberal Judaism Biennial Weekend takes place from July 1-3 at the beautiful St Johns Hotel in the West Midlands. You can secure your place by going to www.tinyurl.com/bien2016 or calling Aaron at the Montagu Centre on 020 7631 9830 for more information.

Rabbi Charley Baginsky is chair of the Biennial Weekend organising committee

Nurturing lifelong Jewish learning



ON TWO damp Sundays in January, educators from Liberal Judaism and the Movement for Reform Judaism came together for the first time to share two days of learning and teacher training.

Co-led by Rabbi Sandra Kviat (LJ) and Becky Teiger (MRJ), participants came from London, Merseyside, Yorkshire, the South Coast and the South West.

Senior educators, teachers and assistants met at Sinai Synagogue in Leeds and the Montagu Centre, Liberal Judaism's London head office, to attend practical workshops and discussions. Speakers included Union of Jewish Students president Hannah Brady, comedian and puppeteer Philip Simon, Liberal Judaism's director of youth Rebecca Fetterman and Sara Levan, head of informal education at JCoSS.

Attendees were encouraged to complete 'lonely hearts' adverts, sharing their educational strengths, and 'wish lists' to help connect together communities tackling similar challenges or with skills to offer out to others.

Online 'hang outs' are now being developed, with future sessions planned to continue discussions about how best to develop engaging and meaningful experiences for young people.

- JOAN RYAN MP, the chair of Labour Friends of Israel, will be speaking at Southgate Progressive Synagogue on Tuesday March 15, from 7.30pm. To book, please email tecs@sps.uk.com or call 020 8886 0977. For security reasons, the synagogue can only admit those who have booked.

- LEARN TO READ, or improve your, Hebrew at Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue's crash course from March 18-20. Call Sue Wayne on 01923 822 592 for details.

- THROUGH A QUEER LENS - a series of photographic portraits of Jewish LGBTQ people - runs at the Jewish Museum until April 17.

- CONGRATULATIONS to Rudolf Oppenheimer, who was awarded the British Empire Medal.

From Cumbria to Copenhagen Staff moves



LJ chair Simon Benschler welcomes Shir Hatzafon chair Adrienne Mannov to the fold

TWO NEW communities have joined Liberal Judaism so far in 2016, increasing our movement's number of members to 43 communities over five countries.

Shir Hatzafon – 'The Song of the North' – has become the first Scandinavian member, while Lancashire & Cumbria Liberal Jewish Community has affiliated as a developing community.

Started informally in 1998, Shir Hatzafon was officially recognised by the Danish Government in 2004. Today, it has 120 members who meet twice a month for services in Copenhagen.

The congregation has been led by Rabbi Tirzah Ben David for the past 10 years, with Rabbi Sandra Kviat now also joining to help develop the community further.

Sandra – who became the first ever female Scandinavian rabbi when she was ordained by the Leo Baeck College in 2011 – will split her time between Shir Hatzafon and Crouch End Chavurah, as well as remaining part of Liberal Judaism's Outreach Team.

Liberal Judaism's senior rabbi and chief executive, Rabbi Danny Rich, said: "The values that we share in common as a movement - of equality, inclusivity and egalitarianism - are not restricted to British Jewry. Indeed, they are evidence of Judaism's ability to continue to grow and thrive by ensuring our relevance to modern world.

"This is as true in Denmark as it is here in Britain and we are proud, therefore, to be able to say 'velkommen (welcome)' to our newest member."

Lancashire & Cumbria Liberal Jewish Community will be led by Rabbi Dr Robert Ash and Prof Naomi Tadmor. The congregation first came together in 2014.

Liberal Judaism has communities in all parts of England, as well as Scotland, Ireland, Holland and now Denmark.



Daisy Bogod joins the team

LIBERAL JUDAISM has promoted two members of staff, welcomed back a familiar face and added a new person to the team at the Montagu Centre, our head office.

Following the departure of Yael Shotts, Liberal Judaism took the decision to split her portfolio by promoting recent joiners, Alexandra Simonon and Aaron Abraham.

Alexandra becomes lifecycle and administration manager, taking on Yael's administration management duties.

She said: "In my new role, I'll be overseeing the admin team at the Montagu Centre, as well as managing the administration of Liberal Judaism's Council and Rabbinic Conference. I am delighted to continue the important work of supporting our communities, rabbis and members around marriages, circumcisions, Beit Din and funerals."

Aaron will now manage Liberal Judaism's internal communications, events and Patrons – while also supporting Simon Rothstein and Ben Rich on the PR team. Aaron retains his responsibilities for Liberal Judaism's Board of National Officers, Resource Bank and Biennial Weekend. He is the first port of call for members with queries and announcements around communications and events.

Daisy Bogod joins the admin team as the personal assistant to Liberal Judaism senior rabbi and chief executive Rabbi Danny Rich. Daisy – a member of Ealing Liberal Synagogue and an LJY-Netzer youth leader – is responsible for Danny's diary and administration.

Daisy said: "I love Liberal Judaism because it combines religion and spirituality with social justice and a desire to make the world a better place. It is amazing being surrounded by people who care about Progressive Judaism and live their lives according to these values."

Tom Rich has returned to the Montagu Centre as interim receptionist.

- Congratulations to Liberal Judaism officer Ed Herman, wife Rachael and proud big sister Alys – who are celebrating the birth of Dylan David Herman. Ed said: "David and Rachael are both doing really well."

Liberal playwright is on a RUN



A PLAY written by Liberal Judaism's Aaron Abraham (who writes under the name Stephen Laughton) was part of London's biggest art festival. The production, titled *RUN*, wowed audiences at the Vault Festival in February and was selected to feature in *Plays from the Vault*, an anthology of the five best plays showcased during the week.

The one-man play is filled with school riots, first loves, beached whales, cinema, space and sex. It tells the story of Yonni (Tom Ross-Williams), an orthodox Jewish teenager, who is exploring feelings of angst and rebellion.

As Yonni sneaks out of home one Shabbat, he pulls the audience into a colourful world that spans the entire universe: a world away from his overbearing mother and distant father; away from the stresses of school and 'shul' and 'Shabbat'; and into the arms of Adam – the cheeky, older boy who catches his eye and leads him astray. We see love, life and loss through his eyes.

Aaron told *lj today*: "It's amazing to be included in *Plays from the Vault* and to be part of such a prestigious and eclectic festival. *RUN* is a really beautiful and personal play for me, that explores my own feelings of passion, questioning and confusion during that too typical teenage angst phase. The play also has a really anarchic feel to it, so the Vault felt like a natural home."

For more information, please visit www.run-theplay.net

Behind the headlines as LJS makes history

By Jeanne Myers

YOU MAY have seen some of the recent media coverage about The Liberal Jewish Synagogue (LJS) holding Friday evening services in French. 'Sacrebleu', you might have thought... what's all this about?!

Around a year ago, it occurred to me that, with the large number of French people in London, it would be a nice gesture to offer the French Progressive Jewish community services in their own language. I have lived abroad, and when in Switzerland had very much appreciated the English-language services there.

The LJS was looking for a new rabbi at this time and the appointments committee decided, irrespective of nationality, that French-born Rabbi René Pfertzel was the best candidate. He also wanted to provide a service to the French community in London and so, with the agreement of Rabbi Alexandra Wright, a date was set for the first service to take place in Hebrew, French and English.



René and Jeanne

After contacting French schools in London and the consulates of French-speaking countries, I wrote a press release and sent it to media. I was supported in these efforts by the LJS rabbinic team

and their PA Naomi Richland.

The Evening Standard responded quickly and did a great piece. We also had a storm of requests for interviews with Rabbis René and Alex, as well as with one of our French members, David Herz, who generously gave his time for this.

On one particular afternoon, we had interviews every hour with different news, camera and radio crews from *BBC London TV*, *BBC Radio 5 Live*, *BBC News* (online), *Russia Today*, *BBC Radio 4*, the *Press Association* (TV) and even the Swiss station *Radio Fribourg*.

BBC 1's The One Show filmed on the day of the service, as did German broadcaster *DW* and website *Vice News*.

Other coverage included pieces in *Newsweek*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Jewish Chronicle*, *Jewish News*, *The Jewish Telegraph*, *FranceInLondon.com* and *Tribune Juive*, as well as the Israeli press. More coverage is in the pipeline, with TV channels from all around the world still requesting interviews.

And the event itself? Approximately 60 people attended the first tri-lingual Friday night service at which the sermon was given by René in French - a landmark for our synagogue, our movement and Judaism in the UK.

The date of the next such service will be on the seventh night of Passover, Thursday April 28. If you would like to attend, please visit www.ljs.org or call 0207 286 5181 for timings.

Jeanne Myers is a PR consultant and member of the LJS

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This trip is a gift from Taglit-Birthright Israel

To request an application form for the Progressive Birthright bus, email progressivebirthright5776@gmail.com. This trip is FREE and is open to Jewish 19-26 year olds. This trip is open to people who have never been to Israel before, as well as those who have participated in programmes such as Israel Tour. Email us to see if you're eligible.

Rabbi Charley moves into new Alliance role

RABBI CHARLEY BAGINSKY has been appointed as the part-time coordinator for the Alliance for Progressive Judaism, a partnership between Liberal Judaism and the Movement for Reform Judaism.

Charley's remit is to develop projects that the two movements will work on jointly to advance Progressive Judaism, its principles and ethos in the UK. She will be fostering a number of new ventures, one of which will be the establishment of an Israel Desk to increase engagement with our members and partners in Israel.

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, senior rabbi to the Movement for Reform Judaism, said: "This appointment crystallises a very strong relationship, and enables us to work together on areas of mutual interest and strength for the benefit of each of our movements, and for Jews in Britain as a whole."

The Alliance for Progressive Judaism was formed in September 2014 and sees the Liberal and Reform movements working together in a number of areas including, but not limited to, education, chaplaincy and the Leo Baeck College, as well as both the European and World Unions of Progressive Judaism.

Charley has also been appointed as rabbi to South Bucks Jewish Community. She has left Kingston Liberal Synagogue after 10 fantastic years.



Bright start back in old home



Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah leads the service at the BHPS official opening, and then joins Christopher Gebbie, Peter Speck and Rabbi Danny Rich

AFTER FIVE YEARS away, the community at Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue (BHPS) have returned to the building that they first converted from a gymnasium back in 1937.

The debut event to take place in the redeveloped, state-of-the-art, synagogue was Shabbat Chanukkah in December, when the congregation celebrated their return to 6 Lansdowne Road with a day of joy and fun. The official opening took place on Sunday February 7 with Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah, BHPS chair Peter Speck and the congregation welcoming guests from the wider Jewish and interfaith communities.

Dignitaries at the opening included Liberal Judaism's senior rabbi, Rabbi Danny Rich, chair Simon Benscher, Peter Kyle MP (Hove), the Mayor of Brighton and Hove Cllr Lynda Hyde, Cllr Warren Morgan and Deputy Lieutenant Christopher Gebbie OBE.

Peter Speck said: "This new building is a tangible representation of the inclusive and Progressive vision that Rabbi Elli has spent the last 15 years tirelessly working towards making a reality. Every one of us should feel a sense of accomplishment."

The last service held at BHPS took place in 2011 when the building, in need of modernisation, was vacated.

Today, the 'new' synagogue offers a large sanctuary, office, library, social area, educational rooms, pastoral care, kitchen and toilets over two floors.

On entering the sanctuary, congregants and visitors are immediately confronted with an impressive Ark at the front, creating a vivid focal point.

Peter added: "The timber Ark has been built by a creative carpenter and makes a bold statement in its rainbow hues, about inclusion and diversity, proclaiming a welcoming message to all those who wish to journey with the community."

To find out more about BHPS, please visit www.bhps-online.org

Emotional farewell at South Bucks



By Helen Cohen and Dick Vardy

South Bucks Jewish Community (SBJC) held a Shabbat service to say farewell, but decidedly not goodbye, to their rabbi of nine years - Rachel Benjamin.

The service was created and led by three retired chairs, and the current SBJC chair, who gave their own tributes and recollections. The involvement of past barmitzvah, batmitzvah and Kabbalat

Torah students demonstrated Rachel's success in teaching.

The service finished in the traditional SBJC way with a big Kiddush, an exchange of presents and some emotional individual 'thank you's'. All wished Rachel good luck in her new role at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue and filled a 'memory' book. SBJC looks forward to welcoming Rabbi Charley Baginsky during 2016.

Paul's dream comes true



GILLIAN DAWSON, chair of Wessex Liberal Jewish Community, presented a silver Kiddush cup to Paul Burridge, following his admission to Judaism.

The community's Anne Szewczyk said: "Paul has been attending our services for a long time and has finally received his dream certificate from the Beit Din. A special Kiddush was served with many of our members and Paul's close family enjoying a party atmosphere."

Anna goes to Eastbourne



By Ruth Selo

REGULAR READERS of *lj today* will remember Anna Posner as an LJY-Netzer movement worker between 2011 and 2013. Younger readers will have been fortunate enough to have been to events led by Anna during her time as one of our enthusiastic and committed youth leaders. Anna's deep commitment to Liberal Judaism has now led her to train as a rabbi.

According to Anna, aged 27, she has wanted to be a rabbi since she was 13. Now putting that long-held ambition into reality, Anna is a first year rabbinic student at London's Leo Baeck College, embarking on the demanding five-year course leading to *semichah* (ordination) as a rabbi.

Anna says: "It has been amazing, stepping into the world of Leo Baeck and starting to realise what a variety of pathways the rabbinate can take you down. I would love to work in a provincial community in the future, but I am also interested in exploring prison chaplaincy and ways in which I may apply my rabbinate to creating wider social change. I am pleased to have the next four and a half years to explore my path."

Anna was brought up in Nottingham, where her family are members of Nottingham Liberal Synagogue. She went to Liverpool Hope University, gaining a degree in drama and religious studies. Following her time with LJY-Netzer, she went to Israel for two years where she worked as an educator on Shnat Netzer, the gap year programme for Liberal and Reform youth from around the world.

As part of their training, Leo Baeck students spend time in Progressive communities, developing their skills in leading services and community activities. Anna is spending one Shabbat a month with the Eastbourne Liberal Jewish Community (ELJC) until June.

Although ELJC, which was founded in 2001, has no rabbi, its lay leaders and rabbinic students run regular Shabbat and High Holy Days services, a Seder and popular events such as a summer beach barbecue service and Chanukkah party. Anna's services, incorporating plenty of singing and congregational participation, are proving very popular.

ELJC chair Suzanne King said: "We have been so lucky with our wonderful student rabbis over the last few years, and Anna is continuing that tradition. We look forward to her visits each month."



LIBERAL JUDAISM'S senior rabbi, Rabbi Danny Rich (pictured second from right), joined members of Bedfordshire Progressive Synagogue at Luton's Holocaust Memorial Day event – one of many featuring Liberal communities around the UK.

No barriers at Woodford



By Zara Fryer

MY COMMUNITY at Woodford Liberal Synagogue (WLS) has held two 'Shabbat Shelanu' ('Our Shabbat') services for members, and non-members, specially designed to be fully inclusive of those with learning disabilities. A third is planned for Saturday April 16 and will be a Pesach-themed event. The service will be led by Rabbi Richard Jacobi.

I have been lucky enough to be involved in organising these, working with Richard – as well as Mich Sampson and Candy Parfitt – to ensure there were no barriers preventing people with disabilities from participating in, and gaining meaning from, the service.

The two services so far have been wonderful occasions, with songs that encouraged us to feel celebratory, tranquil and reflective. The theme for the first service was blessings, and I must say I feel blessed to be a member of WLS.

From the moment we put forward the idea for an inclusive service, we received overwhelming support. Members of the congregation and cheder have given their time in a number of ways, including planning and writing the service, attending meetings, moving furniture, guillotining, cutting, sticking and snapping glow sticks.

We are also especially grateful to the NLPS Trust for Progressive Judaism for their grant, covering the cost of the specialist equipment needed.

WLS members Jenni Kirstein and Bernice Cole, who participated in the second service, said: "Seeing some new faces, and the opportunity for everyone to be involved, made it such a unique occasion. The event was so successful and we can't wait for it to be repeated."

If you would like to join us at Woodford for the next service – which will express the traditions of Passover through music, multisensory experiences and prayer – then please contact me on 07976 007735 or zara@woodfordliberal.org.uk

Eighty years of Liberal Judaism in the Midlands

Joe Seager on a special Shabbat service at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue



Picture by Charles Davis (info@professionalphotography.me.uk)

THE NEEDS of refugees fleeing poverty and persecution was the focal point of a special Shabbat service to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Birmingham Progressive Synagogue (BPS).

Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi told the congregation how, in the current climate of increasingly "difficult and worrying times", vital work to protect the rights of the oppressed was being carried out by interfaith groups on a combined scale in the city. She reported how this not only gives refugees a stronger sense of security, but also makes Birmingham's own community feel safer at a time of heightened fears and uncertainty.

She added: "Birmingham is becoming a city of sanctuary for those who seek help, and at BPS we maintain our pledge to play a part in giving that support."

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Cllr Raymond Hassall, applauded the many benefits provided by BPS throughout the community and further afield, including to a school in Gambia. Cllr Hassall was one of many senior figures at the service.

Dignitaries included Stephen Goldstein, the deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Jonnie Turpie, the High Sheriff of the West Midlands, Janet Richardson, deputy Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, and Cllr Barry Henley.

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, president of Liberal Judaism, was in attendance along with four vice presidents - Sharon Goldstein, David Lipman, Corinne Oppenheimer and Henry Cohn.

BPS president Frank Maxwell welcomed guests and acknowledged the contribution made by chair Val Harrison, and members of the executive, to ensure a service worthy of the occasion.

Each principal guest received a copy of *Responding to the Call: A Life of Liberal Jewish Commitment*, a book in honour of Rabbi Harry Jacobi - father of Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi - who, in his 90th year, continues to serve Liberal Judaism.

Be part of the EUPJ Biennial

THE 2016 European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) Biennial Conference will take place in London from April 14-17.

The conference will look at inter and intra faith issues, the challenges facing our relationship with Israel, community building and leadership development.

It will give you the opportunity to meet fellow Progressive Jews from Europe and around the globe, finding out more about their Jewish world and the challenges they face. By building those bridges, you will have that chance to recharge your Jewish batteries and return to your own community refreshed and energised.

For more, please visit www.eupj.org

Another first as Judaism returns to Scarborough

THE FIRST Shabbat service to be held in Scarborough "in living memory" will take place on Saturday March 5.

An offshoot of the successful York Liberal Jewish Community - which launched 18 months ago and is now attracting in excess of 60 people to its fortnightly events - the Scarborough service is a response to demand from a number of Jewish and mixed faith families living in the town.

It will be held at the Albemarle Baptist Church on Albemarle Crescent and led by Student Rabbi Daniel Lichman. The plan is to host quarterly services in

Scarborough over the next year, should there prove to be sufficient demand.

Ben Rich, chair of York Liberal Jewish Community, said: "The speed with which the community has grown in York has taken everyone by surprise.

"With a number of members from the Scarborough area, the natural next step was to offer even more local services and test the response. We hope that, in addition to members travelling from York and the local families who have already come forward, we will find that - with a university, college and hospital - we are meeting an unfulfilled need in the town."

Bet Tikvah joins project to save lives abroad

Anthony Kerstein on a bid to prevent the thousands of refugee deaths each winter



WORLD JEWISH RELIEF'S Gifts in Kind programme ran for 12 years under the management of Rosalind Bluestone. I was proud that my Liberal community, Bet Tikvah in Barkingside, was a collection point, and that I was part of a large, loyal and committed team of volunteer packers. Sadly this programme was terminated, mainly due to the obstructive attitude of the political establishment of the recipient countries in Eastern Europe at that time.

It was not long after Rosalind was made redundant, that she was contacted by several Eastern European recipient communities she had worked with and also by Max Veenstra, the founder of the large Dutch charity HRIF.

Together they created Goods For Good (www.goodsforgood.org.uk) – a charity that has become the British response to help millions of victims of poverty, tragedy, war and disasters around the

world – all of whom are trying to survive without basic goods such as clothing, shoes, blankets, duvets, medicines and hygiene products.

Currently a big effort has been directed towards the refugees in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, where the conditions

beggar belief. In the bitter cold, there are 1.8 million people scattered over three provinces – Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyah – all existing in tents and makeshift huts. Last winter, more than 6,000 children died of hypothermia.

Many of the refugees there have lost everything – their homes and possessions, their livelihoods and loved ones, their dignity. They have also lost hope. A Polish Jew called David, who lost family in the Holocaust, visited one camp in Kurdistan, representing the charity.

David heard stories of missing family members and kidnapped children, of ISIS atrocities and kids being sold as slaves for \$50 each. Small children wept and told David how they'd witnessed their parents and beloved family members being killed – with deplorable violence and decapitations. They trembled, as they recalled the many horrors that they had somehow escaped.

Protected behind barbed wire to keep them safe, David was chilled by the sight – as pictures of the Holocaust flashed through his head. Hitler gave numbers. Each of these children had a name.

The charity also hasn't forgotten the Jews and others in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, the Baltics, Serbia, Romania and Israel, where they also send monthly consignments.

In Ukraine, 1.5 million people fled from war-torn regions, with only the clothes on their backs and a few small bags of possessions. They are now trying to survive in sub-zero temperatures, which will kill many of the more vulnerable and weak. Many live in temporary shelter, halfway houses, or in cold dark basements with no ventilation.

Goods For Good and HRIF have been inundated with desperate cries for help and are working on the ground in all these areas to give a lifeline to those who have been displaced.

Working in co-operation with local charities, Christian churches and interfaith groups, in the past 19 months, the charity has sent 40 consignments, valued at over £2.5million.

Bet Tikvah is now a collection point for Goods For Good and I hope that, after reading this article, other Liberal communities will join in this enterprise that ticks all boxes for *tikkun olam*.

If you can help by donating warm clothes, funds, time or a place to act as a collection point, please contact Rosalind on rosalind@goodsforgood.org.uk or 01582 540 521.

Family connections

WHEN Rabbi Danny Rich, Liberal Judaism's senior rabbi, preached recently at South Bucks Jewish Community, he was delighted to see a husband and wife who had been members back when he was the rabbi at Kingston Liberal Synagogue – and, prior to that, members of Finchley Progressive Synagogue and South London Liberal Synagogue.

Now happily settled at South Bucks, where one of their daughters and two of their grandchildren are already involved, they mentioned their second daughter and two further grandchildren who live near Stevenage. A month later and Stevenage Liberal Synagogue has a new family, Liberal Judaism gains a third generation and Danny is "feeling smug".

THE NEXT meeting of the NLPS Trust for Progressive Judaism will be held on Thursday April 7. Should your community or group wish to apply for funding, please contact the Trust's Administrator, Sandra Greenberg, on admin@nlpstrust.org.uk to request a grant application form. More details can be found on the Trust's website www.nlpstrust.org.uk

To date, 180 grants have been awarded by the NLPS Trust amounting to more than £0.5million. The average grant has been £3,500.

Trustees determine which projects, in their view, will make the most effective use of the funds available.

Grant application forms must be returned by Friday March 4.

Silence is golden

IMAGINE a group of Jews sitting together in silence and enjoying the experience...

Silence is a key motif in Mosaic Liberal Synagogue's contemplative Friday night service, Kabbalat Shabbat. Now in its third year, it is led by Esther Aronsfeld.

The successful services are attracting people from across Harrow's Mosaic spectrum, with members of Mosaic Reform and Hatch End Masorti attending.

Esther told *lj today*: "A contemplative service gives you time to pause between prayers and think about what you're saying, with music and rituals that help deepen your connection to yourself, to others and to the Divine."

Kabbalat Shabbat takes place at 7pm on the first Friday of alternate months.

A batmitzvah recipe to help others



Hannah and her recipe book

By Hannah Davis

FOR MY upcoming batmitzvah at Crouch End Chavurah, I am raising money for the campaign Too Young To Marry, set up by the charity Plan UK.

In the developing world, one in

three girls are married by the time they are 15 years old. Every couple of seconds, a girl - not a woman - will become a bride. Victims of child marriage often have children very early, before their bodies are ready and, in the course of one year, roughly 70,000 will die in labour.

The minute they say "I do", not only are these girls stripped of happy lives, and of their dreams and ideas. They are also stripped of hope.

The stats cannot begin to tell you the individual torment of each and every child bride. Being a child bride almost guarantees poverty, hunger and severe lack of health care. A lot experience much worse, such as torture, abuse, violence, beatings, rape and constant danger.

In ancient times, reaching the age of batmitzvah meant a girl was often seen as ready to get married. To us in the UK, today, that quite rightly sounds ridiculous and cruel. However, girls my age in places like Yemen, India and Niger can be, and often are, viewed as of marriage age and forced to grow up before they're physically or mentally ready. This simply is not right, and it must stop.

One way to help the fight is to raise money and, with that in mind, I have compiled a book of recipes kindly sent to me by friends and family. You can read one of my favourites on the right. So far, we have sold 112 recipe books and, combined with some odd jobs I've done, have raised a total of £1,215.

If you are interested in buying a copy of the recipe book for yourself, or for a lucky friend, please email d.crewe@me.com

Your benevolence is worth more to these girls than you can possibly know.

Triple chocolate cookies

This recipe was originally from Tanya Burr's book *Love, Tanya*, but when Olivia and I made them we edited a few things. These cookies are actual tiny pieces of heaven, and delicious with a glass of milk sitting in the Norbury family's back garden. I am aware that the exact location given isn't possible to everyone (poor, unfortunate souls), but it is the optimal place to experience and appreciate these cookies.

To make 10 cookies (or 11 to 13, according to Olivia) you will need:

- 200g butter
- 200g caster sugar
- One large egg
- 275g self-raising flour
- 75g cocoa powder
- A little dash of milk
- Half a bar each of white, milk and dark chocolate, plus three Daim bars

1. Pre-heat your oven to 200° C.
2. Whizz together your butter and sugar until it's a smooth consistency.
3. Crack in the egg and then put in your dry ingredients and blend it.
4. If your mixture looks too dry, add some milk.
5. Now for the chocolate... break it all up and throw into your mixture. Don't forget those Daim bars!
6. Once you've mixed the chocolate in, line two trays with baking paper or foil and then prepare to get messy.
7. Use your hands to separate the mixture into 10 (or 11 to 13, according to Olivia) blobs*.
8. Now pop your chocolately blobs* in the oven for 11 minutes - I have found this to be the perfect baking time. When you take them out they will not look cooked; it is vital you know this, as it will be very tempting to leave them in for longer and then they'll be hard once they are cool.
9. Leave the cookies to cool for about 30 minutes. Olivia and I use this period to take artistic photos of the cookies, catch up and laugh. You too can use this time productively.

* Tanya Burr says 'blobs', which we think is very vague. I encourage you to be creative. How about star, heart or letter shaped 'blobs'? THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!

Friday night winner



GLoucestershire Liberal Jewish Community (GLJC) gathered most of its members together in January for a simultaneous Friday night dinner party.

Eighty people united in nine houses around the county, enjoying home cooked food contributed by those taking part. Members were grouped together into convenient geographical locations to cut down the travelling time.

The event was the brainchild of Rabbi Anna Gerrard, in order to give a unique opportunity for members to enjoy each

other's company, get to know new people and set up social opportunities to improve the cohesiveness of a small but growing Jewish community.

GLJC's Louise Radford said: "The dinner party was a tremendous success and it could become a regular annual event. This is another example of Anna's abilities to develop stronger community links and encourage membership. It shows that the GLJC is a vibrant community of Jewish and potential Jewish members of all ages."

'We owe Eleanor a debt of gratitude'



By Dr Susan Cohen

SOME READERS of this article will be familiar with the name Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946), the Independent MP who, besides being the architect of the family allowance, which became law in 1945, gained a reputation during her lifetime as the 'MP for refugees'. Her campaigning on behalf of endangered Jews, in and from Nazi occupied Europe before and during the Second World War was determined and persistent.

As 2016 marks the 70th anniversary of Eleanor's death, it is a fitting time to reflect on her contribution to society in general, and more specifically to the rescue and welfare of refugees. She was, first and foremost, a humanitarian activist who, as a social and welfare reformer, suffragist and feminist, local councillor and Justice of the Peace, championed the cause of the underrepresented in society, regardless of race, religion or gender.

Her election to parliament in 1929, as the Independent member for the Combined English Universities, gave her a powerful new platform from which to take up feminist causes, notably against child marriage in India and Palestine. But international affairs took on a new significance with Hitler's election to power in Germany in January 1933, and she was the only female politician to warn her fellow MPs, in April 1933, of the danger posed by the new regime. She boldly warned of the threat to world peace and to the lives of Jews and others, whose only crime, she said, was to belong to a "particular race or religion or profess certain political views".

A staunch anti-fascist, anti-Nazi and anti-appeaser, Eleanor saw a human disaster looming in Europe, as the events of 1938 unfolded, from the annexation of Austria, the Munich Agreement and the occupation of the Sudetenland to the events of Kristallnacht.

Eleanor was thrown almost headlong into a new refugee crisis – vastly different from helping rescue children from the Basque combat zone during the Spanish Civil War in 1937 – as she sought, initially, to help save the endangered Czechs who had sought temporary safety in Prague.

To facilitate her work, Eleanor established her Parliamentary Committee on Refugees in November 1938, a cross-party, purely voluntary committee, which soon had 200 supporters and a small core of activists. She funded the committee herself and spearheaded activities, challenging the government to issue more visas, relax entry criteria and make good their promise of a financial loan to the Czechs.

Following the outbreak of war, Eleanor turned her attention to refugees at home, the so-called 'enemy aliens' who were caught up, especially after May 1940, in the newly introduced policy of mass internment. Defending their right to be treated fairly and humanely, which Eleanor held to be an article of faith within the British spirit, she became their most vociferous advocate.

Camps were visited, support was enlisted from any quarter she thought could help and she took up innumerable individual cases, responding personally and kindly to distressed refugees and their relatives.

Eleanor's second committee, the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, set up in late 1942, attempted, unsuccessfully, to get news of the atrocities more widely publicised through the BBC and the press, and to engage the government in small scale rescue schemes.

The effect on Eleanor's health was immense, and contributed to her untimely death.

The Remembering Eleanor Rathbone group – a voluntary committee made up of just two individuals – are arranging a series of events to celebrate Eleanor and all her achievements.

Organisations, schools, universities, individuals - including members of the Rathbone family - and parliamentarians are working with, and supporting us to ensure that Eleanor receives the recognition she so richly deserves.

We urge the Jewish community to embrace this opportunity, for we owe Eleanor a special debt of gratitude. Without her personal sacrifices and commitment, Jewish refugees would not have had such a powerful and humanitarian advocate and ally during the 1930s and 1940s.

For more information, and to get involved, please visit our website www.rememberingeleanorrathbone.wordpress.com

• Dr Susan Cohen is the author of *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees*. Picture of Eleanor Rathbone printed with the kind permission of Philip Norton Collins.

Living in the Jewish Community with Mental Illness

Tuesday 1st March 2016

Doors open 6.30pm
7.00 – 9.00pm

Martin B. Cohen Centre
Edgware, HA8 9GL

Cost £5, pre-booking essential. To reserve your place please call Emma on 020 8458 2225, email headroom@jamiuk.org or visit www.jamiuk.org/headroom

Come and join us to hear a range of experiences from across the Jewish community. Hear how we found the tools to re-join our communities and how we feel about the community's response to mental illness.

This special evening event will be chaired by our Chief Executive Laurie Rackind.

Head Room

Courses, seminars & events

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The Mental Health Service for our Community



LJY-Netzer is Liberal Judaism's Zionist youth movement. It gives young people the opportunity to develop a strong Progressive Jewish identity, make lasting friendships and have loads of fun

Two ways to spend your summer



THE SUMMER is drawing closer and you know what that means... lots of great LJY-Netzer events.

Machaneh Kadimah is our amazing two week summer camp in August – an inspiring, uplifting celebration of being young, Jewish and Liberal. Kadimah is a dynamic community, which grows and changes each year but keeps a feeling of inclusivity and friendship.

We run a range of amazing activities from singing and drama to discos and huge foam fights (pictured above). We have a fully stocked art room and an indoor swimming pool. As well as all the amazing activities on site, there is also an away day – last year we went to a theme park, to the beach and played laser tag. That is on top of all the fantastic informal education and prayer, where LJY-Netzer makes Judaism cool.

Get in contact with Anna Craven by emailing anna@liberaljudaism.org to find out more about Kadimah.

Last Month, we launched our Europe tour **Kayitz Netzer** – a joint event with Reform Synagogue Youth (RSY) for 17 year olds. This trip sends around 40 young people to three European countries over 10 days, to explore their Jewish identity and where they came from.

This is a unique tour in the Jewish world, as Kayitz looks at diaspora Jewry and visits Croatia, Bosnia and Austria. All under the leadership of two trained youth leaders and an excellent student rabbi in Daniel Lichman.

This trip is designed specifically for the age group doing their A levels. It is tailored to give people a break, going on holiday with friends in some of the most beautiful countries in Europe and exploring them in a safe environment. It is a tour with more freedom and independence than any other we offer, combined with not demanding the responsibilities of being over 18.

Additionally, Kayitz is very much focused on identity, exploring who we are, where we came from and what it means to be a diaspora Jew. These are questions that are highly pertinent as people are making their important life choices.

So, come on Kayitz and enjoy the beauty of Croatia, marvel at the history of Vienna and explore what Sarajevo means for all of us today. Find out more about a story that links Zionism and the origins of Liberal Judaism.

Kayitz Netzer 5776 runs from August 15-25. For more information contact Sam Alston on sam@liberaljudaism.org

Veidah: The top five motions

VEIDAH is LJY-Netzer's decision making event, where members aged 14-25 directly shape the direction and ideology of our youth movement. Many motions are passed, but here is a snapshot of five key decisions:

1) LJY-Netzer should create more opportunities to work and learn with Muslim youth.

A greater focus on interfaith events was seen as important to improve friendships and combat hatred.

2) There should be a dedicated block of time on *mechinah* (preparation days) for creativity and innovation.

LJY-Netzer prides itself on its informal education and creative prayer. Therefore, we are now going to facilitate sessions that will get our members' creative juices flowing.

3) Kinus – our decision making event for younger members - can select a charity for a fundraiser.

For the past two years, our younger members have done a charity hike in aid of a cause that they have chosen. This has now been formalised.

4) To encourage Liberal Judaism to make a formal statement never to invest in fossil fuel companies.

In December, LJY-Netzer ran a amazing trip to the Climate Change Conference and at Veidah green issues were a hot topic.

5) LJY-Netzer should actively engage with the Union of Jewish Students to make Jewish societies more Progressive friendly.

University JSocs should better reflect the entire Jewish community and welcome Progressive students.

Contact the **LJY-Netzer** team: **Anna Craven** (annac@liberaljudaism.org), **Sam Alston** (sam@liberaljudaism.org) and **Tom Francies** (tom@liberaljudaism.org); office telephone 020 7631 0584

Congregations

Bedfordshire Progressive Synagogue

T: 0845 869 7105
E: bedsp@liberaljudaism.org
W: bedfordshire-ps.org.uk

Beit Klal Yisrael (Notting Hill)

E: bkymailing@gmail.com
W: bky.org.uk

Bet Tikvah Synagogue (Barkingside)

T: 020 8554 9682
E: bttkv@liberaljudaism.org
W: bettikvah.blogspot.co.uk

Birmingham Progressive Synagogue

T: 0121 634 3888
E: bps@liberaljudaism.org
W: bpsjudaism.com

Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue

T: 01273 737 223
E: info@bhps-online.org
W: bhps-online.org

Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation

E: bwppjc@bwppjc.org
W: bwppjc.org

Crouch End Chavurah

E: info@crouchendchavurah.co.uk
W: crouchendchavurah.co.uk

Crawley Jewish Community

T: 01293 534 294

Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation

E: djpc@liberaljudaism.org
W: djpcireland.com

Ealing Liberal Synagogue

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W: ealingliberalsynagogue.org.uk

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E: eljc@liberaljudaism.org
W: eljc.org.uk

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

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W: eljc.org

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E: hjc@liberaljudaism.org
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Kehillah North London

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E: knl@liberaljudaism.org
W: nljpc.org.uk

Kent Liberal Jewish Community

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E: enquiries@kljc.org.uk
W: www.kljc.org.uk

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W: klsonline.org

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W: jewsinyork.org.uk

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