

Sukkat Shalom April 2010

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

Chair: Gillian Raab, chair@eljc.org
Secretary: Nancy Warren, secretary@eljc.org
Newsletter: Hannah Holtschneider, newsletter@eljc.org
Treasurer: Jonathan Broadie, treasurer@eljc.org
Membership: Maureen Mackinnon, membership@eljc.org

Community Phone: 0131 777 8024 Email info@eljc.org Web www.eljc.org

Events and Services

Date 2 April

Event Shabbat Morning Service

Time 7pm

Date 9 April

Event Short Kaballat Shabbat Service

Time 6.15pm

Date 17 April

Event Shabbat Morning Service

Time 11am

Date 16-18 April

Event Liberal Judaism Biennial Weekend

for details see p. 2

Date 23 April

Event Erev Shabbat Service followed by Community Meal, please bring a non-meat dish to share. Rabbi Mark will be leading.

Time 7.00pm

Date 24 April

Event Cantillation class

Time 10-11am

Event Tea and Talmud

Time 11am-1pm

Venue Not yet confirmed. Regulars will be informed. Others should contact Kristi for cantillation: kristilong66@yahoo.com or Lindsay: lindsay.levy@googlemail.com for Talmud.

Date 25 April

Event Choosing Judaism

Venue usual location

Time 10.30am

Date 25 April

Event Induction of Rabbi Mark Solomon

for details see below

INDUCTION of RABBI MARK SOLOMON
with Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of
Liberal Judaism

at St Mark's Unitarian Church
Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2DP
on Sunday 25th April 2010

Service to commence at **4 pm**

ELJC support line

07904 813162



Use this number if you have an emergency and really need to speak to someone. It goes to one of our members. Otherwise please leave a message on the community phone and we will respond as soon as possible.

Contents

Page 2	<i>Future Dates, Liberal Judaism</i>
Page 3	<i>Pesach Message from L.J. Hudson</i>
Page 5	<i>Chairman's Word</i>
Page 6	<i>Sukkat Shalom - Our Purpose and Values</i>
Page 7	<i>Community Matters</i>
Page 8	<i>Interfaith and Other Events</i>

Future Dates

Our regular schedule is as follows:

First Friday of each Calendar month

Erev shabbat service

The shabbat morning 2 weeks after this

Shabbat morning service

Weekends when no other service

Short kabbalat shabbat service

May 2010

Fri 7	Erev Shabbat
Tues 18	Erev Shavuot
W/end 21/23	Rabbi visiting
Sat 22	Shabbat morning service at Newstead, Scottish Borders, followed by lunch and a chance to explore the Roman Fort at Newstead in the afternoon. Details of location and coordination of transport for those who need lifts will be in the next newsletter.

June 2010

Fri 4	Erev Shabbat
W/end 18/20	Rabbi visiting
20th June	Memorial Stone Setting for Frederick Broadie, Dean Cemetery

July 2010

Fri 2	Erev Shabbat
W/end 16/18	Rabbi visiting (to be confirmed)

August 2010

Fri 6	Erev Shabbat TENT service
W/end 20/23	Rabbi visiting

September 2010

Fri 3	Erev Shabbat service
Wed 8	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Thurs 9	Rosh Hahanah
Fri 17	Kol Nidre
Sat 18	Yom Kippur

Cheder dates

April	24th
May	8th and 29th
June	12th and 26th



Liberal Judaism Biennial

Weekend 16th - 18th April

Places are selling out fast for Liberal Judaism's Biennial Weekend. Don't miss this great opportunity to meet and mingle with Liberal Jewish friends old and new, and to enjoy an exciting programme of events in the beautiful setting of the Tortworth Court Hotel, Wotton-under-Edge, Worcestershire.

Visit our Website www.liberaljudaism.org/biennial and book now.

Greening the Synagogue

At its September 2009 meeting the Board of Deputies passed a resolution "urging Synagogues/organisations to take practical steps, as soon as possible, to make their premises environmentally friendly and energy-efficient". A Tool Kit to help with this can be downloaded here:

http://www.liberaljudaism.org/pdf/Greening_Synagogues_Toolkit.pdf.

Further information is available in this letter:

http://www.liberaljudaism.org/pdf/Greening-Synagogues_Letter.pdf.

Dying with Dignity

"The time has come to 'out' death and dying", writes Liberal Judaism's Chairman, Lucian J Hudson, in a piece published in the Guardian on Saturday 6th March:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2010/mar/06/dying-death-disorient>.

Lucian's call comes after Liberal Judaism joined the national *Dying Matters Coalition* (<http://www.dyingmatters.org>), a project of the National Council for Palliative Care. *Dying Matters* aims to make a good death the norm by encouraging people not to leave the issue of death till the last minute, but to make plans and discuss them with their friends, loved ones and carers.

Please contact PR Officer Alexandra Ben-Yehuda (alexandra@liberaljudaism.org), Chairman Lucian J. Hudson (l.hudson@liberaljudaism.org), or Rabbi Aaron Goldstein (rabbiaaron@npls.org) for more information or to share your ideas.

Celebrating 200 Years of Progressive Judaism

On 17 July 1810 Israel Jacobson held the first Reform Service in the "Temple" at his school in Seesen. It as a significant event that was to lead to the world-wide Liberal/Reform/Progressive Movement.

Rabbi Andrew and Sharon Goldstein are organising an EUPJ tour in Germany to mark this historic anniversary. On Saturday 17 July 2010 there will be a special service in Berlin with a celebratory dinner that night. Next day the group will travel to Seesen as well as Halberstadt (the birthplace of Jacobson) and Dessau (the birthplace of Moses Mendelssohn as well as the 20th century Bauhaus Style).

There are three options of tour to choose from: Full Tour (5 nights, €1,225 pp), Shorter Tour (4 nights, €890 pp), Shortest Tour (3 nights, €650 pp).

For further details and a comprehensive brochure contact Sharon Goldstein on sgoldstein@fs2.com or on 01923-822818.

Pesach Message from Lucian J. Hudson, Chairman of Liberal Judaism

Liberal Judaism and "wicked" problems

A "wicked" problem in my line of business (consultancy) is defined as a problem that does not lend itself easily to a solution, and might never do. Even if a solution is possible in one area, it produces consequences which make any solution fraught with a new set of problems. It is to tackling wicked problems that I feel much of my professional life is committed. If the problem were easy, we would not need to worry about it. Maths, and a mathematical brain, can help us with a lot of problems, simple and complex, but one needs more than a mathematical brain to work on wicked problems. As one of my heroes, Einstein said, "At the cradle of great science and art lies a mystery."

With its questing and questioning disposition, Liberal Judaism is the Jewish movement which is most unabashed in working with wicked problems. Sometimes before we can have peace, let alone lasting prosperity, there must be trouble. Liberal Jews exist to make trouble, trouble-shoot and take the trouble in areas where others might be reluctant to go. All Jews can identify with this sentiment- but in my view, I believe that Liberal Judaism is particularly well-placed to fulfil this historic role.

Liberal Judaism has began its two-year process to produce a strategy for its future at the 2012 Biennial Weekend. Whatever content emerges, the very act of engaging more purposefully internally and externally will enrich our tradition and explore what we are for ourselves and for others at a time of great change for Judaism.

When anybody asks why Liberal Judaism needs a strategy, I draw on some of the comments that have been made to me in the course of my visits and meetings. At last December Channukah reception at Number 10, I was introduced to one of the PM's senior policy advisers who said with a straight face, "Liberal Judaism? That's a ginger group, isn't it?" Then last month, as I sat opposite a distinguished former Church of England bishop, who exuded in erudition, I was asked, "Liberal Judaism? Are you Tony Bayfield's lot?" When I told him that though Rabbi Bayfield was a most esteemed colleague who worked tirelessly for Anglo-Jewry cross-community collaboration, he was in fact Reform, my Bishop elegantly redeemed himself. "Aah, now I remember," he reflected, "You are strong on values, aren't you?"

I over-schmoozed, even by my own standards. I said something like, "Liberal Judaism stands to learn a lot from the Church of England." By this I meant that far from joining the predictable critics of the C of E and accusing it of not settling some key issues once and for all, we should see the genius of a church that puts value on evolution rather than blind application of doctrine. Communities and individuals evolve over generations and tradition is not set in stone but in the lives of the people who live that tradition.

Liberal Judaism is a movement that befriends anxiety. Anxiety is a most healthy thing, particularly when handled constructively. We see a world riddled with anxiety, and the challenge is not to deny or suppress it, but give it creative and useful expression.

As we prepare for Pesach, we are blessed with reminders of its significance- everything from the birth of freedom, to the power of spiritual transformation right through what do we tell our children (and in the case of the "wicked" child, what children can tell us!).

One of the joys of preparing for joining Judaism (my conversion was 5 years ago this coming month), was becoming more familiar with the main festivals. Pesach has always held a special place since I started my Jewish journey, and particularly this year as it coincides with my first Pesach as Chairman of the movement, and, roughly, with Easter. As a former Catholic, and one who had the benefit of a French Jesuit education (and in Paris to boot- a triple-whammy of an education!), part of the journey has been about bringing together the different influences that have shaped my own sense of identity. When I was asked at my Rabbinic Board about my Jesuit education, I think that I must have shocked, amused and puzzled the Board. Because I emphasised that what I thought my Jesuit education and Liberal Judaism had in common: a realisation that human reason must be tested to destruction, yet allow for the limits of human rationality as something inexplicably positive.

I visited Kingston Liberal Synagogue last week. Rabbi Charley Baginsky, one of our most inspiring and inspirational rabbis, asked to speak on the theme of Jewish Identity. I was the last of outside speakers who had spoken at her evening institute this term, so I chose to speak less about definitions of Jewish identity, and more about what I find particularly intriguing - and often difficult- about identity. Is identity about what makes us the same as others, or different? Is it something we choose for ourselves, or something that chooses us?

If we take our inspiration from Jews who have made Jewishness problematic, not just for themselves, but for others - and my preferred selection is Moses, Jesus, Spinoza, Marx, Freud and Einstein (and that's just for starters) - by the time we reach the 21st century I wonder whether what was marginal and edgy in the history of our people now has the power to be mainstream. Being Jewish is more than one thing. A movement which can accommodate those who follow a tradition and those who question that tradition yet still define themselves in relation to it can only add to the survival of Judaism. Humanity after the collapse of overt ideologies is looking for positive examples of what it is to be human and to have a purpose. Tapping the power of different ideas can give us a renewed sense of purpose.

This past week we had a row erupt over our decision to let out a meeting room to another Jewish organization which invited a speaker who is unacceptable to some other Jews, including the venerable Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Interestingly, the Jewish Leadership Council -of which I am member- was publicly silent on this controversy, but from what I could discern expressed two perfectly compatible views: first, some of its members may well have questioned the decision; but secondly, they also see Liberal Judaism holding a special place in Anglo-Jewry, reaching -as in the old Heineken beer advertisement- parts that others cannot reach.

So I conclude this reflection with two ideas for Liberal Judaism and those with whom we engage. Liberal Judaism is a movement that puts value on having values, and by extension, only freedom of speech guarantees respect for those with views different from our own. We cannot carry on being children of the Sixties where freedom is seen as an unqualified good - but in setting limits, we think hard about the consequences of setting those limits, and we err on the side of freedom. In a contest between security and freedom, if we are to be realistic, security must always win. What is a bigger prize, however, is security with freedom.

For Liberal Jews, it is not enough to hold a principle (that is, take a position): one has to hold a space (that is, give a space in which the other, as well as oneself, finds expression). Understanding the tension that freedom brings is also to understand its unforeseen opportunity.

As we marvel over the leadership shown at the time of the Exodus, as Chairman of Liberal Judaism, I ask what is today's leadership challenge for us Liberal Jews. I suggest that the leadership challenge of our time is to give up on a false or forced coherence. Rather it is to embrace an emerging coherence born of a real and patient commitment to work through differences: sometimes to accept them, but more often than not, to appreciate them. And that's when we will achieve a lasting peace.

Spinoza discussion group

Regulars will have noticed the absence of the Spinoza discussion group from our April schedule. But don't despair, we are not finished. Rabbi Mark suggests this could take a lifetime if we have the stamina. We will be moving on to a discussion of Spinoza's Ethics at Rabbi Mark's next visit. Anyone wanting to join the group should email Maurice (webmaster@eljc.com).

From the Chairman

Since the last newsletter there are several Sukkat Shalom of events, so this will just be a simple report of each of them.

PURIM

We held another successful joint Purim event with the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. A spirited Megillah reading by Rabbi David Rose allowed us all to shake our greggers loudly and was followed by refreshments with hamentashen.



We then moved on to the Purim panto incorporating a talent show. The panto this year, authored by our own Nancy Lynner, was set in a country of Shushan beset by financial problems. The RBS (Royal Bank of Shushan) under the leadership of Fred Haman was in big trouble. All the troubles were resolved thanks to Esther and her Uncle Mordechai and the wonderful Jewish food they prepared for the banquet like the gefilte fish we see above. Thanks to everyone for their contributions and especially to the producer, our minor festivals co-ordinator Phil Wadler. Phil is seen here directing from the wings while Haman waits to go on stage.



The talent show included excellent contributions from both communities.

2010 AGM

This year's AGM took place on 7th March, later than it should have been. We must try to have it earlier next year. We had a good attendance and lively discussions. The Treasurer presented the accounts and we voted to maintain the subscription at the same level as last year. Further reports were presented from the Chairman and on religious affairs, adult education, cheder, membership and burials. I would like to highlight the education report especially, as this is an area in which we have moved on substantially during the past year. You will know from the newsletter announcements about all the classes that Rabbi Mark holds on his monthly visits, but you may not know that Norman Crane has been taking leading several groups in biblical Hebrew. In particular he is currently leading a class on late Sunday mornings on a fortnightly basis called **Reading and Understanding the Prayer Book**. A bare knowledge of Alef Bet is required for this group as gaining a degree of fluency in reading the Hebrew is one of the aims of the class. If you are interested in attending please contact Norman at Norman.Crane@googlemail.com.

Stew Green presented the "Purpose and Values" statement for Sukkat Shalom (see page 6 for details) and we agreed to adopt it. A new Council for 2010 was elected. The only change from the 2009 Council was that Joe Goldblatt has stepped down from the Council and his role as Membership Secretary as pressure of work makes a regular commitment difficult. He was heartily thanked for what he has done for the community during the relatively short time he has been here and we looked forward to his continuing to contribute in other ways. His place on Council will be taken by Sue Lieberman and Maureen Mackinnon will be taking over his role as Membership Secretary. Finally, we made a minor amendment to our constitution to appoint trustees, as required by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Seder 2010/5770

Our biggest seder ever (100+ members and guests) and a great success by all accounts. Not one seder but two with Rabbi Mark taking part in both the shorter one for those who needed to finish earlier. We used both ends of the new LJ Haggadah. We were fortunate to be in Marchmont St Giles Church Centre where we have been warmly welcomed and to have everything so well arranged by Judith of Butterflies Catering and her team of most efficient and forgiving helpers. Thanks too to members of the community who helped getting everything set up, though we sometimes gave Judith conflicting instructions. Judith's comment to me near the start said it all. "You have a lot of different traditions and customs among the people here". Photos will follow next month.

Sukkat Shalom – Our Purpose and Values

At the 2010 AGM Stew Green presented the following summary of our purpose and the values to which we aspire. He explained that he had prepared on behalf of the Council with a view to our using it in publicity and public statements. An extensive consultation process with contributions from a cross-section of the membership had modified it to its current form. The AGM voted to approve the statement with only one member present dissenting on the final paragraph on the Middle East. The following agreed text is shortly going to appear on our new web site. We hope that those members who were not able to be present at the AGM will also agree with it, and that we can all try our best to live up to the values that are expressed below.

Who we are

Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community, was established as an independent organisation in March 2004 and affiliated to Liberal Judaism in September 2004. We respect the Jewish tradition and preserve its values while aiming to give them contemporary force. We aspire to a Judaism that is an active force for good in the lives of Jewish individuals, families and communities and which works for the betterment of society as a whole. We have our own part-time Rabbi, Mark Solomon, who visits regularly and plays an active role in the life of the community. Rabbi Mark is available for rabbinic advice and support.

What we do

Services. We usually hold an Erev Shabbat service on the first Friday of each month and a Shabbat morning service in the middle of each month. We also hold short early evening Kabbalat Shabbat services on the Fridays of weekends when we do not hold other services. We hold services to mark all the major Jewish festivals as well as many minor ones. We also organise a communal Seder at Pesach.

Cheder. We have a small thriving cheder for the education of our children in Jewish knowledge and values which meets fortnightly in school term time.

Preparation for Bar / Bat Mitzvah. We offer additional one-to-one support for young people attending cheder and approaching their big day.

Kabbalat Torah Around the age of fifteen - later for adults - there is the option for an individual or group to formally affirm a commitment to Judaism and the community through making Kabbalat Torah within one of our Shabbat services.

Support for life-cycle events. We support the full range of life-cycle events including:

- baby naming (with access to a progressive mohel who can perform a brit milah);
- marriage and civil partnerships, including mixed faith marriage blessings and same-sex commitment ceremonies;
- burials and cremations, and services in a house of mourning for those "sitting shiva".

Adult education. We hold discussion groups to explore Talmud and other sources of traditional and non-traditional Jewish knowledge as well as to discuss practice. These generally take place during Rabbi Mark's regular visits to Edinburgh. Other adult education courses and events are provided from within the community.

Conversion support. We provide active support to those considering or undertaking conversion to Liberal Judaism, including classes in Judaism and basic Hebrew.

Social activities. We organise a number of social events and outings throughout the year linked often, but not exclusively, to the festivals and other significant Jewish dates.

Our aim

Our aim is to sustain our community and continue its development through the provision of services and activities which embody our values and Liberal Jewish identity and which embrace the wide diversity of our members' faith, practice and support needs.

Continued with Our Values on next page

Our values

Sukkat Shalom is an open, inclusive and evolving Liberal Jewish community. We provide a modern and relevant interpretation of Jewish life and practice and respect and embrace the diverse ways in which people express their Judaism and engage with it.

- We are warm and welcoming and offer a friendly hand to all those who want to share in Jewish companionship, worship and study.
- We particularly value difference and pride ourselves in embracing diversity in gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ability / disability and personal views. We are as welcoming to single people as we are to couples and families.
- We nurture and support those within our community who are vulnerable or in need of help and we endeavour to ensure that financial circumstances are never a barrier to full participation.
- We are committed to the pursuit of peace, social justice and care for the environment.
- We seek to play a positive role within wider society and the world at large.
- We welcome non-Jewish partners at our services and events and embrace them as part of our social network.

Where we stand on the Middle East

In agreeing these Purpose and Value statements, it is this one on Israel that has led to the most discussion and where people have expressed the most divergent views. Some members simply wish us to say that we support the State of Israel. Others urge that we include a statement in support of the rights for Palestinians and Arab Israelis as a first principle in our engagement with the Israeli State. Some of us would take issue with parts of the Liberal Judaism position on "Israel and Zionism" (2006), but others would be happy to endorse it, see http://www.liberaljudaism.org/lj_wherewestand_zionism.htm. Nevertheless we commit ourselves to building our community through mutual respect, regardless of our differences.

Community Matters

New Member

We are delighted to welcome Joanna Bleau as a new member. Many of you will already have met Joanna, husband Rudy and daughter Sophie. Joanna is a former member of Wembley Liberal synagogue. Some of us will have heard Sophie's accomplished singing of the four questions at the smaller of the two community seders and even more of us will have tasted Joanna's charoset.

It's a Building Site!

Our website (www.eljc.org) is long due an overhaul, and we have a new one growing in the wings. The outline is there, and now all that's needed is some time to copy material over from the current one, though sometimes it needs to be adapted a little. Could you spare a couple of hours to help with this? No technical knowledge needed - it's no harder than using a word processor. Please get in touch with Maurice (webmaster@eljc.org) if you could lend a hand.

Interfaith Events

www.eifa.org.uk

**Fair Trade Community Meal,
Monday 5th April, St John's
Church, Princes Street**



This event seeks to further promote the cause of making Scotland a Fair Trade Nation. There will be a short talk by Rachel Farey from the One World Shop and Betsy Reid from the Scottish Fair Trade Forum before the meal. There will also be the chance to taste Fairtrade products like olive oil, chocolate and herbs and spices.

Cooking will begin at around 5pm and we will aim to eat around 6:15pm.

Four Corners

The newsletter of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities is now available and copies can be picked up at our services. It is also on line at http://www.scojec.org/four_corners/four_corners.html

Riga Ghetto Museum - Call for Artefacts

The area of the Riga Ghetto is almost unique in Europe, because it has not undergone any architectural changes within last sixty years. More than 70,000 Latvian Jews were killed during the Holocaust, 20,000 Jews from Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary passed through the Riga Ghetto. The Riga Ghetto Museum will be located in the historical part of the city, behind the Central Market. For more information go to

http://www.shamir.lv/en/item/100-there_will_be_the_riga_ghetto_museum_in_riga.html

One of the sources of the exhibits may be the descendants of Latvian Jews who are today living dispersed across the world. If you have an item you think is suitable for this museum project, please contact Victoria Shaldova, Executive Director, Religious community "Shamir"; phone + 371 67270827, fax. + 371 67271793, shamir@shamir.lv www.shamir.lv.

**KLEZMER
KEILIDH
AND
WORKSHOP**
FEATURING
**CELTIC
SCHMELTER
QUARTET**
WITH YIDDISH DANCE CALLER SUE COOPER
Sunday 18 April
Workshop 2 till 3.30pm Keilidh 4 till 6.15pm
THE VOODOO ROOMS
19a Register Street, Edinburgh
Workshop £5
(conc £4/ Kids £2)
Keilidh £7 (conc £6, Kids £4)
Buy Both Discount is £10/ conc £8/ Kids £5
Tickets: USHER HALL BOX OFFICE 0131 228 1155
www.myspace.com/celterschmelter www.ceilidhculture.co.uk

Here are the details in case they are not legible.

Dance Workshop 2 - 3.30 pm .Keilidh 4 - 6.15pm

The Voodoo Rooms ballroom, 19a West Register S
All welcome, no experience necessary!

Workshop £5.00 (Concession £4. under 12 £2.00)
£7.00 (concession £6.00, childr 12 £4.00)

Discount for both events: £10, £6, children £3

Tickets from Usher hall Box Office 0131 228 1155 or
on the door

More info at <http://www.ceilidhculture.co.uk>

Jewish Edinburgh Trekkers!

Future events

4 April: Flotterstone (matzah ramble) Betsy Dorfman

16 May: Eildon Hills Tony Gilbert/Betsy Dorfman

13 June: Carlops Carol Levstein

For details or if you would like to be added
to the mailing list for walks, or would like to suggest
and/or organise a walk, please email Betsy Dorfmann
bdorfman@yahoo.com.

Book group

Meets first Monday of the month. If you are interested
please contact Betsy Dorfmann
bdorfman@yahoo.com.