

Sukkat Shalom JULY 2011

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

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Events and Services

Date **Friday 8 July 2011**

Event Discussion Group on new Erev Shabbat booklet, see page 7.

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace

Time 7pm

PLEASE BRING CONTRIBUTION TO LIGHT MEAL

Date **Saturday 9 July 2011**

Event Shabbat Service and Bar Mitzvah of Rohan Green, with Rabbi Mark Solomon officiating

Venue Turmeau Hall, Napier Craighouse

Time 11am

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE DETAILS

Date **Sunday 10 July 2011**

Event Choosing Judaism

Venue Usual Location

Time 10:30am

Event Cantillation

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace

Time 3pm

Event Spinoza

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace

Time 4pm

Date **Saturday 23 July 2011**

Event Shabbat Service

Venue Columcille Centre

Time 11am

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.

Return of the summer Barbecue

Sunday July 24, see page 3 for details



ROSH HASHANAH DIARY SALES LEO BAECK COLLEGE 5772

I am pleased to inform you that the diary you knew and loved is back!

What's more, since 2008 we have kept the price down to **£10.99**.

The College Diaries and Personal Organiser Inserts for 5772 will be in stock by the end of July. These follow the established formal formats within a hard cover.

Please refer to the order form for full details of our products and prices:

http://www.lbc.ac.uk/images/stories/merchandise/Diary_Order_form.pdf

We are still pleased to offer a 10% discount for orders of ten items or over: **PAYMENT MUST BE SENT WITH YOUR ORDER.**

Please note: we regret we are unable to offer a sale or return service.

It would also be a great help to us if you could fill out the on-line questionnaire:

<http://www.lbc.ac.uk/201103311450/News/questionnaire-for-2012-leo-baeck-college-diary.html>

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Future Dates

Our regular schedule is as follows:

Our **Erev Shabbat service** will be on the **SECOND** Friday of each calendar month and our **Shabbat morning service** on the Saturday after the **FOURTH** Friday.

These services take place in the **Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace.**

5 August	Kabbalat Shabbat Service
12 August	Erev Shabbat Service
19 August	Kabbalat Shabbat Service
26 August	Chavurah Supper with Rabbi Mark Solomon
27 August	Shabbat Service, Tea & Talmud

Jewish Calendar

Rosh Hashanah	5772 29/30 September 2011
Yom Kippur	8 October 2011
Sukkot	13/14 October 2011
Simchat Torah	20/21 October 2011
Chanukkah	20-28 December 2011

Charities for the Kol Nidre appeal

Last year we asked members to give us suggestions for charities to nominate for the Kol Nidre appeal. We had a very good response and were able to send almost £1000 to each of five different charities. If you have a suggestion for a charity then please email some details to info@eljc.org or mention it to any member of the council.



Liberal Judaism on Facebook

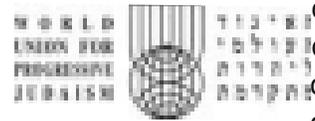


Liberal Judaism has launched a brand new Facebook page to keep all our communities and members up to date with what is happening in our movement. To join all you need to do is log into Facebook, go to www.facebook.com/liberaljudaism and hit the button that says 'Like'. We'll then regularly update the page with fantastic photos, videos, links and the very latest news and event information.

Netzer FSU Camp Crisis!

We need YOUR help!

Please take a minute to look at this flyer. The children of the FPS movement in Russia/Ukraine/Belarus cannot attend summer camp because their parents cannot afford the fees. Due to cutbacks in support from other agencies because of the financial crisis there are barely any bursaries or funds to help out. A £200 donation per child would change all that and enable a child to go to camp. To find out more about how you can help, please email leslie.bergman@btinternet.com.



Chairman's Word Antisemitism, anti-Zionism and the UCU

Most of our members will be aware that, as a community, we do not take any position on the situation in the Middle East and on Israel in particular. In agreeing a position on the values page of our web site, we acknowledged the different views held by our members and "committed ourselves to building our community through mutual respect, regardless of our differences".

Along with three other members of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) I have, this week, signed a joint letter of resignation to the University and College Union (UCU), my union for most of my working life. The reason for our resignation is explained below and relates to a resolution recently passed by the UCU that, in our opinion, legitimises antisemitism when it is expressed in connection with criticism of Israel. Like us, SCoJeC takes no position on Israel. Its democratic role is solely to represent the interests of Jewish people in Scotland. It is because racist propaganda against Israel has exposed Jewish people in Scotland and the UK to hostility that it is relevant for SCoJeC members to take issue with the UCU. Students at Scottish universities have borne the brunt of this, as we hear from those who have come to our services.

The UCU Congress at the end of May adopted motion 70 which rejects the definition of antisemitism initially proposed by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and now by the European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights. The definition includes a list of

examples of antisemitism that masquerade as criticism of Israel: for example “Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel”. SCoJeC explained the problems to the Scottish Trades Union Congress in these terms:

The STUC has complained that Jewish representative organisations are conflating anti-Semitism with legitimate criticism; but criticism of Israel is often expressed in racist terms. When you read, for example, that Israel’s behaviour is determined by the character of the Jewish people, that a powerful Zionist lobby exerts a sinister influence on Western governments, or that Israel is setting out to kill non-Jewish children, you are reading the politics of hate.

By rejecting the definition the UCU are allowing their criticisms of Israel to be directed against all Jews. The EU definition specifically allows legitimate criticism of Israel, in the same way as any other country can be criticised. And we should be careful not to deny this freedom to everyone, Jew or non-Jew, without demonising them as is sometimes done in the Jewish press.

I signed the letter of resignation from the UCU as an individual, albeit on ScoJeC headed paper. I hope that members of the community will not think that I overstepped the mark in taking a position on Israel. Please feel free to air your views in the newsletter. I believe that the text of our letter will shortly be available on the ScoJec web site: <http://www.scojec.org/>.

Community Matters

Births

Mazal Tov to Kay and Lewis Broadie on the birth of their daughter Isla on 18th June, seen here fast asleep. Mother and daughter are doing well. Proud grandparents Jonathan and Marjory Broadie are over the moon.

Mazal Tov to Francoise Robertson on the birth of her granddaughter Georgina on 27 June.



Rohan's Bar Mitzvah

Just a final reminder that Rohan Green's Bar Mitzvah will take place at 11am on Saturday July 9th in the:

Turmeau Hall, Napier University Craighouse Campus, Craighouse Road, EH10 5LG.

The service will be followed by a kiddush hosted by Stew & Gina.

The Turmeau Hall is about 100m up the hill of the campus and is approached from the entrance off Craighouse Road. The site is not large (tho' it is uphill on the way in). Lothian Buses numbers 23 and 41 go into the Craighouse site and stop just down the hill from the Newcraig Building where the Turmeau Hall is located. Be sure to take one that goes all the way to Craighouse. See <http://lothianbuses.com> for timetables.

There is a lift in the building for those with access requirements and some parking provision near to the main building. The access to the lift area is to the right of the main external steps where there is a sloped path and a mechanical wheelchair hoist. The janitors / security guard should be around the entrance to assist.

Those without special needs who come by car are asked to park in one of the two main carparks. These are located close to the entrance barrier as you come into the site. If the barrier is down when you arrive, just buzz the janitors. Finally, a request: since the main entrance door into the hall is at the front of the room, rather than the back, it would be appreciated if those attending could **please be on time to avoid disturbing the service**. This should be a lovely simcha and we look forward to it very much.

Return of the summer Barbecue - Sunday July 24

After a lapse last year the 'annual summer BBQ' will be at Kate & Nick's, 18 Grange Knowe Linlithgow. Tel. (01506) 845325.

Arrive any time from 12.30pm. Any contributions of food and drink welcome - but no pork, thanks! All welcome – kids, adults, friends, relatives.

If anyone wants a lift from Linlithgow station, just call (but ideally let us know beforehand so we've not drunk too much...)

By car, come off the M9 at junction 3, turn left towards Linlithgow. As you go past the 'Sun'factory, there is a turning for Grange View on the left. Turn in there, then left at the roundabout into Grange Knowe. We're in the first cul-de-sac on the right.

ELJC Israel trip?

Following last month's announcement some people have expressed interest in a trip to Israel to see for ourselves the work being done by Physicians for Human Rights—Israel. Maurice is doing some research on possible dates, costings, and scheduling possibilities, and when this is done he will propose some options for the trip. If you might be interested and would like to learn more, please contact him at maurice@morninglight.co.uk.

Events and Announcements

EDINBURGH BOOK FESTIVAL 2011 – Events of possible Jewish Interest

To book tel 0845 373 5888 or on the web <http://www.edbookfest.co.uk>

Sunday 14 August 10:15am Ned Beuman & Zoë Strachan

Ned Beuman's uproarious debut novel *Boxer, Beetle* follows the tale of a gay Jewish boxer in 1930s.

Wed 17th August 3:30pm Shlomo Sand ARE JEWS THE ONLY 'PEOPLE OF ISRAEL'?

An academic at Tel Aviv University, his recent book, *The Invention of the Jewish People* sparked a furious worldwide controversy with his claim that Jewish people are not a genetically defined race. Sand defends his position by discussing the work of the 19th century historian Ernest Renan, using Renan's lectures to argue that Israel needs to reform itself to become a state of all its citizens – Jews and Arabs.

Monday 22 August 10:15am Kalinda Ashton & Jula Rabinowich CHILDHOOD SCARS

Jula Rabinowich's *Splithead*, draws heavily on her own experience of leaving the Soviet Union at the age of 7. Her novel tells of a young girl's move from St Petersburg to Vienna which leads to divided loyalties and a splintering family.

Monday 22 August 2:00pm Karin Altenberg & Alon Hilu BELIEF, LOVE AND PORTENTS OF DOOM

Two novels set in the 19th century at opposite ends of the northern hemisphere offer intriguing parallels in this event. Alon Hilu's *The House of Rajani* explores the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict when a dynamic young Jewish settler arrives at a dilapidated Palestinian mansion.

Tuesday 23 August 11:30am Linda Grant EXPOSING THE LIMITS OF REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL

It's 1968 and Stephen is telling the girl he will later marry about the time he tried on a fur coat which belonged to Marilyn Monroe. *We Had it So Good* is the latest, vital work from Liverpool's Orange Prize winner and Man Booker nominee in which she explores the lives of the baby boomers who ended up betraying their radical principles for lives of luxury and vanity.

Saturday 27 August 7:00pm STRANGER THAN FICTION Steve Sem-Sandberg

A Jewish ghetto in Poland provides the historical event on which Sem-Sandberg builds his astonishing, award-winning novel *The Emperor of Lies*. Winner of the August Prize in Sweden, it tells the story of a community whose leader, a Jewish businessman named Rumkowski, tried to strike a deal with the Nazis. His ruthless opportunism led to the deaths of many of his compatriots, but it may have saved the lives of countless others.

Saturday 27 August 8:30pm Adam Levin EPIC STORY OF A DIFFICULT YOUNG BOY

The Instructions was a massive hit in the US last year and is sure to strike a chord here. It's the story of 10 year old Gurion Maccabee, a lover, fighter, scholar, and truly spectacular talker who can't stop being expelled from Jewish day schools as his search for righteousness sparks an unstoppable rebellion.

The following two events are already sold out

15 August Simon Sebag Montefiore on his *History of Jerusalem*

17 August Julia Neuberger interviewed by Bishop Richard Holloway about her new book.

Interfaith Events

There will be NO meetings of the Edinburgh Women's Inter-faith Group (EWIG) during July & August. The next one will be on 21st September 2011 when there will be a talk given by one of the ladies from the Central Mosque. More details will be available nearer the time.

Website: <http://www.edinwig.org.uk/EWIG/Welcome.html>



FESTIVAL OF SPIRITUALITY AND PEACE 2011 will be taking Place from 6th to 11th August, with many interesting events. See <http://www.festivalofspirituality.org.uk/> for details.

"UPHOLDING DIGNITY - SAY DARF SAY NO TO FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)"

Dignity Alert and Research Forum (DARF)

<http://www.darf.org.uk/>

Wednesday 21st September, 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. at Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge – women only event. This is a "women only " event because of the nature of the topic. Many of you will not be familiar with this or interested in it, but for those who are, please ask Rebekah Gronowski (rebekah.gronowski@gmail.com) for more detail if you wish.

BOOK REVIEW

Khirbet Khizeh by S Yizhar: Granta (2011)

by Sue Lieberman

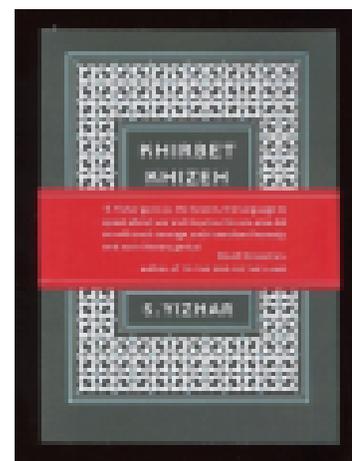
Anyone who would like deeper insight into the unhealed sores afflicting Israel since its inception can do no better than read S Yizhar's novella, *Khirbet Khizeh*. Published in 1949, this "masterpiece of modern Hebrew prose" was only translated into English in 2008; its English-language edition has now been published in paperback.

S Yizhar was the pen-name of Yizhar Smilansky. Born in Rehovot in 1916, he was an intelligence officer in the Israeli army in the 1948 war of independence, then became a long-time member of the Knesset. *Khirbet Khizeh* is his best-known novel. Straightforwardly, it tells the story of the clearing of an Arab village by Israeli soldiers in 1948 through the eyes of one (unnamed) young Israeli combatant; but like Israel itself, this is a far from straightforward history.

The opening of the novella describes a haunting which the writer cannot shake off: a haunting of conscience which returns periodically to disturb his forgetting, through "the rush of daily life" and the pressures of "utilitarian indifference and shameless self-interest" that which he cannot forget. The action moves to the day of the clearance itself. In the most lyrical and evocative of prose, a prose which David Shulman (who contributes the translation's afterword) describes as "a vanished language [...an] experimental mélange of wild, lucid lyricism [...and] pointed biblical allusions that go off like hand grenades in the midst of the [...] stream-of-consciousness syntax," Yizhar goes on to convey the mutual misery of that action and that day: the initial confusion, bewilderment and fear of the Arab villagers which gives way to desolation and anger as they grasp what is happening to them; coupled with the sickening impact on the young Israeli soldiers who can only cope with what they are ordered to do by wildly firing off their guns and through harbouring disgust towards and contempt for the Arab villagers. It is this contrast between the soldiers' aggressive derision for the people they are dispossessing, and the sensitively caught intimacies of a long-established way of life interwoven with the land and domestic ordinariness, which provokes such a pang in the soul of the reader:

"All these stinking Arabs, sneaking back to eke out their miserable existence in their godforsaken villages – they were disgusting, infuriatingly disgusting – what did [...] our young, fleeting lives have to do with their flea-bitten desolate suffocating villages?"

"Suddenly to our right the valley appeared bathed in the early light of the wintry day that was, finally, clear blue-gold, sweeping like [...] the ocean waves crashing on the shore, shedding upon it green-brown-yellow, splashes of joy and generosity, a patchwork of fields, pathways, and their course – a



tapestry of peasant wisdom, the weave of generations.”

The innate disturbance of Yizhar’s book lies in the fact that in this simple story of one day, a day in which no one dies, he describes so accurately what happens to an invading army – any invading army. The very act of successfully taking over someone else’s land and asserting a more powerful claim to it necessitates cultivating contempt for those on the receiving end. It is not simply a question of Might equalling legal Right: Right has to be morally justified, and ejecting women, children and old men from their homes means having to deny their equal humanity. It is all-too-painfully evocative of Jewish history, and this is one of the key reasons why Israel’s ongoing predicament, stuck for forty years in the mire of occupation and illegal settlement, continues as another wound in the Jewish psyche. Yizhar’s voice is heard in that of his narrator:

“This was exile. This was what exile was like. This was what exile looked like. [...] I had never been in the Diaspora [...] ... but people had spoken to me, told me, taught me and repeatedly recited to me, from every direction, in books and newspapers, everywhere: exile. [...] Our nation’s protest to the world: exile! [...] What, in fact, had we perpetrated here today?

[...] I passed among them all, among those weeping aloud, among those silently grinding their teeth, those feeling sorry for themselves and for what they were leaving behind, those who railed at their destiny and those who quietly submitted to it, those ashamed of themselves and their disgrace, those already making plans to sort themselves out somehow, those weeping for the fields that would be desolate, and those silenced by exhaustion, eaten away by hunger and fear. [...] I sought an explanation for [...] where this echo had come from, an echo of tramping feet ringing in my ears, an echo of the feet of other exiles [...]”

And as though, in 1949 already anticipating the Intifadas of more than forty years later, in one condensed sentence Yizhar wonders about the inheritance of such an action: how the impact of one day may, through the life of a seven-year old child, echo through the generations:

“We could also see how something was happening in the heart of the boy, something that, when he grew up, could only become a viper inside him, that same thing that was now the weeping of a helpless child.”

Shulman’s afterword contains its own, real-life echoes of Yizhar’s novel. Shulman, an American who emigrated to Israel in time to serve in the Lebanon war of 1982, is now involved in defending Palestinian villages in the new Occupied Territories from the actions of “Jewish settlers intent on terrorising these people and driving them off their land.” “It isn’t”, says Shulman, “a pretty story.” He reflects on the way the Hebrew language has changed since Yizhar’s day: an evolution which itself involves the ‘forgetting’ of another kind of Jewish experience and Jewish sensitivity than the triumphalist action Yizhar describes. Under the aggressive drive to embed the notion of ‘gvurah’ – heroism – in the Israeli psyche, Israelis, Shulman suggests, are no longer attuned to the biblical concepts of sin embedded in the subtle nuances of the Hebrew language:

“It’s not enough that these soldiers are happily shooting at innocents, or that the thrill they feel is recognised at once as something universal, hidden inside every man; the very words [from Isaiah] conjure up the sinister and the sinful. And the sentence ends on a still more bitter and ironic note, for ‘taken firm hold of us’ is bi-gvurah – the standard Hebrew term of ‘in strength’ or ‘with heroism’. The sordid thrill has heroically taken hold. Our young heroes are already enmeshed in incipient crime.”

Despite its short length, Khirbet Khizeh is far from being an easy read. Its haunting language, its refusal to be silent over something which Israel still prefers to keep hidden, and its allusions to an older Jewish history of dispossession and dehumanisation juxtaposed with this modern one in which Jews have swapped positions, continues to present us with a perplexing and dismayingly unresolvable conflict: a conflict as much internal (‘by what standards do we aspire to live?’) as it is external and ‘out-there’. In the embedded conflict which characterises Israel-Palestine, it is certain that there are no easy answers. There are, however, always challenges. Reading Khirbet Khizeh is not an easy one: but I think it one that is necessary.

Creating a new Erev Shabbat siddur for our congregation

Norman Crane and Catherine Lyons

On Friday 9th July we will be holding a discussion about the contents of the new Erev Shabbat booklet. Norman and Catherine have put in a lot of work on this project, so do come along to help to support them and consider joining their editorial group.

We will start with kiddush and then get straight into the discussion. Please bring some light refreshments. Finger food would be best. We will provide tea, coffee and soft drinks. Note that the Columcille Centre does not allow alcohol except for kiddush wine. A description of the project follows along with a sample pages. Sample pages are attached or can be viewed on our web site (www.eljc.org).

Since we have no building of our own, we cannot see ourselves reflected in our surroundings when we gather together. Our identity is expressed by the artefacts we use, and our siddurim become familiar, reassuring objects. When we were still part of Glasgow Reform we used a booklet put together by Rabbi Pete Tobias containing material from Forms of Prayer (1975), the old Reform siddur. Our copies have long since become too tatty to use. Moreover, the old Reform language was doggedly patriarchal, and there was no transliteration. Lev Chadash, the Liberal siddur, has more modern language, but still lacks transliteration. Many of us appreciate its content, but some of us find it impersonal and awkward to navigate. Lev Chadash is about 20 years old now. Progressive siddurim of the last ten years include transliteration as a matter of course, and a number of our members would like to see it included in our siddur. As far as we know, Liberal Judaism has started to think about revising Lev Chadash, but clearly a new edition will be some time in the making. Although we have permission to use the content of Lev Chadash in our own siddur, there are, unfortunately, no editable electronic files available.

Once it was agreed that we would embark on a siddur of our own, we discovered that other congregations are doing the same thing. Our siddur will be restricted to evening services. The current proposition is to include material for evening festival services and Kiddush and Havdalah at home.

In our editorial work so far, we have focused on gathering core material, in English and in Hebrew. The Hebrew content is very close to Lev Chadash. In a few places we have reflected our own minhag, reflecting our roots in Glasgow. Occasionally we have slipped in a good idea from the new Reform siddur, Forms of Prayer (2008). The English content is taken largely from Lev Chadash. For all Hebrew text commonly read or sung by the congregation, we have compiled transliteration.

As the Movement for Reform Judaism (UK) was publishing its new Forms of Prayer, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform USA) was publishing Mishkan T'filah (2007), a veritable magnum opus of progressive liturgy. Both of these siddurim extend the texts that preceded them. Mishkan T'filah alternates (righthand) pages of standard material and straightforward translation with (lefthand) pages of interpretive and alternative material. Forms of Prayer is printed in two colours, indicating less-used alternatives, and includes plentiful footnotes and endnotes. Both of these works have inspired some of us in the congregation to be more ambitious about what a siddur should be.

For our own work, we are limited by the skills and time of editors, as well as the constraints of budget. Compiling and composing multiple texts in two languages laid out so as to be pleasing to the eye is a challenge. Our page format is limited to A4 (too big to hold?) or A5 (too small for multiple parallel texts?), and our page run is limited to what can be stapled rather than bound. So far we have chosen fonts that are easy to read, have laid out prose and verse, and inserted transliteration in a way that we think will be useful but not intrusive.

We now need more guidance from the congregation to know what to do next. The layout so far is quite drafty, especially with regard to vertical spacing and page breaks, but we don't want to clean it up without knowing that our work so far has general approval. From this point, there will be choices and trade-offs to be made, and we would like to expand the editorial team. If you would like to be involved with taking our siddur forward, please come to the discussion meeting.

A few key questions that we hope to get guidance on at the meeting are:-

- Do we want the booklet to include ONLY erev Shabbat services, Kiddush and Havdalah or to have material for festival evening services too?
- Do we want footnotes and additional commentary?
- What comments do you have on the layout and how the transliteration is arranged?