

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

Sukkat Shalom is a constituent of liberal judaism

April 2009

Chair: Gillian Raab, chair@eljc.org

Secretary: Nancy Warren, secretary@eljc.org

Newsletter: Kristi Long, newsletter@eljc.org

Treasurer: Jonathan Broadie, treasurer@eljc.org

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EVENTS & SERVICES

Date Friday 3rd April
Event Erev Shabbat Service
Venue Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace
Time 7 pm

This is our regular Erev Shabbat service.

Informal Kabbalat Shabbat Services

Dates 10th & 24th April
Venue Marchmont - St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road
Time 6:15 pm

Join us for a short, informal service to welcome Shabbat.

Date Wednesday, 8th April
Event Community Seder
Venue Queen Margaret University
Musselburgh
Time 7 pm

Student Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich will join us again this year for our community seder.

Date Saturday 18th April
Event Shabbat Service
Venue St Marks,
Castle Terrace
Time 11 am

Rabbi Mark will be visiting us this weekend and will lead our regular Shabbat morning service. **Tea and Talmud will take place Shabbat afternoon, 2:30-4:30 at Marchmont St Giles.** For information about Tea and Talmud, contact Lindsay Levy.

Introduction to Judaism class will be on Sunday, 19th April, 10:00-12:00, and the **cheder** will meet at 4pm at Marchmont St Giles.

EVENTS & SERVICES

Date Friday, 1st May
Event Erev Shabbat Service
Venue Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace
Time 7 pm

Our regular Erev Shabbat service will be on 1st May.

Dates for your Diary

See page 8 for this new feature—a list of future events to help with diary planning.

Pesach is coming. Have you booked your place at the community seder? If not, there may still be time. Contact Nancy Warren asap. All bookings must be confirmed and paid no later than 72 hours in advance.

Need matzoh? Sainsbury's at Cameron Toll stocks kosher I'Pesach matzoh.

Jewish Calendar for April 2009

8th April -- Erev Pesach
9th - 16th April -- Pesach
21st April -- Yom Hashoah
24th-25th April -- Rosh Hodesh Iyar
28th April -- Yom Hazikaron
29th April -- Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day)

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ELJC AGM

Sukkat Shalom's Annual General Meeting took place on Saturday, 7th March. We were pleased to have a good turn out for our AGM and also to have Rabbi Danny Rich, chief executive of Liberal Judaism (LJ), with us this year. The treasurer reported on the financial situation and noted that as we were now more fully established we would be paying our full dues to LJ for their excellent support to the community. He also noted that the amount raised by the Kol Nidre appeal has risen by 10% compared to last year in spite of the current financial situation. The subscription for 2009 will remain at £200.

The meeting accepted reports from the chair and from groups or individuals in charge of religious affairs, cheder, newsletters, premises, membership, interfaith, social action, burials and young people. Members can access full details of these reports and the AGM minutes on the web site (www.eljc.org/organisation). To obtain a password to read them, just send an email to webmaster@eljc.org.

The overwhelming message from the reports was of a successful year, with more members becoming involved in the running of the community. The officials and council for the coming year were elected. Nancy Lynner, Ricky Hogg and Bill Zachs, all members of last year's Council, have stepped down and we thank them for all their hard work and valuable contributions. Helen Ford, Jamie Shearer-Bromfield and Norman Crane were elected to Council, and Maurice Naftalin was asked to stay on as a Council member as his term as Chair concluded.

Gillian Raab was elected as the new Chair. Two other officers were reconfirmed: Nancy Warren as Secretary and Jonathan Broadie as Treasurer. Rabbi Danny concluded the meeting with a few words about LJ. He estimates that there are over 9,000 Liberal Jews in Britain. He considers our community a model

one and assured us of their continuing support.



Outgoing Chair Maurice Naftalin, incoming Chair Gillian Raab and Rabbi Danny Rich.

The meeting concluded with a light supper followed by an evening of singing and storytelling from Chana Sophia Yaffe and Tirza Singer. Thanks are due to Colin Gajewski for organizing the concert and setting up the audio equipment.



Council News

The first meeting of the new Council was 26th March. The focus of the meeting was clarifying the membership of subgroups and responsibilities of various members of the Council. In addition, the Council agreed to coopt Stewart Green as a member to replace Bill Zachs, who stood down following the AGM.

A full list of Council members, including membership of subgroups, is attached as page 9 of the newsletter.

The Council agreed that its next meeting, which will be held in May, will be a strategic planning day.

AGM report by Gillian Raab; Photos from the AGM by Joe Goldblatt

Purim Celebrations

Our first joint event with the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation (EHC) was held at the synagogue on Salisbury Road. We started with the Rabbi Rose's multi-hatted and multi-voiced rendering of the Megillah, followed by a break for hamantashen.



Purimspiel director Phil Wadler sets the scene

We were then transported to the City of Sushan (Washington DC) where King George W. Ahasueros (Emilie Faveau) was complaining of his difficult wife (Naomi Lawrence). After an interlude for the Jewrovision Talent Contest (introduced by David Neville and Stephanie Brickman) we returned to Sushan where King George W took as his new wife Ester (Jessica Spencer), cousin of the Jew Baruch Hussein Mordechai Obama (Rohan Green).



Mordechai Obama (ELJC member Rohan Green) and Esther (Jessica Spencer from EHC)

Vice President Dick Haman (Benjamin Griffin) (stamp, boo) was soon deposed in a tightly written script by our own talented Nancy Lynner. Other members of the cast included Bigthan Bill Clinton and his co-conspirator Hilary Rodham Teresh (Andrew Lawrence and Rowan Hendry) as well as King George W's butlers, McCain and Palin, played by Adam and Leora Wadler. Philip Wadler, who produced the performance, was the narrator.



Leora Wadler (Sarah Palin) and Adam Wadler (John McCain) delight the audience with their impressions

The evening concluded with a delicious *Se'udat Purim* provided by the EHC. An enjoyable evening for all. Coming together in unity with everyone in the community is one of the mitzvot of Purim. Thanks to everyone who made fulfilling this mitzvah possible.

*Text: Gillian Raab
Photos: Joe Goldblatt*



From the Chair

As I take over the chair, four and a half years after we were formally constituted I have been thinking back over the early days of our community. Before our first High Holy Day services in 2004 many of us were anxious that we might not have enough people to keep services going all day on Yom Kippur. Of course we need not have worried about this though, being Jewish, we soon found other things to worry about. That these and other worries are distant memories now is a tribute to everyone in the community, but most especially to Maurice Naftalin who has led us so expertly through these early years. As a tribute to Maurice our secretary Nancy Warren is inviting everyone to a celebratory event in the form of an afternoon visit to Nancy and David Nelson's home in Burntisland. See "Dates for your diary" for details.

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have held our community discussion on Israel. The decision to hold this meeting was the result of a large number of email exchanges during January between members of the Council. We were all troubled by the recent events in Gaza and that many of us had been trying hard to deal with our conflicting emotions on the subject. But it was clear to me that every one of us, even and perhaps especially those who were most critical of Israel's actions, cared passionately about the future of Israel. I am sure that this will be clear to everyone at our discussion. We are fortunate to have two professionally qualified members who will guide us through the afternoon.

Gillian Raab

and From the Ex-Chair

I've been very touched by all the compliments that I received on standing down. At the AGM I was presented with a lovely candelabra (you can see it in the picture on p.2) and some very warm words on behalf of the community, which I really appreciated. And now I'm even getting a celebratory party (see above)!

The community will go on to new strengths now because Gillian will be a great chair, and also because our real strength is in how we work together, and that is improving all the time. Onwards and upwards!

Maurice Naftalin

SCOJEC



The latest issue of Four Corners, the newsletter of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, is now available. Issue 21 includes a report on SCoJeC's consultation with Scottish Jewish communities on women in the community. A number of Sukkat Shalom members took part in the Edinburgh consultation event. A full copy of SCoJeC's report to the Board of Deputies can be downloaded from the website.

Reports on community observances of Chanukah and Holocaust Memorial Day, as well as Burns Night are also featured.

The newsletter includes a thoughtful article by Ephraim Borowsky clarifying SCoJeC's approach to commenting on Israel and Gaza. Noting the differences of viewpoint within the Jewish community, SCoJeC points out that it, as an organisation, will not take an official view, but will focus instead on challenging anti-Semitism. Borowsky writes: 'However, it is our place to express concern at the grossly excessive rhetoric, which does not take care to distinguish what is said about Israel from what is said about Jews, or which replicates ancient antisemitic myths, simply substituting "Zionist" for "Jew"... . To uphold the right to take sides is not itself to take sides'

The latest issue of Four Corners is available on the SCoJeC website at : www.SCoJeC.org/four_corners/newsletters/09ii_4C_21.pdf

Print copies are available from SCoJeC, 0141 638 6411, or at Sukkat Shalom services

Happenings around Edinburgh and Beyond

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Joachim Hemmerle on the **Yiddish puppet theatre "Hakl-Bakl."** In 1948 Simcha Schwarz, a multi-talented Romanian-born artist, created the Yiddish puppet theatre "Hakl-Bakl" in Paris with the aim of bringing back the spirit of the Eastern European Jewish world to children and adults alike. The talk gives an introduction to the background of "Hakl-Bakl" and the ideals of its founder.

Sunday, 5th April, The Community Centre, Salisbury Road, 7:30 pm (tea from 7pm)

Glasgow Jewish Educational Forum

Rabbi David Goldberg:

"The God of the Prayer Book is Dead, let's face it"

So wrote senior Liberal Rabbi David Goldberg wrote in November 2008. He concluded ". . . it has become increasingly problematic for most of us, Rabbis included, to pay lip service, even twice a year, to the unchanged supernatural, omnipotent, omniscient just, judgemental God of our prayer books. Such a God is, literally, beyond belief in the modern scientific world. . . . Only a fool – or a fundamentalist – doesn't have doubts".

Sunday 26th April, Calderwood Lodge Primary School, Glasgow, 8pm. Adm £5,

Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre

Race Night, Sunday, 26th April, 7:30pm
Cost: £10 (students and children, £8). For more information contact Joyce Sperber at j.sperber@yahoo.com.

Art: The Whitechapel Reopening

The Whitechapel Gallery is reopening with a programme that includes amongst other interesting exhibitions a major exhibition of the work of the Whitechapel Boys, Jewish writers and artists who overcame the poverty of the East End to become a vibrant avant garde. The Whitechapel Gallery: www.whitechapelgallery.org or 020-7522 7888, from 5 April. Admission free.

Liberal Judaism Joins Christian Aid in Campaign to Lobby on Climate

Liberal Judaism is endorsing a Christian Aid campaign for the first time ever. The March edition of the magazine LJ Today carried co-branded pledge cards and details of how to sign up to the international Countdown to Copenhagen campaign on climate change.

Activists who take the pledge agree to lobby for the richest to repay their carbon debt, to do all they can to reduce their own carbon footprint and to encourage others to pledge their support

Rabbi Rich says: "Climate change affects everyone, irrespective of religion but the poor suffer disproportionately. The threat to our world is so great that it is vital that Liberal Jews join people of other faiths to lobby for laws that cut carbon emissions.

Liberal Judaism is proud to endorse and co-brand the pledge cards. We do this as a core part of our faith, which aims to make Jewish life more relevant to the modern world".

The Copenhagen climate conference this December will see a new international climate deal agreed that will come into force when the first phase of the Kyoto treaty expires in 2012.

Christian Aid is calling for the rich industrialised countries to cut emissions by 80% by 2050 and to pay a greater share of the cost of global cuts – on top of the actions they are taking domestically.

It wants technology that can help cut emissions shared with poorer countries and wants rich countries to financially support poorer ones in adapting to climate change. But it also says developing countries have to play their part by bringing in emission-cutting programmes that can be measured, reported and verified.

The campaign pledge can be found at www.christianaid.org.uk.



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Dreams and Realities - Seminar in Israel

The Saltz Education Center in Israel is offering a unique seminar designed for Progressive Jewish adults seeking a deeper learning experience from within the political, historical and spiritual centre of our people. Participants will journey from Jerusalem to the centre of the country and then down into the desert. The seminar will take place on July 9th - 19th 2009 / October 15th - 25th 2009 / December 3rd - 13th 2009. For more information, see [www.liberaljudaism.org/pdf/Dreams and Realities 09.pdf](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/pdf/Dreams_and_Realities_09.pdf)

Legal Challenge to JFS Entry Policy

The Court of Appeal will hear the case of a boy who was refused entry by the JFS Comprehensive in north London because his mother is a Progressive convert. Last year, after a four-day hearing, the right of the United Synagogue to reject applicants who do not meet the Orthodox definition of Jewish status was upheld. The appeals case, which is being argued on human rights grounds, will be heard in May. If successful, it could force Jewish schools to revise their admissions policy. Rabbi Danny Rich speaking to the Jewish Chronicle, supported the appeal: "The way JFS has applied its admissions criteria is unfair, politically motivated and highly inappropriate for a state-aided school. JFS should not be a private club for certain approved sections of the Jewish community".

The London Declaration on Anti-Semitism

Liberal Judaism's Chief Executive, Rabbi Danny Rich, and Chairman, Nigel Cole, have been involved in the International Par-



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liamentarians' Conference on anti-Semitism, which resulted in the publication of a document entitled, *The London Declaration on Combating Anti-Semitism*, available through Liberal Judaism's website at this link: [www.liberaljudaism.org/pdf/The London Declaration Feb09.pdf](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/pdf/The_London_Declaration_Feb09.pdf).

The Declaration, which was signed by 125 ministers from 40 countries, It called on national governments, parliaments, international institutions, political and civic leaders and civil society to "affirm democratic and human values, build societies based on respect and citizenship and combat any manifestations of anti-Semitism and discrimination."

The Second Generation Network

The Second Generation Network is the national organisation within the UK representing the children and grandchildren of survivors and refugees from Nazi persecution. The Network was started following the "Unto the Third Generation?" national conference in London in 1995. They produce a journal (first published in January 1996), *Second Generation Voices*, three times per year. They also provide a link between smaller regional groups around the UK. For more information, see the Second Generation website, www.secondgeneration.org.uk.

Connie's Eyes

by Joe Goldblatt

We came into our wee little Jewish community to cast away the burdens of the week as together we welcomed Shabbat. A larger than usual crowd had assembled due in large part to the visit of our special guest, the chief executive of Liberal Judaism, Rabbi Danny Rich of London. The usual pleasant greetings we exchanged and then one could hear audible sighs of relief from some of those in attendance as they sunk into their seats awaiting the beginning of the service. The daily barrage of bad news about the global and national economy coupled with a long week of hard work had greatly added to the everyday burdens of those who had come to worship.

The Rabbi warmly welcomed us and then invited someone to light the Sabbath candles. A female member of our community stepped forward, struck the match, kindled the tapers, gently covered her eyes and recited the traditional prayer to welcome the Sabbath. However, as we opened our eyes at the conclusion of the prayer we found the room had suddenly turned much brighter.

Connie, almost two years of age, upon seeing the lights, suddenly had left her grandmother's safe arms and bolted forward toward the Sabbath candles. She stood less than a meter away and her eyes brightened in a fixed gaze at these glimmering lights. Slowly she drew her breath as if she were inhaling the light itself. She leaned forward, lifted her head while squinting her lovely eyes at the tall bright lights and then the Rabbi invited her to come closer.

The Rabbi asked Connie if she would like to sit in his chair near the candles and she tentatively agreed to be seated. From her exalted position she could survey the members of the community as they continued to sing and pray. However, Connie seemed to barely notice the two dozen people in front of her and instead continued to read her children's picture book that was entitled "My Shabbat". The Rabbi gently stroked her blonde wavy locks of hair and whispered words to encourage Connie to continue reading her book.

After several minutes of reading and occasionally stealing glances at her grandmother and grandfather, Connie, carefully edged her way off the chair and walked slowly back into her grandmother's arms. As she walked away, all of us realized we had discovered a new appreciation for the Sabbath. We had seen it, in a special way, perhaps for the first time, through this child, Connie's, brilliantly blue eyes. And in seeing it through Connie's eyes, despite the cold economic winds that were blowing just outside the door, this Shabbat and our wee little Jewish community was warmer and much brighter indeed.

ELJC Support Group
07904 813162

Thanks from Rebekah

Dear Gillian, Council & Members of Sukkat Shalom,

Thank you all so much for the wonderful gifts with which I was presented after our Community's AGM last Saturday. I was so pleased to receive a copy of the Talmud, Tractate Berachot and the delightful Havdalah Set. I am including photos of these for those of you who have not seen the gifts ~ I did not open them at the time in case they got damaged, but did so on my arrival home afterwards. You could not have made a better choice and I truly appreciate the thought which went into their selection. The Havdalah set is in dark blue and white which is perfect for my home and the Talmud, Tractate Berachot is in large print which is most useful to me as I find the regular editions too small for me to read.

It has been an honour for me to serve you, my Community, in the different and varying ways in which I have and I am pleased to see that our numbers are growing by the year and the Community going from strength to strength. We have an exciting future before us to look forward to.

Again, many thanks for your thoughtfulness in your choice of gifts.

Yours sincerely,

Rebekah Gronowski



Many thanks to all who contributed this month. Items for publication are welcomed, as are responses to items published. The deadline for the next newsletter will be Friday, 17th April. Please email all contributions to newsletter@eljc.org.

Community & Members News

We send best wishes to **Udi Ojiako** and his family, who are moving to South Hampton.

Katy Bromberg and Alasdair Gray are moving to Manchester. We wish them well in their new home.

Our deepest condolences to **Gordon Barclay** and his family on the passing of Gordon's mother, **Sybil Barclay** of Aberdeen. May her memory be for a blessing.

Dates for Your Diary

Keep these dates in mind for diary planning. More details will be available in the newsletter closer to the events.

Sat May 2nd: Cheder

Sun May 3rd: Hill walk on Ben Lawers Rabbi Nancy's second Munro. For details, contact Gillian Raab (gillian.raab@googlemail.com)

Fri May 8th: Kabbalat Shabbat service

Sun May 10th: Visit to Burntisland to celebrate Maurice's period as Chair (and also to just have a good time!)

Sat May 16th: Shabbat morning service, cheder

Fri May 22nd: Kabbalat Shabbat service

Thurs May 28th: Shavuot service, 7pm at Columcille. Followed by coffee and cheese-cake, and maybe discussion. Finish by 10pm.

Fri May 29th: Kabbalat Shabbat service

Saturday May 30th: Cheder

Weekend June 5-7th: Rabbi Mark visit, with a chavurah supper on the 5th and an additional Shabbat service on the 6th

ELJC Organisation

The AGM on 7th March 2009 elected the following people to **the council of Sukkat Shalom**:

Jonathan Broadie	Treasurer
Marjory Broadie	
Norman Crane	
Helen Ford	
Lauren Fox	
Joe Goldblatt	
Kristi Long	
Catherine Lyons	
Maureen Mackinnon	
Maurice Naftalin	
Gillian Raab	Chair
Jamie Shearer-Bromfield	
Nick Silk	
Nancy Warren	Secretary
Bill Zachs	

At the first council meeting, on 26th March, Bill Zachs stood down from the council, and Stewart Green was co-opted in his place.

The council meeting also confirmed the following working groups, with the people mentioned as leads liaising with the council:

Religious Affairs

Nick Silk
Norman Crane (lead)
Rebekah Gronowski (copied in)
Ricky Hogg
Catherine Lyons
Maurice Naftalin
Philip Wadler (minor festivals)

Premises

Nick Silk (lead)
Catherine Lyons
Stewart Green
Bill Zachs
Maureen MacKinnon

Membership

Eva Wiseman (database)
Joe Goldblatt (recruitment, lead)
Nancy Warren (correspondence)

Social Action

Lauren Fox (lead)
Kristi Long
Maurice Naftalin

Newsletter

Kristi Long (lead, until June)
Gillian Raab
Jamie Shearer-Bromfield
Helen Ford (proof reading)

Security

Jonathan Broadie (lead)
Marjory Broadie
Maureen Mackinnon

Burials

Gordon Barclay
Jonathan Broadie
Marjory Broadie

Cheder

Lisa Barcan (Librarian)
Norman Crane (lead)
Stewart Green
Nancy Lynner
Gillian Raab (temporarily)
Phil Wadler
Other cheder parents

Community

Catherine Lyons (SCOJEC)
Kristi Long (Interfaith)
Miriam Vickers (Women's Interfaith)

Youth

Helen Ford (lead)
Lauren Fox

Website

Maurice Naftalin (lead)
Gillian Raab

If you would like to be involved in any of these activities, please get in touch with a member of the group or any member of council. Ideas and offers of help—large or small—are always welcome!