

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity SC035678

www.eljc.org

May
issue 53

April

- 28** Choosing Judaism
As usual 10.30
Philosophy Group
CC 4.00

May

- 3** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
10 Erev Shabbat
CC 7.00
11 Cheder
MSG 3.30
14 Erev Shavuot
CC 7.00

Service and dramatised reading of the [Book of Ruth](#), followed by our [Tikkun Leil Shavuot](#) (bring to share: Shavuot-themed study material plus cheesecake or similarly yummy dairy food)

- 17** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
18 Cheder
MSG 3.30
25 Shabbat morning service
CC 11.00
31 Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15

Notes

CC Columcille Centre
2 Newbattle Terrace

MSG Marchmont St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road

Rebekah Gronowski honoured by International Women's Day Award

Founder member Rebekah Gronowski has been honoured by the Edinburgh Interfaith Association's first annual award ceremony to celebrate International Women's Day.

Hearty congratulations to Rebekah, a true *אשת חיל*!

Extended interview with Rebekah on p. 2



Shavuot

Tuesday 14 – Wednesday 15

Ruth in Boaz's Field

Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1828
Source: Wikimedia Commons



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Community Phone and Email

These go to several council members

Leave voicemail **0131 777 8024**

Send email **info@eljc.org**

Urgent Support **0131 208 1447**

For urgent use or in emergency (rings several people at once)

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Word from the Chair

The year rolls on. Last month I talked about Pesach and next month I expect I shall talk about Shavuot. Does that mean that this month we are in the desert? Well, no. We live in modern times. In our day we celebrate the founding of the modern state of Israel as Yom Ha-Atsma-ut, Independence Day. Or rather in our community we do not because the day falls on a weekday and we do not hold weekday services. It is possible to designate a Friday or Saturday as Shabbat Atsma-ut but we have not done so this year. It is clear from reading material from Liberal Judaism that our sister congregations have celebrated Yom Ha-Atsma-ut in some way.

The lack resonates particularly with me this year as I have recently seen *The Gatekeepers*. For a review, see Gillian's article, p.6. The film acts as a potted history of the State of Israel seen through the eyes of the ex heads of Shin Bet. They see security as providing an essential condition for peace. I looked in *Siddur Lev Chadash* to find an order of service for Yom Ha-atsma-ut. There isn't one. But there is a Prayer on Arriving in the Land of Israel (p. 561). Its last four lines refer to security and peace. *Birshut chaverim*, with your permission friends, I shall quote from the last few lines to mark Sukkat Shalom's celebration of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

Let there be peace within your walls,
safety within your borders

May the Eternal One bless us from Zion
Let Israel have peace

Shared Food

We have recently had an enquiry about the term *chavurah* supper. In rabbinic times the rabbis ate together in a table fellowship, a *chavurah*. They ended their meal with blessings, which we call *Birkat Hamazon*, or Grace after Meals, that were introduced by *Birshut Chaverim n'vareich* — with your permission friends let us bless — and which I have borrowed above.

In our day it is simply an occasion when we eat together as a community. The food and drink are provided by the people who come along, and we all share with each other. Some are able bring home-made dishes; others bring something they have bought; it does not matter. What is important is that we share each other's company round the table. We also set up, clear away and wash up together, and it is this spirit of togetherness that makes it a *chavurah supper*. Suppers take place every so often on a Friday evening. On some occasions they follow a regular Friday service (Service and Supper); on others they are an informal gathering on a Friday evening with singing, eating and drinking (Supper and Songs). The *Newsletter* and Mid-month reminder will specify which it will be.

Mark's Deli, Glasgow

Mark's Deli burnt down completely recently. Mark delivered fresh Kosher meat to Edinburgh to be collected from Salisbury Road and provided an excellent service now temporarily suspended. We will let you know when the situation changes. In the meantime we offer our sympathy for Mark's misfortune and wish him every success with his rebuilding project.

Members' News

We wish farewell David Finn, who is moving to China to start up a language school. He has been an active member of the community and will be sorely missed. We wish him well in his venture!

We send our very best wishes to Yael, who has been poorly. We wish her a speedy recovery, a *Refuah Shlema!*

Norman Crane

Celebrating Rebekah

"Rebekah has used her life experiences to contribute to Interfaith work and equality in Edinburgh, to establish the Liberal Jewish Community, to care on a personal level for many people through deep friendships, and carries a concern for and involvement in justice and peace in Israel and Palestine."

From the Celebrating Women nomination document



Tell us about the EIFA Celebrating Women Awards and your nomination

This was a surprise for me! I was nominated by one of the founders of the Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group. I was only one among many who had been described as an inspiration to others. Four of us received a Certificate of Honour. One of the others had single-handedly provided support to people who have dementia.

The main award, a beautiful silver sculpture, was received by Mrs Izabella Brodzińska, who came to Edinburgh 50 years ago and worked to establish the Scottish Polish Cultural Association. She is currently the Chairperson. The rest of us received a Certificate of Honour and a beautiful potted orchid.

How long have you been involved in interfaith activity and EIFA?

My interest in Interfaith goes way back to 1975 when I worked as Director of Music and Co-ordinator of Religious Studies in an ecumenical school. I was there for four years and learned a great deal. Later I worked in London in a Muslim school for four years — again, a time of learning for me, and a very steep learning curve. I am so grateful for those times as they prepared me for my work with EIFA in Edinburgh.

My connection with EIFA goes back to Professor Frank Whaling, one of my lecturers at New College, who taught World Religions. Frank was one of the founders of the EIFA. I joined the EIFA Executive in the early days of Sukkat Shalom. I

thought it was important to learn more about other Faiths, traditions and customs. I also made connections with the University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy, and I was one of the founding members of the Three Faiths Forum. We met in the Central Mosque on Potter Row. This is still going and there is an event on 2nd June.

Tell us about your other community activities

The Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group (EWIG) started about ten years ago and grew from EIFA. EWIG is for women only so that our Muslim sisters can attend in an all-female environment. We would always start with a vegetarian buffet so that we could get to know each other. Over the years we have covered many topics, but at first each of us took it in turns to do a presentation about a particular Festival. The first presentations were about Festivals of Light, so I did Chanukah. One of the most moving and memorable events, held in the Central Mosque, was a presentation done by three of us, a Christian, a Muslim, and me, on the Holy Land. Obviously there were controversial questions, and we had to hold a second session to continue the discussion.

I also took part in "Our Festivals of Light" organised for schools by East Lothian Council. As time has gone on, some original EWIG members have gone our separate ways. I joined Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC).

For some time I had been engaging in Human Rights and Equality issues, particularly disability and those which affect women. In my family, I have personally been involved with issues of domestic violence and abuse and LGBT. And I feel that this is now where my interests and expertise are best used. So I joined Direct Approach, which focuses on women in Ethnic Minorities and in Faith groups. Direct Approach works for social change, for example with regard to FGM and Forced Marriage, and has brought these issues to the attention of MSPs with a view to getting change in the law. The findings of our survey on Hate Crime are currently being collated, and our current survey is about "Honour, Gender Balance and Equality".

What are your hopes for the future, and your vision for these activities?

My hopes for the future are for more people (maybe in our community) to become involved with others of different Faith and Ethnicity to explore commonalities instead of being inward-looking. We are only minorities if we make ourselves minorities. We have to challenge inequality and breaches of Human Rights wherever we can, but without endangering ourselves or our community.

How do you see Sukkat Shalom acting in the context of these organisations and activities?

Engage and show an interest! It is up to us to combat sectarianism and racism in whatever way we can. If we can do this as a community, that would be great but, if not, it is up to us as individuals to take on the challenges. We, as a Jewish community, may not consider ourselves an "ethnic minority", but, as Jews, we have been targets for some crimes from time to time which have probably been racially motivated. These incidents have been recorded and are historically documented.

Direct Approach and ELREC work with communities and individuals who fall into the new nine "Protected Categories" of people or groups. We work with the Police and other organisations on inequality, harassment and other events that affect people in the work place, in public, and in the home. "Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of your brother": I read this to mean that we should not watch in silence whilst others are being attacked, marginalised, or otherwise threatened. Human Rights are being breached on a massive scale. My voice may be added to others who are fighting against injustice.

And for yourself? What do you see yourself doing?

Well — I am now slowing down physically and will need to cut back, especially travelling in and out of Edinburgh. My time with EIFA was very valuable and, through EIFA, I was active in the wider

community. I gave talks about Judaism at Women's Guilds and various Churches. I also took lessons in schools relating to Religious and Moral Education and Holocaust Memorial Day. I am so pleased that Stew Green has now joined EIFA and will be able to represent our community within that organisation. Our Interfaith activity will be in very capable hands. It cannot, though, be left to only one person — we need more people to help — it can be very time-consuming but rewarding too.

I will now be concentrating on being a trustee of ELREC and doing more closer to home. I am part of a group working to set up an East Lothian Women's Interfaith Group. There are premises available and interest from many women who meet on an informal basis.

And for our community: what is your vision?

When our community first started out, I had a vision of us in 25 years' time: with our own Rabbi, Cheder, and purpose-built Synagogue. I believe we are well on the way to fulfilling this vision. We have our Rabbi, Mark. Cheder has more children than ever before. We have grown massively as a community since our early beginnings and we are now addressing the third aim: to have our own Synagogue.

I would like to think that I will see our own Synagogue. It may be expensive but there are funds out there and construction options that will reduce costs. We need to be open to sharing the space with other communities, as well as to build a place of worship. This will also create cohesion with other Faith groups.

We need to spread our wings a little more but, most of all, we need to *believe* in ourselves and believe that *we can do it!*

Stop Press

The position of Manager at ELREC has just been announced.

www.elrec.org.uk/jobs.htm

This would be a good opportunity for someone who wishes to engage with multi-cultural issues.

Alex at the Lit Buber, Gandhi, and dialogue

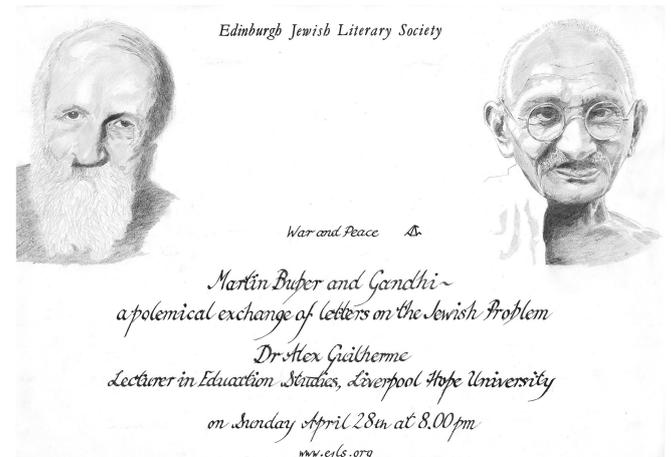
We look forward to seeing our long-time member, Alex Guilherme, back in Edinburgh at the end of April. Alex left Edinburgh to work in Education Studies at Liverpool Hope University.



Following his research into Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue, he now specialises in dialogical education as a tool for reconciliation between communities in conflict. He will be speaking at the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society on Buber, Gandhi, and dialogue.

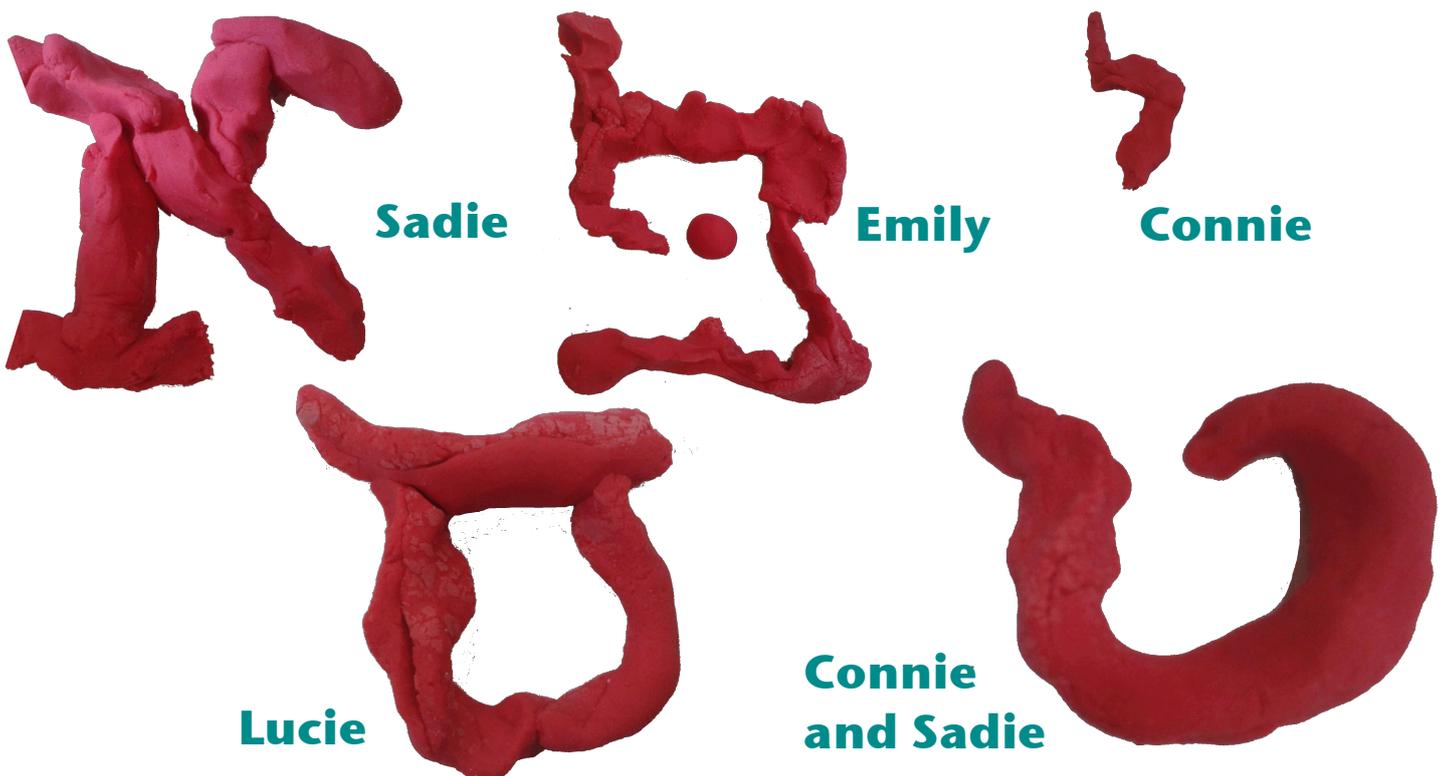
Martin Buber and Gandhi – a Polemical Exchange of Letters on the Jewish Problem

On the eve of the World War II, while anti-Semitic riots were raging fiercely in Europe, Buber and Gandhi were involved in a polemical exchange of views on the Jewish problem. Alex will speak on Buber's philosophy of dialogue with its implications for how one group of people respects, or perhaps more significantly, fails to respect another.



Cheder Gallery the Alef Bet, squeezed, carved, and sculpted

The youngest class have been learning the shapes of Hebrew letters by moulding and carving them in big red squidgy handfuls of play dough.



The Gatekeepers reviewed

The Gatekeepers is the Israeli documentary that has recently been nominated for an Oscar. I promised to write something about it for the newsletter, though I now regret this, as I am still trying to take in a visually disturbing film, one that raises many difficult moral and political questions.



The film consists of in depth interviews with the six men, all the former heads of Shin Bet who are still alive today. Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security service (sherut habitachon haklali שירות הביטחון הכללי) now more often referred to as Shabak, has had the key role in attempting to combat terrorism in Israel, both from Hamas and from the Israeli extreme right. The interviews are set against a background of newsreel footage and reconstructions of events in Israel and Palestine from the six-day war of 1967 up to the present.

The film is divided into seven sections in roughly chronological order. The first of these, "No Strategy, Just Tactics" is about the early period of occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Subsequent sections cover the efforts to reach peace following the Oslo Accords, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the first and second intifadas, and the attempts to control

the Jewish Underground. In the final section entitled "The old man at the end of the corridor", a reference to the respect shown to David Ben-Gurion by one man's father, they reflect on the current situation.

The six men speak with great openness and honesty and reflect, often with regret, on the consequences of their actions, and those of others, including politicians. One interviewee noted that things that appeared to be technical triumphs (such as the successful killing, with no other casualties, of a known terrorist who trained suicide bombers) turned out to be strategic disasters which served only to escalate the violence.

In looking to the future, all are agreed that it is talking with every side in the conflict — one man said "even with Ahmadinejad" — that opens the only hope for a peaceful future for Israel.

If you find graphic footage of deadly conflicts difficult to watch, you will not find this an easy film to watch. I had to shut my eyes at a some bits. But it is the words that are more important, and if your Hebrew is better than mine you may still be able to follow the dialogue.

The Gatekeepers is showing at Filmhouse in Lothian Road.

Gillian Raab

Cabaret success for Melissa

Melissa Eisenberg is making waves with her Cabaret shows. She recently won the Best Concept award for her burlesque performance, and was placed second out of 19 artists.

Melissa also won the Wild Card award as part the international Pole Factor competition, and her troupe, the Kamikaze



Girls, has just been booked for the second year running to perform at the Cabaret Tent at T in the Park.

Melissa will also be running Candid Cabaret during the Fringe this coming summer. Her previous Candid Cabaret shows at the Fringe have been described by the *List* as 'a hotly anticipated neo-cabaret mix of burlesque, comedy, magic.'

Kat Angus

Shopping Surprise in Granton chopped liver, fish balls, humous, turkey salami, pastrami, salt beef, chopped herring

Roger Stewart writes

I just happened to be ambling around the big Morrison's supermarket in Granton this morning, the one beside Edinburgh (previously Telford) College, and I suddenly came across a refrigerated cabinet filled to the brim with chilled kosher food — by far the best selection I've ever seen in Edinburgh, including salt beef, Vienna sausages, pastrami, chopped liver, chopped herring, little "cocktail" latkes, falafels, Tomor sunflower spread, and so on and so on.

Some of the sell-by dates were still quite long, but I do have an ominous feeling that once this stuff is gone, it won't be back. Unless, of

course, members of our community get down to Granton right now and spend, spend, spend! It looks like good stuff, and presumably is being test-marketed.

Hilary Rifkind of EHC sent us full details

The Granton store has been chosen to expand Morrison's provision of Halal, Asian, Kosher foods because it is the largest in Edinburgh and very spacious. The store is open from 8am to 10pm Monday to Saturday, and from 9am to 7pm on Sunday. Kosher items are in Aisle 15. The store manager is also looking to expand grocery items in Aisle 12; at the moment there are only matzos and crackers. He will also consider stocking frozen foods. The store is at

3 Waterfront Broadway, Granton EH5 1SA.

The Number 24 bus goes there from Marchmont and Newington. The 8, 14 and 16 buses go to West Granton Road.

Noticeboard

For sale
Gillian has small **rosemary plants** to pass on in return for a small donation to the community

The three ages of Islam in France

Professor Gilles Kepel

Tuesday 30th April, 1pm - 2:30pm.

Room G2, 19 George Square.

A leading specialist of Islam and the contemporary Arab world, Gilles Kepel is a Professor at Sciences Po Paris and a Senior Visiting Fellow at LSE and the Institut Universitaire de France. He also taught at New York University and Columbia University. His books have been translated into 20 different languages and include such seminal titles as *Allah in the West: Islamic Movements in America and Europe* and *Les Banlieues de l'Islam*. This lecture is FREE. No booking necessary. For more information contact: thealwaleedcentre@ed.ac.uk

Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre
Committee

thanks everyone who supported our very successful Games Night.

Our next fundraising event is the

Pre-Shavuot Coffee Morning

Sunday 12th May 2013

at 10.30 am in the Community Centre

Minimum donation £5

Bid for home baking, browse the book stall, buy some plants, chat to friends, relax, Home-baked good required for auction. Please bring along any items wrapped, and labelled parev or dairy.

Plants and books also very welcome.

For further information contact

jcc@ehcong.com