

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity SC035678

www.eljc.org

August 2013

Av–Elul 5773

issue 56

August

- 2** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 9** Erev Shabbat Service
CC 7.00
- 16** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 24** Shabbat Morning Service
CC 11.00
Tea and Talmud
CC 3.00
- 25** Choosing Judaism
Usual location 10.30
Philosophy Group
CC 4.00
- 30** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 31** First Cheder Session
MSG 3.30

September

- 4** Erev Rosh Hashanah
SMU 7.00
- 5** Rosh Hashanah
SMU 11.00

*Remaining High Holy Day services
in September Newsletter, and at
<http://eljc.org/index.php/diary>*

Venues

- CC** Columcille Centre
2 Newbattle Terrace
- MSG** Marchmont St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road
- SMU** St Mark's Unitarian
Church, 7 Castle Terrace

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This is a short edition of the newsletter, produced by a stand-in while the real editor takes a well-earned holiday. Normal service will be resumed next month.

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These go to several council members

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Word from the Chair

Norman Crane

First I would like to draw your attention to **Ricky Hogg's** account of the residential weekend that he attended as part of the **Ba'al Tefillah** (prayer leader) programme. Just to remind people the programme has been set up to encourage the development of skills and knowledge for those who would like to take services in their congregations. I have talked with Ricky quite a bit about the course as it has gone along for him. It is clear that the course offers an excellent opportunity for personal development as well as being of benefit to the community. We are being asked to consider sending one or more people to a similar course next year and to think about people who might want to lead the community by conducting life cycle events. I would urge anybody who is the slightest bit attracted by the Ba'al Tefillah programme to get in touch with me. I think that Judaism is always in need of a strongly Jewishly educated lay membership, and for me this is one small facet of an attempt to achieve that goal.

We had a very successful trip to **Dundee**, the home of the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community, where the service led by Rabbi Mark was enjoyed by all. It was good to see the Synagogue full of people. The service included the ceremony of admission to the Jewish faith of Melvin Davies, a very moving occasion. Mazeltov to you from us all, Melvin. After the service we were entertained to lunch by the Community. In the afternoon Rabbi Mark led a session of Talmud study centred on a story which gives the Rabbis' views on the causes of the destruction of the Second Temple, commemorated on Tisha B'Av, which fell in the following week.

I am very pleased to be able to report that as a consequence of my speaking at the United Against Fascism meeting on 2 July I have been invited to an **after-fast meal at the Central Mosque** as we draw close to the end of Ramadan late on Wednesday evening. I feel honoured and privileged and am very much looking forward to it.

We are of course fast approaching the **High Holy Days**, and a letter is due to be sent to members with details of services, including those for Succot and Simchat Torah, very shortly.

During September we also have a visit to Abbotsford, the newly restored home of Sir Walter Scott, planned under the guidance of Lindsay Levy, so watch this space for further details.

2013 Ba'al Tefillah Residential Intensive Weekend

Ricky Hogg

Barnes Close began back in 1931 as a country residence for Quaker scholar Henry Cadbury. It is now the conference centre of The Community for Reconciliation, and last month the venue for the Liberal Judaism 2013 Ba'alei Tefillah (prayer leaders') Residential Intensive Weekend. As I got out of the taxi on a lovely summer's afternoon in June (the only day the sun actually appeared), it certainly looked the part: an idyllic retreat situated deep in the English countryside. Deep breath..... Here we go.....

We unpacked, refreshed and caught up with each other. There were representatives from Eastbourne, Bristol, Edinburgh and several from the London area — this was the third time the group had met since the programme started in February 2013.

This weekend went on to become my first ever totally full-on Jewish weekend, and I was totally swept up by it all.

Preparation for Shabbat.....We were very fortunate that Ian and his helpers (Barnes Close staff) did all the catering for us and made us feel very welcome over the whole weekend. Friday evening began with Kabbalat Shabbat followed by our evening meal, which in turn was followed by Erev Shabbat service. To round the evening off we had a good sing song session.

And there was evening.....
And there was morning.....

After Saturday breakfast we went straight into a Torah Shiur – an opportunity to study part of the Torah portion together. Shabbat Morning Service followed in which I had a few verses to read from the Torah scroll. It was very handy to have the opportunity for a sneak viewing of our verses from the scroll; if you are going to read from the scroll then I recommend having a wee look beforehand. (Advice not needed by Rabbi Mark!)

Saturday night was something special when we all got together for Havdalah. It wasn't the warmest of nights but in the half light we linked arms, and the singing and happy faces I will always remember.

During the weekend, we were encouraged to participate in the various services, which also included reading a few verses from the Torah scroll. We also spent time on presentation skills. These sessions were not only helpful but, dare I say it, a lot of fun too. The exercises were hugely beneficial to us all and really broke the ice. Richard, Sandra and Robin put together both a constructive and organic programme, the kind of timetable and approach that allowed the group to put aside any concerns about ability. Most of us were at ease now and by the time Sunday morning came around, we were able to put into practice the skills learnt over the previous few days, which in turn helped with the delivering of our D'verei Torah.

Over the three days we were each allotted a particular time for a one-to-one tutorial with

the aim of going over previous modules and tasks and finding ways to refresh our approach to areas which may need more attention. The tutorial was done in such a way that it gave a feeling of comfortable progress, this positive vibe was certainly doing its work on my confidence.

The Sunday morning session, more than any other in the weekend, brought me nearest to losing sleep. I am not the most confident person when it comes down to expressing thoughts on paper and imparting these writings to others. We had to write a D'var Torah based on Parshat Pinchas, Numbers chapters 25:10. Before I came to the residential I asked Norman Crane, our chairman, and Nick Silk to look over my D'var Torah and they were both very constructive and positive, which gave me confidence to change the material and come up with something close to interesting. After each person had delivered their D'var Torah, other members of the group would offer constructive feedback, so that each of us could learn and gain confidence from this experience. It helped us find new ways of delivering our Divrei Torah; listening to the fascinating way in which each person approached and interpreted Parshat Pinchas was quite extraordinary.

This experience of reading a D'var Torah on the last day of the weekend — the task which held the most fear for me — turned out to be the unexpected surprise.

Both the structure of the weekend and the observant guidance shown by Rabbi Richard Jacobi, Rabbi Sandra Kivat and Robin Samson (Ba'alat Tefillah and Programme Facilitator) turned a fear-stricken member of the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community into a person who now believes he could maybe, just maybe, pull this off.

PS. Rabbi Jacobi is encouraging applications from the Edinburgh community for the 2014 programme. If you are interested, please talk to Ricky about what is involved.

Sukkat Shalom visits the Fringe!

Outings to the Jewish Fringe

Some of us are planning to visit Melissa's show (**Aurora Winterborn's Candid Cabaret**, <http://goo.gl/3MgE9d>) on the **22nd of August** (8.00-9.30pm) There will be burlesque, comedy, magic, aerial dancing and more! Tickets are £5. To go, contact Jennifer at jennifer.underwood@hotmail.co.uk (mobile number 07946 590754)

We are also planning to see **Ivor Dembina's** free comedy show **Comedy After Lunch** (<http://goo.gl/WNfwRv>) on the **25th of August** at 2.15pm. It's free, but we will have to book tickets. Again, contact Jennifer if you want to come along.

The last social event isn't in the Fringe, but you still need to think about booking soon: Joe Goldblatt has arranged for the **Jewish Community Dialogue project** to get a limited allocation of half price tickets for **Fiddler on the Roof** at the Festival Theatre on **2nd of October** at 7.30pm.

We may also get to meet the stars of the cast, including Paul Michael Glaser (best known as Starsky!) Tickets are £20 and there is a suggested donation of £18 to the Jewish Community Dialogue project. However, any donation that you can manage would be appreciated. Tickets need to be booked by the **20th of September** with Janet Mundy (mundy.janet@gmail.com).

More Jewish Fringe

Daniel Cainer is back with a new show, **Schtick and Spiel** (not free this year) <http://goo.gl/Atp7Qg>, 31/7 – 26/8, 12:45pm

Ivor Dembina again in **Old Jewish Jokes** (<http://goo.gl/A8uHaN>, 1 – 25/8, 6pm). His afternoon show (see above) is on 1 – 25/8 at 2:15pm

Ballad of the Burning Star (not free but sounds interesting, group has good reviews from elsewhere) <http://goo.gl/ev5tDv> 31/7 – 26/8, 7:50pm

Beard Envy – Sarah Cassidy and others (free non-ticketed) <http://goo.gl/TXK7Rq> 3 – 24/8, 7:50pm

Repertory Theatre (Israeli Group), looks promising: <http://goo.gl/c8mZIH> 1 – 26/8, 5:05pm

Killing Miss D (Daphna Baram, well-known Israeli journalist in a new incarnation) <http://goo.gl/1c1Kkd> 1 – 15/8, 6:45pm

Eric Hutton's Favourite Songs — free <http://goo.gl/iXigeX> 2 – 25/8, 11pm

... and don't forget the **Festival Open Day**, invaluable as a quick preview of a dozen or more Fringe acts, at the Salisbury Road shul on 18th August. No confirmation of times yet, but in previous years it has run from 12pm to 3:30pm.

Spare room needed

Russell Ross writes from Toronto:

"Our daughter is living in the U.K. She will be performing in the Edinburgh Festival from Aug 1st to Aug 26th or thereabouts. Right now she is completing a performance contract in London. She has just found out that her accommodations while in Edinburgh are unsuitable. Could you help us find a safe and suitable and quiet room for the period?"

If you can help, the contact address is me@russellross.info

Holy Land Healing Herbs

If you are visiting the Botanic Garden this month be sure to go to the demonstration garden (behind the high beech hedge) and see the display on *Herbs of the Holy Land* produced by our former treasurer Claudette Hudes. Her display includes plants that have grown and had significance in Israel and Palestine along with descriptions of the context. You will find it in the herb garden by the Magen David frame that makes sections for the display. The text below is from Claudette's explanatory sign.

Gillian Raab



Plants in the Bible

Most of the plants named in the Bible are native to Egypt and the biblical land of Palestine, though incense and spice plants were imported from Arabia, Ceylon and India. The Bible mentions more than 125 different plants and hundreds more are found in the Talmuds (Babylonian & Jerusalem) and Midrashim.

New plants have been introduced over the centuries and biblical botanists estimate that today there are at least 126 families and more than 2,300 species of plants in Israel. Since the general climatic conditions of the country have changed little since biblical days, many of the native plants still exist.

Ancient Medicine and Healing

Herbal medicines were used in ancient Egypt as far back as 10,000 BCE and by the end of the fourth millennium BCE the priest-physicians of Egypt had begun to systematize their traditions of healing. They may not have understood why a specific plant worked, but had learned from experience that its use in treatment was beneficial.

Healing in Biblical Times

The Israelites, who spent several hundred years in Egypt before coming to the Promised Land, knew Egyptian medical practices and brought this knowledge with them.

There were no physicians as we understand the term, and people relied on herbal folk remedies, simple powders, ointments and salves for treatment. The Talmud identifies some 70 herbs and other plants as having medicinal properties, many for cures, others for prevention. The list includes olives, dates, pomegranates, garlic, hyssop, cumin and other plants used mainly for food. There were remedies for intestinal ailments, blood pressure, skin and liver ailments, hemorrhage, eye problems and scurvy.

Holy Lands, Healing Herbs in Scotland

Because of the difference in climate not all the plants that grow in the Holy Lands will grow in Scotland. The plants chosen for this plot were chosen from lists of plants that were mentioned in the Hebrew Bible or that grow in the present Holy Lands and will grow in the Scottish climate. These were narrowed down according to their availability—as plants or seeds—in the UK.