



Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

November 2013

Scottish Charity SC035678 www.eljc.org

issue 59

Cheshvan – Kislev 5774 November

| | | |
|-----------|---|---------------------|
| 8 | Erev Shabbat CC | 7.00 |
| 15 | Kabbalat Shabbat MSG | 6.15 |
| 16 | Cheder MSG | 3.30 |
| 23 | Shabbat Morning Service <i>Rabbi Mark Solomon and Ricky Hogg, see p. 9</i> CC | 11.00 |
| 23 | Tea and Talmud CC | 3.00 |
| 24 | Philosophy Reading Group CC | 4.00 |
| 29 | Kabbalat Shabbat MSG | 6.15 |
| 30 | Cheder and Chanukah Party <i>See p. 3</i> | 3.30 5.00 MSG |

December

| | | |
|-----------|---|------|
| 6 | Kabbalat Shabbat MSG | 6.15 |
| 13 | Erev Shabbat Service and Supper <i>Please bring a non-meat dish to share</i> CC | 7.00 |

Venues

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| CC | Columcille Centre 2 Newbattle Terrace |
| MSG | Marchmont St Giles 1a Kilgraston Road |

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Community Phone

This phone number sends voicemail to members the Contact Team
0131 777 8024

Urgent Support

Only for use in emergency; alerts the whole the Welfare Team
0131 208 1447

Email Contact

Email the Contact Team and the Newsletter via the webpage at
contact.eljc.org

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|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <i>Chair</i> | Norman Crane | <i>Treasurer</i> | Gillian Raab |
| <i>Administrator</i> | Catherine Lyons | <i>Membership</i> | Eva Wiseman |

Word from the Chair

The end of each month is a time of heightened activity, for it is usually the time when our rabbi is with us. He is heavily engaged the whole weekend in teaching and leading services and in other activities. The community's soul is very much refreshed through his verve and weight of intellect.

This month Rabbi Mark arrived a day early in order to take part in the Day of Dialogue with the Church of Scotland. For this he was wearing two hats; as rabbi of our community and as interfaith consultant for Liberal Judaism. We were pleased that in the midst of a busy schedule Rabbi Danny Rich, chief executive of Liberal Judaism, was able to fly up from London to take a leading role in the day's proceedings. Our local representatives were Catherine Lyons, Rebekah Gronowski, and me. Catherine co-chaired the day's discussions with Rev. Sally Foster Fulton, the convenor of the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council, which was responsible for the *Inheritance of Abraham*, the starting point for strained relations with the wider Jewish community. Sally was flanked by Rev. Chris Wigglesworth, known to some of us locally, her deputy convenor. We welcomed the presence of another busy person, Rev. Lorna Hood, the current moderator of the Church of Scotland, as well as Rev. Ian Alexander, secretary to the World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland, and Val Brown, Church and Community Manager of Christian Aid, Scotland.

Enormous thanks are due to Catherine and Sally, the co-organisers, both for the way they organised the day and the extensive work they put in beforehand. It is largely due to their efforts and the goodwill shown by participants that the day was a successful one. An atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust was established that bodes well for the future. An important, indeed essential, outcome for the day was the agreement to continue the dialogue in a number of ways, to be explored in the coming months. I hesitate to be more specific, because preliminary notes of the meeting are still being drafted. Suffice it to say that questions of theology were touched on, as were human rights in

Israel/Palestine. It emerged that members of a Church of Scotland human rights group attended the Friday evening service at Kol HaNeshemah in Jerusalem at the same time as members of our own human rights group. Unfortunately neither group found out they had been there together until afterwards.

The Day of Dialogue included lunch, and we all thought that a vegetarian lunch had been ordered. It turned out that those responsible at Church of Scotland HQ had ordered a kosher cold collation from Mark's Deli in Glasgow. No problem! Except that the van bringing it from Glasgow broke down on the M8. As lunchtime came and went, with no sign of food, participants ordered local felafel; in the event, felafel and kosher buffet arrived together. Only a small part of the buffet was eaten. Rebekah took most of it to Columcille for our Friday evening Supper and Songs. It made a very welcome addition to the food brought by members, and we managed to eat it all! Thus, in a roundabout sort of way, the Church of Scotland shared a meal with our community. We should invite members of the Church of Scotland so that we can return hospitality and they can break bread with us in a more normal kind of way.

Our Erev Shabbat Supper and Songs was followed by a presentation by four of our members who had been on the community's Human Rights trip. They spoke for about ten minutes each and presented photos. What they had to say was fascinating, as well as disturbing. The presentations were followed by a discussion, which I chaired. There was a lively discussion, and I'm pleased to say that this was conducted in a pleasant manner by all participants.

To finish on a social note, those of us who attended the flat-warming party of our first chair, Maurice Naftalin, on the following evening, enjoyed a splendid occasion, when the wine, beer and conversation flowed freely. The only problem was yet another surplus of party food as ordered by son, Daniel. Maurice was faced with a mountain of leftovers, which I was later pleased to help him tackle!

Norman Crane



Chanukah is almost upon us

The first candle of Chanukah will be lit on **Wednesday 27 November**. **Candles** from Mark's Deli will be available from Gillian at cheder classes and services, £2.50 (large) or £1 (small).

Our **Chanukah Party** will be hosted by our cheder again this year, on **Saturday 30 November**, at Marchmont St Giles. Hebrew classes will continue as usual, but what will normally be break time will transition into party time. We will make Havdalah as the night draws in. As well as abundant latkes, gelt, and candlelight, there will also be a (dreidl-shaped?) piñata. Cheder children, teachers, and parents welcome the rest of the community to join the party from **5 pm**.

Meanwhile, at Salisbury Rd, the **JCC Chanukah Dinner** is on the same night, with entertainment from the klezmer band, Tantz. Tickets are £25 adults/ £12.50 students/£5 under10's, and must be bought by booked and paid for by 16 November. For information on how to book, email Hilary Rifkind via jcc@ehcong.com.

On **Thursday 5 December**, at 2pm, **Freylakh un Tsores** will be performing at Columcille as part of the Centre's normal day-time activities. The Columcille Centre has invited us to join them for Yiddish music and perhaps a couple of carols. RSVP to Columcille: admin@columcillecentre.co.uk.

Look forward to January! The Sukkat Shalom Night Ceilidh

In 2014 our community will be ten years old. Formal festivities will take place later in the year.

But we will start the year with a celebratory **Burns Night Ceilidh (Saturday 25 January)** at Marchmont St Giles. Music will be provided by Gica Loening and the Belle Star Band (right; traditional **ceilidh music with a touch of klezmer**). Butterflies Catering will be serving **veggie haggis, neeps, and tatties**. We will be able to bring our own **beer, wine, and whisky**, of course. **Tickets will be available soon.**



You can get more information from Jenni Underwood, via the webpage at contact.eljc.org

Welcome to our new members

We are pleased to welcome:

Daniel and Lorraine Hershon and sons **Elkan, Isak, Abel, and Elias**. The Hershons come all the way from Haltwhistle. (If you are struggling to put names to faces, Elkan was the knowledgeable young man who told us about how camels are adapted to desert journeys during the Torah service for Chayyei Sarah.)

Louise Macdonald from Cupar and her daughters **Isobel and Ella**.

Terri and Fabio Nudelman, originally from Turkey and Brazil, they lived previously in Israel and Holland.

Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue: Exploring the Oxford Jewish Community Model

The Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue Project's next event will be Wednesday **4 December**, 6.30pm–8.30pm in Gladstone Hall (off the Royal Mile). Jesmond Blumenfeld of the Oxford Jewish Community will speak.

As this is the seventh night of Chanukah, we invite leaders of EHC, Sukkat Shalom, and Chabad of Edinburgh to help us light a community menorah at the start of this event.

Joe Goldblatt, and on behalf of Jane Ansell and Janet Mundy

Tzedakah for Kol Nidrei

It is our minhag to donate money to a range of causes at this time of year: two local charities, one Jewish and one not; a non-profit organisation working for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine, and another one working for international development. We like to select projects that embody Jewish values of justice and dignity, projects that our community has some connection with, and small-scale grassroots projects where, as a small community ourselves, we know our donation will make a difference.

Rabbis for Human Rights

This year, the Council has selected Cosgrove Care, the Pastoral Foundation, Rabbis for Human Rights, and the Jabulani Project. You may remember the presentation of our four organisations by Sue Lieberman at our Kol Nidrei service. In his sermon at that service, our rabbi, Mark Solomon, drew a connection between the president of Rabbis for Human Rights, Arik Ascherman, and the concept of human rights. In Hebrew, the term for 'human rights', *z'chuyot ha-adam* — what is ours by virtue of being human — is related to 'the merit of (our) ancestors', *zechut avot* — which accrues to us by virtue of our heritage. Reflecting on the Human Rights trip, Mark symbolically chose a mother and a father from whom to accrue *zechut avot*. Penina Feiler, the 90-year-old nurse who is still active with Physicians for Human Rights, and Rabbi Arik Ascherman, with whom the Human Rights Trip participants were able to witness the erosion of human rights in the Negev and the South Hebron Hills. From the trip blog:

Another extraordinary day, this time with the courageous, prophetic Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights, visiting El Arakib and other unrecognised Bedouin villages in the Negev, and the Arab cave dwellings in the South Hebron Hills. In both places — with very different histories — traditional communities have repeatedly been destroyed by Israeli action, and hang on in dire poverty with great persistence and dignity.

Sheikh Sayyah and his son Aziz showed us where their fields and olive orchards — and of course their houses — have been destroyed to make way for sterile JNF forests. Some of the few who remain sleep in their graveyard (dating back to 1914), the only place that doesn't get regularly bulldozed.

They, and Ismail in his cave village near Susya, spoke of their love for their



Rabbi Arik Ascherman, President of Rabbis for Human Rights, and Sheikh Abu Aziz, of El Arakib
Photo: Maurice Naftalin

ancestral land, which gives them the determination to stay, and their dream of peace and justice between Jews and Arabs. Their sweet tea was delicious!

Rabbis for Human Rights is an Israeli organisation founded in 1988 by a group of Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative rabbis led by David Forman, *z'l*. It now numbers 120 rabbis. During the first Intifada, Rabbi Forman wrote an open letter to Israel's chief rabbinate asking why the religious establishment focused almost solely on Shabbat observance and kashrut. 'Where were rabbis like Abraham Joshua Heschel, addressing the burning moral issues our society from a religious Jewish perspective?' While not ignoring the very real physical dangers that Israelis faced, he argued that these threats could not be used as an excuse to behave immorally.

RHR is supported by British Friends of RHR, of whom Rabbi Laura Janner Klausner is chair and Rabbi Danny Rich is treasurer. Rabbi Mark Solomon is one of many rabbinical members. RHR-North America has given rise to a partner organisation: T'ruah, the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

RHR engages in field work, legal work, lobbying, and research and study. RHR supports West Bank Palestinian farmers harvest olives in the face of settler violence. Current legal work is focused on challenging eviction and demolition, but RHR's first High Court victory was the revoking of a curfew in Ramallah in 1992. RHR has recently been particularly active in lobbying the Government and the Jewish National Fund (JNF-KKL) on behalf of the Bedouin to resist the Praver plan that would dispossess them.

Other Israeli groups on whose behalf RHR lobbies include the unemployed, the disabled, and single parents. RHR has also challenged the priorities and methods of the Wisconsin Plan, Israel's Welfare-to-Work Bill. A current priority for RHR is the plight of some 60,000 asylum seekers and

continued



Gillian Raab inspects the site of the (many times) demolished village of El Arakib Photo: Maurice Naftalin

refugees fleeing Sudan and Eritrea. Israel has passed a law making it illegal to help them. RHR is seeking legal redress against geographic restrictions on refugees, and seeking fair policies for granting refugee status. Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, RHR ran *T'shuvah* vigils outside the homes of Prime Minister Netanyahu, Interior Minister Yishai, and Defence Minister Barak.

The choice of RHR for this year's Kol Nidrei appeal was heavily influenced by its advocacy on behalf of the unrecognised Bedouin villages of the Negev. El-Arakib has been demolished over 40 times in 3 years. In addition to fieldwork and legal work, RHR engages with JNF-KKL over their role in expelling the Bedouin from the Negev.

RHR, T'ruah, and the Jewish Alliance for Change has convinced JNF-KKL to freeze planting programmes pending court ruling on Bedouin claims of land ownership. RHR asked the JNF 'to focus on their admirable work in the fields of forestry and ecology, and to leave behind that part of their history which has been complicit in unjustly creating facts on the ground and discrimination against Israel's Arab citizens.'

Given the respect traditionally accorded to the JNF, as all but synonymous with *tzedakah*, respectful but determined resistance from RHR and T'ruah — human rights advocacy *from within* the Jewish community — has been especially significant. A JNF-North America board member resigned in protest in 2011. Rabbi Ascherman reports that JNF-KKL shares some of the responsibility of the Praver/Begin plan. The chief

executive of JNF-North America proclaimed in a meeting with Rabbi Ascherman that he lobbied the Knesset to adopt the Negev Development Plan, which the Praver Plan serves. The JNF-KKL will be asked to create a green belt on much of the Negev.

RHR also conducts research and study programmes. A major report was published this year on *Israeli Settler Agriculture as Means of Land Takeover in the West Bank*. RHR runs Human Rights yeshivas at Hebrew University and Jezreel Valley College, and teaches students to connect Judaism and Human Rights in 13 pre-military academies. RHR has also created *Masekhet Atzma'ut (Tractate Independence)*, a study guide to the Declaration of Independence composed in the style of the Talmud.

Sources

Rabbis for Human Rights rhr.org.il

Rabbis For Human Rights: The Annual Report 2012-2013, www.yumpu.com/en/document/forward/19702053

Israeli Settler Agriculture as Means of Land Takeover in the West Bank (RHR, August 2013)

British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights, rhruk.co.uk

Call This a Holiday? ELJC Human Rights Trip, 16th – 25th May 2013 humanrights.eljc.org

The Guardian guardian.com



Shabbat Breakfast!

Join us for an informal Shabbat morning breakfast on on **9 November**, a day when no service is scheduled. Please let us know if you are coming as we have to pay a non-refundable deposit. Contact Jennifer Underwood using the webpage at www.eljc.org.

Loopy Lornas in the Churchill Theatre
www.loopylornas.com

10.15 for 10.30 (as they have a breakfast menu which stops towards lunchtime).

Ketoret: Ancient Ritual and Remembered Remedy

Claudette Hudes

As part of my Diploma in Herbology at the Royal Botanical Gardens I was required to interview someone and write a paper on 'Remembered Remedies'. In keeping with my theme of 'Holy Lands, Healing Herbs' I interviewed Rabbi Mark about the *Ketoret* — the Holy Incense.

Since ancient times, natural aromatic plant substances have played a vital role in the daily life of the everyday folk in every native culture throughout the world. During the days of the Temple, the *Ketoret* was burned every evening and morning on the Golden Incense Altar by the Cohanim in front of the holy Ark in the Temple's sanctuary. According to the *Zohar*, the Incense Offering is the most precious part of the Temple service in the eyes of God. The *Ketoret* Offering is a sacred memory in Judaism. It hasn't existed since 70 CE when the second Temple was destroyed.

In Orthodox Judaism, though not in Liberal Judaism, one reads every morning about Temple sacrifices including *Ketoret*. Though the Temple was destroyed, if we read Torah prescriptions of sacrifice, it is as if we have sacrificed: a spiritual replacement.

Incense was an important part of Temple worship. All animal sacrifices took place on a bronze or copper altar in the courtyard outside the Temple Sanctuary, whereas the incense was burned twice a day on a golden altar, used only for incense, inside the sanctuary. According to commentators in the Talmud, smoke rose vertically to the heavenly throne. The main mystical (Kabbalistic) view is that incense was to sweeten God's judgement. The main rationalistic view (from Maimonides) is that the incense was used to cleanse and deodorize after all the sacrifices.

My studies reveal that *Ketoret* was believed to cure illness. It could nullify a evil decree, even death. When a plague broke out among the *B'nei*



Boswellia Sacra: Frankincense is resin from this tree
Photo: Scott Zona/Wikipedia



Replica of the Golden Altar, Timna valley, Israel
Photo: Ori229/Wikipedia

Israel in the wilderness, Moses ordered Aaron to go through the camp with the *Ketoret*.

Bamidbar (Numbers) 17:12-13 Aaron took the incense pan as Moses had commanded him ... He offered the incense to atone for the people ... and the plague was checked.

The healing properties of *Ketoret* could especially alleviate plague. If the *Ketoret* had not been formulated correctly it would not have ended the plague, thus condemning the people to death.

There are eleven herbs and spices in the *Ketoret* incense, however only four are actually mentioned in the the Torah. The other seven (myrrh, cassia, spikenard, saffron, costus, aromatic bark, and cinnamon) are added in the Talmud.

Shemot (Exodus) 30/34 And the Lord said to Moses: "Take for yourself aromatics, [namely] balsam sap, onycha and galbanum, aromatics and pure frankincense; they shall be of equal weight."

I analysed the compounds of all eleven ingredients of this mixture. It was a powerful healer. Not only could it be used for respiratory problems when inhaled, the smoke could also be used for skin problems. It could be used for keeping areas clean. Many of the ingredients could also be taken internally.

A huge thank you to Rabbi Mark. His wide expanse of knowledge never ceases to amaze me. The discussion with him answered a lot of questions I had about the use of herbs and spices in the Holy Lands, my theme throughout my diploma course. It has given me an even better foundation to further explore this topic.

A longer version of this article, including the chemical and clinical properties of Ketoret, is available on request.

Letter from one who has been ‘gathered in’

In the October *Newsletter*, Norman Crane very fairly vents his anger against *The Times*, for associating itself with Francis Spufford’s view that Christianity, alone among major religions has, at its core, ‘no detailed rules,’ which, coupled with (among other things) its special emphasis on ‘salvation and forgiveness’ renders it less vulnerable to the excesses of ‘legalistic, literal authoritarian fundamentalism’ than either Judaism or Islam. With commendable restraint Norman confines his criticism — with which incidentally I wholly concur — to pointing out that the view of Judaism presented in this thesis is out of date, hopelessly oversimplified and hence quite inaccurate.

As one who, to borrow Rabbi Mark Solomon’s phrase, has been ‘gathered in’ to our community in my capacity as the husband of a member of ELJC, and who was also brought up as an Anglican Christian, I feel it is my privilege to be a little less diplomatic. Insofar as the picture of Christianity outlined in *The Times* leading article is a fair summary of Spufford’s position, I see very little likeness between my own experience of Christianity and the grandiose claim that Christianity is, in these key respects, entitled to view itself as a little bit superior to other faiths.

Being a simple citizen, with no claim to theological scholarship, I can only judge faiths through my own direct experience of them. Let me cite just one example of my own discomfort, in practice, with the Christian faith. At every Eucharist we used to implore God to ‘... forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us’ (my italics). Do Christians actually do that? Only some of the time and on a very selective basis. Years ago a Roman Catholic bishop had the temerity to invite a leading member of the Church of Scotland (a delightful man, whom I knew well, personally), not only to visit his cathedral but also to be the first representative of his church to preach at a Catholic service in Scotland. To the enlightened, this was a grand and beautiful ecumenical gesture, a true and courageous hand of friendship; but to a substantial and vociferous minority in both those branches of the Christian faith this was seen as little short of treason. It was not merely that both host and guest came in for furious criticism from others in their own respective churches (I think the modern phrase is that they were each accused of ‘sleeping with the

enemy’). It was that their trespasses were, in certain quarters, considered unforgivable (former friends never spoke to them again), in a way that was inconsistent, as I saw it, with those daily recitations of The Lord’s Prayer. While I have met many people to admire within the Christian faith, the sad fact is that Christian churches, as much as any other faith groups, are also riddled with prejudice and intolerance.

As I see it, too, the reason why Christianity has few prescribed rules ‘at its core’ is essentially that *Christianity* is little more than an umbrella term, under which different branches and even different denominations have such widely differing interpretations of the faith that the common ground between them has been very substantially eroded over the centuries. So the rules and prescriptions, rather than being set at the core are, in effect, generated at denominational level. An implicit aspect of Spufford’s claim that written rules are vulnerable to literal, authoritarian interpretations, which can be highly damaging, is that unwritten rules are, in some sense, less damaging. On the contrary, at least if a rule is written down, it can be challenged and reinterpreted. In my experience, Christianity is full of rules and prescriptions which, because they are not always written, are more difficult to challenge or change. For example, in my own experience of the Anglican church, the rules about something as simple as the clothing to be worn by choristers and servers can be highly prescriptive and rigid, even though rarely formally codified in writing.

The fact is that, in all faiths, there are enlightened scholars who understand the difference between myth and fact, who recognise when (say) a Bible story is more allegorical than historical, and who see when the literal interpretation of a precept, though valid in its time, is now past its sell-by date, such that its modern application has not only become irrelevant, it may even become damaging to our contemporary community experience. A thriving faith needs to belong in the needs and challenges of the present day, not merely locked in dedication to its history. The community of Sukkat Shalom, for me, has all the hallmarks of a thriving community; and it is a privilege to be associated with it. Most particularly, I encounter in our community a true spirit of intellectual humility, from which has developed a tolerance of each other’s differing identities, needs and perspectives, on a wide range of issues.

Peter Bennett

*Peter is a member of the Newsletter team, responsible for print production and distribution.
He is married to Joy Northcott*

A personal thank-you note from Benjamin Staal, who was Bar Mitzvah on 28 September

Dear All at Sukkat Shalom,
 thank-you for all of the help and support I have been given. This community is a lovely, warm and vibrant group. I would also like to say thank-you for hosting my Bar Mitzvah and for the lovely Siddur.

lots of love,
 Benjamin

The Praise of Silence: Speaking out in the face of evil; silent before the face of God

Our rabbi, Mark Solomon, is the author an article in the current issue of *European Judaism*. We are pleased to print the abstract here.

'The Praise of Silence' is a reflection on silence in the face of the mystery of the divine, and on divine and human silence in the face of suffering and evil, as well as on the author's own ambivalence about silence. It begins by considering three traditional translations of Psalm 65:2: 'Praise is fitting for You, O God, In Zion,' 'Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion,' and the Targum's interpretation, 'To You silence is praise, O God, in Zion.' The last of these is the main focus of the paper. Rashi explains the verse in two ways: firstly, the futility of multiplying words in praise of God, so that the best praise is silence. The roots of this doctrine lie in a Talmudic story, paralleled by a saying of Jesus and by teachings in other religious and philosophical systems, both eastern and western. The via negativa of Maimonides is the most powerful expression of this in Judaism. Rashi's second interpretation shifts the focus from human to divine silence, and suggests that God is to be praised for remaining silent in the face of the destruction of the Temple and the blasphemy of the wicked. This derives from a passage in Midrash Tehillim which culminates with the Psalmist's own commitment to stay silent in the face of suffering, a stance which is in tension with the moral imperative of speaking out in the face of evil. This imperative is expressed both by the mediaeval poet who rebukes God's silence in the face of Crusader atrocities, and by the motto of 1980s AIDS activism: Silence = Death. The third part of the paper looks at another difficult Talmudic passage which contrasts the silence enforced by human tyranny with the voluntary silence of those who suffer at the hand of God. Two contrasting stories in the Talmud have God, on the one hand, commanding Moses to be silent in the face of the inscrutable divine will, and on the other hand, to speak out in aid of God's work. In conclusion, there is 'a time to be silent' in the face of mysteries beyond our grasp, but 'a time to speak' when we must protest against human evil and end avoidable suffering.



Mark Solomon, 'The Praise of Silence', *European Judaism: a Journal for the New Europe*, 46:2, 2013

Torah, singing, and choreography: becoming Ba'al Tefillah

Ricky Hogg

Note to any future participant in the Ba'al Tefillah programme: *if you take the first flight of the day to Gatwick North, do not volunteer to lead the Weekday Morning Service at 10.30.*

Yep! I thought I'd have plenty of time to get to the Montague Centre, and lead in with *Mah Tovv*. Having not slept, for fear of missing my alarm, and realising a bit late that Sunday rail work on the Gatwick Express is the norm, my timing and general well-being went right out the window of the so called Express train. Off the train and into the pouring rain — no brolly, no hat.

Anyway, I did make it, just. After drying off, a coffee and a quick catch up, it was straight into the morning service. I had no time to get nervous. (Every cloud ...)

This was to be our last working get together on the 2013 *Ba'alei Tefillah* trail. We were all of the same mind: t'was only January a few moments ago when we all first met up.

We (the year 3 programme) were joined by years 1 and 2. The idea was that we could learn from those who had already become *Ba'alei Tefillah* and absorb the various experiences they had encountered in their communities.

Just before the service started Rabbi Richard Jacobi informed us that a few people of our group had been unable to attend, and a few more had pulled out altogether, which was a real disappointment to us all.

By this point, a rather bedraggled member of the Edinburgh community (me!) made his way up to the bimah.

I was to lead the service from *Mah Tovv* through to the *Yishtabach*, and I began *Mah Tovv* in a melody sung by Danny Maseng (my favourite tune for *Mah Tovv*) and one which most people there knew. I have to say it makes leading off that wee bit more enjoyable when there's a wall of sound coming back at you!

After some reading in English we came to *Shachar Avakashchar* (*Lev Chadash* p. 30).

From its origins, Liberal Judaism has always celebrated the partnership of a professional rabbinate and committed lay men and women. Although we have recently expanded our rabbinic team, we are also committed to strengthening our local communities by nurturing the skills and commitment of individuals.

Rabbi Danny Rich



Graduation of the Year 2 Ba'al Tefillah Programme
Ricky will be graduating soon

While away at the Residential Weekend, I heard a wonderful rendition of *Shachar Avakashchar*, sung by Gwendolen, one of our group. I asked if she could record it for me to learn. B'reisheet was read next from the Sunday service, followed by Psalm 24. I had never come across Psalm 24

before and if it were to pop up I would more than likely read it out in English. This is what I had on the cards until Rabbi Mark let me know that there was a particular tune by Julius Mombach, which I have to say was rather difficult to master! It is up and down and all over the place, but learning this tune gave me that little bit of confidence. Preparation really does make all the difference, although I wish I could say it takes away the nerves!

I explained the background to the melody, and that it was, until recently, unknown to me. After the service a few people said it was not a tune they were familiar with and that they appreciated the introduction to the Psalm rather than launching straight into it. They agreed that being more informed had them feeling more comfortable with not knowing the melody. (Note to future Year 4 *Ba'alei Tefillah*).

I finished up my part in the morning service with everyone reciting the *Yishtabach* together, and could now sit down and un-melody my brain. Why do we have so many tunes for the same Blessing/Prayer/Psalm? Maybe it's just an extension of two Jews — three opinions.

After some refreshments we turned our attention to Torah service choreography, and there were

continued

lots of 'we don't do it that way', 'we have two people helping at this bit'. Richard guided us through the basic structure of the Torah service, but he made a point of emphasising the importance of community *minhag* (custom) and how choreography not only during the Torah service but throughout the various services change from community to community.

We finished the day discussing the Akedah, the binding of Isaac. We paired up, and all the Akedah characters were up for grabs: from Abraham and Isaac to the servants, donkey, and even the ram. Guess who we pulled from the hat? Yep — the ram! We all had fun exploring with these characters. There were many innovative interpretations, and not a few surreal ones too.

I should point out that we are still working on our modules at home and that completion of this year's course is still ongoing.

To Rabbis Richard Jacobi and Sandra Kviat, and Programme Facilitator Robin Samson, many thanks for allowing me to be part of this year's programme; wonderfully put together, it has helped me explore Jewish life. It has also opened up new Jewish learning and for that I thank you. A big thanks to Norman Crane who was always on hand when I needed guidance, Thanks also to Rabbi Mark and Nick Silk and of course to ELJC for helping with the funds. If you are interested in being part of the next *Ba'al Tefillah* programme then please speak to me or to Norman Crane.

As he reaches the culmination of the Ba'al Tefillah programme, Ricky will be leading the Shabbat Morning Service, together with our rabbi, Mark Solomon, on 23 November.

On screen in Edinburgh

Miserable November nights are a good time to hole up in the cinema (if you call it a movie theater, you may have problems with the timing of the second recommendation below). Apart from the warmth of *Philomena* and the adrenaline of *Gravity*, more substantial viewing is coming to Edinburgh this month.

Hannah Arendt opens at the Filmhouse on **Friday 8 November**. Reviews have been restrained, perhaps like the film itself. *The Guardian* describes it as a 'formal and pedagogic production, but worthwhile nonetheless'. (Those of us with babes in arms may wish to meet up at the 11.00 a.m. Filmhouse Crying Out Loud screening on **Monday 11 November**.)

Running all over Scotland for four weeks from **7 November** is La Fête du Cinéma. Among many recent titles is *Le fils de l'autre* ('The Other Son', but surely better translated literally as 'The Son of the Other'), in which an Israeli and a Palestinian baby are accidentally switched at birth and raised 'on the wrong side of the struggle'. Though the plot device may be very well worn, reviews describe the film as optimistic while avoiding melodrama and sentimentality. *Le fils de l'autre* is showing at the Dominion on **Thursday 28 November** only

(16.15 and 18.30). People going to the second screening might want to go for a drink at the Merlin or the Canny Man afterwards. *Contact Gillian* if you are interested.

Both films are certified 12, feature multiple languages, and have a female director. *Hannah Arendt* is directed by Margarethe von Trotta and is in German, French, English, Hebrew, and Latin. *Le fils de l'autre* is directed by Lorraine Levy (Google her to find fascinating interviews about the film) and is in French, Hebrew, Arabic and English.



Wha's like us?

Sukkat Shalom, Scottish Jews, and the 2011 Census

Gillian Raab

The data from the 2011 Census of Scotland has finally started to be published and some data on the answers to the religion question have recently been released. As you may remember, the question asked 'What religion, religious denomination, or body do you belong to?' Of course, one can argue that this is not the right way to count Jews, and many people will. But meanwhile, the only data published so far gives numbers by local authority, and here is a summary.

| Council area groups | Number answering Jewish | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------|--------|--|
| | 2001 | 2011 | Change | |
| East Renfrewshire | 3128 | 2399 | -23% | *Surroundings comprise: Renfrewshire, Dumbartonshire, E Ayrshire, S Lanarkshire |
| Glasgow and Surroundings* | 1455 | 1342 | -8% | |
| Edinburgh, Fife, and Lothians | 1036 | 1239 | 20% | |
| Elsewhere in Scotland | 829 | 907 | 9% | |
| All Scotland | 6448 | 5887 | -9% | |

Census 2011: Release 2A

Key results on Population, Ethnicity, Identity, Language, Religion, Health, Housing and Accommodation in Scotland

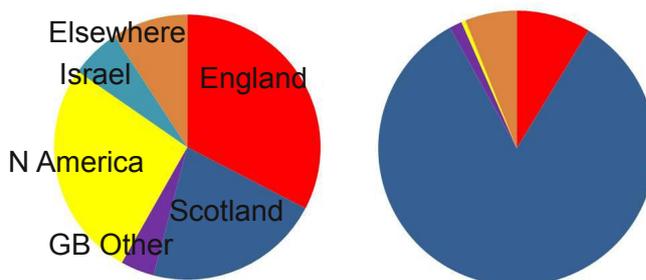
26 September 2013

We can see that there has been an overall decline, more marked in the West of Scotland, while numbers in the East of Scotland have increased. It would be nice to think that it was the vibrancy of our community that has led to the increased numbers, but that may not be the whole story. Increasing numbers of Jewish students in Edinburgh and St Andrews may be part of the picture, but we will have to wait until next year when further data will be published to learn more.

Meanwhile, in the absence of more Census data, here is some information about our members. Our total membership is creeping up towards 100. This is the count of individual adult and student members, but we also have over 40 children of members.

We can also look at the age distribution of our members and their children and compare it to the population of Scotland in 2011.

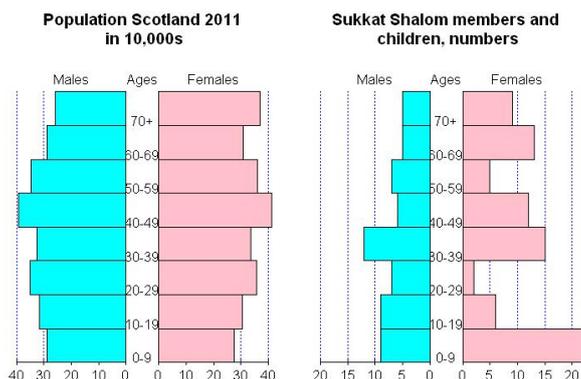
The smaller numbers in our pyramid make it look rather lumpy, but overall our distribution is not markedly different from Scotland as a whole. The large number of little girls under ten may surprise some of you, but anyone who has seen the girls running around at the cheder break will know that this is real.



Another interesting feature of our membership is our diverse origins. Adult Sukkat Shalom members are on the left and Scottish residents in 2011 on the right.

We have often said that we are wandering Jews because we don't have a building as a permanent home, but you can see that many of us also wandered to Scotland, and we hope we can make everyone welcome here.

Gillian Raab, treasurer and former chairman, is also Professor Emeritus of Statistics at Napier University



Giffnock and Garnethill, two events to head West for, or stay in Edinburgh for old Jewish records at the Lit

Commemoration of Kristallnacht

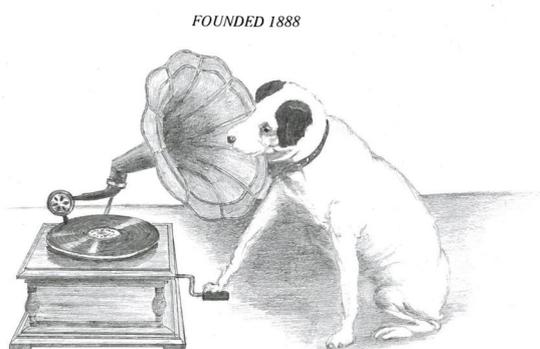
The weekend of 9-10 November marks the 75th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The Association of Jewish Refugees will be commemorating this event on **Sunday 10 November at 2pm** in **Garnethill Synagogue**.

Henry Wuga, a Kindertransport refugee, will recount his experience. Music will be provided by Eddie Binnie and the Glasgow Jewish Singers. The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre will also be open at Garnethill that afternoon to commemorate Armistice day, and the Centre has considerable holdings from the Holocaust period.

If you would like to attend, please contact Agnes Isaacs, AJR Scotland and Newcastle Groups Coordinator, agnes@ajr.org.uk, 07908 156361.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society



Old Tales ~ off the Record &

Practical Nostalgia

*a record collector shares his old Jewish records
and the stories they tell*

*David Bleiman
Tribunals Adjudicator*

*on Sunday 10th November at 8.00pm
www.ejls.org*

Jewish Glasgow: An Illustrated History

If you go Garnethill on 10 November, and you are not heading straight back for **Practical Nostalgia** at the Lit (see left): you can head down to **Giffnock Synagogue** for **8pm** for the launch of a book published by the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

Jewish Glasgow: An Illustrated History, by Kenneth Collins, Havey Kaplan, and Stephen Kliner will cost £25 in 2014, but is available until the end of 2013 at the launch price of £20.



Supper and Piano Recital

On **Thursday 21 November** at 6.30pm there will be a supper and piano recital by Lizzy Shamash, organised by WIZO, at the home of Edward and Maryla Green.

Ticket price is £30 and numbers are restricted. To ensure a place please send a cheque or contact Kate Goodwin, 668 2113.