

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

לולב *lulav*

vol 1
issue 3

March
2014

Adar I-II
5774

7	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15
8	Cheder MSG	3.30
14	Erev Shabbat CC	7.00
15	Tea and Talmud CC Cheder CC <i>note venue</i>	1.00 3.30
	Erev Purim Havdalah, Megillah, Spiel <i>Bring hamentaschen, etc.</i>	
	CC	6.00
16	Philosophy Reading Group CC	4.00
21	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15
29	Shabbat Morning Service SMU Cheder MSG	11.00 3.30

April

4	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15
11	Erev Shabbat CC	7.00

Venues

CC Columcille Centre
2 Newbattle Terrace

MSG Marchmont St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road

SMU St Mark's Unitarian
7 Castle Terrace

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Contributors' addresses are not published, so as to prevent them from being harvested from our website and used for spam. Contact Lulav contributors by using contact.eljc.org

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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Chair/Lulav Norman Crane *Treasurer* Gillian Raab
Admin/Lulav Catherine Lyons *Membership* Eva Wiseman

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Word from the Chair

We are fast approaching the festival of Purim. One family has told me that their children will not be staying for the reading of the Megillah because they find it too frightening. It is the violence and hanging of Haman contained therein that upsets them. Indeed, the Megillah is cartoon-like in its depiction of people and events. It is a story, one told in a particularly effective way, replete with deceptions, unmasking of those deceptions, visceral anti-Semitism, and role reversals; complex and fast-moving. I can still hear my mother calling any long-winded account or description of events as a *ganze Megillah* (with apologies to those who really can write Yiddish). In a way, this hits the nail on the head, for the Book of Esther is a story, not a historical record of events.

Interestingly, 13 Adar, the day recorded in the Megillah as the Fast of Esther, was once called Nicanor Day, as mentioned in both 1 and 2 Maccabees. It commemorated the really significant victory of Judah Maccabee in pitched battle over the Syrian army, led by Nicanor, which enabled Judah's brothers to seize territory, impose Jewish hegemony over the non-Jewish population, and continue Judah's policy of conversion by the sword. A case, indeed, of role reversal, for this is the only period in Jewish history when this 'missionary' activity has been to the fore. Needless to say, it is not this aspect of the history of the Maccabean period that is told to young people in Israel in recounting the glories of that period, who are encouraged in a gung-ho attitude to those events.

The *Megillat Ta'anit* is a list of 36 days in the Jewish calendar when there had been significant victories in the Jewish realm, and therefore on which public fasting was prohibited. It still listed the victorious Nicanor Day in its last edition during the 60s CE, just before the destruction of the Second Temple. Were they confusing Purim with Chanukah? Probably not, for neither of these festivals was then established in the form we have them today. To add to the mix, Josephus refers to a festival of lights at the time of Chanukah, without saying anything further about what it was.

Destruction of the Temple saw the replacement of the authority of the upper-class Sadducees by the growing influence of the Rabbis, who were the successors of the Pharisees, and, like them, doughty opponents of the Maccabees and the Sadducees. Interestingly, according to my own research, it was shortly before this that the canon of the Hebrew Bible was established. The historical books that describe the background to Chanukah were excluded from the canon, and the fictional story of Esther included in it. The festival of Purim developed as we know it with full rabbinic approval and promotion. Chanukah was then associated with the miracle of the oil, so that both the popular festivals could be given rabbinic sanction.

This all came back to me as I reflected on the report of the Human Rights Trip to Israel/Palestine presented at the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society. It seemed to me that the report was in some measure a parallel to the background stories of Chanukah and Purim. There is an official, government-promoted story of the glories of the Israeli State, and at the same time there is a story to be uncovered of the abuse of human rights of the inhabitants of the West Bank. The parallel is not an exact reflection of the fact/fiction dichotomy in the origins of the Chanukah and Purim stories. Life is too complex nowadays for such simple divisions; different kinds of facts have to be acknowledged alongside each other.

The festival of Purim is of course a Diaspora one; Israel is not mentioned in it. But the author borrowed heavily from the description of the Sanctuary, in the book of Exodus, for his description of Ahasuerus's palace. And that is why the story has resonated with us so well: it expresses feelings and describes situations with which Jews have been familiar over the centuries. As it stands, it is an end-of-winter story that enables us to let our hair down and enjoy ourselves. If you will, please ignore all the historical stuff and eat lots of hamantaschen. And don't forget to come along to our Purim celebrations disguised in fancy dress.

Norman Crane

Welcome to three new members

We welcome Anita Shulman, Tali Pechenick Jowers, and Mike Valencia as new members.

Anita has come to live in Aberdour, Fife, to be close to her son and young granddaughter. She was previously a member of Chatham Memorial Synagogue in Rochester (home of Charles Dickens) and of the Kent Liberal Jewish Community.

Tali, originally from Israel, is now in Edinburgh working as a research virologist. She and her husband Christian Jowers are the parents of Gabriel, who is 4 ½.



Tali and Chris Pechenick Jowers



Gabriel and Chris Pechenick Jowers

Mike and his wife, Heather, live in Thornhill, near Stirling. Mike and Heather have been attending Rabbi Mark's study sessions in recent years. Heather runs Yiddish classes in Edinburgh, and many of us know her from her presentations on Yiddish language and literature at Limmud and at the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.

Mike says

I'm very pleased to become a member of Sukkat Shalom where Heather and I have felt at home whenever we have visited. I am looking forward to participating in the life of the community as much as possible, especially in services and study sessions.



Mike and Heather Valencia

Singing with Kavanah (Intention) A Musical Journey through the Siddur

Music expresses that which cannot be said, and on which it is impossible to be silent

Victor Hugo

This is not a choir recruitment drive nor a competition to find Sukkat Shalom's own version of The Voice. No; it's much much more! This, if you are interested, will be a musical journey through our Siddur, its Prayers, Blessings and Psalms. It will be a chance not only to become familiar with the various melodies but also a chance to explore the background and meaning behind the liturgy.

For anyone picking up our Siddur for the first time — or indeed if you are not familiar with the Hebrew — then it can become quite a struggle to keep up, never mind preparing and participating in meaningful prayer (I would know).

This will be a chance to improve both your Hebrew and musical liturgy. I hope that in some small way it will help your approach to services and focus your intention toward prayer. This is not only for the vocal cords of those attending 'Choosing Judaism' classes; all are most welcome.

Ricky Hogg



Image: Shiraynu Hackney Jewish Music Choir

The first Musical Journey will be after the Shabbat Morning Service on 29 March. Further Musical Journeys will be arranged at the end of each session.

An evening with Lior Amihai of Settlement Watch



Nili Settlement, 3.8 km east of the Green Line (Settlement Watch), Photo: Wikimedia

Yachad (Hebrew, *together*) has become quite well known in the English Jewish community over the last couple of years. It describes itself as a pro-Israel pro-peace movement, and campaigns for a peace treaty with a "viable sovereign and democratic" Palestinian state on the 1948 borders. Next week it is hosting a speaking tour by Lior Amihai of Settlement Watch. Lior is in Edinburgh to address the University JSoc on the afternoon of Wednesday 5 March.

Yachad has asked if our community would host an informal meeting for Lior on Wednesday evening, and Council has agreed. Settlement Watch was established by Peace Now

to provide reliable and accurate information regarding the expansion activities of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Settlement Watch focuses on the physical development of the settlements and the long term implications in relation to the peace process, as well as their economic and demographic impact.

Lior Amihai is deputy director of Settlement Watch. He grew up in Israel and served in the army. Since his father was a diplomat, he also lived abroad while growing up. He is a graduate of the Olive Tree Programme, which brings undergraduate Israelis and Palestinians together at City University.

Maurice Naftalin

The meeting is at 7:30pm, 5 March, at Maurice's flat. RSVP and ask for directions at contact.eljc.org.

Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future

Photographs by Judah Passow

The Scottish Parliament hosted the world premiere of a photo exhibition on 18 February of photographs by Judah Passow, a four-time World Press Photo award-winning photographer. First Minister Alex Salmond, MSP, warmly welcomed 200 persons to the exhibition.

“Scotland has never had a law prohibiting anti-Semitism” said Salmond, and he stated that this fact speaks volumes about how Jews have been welcomed in Scotland. Judah Passow thanked the First Minister for his positive comments and stated that this year-long project took him from the Shetland Islands to the Borders and was truly “a voyage of discovery”.

The producer of the exhibition is Michael Mail of Glasgow. He stated that when he first saw Passow’s work he knew that he would be the ideal photo journalist to document the experiences of Scotland’s diverse Jewish community.

Jewish leaders and guests from other religions were welcomed by the director of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCOJEC), Ephraim Borowski. He said that thanks to the work of Judah Passow and SCOJEC Projects and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank, a woman in Inverness who was the only Jew in her small village became connected with a wider Jewish community. “The time she came to celebrate Chanukah with us, there were 30 people there!”

The First Minister said that, thanks to Judah Passow, the creativity and other rich contributions of Scotland’s Jews would now be appreciated by a much wider audience, both here and in New York and throughout the world.

The exhibition will open on 5 March in New York City and continue through 27 April 2014 at the 92nd Street YMCA. There will be a special reception on 3 April 2014 during New York’s Tartan Week to celebrate Scotland’s extraordinary Jewish community.

Joe Goldblatt

Judah Passow's forthcoming book, *Scots Jews*, is published by Bloomsbury Continuum on 10 April, £25, ISBN 978-1472906175



Sophie Bleau rehearses for her Bat Mitzvah



Nick Silk prepares the scroll for the Shabbat morning service

We have signed on the Green Line

Launched by members of LJY Netzer and RSY Netzer, the progressive Zionist youth movements in Britain, [Sign on the Green Line](#) advocates that Jewish organisations undertake to show Israel within its internationally agreed boundaries on the maps they use. Liberal Judaism, the Movement for Reform Judaism, Yachad (the pro-Israel, pro-Peace pressure group), and the New Israel Fund have all signed up. The February Council meeting determined that we should too.

Maps used on Israeli government websites and by Bicom (the Britain Israel Communications & Research Centre) routinely shown Israel bounded by the Green Line. So why the fuss? According to the [Jewish Chronicle](#), the Board of Deputies, the Zionist Federation, the UJIA and JNF have either refused to sign or have not made a decision. The Masorti movement has refused to sign; the United Synagogue has refused to comment.

JNF calls the campaign “a sad reflection on those who seek to influence the communal agenda that the brightest and best of our youth should have their talents and energies diverted from more important domestic issues”. Since the JNF's Youth and Education division is [seeking to bring back the Blue Box](#) to every Jewish kindergarten and school in the Diaspora, its spokesperson can hardly be disappointed that young Jews are engaging sincerely with their Zionism.

Ben Leibowitz of LJY Netzer, [writing in the Jewish News](#), calls for Jews to be educated with consistency, accuracy and integrity. He believes that maps can shape our conscious and subconscious perspectives. But Paul Charney, of the Zionist Federation, [also in the Jewish News](#), believes the Sign on the Greenline campaigners would be better occupied defending Israel. He asserts 'the moral and historic right of Jewish communities to exist in this territory [beyond the Green Line]. He is worried that the campaign will distinguish 'good' Jews from 'bad', moderate from extremist, pro-peace from anti-peace.

And Charney should be worried; what does the Federation's position reveal? Bruce Wexler, professor of psychiatry at Yale University, [interviewed in the Guardian](#), has studied the representation of the Other in Israeli and Palestinian text books. The vast majority of maps used in schools, on both sides, ignore the Green Line, or at least what is on the other side of it, and show a single territorial entity. "It's almost comical," he says, "The idea of maps is to represent reality; here it represents fantasy," Wexler concludes, "Education makes a difference in shaping expectations, it influences the way [people] view the world. ... You do not want to keep creating more and more obstacles [to peace] by training children in such a way that it obstructs the peace process." Young Liberal and Reform Jews have understood this.



Map showing the West Bank and Gaza in relation to Israel. Wikimedia/HowardMorland

Catherine Lyons

There is always room for sweet things

Talmud, Megillah 7b



Hamantaschen Truffle Pops
Recipe at joyofkosher.com



Rainbow hamantaschen
Recipe at kitchen-tested.com



Cardamom-scented hamantaschen with
pear and goat's cheese
Recipe at joyofkosher.com

The mitzvot of Purim involve two of my favourite activities, drinking wine and reading a good book. In the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides is very particular about how we should read or hear the Megillah, and how the Megillah — the scroll itself — should be crafted. In the *Talmud*, the rabbis are much exercised by consideration of the day on which it must be read, depending on where you live.

We are all familiar with the requirement to 'mellow ourselves' until we cannot distinguish 'cursed be Haman' [Boo!] from 'blessed be Mordechai' [Hurray!]. We are supposed to get drunk at the end of Purim. I can't help but wonder if by Medieval times people had become accustomed to drinking well before Se'udat Purim, since Maimonides indulges us as follows, 'Should one read while dozing off, he fulfills his obligation, since he is not sound asleep.', and also tells us that we are allowed to make mistakes when reading the Megillah.

I wonder that it is not also a mitzvah to eat hamantaschen, since the *Talmud*, when discussing eating heartily on Purim, also tells us 'There is always room for sweet things'. If you think hamantaschen are filled with poppy seeds or apricot jam, think again. This selection of culinary parodies matches the quirkiest of Purimspiels.

Catherine Lyons

Just Free Film Festival: our rabbi recommends

Mark Solomon recommends a documentary double bill at the free film festival that the Just Festival has launched.

Two-sided Story (upper right) documents a dialogue workshop led in 2011 by the Parents Circle–Families Forum (PCFF; bereaved Palestinian and Israelis). *The Growing Pains of Ahmed and Moshe* (lower right) features two young men growing up a few miles apart on each side of the Separation Wall.

The two films will be shown on **10 March**, 6.30–9.00 pm, at Brass Monkey, 14 Drummond Street. EH8 9TU

The full programme is available at www.justjust.org/just-free-film-festival-programme/





Women's Interfaith Bookgroup

Lisa Barcan is now coordinator of the Women's Interfaith Bookgroup. The group meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at Caffè Lucano on George IV Bridge at 6 pm. Contact Lisa Barcan through contact.eljc.org for more information.

Listening Attentively and Speaking Non-Violently

This free workshop, sponsored by the Edinburgh Peace Initiative, will be run by facilitators trained by the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and in Creative Listening. The workshop is for everyone who wants to handle conflict, deal with strong feelings, and build better relationships.

Sunday 9 March, 2-5 pm

Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace

Contact: Marianne Ferguson Rice,
mariannefr@phonecoop.coop.



United Nations Anti Racism Day

On **22 March**, cities across the world, including New York and Melbourne, will be holding rallies celebrating diversity in our societies.

Council has added our community to the list of supporters for the Glasgow rally and encourages people to go and show support on the day.

March 22 commemorates the victims of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, when 69 peaceful demonstrators against apartheid were killed by the South African police.

As the poster, left, shows, a coach will be going from Edinburgh. For more information, see

uaf.org.uk/tag/scotland/



Eileen Chan-Hu
Photo: Google

International Women's Day: celebrate with the Edinburgh InterFaith Association

The festival is free and open to all. It includes a fair in the hall and talks in the chapel. At the fair will be information stalls from Scottish charities supporting women, and also free henna painting, and Chinese calligraphy. Talks in the chapel will be:

Women, Power and Politics, Ann Henderson, Scottish Trades Union Congress
Combating Female Genital Mutilation, Dignity Research Alert Forum
Upcycling, Sophie Unwin, Remade
Women, Faith and Leadership, Panel Discussion

Saturday 8 March,
11.00–4.00,
St John's Church,
EH2 4BJ

The Keynote speech will be given at 2.00pm by Eileen Chan-Hu, Chief Executive of the Chinese Welfare Association, Northern Ireland. The awards ceremony for the Woman Who Inspires Change will take place at 3.05pm, followed by afternoon tea.