



est 2004

February 2015 Sh'vat-Adar 5775

13	Erev Shabbat CC	7.00
20	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15
21	Cheder MSG	3.30
28	Shabbat Morning Service CC	11.00
	Tea and Talmud CC	3.00

March 2015

1	Annual General Meeting and Community Consultation <i>See p. 3</i> CC	2.00
4	Purim Feast and Megillah Reading (Wednesday) <i>See p. 3</i> CCM	7.00
6	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15
7	Cheder MSG	3.30

Venues

CC	Columcille Centre 2 Newbattle Terrace
MSG	Marchmont St Giles 1a Kilgraston Road
CCM	Christ Church Morningside 6a Morningside Road

לולב lulav

vol II
issue 2

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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 Welfare Team 0131 208 1447

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

Website www.eljc.org

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Word from the Chair

We have just celebrated Tu Bi-Sh'vat, the New Year for Trees. This is an odd name for a festival, even a minor one, for it is simply a date. Shevat is the eleventh month in the Hebrew calendar, and the festival falls on the fifteenth day of the month, which is full moon. Given that that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are traditionally used as numbers, it is easy enough to indicate the fifteenth by using the two letters *Yod* for ten and *Hay* for five. Unfortunately, if these two letters are taken together they spell a biblical word for God. This is found, for example, in ' Halleluyah ' or ' Praise God '. So this is how *Tet* (nine) and *Vav* (six) came to be used instead. Put together, they spell *Tu*.

The New year for Trees is first mentioned in Jewish texts in Mishnaic times, around 200 C.E. The Rabbis noted that by this time in the year the majority of the winter rains had already fallen and the sap in the trees had begun to rise. Therefore trees which blossomed after Tu Bi-Sh'vat counted as belonging to the following year. According to Leviticus 19, only the fruit of trees from the fifth year of their lives onward were permitted for ordinary consumption. For centuries in the Middle Ages the Jews of Europe used Tu-Bi-Sh'vat as an occasion the connection to *Eretz Yisrael*. The custom was to eat of the five fruits and two types of grain mentioned in the description of the goodly produce of the land in Deuteronomy 8:8, together with some others, to total fifteen.

In the 1500s the Kabbalists of Sfat transformed the celebration of Tu Bi-Sh'vat into a ceremony which gave expression to their Kabbalistic world view. This is the Tu Bi-Sh'vat Seder, modelled on the Passover Seder. It involves eating from three groupings of fruit and nuts and drinking four cups of wine. According to this system of Kabbalah, there are four levels of creation. The groups of fruit represent three of these four levels of creation, moving from the less spiritual to the more spiritual aspect of creation. Our world of physical reality is represented by fruits and nuts with a hard outside but edible flesh inside. The next level is represented by fruits with edible skin and flesh but an inedible stone. A more spiritual level still is represented by fruits that are totally edible such as berries. The first cup of wine is white, representing the dormant season of winter. The next two cups are mixed with increasing proportions of red wine, and the fourth is solely red.

We are fortunate that we can use a Tu Bi-Sh'vat Seder booklet put together by Rabbi Mark Solomon, which expresses these and other relevant ideas and material very clearly. Our celebration of Tu Bi-Sh'vat was as enjoyable as it always is. There was, I have to say, an unexpected occasion for hilarity this year. Despite a timely reminder from Maurice Naftalin, nobody remembered to bring a nutcracker. So at the beginning the reading of the text was punctuated by the clash of fire extinguisher on nutshell, on the inside of a large saucepan. This was a successful ploy and we proceeded with gusto.

Much as I — alongside everybody else — enjoyed the occasion, I feel that the time is ripe for another transformation in the way we celebrate Tu Bi-Sh'vat. As I bought some of the fruits to be used at the Seder, I could not but notice that some were out of season and imported from the other side of the world. Is it not time to concentrate more on other aspects of our relationship to trees and wood and fruit and nuts? However fascinating it is, we find ourselves giving expression to the obscurities of a world view that is simply not natural to most of us. The mystics of Sfat, in their expression of the Tu Bi-Sh'vat Seder, were concerned with *Tikkun Olam*, the repair of the world, in a spiritual sense, according to their system. Personally, I would prefer a Tu Bi-Sh'vat Seder more tangibly concerned with *Tikkun Olam* as we understand it today. What do you think?

Norman Crane

Welcome to Sue Gutteridge

One of our most recent members, Sue writes

I'm really pleased to have found Sukkat Shalom, which is the first religious Jewish community that I've felt completely at home in.

Although I'm from London originally, I've lived in Scotland since 1971, first in Stirling but for the last eight years in Edinburgh, which I love. I have four children, two of whom live in Edinburgh. My daughter Annie lives in a small Camphill community in Edinburgh with the Hebrew name of Tiphereth. My son Tim is an ace challah maker and happy to participate in community baking. I am enjoying the diversity and richness of what Sukkat Shalom has to offer, which for me has included so far — as well as enjoyable regular services — Hebrew lessons with Norman, Tea and Talmud, the Philosophy Group, a Burns supper, a book launch, several lovely Erev Shabbat services, songs and food. What more could I ask?



Upcoming activities: please join in!

Annual General Meeting and Consultation Our AGM is at 2.00 pm on **1 March**. Once business is concluded, Inspector Tom Galbraith will talk to us about security and policing in the wake of events in Paris. Then we shall continue our Community Consultation (see p. 4). Refreshments will follow, with music from Freylakh un Tsores.

Norman Crane and Gillian Raab

Rosh Hashanah Singers This year Rabbi Mark Solomon will not be with us for Rosh Hashanah. There are within the Community a number of people with good singing voices; some are even in choirs. There are others willing to help plug the gap. *Are you any of these people?* In particular, we need someone to volunteer who could lead the group musically. As soon as we know who wants to join, we will arrange our first meeting. Get in touch with us via the [Contact Page](#) as soon as you can.

Norman Crane and Ricky Hogg

Purim Feast and Megillah Reading

Tragic Comedy, Blood-thirsty adventure, Pantomime, or Bedroom farce? All mavers of the Megillah are invited to read together and share food. Purim, 14 Adar, falls on Thursday 5 March this year. We will be up to no good on Erev Purim, Wednesday **4 March**, on the premises of Christ Church, Morningside (note the venue!).

The Royal Feast begins at 7.00 pm. Please come dressed in your Purim finery, and bring a non-meat dish fit for Queen Esther.



Last Year: The Three Beards of Purim

Community Consultation: the story so far

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed ideas to our Community Consultation. Here is a selection of them.

Some of you thought that we would just be doing a survey. We might do one later, but first we want to hear from you in a more open-ended way. We will be kicking this off with an ideas/ discussion session at the AGM.

Here are some ideas suggested so far.

Care in the community As a community we need to be able to care for each other. This could take many forms. The most obvious is helping out with day-to-day tasks or travel for people who find this difficult. But it could take other forms. For example, established members of the community could make members of the Choosing Judaism class, especially those with no Jewish family nearby, feel at home with us. Would families with young children welcome help from others? Further ideas under this heading would be very welcome.

More social events or excursions What kind of thing would you like best?

Different types of religious service There have been suggestions of a service which is more meditative and also for one involving the cheder children.

Interfaith activities Should we consider expanding these? Perhaps plan joint activities with other groups, e.g., a picnic on the Meadows with another faith group, joint Mitzvah day activities, or an invitation to someone from another tradition to give a sermon.

Practical activities Challah baking and plaiting has been one suggestion. [This idea is going ahead. On **29 April** there will be a community Challah baking. More information next month. — *Ed.*]

We look forward to hearing more. Just send in any reactions and new ideas via our [Contact Page](#) on the web site, or leave a message on the community phone for us to get back to you.

Gillian Raab

Seder time soon

Winter's bite is starting to slacken and the supermarkets are warned not to sell daffodils next to food (in case customers mistake them for vegetables!).

Yes; Spring is in the air and it's time to plan for Pesach. Our Erev Pesach, Erev Shabbat, First-Night Seder will take place on Friday **3 April**, as usual at Marchmont St Giles. Booking information is available soon.



Photo: Creative Commons
Donald Macleod, Stornaway

Record-breaking grand total in this year's Kol Nidre Appeal

We raised £1100 for each of our four charities, Calibre, Physicians for Human Rights — Israel, Jewish Care, and Mercy Corps.

Sue Lieberman's book launch

Sue's *After Genocide* has been much reviewed and anticipated in [these pages](#). Its launch in January at Blackwell's generated a great deal of interest across the local Jewish community and well beyond. The event was attended beyond seating capacity and some audience members were seated on the stairs.

Presenting the book, Sue described its development and scope in a way familiar to many of us. The physical book itself was new. It turned out to be bound in plain austere brown, deliberately eschewing visual clichés of the Holocaust or attempting to constrain what was written within.



Sue Lieberman, introduced by Liz Bondi, Professor of Counselling and Psychotherapy



The audience gathers

Sukkat Shalom members: looking down the row between Norman and Wendy Crane, we see Gary Dixon, Lisa Barcan, and Miriam Vickers (Stew Green is just out of shot).



Regina Jonas: May her righteous and holy memory be a blessing

Maurice Naftalin has discovered that, to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, the film *Regina* was screened by BBC 4 at the beginning of February. There have been a couple of opportunities to see this film at the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society. If you missed both of them, you may not know that Rabbi Regina Jonas, the first woman to receive *s'micha*, was a renowned teacher and preacher in Berlin. She was ordained in 1935 and was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

Regina: the First Woman Rabbi is available [on the iPlayer](#) until 24 March.

(The film is a remarkable biographical achievement, given how little remains of Regina. If you would like to know more, or are wondering why she needed to be 'rediscovered'. I recommend:

[Fräulein Rabbiner Jonas: The Story of the First Woman Rabbi](#), by Rabbi Elisa Klapheck (Wiley, 2004), and also [the entry for Regina Jonas](#), written by Rabbi Klapheck, at the Jewish Women's Archive. — Ed.)



Rabbi Regina Jonas (This is the only extant image of her.) Jewish Women's Archive

Burns and the Knights of Roslin: Kinship and Ceilidh

Paul McPhail and Bruce Ballantyne

The Trustees of Kinship Advice and Advocacy Provision would like to thank all the members from ELJC that supported our Burns Ceilidh. With a special thank you to Rabbi Mark for his tremendous singing.

We have had fantastic feedback from many people and are extremely pleased that so many of you had an enjoyable evening.

Altogether we raised £536 which will be used to provide a day away for children in Kinship Placements in the Lothians.

We hope to have some other events later in the year and we will definitely be having another Burns Night in 2016.

We thank Paul for chauffeuring us all to the ceilidh at the Masonic Hall in Roslin, and home again, all over Edinburgh around midnight; we thank Bruce for cooking up a monster of a steaming haggis and feeding us very well indeed.



The JSoc Torah Study Group in early December (via Twitter)

Torah on Tuesdays

The Edinburgh University Jewish Society, JSoc, invites our members to join their Torah Study group on Tuesday evenings (at 8.00 pm).

The sessions are very casual and take about an hour and a half. The group normally takes around twenty verses of the week's parashah, and depending on which student is leading it, look at verse-by-verse Rabbinical and modern commentary and bigger-picture thematic questions.

To find out more, contact Emma Dubin (Interfaith and religious studies officer) via our [Contact Page](#).

Limmud Returns to Scotland

Book now!



Booking is now open for Limmud Day in Glasgow, **8 March**. Several of our members are presenting in Glasgow this year (see below). As usual, a bus will be running from Edinburgh. Full details are at the [Limmud website](#).

Jennifer Underwood is offering a lift to anyone unable or unwilling to take the bus.

Use the [Contact Page](#) to contact Jennifer.

Why did the 2011 Census record fewer Jews in Scotland than the 2001 Census? Between 2001 and 2011 Censuses Scotland's Jews declined in number from over 6 thousand to just under 5 thousand. This could be because of the number of deaths, those not answering Jewish in the Census and those leaving Scotland were larger than births, apparent converts and immigrants. I look forward to discussing some results on this and hearing if it chimes with Limmud participants' experiences. *Gillian Raab*

What does the Holocaust mean for 'ordinary' Jews? The Holocaust remains the biggest single event in modern diaspora Jewish experience. Its consequences for survivors and their children, as well as for Jewish demographics in Europe and beyond, has been well studied. But what of its impact on Jews not directly involved and with no known family losses? Sue spent seven years researching this question, and her book *After Genocide* explores the perplexing issue of collective trauma in the wider Jewish population. *Sue Lieberman*

Seeing for Ourselves Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh is a community that cares about human rights. So when we wanted to understand the human rights situation in Israel and Palestine, we decided to find out about it for ourselves. Nine of us — mostly Sukkat Shalom members with a couple of friends and relatives — went, with some friends, to talk to human rights organisations and to find what help we could give them. The trip opened our eyes! Come and share our experiences and insights. *Maurice Naftalin and members of the Human Rights Trip*

How many tomatoes can you fit in your bra? Or, is it ever possible to laugh in the face of genocide?

Catherine Lyons

Ela Weissberger not only survived the Holocaust, she continues to thrive. As I write this she is touring Edinburgh Castle (despite struggling with steep and cobbled terrain), with her daughter Tamara. This Holocaust Commemoration week, survivors of genocides had a morning off from recounting their personal horrors and went sight-seeing with Iain Stewart of the Edinburgh Interfaith Association.

Perhaps I have shocked you, juxtaposing the incidentals of today with the traumatic experiences these survivors recounted at Edinburgh's Holocaust Memorial event? It has been borne in upon me more than ever that all of life's experience are within our reach to understand. The experience of genocide is not some Grand Mythological Horror Story. Pervasive themes of the evening were acts of bravery and determination that proved hugely consequential, but which in themselves were simple human acts that celebrated life or showed instinctive kindness.

Ela transfixed a packed audience last night recounting her time in Terezin, her performances in Brundibár, her art lessons, her friendships with children who never returned from Auschwitz.



Photo: Irish food board

Ela was one of hundreds of children in Terezin lucky enough to be taught by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. (Can we really call them 'lucky'? I think we can.) Friedl was a gifted artist and art teacher; effectively the originator of art therapy. She was also a defiant resister and subverter of the Nazi machine. The Nazis did not only mark people with numbers, they forbade the use of their names. Friedl told Ela the children to sign their paintings with their names. She begged the bureaucrats for discarded papers, and forms used in the administration of murder were used to express the imaginations of children.

Ela's Mum became very good at stealing from the Nazis (and she, at 11, was upset by jokes about her mother's kleptomania, Ela told me later).

Margrette (Drette) Stein was once of the agricultural slave labourers, sent outside the ghetto to work in the fields. Anyone caught smuggling food would be shot. Drette became so thin that her bra hung empty on her body. And so she was able to smuggle twenty tomatoes in her bra, and not one of them was squashed, Ela boasted! And in the audience we shocked ourselves by laughing at the humour of starvation.

Pesach came, and the enslaved agricultural workers were asked if they could smuggle in some radishes. The women hid what they could in their clothes. But there was a shock inspection and the women were ordered to undress. Drette took her time, and managed to gobble down her hidden vegetables, as she undressed. Next to her, her friend was terrified; she couldn't eat fast enough. Ela tells this story while miming the chomping of radishes. Drette takes a second share and gobbles down yet more, and so her friend did not die that day.

Ela herself has achieved a strange kind of fame for playing the cat in *Brundibár*. Her business card features the famous image of the cast on stage (see the [January issue](#) of *Lulav*). We are accustomed to feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of the Holocaust and the shock of atrocity, but these debilitating feelings do not enable us to fulfill the aspiration (or is it meant as a promise?), 'Never Again!' 'Never Again!' requires our agency, and resistance; not simply our sympathy. Ela and her mother, Drette, demonstrate compellingly that hope makes resistance possible.

I asked Ela's daughter Tamara, how she came to know her family history, and what Holocaust really meant. For a long time, nothing was really said in the family. Then, in 1981, Tom Kean became governor of New Jersey. A former history teacher, he introduced Holocaust education into the school curriculum, and Ela was invited in to Tamara's school. From then on, Ela began to tell stories, little by little, but she never frightened us, Tamara explained. And since then, Ela has 'reinvented herself' as a public speaker.

I was enthralled to hear Ela speak, and honoured to interview Ela and Tamara the following day.



Ela Weissberger tells it like it is (Photo: EIFA)



Ela with her daughter, Tamara (right), with pupils from Boroughmuir High School (Rabbi David Rose is on the left; Photo: EIFA)