Sukkat Shalom September 2010

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

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Events and Services

Date Friday 3 September Event Erev Shabbat Service

Time 7pm

Date Wednesday 8 September

Event Erev Rosh Hashanah Service led by Rabbi Mark Solomon

Time 7pm

Date Thursday 9 September

Event Rosh Hashanah Service led by Rabbi Mark Solomon

Time 11am

Followed by kiddush including a light lunch to be held at St Mark's (sponsored by the Raabs) and followed by the option of a walk to the Water of Leith for Taschlich.

Date Friday 10 September

Event Erev Shabbat Shuvah Service

Time 6.15pm

ELJC support line

07904 813162



Use this number if you have an emergency and really need to speak to someone. It goes to one of our members. Otherwise please leave a message on the community phone and we will respond as soon as possible.

Date Friday 17 September

Event Kol Nidrei Service led by Rabbi Mark Solomon

Time 7pm

Date Saturday 18 September

Event Yom Kippur Services led by Rabbi Mark Solomon

Time 11am For details about how to sign up for a communal break fast meal see page 5.

Date Saturday 25 September

Event Sukkot Service

Time 11am

Date Wednesday 29 September

Event Simchat Torah Service

Time 6:30pm

Date Friday 1 October

Event Erev Shabbat Service

Time 7pm

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Future Dates

Our regular schedule is as follows: First Friday of each Calendar month

Erev Shabbat service

- The shabbat morning 2 weeks after this Shabbat morning service
- Weekends when no other service Short Kabbalat Shabbat service

October 2010

Fri 8	Kabbalat Shabbat Service	
Sat 16	Shabbat Service (Rabbi Mark	
	Solomon)	
	Tea & Talmud	
Sun 17	Choosing Judaism	
	Cantillation	
	Spinoza	
Fri 22	Kabbalat Shabbat Service	
Fri 29	Kabbalat Shabbat Service	
Fri 5 Nov	Erev Shabbat Service	
Sun 21st Nov	Mitzvah day plans - see page 8	

Jewish Calendar

Chanukkah	2-9 December 2010
Tu Bishvat	20 January 2011
Purim	20 March 2011
Pesach	19-25 April 2011
Yom HaShoah	1 May 2011
Yom HaAtzmaut	10 May 2011
Shavuot	8 June 2011

Rosh Hashanah 5772 29 September 2011 8 October 2011 Yom Kippur



Lucian J. Hudson, Chairman of Liberal Judaism, writes in the Jewish News for 19th August. "The vehemence over the debate about Israel should give every member of the British Jewish community pause for thought. Are Israel's defenders and detractors, and its critical friends in between, locked into a dynamic aimed at winning the argument or winning the people? ... Many Progressive Jews in Israel and the Diaspora take issue with particular Israeli policies and actions precisely because of a love for Israel and what the country stands for." Read the full article on page 7 and email l.hudson@liberaljudaism.org if you'd like to discuss what you've read.

Congo Interfaith Month

Congo Interfaith Month is now in full swing. The objective is to raise awareness of the wars and human tragedy overwhelming the Congo in order to galvanize people to act as catalysts to move the UK and other major aid donors to take a more pro-active role in addressing the root causes of the human tragedy overwhelming the Congo and conflicts in the Great Lakes region. For more information see http://congointerfaithinitiative.org .

World Jewish Relief's Pakistan Flood Appeal

Flood waters have devastated homes, villages, and agricultural land and killed millions of livestock. Roads and bridges have been affected, leaving some areas cut off.



Massive rescue and relief operations are taking place across the affected parts of the country, with the Pakistan Army mobilising some thousands of troops, medical teams, boats and dozens of helicopters for the relief effort. The National Disaster Management Agency has distributed its own relief stocks, and has requested more help from international humanitarian agencies. Of the 20 million now estimated to be affected, at least eight million people are in urgent need of lifesaving shelter, food, clean water, and medication. The situation for thousands of people who have lost homes, livelihoods and possessions remains precarious. Food is scarce and the risk from deadly water-borne diseases is growing. Many affected communities have still not been reached, with new communities becoming engulfed by the flood waters. The situation is getting worse. Relief efforts must be scaled up to meet the growing humanitarian needs. Thanks to support from the Jewish community WJR have already been able to support:

* The purchase of 1600 family kits providing support to almost 12,800 persons. Each kit consists of rehydration salts, mosquito nets, blankets, kitchen equipment, a floor mat and a plastic sheet for shelter.

* Assistance towards the reconstruction of 180 family homes completely destroyed by flood waters in and around the Mahal stream area of Bagh District in Azad Jammu and Kashmir provinced the Mahal stream area of Bagh District in Azad Jammu and Kashmir province.

For more details see http://www.ir.org.uk.

Loose Talk Costs Lives

by Rabbi Mark Solomon, 19 Elul 5770

During my last visit to Edinburgh I took part in a panel discussion, as part of the Festival of Spirituality and Peace, in which the opening question was: When does legitimate criticism, of Israel, Jews or Muslims, tip over into antisemitism or islamophobia? The two rabbis and the Palestinian on the panel wrestled with the tricky balance between freedom of speech, a cherished liberal value and democratic right, and the danger of offending, distressing



and inciting hatred and violence towards others. I found myself in the position of defending free speech, even the right to give offence, but balanced this by saying that democratic rights need to be weighed by each individual against the strong moral prohibition in our teachings against publicly hurting and humiliating another person. "Wronging with words," the Talmud tells us, is as bad as shedding blood. As we approach the Days of Repentance it is worth reminding ourselves that in the list of "al chet" confessions on Yom Kippur, there are more sins of speech mentioned than any other sort, for, as the Book of Proverbs asserts (18:21) "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

As I sat down to write this article for the newsletter, two news items caught my attention. One reported that a former Chief Rabbi of Israel, an aged luminary whose words still have huge political influence, had given a sermon in which he called down a plague upon the Palestinians and their leadership, and prayed that they might be "finished." Palestinian spokespersons, not surprisingly, objected, especially at a moment when they and the Israeli government are gearing up for a new attempt at negotiations (which I pray may bear some peaceful fruit).

The website reporting this informed me that I "might like" another article, reporting that the head of Finland's branch of Amnesty International had written a blog calling Israel a "scum state," and that he stood by his words: yet another example of immoderate hate-speech.

Rosh Hashanah is traditionally regarded as the commemoration of the creation of humanity, when God breathed into Adam the breath of life, "and he became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). *Targum Onkelos*, the ancient Aramaic translation of the Torah, renders the Hebrew *nefesh chayah*, "living being," as *ruach memallela*, "an eloquent spirit." The Aramaic could also be translated, "a talkative wind." We can use our power of speech, that essential human attribute, wisely or foolishly, constructively or destructively. We may have the democratic right to do either, but we should know what hangs upon our choice: "life and good, or death and evil," as we read on Yom Kippur (Deut. 30:15). Our words might not kill by themselves, but they can create a moral climate, a popular mind-set, in which some human lives are held cheaper than others; and they can lead us to waste our own lives in foolish, malicious talk. As the Second World War poster read: Loose Talk Costs Lives.

The many pages of our prayers over the coming Days of Awe are surely there to fill our minds and our tongues with words and thoughts of goodness, wisdom, life and purity, and our moments of quiet reflection teach us the value of knowing when to hold our tongues and keep a tactful silence.

I look forward to greeting you all at our services over the High Holy Days, and wish you and your families a *shanah tovah u-metukah*, a good and sweet new year. May all of us, and our Sukkat Shalom community, be blessed with wisdom, moderation and friendship, and written in the Book of Life for a safe, healthy, peaceful and blessed year 5771.

From the chairman

There is a rhythm to the end of the summer in Edinburgh. First the festival, rushing around going to shows, but a relative lull in shul-related activites. Then a quiet, some would say a cultural desert, when the city sits back in exhaustion and there is nothing on. But for Edinburgh Jews it usually gives a wee pause to think about the High Holy days in a few weeks time. But this year things have been concertina-ed and one thing seems to be following another with alarming speed. The Holydays are early this year, with the month of Ellul and the Edinburgh Festival starting at just about the same time. Rosh Hashanah on 8/9 September will be only a few days after the end of the Festival.

This year also saw less of a lull in shul activities in late summer. We had our rabbi here for a longer than usual last month, one weekend for our first wedding and the Shabbat Resouled Service and then for his usual mid-month visit on the next weekend. We had two special Festival services, a Tent event for young people and especially a Festival service with Shabbat Resouled, the London-based folk-rock group. We can see a few of the eight musicians here on the right. Despite our lack of advertising (too late for the Fringe pprogram) we had a good congregation of of around fifty people and the

group certainly lived up to its reputation of making a different but spiritual and uplifting take on he Erev Shabbat service. Many of us



were rocking in our seats or as we stood, and some of the little ones were even dancing. We are hugely grateful to Shabbat Resouled for making the trip here they had to get up at around 5am to have time to rehearse. We are also very grateful to ScoJec (Scottish Council of Jewish Communities) for helping to finance the group's travel, to Colin Gajewski for organizing the sound equipment and to the community members who provided hospitality for the musicians.

So in a few days time it will be Rosh Hashanah. On behalf of everyone on our Council I wish all our members and friends a happy and Sweet New Year and an easy fast.

Our new web site

Visit our web site

http://www.eljc.org

you will see a big difference

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Please go to the site and register to become a user now.

As a member, or a trusted friend who receives this newsletter, our webmaster will send you an email to confirm your registration. You can then access all areas of the web site **including details of the location of all our events**. The new site has a lot of advantages over our old one examples are:

• It is more up-to-date

• There is more stuff there - you can even go to a page where you can listen to our Rabbi's recordings of some of the tunes we will be using for the high holydays

• Content can be added to the site by more than one person, not just our over-burdened webmaster

The last point is the one that we think will make the biggest difference. To contribute to the site you don't need to have web skills. Simple instructions are provided.

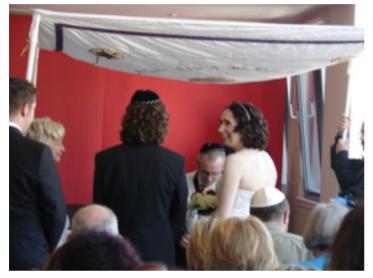
Do you have a topic you would like to see on the web site? You could become an editor and maintain the page yourself. For this or any other comments about the site just email Maurice, our web master, at webmaster@eljc.org.

Gillian Raab

Community matters

Mazal Tov

To Sarah Meek and Ami Bender on the occasion of their marriage, the first marriage ceremony that we have celebrated in our community. The setting on the top floor of the Apex International Hotel, with splendid view of Edinburgh Castle, was quite spectacular. The bride and groom were handsome and beautiful as you can see below where the couple are standing under the Chuppah embroidered by Sarah's mother.



Mazal Tov also

To Sam Foster on her acceptance by the Rabbinic Board of Liberal Judaism. She has been studying with Rabbi Mark Solomon for several years now but she has had several other achievements during that time. As well as her academic work, as a doctor and medical researcher, she and her husband (Joel Marks) have had two further boys, Zachary age 2 and baby Nathaniel, brothers for Oliver who is an enthuisiastic member of our cheder. We are delighted to welcome Sam as a member of Sukkat Shalom and she will be having a formal admission ceremony at a forthcoming service.

Best wishes

To Lauren Fox who will be away from Edinburgh for the next year to follow a course on photography and sculpture in Barcelona. Lauren has been a huge asset to the community during her time in Edinburgh and we are hoping she will want to come back here after her course.

Condolences

To Elizabeth and to Gordon and Adam Barclay on the death of Stuart Goring. We wish you a long life.

Stuart Michael Goring

We record with sadness the death on 2 August of Stuart Goring, the father of member Elizabeth Goring, who was a benefactor of the Edinburgh community in its earliest days of independent existence. He and his wife Marion were so impressed by the strength and commitment of the pioneers that they subscribed generously to the appeal for our Torah scroll. Stuart was well known to many members - a larger than life character whose pride in his grandson Adam's bar mitzvah in St Mark's was clear. Stuart was a member of Hendon Reform Synagogue in London, and was active in Liberal politics, the magistracy and in charitable work, especially as chair of the fundraising committee of the North London Hospice, where he died after a brave seven-year-long struggle against cancer.

Break fast meal after Yom Kippur

Following last year's successful event we have again organised a break fast meal for the end of Yom Kippur to be held at the Caledonian Hilton (just next to St Marks where we will be holding our services). The hotel are able to hold the price at the same modest rate as last year (£17.95 per head excluding drinks and gartuities). The menu choices are below.

To book your place please email our secretary Nancy Warren (secretary@eljc.org) with the numbers you wish to book along with the numbers of choices for items in each course.

Break fast menu choices 2010/5770

Starter: Soup of the Day; Slow Roast Beetroot, Feta and Pears on Seasonal Leaves (v); Pan Seared Chicken Livers and Woodland Mushrooms on toast, pepper Crème Fraiche

Main: Fillet of Brill, Horseradish roast sweet potatoes with peas; Slow Braised Lamb Shank with Brown Lentils, Mixed Beans and Cumin; Strozzapretti with Wilted Spinach, Blue Cheese and Toasted Pine Nuts (v)

Dessert: Fresh Fruit Salad; Baked Lemon and Mascarpone Cheesecake; Fine Apple Tart with Calvados Ice Cream

Menu price £17.95 per person excluding drinks and gratuities.

JUDAISM AND JUSTICE: REFLECTIONS ON VOLUNTEERING IN INDIA

by Roma Menlowe, rmenlowe@googlemail.com

Earlier this year my husband and I worked for two months as volunteers in India, on a programme run by American Jewish World Service (AJWS). Having retired from the civil service, I wanted to mark the transition to a new life and to see things from a different perspective. And we were keen to learn more about international development issues and about India. We hope this brief article may lead some of you to consider a similar adventure.

AJWS is an international development organisation motivated by Judaism's concern for justice. It seeks to alleviate poverty, hunger and disease in the developing world, regardless of race, religion or nationality. Through grants to grassroots organisations, volunteer service, advocacy and education, AJWS seeks to foster civil society, sustainable development and human rights for all people, while promoting the values and responsibilities of global citizenship within the Jewish community. You can find out more at www.ajws.org

We were guided to AJWS by relatives in the US who had volunteered with them in the past. We approached them as non-practising Jews whose perspective on the concepts of *tikkun olam* and *tzedekah* is largely secular. Happily for us, AJWS is more concerned with the ethics of Judaism than with theological orthodoxy (indeed, non-Jews may also apply). The application and assessment process was rigorous; and we were impressed by the care AJWS took over the selection of volunteers and host organisations. Volunteers must fund their living expenses while abroad; and volunteers from outwith the US must also fund their airfares. AJWS organises the placements; provides induction and support during the assignment, and enlists all volunteers in a medical emergency advice service.

We were assigned to a human rights charity in the city of Cuttack in Orissa – a poor state in a country where inequalities are growing. On arrival in India, we joined 8 other volunteers – mainly young professionals from different parts of the US – for a week's induction in Lucknow. This was an intensive briefing on India, on development issues, and on working as volunteers in the third sector. It was stimulating and thought-provoking. It was also one of the coldest experiences of our lives. The daytime temperature in foggy Lucknow in January was around 9C. The training centre was unheated and open to the weather. The skin on my fingertips peeled.

We thawed out in Orissa – indeed the temperatures there climbed steadily during our stay and by the end were around 36C with 70% humidity, which posed a challenge of a different kind, especially at night and without air conditioning. Our living arrangements in Cuttack were simple to the point of austerity – a 9 foot square room at the top of an office building, a western toilet, one cold tap, one electric socket. No hot water, no shower, no hand basin. But we did have access to a large flat roof – our main living space and our vantage point. This was where we washed our clothes in plastic pails, read books by torchlight under a mosquito net, listened to the neighbours' prayer bells and temple music, watched saris flutter like spinnakers from the rooftop washing lines, heard the howling of feral dogs, gazed at exuberant wedding processions winding their way through the streets below, inhaled the fragrance of puri and sambar being cooked up nearby, and where one of us took lessons on the Indian wooden flute.

Our tasks at the charity crystallised slowly. One of us was to support the organisation's national campaign for early education; the other was to carry out a review of the body's structure and management and to propose options for reform. One of the lessons we learned as we struggled to clarify the purpose and outcomes of these tasks was that small charities or 'non-government organisations' (NGOs) can find it hard to invest the time necessary to get the best out of volunteers. Many volunteers experience some frustration around the work proposed for them. A central challenge of most assignments is to manage that frustration,

cope with setbacks and unexpected reversals, develop relationships of trust and mutual understanding, and demonstrate ways of working that are useful and sustainable to the NGO in the longer term.

Our NGO showed us some of their work in the field – in the city slums and impoverished rural areas around Cuttack. We saw powerful and positive work being done in the fields of early childhood education, land rights, and birth registration. We also learned about hideous abuses of public power and corruption of officials; and the deadly effects of inertia, discrimination, and lack of accountability. International aid is desperately needed; yet sustainable improvements to the lives of poor people can only be achieved by good governance and renewal from within. This is where charity meets politics. We were glad to have a brief glimpse of how this is playing out in India.

Some suggestions for those considering volunteering. Be realistic about what you can achieve and focus on what you can learn - outside the job as well as within it. Select a reputable development organisation whose values and approach you endorse. Be meticulous about practical preparations and take insurance seriously. Be open to the experience and what it may tell you about yourself, your relationships, and your assumptions about how work should be done. We are glad we travelled as volunteers to India. It transformed the impressions we had previously built up as tourists to that wonderful and complex country. We were often humbled by the goodness and courage of poor people facing terrible adversity. We were lucky to work with AJWS whose professionalism and commitment are outstanding. And we learned a lot – about ourselves and about the way that Judaism, justice and global responsibility hang together. We hope that some of you too may find volunteering a worthwhile experience – at any stage in life.

An Israel State of Mind by Lucian J. Hudson, Chairman of Liberal Judaism

by Lucian J. Hudson is Chairman of Liberal Judaism and a member of the Jewish Leadership Council

(published in the Jewish News, 19th August 2010)

I have form with the British Foreign Secretary. I have not been actively involved in party politics since I was a local council candidate for the SDP in 1982. But in April 1978, I took part in a television debate as Labour's answer to William Hague, who had achieved overnight stardom at his party's conference. Hague has always been gracious, and said I had got the better of him. But the truth is that his was the more impressive performance: I tried to win the argument, but he won his audience.

The vehemence over the debate about Israel should give every member of the British Jewish community pause for thought. Are Israel's defenders and detractors, and its critical friends in between, locked into a dynamic aimed at winning the argument or winning the people? I increasingly think that we are conducting an endless series of relentless monologues, rather than a genuine dialogue in which we allow ourselves to suspend assumptions and listen to others. Thomas Friedman in a recent article for the New York Times distinguished between constructive and destructive criticism of Israel. Destructive criticism is not about hearing the answer. It is about writing off Israel whatever it says or does. Many Progressive Jews in Israel and the diaspora take issue with particular Israeli policies and actions precisely because of a love for Israel and what the country stands for.

I represent a movement that is largely made up of members who are pro-Israel, for a two- state solution and against boycotts of Israel. But we can be outspoken and critical of Israel's actions if we need to be. I

saw no need to rush to judgment about the flotilla incident when even the BBC reported conflicting accounts of what had happened. But there was every reason to express deep sorrow for the loss of life, and question the policy of the blockade, rather than its enforcement.

Whether we are government, business or civil society leaders, we can show leadership by not falling for the 24/7 news trap of having to respond on every aspect of a breaking news story before we have satisfied ourselves that we know the facts and can reach conclusions. Instead of letting ourselves get caught up in reacting and counter-reacting to the news agenda, we should exercise some real freedom in creating space for a strategic discussion about what it would take to work through, and in some cases, accept differences and find common ground. Context is everything: why is Israel singled out for criticism, when other governments are also far from perfect? Idealisation and demonization go hand-in-hand. An honest, realistic and positive approach to life involves working with the good, bad and indifferent.

This discussion about Israel, its relationship to all of its people and its neighbours should not just be adversarial, but deliberative. The ground-rules should include a concerted effort by all involved to get beneath the surface interests and the rhetoric and emotion that go with it, and properly seek out people's different needs, interests, concerns and expectations. Only then can we fully explore options, and try to find a way through that will achieve peace. We are in a rut, and we need to break out of it. That should be our principal message as a community.

We will not break out of this rut unless we allow ourselves a wider field of vision in how we look at Israel and talk about it. We as a Jewish leadership in the UK have been poor at this. Dan Senor's and Saul Singer's book, Start-Up Nation – The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle, is recommended reading. It describes how Israeli culture fosters an exceptional combination of creative innovative and enterprising activity. At its best, Israel is not just a country but a comprehensive state of mind. This is what we collectively risk neglecting and losing by not pausing to reflect, and becoming slaves to the news agenda.

Mitzvah Day 2010/5771 is Sunday 21st November



Last year a group of the more energetic members of the community had a great time working out any frustrations they may have had on the overgrown trees and bushes in Holyrood Park. Here are some pictures from last year to remind you. We are delighted that the Holyrood Park rangers are willing to have us back for the same or a similar task this year. So energetic members and friends should keep this Sunday free in their diaries.

Last year the cheder children made hospital gowns out of old T-shirts for third world children who were undrgoing operations for things like cleft palates. Do parents, or others have any ideas for this year? Also, it would be good to have another project that would be suitable for community members who might not be up to the physical challenge of being a Holyrood ranger's assistant.

Send your ideas for projects for this year to Phil Wadler (wadler@inf.ed.ac.uk) who is coordinating. You can get ideas from what other shul's are doing by looking at the projects listed on http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk, the Mitzvah day website. Several of these projects involve collaboration with other faith groups, which might be an interesting idea for us to try to work out. **Suggestions please**.

Events and Notices

Nostra Aetatae event

Nostra Aetate (Latin: In our Age) is the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions. For more details and background see the wikepedia article here. The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (ScoJec) is organizing a joint event with the Archdiocese of Glasgow to mark the 45th anniversary of the Papal declaration "Nostra Aetate" that has set the tone for relations between the Jewish and Catholic communities since.

Events have been arranged in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The Edinburgh event be a public conversation on

Wednesday 6th October 7.30 pm - 9.00 pm:

Details are being finalised and will be published in our October newsletter. But meanwhile, if you would like further details about any of them please contact Leah Granat by phone (0141 638 6411 or mobile 07887488100 or email leah@scojec.org.

Given the relative size of our communities, it is important that the Jewish Community put in a good showing, so please do put the date in your diary and try to attend if you can.

Radio Ramadan

Did you miss Rabbi Mark Solomon's interview on Radio Ramadan last weekend. If so we believe that a podcast of the interview will be available after Ramadan, But meanwhile there is another chance to listen to a contribution from our community to this internet radio station. On Sunday 5th September some of our cheder children will be taking part in a discussion on Ramadan/Eid and the High Holidays. The program is at 4.30pm and is called Kids' Zone. Radio Ramadan is a digital station which you can listen to on the internet at

http://www.radioramadanedinburgh.com/

<u>Jewish Edinburgh Trekkers</u> (JETS)

Sunday September 12th, Dalmeny Estate Please contact Betsy Dorfman

(brdorfman@yahoo.com) if you are interested in this walk.

Pre-Yom Tov Coffee Morning

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Jewish Community Centre Committee Salisbury Road

Sunday 5th September 2010 at 10.30am

Come and chat to friends over coffee and sandwiches, bid for some delicious cake in the CAKE AUCTION, buy some pre-owned books and even pick up a plant or two. Only £4 per ticket

If you or anyone you know needs a lift contact Steven Hyams on 445 3740 to arrange.

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group



22nd September, 7 pm, Robertson Hall of the Nicolson Square Methdist Church. Vijaylakshmi (Vijay) Subramaniam, an Indian woman who works in the slums of Madras will be our speaker. Veronica Craig is Vijay's host. Margaret Hendry will facilitate the meeting. We begin with a shared finger-buffet meal.

Jewish Heritage Trek

8-15 May 2010. Raise funds for Jewish Care Scotland and delve into the Latvian and Lithuanian Jewish heritage. The total cost is £1500, with £600 for Jewish Care Scotland and £900 to cover the costs of the trip itself. The trek will consist of a minimu of 10 miles wakling a day. The landscape is quite flat so it's not too arduous and the climate in May should be temperate and not too hot. For further information attend the presentation on 6 September (see below), look at the Jewish Care Scotland website or give Deborah Haase a call (0141 620 1800).

