

Sukkat Shalom December 2011

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

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Events and Services

Date Friday 2 December 2011

Event Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Venue Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road

Time 6:15pm

To be followed by an informal chavurah supper to mark the end of term. Students are especially welcome. Please bring food and/or drink to share. No meat or sea food please.

Date Friday 9 December 2011

Event Erev Shabbat Service led by

Rabbi Mark Solomon

Human Rights Shabbat & Chavurah Supper following the service. Please bring a non-meat dish to share. See p.7.

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace

Time 7pm

Date Saturday 10 December 2011

Event Tea & Talmud

Venue Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace

Time 3pm

Event Havdalah and discussion

Venue Occupation tents in St Andrew Square

Time 5.30pm

See p.7.

Date Sunday 11 December 2011

Event Choosing Judaism

Venue Usual Location

Time 10:30am

Event Spinoza Reading Group

Venue Columcille Centre

Time 4pm

Date Friday 16 December 2011

Event Kabbalat Shabbat Centre

Venue Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road

Time 6:15pm

Date Saturday 24 December 2011

Event Shabbat Morning Service

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace

Time 11am

Event Chanukah Party - with latkes

bring your menorah and candles
see page 4 for details

Venue Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace

Time 3.30 - 5.30 pm

Date Friday 30 December 2011

Event Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Venue Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road

Time 6:15pm



**Deadline for copy for January 2012
newsletter: 25 December 2011**

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.

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Future Dates

Our regular schedule is as follows:

Our **Erev Shabbat service** will be on the **SECOND** Friday of each calendar month and our **Shabbat morning service** on the Saturday after the **FOURTH** Friday.

These services take place in the **Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace.**

Jewish Calendar

Festivals begin on the evening before the day listed.

Chanukah	21-28.12.2011
First candle	evening of 20.12
Tu B'Shevat	8.2.2012
Purim	8.3.2012
Pesach	7-14.4.2012
Shavuot	27-28.5.2012
9 Av	29.7.2012
Rosh Hashanah 5773	17-18.9.2012
Yom Kippur	26.9.2012



Family Shabbaton for small communities - 14th January 2012

Held at GJLC (Gloucester Liberal Jewish Community in Cheltenham), the Shabbaton will include text study, music, paper midrash and fun programmes for young people and children. Presenters include: Rabbi Danny Rich, Rabbi Anna Gerrard, Rabbi Tanya Sachnovich, Cantor Gershon Sillins, Adam Francies, Debi Penhey, Janet Elf and Phil Stone. To find out more, click [here](#).

I'M JEWISH, MY PARTNER ISN'T, Sunday 15th January 2012

2.30pm-5.45pm, Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, Finchley, London N3 2SY

The seminar offers mixed-faith couples the opportunity to talk about your situation, discuss any issues that you may face and explore the various issues open to you.

It will be led by Sheila King-Lassman and

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain for Liberal and Reform communities.

Entry is for anyone, whether or not you are synagogue members...and for both Jewish and non-Jewish partners alike. There is a charge of £5 per person.

You can just turn up on the day..although it helps us gauge numbers if you call in advance : contact us on 01628-671058 or email rabromain@aol.com.

Biennial Weekend - preview and ticket information!

Rabbi Pete Tobias gives his guide to what's in store at 2012 Biennial Weekend. "Come to the 2012 Liberal Judaism Biennial Weekend and embrace your past in order that you can be part of the journey we are making towards Liberal Judaism's - and your - future. It will be a journey to remember". Click [here](#) to read more.





liberal judaism
INFORMED CHOICES

THE FUTURE



BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

20-22 April 2012

Make sure you don't miss out on Liberal Judaism's Biennial
A weekend of fun, learning, prayer & discussion for all ages

Be part of developing our future by looking at our past
A chance to study the origins and development of Liberal Judaism with fellow Liberal Jews from around the UK

Early Bird Booking Before 31 Jan	£295	Book now to avoid disappointment
Bookings after 1 Feb 2012	£350	
Children sharing with parents, under 5	£50	Location: The Tortworth Court Hotel, Bristol
Children sharing with parents, 5-8yrs	£80	
<small>Pieces include 2 nights accommodation, full board and all materials per person</small>		
If you can't make the whole weekend why not come for Saturday or Sunday (meals included)	£99	
<small>Sunday night accommodation is available for £90 (single)/£99 (double). Rooms include dinner and breakfast.</small>		

Sign up now at www.liberaljudaism.org/biennial

biennial@liberaljudaism.org
020 7580 1663

Travel options from Edinburgh to are to fly Easyjet to Bristol or to take the train to Bristol Parkway or Yate station. Do let us know if you are thinking of booking so we can coordinate the final stage of the journey to Tortworth Hall.

Chairman's word

Last Wednesday Lord Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain and the Commonwealth addressed the Scottish Parliament. at "Time for Reflection", the monthly "God slot". You can view and listen to his words on the Scottish Parliament web site <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/newsandmediacentre/31777.aspx> or read them on the ScoJeC web site (<http://www.scojec.org/pov/tfr.html>). He started his message to the rather small number of MSPs who were there that afternoon by mentioning the three great blessings the Scots had given to humankind: Adam Smith, David Hume and Whisky. For the last of these he quoted A.E. Housman :

*"malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man".*

The rest of his sermon referred to the current economic climate and the importance of working together with "hope", a word he contrasted with the passiveness of "optimism". Hope was also the theme of a longer presentation he gave to a group of guests who were invited to have lunch with him before the event. I was fortunate to have been invited to this event, organised by ScoJeC (the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, (<http://www.scojec.org>)). The other guests included the moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, other faith representatives, MSPs and a few other representatives of the Scottish Jewish Communities. We were invited to an excellent sandwich lunch catered by the kosher Simcha Caterers from Glasgow followed by the speech and an opportunity to ask Lord Sacks questions.



This time the Chief Rabbi talked about hope in the context of Chanukah. He recounted briefly a story he had been told by a holocaust survivor and a good friend. The good friend was the late Reform Rabbi Hugo Gryn (Shalom l'verechah) and I quote the story here as recalled by the Rabbi of congregation Bonai Shalom in Boulder Colorado (<http://bonaishalom.org/index.php?id=170>).

One of my mentors growing up in London was Rabbi Hugo Gryn, a dynamic and universally loved Reform rabbi and holocaust survivor. He used to tell a story about when he was a young boy sharing a barracks with his father in Auschwitz. In spite of the unspeakable horror, oppression and hardship, many Jews held onto what scraps of Jewish religious observances they were able to keep in those conditions. One midwinter evening one of the other inmates reminded them that it was the first night of Hanukkah. Hugo Gryn's father constructed a little Hanukkah menorah out of scrap metal. For a wick, he took some threads from his prison uniform. For oil, he used some butter that he somehow procured from a guard. "Such observances were strictly verboten," said Rabbi Gryn, "but we were used to taking risks. Rather, I protested at the waste of precious calories. Would it not be better to share the butter on a crust of bread than to burn it?" "Hugo," said my father, "both you and I know that a person can live a very long time without food, many days without water. But Hugo, I tell you, a person cannot live a single day without hope. This is the fire of hope. Never let it go out. Not here. Not anywhere. Remember that, Hugo."

Lord Sacks went on to discuss whether there was such a thing as the spiritual strength of a Nation. He argued that what we should really celebrate on Chanukah was not the military victory, which was short lived, but the fact that it had permitted Judaism to survive. Without Chanukah Judaism could not have survived and Christianity and Islam would not have arisen. He went on to discuss the importance of building bridges between faith groups and the need for Emunah which he interpreted as trust between different traditions.

There was only a short time for questions and the few that were asked were mainly from interfaith representatives. In response to questions about Christmas he said that he loved to see evidence of celebrations from other faiths. I had planned to ask him a question, but the topic I had in mind did not seem appropriate for an interfaith gathering. I had wanted to ask him about how he saw the future of Jewish Communities in the UK,

outside London and Manchester. Although Lord Sacks has been active in building bridges between faith groups, he has not, as far as I am aware, done the same for different branches of Judaism. Perhaps the fact that he quoted Rabbi Hugo Gryn and referred to him as a friend is a hopeful sign, given past events (see the Wikipedia entry http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Sacks#Rabbi_Gryn_and_Rabbi_Jacobs).

Since last Wednesday I had thought quite a bit about putting this question to him and I have decided to write to him about it. There – I've said this in the newsletter – so now I'll have to do it. I'll keep you posted if I hear back.

Wishing all our members and friends a very happy Chanukah.

Gillian Raab

Chanukah Party

Do come on 24th December to the Columcille Centre at 3.30pm. We will start with some games for the kids and socialising for the adults. Then as Shabbat ends we will make havdalah, light our chanukiahs and partake of some of Phil's Famous latkes. Here he is after making them last year. Bring your Chanukiah and candles (it will be day 4, so bring 5 candles, 4 plus the shamash) and perhaps a little something, maybe some doughnuts, for us to have along with the latkes.



Inter-community cyber quiz report



We entered two teams (Aleph and Bet) seen here getting their heads together over one of the more challenging questions. On the scoreboard we could see how we were doing compared with the other four communities who were taking part: Birmingham, South Bucks, Gloucestershire and Shenfield in Essex. About half way through we seemed perhaps to be in the lead, but at the end of the evening our best team came second with 192 points, just 7 points behind the winners, Gloucestershire. This was a most enjoyable evening with shared food drink and conversation. Many thanks to the South Bucks Community for organising it and for devising entertaining questions. Two examples are given below:-

Round 10 Not the Royal Wedding (title gives clue that questions or answers included Kate or Will)

Q4: Chino, drill, denim and gabardine are all examples of what kind of textile weave.

Q9: Three American presidents of the 20th C have the first name William. Name 2 of them.

Answers on page 6

Equal marriage consultation

As you will know from previous newsletters, Liberal Judaism is in favour of equal rights to marriage for LGBT people and allowing religious marriage ceremonies. Scottish law will make it easier to pass legislation for this than does the law in England and Wales. The Scottish Government is consulting the public on this topic. If you agree with this position there is still time for you to respond positively to the Scottish Government's consultation. It only takes a few minutes to complete. It is important that you reply as an INDIVIDUAL, not on behalf of Sukkat Shalom. The deadline for submitting a response is 9th December, so act now by going to <http://www.equalmarriage.org.uk/consultation.php>.

A lay made about Mitzvah Day 5772

The mighty Jews of Edin's town
By their one G-d they swore
That Arthur's Seat by Holyrood
Should suffer fire no more.
By their one G-d they swore it
And so on Mitzvah Day
Stout Ranger Peter led them forth
From East and West and South and North
To cut the gorse away.

East and West and South and North
Gorse grows on Arthur's Seat
On bonfire night the citizens
For pyrotechnics meet.
The sky's alight in colours bright
That all who see amaze
But a spark falls in a gorse bush
And alas the hill's ablaze.

Flames spread fast and furious
From gorse to neighbouring gorse
Engulfing rose and elder trees
No gap to stop its course.
Rabbits, voles and fieldmice
Each from their burrows race
Their homes destroyed by tongues of fire
Now want a resting place.

As flames die down
The whole hillside
Is nought but charred and twisted roots
The angry rangers cried
"We must such conflagrations halt
And action we must take
To stop destruction here next year
We need a fire break".

Then out spake brave Phil Wadler
"A band of Jews I do command
And we can cut your foe the gorse
Until no shoot doth stand.
You can lead us up the hillside
Your orders we'll obey
We'll come on November 20th
For that is Mitzvah day".



The sun did shine on Mitzvah day
As up the steep slope we strode
Above St Anthony's ruin old
Beside the radical road.
Our ranger showed us where to go
And how to make a passage clear
So if another fire should start
It would be halted here.

We lifted high our saws and shears
And set upon our foe
That armed was with many a thorn
That fingers arms and legs could harm
To make our blood to flow.
But we pressed on undaunted
Men, women, children all
Cutting and tossing the prickly boughs
Over the bushes tall.

So when on a fine summer's day
You wander through the Park
Be sure to note the clearing
Where the Jews have left their mark.
And come next year on Guy Fawkes Night
If a rocket goes astray
We hope the fire will halted be
And make less damage to each tree
Because of Mitzvah day.

Inspired by

Horatius – A lay made about the City CCCLX By Thomas Babbington Macaulay

See <http://theotherpages.org/poems/horatius.html>

Kol Nidre Appeal

Thanks to all who have contributed so far. Our contributions are not up to the levels of previous years, despite what we thought were excellent choices of charities: Jewish Care, The Scottish Refugee Council, Physicians for Human Rights Israel and Water Aid. If you have not sent in your contribution there is still time to post a cheque payable to Sukkat Shalom, Yom Kippur Appeal to Jonathan Broadie, 26 Charterhall Road, Edinburgh EH9 3HP, or email treasurer@eljc.org for details of our bank account.

Thanks to

Julia Merrick, see right, for the beautiful, simple Challah cover embroidered with our name, an ear of corn and a poppy seed that you may have seen covering our loaves at recent Shabbat services.



Royal Scottish Academy Exhibition

Miriam Vickers has a painting in the Annual Exhibition. It was sold on the opening preview. To view Watercolour No. 333 visit the exhibition which runs until 18 December 2011.

Mazal tov to

Anna Duncan on her successful interview with the Liberal Judaism Beth Din and the formal completion of her admission to the Jewish Faith at our Shabbat service on 26th November. She is seen here after the service along with her parents, Judith and John, Rabbi Mark and brother Ben.



The Sunday Morning Hebrew Group

Why is there a dot in that letter ?

How do you read that word ?

Which word in the Hebrew means..... ?

What is this paragraph, psalm all about ?

How does the poetry work ?

How does it fit into the service ? How old is it ?

How does it compare with the way other Jewish traditions use it?

These are some of the questions asked by members of the group which meets on Sunday mornings to improve their reading and understanding of the Siddur. We read the lines slowly together then we talk about what they are saying and then we read them again in the light of that discussion. A bare knowledge of the Hebrew letters is all that is needed to enjoy the sessions which are conducted in a relaxed but hopefully stimulating manner.

Our sessions run from 11.00 am to 12.00 pm on Sunday mornings and are held at 15 Inverleith Place. In principle the group meets fortnightly but in fact dates are arranged in consultation with group members. It does not matter very much if people cannot attend every session because the sessions are largely self-contained. The group has been meeting for some time now and has worked its way through much if not all of the Shabbat morning service. What we study is often at the request of members of the group. Before Pesach we usually look at the Haggadah and before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we look at the High Holidays prayerbook. Currently we are looking at some of the psalms included in the services.

We would be very pleased if more people joined us. If you feel might like to try it but are not sure about it please give me a ring on 0131 552 5732 for further information. The next session will be on either 11 or 18 December to be confirmed by email as are all our dates.

Norman Crane

Temporary newsletter editor required

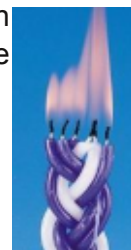
for one or two months to give Hannah Holtschneider, our editor, some well deserved maternity leave. Hannah (seen here) is expecting a little brother or sister for Noa on 29th January. Please let us know if you could help out for this short period. We use the public domain desktop publishing software "Scribus" and we will be happy to help you to learn how to use it.



Human Rights Shabbat

Human Rights Shabbat (HRS), marked by 100 communities around the world, is an occasion to celebrate and reinforce the connections between Jewish values and universal human rights. Coinciding with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it falls this year on December 9-10. The principle of fundamental equality on which human rights are based stems originally from the Jewish idea that all are created in the image of God. For this HRS we plan to discuss, in partnership with protesters from the Occupy movement, the many current challenges to the Declaration. We have invited them to our Erev Shabbat service on 9th December, followed by a chavurah supper and discussion, led by Rabbi Mark, on human rights in the Jewish tradition. Along with ten other progressive rabbis, Rabbi Mark has gone on record in support of the Occupy movement (<http://tinyurl.com/cy9l5ma>).

On the following day, we will make Havdalah at the Occupation Tent in St Andrew Square and continue the discussions with the protestors there. Do come and join in! There will be a tent for shelter and a chance to hear the arguments for and against this protest movement.



Rabbis for Human Rights report

Mitzvah Day was a good occasion to hear testimony from the Israeli organisation Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR), since they have mitzvot to discuss, including: long hard-fought actions at the High Court, shorter but more frightening ones as human shields protecting Palestinian olive farmers from settler vigilantes, and patient ongoing educational work to introduce both Israeli Jewish youth and Palestinian youth to the human face of the other. These and other RHR activities were described to us by Rabbi Nava Hefetz, their Director of Education, at a meeting organised by Edinburgh Three Faiths Forum at Blackhall Mosque on November 20th.

Rabbi Hefetz began by laying down the basis on which RHR and its sympathisers believe that Jews in Israel are “commanded to behave differently”: that as all human beings were created in the image of God, so all are entitled to the same rights. Her talk included a description of her own path from a secular background, prompted in the first place by experience of the losses amongst her own friends in the 1973 war to search for religious and political alternatives to her conventional Zionist upbringing. From small beginnings at the time that she joined, RHR now has 120 rabbis as members across all denominations, and yet other rabbis who sympathise but feel unable to be open in their support. She described RHR’s activity in three main areas:

- in the legal arena, the situation in the South Hebron Hills, where settler harassment has been progressively forcing Palestinian farmers from their lands. RHR has recently been successful in an action before the Supreme Court to obtain a judgement favourable to the Palestinians — although, as Rabbi Hefetz pointed out, to get this judgement enforced is another matter. RHR is also working on, amongst other cases, a wide-reaching legal action concerning water rights on the West Bank — settlers use four-fifths of West Bank water, according to the World Bank, although they constitute less than a fifth of the population.

- in the educational arena, the course that RHR provides for school leavers, preparing them for army service by encouraging them to use Jewish texts to inform a year-long discussion about occupation, the ethics of access to land and to health and welfare services, and the right to self-defence.

- their direct action, specifically their best-known action, which involves joining Palestinian farmers in working their fields during the olive harvest, when they are at greatest hazard from nearby settlements.

Rabbi Hefetz also discussed the situation in Israel generally. She was particularly emphatic about the harmful effect of separation, since the start of the second intifada, between Israel Jews and Palestinian Arabs. A generation has grown up knowing nothing of the other except as an enemy. She criticised Israel’s separation barrier and associated movement restrictions for this isolation.

Understanding the conflict in Israel/Palestine is hard, paradoxically because there are so many news stories flowing from it, making it difficult to get an overall picture. Hearing from someone personally involved feels quite different. Rabbi Hefetz’s talk was like that: we came away from the talk, and the lively question-and-answer session that followed, both informed and inspired.

Maurice Naftalin

Sam Montague's Dvar Torah on his portion Noah

God was getting fed up with people, men and women. They were all fighting and being evil, violent and horrible, so he decided to flood the world and get rid of the human race. But there was one person who was good, Noah. God spoke to Noah and told him that he should build an ark to save himself, his family and animals from the flood. He was told to build the ark with gofer wood and cover the inside with pitch to make it waterproof. The Rabbi said that Noah tried to persuade people to come with him on the ark but they rejected him and said he was crazy.



When the flood came there were eight people on the ark. There was Noah and his wife, Noah's sons and their wives. There were also many pairs of animals. About forty days later the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. Noah cautiously opened a window and set out a raven to see if the raven could find any land related objects. The raven is not mentioned again in the passage. Instead Noah sent out a dove for such reasons as it was smaller so it could cope with hazards. The first time he sent it but the dove returned with nothing so there still was no debris or trees above the water. He waited a week and sent the dove again and this time she returned with an olive branch. This meant she either plucked it or it was floating on the surface of the water and the water level was going down. Then Noah waited another week for the water to shallow out and sent out the dove one final time. Because it did not return he thought it must have found dry land to rest on. Two months later God told Noah and his family to leave the ark, so they did with all the animals.

This is the end of the passage I read but the story of Noah continues.

There is significance in my passage of why Noah uses the raven and the dove. There was only one pair of ravens on the ark and the raven thinks it is unfair to send it out when there are 7 pairs of doves. I think Noah sees the raven as a scavenging, dark and horrible, big bird whereas the dove is thought of as a quiet, peaceful delicate one. My opinion is that god was extremely unfair to the whole of humankind and should have given them another chance. It was also unfair on animals because they did nothing wrong and most were killed although they were saved from extinction because Noah saved a pair of each animal.

Mazal Tov to Sam on his Bar Mitzvah and thanks to his teacher, Norman and to his family for their support.

Events and Announcements

The 'Not Quite' Chanukah Dinner

Saturday 10th December 2011, 7pm, Community Centre, 4 Salisbury Road

Entertainment and cabaret provided by Ian McIntosh

£25 adults/£5 under 10's/£12.50 students

Please send a card with your Name, Address, Telephone number, the number of tickets required and the relevant payment enclosed (cheque payable to 'Jewish Community Centre') to Melissa Gilroy, Synagogue Chambers, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5AB as soon as possible.

Please also indicate if vegetarian alternative to chicken required.

If you need a lift to the event contact Steven Hyams on 445 3740.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

All meetings start at 8.00pm with tea served at the end of the meeting. The venue is the Marian Oppenheim Hall, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, 4 Salisbury Road.

December 11th 2011

Film Evening: The recent Cohen Brothers film. "**A Serious Man**" followed by discussion. Suggested prior reading The Book of Job.

January 8th 2012

Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG QC MP: "Israel and the Middle East".

This talk needs no introduction. We are privileged to welcome Sir Malcolm Rifkind back to the Lit for what, as always, promises to be an erudite and inspiring address from a leading statesman of our times.

Windows for Peace

See the Windows for Peace "Dreaming Peace" exhibition which is part of the Art 4 Peace exhibition at CAD, Kingsgate, Dunfermline November 11th to December 11th.