

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity SC035678

www.eljc.org

June
issue 54

June

- 1** Cheder
MSG 3.30
- 7** Kabbalat Shabbat
MSG 6.15
- 14** Erev Shabbat Service
CC 7.00
- 15** Cheder
MSG 3.30
- 22** Shabbat Morning Service
and the Bat Mitzvah
of Sophie Bleau
SMU 10.30
- 23** Choosing Judaism
Usual location 10.30
Philosophy Discussion
Group
CC 4.00
- 29** Shabbat Morning Service
CC 11.00

July

- 12** Service and Supper
CC 7.00
- 13** Shabbat Morning Service
Dundee Synagogue
6.15

Venues

- CC** Columcille Centre
2 Newbattle Terrace
- MSG** Marchmont St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road
- SMU** St Mark's Unitarian
7 Castle Terrace

Word from the Chair

Norman Crane on the Church of Scotland's *Inheritance of Abraham* and reactions to it in the Jewish Community

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Sophie's Bat Mitzvah

A profile of Sophie and an invitation to celebrate with Sophie and her family after the service (**RSVP by 6 June!**)

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Community Phone and Email

These go to several council members

- Leave voicemail **0131 777 8024**
- Send email **contact@eljc.org**

Urgent Support

For urgent use or in emergency **0131 208 1447**

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Word from the Chair

At the end of April the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council published *The Inheritance of Abraham* for discussion at the Church's General Assembly in May. The document proposed resolutions in support of human rights for Palestinians and provided background material.

The Inheritance of Abraham aroused consternation in the Jewish community here and around the world. It made use of a theology deriving from the Middle Ages that regards Judaism as narrow and inward-looking, and Christianity as universal and superior. To many Jewish readers, it appeared to deny the right of the State of Israel to exist.

A meeting was hastily convened by the Council of Christians and Jews. It was attended by representatives of the Church of Scotland, the Board of Deputies, SCOJEC, the Movement for Reform Judaism, and Rabbis for Human Rights; the latter two in the shape of Rabbi Laura Janner Klausner, MRJ's Movement Rabbi and UK director of Rabbis for Human Rights. As a result, the Church of Scotland released a statement undertaking to revise the *Inheritance of Abraham* by adding an introduction that would address the concerns of the Jewish community and spell out the Church's affirmation of Israel. This improvement cleared the air and satisfied Zionists in general. It did nothing, however, to deal with the report's theological inadequacies.

In the interim, we (Rebekah Gronowski, Catherine Lyons and I) used our connection with the Edinburgh InterFaith Association to effect a meeting with Chris Wigglesworth, Vice-Convenor of the Church and Society Council. The meeting was friendly and productive. We agreed to meet again and go over the *Inheritance of Abraham* together in detail, though this could not be done before the General Assembly. The revised *Inheritance of Abraham* confirmed the statehood of Israel and its right to peace and security; it recognised the worry and concern to the Jewish community caused by the original report. The theological material was drafted much more carefully and Judaism was recognised as just as valid as Christianity. The new version also reaffirmed the Church's commitment to dialogue with the Jewish community in Scotland and elsewhere.

The revised *Inheritance of Abraham*, with minor emendment, was passed after discussion, and despite a counter motion to defer it until the Church had spent a year in dialogue with SCOJEC. Following the General Assembly debate, a statement was issued by the Director of SCOJEC, Ephraim Borowski, saying that the Church of Scotland had 'burnt its bridges with SCOJEC', had rejected dialogue, and had 'effectively called for the destruction of Israel.' No further communication would be possible until the Church had undertaken self-examination. This reaction was to say the least of it inappropriate and intemperate.

I decided to bring these matters to Council and called an extra-ordinary meeting to consider them. I received Council's support for continuing our dialogue with the Church of Scotland and for writing to SCOJEC to explain our position. I agreed to report to Council on progress. We have now arranged a meeting with the Convenor of the Church and Society Council, Sally Foster Fulton. We have also invited Rabbi Laura Janner Klausner to continue to be part of the process. She will join us in the Autumn for a meeting. We shall also write to Liberal Judaism (Rabbi Danny Rich and Lucian Hudson) to keep them informed. I should like to express my personal thanks to Catherine Lyons and Rebekah Gronowski for their indefatigable work in dealing with all this.

Norman Crane

The Bat Mitzvah of Sophie Bleau



We are delighted to announce the Batmitzvah of Sophie Bleau during our service on Saturday 22 June. It promises to be the most tremendous occasion. There are two special points to note.

Sophie's family invite the whole congregation to celebrate after the service at the Ghillie Dhu. Sophie's Mum, Joanna, needs to know final numbers for the Ghillie Dhu very soon. *So please RSVP as soon as possible, and at the very latest, by Thursday 6 June.*

Our Shabbat Morning Service that day will be at St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace. *Unusually, we will be starting at the earlier time of 10.30 a.m.*

Norman Crane

This last couple of months have been very full. Sophie has just finished her last S1 classes at Portobello High School and is starting S2 on Monday. She is very nervous about her Bat Mitzvah and is really trying to learn everything so she doesn't let anyone down, but she's just as nervous about the dance show that she's doing a week earlier. There are three performances to do and she is dancing ten times in each. I don't know what is the greater responsibility: the bat mitzvah on her own in front of everyone she knows and cares about, or the dance show with all her friends. I think she must be growing up!

Joanna Bleau



Cheder gallery and quiz



The play dough scribes have been busy again. Here we have a whole word sculpted Sadie (in play dough made from scratch, by the way, by cheder teacher Nancy Lynner).

Cheder will meet once more this term, but the children will be back for the new school year in August.

Grown ups! Can you translate the play dough?

The first person to write to newsletter@eljic.org and tell us what the play dough means, can ask for cheder to make a new play dough word (please keep to a maximum of four consonants!)

Catherine Lyons

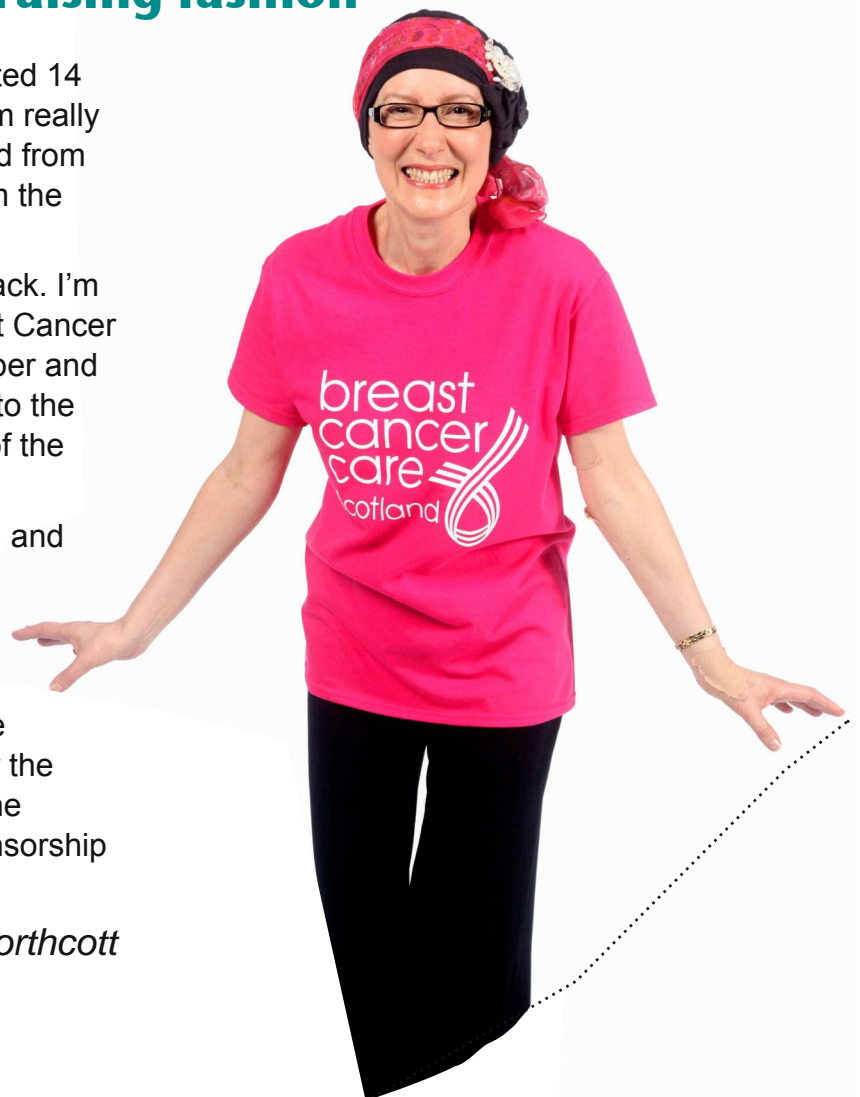
Catwalk début in fund-raising fashion

Many of you know that I recently completed 14 months of treatment for breast cancer. I'm really grateful for the wonderful support I've had from my husband, family and friends, and from the Sukkat Shalom community.

Now it's time for me to give something back. I'm going to be a fashion model in the Breast Cancer Care Scotland Fashion Show in September and I'm asking if you will sponsor me to take to the catwalk at this inspirational event in aid of the charity Breast Cancer Care.

Breast Cancer Care provides information and support to anyone affected by breast cancer, and campaigns for improved standards of care. All the fashion models in the Fashion Show have had a breast cancer diagnosis, and we're modelling in the Show to raise money for the charity that has helped us so much. All the proceeds from the Show and all the sponsorship we raise will go to Breast Cancer Care.

Joy Northcott



To sponsor Joy's catwalk debut go to:
www.justgiving.com/Joy-Northcott

Remembering Blanche Mundy

Thank you to everyone at Sukkat Shalom for the wonderful support provided to me and my family around my mother Blanche Mundy's death on 13 May. The quiet, efficient way that all concerned performed their mitzvot was the best possible tribute to Blanche, who devoted so many years of her life to Liberal Judaism.

Janet Mundy

Those of who remember the early years of our community can recall Friday evenings in the residents' lounge at Home Royal House. Blanche would host us for Erev Shabbat services and bring in tea and biscuits on a traditional tea trolley. Our community must have been much smaller then, but we

seemed quite a crowd in that room, praying from incongruously comfortable chairs.

I remember vividly our rabbi arriving on his first ever visit to our community. I first met Mark when he was getting out of a taxi at Home Royal House directly from the station (could his train have been late, perhaps!).

And I remember shopping in Marchmont with Adam and Leora around that time (we hadn't been in Edinburgh very long and they were still little), when one of them recognised Home Royal and exclaimed 'Look! There's our synagogue!' We have Blanche to thank for the first location where we felt at home.

Catherine Lyons

Faculty of Advocates celebrates Lindsay's work



Lindsay is seen here with (left to right) Mungo Bovey QC, Keeper of the Advocates Library; Lord Sanderson of Bowden, Chairman of the Abbotsford Trust; Lord Woolman, former Keeper of the Advocates Library; and Prof Douglas Gifford, Honorary Librarian of Abbotsford.

On 10th May the Faculty of Advocates held a special event to celebrate the work of Sukkat Shalom member, Lindsay Levy.

The work in question was the completion of an online catalogue of Sir Walter Scott's library. Since Scott's death in 1832, the Faculty of Advocates has been entrusted with the care of his library of over 9,000 books in his house at Abbotsford, arranged largely as they were at the time of his death. Following the death of Scott's last remaining relatives, the house is being restored and reopened, and the library made fully available to scholars world-wide.

The cataloguing has been Lindsay's job as rare-books librarian at the Faculty. According to everyone who spoke at the launch of the completed catalogue, she did a fantastic job. She did much more than just enumerate the books; her detective work enabled her

to link items to entries in the novelist's diaries and to identify many rare items, which you can find described on the home-page of the new catalogue. These include correspondence between Burns and Scott, Flora MacDonald's wedding lines, and many other rare items.

The cataloguing of the library took a good 10 years, and finished with the last books being returned to their places on Abbotsford's shelves just as Lindsay was due to retire. But she is not finished with Scott yet. In her retirement she will be completing her PhD on Scott's library. We wish her all the best with this and Mazel Tov on all her achievements so far.

www.advocates.org.uk/library/specialcollections/abbotsford/abbotsford.html

Gillian Raab

Sukkat Shalom Human Rights Trip



Maurice Naftalin

Perhaps most people know the backstory of this trip; for several years our Kol Nidre Appeal benefited Physicians for Human Rights — Israel (PHR-I). Eventually we got a speaker from PHR-I at a Friday night community supper, who inspired us with an account of their work and encouraged us to go and see it for ourselves.

So, after a lot of delays and false starts over many months, some of us finally did just that, a couple of weeks ago. There were nine in the party: from our community came Rabbi Mark, Gillian Raab, Sue Lieberman, and me — plus an honorary member now resident in Moscow, Nathan Gray. The other four were friends, from Edinburgh and points south; we were very happy to welcome them on the trip, and they each contributed a great deal to it.

We had a pretty full schedule when we were there. We stayed in a Jerusalem B&B, hired a bus and driver, and visited projects, villages, settlements and refugee camps for nine days. More precisely, we did those things for eight days; the tour included one day off, planned according to my idea of a day off — a fairly demanding four-hour walk in the dramatic landscape of the Judean Desert. Some of the party needed a day off to recover from this 'day off!'

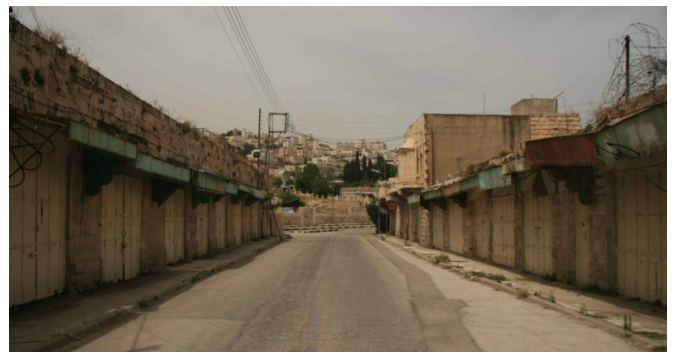
We saw and heard far too much to cover in a short newsletter piece. Our trip blog, at humanrights.eljc.org, was scandalously neglected (by me) while we were away, and we are now progressively adding notes and pictures that people took on the trip. If you are on Facebook, you can see excerpts from Rabbi Mark's postings at the Sukkat Shalom Human Rights page (logo above). If you are a friend of Rabbi Mark or of me, you can see the short but very descriptive posts that he made during the trip, with many pictures.



With Physicians for Human Rights at Al Naqourra. Seated, left, is the redoubtable Prina Feiler, who at 90 never misses volunteering with the mobile clinic.



Jeff Halper, director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, explains the complex topography and geopolitics of East Jerusalem to our party



Central Hebron, forbidden to Palestinians

Highlights of the trip included:

- accompanying the PHR-I mobile clinic to the village of Al Naqourra near Nablus, seeing their work and visiting the impressive Roman ruins of Sebastiyeh (ancient Samaria, capital of the Kingdom of Israel) nearby;
- visiting the strange deserted landscape of central Hebron, just yards away from the life of the Palestinian city that has been expelled from it;
- travelling to the Negev and to a Palestinian village in the South Hebron Hills — beautiful country, but dangerous for the Bedouin and Palestinian villagers trying to maintain a tenuous grip on their land in the face of demolition orders and settler attacks;
- visiting the Jordan valley, where we were astonished at the size and vigour of the settlement palm-tree plantations, and the contrast with the water starved Palestinian villages next door;
- sight-seeing in Battir, a beautiful village near to Jerusalem, whose lands are threatened by a planned extension of the separation wall;
- a visit to Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the coexistence village that has also been a beneficiary of our Kol Nidre appeal.



Lush greenery in the West Bank Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim



And the greys and browns of the Judean desert. The large building in the centre is the policy headquarters for the occupied West Bank, the only construction — so far! — in the infamous E1 area.

Don't let this list make you think that the trip was all work, though: we had good food and a lot of good company too. And people managed to fit in shopping trips, and swimming, and visiting friends and relatives, and a visit to the Western Wall on Friday evening.

We finished with a party and a discussion with our friends at Windows for Peace, a project with strong Edinburgh connections through Judy Sischy, who was on our trip. It was good to see familiar faces, young Arab Israelis who were happy to recall their time in Edinburgh on the Windows summer schools. We were left with many impressions to process, a lot of writing-up and reporting-back to do, and an abiding memory of the many people we met — Jews, Palestinians and Bedouin — struggling for human rights, their own and others', in the face of the Occupation and its many effects. Their dignity and determination deserves to be recorded and acknowledged; watch our blog to understand what we saw and what we mean to say about it.

Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue

The invitation below from Janet Mundy and Jane Ansell is a grassroots initiative arising from discussion at the Edinburgh Jewish Book Club, which attracts members from our own community and the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. Janet took soundings as to whether a cross communal organisation would be welcome. Book club members from both communities were enthusiastic, and Janet and Jane have now arranged a meeting to gauge interest.

I was present at original meeting and I am all in favour of attempts to develop cross-communal activities that are not synagogue-based and that are much more broadly inclusive than our existing activities.

Norman Crane

The Edinburgh Jewish community has always been strong and resilient, and will hopefully remain so for many years to come. Many members of the community feel that it is important at this time that we are all able to find opportunities to come together to meet challenges as they arise. We understand that the Glasgow Jewish Community, through the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, has been undertaking a consultation exercise, known as the Community Futures Project, addressing challenges not dissimilar to those facing the Edinburgh Community.

We suggest that a similar consultation exercise be carried out in Edinburgh through a forum that is open to everyone with an interest in Judaism in Edinburgh, whether from a religious or cultural viewpoint. There will be no restriction on the areas to include in the dialogue, which may include religious, cultural, or educational concerns, for example. No particular age group or

existing structure would be represented to the exclusion of any other. Following the consultation process, recommendations may be made to a particular organisation or group to take forward. We wish to complement, rather than replace or duplicate, the work of any existing organisation and to provide an environment where any individual or organisation can explore new opportunities.

It is clear that there has always been an appetite for cross-organisational activities, whether the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, the Chanukah gathering at St Andrews Square, or the Festival Open Day. The spirit that has enabled these events to occur and be so well supported can surely help us to take Judaism in Edinburgh forward in the 21st century. We owe it to ourselves and to generations to come to work together to ensure that there is a vibrant, sustainable Jewish community in Edinburgh for many years to come.

RSVP by 23rd June. You are welcome to submit questions in advance.

Janet Mundy, Mundy.janet@gmail.com
0131 467 1872

Jane Ansell, jansell@fastmail.fm
0131 667 6698

Sunday 30th June 12.30–3.00 pm.
Inch Park Sports Centre,
227 Gilmerton Rd,
EH16 5UD

Suggested donation £5 to cover hall hire and catering costs.

*Janet Mundy and Jane Ansell
Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation*

AGM of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

The SCOJEC Annual General Meeting will take place on Sunday 9 June. SCOJEC council meetings are open to all members of constituent organisations. The AGM will take place at 2 pm in the synagogue in Dundee. Contact Norman Crane if you wish to go. Council papers are available either from the SCOJEC website (www.scojec.org), or from Gillian Raab (SCOJEC vice-chair).