



Etrog

The Newsletter of Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh

In this issue

Word From the Sofa	1
Emily Potts' Bat Mitzvah	5
George Robin Smith	8
Sarah Broadie	9
Revd Margaret Muir	11
Gordon and Rebecca	12
Festival Photos	13
A Simchat Torah Story	16
Thinking About Climate Change	17
Jewish Ethics and Climate Justice	19
Geht Doch! Just Go!	23
Marcha a Glasgow	25
Interfaith News	27
Uyghur Update	28
James Xavier	29
Night Out 27 November	31
Jewish Film Festival	32
Wonderful Wednesdays!	32
Community Care and Support	33

Sukkat Shalom

p: 0131 777 8024

e: contact@eljc.org

w: eljc.org

t: @SukkatShalom

Scottish Charity Number SC035678

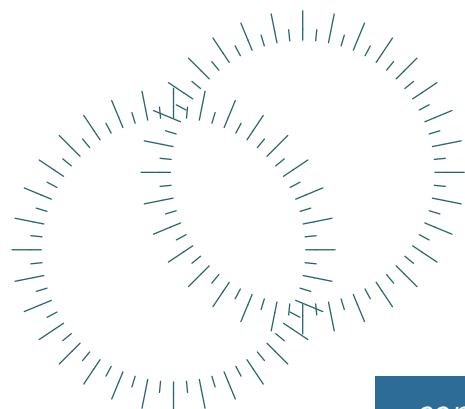


Word From the Sofa

Gillian Raab

How has Covid-19 changed Sukkat Shalom, and where now?

Since March 2020, some of the changes forced on us have been good. Can we reap these benefits while returning to some of the things we have missed? Questions about this are the end of this WFTS – please get back to us with your ideas.



cont'd p.1



Word From the Sofa

Gillian Raab

cont'd

What we used to do

Before March 2020, our pattern of services was:

- On the second Friday of each month an Erev Shabbat service at 7pm, in St Mark's Unitarian Church
- On the Shabbat morning two weeks later a service at 11am at St Mark's
- On weekends without services, a short Kabbalat Shabbat service on Friday at 6pm at Marchmont St Giles
- Flexibility was needed for e.g. festivals and bar/bat mitzvahs

Rabbi Mark Solomon (hereafter Mark) visited us one weekend a month, usually coinciding with the Shabbat morning service. People with birthdays in that month would often bring a cake or something else for Kiddush, having previously been offered a Mitzvah in the service. On some Friday nights we had a Community meal where everyone would bring a dish to share (no meat or non-kosher fish). During weekends here Mark held study sessions on Talmud and Maimonides on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. On Sunday mornings he held a class called 'Exploring Judaism' mainly for

people who might be interested in conversion. On weekends when Mark was not with us services were taken by community members, some of whom had attended Liberal Judaism's service leaders' course.

Where are we now?

The year 5782 has seen our return to in-person services for High Holydays and Shabbat. So far, we have scheduled services to the end of 2021. For in-person Shabbat morning services, we have used our previous pattern. For the Kabbalat Shabbat the first Friday service in the month will be a Zoom service and the second service in the month an in person one. When Mark is here, his services are hybrid, via Zoom. The camera enables a view of the Torah reading and the bimah. He has done the same from Leicester synagogue during his monthly visits there. This can mean that Mark's online service is in competition with our in-person service. Mark has continued to provide other teaching and study sessions every week, mainly online.

Our experience suggests that attendance at in-person services is down compared to pre-pandemic, even when there is no competition from Zoom services, but the total number of people attending is more than before. This may change; some people may still be anxious about getting infected, although we have been wearing masks and doing everything to keep each other safe. We have not restarted Community meals, though we hope to soon. At the last Shabbat service we had a simple Kiddush with bread and wine. It was great to be able to socialise with others, even though socially-distanced; but sadly no cakes.

What may change our hybrid services is an initiative of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities to provide support for Jewish organisations running hybrid events; see 'Jewish Scotland Connected' at scojec.org/news/2021/21x_jsc/jsc.html. This will provide equipment, training and help with setting things up. The programme manager, Mike

Beral, has set up hybrid services for the Liberal Synagogue in Elstree. Another member of the team (Adam Schwartz) is based in Edinburgh and could support us. Their help might allow online participants to be more integrated into services.

Things we have gained from the pandemic

People who could not easily travel to services can participate more easily. Mark has done a fantastic job of inspiring us and bringing us together. We have got to know members of the Leicester congregation and the Manchester Liberal community. Our joint online Purimspiel was a triumph. A wider range of people, including those from Leicester and Manchester, have joined the online study sessions.

Since March 2020, we have over 20 new members, many of whom have wonderful skills that will help us to grow the community in future. Some are new to Edinburgh and a few have

come though the conversion process; others have been near here for some time and others come from much further away. Numbers in Mark's 'Exploring Judaism' class have increased even more. Some may decide that the exploration is not for them, but already 12 people have signed up with Liberal Judaism on their way to a formal conversion via the Beth Din. Some have shown real commitment by helping in the running of the Community.

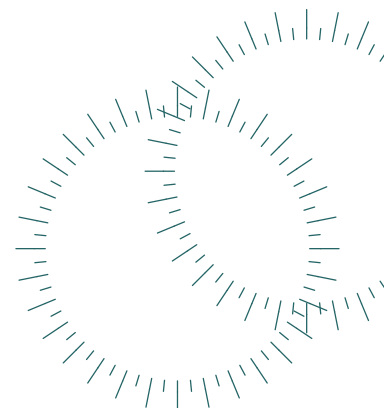
Before COVID, we sent two reminders a month in the weeks before the Erev Shabbat or Shabbat morning services. During lockdown, weekly reminders included pointers to the huge range of online events that are available now. The reminders also include ways for members to access support, such as our What's App group, and links to our care team and most recently their new Initiative, 'Wonderful Wednesdays'. Mark's contact details are also there for anyone in need of pastoral support. We have also had a few online socials.

The future?

I am not proposing any answers, but posing a few questions:

- Can hybrid services work so that neither in-person or online participants miss out?
- Is there any way the online participants could take part in socialising after a service?
- With any Zoom-only services, should we follow them with breakout rooms, to keep us in touch with our more distant members as well as people in Manchester and Leicester?
- Can we encourage people to make every effort to come to services when the alternative is to join on Zoom without having to travel or even sometimes to get out of bed?
- Is Mark being asked to do too much? He is doing most of what he did during the pandemic as well as making monthly visits here. Could we lighten his load or recompense him better?
- Can we begin to share meals again, as Communal suppers, or maybe shared Friday night dinners in smaller groups?

I am sure you will be able to add to this list; replies and suggestions are very welcome.



Emily Potts' Bat Mitzvah

16 October 2021, 10 Marcheshvan 5782



Emily Potts's Bat Mitzvah was a particularly joyful occasion, being Sukkat Shalom's first such in-person event since 2019. Younger brother Gabriel set the tone as he piped guests into St Mark's. Emily chanted her portion, Lech Lecha, with great assurance, following it by singing the Debbie Friedman song L'chi Lach. We are delighted to publish Emily's excellent Dvar Torah here. Grandparents Shunamit Carin and Harvey Levy travelled from Israel to be with Emily, bringing her a most beautiful Women of the Wall Tallit - with the four matriarchs' names embroidered on the corners, including Emily's Hebrew name (Rachel).

Emily's Dvar Torah

Shabbat Shalom everyone,

Our portion this week is Lech Lecha, which begins from Genesis chapter 12. I will be reading verses 1-9.

Lech Lecha starts with God calling Avram. He doesn't get his longer name Avraham until the end of Lech Lecha, in chapter 17. God calls him to gather all of his belongings and leave Haran, his family home. He is to journey with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and "the souls that they had made in Haran." Some say this means the people who converted to following Avram's God. Avram was not a young man at this point, he was in fact 75 when he left home. I hope I'm not that old when I leave home!

God doesn't tell Avram at first what his destination is – just "to the land that I will show you." He has enough trust in God to set out anyway. It turns out that his goal is the land of Canaan, which God promises to give to his descendants, even though, at that time,

the Canaanites are all resident there. At the final stage, Avram journeys on towards the Negev – the name comes from the word for "dry" because it's a desert, and it is still called the Negev in modern Israel.

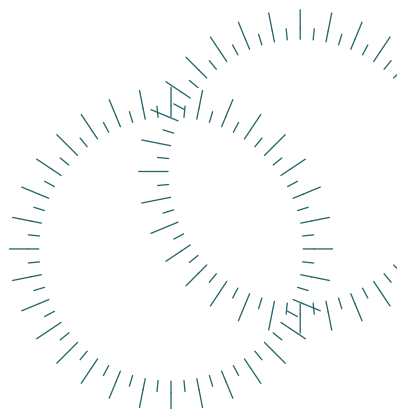
Lech Lecha could be literally translated "go to yourself!" Some interpret this as going on a spiritual journey. A journey in which you find yourself – to trust the process, even if it makes you nervous – because you are leaving behind what you know. This is kind of like what every teen goes through: discovering who they are and who they want to be in the world.

The second verse states: "I will make of you a great nation ..." ending with "and you shall be a blessing". In researching my portion, I was reading about what it means to be a blessing. We normally bless things, like the Shabbat candles, the wine, or the Challah. From then on, these things are given a special status – from ordinary bread to special bread and from ordinary wine to blessed wine. But how can a person be a blessing? The interpretation that I read

suggested to me that a person can be a blessing through their actions and the way they behave. To me this means being a kind friend, being a role model to younger ones, being respectful, generous and polite and just doing simple acts of kindness in everyday life.

God's blessing to Avram is so powerful that he himself becomes a blessing – not just a good person, but the founder of the Jewish people and a whole tradition of goodness. By becoming a Bat Mitzvah – a daughter of the commandment – I'm joining myself to that blessing that started with Avram. My Bat-Mitzvah marks the point in my life when I become responsible for my own actions. I hope to carry on the blessing from this portion and this special day with me as I go through my life.

Thank you all for being with me today as I start this new journey, especially my sabba and savta who have come all the way from Israel.



Welcome to the World – George Robin Smith



George Robin Smith was born on the 14th of August 6 weeks before planned after too much excitement on a camping trip to Ullapool. After a short stay in hospital, they were released to live with their mother Lizy in Musselburgh. They recently enjoyed attending Kol Nidre and are looking forwards to getting to know everyone at future services.

Sarah Broadie: A Personal Recollection

Jonathan Broadie

My stepmother, Sarah Broadie, died suddenly and unexpectedly on 9th August 2021, at the age of 79. She was one of the most distinguished philosophers in the world and had been a professor at the Universities of Texas, Yale, Rutgers, Princeton, and St Andrews. She was a prolific author, publishing the last of her eight major books just three weeks before she died. In addition, she was a fine and much sought-after lecturer, tutor, and supervisor. She was also a founder member of Sukkat Shalom, becoming a much more familiar face through Zoom, as the pandemic took hold, particularly at our Friday night services. She attended her last service just two days before she died. That was the last time I saw and spoke to her.

Marjory and I knew Sarah for over 50 years. She was in her twenties when we were first introduced to her by my father, Frederick Broadie (himself an eminent philosopher), at his home in Edinburgh. It was very clear to us that she had a brilliant mind, but it was equally obvious



that there was a warmth, a gentleness, and a great humility about her. She looked to us like a star in the making!

After Sarah married my father in 1984, they headed off to the US for what she described to me as their 'big adventure'. There were many visits to see them in Texas, Connecticut, and New Jersey, but the ones best remembered were those to Princeton. During those stays, as well as being entertained regally by them both, we were invited to many gatherings, and enjoyed some wonderful company. Often the atmosphere was heady. I remember at a particular event, one of

the most eminent philosophers in the world lauding Sarah to me, and at another a distinguished Nobel Laureate being enrapt by what she was saying to him. It seemed to us, that the star we had imagined, was the star she had become.

When Sarah decided to leave Princeton, there was much sadness amongst her colleagues. One lamented to me, 'but nobody leaves here'. But Sarah left for the best of reasons. My father had become frail and was ailing, and she felt, for his sake, they should return to the UK, where he could be better cared for, and be closer to family. 'Our big adventure is over' she told me with a sigh! So she returned home, and to St Andrews University, where she was welcomed with open arms. Her return to the UK also meant she was more regularly able to join with the family at gatherings such as weddings, birthday and anniversary celebrations, Seders, and Break-the-fast dinners. She clearly loved these occasions, always playing a full part.

Up to the start of the pandemic, Sarah was much in demand across the UK, and overseas (particularly the United States)

to lecture and participate in seminars. She enjoyed travel, and particularly loved her visits to Israel, which she often talked about. The pandemic stopped the travel, but not her work. She was tireless. She also discovered Zoom, which kept her closely in touch with students, colleagues, friends and many others. When she wasn't working, she was reading. Philosophy, of course, but she also devoured fiction, particularly the historical kind. She loved the arts, classical music and the theatre.

When Sarah died, her Alma Mater, Somerville College, Oxford University, said in a statement that they had lost one of their brightest stars. They lowered their flag to half-mast in her honour. We, and many others, were deeply moved by this gesture. But I wonder what she would have thought about all the many tributes, the obituaries, the media pieces and indeed all the fuss! Because, despite her brilliance, she was full of humility. On the day she was awarded her OBE, she told me she could never have done it all without my father's support and guidance. That was typical of her. Brilliant, honest, and always true to herself. Professor Sarah Jean Broadie OBE, Sarah bat Avraham, rest in peace.

Remembering the Revd Margaret Muir

Rabbi Mark Solomon

With the passing of the Revd Margaret Muir, our Liberal Jewish community in Edinburgh has lost a good friend. Margaret was a regular at our monthly study sessions: “Tea & Talmud” on a Saturday afternoon, where we study ancient rabbinic texts and debate their meaning for us today; and the philosophy group on a Sunday afternoon, where we have been studying *The Guide of the Perplexed* by Moses Maimonides, the most eminent Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages. As one of our two regular Christian participants, both from the Church of Scotland, Margaret brought a refreshing and lively perspective to our in-depth discussions and was a welcome guest at many festival services.

Since she resolutely resisted the use of email or the internet, we relied on a particular couple to stay in touch with her by phone, check how she was and let her know our schedule. She would bustle in, usually a little late, with a bulging shopping bag and a cheery greeting, and settle down with evident pleasure to engage with the Jewish texts. With her mystical bent and strong

feminist convictions, her eyes always lit up when we talked about the *Shekhinah*, the indwelling presence of God, often understood as the feminine aspect of the Divine. She would wax lyrical at the idea of a divine feminine and relished any opportunity for a dig at the Patriarchy. She wore her unorthodoxy as a badge of pride.

The late Rabbi Lionel Blue, whom she revered, used to quote one of his teachers, saying that your religion should be your home, not your prison. Margaret was a free and unconfined spirit, a happy and adventurous wanderer who loved to roam far beyond her roots in the Church of Scotland. It was our privilege, and a great pleasure for me as a rabbi, that she did some of her exploring with us, bringing her wisdom, her stories, and a mischievous twinkle in the eye.

Goodbye, dear friend, and may your spirit roam free and joyful in the eternal embrace of the *Shekhinah*.

31 August 2021

Gordon and Rebecca's Civil Partnership



Gordon Duffy and Rebecca Wober are happy to announce their Civil Partnership, which took place in September. Says Rebecca: 'This summer I noticed that the legislation which had come through the courts in England now applies in Scotland and in fact, that on the 17th September this year it would be 17 years to the day since Gordon and I had met. We are so happy that Rabbi Mark agreed to solemnise the occasion with us at a small gathering afterwards with just our two witnesses, my parents and our children. With Rabbi Mark's thoughtful input Gordon and I each brought a keepsake item to a ceremonial plate which we held up together in the presence of our nearest family. The pomegranates, a sumptuous fruit, are simply a decorative pattern from a postcard I found years ago at the textile museum in Istanbul on a trip with my dad when I was 19 and have kept in my collection ever since.'

Festival Photos

Sue Bard

Record numbers of people were eager to cast their sins on the Water of Leith, many having missed the opportunity to do so last year. Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, a recent convert to the custom of tashlich, can be seen at the heart of the action. It was also an opportunity to sweeten the new year with apples and honey.

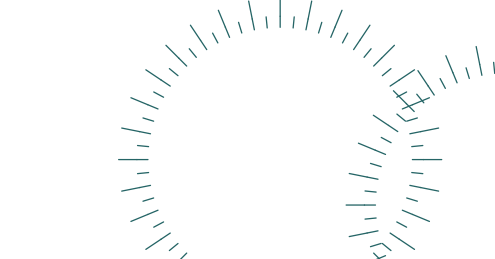




We were back in Christ Church Morningside's secluded garden again this year, building and re-building the succah, following our ancient custom. See the succah that Elinor Predota made, under its magical double rainbow.



There have been few opportunities to show off the beautiful Torah mantle, ark curtain and bimah cover, made by Sukkat Shalom member Katy Bromberg and completed during COVID restrictions (see Etrog issue 31, [Our New Torah Mantle](#)). But Simchat Torah offered that opportunity, with Mor Kandlik Eltanani and Rebecca Wober as our kallot Torah, completing the old year's Torah cycle and starting the new one.



Torah Scroll No. 1052

A Simchat Torah Story

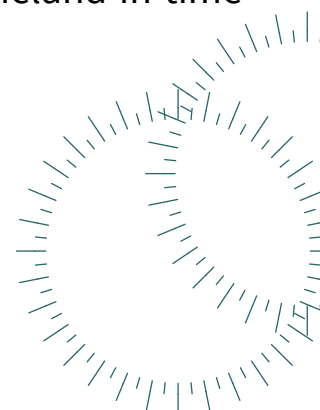
Sue Bard

On 15th May 2020, Sukkat Shalom joined a special Kabbalat Shabbat service broadcast from the Ark (Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue) in London. Attended by Libor Secka, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in London, the service began with the Czech National Anthem. The occasion marked both the ordination of Rabbi David Maxa, who joined us on Zoom from Prague, and the founding of the community he ministers, *Ets Chaim*, the first post-Holocaust Progressive Jewish community in the Czech Republic. The name *Ets Chaim* (Tree of Life) has been chosen in memory of the tree planted, in defiant hope, by Rabbi Richard Feder, with children, during their imprisonment in Terezin.

This tree has survived, unlike the vigorous 117,500 strong pre-Holocaust Czech Jewish community, which was almost wiped out. Other survivors were many religious artefacts that, in 1942, were sent to the Jewish Museum in Prague. Under the Communist regime, these treasures, including 1800 Torah scrolls, were moved to a ruined synagogue outside Prague and in 1962

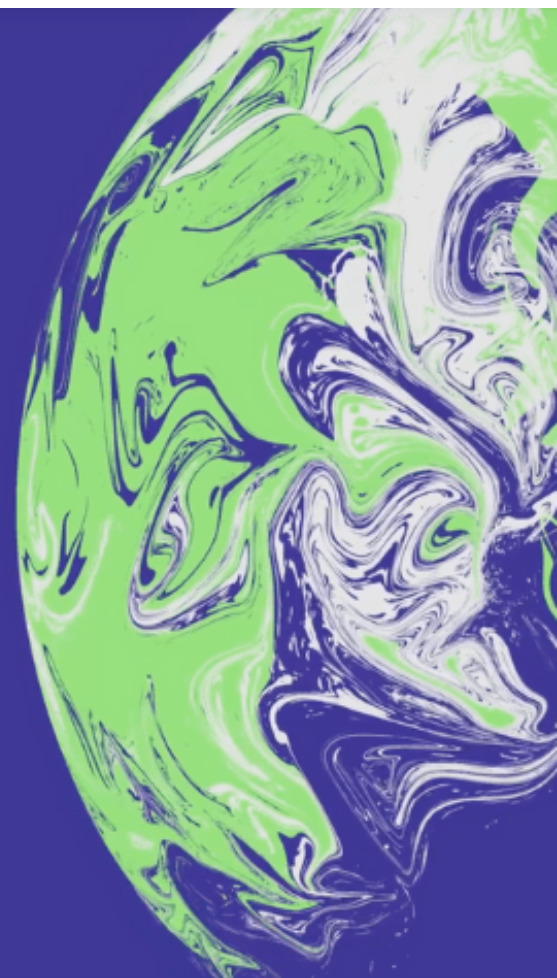
were put up for sale. Most of them were bought by British lawyer and philanthropist, Ralph Yablon, who then donated them to the Westminster Synagogue, which established the Memorials Scrolls Trust. Many of the scrolls have been loaned to fledgling Jewish congregations in North America and the UK.

In 1975, scroll no. 1052, made in 1890 and originally from the Czech city of Brno, was loaned to the Union for Reform Judaism Kutz Camp in New York State, where young people trained for Jewish communal leadership roles. In the summer of 2013 one such young person was David Maxa, reading from a Torah scroll for the first time. Recently, the camp was closed and the scroll offered to the now Rabbi David Maxa and his new community in Prague: scroll no. 1052 came back to its homeland in time for Simchat Torah 2021.



Thinking About Climate Change

Sue Bard



COP 26, the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference, is being held here and now in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November under the presidency of the UK, jointly hosted by Italy. It is the first time that parties are expected to commit to enhanced climate change ambition since COP21. Originally due to be held in November 2020, the event was postponed for a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the venue for the conference – the SEC Centre in Glasgow – having been converted in May 2020 into a temporary hospital for COVID-19 patients.

On 4 June 2021, a nighttime light projection onto the Tolbooth Steeple in Glasgow was installed as part of the ‘Climate Clock’ initiative. The projected Deadline and Lifeline statistics count the time window before 1.5 °C warming is inevitable, and the percentage of global energy delivered through renewables, respectively. Will we make it, and what can come of COP26?

Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, who conducted our Rosh Hashanah services, drew our attention to the fact that this year of COP 26 — 2021 — is also 5782, a Sabbatical Year or Sh'mitah Year (Year of Release), a time proclaimed at Rosh Hashanah every seven years:



The Sh'mitah Year reminds us of the way in which our lives are intertwined with the health of our planet and all the life it brings forth in woodland and marsh, field and city. As we share in the rebuilding of life, the call of the shofar warns us not to resort to our former ways out of careless habit, but to plant the changes in our souls and in our society that we wish to see grow shoots in the future.' (Rosh Hashanah Morning Service: Supplement for the blowing of the Shofar and the Additional Service for a Sh'mitah Year in 5782).

We've expanded on these thoughts here with a trio of articles. The first two are by Sukkat Shalom member, Marloes Schoonheim. 'Jewish ethics and climate justice' is a slightly shortened version of the essay Marloes wrote for her admission to Judaism earlier this year ([read the full essay](#), which includes references). In the second article, 'Geht doch! Just go!' Marloes tells us about the climate pilgrims who've walked from Poland to Glasgow and whom she met on 10 October when they were resting in Hoofddorp in the Netherlands. Last of the trio is Sue Bard's account of the Spaniards who walked from Portsmouth to Glasgow, stopping off in Edinburgh for two nights on 26 and 27 October before embarking on the last lap of their journey.

Jewish Ethics and Climate Justice

Marloes Schoonheim



Twice I have made a complete career change: the first time I left academia and started working for a medical NGO; the second time I left the field of humanitarian aid and joined an environmental organisation. Both decisions were deliberate: I loved doing research and teaching but wanted to contribute directly to a better world; the second time I was motivated by the climate crisis that exacerbated the growing vulnerability to disasters in every single country I worked in. Since joining the climate movement I have been curious to discover the moral philosophy of Judaism in this field. What do Jewish ethics tell us about the climate crisis and how it impacts humanity? What sources motivate that relationship? How do Jewish movements differ in their approaches to climate justice?

Climate change is the human-caused and significant change in the measures of climate, such as temperature, rainfall, or wind, over an extended period. It has a huge impact on the world's ecosystems: from the extinction of animal and plant species and forest desiccation to reef degradation, biodiversity is in decline because of global warming. This makes climate change a Jewish issue because we have a responsibility as caretakers of the natural world God has given us, and need to preserve our ecosystems for future generations – the idea of stewardship and partnership in the ongoing work of Creation. This goes back to Genesis 2:15: 'God places man on earth to *l'av'dah ul'sham'rah*, to work and guard (also translated as keep, tend) it.'

Several other passages in Torah elaborate on how we should protect the environment. In Exodus 23:10-11 and Leviticus 25 and 26 we learn about the laws of *sh'mitah*, to lie fallow agricultural land every seventh year. You shall release the land, Rashi explains, and what is left on the field is for animals to eat. Deuteronomy 20:19 warns us not to cut down fruit

trees needlessly in a time of war: destruction must not be wanton, Sforno explains. This is linked to the mitzvah of *bal tashchit*, of not destroying or wasting items from the natural world. It's believed that Torah is enunciating a general principle here in the form of a specific and extreme case. Fruit trees are expanded to include everything else, and so is the way trees are harmed. *Any form of despoliation is forbidden by biblical law, even diverting the irrigation without which the tree will wither and die.* The prohibition in fact covers all situations according to the Talmud: acts of vandalism are not allowed during peacetime either. We show our commitment to Creation and to each other by preventing all destruction and degradation of our planet. But the laws of *sh'mitah* include relationships with people (outstanding debts should be waived, slaves should be freed). And *bal tashchit* also applies to the body, which is part of the natural world and therefore should also be treated well. It's actually quite challenging to isolate Jewish ethics regarding the environment from human welfare -- and that actually makes a lot of sense since they are intrinsically linked.

Climate change is after all not a uniquely environmental and physical issue, but also a humanitarian issue. The adverse impacts of a warming climate are not felt equitably among people. The richest 10% of the world population, mostly living in the global north, produces 50% of the CO2 emissions worldwide. The poorest half of the global population are responsible for only around 10% of total global emissions attributed to individual consumption yet live overwhelmingly in the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Within most affected regions, the climate crisis disproportionately affects marginalised populations like women, ethnic minorities, the elderly and disabled people. Heatwaves, droughts, and extreme storms for instance affect women more than men, because they are already more likely to live in poverty, have fewer basic human rights, and face systemic violence that increases under instability. But also in our wealthy countries the climate crisis increases inequality. State subsidised solar panels and electric cars with tax credits are great - it's the wealthy who mostly profit from them. The energy transition causes a rise in fuel prices, which adversely affect the poor. In 2018,

ETROG | ISSUE 34

around 10 per cent of households in England were classed as fuel poor and a staggering 24 per cent of those in Scotland

Climate change therefore also addresses the vast and central area of Jewish ethics regarding social justice. Jewish ethics on social justice stem from numerous sources: Leviticus 19:18 (love your neighbour as yourself), 19:18 (you shall not stand by the blood of your neighbour), and perhaps the most often quoted Deuteronomy 16:18: justice, justice you shall pursue (*tzedek tzedek tirdof*). Another important driver is the concept of *tikkun olam* (world repair). Dating back to Rabbinic Judaism, *tikkun olam* is commonly used to refer to a specific category of mitzvot involving work for the improvement of society. *Tikkun olam* is an important driver of social justice, in particular in the context of climate change. 'Dealing with the human existential crisis of global climate change is our ultimate task of *Tikkun Olam*,' the Jewish Climate Action Network states.

Firmly rooted in Jewish text and tradition, for many branches of Judaism climate justice has come to mean addressing climate change at the

intersections of the racial, social and economic disparities that it perpetuates - though approaches differ. Because of its emphasis on the ethical facets of faith rather than the ceremonial ones, climate justice resonates strongly with progressive Judaism. Social justice and the conservation of nature are listed as ethical values that Liberal Judaism commits itself to, giving them the same importance as love of neighbour and charity. Anticipating humanitarian catastrophes as a result of climate change, Liberal Judaism has promoted environmental responsibility in its communities. In the US, The Religious Action Center from the Union for Reform Judaism has been calling for measures to combat climate injustice both within and outside the Jewish community. With few explicit references and activism to climate justice coming from orthodox Judaism, it's particularly interesting that Hasidism has inspired what is now known as eco-centric Judaism. 'The most essential truth I glean from Hasidic teachings, the unity and holiness of all life, even of all existence, is one the world most urgently needs to hear', the scholar Arthur Green writes in the context of global warming. Another reevaluation of

traditional sources for Jewish climate justice can be found in the work of David Seidenberg who challenges us to not regard God as a divine being that separates us from creation, asking: 'Can we revalue the divine image, and envision Creation and all creatures as participating in this image?' Seidenberg's vision relates to many ecological issues - animal rights, intrinsic value, stewardship, biodiversity - and provides a new direction for Jewish ethics on climate justice.

When we do or benefit from an action that improves the world, we can respond by saying the blessing for *la'asot ma'akeh* - for constructing a fence. A specific commandment aimed at preventing people from falling off a roof now inspires us to acknowledge all labour that benefits the world. The fact that Judaism tells me to stand up for the devastating effects of global warming on both nature and people inspires me spiritually and influences my individual actions. Above all it's a powerful motivation for my daily work on systemic environmental and social change. I've made the right choice changing my career.

Geht Doch! Just Go!

Climate pilgrims walk from Poland to Glasgow

Marloes Schoonheim



What do you do when you want to demand an ambitious outcome of COP26, ensuring rapid and effective actions against the climate crisis, but you don't live in Glasgow and don't want to fly there? Why - you walk or bike to Glasgow of course! Over the past months people across Europe have made their way to Scotland's western Lowlands - sometimes on their own, often in groups. One of such groups is the ecumenical pilgrimage for climate justice "Geht doch!" (Just go!) that is an initiative organised by the Institute for Church and Society of the Protestant Church of Westphalia (Germany), with support from the Polish Bishops' Conference, the Evangelical Church of Poland, and the bishop of the Evangelical Church of Berlin and Brandenburg.

Some 30 climate pilgrims started walking to Glasgow from Zielona Góra (Poland). Having started on August 14, the group have travelled a total of 1,450 kilometres with 77 stops along the way. Though the core group doing the entire pilgrimage cannot be more than 30 - or the logistics for local churches who host them would become too difficult - anyone can join the pilgrims on part of their journey.

Many faith groups across the world demand climate action: they feel responsible for the Creation and want to show solidarity with (often vulnerable) people who are hit first and hardest by the climate crisis. The pilgrimage for climate justice 'aims to highlight that, despite the momentary reduction in polluting and environmentally harmful activities due to the pandemic, with the return to normalcy there is still excessive consumption of resources, a shocking and silent extinction of millions of plants and animals, and a serious climate crisis', Vatican News reported. The climate pilgrims have asked people to sign a petition, asking the COP presidency and parties, amongst others, to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, reach zero emissions by 2050 and financially support poor and vulnerable countries and communities that are affected most by the climate crisis. The petition was signed by 1,780,528 people.

On October 10 the climate pilgrims passed Hoofddorp in the Netherlands - the last stop before they took the ferry to Newcastle. They were accompanied by 70 Dutch pilgrims who joined them for the day's hike. Right under a flight path to the runways at Schiphol Airport

the climate pilgrims were greeted by an interfaith group: six people from different faiths, who each had encouragement from their tradition for the pilgrimage. Shrimad Bhagvatam was quoted, representing Hinduism, on how all living creatures, trees and plants, rivers and oceans are manifestations of the Divine and thus require being treated with love and respect. From Islam a story was told of how Mohammed ensured better care for distressed camels, raising awareness of animal rights. Representing the Jewish tradition, the responsibility felt by the climate pilgrims was likened a quote from Pirkei Avot - 'you are not required to finish your work, yet neither are you permitted to desist from it'.

Though they appreciated meeting representatives of different faiths, the pilgrims didn't really need additional motivation to continue their hike. 'I've been on this journey for over two-and-a-half-months now', a pilgrim (aged 72) said, 'but the end goal keeps motivating me. We are showing politicians in Glasgow that we do whatever it takes for the climate. We are serious about it!' Let's hope the pilgrims, and all others that make their way to Glasgow, inspire the COP26 delegates to make this conference a success.

Marcha a Glasgow

Sue Bard

Despite the feelings of fear, rage and anxiety that the (climate) crisis inspires, we are convinced that the changes we need can only be achieved through people becoming engaged, and mass mobilization.



3 Spaniards have spent October walking from Portsmouth to Glasgow. That's 30 km a day for 30 days. The idea was hatched in Zaragoza and jointly organised by Extinction Rebellion, Ecologistas en Acción and the Alianza por la Emergencia Climática.

We all know that COP 26 offers a last chance to halt climate change. The 13 are a diverse group of ordinary people who've been moved to act on that knowledge, undertaking a walk as long

as 23 marathons to take their message to COP 26, engaging with countless communities and individuals along the way, raising awareness of what's at stake and inspiring action.

Their stopping places have included Southampton, Oxford, Newbury, Coventry, Leicester, Sheffield, Leeds, Harrogate, Darlington, Durham, Lauder. Edinburgh – and finally Glasgow. Along the way, local Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth groups gave them

hospitality, providing them with meals and somewhere to stay. They were invited to rallies and meetings, were welcomed by bands and met with local politicians and schoolchildren. On the last stages of their march, from Edinburgh to Glasgow they were joined by other walkers, including Camino to COP26, a kindred project organized by Extinction Rebellion UK.

In Edinburgh, it was my privilege to have two of the group, Jose Luis and Maribel from Zaragoza staying for two nights. Both now retired from their hospital jobs – Maribel as a nursing

auxiliary and Jose Luis as a porter – they have been lifetime activists.

Says Jose Luis: My aim is to bring the voice of climate social movements to the UK. I want to collaborate with British social movements on demonstrations at the climate summit.

Says Maribel: The governments should act now to avoid causing more irreversible harm to our planet. Climate change is eroding human rights and aggravating social inequalities, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.



Interfaith News

Nick Silk



The highlight of ‘interfaith matters’ is that our longstanding member Joe Goldblatt was recently elected at the EIFA (Edinburgh Interfaith Association) AGM as Chair of EIFA. Joe was previously treasurer, and it is great that our community has provided two of the last three EIFA Chairs (Stew Green was the other). Congratulations Joe.

This year’s interfaith week, which is from 31st October – 7th November, has been timed to coincide with COP26. The theme is ‘together for our planet’ and In Edinburgh, EIFA are running a number of events. Unfortunately, two of these are in October and so the only one that I can ‘advertise’ for Etrog is an online discussion which is on Wednesday 3rd November. John Philip Newell discusses the themes coming out of his new book

Sacred Heart Sacred Soul, rediscovering a theology that allows us to see the sacredness and interrelatedness of all living things. I’m not sure of the time yet – I assume it will be in the evening – and if you would like further details email me (nicksilk@eljc.org) or info@eifa.org.uk.

On Friday 1st October I was invited to read a prayer at the kirking of the Scottish parliament. This is a service held at St Giles’ cathedral to bless the new parliament; it should have been held earlier in the year but was delayed due to Covid. While being nominally a Christian service, seven members of other faith groups were invited to read a short prayer (we were told many times – 45 seconds is your maximum!) and I read our prayer for ‘those that govern

our nation' which we read at Shabbat morning services. Prince Charles was at the kirking and we got to meet him afterwards. As members of different faiths, we were clearly the main dignitaries as, while we were being ushered in through the front door to the reception afterwards, some of the politicians present, including the leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties who tried to follow us in, were told they had to go in via the back door. While I felt honoured to have been asked, it should perhaps be noted that when I was asked to do the reading, it was accompanied by the comment that "I've not asked any Rabbis as they wouldn't do it as the event will run into Shabbat". Oh well, I know my place!

Uyghur Update

Nick Silk

On Thursday 14th October, Mia Hasenson-Gross, the Executive Director of Rene Cassin, gave a talk to the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre (EJCC) on human rights in general and the plight of the Uyghur people in particular. The details that Mia told us were, unsurprisingly, similar to those that Rabbi Mark told us about at last year's Human Rights Shabbat service in December. It is though, still harrowing to hear of people being put into what are effectively concentration camps simply because of who they are. Perhaps the most difficult discussion of the night was what effect we can have particularly given the economic power of the Chinese government and their global influence. As someone said, we had similar thoughts when campaigning

for Refuseniks in Russia at the end of the last century, but over time things did happen, so that is not a reason not to do anything. Details of actions we can take, such as writing to companies who are active in the Xinjiang area of China where the Uyghurs are effectively being used as slave labour, can be found on the Rene Cassin website (www.renecassin.org).

If you do go onto the Rene Cassin website, you will see that the theme for this year's Human Rights shabbat (in December) is "The right to food". We have again signed up this year, and I'm sure Rabbi Mark will be using some of the information provided by Rene Cassin at that weekend's services.

James Xavier

Sue Bard

James knows how to pick his cities. He's from Quito in the Northern Highlands of Ecuador. Founded in the 16th Century on the ruins of an Inca city, it's South America's oldest capital, and, like Edinburgh, where he's lived for the last six years, a UNESCO world heritage site. In between times, he's lived in the Falkland Islands, the United States, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland.

Following a master's degree in forensic science at the University of Seville, James is completing his PhD at the University of Edinburgh's School of Classics, History and Archaeology. Finding Seville unbearably hot, Scottish weather was one of the reasons for choosing Edinburgh. James' PhD is in the field of forensic anthropology, looking at the significance of asymmetry in skull development, based on the study of a collection of 200 skulls held in Spain. He hopes eventually to find work either as an academic, or as a forensic expert for the police. In the meantime,



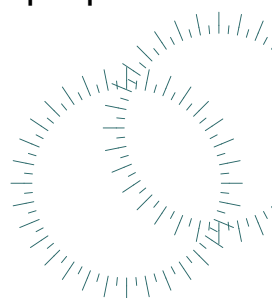
as well as finishing his PhD, he is working as a vaccinator for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and with Edinburgh Council's COVID 19 community testing service.

Ecuador's Jewish population is small and consists mostly of people of Ashkenazi origin, many of whom were Holocaust survivors. James's own origins are both Ashkenazi and Sephardic – his maternal great-grandmother was of Syrian-Maghrebi descent. In 2005, James was one of the founder members of a new (and the only) progressive Jewish community in Quito – Beit Chadash – affiliated to the World Union of Progressive Judaism.

Living in different countries, James has sought out Jewish communities, but has often, as a gay man, not felt fully accepted. Visiting family in Israel, he encountered the Shas Party, of which they were members (Shas is a Haredi religious political party founded by a former Israeli Sephardi chief rabbi to represent the interests of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews) and was horrified both by its homophobia and attitude to progressive Judaism. James

experienced this as 'heartbreaking' in the face of his strong attachment to his Sephardic heritage and felt for a while that he didn't want to belong to a Jewish community.

However, at university in Edinburgh, he heard about Sukkat Shalom and its rabbi and is excited now at having become a member, both for what – as a single gay man living alone in Edinburgh, with such a scattered family – he might gain from the community, and for what he might bring, with his many languages, his knowledge of and passion for Sephardic history and culture and his links with the student community. He is enthusiastic about Scotland too: 'I love Scotland. I love the weather, the architecture, the history. Everything except the food'. At this point, we finally get onto the subject of food and mouth-watering descriptions of Ecuadorian dishes. I tell him about our shared suppers and how we hope they'll soon be back. 'I will prepare something', he says.



Night Out 27 November

Ricky Hogg



Saturday 27th November for 7.30pm

Time to dust off the glad rags and book yourself a seat for our community evening meal at Zucca's restaurant. It's been a long time coming, in fact, It's been a very long time coming. Zucca's has been one of Sukkat Shalom's go-to restaurants and excellent for catering to our requirements. There will be a 2-course menu on offer or a la carte if you want to explore some other dishes. The evening meal starts at 7.30 pm but perhaps some people would like to meet up beforehand. The booking of tables in bars is now at an end and it's now first come first served, so we suggest if you would like to meet up beforehand then this can be organised between the parties.

We hope you can come and spend time with old and new friends over some fine food/drinks in a lovely setting.

zuccarestaurant.co.uk/entertaining

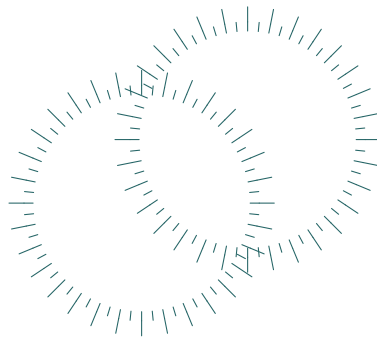
Please contact Ricky at rickyhogg7@gmail.com to book your place. Closing date will be November 14th.

25th Year of the Jewish Film Festival

Sue Bard

4 – 18 November

In cinema and online, the Jewish Film Festival offers a range of international films exploring Jewish and Israeli life, history and culture. To look at the programme and book, go to: ukjewishfilm.eventive.org



Wonderful Wednesdays!

Professor Joe Goldblatt

Meet Others, Share and Care with the New ELJC

On the last Wednesday of each month, at 6pm, Gem Newman, a member of the new ELJC Care Team will host an informal monthly forty-minute Zoom get together for our community. This is your opportunity to meet others in the community and share with us what is happening in your world. If you would like to join us, please contact Professor Joe Goldblatt at care@eljc.org and he will send you the Zoom link. You will be most welcome!

The next Wonderful Wednesday session is on 24 November 6pm

Community Care and Support

In these difficult times, we are here for each other, so don't hesitate to ask for any help and support you may need, including simply the need to talk.

OUR EXISTING CONFIDENTIAL CONTACT SYSTEM: phone 0131 777 8024 or email contact@eljc.org and one of the small group of people who respond to calls and emails will get back to you quickly.

RABBI MARK SOLOMON would like you to know that he's available on 07766 141315 and by e-mail at marksolomon@btinternet.com if you'd like to talk to him.

OUR WHATSAPP GROUP allows people to be in direct contact with each other very quickly where help is needed. If you're not already on it and would like to be, text your mobile number to Sue Lieberman on 07939 014720 and ask to be part of the group.





Sukkat Shalom

Scottish Charity Number SC035678

Sukkat Shalom Contacts

Community Phone - 0131 777 8024

This phone number sends voicemail to members of the Contact Team

To reach the Care Team, call the Community Phone or email care@eljc.org

Contact Team - contact@eljc.org

Etrog Team - newsletter@eljc.org

Co-chairs: Sue Bard, Maurice Naftalin. Gillian Raab and Nick Silk (chair@eljc.org)

Treasurer and Membership: Stefano Giossi (membership@eljc.org)

Secretary: Gillian Raab (secretary@eljc.org)