



## 1. November – December 2018

Let us know what you think of Etrog or send us your contributions by contacting the newsletter team at [newsletter@eljc.org](mailto:newsletter@eljc.org)



**Sukkat Shalom**  
**Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community**  
**Scottish Charity Number**  
**SC 035678**

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## Stop press– fundraiser 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018



This edition of Etrog is being finalised just after our fundraising evening and we are delighted to let you know that it has raised in excess of £800; accounts are still being worked on. There is a final chance to contribute by purchasing one of the **Celtica Schmellica CDs** donated by Gica Loening (seen here performing with Phil Alexander). The cost is £10, half of which will go to Sukkat Shalom. Just reply to this email if you would like to buy one.

It was a wonderful evening with great performers ably compered by Professor Joe Goldblatt. He is seen here impressing his assistant (Sorcha Eisenberg) with some magic tricks at one of the breaks between acts.



As usual there was a fantastic selection of dishes at the buffet contributed by our members and friends. Thanks to everyone who contributed and especially to Ricky Hogg who masterminded the evening.

Sadly this date will be remembered for a different reason. At the start of the evening Rabbi Mark reported on the breaking news about the shootings in the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and led us in a minute's silence to commemorate the victims.

## Message to the Tree of Life Synagogue

To Rabbi Hazzan Jeffrey Myers  
 Congregation Tree of Life \* Or L'Simcha  
 5898 Wilkins Ave  
 Squirrel Hill  
 Pittsburgh PA 15217

Dear Rabbi Myers,  
 On behalf of my two congregations, in Edinburgh, Scotland and Leicester, England, I'm writing to express to you, to President Sam Schachner and to your whole community our profound sorrow and sympathy for the terrible blow that has fallen upon your holy congregation. We mourn with you the eleven precious lives so cruelly taken in an act of racist brutality, and we pray for their bereaved families and for those injured in this attack, both congregants and police – may the Almighty send them a *refu'ah shelemah*.

We understand that the attacker, while motivated by bitter antisemitism, was also incensed at the role the Jewish community in America plays, through HIAS and in other ways, in fostering an open and equal society in which refugees, including those from Muslim countries, can find welcome and haven. As communities in the UK which strive likewise for the rights of refugees and an open, liberal society, we stand with you and your congregation, not only in grief and shock, but also in pride and grateful solidarity. We will answer hatred and violence with love of our neighbour and the stranger, and renewed determination that justice and peace must prevail in our world.

The killer struck as a new life was being blessed in your synagogue, and as Jews everywhere were reading in the Torah, Parashat Vayera, of the birth, circumcision and binding of Isaac.

Throughout the ages, Jewish martyrs have associated themselves with Isaac bound upon the altar in the Akedah. The names of your eleven kedoshim are now, to our grief, added to that list of martyrs, who died simply because they were Jews. May their memory be a blessing. It may be too early to offer comfort, but this week we read in Chayyey Sarah, “And Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.” May comfort come, in time, for your bereaved community.

*Hamakom yenachem etchem betoch sha’ar aveley tziyyon virushalayim* – May the Almighty comfort all of you, among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem,

Yours in sorrow,  
Mark L Solomon

## To remember the victims

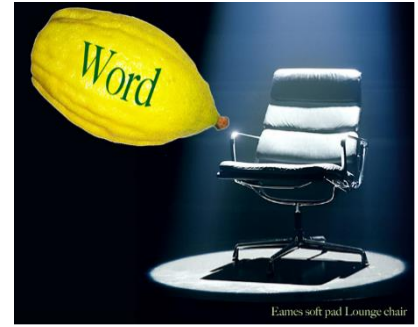
We will be remembering them at our Kabbalat Shabbat service on **Friday 2nd November at 6pm** (see below).

## Diary

<b>November 2018</b>			
Fri 2	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Fri 9	7pm	Erev Shabbat service	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Fri 16	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Fri 23	7pm	Supper and Songs, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sat 24	11am	Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sat 24	3pm	Tea and Talmud	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sun 25	4pm	Philosophy Group	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Fri 30	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
<b>December 2018</b>			
Fri 7	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Fri 14	7pm	Erev Shabbat meditative service, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sat 15	3pm	Tea and Talmud	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Sun 16	4pm	Philosophy discussion group	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>
Fri 21	6pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	<a href="#">Marchmont St Giles</a>
Sat 29	11am	Shabbat service	<a href="#">St. Marks Unitarian Church</a>

## Word from the Chair

In one of my articles in the last Etrog, I talked about our Kol Nidrei appeal and refugee support, both of which are very outward-facing aspects of our identity. Not long after I had written my article, I had several discussions with members of our community on something much more inward-facing, and that's how we support each other within our community. And that got me thinking – do we do enough to look after each other? I think the answer is always going to be no, since there's always more we can do for each other, but I'm not sure that's the best question to be asking. A better question is what should and could we be doing?



After the first of the discussions I had, my initial thought was that we don't do nearly enough for each other. I think that's fairly typical of the way many of us think – we look at the negative rather than the positive. But the more I thought about it, the more I realised that we do support each other, albeit not necessarily in what you might call a formal way. We do of course have some formal processes. Des Shanko and Joe Goldblatt have for some considerable time now made contact with members who we know are poorly, and offered support, even if that is just sending a card to say 'get well' and Rabbi Mark is always willing to arrange pastoral visits on his Edinburgh weekends. Also, we now have access to an Edinburgh based Jewish Care worker which any Jew, be they a member of our shul or not, can speak to for help and advice and we have also introduced our taxi scheme so that any of our members can come to services or other shul events without having to worry about accessibility or cost.

We also have some informal support networks, although these aren't run by the shul and are very much member-driven. (And you'll have to excuse my language here. I'm very conscious that as I'm writing this it's sounding more like something I'd write for work. Unfortunately I can't think of a better way of expressing myself!). There are members within our community who look out for each other. It's stating the obvious to say that I only know about the ones I know about, but one thing that struck me when I was at one of our Yom Kippur services was seeing this in action. There were a couple of our members sitting next to each other, one of whom was clearly supporting the other. I didn't even know they knew each other – and of course why should I? – but my point is that members do support each other.

By now you might be wondering where I'm going with my thoughts. Well, I have a direct question to all of us. Do we do enough to support each other within our community? We are only a comparatively small community, and so I don't think it's realistic to think that we'll be able to provide a full support network. As I've discussed, we do have some things in place, both formal and informal. There are other things too that I've not mentioned – we have both open and closed Facebook groups where members can provide support. But, as I said earlier on, do we do enough? Are there any other things that we could be doing? I know I want to say 'yes' to this question, but I'm not sure what they are. Please do let me know if you have any ideas. The one thing I do know is that I will help support any initiative for our community.

I'm going to conclude this article by changing topic, albeit I'm going to talk about the two things I mentioned right at the start of the article, our Kol Nidrei appeal and refugee support. You'll find details of how much our Kol Nidrei appeal has raised so far elsewhere in Etrog, but I'd like to thank everyone who has donated, and also to Sue Lieberman, who gave the appeal on Kol

Nidrei, and everyone else who has helped with appeal – putting envelopes on seats, printing off details of the charities etc. That said, if you haven't yet donated, there's still time to do so.

As regards helping with refugee support, we have had ten people come forward and offer support. This includes several people who are not members of our community but who have either read our newsletter or have heard of what we are doing via friends who are members. As I'm writing this, we are going to meet up in two days' time with the existing members of the support group to start integrating and identify how we will all help.

It's really good to conclude with positive news on both of these topics. Here's looking forward to keeping this going in 5779.

**Nick Silk**

## Kol Nidrei Appeal

**Thank you donors! So far we've raised £2590. If you haven't yet donated and would like to do so, the deadline for donations is 30 November.**

Our chosen charities this year are:

- Meketa, a British charity that supports families in Ethiopia of Jewish origin who have been unable to emigrate to Israel. <https://www.meketa.org.uk>
- Jewish Care Scotland, the main charity providing a wide range of care and support services for Jewish people in Scotland. [www.jcarescot.org.uk/](http://www.jcarescot.org.uk/)
- Edinburgh Direct Aid in Lebanon whose main activity since 2013 has been supporting many thousands of Syrian refugees who escaped over the border into Lebanon. <https://www.edinburghdirectaid.org/>

### **If you'd like to donate, you can do so in the following ways**

Donations by cheque should be made payable to 'Sukkat Shalom, Edinburgh'. You can hand this to any council member or post to: Treasurer, ELJC, c/o 10, Ainslie Place, EH3 6AS.

Bank transfer to: Sukkat Shalom; sort code 301301; account 00974077 Please reference as KN Appeal.

PayPal: go to our website <http://www.eljc.org/make-a-payment>

## Lit meeting this Sunday

**Keith Kahn-Harris**, senior lecturer at Leo Baeck College, will open the season of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society at **8pm on Sunday 4th November** with a talk on divisions in the Jewish community with regard to Israel and look at their exploitation by those with an antisemitic agenda.

For details of this and the rest of the Lit season see [www.ejls.org](http://www.ejls.org).

## Woody is well



Woody Zollinger has had a tough first eight months, as have his parents Helen and Stewart. Well before he was born, his parents learned that he would need open heart surgery in his first year to correct a defect in his heart.

Many of Woody's nights so far have been spent in hospital including several extended stays in the cardiac ward at the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow. Helen and Stewart were able to stay on the ward or in the nearby Ronald McDonald House - accommodation specifically for parents of children staying in hospital.

We are delighted to let you all know that Woody's surgery has been successful and he is now back home with no need for more medication or urgent hospital appointments. We will continue to remember Woody in our thoughts and prayers.

Woody will have a baby naming ceremony at the Shabbat service on **Saturday 24th November**. All are welcome to come and celebrate afterwards with a kiddush.

## Fulfil your Mitzvah

### Volunteer on Mitzvah Day

**Mitzvah  
Day**

**For Mitzvah Day 2018** members of the Edinburgh Jewish communities will once again be giving a few hours of their time to help Edinburgh Direct Aid (EDA) – the local refugee support organisation that we are supporting from this year's Kol Nidre appeal. **18th November 2018**



EDA have been active in support of refugees in the Greek islands and mainland Europe, but EDA's main effort has been in Aarsal, Lebanon. EDA has supported around 50,000 Syrians and has sent over 130 tons of supplies, food, winter clothing, stationery, educational equipment and an ambulance, all donated by the UK public and packed and loaded by volunteers in Edinburgh.

EDA has been expanding school capacity and creating vocational workshops to impart skills to Syrian refugees and poor Lebanese. Having secured better premises they provide space for a large sewing and weaving workshop and are running vocational courses on heating, plumbing, first aid etc. With the help of a volunteer Lebanese nurse, EDA has arranged talks on women's hygiene and run special clinics

### Volunteer

We are looking for people to volunteer at the EDA warehouse at 16a West Harbour Road, Edinburgh EH5 1PN on **Mitzvah Day itself, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November**. Volunteers will be helping to sort and pack items donated by the public, in two shifts – either 11am-1 pm or 1-3pm. If there are too many volunteers, we will also arrange further groups on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November. To sign up to volunteer or for more information please contact Janet Mundy – [mundy.janet@gmail.com](mailto:mundy.janet@gmail.com).

## Donate urgently needed items

Please donate items to the collection. Donations can be dropped off as follows:

At Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, 4 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AB on:

- Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November between 9 am and 3 pm
- Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November between 9 am and 11.00 am

and at the EDA warehouse at 16a West Harbour Road, Edinburgh EH5 1PN on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November between 11 am and 3 pm.

### **EDA are collecting:**

- CLOTHING FOR MEN AND WOMEN, YOUNG AND OLD, BABIES, CHILDREN, TEENAGERS
- COATS, FLEECES, WATERPROOFS, WARM WINTER CLOTHES OF ALL SORTS
- GOOD SHOES AND BOOTS --MOUNTAIN BOOTS -- WELLY BOOTS -- PADDED BOOTS
- UNDERWEAR (NEW only!)
- TOILETRIES: SOAP, SHAMPOO, TOOTHPASTE, SANITARY TOWELS, RAZORS
- SIMPLE FIRST AID: PAIN KILLERS, PLASTERS, DISINFECTANTS
- SCHOOL SUPPLIES: paper, pens, pencils, laptop computers Windows 10 capable
- FABRICS, WOOL

### **NO BEDDING, BLANKETS, DUVETS, SLEEPING BAGS, PILLOWS OR TENTS**

More information can be found on the EDA website ([www.edinburghdirectaid.org](http://www.edinburghdirectaid.org)).

## High Holydays

In our first year of celebrating the High Holydays at St Mark's since it has become our usual meeting place, and our third year of welcoming Rabbi Andrew Goldstein and Sharon Goldstein to share our High Holyday services with our own Rabbi Mark Solomon, we appreciated the strengthening of our relationships with people and places at this significant time. We have had thought-provoking sermons, a memorable study session on Jonah (to say nothing of the dramatization of the Jonah story in the children's service), the beautiful voices of Sue Lieberman singing Kol Nidrei and of Rabbi Mark and Sharon Goldstein throughout, a plethora of shofaroth and shofar blowers of all ages, our Rosh Hashanah lunch with festive round challot and honey cakes, tashlich by the peaceful, autumnal Water of Leith and finally breaking our fast together.



We were delighted to welcome ninety visitors attending one or more services. As well as many local visitors, people came from other parts of the UK, from all over the US, from Israel, Germany, Italy and Norway. They included our own members' visiting family and friends, holiday-makers, students, parents of students and some new arrivals in Scotland.



*Susan Fitzgerald from New Mexico and her brother and sister-in-law Marc and Wendy Hurwitz from Vermont met up for Rosh Hashanah in Edinburgh. More used to tashlich in the Rio Grande and Lake Chaplain, they nevertheless appreciated the leafy intimacy of the*

*Water of Leith where Solly is getting close to the water.*



## Sucloth

We celebrated Sucloth at Christ Church, Morningside, putting up our succah in its lovely secluded garden with many people turning up to build and decorate it. Tiphereth Camphill Community once again provided greenery and a group from the community visited the succah during the week.



## Sue Bard

# Rabbi Mark's New Year Message

For those who may not have seen this, we're delighted to publish Rabbi Mark Solomon's New Year letter to his two communities.

*Dear friends in Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh and Neve Shalom Leicester,*

A New Year message should be uplifting, but there's little I can find to say about the world, or the UK, or Israel right now that's uplifting or bright.

Instead, I want to focus inward on the two communities whose rabbi I'm honoured to be. We are two communities far from the centres of Jewish life, one without a building of its own, sharing a fraction of a rabbi, with small congregations and few resources. Despite all this, both Leicester and Edinburgh have achieved great things, not least in 5778. Both communities are ethically and spiritually alive, attracting new members and new converts, caring for the sick and elderly, reaching out through interfaith activity and social action.

To single out two things in particular – Edinburgh's cheder under the leadership of Dan Hershon continues to grow and thrive, providing a Jewish foundation for our children which is creative and enjoyable. Leicester, through the tireless efforts of Miriam Levene, has secured funding for an annex that will enable us to diversify our activities, especially for children and young people. As we enter 5779, let us continue to focus on the strength of our communities. We mustn't allow ourselves to be divided by the stresses and strains of wider British (or Scottish) and Jewish politics, but grow in care, respect and solidarity with one another.

Where I have failed as a rabbi – especially pastorally – I ask your forgiveness. Please always let me know where I can be doing more to help.

I wish you all, and your families, a meaningful Jewish experience over these Days of Awe, and a sweet, healthy year ahead.

Shanah tovah u-metukah.

***Rabbi Mark***

## THANK YOU for the taxi service

Thelma Henderson wishes to express her thanks for the provision of the taxi service and has found it a great boon, especially in inclement weather.

We're really pleased that Thelma, and others, have found this service such a help. Just so everyone understands how it works, we've set up a contract with a local taxi firm for those members who would like to come to services and other events but find it difficult or even impossible to get to them. The contract involves Sukkat Shalom depositing a set amount of money with the taxi firm so that taxis can be ordered just using a password and code, and the cost of the taxi is taken from the money we deposit.

If you think you'd like to use it, or want to find out more, just give Ricky Hogg a ring on 07962076017.

## Limmud comes to Edinburgh

Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre is delighted to announce that we are bringing together a group to organise a Limmud Day in November 2019. Limmud's values – learning, expanding Jewish horizons, enabling connections, participation, empowerment, diversity and community – are very much in keeping with our own, and this will be a wonderful opportunity for the Jewish community in Scotland to explore its culture, traditions and future together. If you would like to be a part of the organisation of this event, please contact Janet Mundy ([scotland@limmud.org](mailto:scotland@limmud.org) 07970 029293). We will have an initial meeting with representatives from Limmud in the next couple of months – date to be confirmed.

Janet Mundy

## Edinburgh Interfaith Association

### News

The year at EIFA has got off to a very special start with the annual peace service, this year at St Mary's Cathedral on Palmerston Place. The interfaith peace



service was established after the terror attacks in Paris to give voice to our collective aspirations for an end to religious violence and hate. There were short talks from numerous individuals across the religious spectrum, including from Rabbi David Rose who gave a moving rendition of 'Avinu Malkeinu', the peace service being, as it was, just one day after Yom Kippur.

Unfortunately there were racist attacks at The Sikh Gurdwara Temple and Leith Methodist Church in August, leading to extensive smoke damage within the Gurdwara. Fortunately no-one was hurt, and a huge turnout a few days later for a demonstration of solidarity with the Sikh community gave the unambiguous message that an attack on a faith community in our city is an attack on all of us. It was a very emotional event involving a number of touching messages of love and support from neighbours in the local community and various civic leaders and MSPs.



In my opinion, now more than ever is the time to pay heed to the message of the famous poem: 'First they came.....' (see- <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/first-they-came-by-pastor-martin-niemoller/>) and each of us must take personal responsibility for forming bonds of friendship with those from different communities whilst standing firm against the current fad for narratives of us vs them.

Scottish Interfaith Week, from **Sunday 11th of November to Sunday 18th of November**, is an annual celebration of our country's religious diversity and a great time to tap into some of the issues that EIFA addresses within our society. Organised by Interfaith Scotland, the week always contains many fascinating and enriching events that are open to the public. Events include the following:

- The 'Breaking Barriers' scriptural reasoning workshop will look at how different faiths think about the relationship between parents and children. **Sunday 11 November 2pm – 5pm** at the Alaweed Centre, Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, 19 George Square, EH8 9XF.
- The Big Interfaith Quiz and Meal: come as an individual or as a team and test your knowledge of world religions. **Sunday 11 November 6pm – 8pm** at St Columba's by the Castle, Scottish Episcopal Church, 14 Johnston Terrace, EH1 2PW.
- Keynote lecture by the controversial Fatima Salaria, BBC commissioning editor for religion and ethics, will be worth listening to on Wednesday **14 November, 6pm – 7.30pm**, University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy, 1 Bristo Pl, Edinburgh EH8 9AL.
- Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group (EWIG) meeting on **Wednesday 14 November 7pm – 9pm** on 'Connecting Generations' will start with short talks from guest speakers followed by discussion. It will be held at The Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL
- 'Untold Stories: Women of Faith in the Suffragette Movement' will be held on Wednesday **14 November 6pm – 9pm** at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, 43-45 High St, Edinburgh EH1 1SR

All these events are free, but you need to register to get a place. To do this and for further information go to [www.edinburghinterfaith.com/events](http://www.edinburghinterfaith.com/events)

St. Andrews Weekend Celebrations on **Saturday 2 December at Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church**

18 West Mayfield, EH9 1TQ will include an Interfaith Service 7pm - 8pm, dinner 8pm and concert and fundraiser starting at 8.30pm including a live performance from Bollywood Star, 'Saj Sabri.' Topics discussed will centre around religious figures who made great sacrifices for others. Judah Hamaccabi is our communities' representative at the table so come on down and show your support! The event is free, but a donation of £10 at the door is suggested. Register as above.

***Sam Danzig, EIFA representative for the Edinburgh Jewish Communities***

## Swimming for Hana – after the event

In the July/August Etrog I wrote about the forthcoming Hana Greenfield Memorial Swim taking place on 26 August in Kolin, a town in the Czech Republic. The purpose of the swim was both to commemorate Hana Greenfield, one of the few Jews of Kolin to survive the Holocaust and to re-introduce the pleasures of swimming in the lovely River Labe/Elbe that flows through Kolin. Everyone used to swim in the river but a combination of pollution and Nazi prohibitions ended this innocent pleasure 80 years ago. I described how this event had come about, through the relationship that Rabbi Andrew Goldstein instigated between Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS) and Kolin, its catalyst being the Kolin Torah Scroll that had been entrusted to NPLS in 1971.

Kolin's Jewish community dates back to the 14th century and was once second only to Prague's in size and importance as is testified today by its significant Old and New Cemeteries and its substantial 17th century synagogue. The situation of Kolin's Jews fluctuated over the centuries but from 1918 to 1938 they flourished as citizens in the multi-ethnic First Czechoslovak Republic. Of the 500 plus Jews deported from Kolin in 1942 just 37 survived. In 1945 some of them returned to Kolin with their Rabbi Richard Feyer and painfully began to rebuild their community and their desecrated synagogue and cemeteries. This intrinsically difficult task became even harder after 1948 with Communist rule and in 1953 the community was dissolved. A handful of Jews continued to live in Kolin, the last of them, Olga Kodickova dying in 1981. In the two years before she died, Olga met NPLS's Michael Heppner and Rabbi Andrew Goldstein at the start of their quest to find out about the community whose Torah Scroll they had. She inspired them with her hope that the heritage of the Jews of Kolin could live on at NPLS.

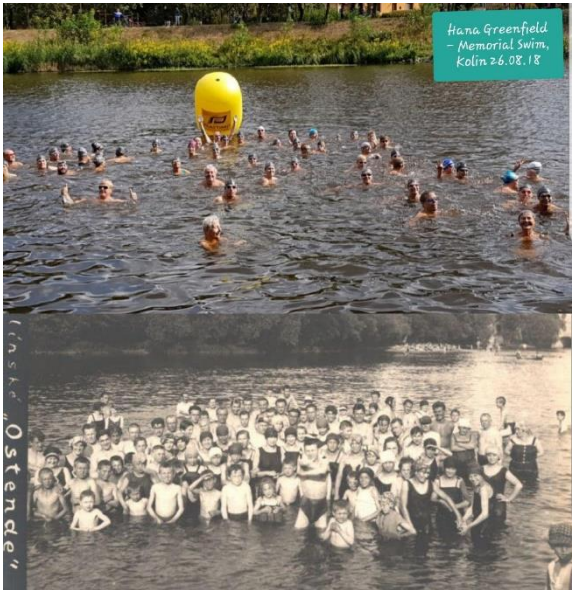


This is how our group of 25 from NLPS, from other parts of the UK, from Germany, Serbia and Israel, Jews and non-Jews came to be in Kolin, here to swim, or support the swim, but also to experience and understand this place. Among our group were some of those who for many years, and even during the Communist era, have been fulfilling Olga's hope by the work they've done and the links they've made with the municipality and the people of Kolin, not only to ensure that the past is not

forgotten but also to create new experiences and new memories, particularly for the young people of both communities. During our visit it was wonderful to experience Erev Shabbat and Shabbat services in Kolin's beautiful baroque synagogue, restored now by the people of Kolin and used as a cultural centre as well as a synagogue and to visit the peaceful and well-tended Old and New Cemeteries. This is where, in 1950, Rabbi Feyer somehow managed to bring about what must be one of the earliest Holocaust memorials, a simple stone and marble structure, standing among trees, and listing the names of all those who died.

Also part of our group were four generations of Hana Greenfield's family from Israel and London, including Hana's redoubtable 92 year old widower, her son and daughter, two of her granddaughters and her six week old great-grandchild. Hana, deported at 15, survived Terezin, Auschwitz, slave labour in Hamburg and finally Bergen-Belsen. After liberation she returned briefly to Kolin but spent the rest of her life in Israel where she became a writer and educator. She was a member of the Board of the Terezin Ghetto Museum, where she devised a programme based on tolerance to educate Czech children about the Holocaust. After the Velvet Revolution Hana visited Kolin when, according to Murray, Hana's widower, she harangued the town council into erecting a prominently displayed plaque commemorating 50 years since the deportation of the Jews from Kolin. It was her daughter Meira's memories of her mother describing how as a girl she used to swim in the river with her friends – Jewish and non-Jewish - that prompted the idea of the memorial swim.





This event, in memory of Hana and marking the first river swimming for 80 years, had enormous support from Kolin's young and energetic Mayor and from Kolin Swimming Club, who organised the actual event. The day of the swim did not have a solemn 'memorial' atmosphere but took on a life of its own. Rabbi Andrew Goldstein blessed the swim – who knew there was such a blessing? – and we were off. Our group of 16 swimmers was satisfyingly outnumbered (and for the most part out swum) by shoals of young local swimmers, and the river banks and bridge were lined with spectators cheering us on. I was glad I'd practised getting in and out of the river – by far the hardest part – the day before. After the swim the atmosphere was festive with BBQ and beer,

awards and speeches; it became more festive still with the Mayor's announcement that the swim would become an annual event.

Preparing for this event, I swam my way through our uncharacteristically warm British summer in the North Sea, the Atlantic, the English Channel, Midlothian reservoirs, tiny deserted mountain Loch Fraing on the Isle of Mull, the Ladies Pond on Hampstead Heath and the wonderful 1930s Stonehaven Lido in Aberdeenshire where they heat the sea water to an unbelievable 39 degrees. During every single swim I thought about Hana and her friends swimming together in the River Labe and how simple and elemental acts such as swimming in open water require our conscious awareness and protection. It seemed little short of a miracle that on my birthday in 2018, I (from Edinburgh) should find myself swimming alongside Hana's daughter, Meira (from Jerusalem) in the broad, beautiful and clean River Labe.



**Sue Bard**

***Elaine Smith from Toronto spent three months in Edinburgh this summer and quickly became a vital member of our community. Here she reflects on her time with us.***

## **ELJC and Me**

Spending time at ELJC this summer warmed my heart, taking me back in time to meaningful Jewish experiences I've had in the past.



Growing up in New Jersey (yes, I'm a dual citizen), I went with my family to a large congregation whose rabbi was very socially conscious. He regularly spoke out on injustice and participated in the historic March on Washington, joining Martin Luther King and other African-American leaders in protesting segregation and racism in the U.S. South. The services were a comfortable mix of English and Hebrew, and since I attended Hebrew school, I knew all the prayers and loved singing along. Although this congregation was much larger than ELJC, the similarities are there.

When I emigrated to Canada many years later as a newly married woman, we lived in suburban Vancouver, British Columbia, on Canada's glorious west coast. There was no synagogue, but there was a Jewish community that met regularly as a chavurah, holding services at members' homes and celebrating holidays together. Knowing no-one in BC, let alone in Canada, I found a lifeline in the congregation and participated in its myriad activities, such as the Purim carnival and the communal Seder. Although we relocated to Ontario two years later, almost 25 years afterward I still keep in touch with two friends from that congregation. Small, but cohesive and committed; it reminds me of ELJC.

Being part of ELJC added an extra dimension to my summer in Edinburgh. You were all welcoming, and I felt right at home with the prayer book. I also loved the informality of sitting in a circle to pray – and helping to set up the chairs before we began. When it's incumbent upon everyone to pitch in, the teamwork strengthens bonds.

It was also a pleasure to have the rabbi as part of the mix; I certainly benefited from his knowledge and his insights. I also loved the kiddush after services, since it, once again, offered a chance to forge ties among community members while celebrating Shabbat.

After being part of ELJC this summer, I think the congregation could easily adopt the motto espoused by one of Toronto's professional baseball players: "Height [or size] doesn't measure heart."

Thank you for sharing your warm hearts with me. If your travels bring you to Toronto, I will be happy to reciprocate.

***Elaine Smith*** ([elainersmith@hotmail.com](mailto:elainersmith@hotmail.com))

## 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](mailto:care@eljc.org)

Contact Team – [contact@eljc.org](mailto:contact@eljc.org)

Etrog Team – [newsletter@eljc.org](mailto:newsletter@eljc.org)

Chair: Nick Silk

Treasurer: Andrew Yule

Membership: Gillian Raab

Scottish Charity SC035678