

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

לולב *Lulav*

vol 1
issue 5

May **Iyar-Sivan**
2014 **5774**

9	Erev Shabbat Service CC	7.00
16	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15
23	Supper and Songs, <i>talk about Volunteering; bring food: see Chair's Word</i> CC	7.00
24	Shabbat Morning Service SMU Tea and Talmud SMU	11.00 3.00
25	Philosophy Reading Group CC	4.00
30	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	6.15

June

3	Erev Shavuot and Tikkun Leil Shavuot <i>Bring cheesecake to share</i> MSG	7.00
6	Kabbalat Shabbat MSG	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	3
a rabbi considers the Crucifixion and Jews are called to Sinai; Ruth, the archetypal refugee, inspires <i>gemilut chasadim</i> as Scottish Refugee Week approaches	
Welcome to Robert Waang and Gwaang-Ee	3
Saul and the Universe	3
Saul Kohn's spiritual pilgrimage and cosmic journey	
Remembering Blanche: notice of stone setting	4
Rebekah Gronowski reports on East Lothian outreach	4
Edinburgh Jews and the Jabulani Project	5
and notice of a Jabulani event Wednesday 7 May	
Jewish Dialogue: Lena Posner-Korosi from Stockholm	5
Art shows for Miriam and Lauren	6
Funding secured for portable ark, reports Lauren Fox	6
Supporting us supporting others	7
An award from the Voluntary Action Fund	
Creative Writing Day for Refugee Week	7
Ellen Galford is one of the writers at <i>An Edinburgh Jewish Welcome</i>	
Glasgow Jewish Singers celebrate Cantor Ernest Levy	7
Fire in the forest	8
SCoJeC's Lag B'Omer Celebration	
ELJC celebrates LGBT: Dyke March and Pride Scotia	8
Ethics on the edge of a knife	8

Contributors' addresses are not published, so as to prevent them from being harvested from our website and used for spam. Contact Lulav contributors by using contact.eljc.org

Community Phone This phone number sends voicemail to members the **Contact Team** 0131 777 8024

Urgent Support Only for use in emergency; alerts the whole the Welfare Team 0131 208 1447

Email Contact Email the **Contact Team** and the **Newsletter** via the webpage at contact.eljc.org

Website www.eljc.org

<i>Chair/Lulav</i>	Norman Crane	<i>Treasurer</i>	Gillian Raab
<i>Admin/Lulav</i>	Catherine Lyons	<i>Membership</i>	Sharon Goldwater

Scottish Charity SC035678

Word from the Chair

Well, we had more or less a minyan Friday lunchtime 18 April, particularly if you add in attendees from Salisbury Road. It was of course Good Friday, and the venue not one of our usual ones. It was St John's Church at the West end of Princes Street. The occasion was the three-hour service held in commemoration of the Crucifixion. There were seven preachers, mostly guest preachers, one of whom was our rabbi, Mark Solomon. The texts used were various psalms, and that used by Mark was psalm 22 of which the opening line is quoted in Aramaic by Jesus as his last words: 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'

The sermon seemed a difficult task. How could a rabbi preach to a Christian congregation about the core event at the heart of Christianity meaningfully and with dignity? So it was with some trepidation that we began to listen. We should not have worried. Mark spoke with such warmth, understanding, and empathy that it was evident that the congregation heard his sermon with a deep appreciation of his insights. Yet he spoke from a Jewish perspective and did not cross that line that separates Jews from Christians. From this point of view it brought to my mind the story in the Talmud (*Hagigah* 14b) of the four rabbis who entered paradise. Paradise is here symbolic of a mystical experience. One looked and died, one looked and went mad, one became an apostate, and one, Rabbi Akiva, entered in peace and departed in peace. Mark dealt with a profound mystical experience in such a way that enabled both Christians and Jews to emerge in their separate ways spiritually enriched.

In a sense, the antithesis of belief in a saving act by one individual is the response to a collective summons to duty, which we experience with the giving and receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai in our next major festival, Shavuot. There will be an Erev Shavuot service at 7.00 pm on **Tuesday 3 June** at Marchmont St Giles. The service will be followed by a Tikkun Leil Shavuot, during which we shall look at a number of texts, talk, and discuss. Above all, we shall eat cheesecake. So please remember to bring some, along or any other suitable delicacy to eat. Food for mind and body; who could ask for anything better? We are still in the period of the counting of the Omer, which links Pesach to Shavuot, so I would remind some people that they have left their Seder plates behind after the Communal Seder. Please ring me on 0131 657 1922 to arrange to collect yours.

We shall, as part of our Shavuot service, read from the Book of Ruth, who, in the words of John Keats, stood alone amidst the alien corn. Ruth is the archetypal immigrant or refugee. It is sobering to think that the first anti-immigration Act in this country, the Aliens Act of 1905, was aimed at the Jews 'flooding' the East End of London.

On **Friday 23 May**, after food and song for Erev Shabbat, we shall be hosting presentations from people representing the Scottish Refugee Council and our partners in the Food Bank project. Remember to bring (vegetarian/fish) food to share. As Scottish Refugee Week approaches, there will be a presentation to launch our refugee mentoring scheme as part of our successful bid for monies from the Volunteer Action Fund (see p. 7). We shall be using some of these monies for other aspects of Community Development as well.

We have also been successful in another funding application. Our thanks are due to Lauren Fox, who prepared our bid for funding for the portable ark. Now comes the hard work as we get down to the detail of commissioning an actual plan. We have been awarded £4420 for this work, which is a very successful outcome.

We are very fortunate that, apart from our rabbi, we have within our community a number of talented people. Our artists are exhibiting this month (see p. 6). Our novelist is participating in a writing workshop (see p. 7), an event in the Scottish Refugee Council's Refugee Week programme.

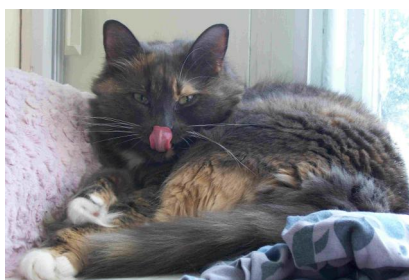
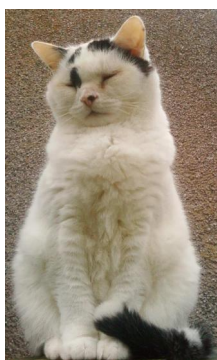
Norman Crane

Welcome back to Robert Waang and welcome to Robert's partner, Gwaang-Ee Waang



Empress Queenie III

Old Kyng Nougat



Mooncake

Mitzvah the Bumblecat



After a break of five years, during which time he has been tucked away amongst the hills of the Scottish Borders, Robert is returning to our community. This time, he brings with him his partner of over a decade, Gwaang-Ee Waang. Robert is a freelance copywriter, Gwaang-Ee is a freelance translator, and both are now also mature students at the University of Edinburgh.

They divide their time between Edinburgh and rural Roxburghshire. The latter is where the Court of Empress Queenie III is to be found. Robert and Gwaang-Ee have been in the service of Her Impurrial Majesty and Three Other Cats for a number of years, and are happy to be sent out to spread the good news of Catkind to Edinburrr and beyond. Shalommiaow!

Saul and the Universe Spiritual pilgrimage and cosmic journey

Saul Aryeh Kohn has enjoyed the creativity, hospitality, and love of Sukkat Shalom for the past five years while working towards his Master's degree at Edinburgh University.

Now 23, he has lived in the UK since he was eight. Saul is a firm believer in the Liberal Jewish cause, having grown up in the community of Kingston Liberal Synagogue, where he became Bar Mitzvah. GCSEs followed in Jewish Studies and Literature, and Saul has taught cheder for many years. He is a cofounder of Exploring Our Faiths, the Edinburgh University Chaplaincy interfaith group.

In June, Saul will be leaving Edinburgh for Philadelphia to pursue a PhD in Physics and Astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania. He is interested in galactic evolution, and probing the very-young Universe.

While I've not been able to attend services often this year I have found other sources of spiritual nourishment. Attendance at the chaplaincy interfaith group, Exploring Our Faiths, of which I am cofounder, has increased at least fivefold this year, and I have since been appointed to the Chaplaincy Committee as a representative of the student interfaith work. I have also founded a weekly Torah study group (for each parashah) through the University Jewish Society. The study group recently received the UJS Education Project Award in Memory of Fred Worms OBE, a UK and Ireland award. Edinburgh J-Soc is the first in the country to develop such a programme.

About two years ago I received a scholarship to attend a pilgrimage in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. A pilgrimage for change: to the Home of Peace was run by Salva Terra (now Heartbeat), bringing together about 40 people (under 40 years old) around the theme of global peacekeeping through spirituality. Almost all the pilgrims were Christian, many of them pastors or pastors-in-training. I was the only Jew that applied.

When I arrived at Ghost Ranch (and that trip is a whole other story), I was suddenly struck with a

[continues ...](#)

question. What am I doing here? I was the only Jew among Christians, and the only agnostic among believers: how uncomfortable would this be? Of course, I ended up having a wonderful time, and making friends that I still keep in touch with today. The short answer to my question was that it didn't matter. I realised how much I could contribute to peacemaking and spirituality without believing in God, or in a God interpreted by a given religion. What mattered was my commitment to furthering the development of my friends, community, and wider world through engaging with a more spiritual and metaphysical side of life than I was used to. It was an emotional and empowering experience, which inspired me to create the initiatives that I described above.



Saul in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, walking back to camp

Come June, I will be walking the northern coast of Spain with Heartbeat. There will be fourteen of us, of seven different faiths: seven from the UK and seven from the US, walking the 100-mile [Camino de Santiago pilgrimage](#) route together. Heartbeat founders and pilgrimage guides John Philip and Ali Newell will provide guided meditation, and time for reflection and dialogue. Foci will be environmentalism, religious conflicts and peacemaking, and leadership.

The trip will take place as I leave university and the UK, and will affirm for me the transience of my life experience, but perhaps paradoxically the steadfastness of my faith and spirituality in the face of this transience. Just as I found that my disbelief in God did not inhibit my spirituality in the Home of Peace pilgrimage two years ago, I look forward to discovering more about myself in June. I plan to write a sequel to this article when I return, reflecting on my physical and personal journeys.

Saul Kohn

Remembering Blanche

The Stone Setting for Blanche Mundy will take place at Dean Cemetery on Tuesday 17 June at 2.30pm. We would be delighted for members of Sukkat Shalom to come along. More details will be available nearer the time.

Janet Mundy

East Lothian Outreach

St Martin's RC Church in Tranent is launching its newly refurbished parish hall as a Community Hub and has consulted widely in the surrounding area. There is a core of people interested in interfaith activities in Tranent. Our community has been offered a suitable space for an occasional Erev Shabbat Service, should we want to hold an event in East Lothian.

I am keen to develop this option, for those of us who live in East Lothian, and hold occasional services. This is a very welcoming Church community, which would be pleased to offer us hospitality and include us in any interfaith activities. If anyone is interested in coming along to the Grand Opening of the Community Hub or wants more information, please contact me [via the Contact Team](#). I will be attending the Grand Opening anyway to show our support.

Grand Opening of the St Martin's Community Hub, Tranent EH33 1HJ, 7 June, 11.00am–2.00pm.

Rebekah Gronowski

Edinburgh Jews support the Jabulani Project

One of the projects supported by our Kol Nidre this year is the Jabulani Project, which grew from a ten-year partnership between James Gillespie's High School in Edinburgh and Zwelibanzi High School in Umlazi Township (Durban) in South Africa. Readers may remember the guest article from the project's development officer, Isaac Ansell Forsyth, in the September Newsletter. Isaac is a member of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and a former Gillespie's pupil. Our Kol Nidre contribution (£950) was handed over to Isaac by Adam and Leora Wadler, who are currently at Gillespie's, when members of both congregations met at the Enlightening Jews study day, celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.



Left to Right: Niall Dolan (John Byrne Award). Alex Wallace (former JGHS head and project founder), Isaac Ansell Forsyth, Adam Wadler, Leora Wadler, Gillian Raab (as ELJC treasurer). Photo: Malcolm Merrick.

An evening with Jackie Branfield, director of Bobbi Bear, hosted by the Jabulani Project

Jackie Branfield is founder and director of Bobbi Bear, an organisation that supports child victims of sexual abuse in KwaZulu Natal. Bobbi Bear aims to create greater awareness of the rights of the child to help prevent further cases of abuse. The group provides training to local Child Safety Officers and reaches around 4,000 children per month as part of their school outreach programme. Jackie and her team were featured in *Rough Aunties* (2008), which won the Sundance World Documentary Jury Prize in 2009.

The evening will feature an excerpt from *Rough Aunties* and a talk by Jackie about the work with Bobbi Bear done by Jabulani Project volunteers.

Wednesday 7 May, 6.30-8.30, Room G43, Patterson's Land, enter from Canongate or Holyrood Road (same venue as for Jewish Dialogue, below)

Jane Ansell

Jewish Dialogue with Lena Posner-Korosi the Stockholm Model

In the third Dialogue event, we will hear from Lena Posner-Korosi, President of the Stockholm Jewish Community. The Stockholm Jewish Community is open to all Jews, religious or not, organises cultural and educational events and social services, and manages three synagogues. Fiona Frank from SCoJeC will also be there to talk about VAF-funded projects (see p. 7). Lunch will be provided (for which, please donate £5 on the day). [Book using Eventbrite.](#)

Sunday **11 May**, 1.30 – 4.30 pm at Room G43, Paterson's Land, St John Street, (same venue as for Bobbi Bear, above).

Janet Mundy



Lena Posner-Korosi, President of the Stockholm Jewish Community and the Council of Jewish Communities of Sweden

Art shows for Miriam and Lauren

Miriam Vickers and **Lauren Fox** are both exhibiting work in May. Miriam is selling drawings, watercolours, etchings, and oils at the [Patriothall Gallery](#) in Stockbridge **until 11 May**. Lauren is exhibiting and selling painting and sculpture at [Art on the Hill](#), Glasgow's art fair, **until 31 May**.



Comrie Woods,
Miriam Vickers



Manta, Lauren Fox
On display at the Whitespace Gallery, Edinburgh

Our portable ark will be crafted this summer: funding awarded by the NLPS Trust

The aspiration to have a proper ark of our own has been expressed by many of us, and was recently proposed in earnest by architect and designer Rebecca Wober, and taken forward by Lauren Fox, sculptor (see above), and furniture maker. The NLPS Trust for Progressive Judaism makes grants that further the cause of Progressive Judaism, and has given us a sufficient award to commit to this project, though we will also need to raise some funding ourselves.

We got the good news last week, that some of the funding we requested has been awarded! Which means the exciting process of designing and making the ark can begin.

The idea to commission the creation of a portable ark has come from a few different directions. It will be a lovely way to mark the tenth anniversary of our community and of our Torah Scroll later on this year, and also to celebrate the growth of the community over the past decade. It feels appropriate to mark these developments with the symbolism of creating a protective and semi-permanent home for our Scroll, a meaningful expansion on the key ritual and symbolic possessions of the community that we already treasure.

The basic structure of the portable ark is going to be commissioned from an Edinburgh-based furniture maker. There will be four inset panels in the ark, one on each side, and one in each of the two doors. The design of these is yet to be created. We would very much like input and ideas from the community to contribute to the design of these, and will be holding two workshops to help come up with ideas, motifs, designs etc for the panels, so look out for these in the calendar, and/or get in touch via the [Contact Team](#) in the meantime if you would like to contribute and can't hold your ideas in any longer! It would be great to have contributions from as many people as possible, to help create a sense of ownership and cohesion in producing this piece together. I will lead on the final designs for the panel — so you don't even need to be able to draw your ideas if you don't feel you want to — thoughts and words are just as useful at this point.

Lauren Fox

Supporting us supporting others: an award from the Voluntary Action Fund

Our community is a co-recipient of a cross-community award from the Voluntary Action Fund. VAF's core task is to build capacity in charitable organisations.

Fiona Frank, Projects and Outreach Manager at SCoJeC, led the bid and secured £30,000 in funding for SCoJeC, the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, the Scottish Jewish Archive Centre, and for our own community.

Funding from VAF will enable leadership training for council members, and will provide our community with support, including training, for volunteering to help others. Our community will be supported in helping people who have recently migrated to Edinburgh, and who need help with English and adapting to life here.

A representative from the Scottish Refugee Council has been invited to speak at our Supper and Songs Erev Shabbat on 23 May. The Scottish Refugee Council is also sponsoring a Jewish creative writing day (below).

The SCoJeC-led programme will also support CoNNeCT, Jewish Scotland's social media network, and training programmes at the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre for volunteer guides.



"I am very happy that Sukkat Shalom came forward at an early stage as one of our partners. I very much look forward to working with ELJC throughout the year to support training and volunteer activity."

Fiona Frank, Projects and Outreach Manager at SCoJeC

Edinburgh Jewish Creative Writing Day for Refugee Week

Our own Ellen Galford will be one of the writers presenting *An Edinburgh Jewish Welcome*, at Salisbury Rd. This event is part of Refugee Week Scotland, organised by the Scottish Refugee Council, in conjunction with SCoJeC. A novelist and poet, Ellen's *The Dyke and the Dybbuk* won the Lambda Literary Award in 1995 for the best LGBT comic novel. The other writers are J David Simons and Tracey Rosenberg. The three writers will offer insights and guidance on writing short stories and poetry.

An Edinburgh Jewish Welcome, Sunday 29 June, 10:00am–4:00pm, EHC, 4 Salisbury Road. The event is free, but contact Fiona Frank if you plan to go: fiona@scojec.org.



Cantor Ernest Levy OBE

Glasgow Jewish Singers celebrate Ernest Levy

There are still a few (free) tickets left for Ernest Levy: a life in music at the Edinburgh Central Library: the Glasgow Jewish Singers present a musical celebration of the life of cantor Ernest Levy. Originally from Bratislava, Ernest Levy settled in Glasgow after the war. He spoke out throughout his life about his experiences, knowing that his Holocaust testimony would help future generations remember this terrible time. The Central Music Library holds the Ernest Levy Archive. The few remaining concert tickets may be booked through [Eventbrite](#).

Central Library, George IV Bridge, 7.00pm, Thursday 29 May

Fire in the Forest: SCoJeC's Lag B'Omer Celebration

SCoJeC will be putting on the style for Lag B'Omer, with a bonfire, barbecue, bushcraft, fire juggling, and story telling at Vogrie Country Park. The Forestry Commission will lay on transport from Edinburgh. Forest wardens will be running Lag B'Omer-themed activities for adults and children in the Country Park. Kosher meat and vegan barbecue goodies will be provided. A minimum donation is requested, of £5, or £10 for a family, but no one should be put off by cost.

*Sunday 18th May, 2–6pm, Vogrie Country Park, Gorebridge, Midlothian, EH23 4NU, 13 miles south west of Edinburgh. **Note:** this event is already oversubscribed. To go on the waiting list, contact Fiona Frank, fiona@scojec.org.*

ELJC celebrates LGBT

'Homosexuality is not a disease, a disturbance or a perversion', declared the World Health Organisation on 17 May 1990. Until then, being gay was formally considered a mental disorder. The date is now commemorated as International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT, for short). In Edinburgh this month and next, there are several celebratory events.

Dyke March is an international celebration of Pride for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender women. Scotland's first Dyke March is on Saturday 17 May, assembling in Parliament Square at 11am and finishing with a Community Fair and Refreshments in Tollcross Community Centre from 1.00–3.30pm. See [DykeMarchScotland](#) for more details. **Loud & Proud**, Scotland's LGBT Choir, will be performing their Spring Concert to celebrate IDAHOT. The choir will also be joined by the Common Voices Chorus from Massachusetts: Stockbridge Parish Church, Saxe Coburg Street, EH3 5BN, 8pm, Sat 17 May. Book using [HubTickets](#). The [Filmhouse](#) is celebrating IDAHOT with **Who's Your Dandy?**, an evening of film, poetry and music.

Next month sees the **Pride Scotia** weekend taking to the streets of Edinburgh. [Pride Scotia](#) is Scotland's national LGBT festival. The traditional pride march and rally provides a platform for politicians, community activists, celebrities and individuals turn out to march through the city centre to celebrate pride. Pride Scotia is held in Edinburgh every two years. The march will be on 21 June.

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community is proud to celebrate Dyke March and Pride Scotia. Council will be sending formal greetings to both events. Our rabbi, Mark Solomon, will be with us in Edinburgh for the PrideScotia weekend and will be leading an Erev Shabbat Service linked to Pride.



Ethics on the edge of a knife: two progressive views on shechita



Your editor has written [one of two short pieces in the Jewish News](#). The other is by Rabbi Janet Burden. In writing this I came to realise how difficult it is to evaluate the ethical dimension of animal slaughter, given current evidence. It was hard to be sufficiently nuanced in that brief article.

I think questions about shechita are partly a distraction from the ethical questions about food that we should all be asking, Jewish or not. Intuitively, I now believe that it is not possible to kill a large animal assuredly painlessly, and still be able to eat it, with or without a chalaf (pictured above).

Whether we should eat animals at all is another question.

Catherine Lyons