

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

Sukkat Shalom is a constituent of liberal judaism

September 2009

Chair: Gillian Raab, chair@eljc.org

Secretary: Nancy Warren, secretary@eljc.org

Newsletter: James Shearer-Bromfield,
newsletter@eljc.org

Treasurer: Jonathan Broadie, treasurer@eljc.org

Membership: Joe Goldblatt, membership@eljc.org

Phone: 0131 777 8024

EVENTS & SERVICES

Date Friday 4th September
Event Erev Shabbat Service
Venue Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace
Time 7 pm

Rabbi Mark is visiting us this weekend and is leading the service. It will be followed by our usual ELJC family supper. Please bring a non-meat dish and drink to share.

5 September: Choosing Judaism class - usual venue, 10.30am. For details please call the Community Information line - 0131 777 8024.

Tea and Talmud in the afternoon is not yet confirmed. We will advise regulars if confirmed, otherwise for more information please contact Lindsey Levy, Nick Silk or the Information line.

Informal Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Dates 11th September
Venue Marchmont - St Giles
1a Kilgraston Road
Time 6:15 pm

High Holy Days



The Ending is not yet written!

Members should have received their HHD tickets with service details. Non-members requiring tickets should contact us by phone or email.

EVENTS & SERVICES

The High Holy Day services are being led by Rabbi Mark Solomon.

Erev Rosh Hashanah:

18th September, 7pm, Lindisfarne Room at St Cuthbert's, King's Stables/ Lothian Rd.

Rosh Hashanah:

19th September, 11am, Lindisfarne Room at St Cuthbert's, Kings Stables/Lothian Rd.

Erev Shabbat Shuvah:

25th September, 6:15pm at the Conference Room, David Hume Tower, Edinburgh University - we are holding our Kabbalat Shabbat here to welcome students to the Edinburgh Universities. Please join us to welcome them and perhaps bring something for the kiddush (finger food only and no meat or shellfish).

Kol Nidre: 27th September, 7pm at St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace.

Yom Kippur: 28th September, 11am, at St Mark's. The full list of services on Yom Kippur is found in your HHD ticket.

Concluding at 7pm We plan to break the fast at a local restaurant. For further details please contact Nancy Warren on secretary@eljc.org.uk.

Forthcoming Events

Succoth 3rd October, 11am at Columcille. Do join us to help decorate the succah from 9am. "Nibbles" and fruit in the Succah after the service.

Contents

Pg 2	<i>Calendar, Madam Chairman's Word</i>
Pg 3	<i>Pastoral Patch - Rabbi Mark Solomon</i>
Pg 4	<i>Retrospective - Stewart Green</i>
Pg 5	<i>Interfaith, Wisdom, Rainbow Covenant</i>
Pg 6	<i>Liberal Judaism News</i>
Pg 7	<i>Members' News, ELJC Support</i>
Pg 8	<i>Our Crowd</i>

Jewish Calendar, September 2009 12th Elul 5769 -12th Tishri 5770



ELJC's September LBC Diary Meditation

"Redemption, like a livelihood, has to be earned each day". Gen. Rabbah 20:9

For High Holy Days, please refer to page 1.

19th Sept. Rabbi John Rayner z"l, 2005

Remember The start of the Jewish New Year falls on Rosh Chodesh Tishri.

Madam Chairman's Word

Opportunities and challenges

As I am sure all of our members must be aware we owe a huge debt over the past years to our foster Rabbi Mark Solomon for his input into the community and for his teaching, inspiration and leadership. This debt is also owing to the Liberal Jewish Synagogue (LJS) in St John's Wood, London who have lent him to us at no cost beyond his travel expenses. But Mark's circumstances have now changed. He is leaving LJS and will be working part-time as an inter-faith consultant for Liberal Judaism (see the August newsletter). This means that we have the opportunity to have him move from being a foster-Rabbi on loan from the LJS, to being our own part-time Rabbi. Of course this means that we will

have to pay for his visits here. Fortunately, due to the careful financial management of our treasurer, we have a modest surplus in our accounts that will enable us to grasp this opportunity. We are currently negotiating a contract for the coming year. We are optimistic that, even in these straitened economic times, we may be able meet the challenge of having this continue in future years. I am sure that you will all be as excited about this as I am and as delighted that we will be having Mark with us for the services of the High Holy Days.

Another challenge that regular readers of our newsletter will be familiar with is that of finding a more permanent home. We are considering the possibility of using the church hall of St James's Goldenacre in Inverleith Row where we may be able to have a more guaranteed tenancy than any of our current venues and, importantly, the use of storage space. This may be possible at roughly the same costs as we have for our current rentals. But we don't want to rush into this until we are sure it would be a venue that would fulfil our needs and where we would feel comfortable. If the council thinks that this may be suitable we will plan to hold a service there in the near future. We hope as many of you as possible will take the opportunity to attend.

I must emphasize that both of these matters are still being discussed and final decisions on each have to be agreed by the council.

I look forward to reporting back to you on these opportunities and challenges in the New Year and, on behalf of all the members of ELJC council I wish all of our members and friends a good and sweet year.

Gillian Raab

The Pastoral Patch



This month's Pastoral Patch is by our own foster Rabbi, Mark Solomon who has recently been appointed Liberal Judaism's first Interfaith Consultant.

A New Year In Edinburgh

Rosh Hashanah means new year – we all know that. But where does the word shanah, a year, come from? Hebrew etymology – the study of the origins of words – is fascinating but filled with questions and uncertainties. Virtually all Hebrew words derive from three-consonant verbal roots, and in our case, there are two roots, of identical spelling but probably different ancient origins, that could be the basis of the word for “year.” One root SHaNaH means “to repeat,” and from it we get the word shnayim for “two” and the meaning “teach by repetition” which gives us the Mishnah. Perhaps this is the root for “year,” the endlessly repeating cycles of time and nature, essentially the same from one year to the next. This would certainly reflect the view of Kohelet, the book of Ecclesiastes, which we read on Sukkot, that “What has been will be, and what has been done will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” (Eccl. 1:9)

There is another root SHaNaH, though, with the contrasting meaning “to change, to be different,” and based on comparison with other Semitic languages, linguists tend to agree that this is the root of “year.” The idea, then, is not the repetition from one year to

the next, but the constant changes of season in the course of each year. To the earliest Hebrews, then, or their proto-Semitic ancestors, each solar cycle was “the change” as the seasons turned, dry gave way to wet, cold to hot, rutting rams to leaping lambs, bare earth to ripe corn. The oldest Hebrew inscription yet discovered (in 1908), dating from the 10th century BCE, is the tiny tablet known as the “Gezer Calendar,” possibly a children’s song or writing exercise, which lists the changes of the year:

Two months of harvest
Two months of planting
Two months are late planting
One month of hoeing
One month of barley-harvest
One month of harvest and festival
Two months of grape harvesting
One month of summer fruit.

The linguistic conundrum of SHaNaH and SHaNaH prompts us to reflect on repetition and change in our lives, and the life of our community. Is each year just like the one before, in monotonous succession, or is there change and development from one to the next? In the life of a young community like Sukkat Shalom there is definitely more change than repetition, as each year brings new events and experiences, new members and challenges. Most notably, August saw the first Bat Mitzvah for the community, a delightful milestone for Sarah Zachs-Adam and the congregation. The new year of 5770 will bring new opportunities, and perhaps even a more permanent home for the congregation.

For me personally, change is certainly the order of the day. From a few months ago, when it seemed I would have to stop my visits to Edinburgh, a sudden change in circumstances means that I can continue and consolidate my relationship with the community, whilst I pursue a new role as

Liberal Judaism's first dedicated Interfaith Consultant. After nine years conducting High Holy Day services, as part of a rabbinic team, in the cathedral ambience of the LJS, I look forward with enormous pleasure to sharing the Days of Awe with Edinburgh friends in the more intimate, more free, and somewhat more tradition-friendly atmosphere of Sukkat Shalom.

I wish everyone a Shanah tovah u-metukah, a good and sweet New Year of change for the better: good health, prosperity and contentment; and may the world move a little closer to peace and justice for all.

Rabbi Mark L. Solomon



Retrospective

This month I am additionally including a sermon delivered by **Stewart Green** on Erev Shabbat, August 7th 2009 - which while very much a piece for the moment, nonetheless, has a timeless theme - which I felt appropriate to have in as we leave the old year behind with its losses and celebrations, anticipate the new, and renew our commitment.

Editor

This has been a sad month for our community with the loss of two very senior members:

I didn't know Frederick (Broadie) at all but from the write-up in the August newsletter, he was clearly a very remarkable and inspirational man. So when I read the eulogy I found myself wishing I had had the opportunity to know him and meet him (Jonathan: I'll need to ask you a lot more about your dad! Forgive me that I can't say more about him here and now, other than to wish you and the family well and long life).

By contrast, I am very familiar with Ida's history – as possibly the person in our community who has seen the most of her in recent years. Unfortunately, Gina, Rohan and I were away when Ida died but I've been thinking about her a lot since I heard the news and I'm missing her. Indeed I keep seeing an image of her peering at me from her chair in her little flat.

But inevitably, there's the ever-present duality of our human existence: our losses are matched by new births and hope and our pain and despair is accompanied by other reasons for hope, celebrations and joy. So is it on this occasion. At the same time as we are endeavouring to cope with the loss of Frederick and Ida, we are also preparing to celebrate Sarah Zachs-Adam's Bat Mitzvah next week.

In preparation for her Bat Mitzvah, Sarah has kindly asked her cheder classmates Adam, Leora, Naomi & Rohan to play a part in the service by sharing the reading on the day. Rohan and I have been looking at the reading and I don't think I'll be giving away any state secrets (at least I hope I'm not) by saying now that the reading will be on the theme of 'Giving' (Siddur Lev Chadash, p337).

The moment I read the passage I thought of Ida in particular because she was someone who had very real support needs and was not shy of voicing them. Consequently I reflected on what it really means to give.

In our increasingly busy and self-centred lives, giving can often translate into helping those we love or care about and providing financial support to charities and other good causes.

However, I think that giving money is only part of the intended message. (And let's face it, if we're giving within our means, then this in itself isn't a particularly difficult thing to do anyway). My belief therefore, is that to really give, we have to be willing to offer more of ourselves than just helping those we love / respect or giving away money. We have to try to help others when doing so means acting against our own (cont.)

interests or needs. Furthermore, we need to be prepared to push ourselves to help in more difficult situations and to reach out to those individuals who, either by nature or circumstances, do not readily win our warmth or sympathy. Even so, I myself need to work hard to keep reminding myself of this message and to live it in my daily life. It seems particularly important not to write people off or bury my head in the sand when others, or their needs, get hard to cope with. As it says in the reading:

"To give to those in need is not to be gracious, but to do one's duty. It is an act of love, but also of justice – which is the root meaning of the Hebrew word tzedakah, for 'charity'. It is to relieve suffering and correct injustice, and so to ensure that God's gifts are shared by all in a society whose members care for one another as brothers and sisters. Giving is a supreme ethical obligation, second only to the still greater Mitzvah of gemilut chasadim, the doing of kind deeds. Giving is greater than all sacrifices and doing kind deeds is greater than giving".

As we move to the conclusion of the service, let us hold Ida and Frederick in our thoughts and memories through the Kaddish, through the rest of the service and beyond. As we do so, let us at the same time look forward to Sarah's celebration next week with anticipation and pleasure!!

Stewart Green

Interfaith

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group

The September meeting will be held on 16th September at the Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House in Victoria Terrace (off Lawnmarket). We will begin, as always, with a vegetarian finger buffet at 7.00 p.m. where we meet old friends and welcome new members. The theme of this month's meeting will be on the issue of

"Women as Peace-makers" as we prepare for the observance of the International Day of Peace on 21st September. Please bring vegetarian food to share.

Wisdom from Other Traditions

Zen

"Consider the trees that allow the birds to perch and fly away without calling them to come or longing for them to leave.

If your heart can be like a tree you will always be close to The Way".

Master Langya

From the Wisdom of the Zen Masters by Timothy Freke. ISBN 1-899434-03-8

The Scottish Rainbow Covenant

The "Scottish Rainbow Covenant" initiative is being developed to enable Scottish LGBT Jews from all parts of Scotland to come together as a group in a 'virtual space' and exchange news and views. Hopefully real time social events will emerge.

It hopes to serve to bring together any LGBT Jews, including remote areas and those feeling isolated. This is a first-step initiative to explore ways in which we can share news and events and generally support each other within the wider Jewish Community. We welcome enquiries from prospective members of all Jewish traditions in Scotland.

For the time being, contact can only be via email until we are able to set up our own website. If you are interested, please make initial contact by email at:

scottish.rainbowcovenant@googlemail.com

Community Contacts: Rebekah & Jamie

liberal judaism

Gilad Shalit Rosh Hashana Appeal



On the 25th June 2006, Gilad Shalit (aged just 19) was kidnapped by Palestinian terrorists in a cross border raid from the Gaza Strip. He has been held hostage by Hamas ever since. During this Rosh Hashanah, you are invited to send your New Year Greetings to Gilad via www.gilad.org.uk, which will be passed on to the International Red Cross and ask them to help us pass these messages onto Gilad. Your wishes will also be passed onto his parents, to show that the world is still thinking of them and Gilad, and praying for his release. Make sure the loneliest man in the world is not forgotten - your help will make a difference. **Visit www.gilad.org.uk NOW and please circulate this to your contacts.**

Mitzvah Day - 15th November 2009

This year's Mitzvah Day is on Sunday 15th November 2009. This year Mitzvah Day will also be part of the national Inter Faith Week and many partner organisations will choose to work side by side with volunteers from other faiths on the day. For more information on this year's event, please visit mitzvahday.org.uk.

Chairman's Note: Sukkat Shalom are hoping to plan some community Mitzvot for this day. Keep it free and look out for announcements in our later newsletters.

liberal judaism

International Progressive Jewish Hospitality Exchange

Liberal Judaism congregations may be interested to hear about the Hospitality Exchange scheme whereby Progressive communities around the world offer hospitality to members of other communities in the scheme. The scheme includes Reform and Progressive synagogues in Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy and the United States. To find out more please visit hospitalityexchanges.org. The goals of Hospitality Exchanges are two-fold: 1) provide members of your congregation and others an opportunity to see life in other countries from the perspective of residents and 2) provide the chance to build person-to-person contacts with members of other communities

Victor Kaufman Bids Lehivraot (but not goodbye) to Liberal Judaism

Victor Kaufman, former LJY-Netzer Mazkir and current Liberal Judaism Community Youth Projects Manager, is leaving the movement after two years to pursue a career as an auditor. A lifelong member of Leicester Progressive Jewish Congregation, Victor has been involved in LJY-Netzer for 15 years. "It's been a privilege working with LJY-Netzer and the Liberal Judaism communities. I look forward to my continued involvement from a lay position and thank members for all their support. I'm happy to visit congregations and would love to stay in touch. Please do [email me](#)." Everyone at Liberal Judaism is sorry to see Victor go and we wish him the very best of luck for the future.

Community & Members News

.Rabbi & Cantor, Rev. Ernest Levy

It is with sadness that we record the death, on 23rd August 2009, of Cantor Rabbi Ernest Levy in Glasgow. He was a Holocaust Survivor who survived several concentration camps and spent many years teaching people, young and old, about the Holocaust and promoting peace and reconciliation. He was a fine Cantor and served at Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue for many years. His funeral left from Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue at 11.00 a.m on 24th August, and his funeral took place at Glenduffhill Cemetery at midday. He wrote 'Just One More Dance' and 'The Single Light' in which he told his life story. Those of us who were privileged to have known him will always remember his kindness and the ways in which he touched people's lives. May his memory be a blessing and may his family have long life.

News from Israel

Anat Kamenka Algazi a former member of this community currently lives in Israel where she has settled to an Orthodox life. We wish her continued happiness in Israel.

She requests if anyone is able that they consider making a donation to **Shekel**, which provides community services for people with special needs and disabilities in both the Jewish and Arab communities.

Like all not for profit voluntary organisations, Shekel's income is being affected by the economy and all donations would be very welcome. www.shekel.org.il

and from Oxford

Another former member, Hannah Kenner, has now returned to live in Oxford where she is again working in scientific publishing. Hannah has a long-term involvement with the Beshara School in the Borders and will be attending a symposium there on 9th to 11th September on self-knowledge and global responsibility. Anyone interested in joining her should contact her (frizzwig@yahoo.co.uk). See

www.beshara.org/symposium2009.

ELJC SUPPORT LINE:

07904 813162



If you or your family are stuck in a hole or are in a bad place, dealing with illness etc and need a bit of Jewish support then Alice says "**Phone me**".

An answer when you need help from your Scottish FULLY inclusive Jewish Community

CUT ME OUT AND PUT ME BY THE PHONE

Remember, the ordinary community information line is 0131 777 8024.



Rebekah would like to wish everyone at Sukkat Shalom, and beyond, L'Shanah Tovah! May you all have a sweet year ahead. She will not be sending cards this year.

Miriam Vickers has recently suffered a heart attack on her way to teach her art group. She is back at home now and we wish her a full and speedy recovery,

Many thanks to all who contributed this month even if your piece could not be used. Items for publication are welcomed, as are responses to items published. The deadline for the October newsletter will be **Friday 18th September**. Please email all contributions to newsletter@eljc.org.

Anticipated Deadlines:

November - 23rd October
December - 20th November
Jan. 2010 - 25th December

Our Crowd

by Joe Goldblatt

This month we shine the Sukkat Shalom spotlight on our chairman, Gillian Raab.

What is your favourite Jewish holiday and why did you choose this one? Pesach. I chose this holiday among all others because of how we get together with friends and family and think what it means to be free.

What is your favourite Jewish food? My favourite Jewish food is Chicken soup with matzoh balls because chicken soup is Jewish penicillin and matzoh balls remind me of Pesach and the time when my son Jonathan so impressed his grandmother by ordering and finishing three bowls of it at her local restaurant in Miami Beach.

What is your favourite Jewish memory? My favourite Jewish memory is my first ever aliyah. It was at my niece's Bat Mitzvah in Newton, Massachusetts in a huge synagogue with an auditorium like an opera house. Although at that time I had been a member of the (then) Glasgow New Synagogue for a good few years I had never had an aliyah. It was not then their custom to offer them to women. How things have changed! I was glad no one else in the US synagogue knew was it was my very first time.

What do you like best about Sukkat Shalom?

On the practical side, I like not having to negotiate the M8 to Glasgow to go to services. Also the way we have grown recently into a community where so many people contribute by doing things and, of course, caring enough to have strong views about how they should be done.

Tell us a secret about you?

I can't think of anything interesting about me that people don't know already. *Author's note:* Some may not know that Gillian is also Professor Emeritus of Applied Statistics at Edinburgh Napier University.

What are your favourite Jewish songs? One of my most favourite Jewish songs is Dayenu, (enough already).

Who are your favourite Jewish artists and writers? My favourite Jewish artist is my husband Charles Raab and my favourite Jewish authors include, among many others, Primo Levi, Isaac Bashevis-Singer, Andre Schwarz-Bart, Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker, and Ellen Galford.

What are your favourite travel destinations? My favourite travel destinations include The North of Scotland and the South of France.

What was your personal journey to Judaism? My personal journey to Judaism may best be described as a surprise to me and others. The very last thing I thought I would end up becoming when I became Jewish 41 years ago was a chair of a Jewish community.

How do you describe Sukkat Shalom to others? Friendly, welcoming, and a place that I hope may extend a friendly hand to anyone who wants to share in Jewish companionship worship and study.

