

# SUKKAT SHALOM

EDINBURGH LIBERAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

## APRIL 2005



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## Shalom and good wishes for Purim and Pesach!

This is the last edition of the newsletter that I will be editing. At present we don't have a replacement for me as editor, so the current plan is to reduce the frequency of full newsletters to bi-monthly or quarterly, with the monthly edition becoming more like a diary sheet.

If you are interested in taking over the newsletter please contact any member of the council or ring the community phone (07891 439646).

As always, the most up-to-date details of future events will be on the website [www.eljc.org](http://www.eljc.org).

As Douglas Adams might say, "So long and thanks for all the fish"

Thanks once more to those who have contributed over the last year, and of course to everyone who read the newsletter!

*Shalom, Hannah*

*"He who knows himself knows his Lord"*  
Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, Treatise on Being

## Events

**THURS 24 MARCH, 6.30pm – Purim play, service and party**

**FRI 25 MARCH, 7pm – Erev Shabbat service**

**SAT 26 MARCH, 11am – Service-lunch-study**

For details of these Purim events please see last newsletter or the website ([www.eljc.org/calendar](http://www.eljc.org/calendar))

**FRI 1 APRIL, 7pm – Erev Shabbat service  
Homeroyal House, 2 Chalmers Crescent**

Please arrive in good time; if you are early press "5" then "4" then "call".

**SAT 16 APRIL, 11am – Shabbat service, lunch & study, St Columba's by the Castle, Church Hall, 14 Johnston Terrace**

Torah service followed by communal lunch and study session. **Rabbi Nancy Morris will be leading the service!** Please bring a cold vegetarian dish to share.

**THURS 21 APRIL, 7.30pm – Council meeting, venue tbc**

All Sukkat Shalom members welcome: please let us know if you intend to come.

**SAT 23 APRIL, 7pm – First seder night, Inch House, Inch Park**

Sukkat Shalom's 8th communal seder at our usual venue. We are delighted that Rabbi Pete Tobias will be officiating. If you would like to come please contact Gillian on 0131 226 6234 or [RaabGillian@aol.com](mailto:RaabGillian@aol.com). Offers of help in preparing for the event are welcomed.

**SAT 30 APRIL – Shabbat service, Melrose, Scottish Borders, TBC**

We're thinking of having a day in the borders, with a service in Melrose followed by lunch and a walk. But we need to know how many people would like to come, so please contact Nick ([education@eljc.org](mailto:education@eljc.org)) if you are interested. We'll arrange transport if necessary.

**FRI 6 MAY, 7pm – Erev Shabbat service, Christchurch, Holy Corner, Morningside Rd**

## Notices

### Condolences

Ricky Hogg would like to express his thanks to all who sent on their best wishes for a long life following the recent death of his mother.

### Mazel Tov

Happy Birthday to Phil Wadler!

### Party time!

Catherine, Leora, Adam, and Phil invite you to Phil's square birthday!

Friday 8 April, 6pm to late, 11 Braid Ave, 0131 447 4276. No presents please, although donations to "Make Poverty History" accepted.

Prince Charles will not be in attendance, despite being in the vicinity. But the Queen says she has nothing important on that day.)

### Rabbi Aaron's D'varim Torah

Each week Rabbi Aaron Goldstein, who in some ways is acting as our community's rabbi this year, writes a short piece on the week's parasha for the various congregations that he services. Rabbi Aaron's thoughts for the week's parasha now have a page of their own on our community website – see [www.eljc.org/parashot](http://www.eljc.org/parashot)

### Seder night – volunteers needed

Volunteers urgently needed to help join the group organising the seder. In particular with one or more of the following:

- Provide a car to assist with transport of things to Inch House
- Food preparation on Saturday 23 April
- To prepare and bring along dishes
- To join a small planning committee that will probably meet just once

Please contact the membership secretary ([membership@eljc.org](mailto:membership@eljc.org)) or call the community phone with offers of help.

### [www.shalomctr.org](http://www.shalomctr.org)

*Rebekah writes:* For folk who were at the Erev Shabbat Service which was held during the MESP and who met Rabbi Arthur Waskow, his website is [www.shalomctr.org](http://www.shalomctr.org). They have a regular News/Reports which they send out weekly and to which you can subscribe via email.

### Possible LJ family trip to Israel – anyone interested?

*Stewart Green writes:* I am quite interested in one day joining an LJ Community Israel tour of the sort advertised in the December newsletter for this coming May. Ideally though, I would favour a family-based tour which could include Gina and Rohan. This would only be possible though if it were possible to arrange such a trip during the school holidays.

I raised this with Rabbi Aaron when he was up at the beginning of Feb and he responded very favourably to the possibility of LJ organising a family based tour (which would of course not exclude non families) – perhaps for Easter 2006. The trips are very reasonably priced, all-inclusive and flexible – consisting of a core organised programme but with considerable scope for changing the outward and/or return dates and adding on one's own bespoke holiday or visit programme if desired.

Rabbi Aaron has undertaken to discuss this possibility internally and get back to me (I have warned R. Aaron that care is needed when scheduling for Scottish and English school holiday dates). In the meantime, I wonder whether there would be any others in the community who would be similarly interested? If you are, let me know.

### Jewish Book Week – Edinburgh event with Jonathan Freedland, Sunday 3 April

The Jewish Book Council is proud to present Jewish Book Week 2005, the leading international festival of Jewish ideas and writing.

Jonathan Freedland will talk about his new book, *Jacob's Gift*. The moving story of three members of his own family, going back several generations, but also an inquiry into wider and urgent questions of Jewish identity and the universal business of belonging.

The event is in association with the Edinburgh Literary Society and will be held on Sunday 3 April at 8pm in the Marian Oppenheim Hall, 4 Salisbury Road.

For further details please contact [eils@xemaps.com](mailto:eils@xemaps.com). Tickets £5.

For information on the national programme of Jewish Book Week events see [www.jewishbookweek.com](http://www.jewishbookweek.com)

## Notices *continued*

### **Liberal Judaism launches Council of Patrons**

Liberal Judaism launched its Council of Patrons at a dinner in the House of Lords hosted by Lord Stone of Blackheath. Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, spoke of his delight in gaining the support of so many Liberal Jews. With the backing of the Council of Patrons, Liberal Judaism can approach the future with new-found confidence and continue to provide a sound spiritual home meeting the needs of today's and tomorrow's Jews, including those who are disaffected with the other strands of mainstream Judaism.

The Council of Patrons has been established to provide long term stable donor funding for the movement's ambitious development plans so that Liberal Judaism can continue to grow, and offer a sound, strong, open, relevant and modern spiritual home for all Jews, both in Britain and beyond. In seeking backing from individuals who are financially in a position to help the movement, Liberal Judaism intends eventually to reduce the increasing fiscal demands on its constituent synagogues and communities, allowing them to devote more of their incomes to front line services. To date, over £500,000 has already been raised, over a five-year period. Liberal Judaism aims to double this total by the next Council of Patrons Dinner.

Stanley Fink, Chairman of the Council of Patrons, introduced Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, the guest of honour. Mr Fink reported that 22 patrons have currently been recruited. He thanked the founding patrons and expressed the hope that more committed individuals will join the Council, thus ensuring that the vision of our founders can be realised: to make the ancient faith of Judaism a religion, not just of the past but of the future.

In his address, Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, a Patron of the Interfaith Foundation, spoke of the need to bring people of all faiths together. Sir Evelyn urged Liberal Jewish Rabbis, and leaders of communities, to work with leaders of other faiths, to educate young and old alike to promote the cause of interfaith harmony and understanding.

## Notes:

► Liberal Judaism's main departure from traditional Judaism concerns revelation. Liberal Judaism believes that the Hebrew Scriptures including the Torah are a human attempt to understand the Divine Will, and therefore uses Scripture as the starting point for Jewish decision making, conscious of the fallibility of scripture and of the value of knowledge outside of Scripture.

► Liberal Judaism emphasizes the universal over the particular, believes ethical injunctions to be of a higher order than ritual instructions, and affirms the equality of each individual Jew, regardless of race, gender or sexuality.

► Liberal Judaism is a national movement of 35 synagogues and communities of over 9000 individual members

### **Friends of Progressive Judaism in Israel and Europe**

*Jane Greenfield – Chairman of "the Friends" – writes:* Much has happened since my last report. The Friends were asked to name the charities for the High Holy Day appeal run by LJ and UJIA for this year and after a great deal of thought it was decided by the present committee to put forward two projects.

The first, "Mercaz Ruth", is a brand new venture launched by the Leo Baeck Education Center in Haifa. It is a joint programme for children who are both Israeli and Arab aged 6 years old and above who are at risk from starvation and abuse, and follows on from the well established Beit Yitzhak centre which caters for the 5 year olds and under.

"Esh David", the second charity, was founded by the IMPJ and is a synagogue community in Ashdod. Established in 2000 by a group of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, the leaders there have a great deal of experience working with Progressive Jews from Moscow.

You may remember that in the last report I said that the Friends would be contributing the majority of their fundraising to the FSU, having sent most of the last two years' money to Israel. Individual donors as well as whole congregations will have a choice of giving either to the joint LJ/ UJIA appeal or making a direct donation to FPJIE. The projects will be the same.

## Quotes and Jokes

### Parental Advice

From Dad: "Remember, Robert, in life anything can happen. Even if you don't have all the things you want, be grateful for the things you don't have that you don't want."

From Mum: "There's a lot of monkey business out there in the world Bobby, don't forget you have relatives in New Jersey."

Bob Dylan's autobiography, *The Chronicles*.  
Published by Simon Schuster, 2004.

*With thanks to Anat*

### Boom Boom!

Q: What do Italian Jews eat on Friday night?

A: Shabbata!

Q: What do Italian Jews eat at Passover?

A: Maztorella!

*With thanks to Adam Wadler (aged 5)*

### Ancient Ancestry

The following was overheard at a recent 'high society' party:

"My ancestry goes back all the way to Alexander the Great," said Christine. She then turned to Miriam and asked, "How far back does your family go?"

"I don't know," replied Miriam, "All of our records were lost in the flood."

*With thanks to Rebekah, courtesy of  
[www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)*

### Yiddish Paper

Rabbi Mordechai Schleppman was a perfectionist and demanded the very best of his pupils. So it was only to be expected that he would get furious when little Saul handed in a poor paper.

"This is the worst Yiddish essay it has ever been my misfortune to read," ranted the rabbi. "It has to many mistakes I can't understand how one person would have made all these mistakes."

"One person didn't," replied Saul defensively. "My father helped me."

## Good News and Bad News

One Saturday morning the rabbi got up on the bima and announced to his congregation:

"I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

### Long Hair

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a rabbi, if they could discuss his use of the family car. His father took him into his study and said: "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your Talmud a little, get your hair cut and then we'll talk about it."

After about a month, the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car. They again went into the father's study where the father said: "Son, I've been very proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied the Talmud diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut."

The young man waited a moment and then replied: "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair."

The rabbi said: "Yes, and they walked everywhere they went."

### Conversion

Although born to a Catholic family, Chester had always wanted to be Jewish.

As a senior in college, he decided to take the plunge and go through the formal conversion process. He studied Judaism all semester. Finally, he felt he was ready to take the test and complete the conversion.

On the appointed day, he arrived at the Rabbi's office, ready to begin.

The Rabbi said, "I'm sorry, but before I give you the test, I must discuss my fee, It's \$5000."

"\$5000!" exclaimed Chester, "That's a lot of money. How about \$500?"

"Congratulations, you pass." said the Rabbi.