

# Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Sukkat Shalom is a constituent of liberal judaism

## January 2008

**Chairman:** Maurice Naftalin, chair@eljc.org  
**Secretary:** Catherine Lyons, secretary@eljc.org  
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**Treasurer:** Jonathan Broadie, treasurer@eljc.org  
**Membership:** Gillian Raab, membership@eljc.org

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### EVENTS & SERVICES

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

Our first erev Shabbat service of 2008 will be held at Columcille.

**Date** Saturday 19th January  
**Event** Shabbat Service  
**Venue** St Mark's Unitarian Church  
7 Castle Terrace  
**Time** 11am

Shabbat service led by Rabbi Mark. The service will include a welcome to our community for Eva Vierbovska and Helen Ford. Following the service there will be a special Kiddush sponsored by Steve Engleman to celebrate his recent recovery from brain surgery and some of its rather unpleasant after-effects. The Community is cordially invited to enjoy the Kiddush.

### Weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January

Rabbi Mark is up this weekend. We are still confirming details, but on Sunday we expect to have **cheder**, **Choosing Judaism** and **Kabbalat Torah** group. Details will be confirmed with those involved, but if you would like more details, please contact Nick, Gillian or Rabbi Mark.

And don't forget the **Burns Supper** on Saturday evening, 19th January! More details on page 2.

### EVENTS & SERVICES

**Date** Friday 1st February  
**Event** Erev Shabbat Service  
**Venue** Columcille Centre,  
Newbattle Terrace  
**Time** 7pm

The service will be followed by a family supper.

**Date** Saturday 9th February  
**Event** Shabbat Service  
**Venue** to be confirmed  
**Time** 11am

Rabbi Mark will be with us this weekend as he is delivering a talk at Limmud in Glasgow.

### ELJC AGM

Sukkat Shalom's Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, 27th January at 4pm. The meeting will be followed by refreshments. The venue has not been finalised but more information will be forthcoming soon.

A mailing will be sent to all members later this month. Papers for the meeting will be included and the venue details confirmed.

In the meantime, any constitutional resolutions to be put to the membership at the AGM should be sent in advance to Maurice.

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## The first ever ELJC Burns Supper



19<sup>th</sup> January  
at Historic Inch House  
(once a shelter to Jacobites)  
7 pm

Immortal Memory proposed by  
Dr Gerry Carruthers,  
renowned author and Burns expert

Entertainments  
including Burns songs sung by  
Rabbi Mark Solomon

Professional catering  
whisky for toasts provided  
BYOB for other alcoholic drinks  
(free corkage)

**Number of tickets strictly limited  
Book now to avoid disappoint-  
ment**

**See enclosed booking form  
Cost £25 per person**

## Sukkat Shalom - Meetings of the Council

The date of the next Council meeting is Monday, 14 January at 7:30. If anyone in the Community has an item or issue which they would like to be discussed by the Council, or would like to attend, please get in touch with one of our Council members.

## עברית

### Book Now for New Hebrew Class Starting in February

Are you interesting in learning or improving your Hebrew? Would you like to study the language of the prayers in depth? A second series of Hebrew language classes will be starting in February.

Using the siddur as our core text, instructor Yifat Haber will lead us through close study of selected prayers or berachot, providing an opportunity to learn grammar, vocabulary and some of the history of the language. Yifat welcomes requests for specific prayers or berachot to study.

This will be a four-week course, beginning the first week of February, and meeting weekly. Each session will be two hours long, held on a day to be agreed. The venue is also under discussion, but is likely to be in Leith. Sukkat Shalom is pleased to subsidise the cost of tuition for members. Tuition for members will be £4 for the course; for non-members £40.

New students at any level are very welcome! Don't worry if you are a beginner or if your Hebrew is rusty. We can have more than one session if required.

If you are interested in attending the course, please contact Kristi at [newsletter@eljc.org](mailto:newsletter@eljc.org) or 0131-466-9356 by 21 January, indicating which days you would be able to attend (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) and your level of current Hebrew knowledge.

## **Kabbalat Torah (KT)**

Kabbalat Torah (“receiving the Torah”) is a ceremony for young people after bar mitzvah. In Edinburgh the KT group, which meets with Rabbi Mark when he is up, is planning to conduct a service this year, with our own theme and structure. The idea behind KT is that Liberal Judaism believes that thirteen is too young an age to commit to Judaism and stop learning. Also, children are not recognized as adult until much later than thirteen in modern society. The KT service therefore gives the group the personal decision to renew their commitment to their faith at an age when we are more mature.

KT encourages us to delve deeper into Judaism and discover how it affects issues in our lives and the society we live in. Apart from the preparation for the service itself, the program includes participating in the religious and cultural aspects of the community. And recently we even got a trip to Amsterdam...

*Daniel Naftalin*

Daniel and I, alongside KT members of Rabbi Mark’s synagogue and our brother Isaac, went on an educational tour of Amsterdam last month, exploring various synagogues and aspects of Jewish life different to ours in the UK: in particular we visited the Anne Frank house, and read extracts from her diary describing the hardships of life in hiding from the Nazis. This had an impact on me, especially, because although I had heard so much about Anne Frank, the diary, and the difficulties of her life in hiding, I didn’t really understand the mental strength and fortitude it must have required to stay in the cramped conditions of the secret annex for so long. Reading her diary also gave me insight into the whole concept of suffering. From one person’s suffering, many others can derive hope from the fact that whatever oppression we experience, we can always resist and somehow survive, and also an appreciation of our freedom, all the greater for knowing the price that people like us have paid for it in the past.

But as well as this rather melancholy interpretation of her diaries, the visit

to Amsterdam also had many positive experiences derived from such things as visiting the museum of Judaism, visiting various Dutch synagogues, having a little insight into the lives of Dutch Jews (we were hosted by members of a Dutch synagogue) and non-Jews (they cycle A LOT!), and being able to share these truly wonderful experiences with a number of liberal Jewish teenagers just like ourselves!

*Joe Naftalin*

## **Jewish Immersion**

It was my privilege to join Helen and Eva in London last month, just after their interviews with the Rabbinic Board of Liberal Judaism. I arrived at the Montague Centre to find them relaxing and taking tea with, among others, Rabbis Mark Solomon and Aaron Goldstein. As expected, their interviews had gone well, and were much less scary than either had expected.

It was the last night of Hanukkah, and so we all piled in to Mark’s car and drove to his home shul (the Liberal Jewish Synagogue) to join a group lighting a huge menorah there, and had a tour of their magnificent new building. From there to the Sternberg Centre where the mikvah had been booked for them. My role was to witness that each of them was really completely immersed, and both needed a second try, so I felt I had had a role.

Then on to Mark’s house where more Hanukkiah’s were lit (see below). Finally for a true immersion in Jewish ways we ended the evening with a copious meal at the Dizengoff restaurant in Golders Green.

*Gillian Raab*





## Four Corners

The latest edition of Four Corners is now available online at [http://www.j-scot.org.uk/Four\\_Corners/Four\\_Corners.html](http://www.j-scot.org.uk/Four_Corners/Four_Corners.html). Four Corners is the newsletter of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities. If you'd like a paper copy of the Four Corners, contact Leah Granat at 07887 488 100.

You can also find [A Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland](#) on the SCJC website. Published last month, the *Guide* includes a list of synagogues, sources for kosher food, Jewish bookstores, and information on a number of other Jewish organisations.

The SCJC also publishes [MEMO](#), Minority Ethnic Matters Overview, in partnership with BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland). The latest edition of MEMO, which covers issues of interest to a variety of minority communities, can also be found on the JCSC website.

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With all its grandeur, the Sabbath is not sufficient unto itself. Its spiritual reality calls for companionship.... It is not good that the spirit should be alone, so Israel was destined to be a helpmeet for the Sabbath.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, in *The Sabbath*



## Scotland Day Limmud

The Scotland day Limmud, *Expanding Horizons*, will take place on Sunday, 10th February at Hutcheson's Grammar School in Glasgow.

There will be around 50 sessions running, from cookery to current affairs, puppetry to politics, and much more. There will also be family sessions to which children are welcome. Highlights will include a talk by Rabbi Mark and a session on singing niggunim by Stephanie Brickman.

The all-inclusive ticket covers the full day's programme, kosher lunch and other refreshments.

A bus will be going from Edinburgh. To find out more about the planned speakers and activities, go to <http://www.limmud.org/day/scotland/>

Booking forms are now available online by email at [scotland@limmud.org](mailto:scotland@limmud.org) or by phone at 0141-639-4541. Book by 25th January for the early bird discount.


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## Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Eric Milligan, Lord Provost of Edinburgh from 1996-2003, will be speaking to the Lit on Sunday 13th January, in the Community Centre on Salisbury Road, at 8pm.

## Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre

A Tartan/Burns Coffee Morning will take place on Sunday 3rd February. For further information or to volunteer to help out, contact Doreen Bowman or email [jcc@ehcong.com](mailto:jcc@ehcong.com).



# liberal judaism

## **Interfaith Tour of Israel and Jordan**

14th - 19th May 2008: Liberal Judaism and the Dittons Council of Christians and Jews have organised an interfaith tour of Israel - including Petra in Jordan - led by Rabbi Danny Rich and Father Patrick Shanahan, with archaeologist Roberta Harris. Come together as Jews and Christians for a unique perspective of the land from both religions. Information, including an itinerary and a registration form are available from the Liberal Judaism [website](http://www.liberaljudaism.org), or email [shlich@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:shlich@liberaljudaism.org)

## **Liberal Jews on Air**


If you haven't already tuned in at [www.jcomradio.net](http://www.jcomradio.net), make sure you don't miss out. If you happen to do that on MONDAYS between 6.00 and 7.00 pm, you'll hear Rabbi Pete Tobias' radio show, 'I'm a rabbi - get me out of here!'. The first show was on Monday 26th November and the series will continue until 11th February 2008.

## **Feeling Adventurous? 'tent' is Heading for the Top ... of Ben Nevis!**

'tent', the community for young adults, has set a challenge. They're looking to recruit a group of 10 to 15 people (aged over 25) to climb Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in the UK, in February. The event is a fundraiser for the charity Make a Wish Foundation: [www.make-a-wish.org.uk](http://www.make-a-wish.org.uk)

for more details contact:

Trudy on 07961 375619 or [trudy@redpictures.co.uk](mailto:trudy@redpictures.co.uk) or Mike on 0770 178603 or [michael@reibscheid.co.uk](mailto:michael@reibscheid.co.uk)



# liberal judaism

## **Liberal Judaism's Biennial Weekend 4-6 April 2008**

This year's biennial theme "Creation and Creativity" will allow us to explore both the arts and the sciences as Liberal Jews.

A range of exciting workshops is planned to cover both the arts and the sciences, so whether you are interested in one or the other or both, there will be plenty for you. Some workshops will be "how to" sessions, while others will explore current issues. You will have a chance to tap into your own creativity as well as to consider the relationship between art and Judaism with workshops on making holy music, making midrash, writing poetry, and using art to explore our spiritual lives. You will also have the opportunity to consider the role of science in the world today. Science-themed workshops are planned to include end of life issues, medical treatments in the context of Talmudic discourse, the tension between ethics and efficiency in food production and many more.

Music, poetry and art are already well represented in our scheduled workshops, but if you are planning to attend the Biennial and have a particular interest in an aspect of science and would like to suggest a workshop theme or even offer to lead one, please let us know. Esther Aronsfeld would be pleased to hear from you. You can contact her by e-mail at [ejarons@beeb.net](mailto:ejarons@beeb.net) or by phone on 020 8866 6343.

Check our website for further information [www.liberaljudaism.org/biennial](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/biennial). Sign up now for this exciting biennial to take advantage of the early bird booking period. Pick up your booking form from your community today or download it from the biennial website as above.

## Letters to the Editor

### Personal Security Issue - Signing on-line petitions against anti-Semitic websites

In response to Gordon's well-advised cautionary item on Personal Security on the Internet, I would like to make the following response in order that it may be helpful to others. I do not imply any criticism of either Gordon or the L & B Police – they are acting on our behalf and are being vigilant for our security and safety, for which we thank them.

The original Site which has caused so much upset and controversy is this one –

<http://www.JewWatch.com/>

On the surface, it seems to be quite innocent and innocuous, but it has obviously been used for more dubious purposes. Following its discovery, many people all over the world – Jews and non-Jews alike – took exception to this site and asked Google to remove it (see my separate page on Google's Response to the problem).

The website called 'Shitler's List' (not to be confused with 'Shitlers List' which is a pop band) then came into being – see the links below. I do urge you to read the Introduction before you go the 8 Volumes in the list. If you are concerned at all that your name may have been added inadvertently, I would suggest that you go to each volume and do a search for your own name (Ctrl +F and put in your name). I did this plus a couple more names and can happily tell you that I do not seem to have appeared on it! I also point you towards this site –

<http://www.sethf.com/anticensorware/google/jew-watch.php>

My own personal view on the signing of Internet Petitions is this –

It is very important that we are aware of the inherent dangers in signing all online petitions. I do sign online petitions from time to time, but I choose carefully what I sign and why I am signing it. My name regularly appears on different websites for a variety of reasons - whilst being cautious, I don't think we (or I personally) can 'go underground' when there are grave matters against which to protest. I appreciate that it can also cause problems, but silence is not always an option – being silent will often compound the issue. I'm sure there are many others besides me in both Jewish Communities who do sign petitions and we/they should have the personal freedom to do so.

*Rebekah Gronowski*

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### Thank you from Steve Engleman

Many of you will know that following brain surgery towards the end of October, I was extremely ill. During that period my wife Kathie and I received a very substantial number of cards, emails and other forms of good wishes from individuals from the Sukkat Shalom community. I hadn't previously appreciated how valuable all these good wishes would be to me. All of these meant a great deal to me and very much helped me through what was a very difficult time for me. So this is a heart-felt thank you to all of you.

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**ELJC Support Group**  
**07904 813162**

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Many thanks to all who contributed this month. Items for publication are welcomed, as are responses to items published. The deadline for the next newsletter will be **Monday, 21st January**. Please email all contributions to [newsletter@eljc.org](mailto:newsletter@eljc.org).