

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

Sukkat Shalom is a constituent of liberal judaism

October 2008

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Cheder Children Lead Erev Shabbat

On 5th September our Erev Shabbat service was led by the cheder children for the first time. The children worked with Stewart Green for several months, and then for a few intense weeks leading up to the service.



In his introduction to the service, Stewart commented,

'They have worked really hard and I'm personally very proud of them. Their application, and the way they've fitted in the additional practices amongst homework, after school clubs—and everything else they have to do—has been tremendous.

We started with a number of objectives:

- To familiarise the children with the Friday night service and to improve their ability to follow the service themselves;
- To increase their understanding of the structure and meaning of the service;
- To consolidate their Hebrew reading;
- To improve their ability to follow and read other services;
- To empower them and support their self-confidence by giving them an opportunity to experience a sense of achievement and show their learning;

- To raise the profile of the cheder within the community.

In the beginning (sounds just like the Torah doesn't it!), consolidating and developing reading in Hebrew was the primary objective. And I'm thrilled with where the children have got to on this. It's not all perfect or totally fluent yet. BUT, that said, *every bit of Hebrew you will hear tonight is being read, and has been learnt, from the Hebrew.* The children have never made use of the transliteration. So, we hope you will bear with any slowness or slips.

Overall, I'm very pleased with what they have learned and I hope you will find that they have achieved an enormous amount in terms of those initial overall objectives.'

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Jewish Calendar for October 2008

1st October -- Rosh Hashanah (2nd day)
8th October -- Yom Kippur
13th October -- Erev Sukkot
14th October -- Sukkot (1st day)
21st October -- Shemini Azeret
22nd October -- Simhat Torah
29th-30th October -- Rosh Hodesh Heshvan

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EVENTS & SERVICES

Date Friday 3rd October
Event **Erev Shabbat Service**
Venue **Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace**
Time **7 pm**

Date Tuesday 8th October
Event **Kol Nidre**
Venue **St Marks, Castle Terrace**
Time **6:30pm**

Date Wednesday 9th October
Event **Yom Kippur Services**
Venue **St Marks, Castle Terrace**

Shacharit (Morning service)	11.00 am
Musaph (Additional service)	1:30 pm
Break	3:00
Study session	3:30
Minchor (Afternoon service)	4:00
Children's service	5:00
Yizchor (Memorial service)	5:30
Ne'ilah (Concluding service)	6:00

Date Saturday 18th October
Event **Shabbat Sukkot Service**
Venue **Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace**
Time **11 am**

Rabbi Mark will be leading the service. We will be decorating the sukkah from 9am, so come early and join in! Following the service we'll share fruit and nibbles in the sukkah. Please bring some nibbles to share.

Tea and Talmud will take place on Saturday afternoon, 3-5pm at Columcille.

The "Choosing Judaism" class will be held on Sunday morning.

Date Monday 20th October
Event **Simhat Torah Service**
Venue **Quaker Meeting House**
Time **6:30pm**

Advance notice -- in November, our Shabbat service will be held on the second Saturday of the month, when Rabbi Mark will be visiting.

Cheder Service, *continued*

A number of people supported the effort, including all the cheder parents, Nick Silk, who helped teach the service in the early stage, and Maurice Naftalin, who recorded the songs.

The new cheder teacher, Shani Zour, was on hand to see her pupils lead their first service.

Well done, Naomi, Leora, Adam, Rohan and Sarah!



For more information about cheder, contact Stewart Green.

Thanks to Stewart Green for his photos and contribution to this article, as well as his work with the children.

News from the Sukkat Shalom Council

Update of Members' Data and New Directory - reminder

By now all members should have received a mailing from the membership secretary requesting that they update their contact information. This mailing also requests information for the new members' directory. Please be sure to complete your form and return it to the membership secretary as soon as possible.

Human Rights Shabbat

December will be the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ELJC is planning a human rights shabbat in commemoration. For more information, or to get involved, contact Lauren Fox.

Holiday Details

Tickets and Security

For reasons of security, **ADMITTANCE TO ALL SERVICES WILL BE BY TICKET ONLY**. All members will receive a ticket by post prior to the High Holy Day services. All visitors, including friends and relatives, who wish to attend services are requested to apply for a ticket. We do not make a formal charge for tickets, but ask those who are able to do so to make a donation. We suggest a donation (if you receive a wage) of £25 for a ticket.

We look after our own safety and security on Yom Kippur, as at all our services. To do that effectively we need volunteers who are prepared to take their turn —The more of us who volunteer, the less time each of us has to spend on the door. It is an important role, not to only to make sure that we are secure, but also to be a welcoming face to members and guests. If you would like to volunteer or to find out more, please contact Gordon Barclay on security@eljic.org

Kol Nidrei Appeal

The Kol Nidrei appeal will this year go to : Cosgrove Care, Marie Curie, Physicians for Human Rights, and Tzedek.

Yom Kippur: Breaking the Fast

We will be going to a restaurant after the conclusion of the Yom Kippur service. If you would like to go and/or for further details, please contact our secretary Nancy Warren (secretary@eljic.org).

Children

We do not plan to have a crèche during any of the services. However, we will have some 'worksheets' relating to the High Holy Days which children will be able to complete/colour in. For those parents wishing to take children out of the services to use the worksheets, there will be a separate room at St Marks.

During the Yizkor service, Gillian Raab and Nancy Lynner will lead a children's activity.

There is a service specifically for children at 5pm on Yom Kippur, to which adults are also invited.

Memorial Service

If you have a relative whose name you would like to be remembered in the memorial service on Yom Kippur, please let Nick Silk have details (Hebrew name, English name and relationship; details provided last year are still on file). It would be helpful if these details were given prior to Yom Kippur.

Prayer Books

The Liberal Judaism prayer book *Machzor Ruach Chadash* will be used for all High Holy Day services. Some of you will already have copies of the machzor. If you would like to purchase a copy before the High Holy Days, please contact Nick. The cost of the books is £16.90.

The Sukkot and Simchat Torah services will use the 'usual' Liberal Judaism prayer book *Siddur Lev Chadash*.

Building/Decorating the Sukkah

We are holding our Sukkot service this year during the festival, on Saturday 18th October. **We will be decorating the sukkah from 9 am**, so please bring along greenery from your garden, plus fruit from your garden, your allotment, bought from a shop etc.

The service will start at 11am and after the service we will have some 'nibbles' – hummus, cake and the like – together with fruit from the sukkah. Please bring along some appropriate 'nibbles'! Help will also be required to dismantle the sukkah although at the time of writing we have still to confirm details as Columcille may wish us to leave the sukkah up for a while. We'll confirm details via the newsletter.

Simchat Torah

The service starts (and finishes!) earlier than normal evening services, so we hope as many children as possible will be able to attend. Any contributions of sweets for the children – and adults – to eat as we parade the scroll will be most welcome. Children are encouraged to make flags and bring them along.

Our Rabbi

Rabbi Haskell Bernat, an American Rabbi with over 40 years' experience, will be leading our High Holy Day services.

Your Newsletter Needs You

We hope that you enjoy the newsletter and we're always looking for ways to make it better. But pulling the newsletter together from scratch each month is actually a very time-consuming task. If we want to have a substantive, sustainable newsletter each month, we need more participation from the community.

We need regular contributors or columnists. Would you like to write a column on Jewish food, activities for children, Jewish arts or culture, events? How about a Jewish book review column? Have you always wanted to be a crossword or puzzle designer? Here's your chance! Young people – would you like to write about Jewish life and issues from a young person's point of view? These are suggestions, so if you have other ideas, please propose a subject! Columns could be less frequent than monthly, but I'd like to put them on a regular schedule so that I know when to expect them. Columns could also be shared. Another option would be for someone to take over as a subject editor (eg, Jewish arts editor) and commission others to write about that topic.

A number of people have commented about how they've enjoyed recent articles contributed by members, like Katy Bromberg's account of her travels through Jewish Eastern

Europe. This month's newsletter offers a feature by Michael Hornsby on Judaism in contemporary Poland. We hope to keep these feature articles coming, but for that we need you! Want to share your interest in a subject? Write a feature. To discuss subjects, length and schedule, call or email the editor.

Finally, I'd like to plan a few special issues or series per year. So I'm issuing a call for contributions for the following.

First, the 'kosher issue'. In contemporary life, there are many different perspectives and practices informing the way that we do (or don't) keep kosher. How do we, as Liberal Jews in a small community, approach kashrut? Essays, notes or comments are welcomed! These could cover a range of topics, from personal experiences, to LJ perspectives, to philosophical debates.

The second special issue might be described as 'coming to Jewish Edinburgh'. Our community is very diverse, including members from many countries and backgrounds. Some of us draw upon experiences of different approaches to Judaism as well. This issue would give us the chance to share stories of how we came to Jewish Edinburgh, our experiences of being Jewish in Scotland and what the ELJC community has meant to us in the process.

If you're interested in contributing in any way to either issue, please contact the editor at newsletter@eljic.org or 0131-466-9356 to indicate your interest and I'll be able to provide details about style, suggested word counts and deadlines.

Kristi

The Exchange

Do you have something you'd like to buy, sell, trade? Want to announce an achievement, or just share a bit of news with others in the community? Send contributions for the Members' Exchange to the editor at newsletter@eljic.org.

Kol Yisrael Chaverim ...

These words were said to me during my stay in Lublin, in eastern Poland, at the beginning of August. A trip back to the city where I had my first job, back in the late 1980s, had unexpectedly turned into a kind of Jewish adventure.

When I first went to Poland, to teach English and Welsh (yes, you read that correctly) to undergraduates at the Catholic University of Lublin in 1988, Communism still reigned supreme and there was little, if any, sign of Jewish life in the city. There were certainly signs that there had once been a thriving Jewish community there before the war, but these amounted to relics from the past – a small, two-room synagogue that had somehow escaped the destructive tendencies of the Nazis, graveyards, the buildings that used to house the Jewish hospital and Yeshivah Chochmei, among others. None of these sites was functioning in their original capacity, of course. For all intents and purposes, Lublin (and indeed the whole of Poland) was Judenfrei, or 'free of Jews'.

I returned ten years later, and with the fall of Communism, there were signs of resurgence in interest in things Jewish, but I felt there was a real danger that the memory of Polish Jews was becoming folklorised; a romantic view of the Jews as inhabitants of pre-war Poland, a surface affection for Poland's Jewish past, which sometimes hid virulent anti-Semitism. It was almost unimaginable that a modern Jewish life was possible in the Poland of 1998.

Ten years on, and I found myself once again in Lublin. Much had changed – the Communist-imposed names had disappeared from the streets, American-style malls had sprung up and a café-style culture was springing up in the town centre and the old town. (If you have ever seen 'Yentl', part of it was filmed in Lublin's old town). What had changed ever more was the feeling of a Jewish presence in the city. Whereas, according to one of the few Lublin Jews I was lucky enough to meet, Paweł Matraszek, there were only 45 Jewish people in the city today (compared to an estimated 15,000 in the whole of Poland), 'Jewish' Lublin seemed to be experiencing a sort of renaissance. A recently-established Jewish-style café in the Old Town, called Madragorza, acts as a centre for people interested in all things Jewish. The owner makes frequent trips to Israel and as well as serving Jewish-style food in her café, also sells a variety of objects of Jewish interest: copies of a recent bilingual (Polish-Hebrew) siddur; Jewish calendars; mezzuzot, etc. Lublin also plays host to

occasional visits from a rabbi based in Warsaw, Rabbi Tanya Segal, an Israeli of Russian origin, who brings a taste of Reform Judaism to a city renowned in the past for its centres of Chasidic learning. But, according to Paweł, few Jewish people go to such meetings – audiences are mainly composed of Poles wishing to learn more about Judaism.

This Jewish 'renaissance' was also visible outwith Lublin too. On a trip to Kazimierz Dolny, a town with a sizeable pre-war Jewish population and where, according to one poet, 'w Kazimierzu Wisła mówi do mnie po żydowsku' ('in Kazimierz, the river Vistula speaks to me in Yiddish'), my hosts and I attended an open forum with a 'Jewish family', as the event was advertised. It turned out that it involved a young, married couple from Warsaw who had converted on discovering their Jewish roots and who had chosen to become 'dati', or ultra-orthodox. It was a fascinating event, not only from the perspective of the answers they gave, but also from the questions the audience chose to ask. The initial questions focused on food and sex! As the audience began to see that this couple was merely a little exotic and not in fact from another planet, the questions became less outlandish. The couple told of discovering their Jewish roots a few years ago, going to conversion classes in Warsaw, meeting each other ... and the rest was history. As no one else seemed to be asking what to me was an obvious question, I raised the point about their orthodoxy – why choose to be ultra-orthodox, when other options were available? Their answer did not surprise me – for them, being ultra-orthodox was being 'authentically' Jewish. It is a return to an idealized past, no doubt, but it is also, I feel, an extreme reaction to the extreme events of the Holocaust, a mirroring of and a distancing from the denigration and destruction of Judaism by attempting to become as Jewish as possible.



The most poignant event during my stay, however, concerns the encounter we had with

some Israelis. We met them by the most amazing of coincidences. My friend's husband works for Radio Lublin and in his role as a reporter, was walking through the Old Town one day, microphone in hand. He was spotted by the Israelis in question, one of whom called out, "Voice of Lublin, Voice of Jerusalem!" Of course, the Israelis had nothing to do with Jerusalem radio, but my friend's husband got on the phone straight away to his wife, to let us know Israeli 'reporters' were in town. In fact, we were just round the corner, and so we made our way to where the Israelis were sitting. We found them, bizarrely enough, at a coffee stand being maintained by American Evangelical Christians! The location of the stand was the key though – it was directly opposite the apartment where two of the Israelis had their roots. Apparently, their family had lived at 5 Grodzka Street since the 17th century. While looking for this flat, the Israelis had been kindly invited to take a seat by the Americans and this is where we met them (and got our free cup of coffee too!)




We soon heard the amazing tale of the two people looking for their roots. One of them, Heniek, had been born in 1946 in a parallel street, Lubartowska, which was the main street of the Jewish area in pre-war Lublin. He was on the hunt for his birth certificate. This led us on what turned out to be a wild goose chase. We went to a variety of government buildings and eventually found the registrar's office for births. Frustratingly, the one post-war year for which all records were missing was 1946. We then tried what had been the Jewish hospital, even though Heniek had been born at home, in the hope that they might hold some sort of record of births. No luck here either – all records were destroyed once 10 years had passed. Even though I had no personal investment in the search, I too could relate closely to the frustration this must have generated in the Israelis. I felt some sort of connection to their plight and indeed some sort of obligation to help them as best I could, by

translating necessary information where I could. It was at this point that one of them said to me, "Kol Yisrael chaverim" ('The whole of the Israel is friends') and this really summed up for me why I probably felt I had to do the best I could for them during their stay in Poland. We said goodbye to them that afternoon, as they set off in their hire car to go to Kraków, via the death camp at Majdanek. I visited Majdanek the following day myself, in order to remember a victim who had been murdered there, and found two Israeli memorial candles already there. I like to think it was our new Israeli friends who had left them there.

My stay in Poland left me with mixed emotions. It had been the most Jewishly-informative trip I had ever made to Poland. More than ever before, Poland seems to be embracing its Jewish past. On the other hand, though, old attitudes do not die easily, and anti-Semitism is still visible there. For example, we went to the only remaining Jewish prayer room in Lublin, on Lubartowska Street. It is a like a time capsule – it is as if the worshippers had just stepped out, and were due back at any moment, even though any services held there after the war can only have been intermittent at best. Paweł, mentioned above, is the current caretaker of the synagogue, showed us a bucketful of stones that he had collected, stones that had been thrown through the windows before Paweł had had the windows boarded up ... though I suppose it would be easy to exaggerate the significance of such acts. I remember being in the Southampton shul a few years ago and a rock being thrown through the window there too. My hope is that the common sense and decency of the vast majority of the Polish people will prevail, especially as the political climate there changes, due to increased contact with the European Union.

Michael Hornsby






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Statement of Communal Collaboration

Liberal Judaism has just released a joint statement together with the Movement for Reform Judaism and Masorti Judaism, calling for greater collaboration within the Jewish community. The Statement proclaims that, "Pluralism means living creatively with diversity. It is based on treating other groups and their philosophies with respect, while maintaining the right to uphold the value of one's own position. Diversity is a reality within the British Jewish community; true pluralism is, as yet, not. We believe that British Jewry both needs and deserves better." To read the statement in full and to see related articles, go to <http://bit.ly/communal-collab>.

Global Debt Week 12th - 19th October

Liberal Judaism has been a strong supporter of the campaign to bring about the cancellation of all illegitimate and unpayable debt on the world's poorest countries. Over ten times as much money is paid from developing countries as debt service than is received in development aid. In many countries, such as Kenya, the government is forced to prioritise debt payments over providing basic education and healthcare or simply feeding the vast numbers of malnourished Kenyan citizens. For Debt week this year we would encourage as many congregations as possible to take part in action to help bring an end to this unjust global situation. Following this link www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/debtweek will provide all information needed to take on a project, from simple petition-style lobbying to a mass 'stand-up' that last year involved 43.7 million people in 127 countries.



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'tent' Seminar in Berlin

6th - 9th November. 'tent', Tamar Olami and "Jung und Judisch" (Germany) are co-producing a seminar called Lech Lecha, with some of the most inspiring presenters and teachers from Progressive Judaism in Europe . Bursaries are available to help those who find it difficult to meet the cost of the seminar. Interested? Lech Lecha - Lechi Lach: make your Jewish journey part of ours and join us for a wonderful weekend! Registration opens on 5th August 2008 at www.tamar-europe.com. For more information email: [jewish.journeys@gmail.com](mailto: jewish.journeys@gmail.com) or contact Avivit on a.katzil@liberaljudaism.org.

Passport to Liberal Judaism

The Passport to Liberal Judaism has now been launched on the Liberal Judaism website. The scheme is for people aged 20 - 35 who would like to become more involved with Liberal Judaism without committing to one particular community and who are you prepared to pay a modest amount to associate themselves with Liberal Judaism values and practices. The Passport to Liberal Judaism offers benefits such as discounts at Liberal Judaism and 'tent' events, access to all Liberal Judaism communities and complimentary tickets to High Holy Day services. For more information or to apply please go to <http://bit.ly/lj-passport>

Leo Baeck College Invites You to Study with Skype

The second and last of the Leo Baeck College Skype Shiurs ("because you don't all live in North London") is on the evening of Tuesday 28th October, from 8-10pm. **Jews and Power** looks at the clash of religion and politics in the run-up to the US presidential elections. To find out more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/skype3ts>.

New Jewish Book Club

Members of Edinburgh Hebrew Community have formed a new Jewish book club and invite members of the Liberal community to join. The informal meetings are generally held in someone's home, and usually start at 8pm. The books for the next three meetings are as follows:

Wednesday 15 October: ***Rabbis and Wives*** by Chaim Grade (available on Amazon in the used book section)

Thursday 20 November: ***Credit Draper*** by J David Simons—A very special evening as the author is coming; start time 7pm (not 8pm) The next three books will be chosen at this meeting.

Monday 5 January: ***The Clothes on their Backs*** by Linda Grant

If are interested in attending or would like more information, email Betsy Dorfman, brdorfman@yahoo.com.

Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre Future Events

26th October - Quiz night.
22nd November - Race Night
20th December - Chanukah Dinner
25th January- Burns Supper

Latif Bolat

Turkish Mystic Sufi Musician, Singer and Composer, Latif Bolat (www.latifbolat.com/) will be visiting

Edinburgh on **Saturday 4 October 2008**. His visit will feature two events.

Day Workshop: Turkish Mystic Sufi Literature: Poetry, Storytelling, Humour and Philosophical Writings.

Healing Sounds of the Wandering Dervishes of Turkey: Turkish Mystic Sufi Music, Poetry, Stories and Images

See: www.mesp.org.uk, for time and venue and online booking, or contact Neill Walker (0131 331 4469) for more information

New and returning members

Our membership numbers now exceed 60 adults, for the first time ever! We welcome **Michael Hornsby** (see article on page 5) and also the **Stern family (Elaine, Guy and sons Casey and Sam)** recently arrived in Edinburgh from London, but before that from New Jersey and from Germany, where the boys spent their early years.

We also welcome back former member **Rebecca Wober**, now in Edinburgh after a spell working in London. Rebecca will be collaborating with her partner Gordon Duffy in his architectural practice Studio DuB. Their latest event was a Doors Open Day talk (architectural tour) on Studio DuB's conversion of the Basil Spence Southside Garage (<http://bit.ly/ssg>).

Gary Dickson Tour 5769

I wish all of my fellow congregants at Sukkat Sholom, a healthy and fulfilling New Year (and a life-affirming fast). Alas, I am unable to be with you in Edinburgh.

My excuse? I'm off on an American university lecture tour. I'll be speaking on subjects connected to my book *The Children's Crusade* which is published in the U.S. as well as the U.K.

Crossing the country from the east coast to the Pacific, I'll be stopping off at universities in New York, St. Louis, Baltimore, Richmond, North Carolina, Philadelphia, New York City, Berkeley, and Stanford.

Thanks to kind invitations from a Hillel Foundation and a Jewish Theological Seminary, I shall be be looked after for Rosh Hashanah in Baltimore and Yom Kippur in New York. Jews really do welcome strangers, don't they?

So have a good Yom Tov. Next year in Edinburgh!

Gary Dickson

Spotlight on... Katy Bromberg and Alasdair Gray

Spotlight on... is a new column. Each month we interview someone from the community to learn more about them.



When Katy and Alasdair met during their first week at Edinburgh University, they didn't realise they were renewing an old acquaintance. At age 10, Katy attended a violin workshop at St Andrews. Alasdair's family, who lived in Cardiff, were there for a country dance workshop at the same time. Many years later, when their parents met for what they thought was the first time, Katy's mother, much to Katy's surprise, unearthed a picture of young Katy and Alasdair with Alasdair's father.

Growing up in the States (Michigan), Katy fondly remembers a community where her rabbi dressed up as 'Super Rabbi' for Purim. This same rabbi performed Katy and Alasdair's wedding last year.

Katy always wanted to live in Scotland and came to Edinburgh for university. Although she initially attended Edinburgh University she soon transferred to the Edinburgh College of Art, where she studied photography.

Katy works in student services for the Open University and Alasdair is a research associate in the Department of Computing Science at Glasgow University. They both do lots of dancing. Katy mainly takes (and sometimes teaches) ballet classes and Alasdair teaches Scot-

tish Country dancing. After a short-lived swing dancing experiment they are currently taking a tango class. Those who attended the ceilidh last spring got to see a demonstration of their dancing skill.

In addition to her work for the University, Katy is also starting a craft business, which involves sewing, quilting, crochet, tating and photography. She is particularly interested in working with found fabrics. She made the chuppah for her wedding and has also made a variety of baby quilts. Check out her website at www.misericordia.co.uk to see her designs. She also takes commissions.

Katy is part of an informal crafting circle made up of friends who meet in each other's homes to work, chat, and have tea and cake. They are happy for new people to get involved, so if you are crafty – or interested in learning – contact Katy for details.

Katy's other interests and talents include cooking. She has lots of recipes from her great grandmother (for whom she is named), although she admits to always tinkering with recipes. Alasdair confirms that the results are usually good! Katy has even bribed reluctant friends to donate blood with her cinnamon biscuits, though she says that is a secret recipe.

Next month Joe Goldblatt takes over as the editor of "Spotlight on..."

Artist Donates Paintings

Two years ago, ELJC member Miriam Vickers was at risk of losing her sight in one eye following a complex retinal detachment. After major operations at the Princess Alexandra Pavillion, her sight was restored. Miriam was recently in the news when she generously donated a series of six paintings to the Princess Alexandra Medical Pavillion, in thanks for the support she received from the staff. For more details, see the story at <http://tinyurl.com/mvickers>.

Letter from Edinburgh

When Kristi and I first talked about this column, it was going to be a “Letter from America” and so it still is—in spirit! Although I’m back now, a few impressions of my six weeks stay in New York City still remain. I’m afraid that the one that stands out produces mixed emotions: I was working on 7th Avenue, exactly across the street from the world headquarters of Lehman Brothers, when their ship went down. The view from our windows was the huge animated sign on Lehman’s frontage, obscured for a time by telescopic cameras elevated from vans parked in the street so that they could peer into 1st- and 2nd-floor offices. Students on our course, brand-new employees of Morgan Stanley, spent more time watching the MS stock price than they did listening to our wise words!

Work was quite demanding—more than I’m used to! I was teaching a much broader range of subjects than usual, so I had a lot to learn. Although, since some of the syllabus was truly ancient for an IT course, I could use things I learnt before the students were born! It was reassuring to find that I remembered ancient things as well as ever, although it made me feel ancient too.

Having an apartment in New York certainly boosts one’s popularity, I found. The friends and family who visited gave me pretexts for sightseeing. Max Goldblatt (Joe and Nancy’s son), who lives in NYC, generously gave up a day of his time to show Daniel and me around, with a sighting of the Statue of Liberty through sheets of rain, and a memorable visit to the Tenement Museum (www.tenement.org) which vividly brought to life the triumphs and tragedies of 19th-century immigrants under the terrible conditions of the time.

Of course, I had to take advantage of being in the world’s biggest concentration of diaspora Jewish life. A group called Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) thoughtfully timed their annual picnic for my first weekend in New York. I found a lot of

good company there, and helpful orientation to New York city life. It was through them that I heard about a free concert the following weekend starring Pete Seeger, who at 89 still puts on a good show! That at least was one audience in which I didn’t feel too ancient.

The picnic was in a Brooklyn park. I couldn’t help thinking how much at home Steve Engleman, a Brooklyn boy and very much a JFREJ, would have been. It felt a bit like a pilgrimage!

Equally of course, I had to see what the huge variety of progressive shuls had to offer. In fact the first one I tried was so congenial that I went back twice more. I really enjoyed my first two visits, and felt we had a lot to learn from the wonderful blend of informality and learning that characterised the services. You can perhaps imagine my disappointment when on my third visit, the sermon—on previous occasions more like a shiur—was replaced by a ferocious exhortation from a visiting Reform Zionist dignitary for his audience of New York Jews to make “part-time aliyah” (summer in NYC, winter in Israel) on the grounds that Israel is now as comfortable to live in as New York!

All in all—and hard work notwithstanding—I enjoyed my time in NYC immensely. My work was well received, but whether I’ll be asked back to teach for Morgan Stanley depends not only on my performance but on that of Morgan Stanley too. And for that and the much bigger issues, I’ll just have to wait and watch, along with the rest of the world, the unfolding drama in the months to come. L’shana tovah indeed.

Maurice Naftalin

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 Friday, 17th October. Please email all contributions to newsletter@eljc.org.

**ELJC Support Group
07904 813162**

Sukkat Shalom

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Scottish Charity No SC035678

Sukkat Shalom is a constituent of liberal judaism

October 2008

Chairman: Maurice Naftalin, chair@eljc.org

Secretary: Nancy Warren, secretary@eljc.org

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Cheder Children Lead Erev Shabbat

On 5th September our Erev Shabbat service was led by the cheder children for the first time. The children worked with Stewart Green for several months, and then for a few intense weeks leading up to the service.



In his introduction to the service, Stewart commented,

‘They have worked really hard and I’m personally very proud of them. Their application, and the way they’ve fitted in the additional practices amongst homework, after school clubs—and everything else they have to do—has been tremendous.

We started with a number of objectives:

- To familiarise the children with the Friday night service and to improve their ability to follow the service themselves;
- To increase their understanding of the structure and meaning of the service;
- To consolidate their Hebrew reading;
- To improve their ability to follow and read other services;
- To empower them and support their self-confidence by giving them an opportunity to experience a sense of achievement and show their learning;

- To raise the profile of the cheder within the community.

In the beginning (sounds just like the Torah doesn’t it!), consolidating and developing reading in Hebrew was the primary objective. And I’m thrilled with where the children have got to on this. It’s not all perfect or totally fluent yet. BUT, that said, *every bit of Hebrew you will hear tonight is being read, and has been learnt, from the Hebrew.* The children have never made use of the transliteration. So, we hope you will bear with any slowness or slips.

Overall, I’m very pleased with what they have learned and I hope you will find that they have achieved an enormous amount in terms of those initial overall objectives.’

Continued on page 2

Jewish Calendar for October 2008

1st October -- Rosh Hashanah (2nd day)

8th October -- Yom Kippur

13th October -- Erev Sukkot

14th October -- Sukkot (1st day)

21st October -- Shemini Azeret

22nd October -- Simhat Torah

29th-30th October -- Rosh Hodesh Heshvan

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EVENTS & SERVICES

Date Friday 3rd October
Event **Erev Shabbat Service**
Venue **Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace**
Time **7 pm**

Date Tuesday 8th October
Event **Kol Nidre**
Venue **St Marks, Castle Terrace**
Time **6:30pm**

Date Wednesday 9th October
Event **Yom Kippur Services**
Venue **St Marks, Castle Terrace**

Shacharit (Morning service)	11.00 am
Musaph (Additional service)	1:30 pm
Break	3:00
Study session	3:30
Minchot (Afternoon service)	4:00
Children's service	5:00
Yizchor (Memorial service)	5:30
Ne'ilah (Concluding service)	6:00

Date Saturday 18th October
Event **Shabbat Sukkot Service**
Venue **Columcille Centre,
Newbattle Terrace**
Time **11 am**

Rabbi Mark will be leading the service. We will be decorating the sukkah from 9am, so come early and join in! Following the service we'll share fruit and nibbles in the sukkah. Please bring some nibbles to share.

Tea and Talmud will take place on Saturday afternoon, 3-5pm at Columcille.

The "Choosing Judaism" class will be held on Sunday morning.

Date Monday 20th October
Event **Simhat Torah Service**
Venue **Quaker Meeting House**
Time **6:30pm**

Advance notice -- in November, our Shabbat service will be held on the second Saturday of the month, when Rabbi Mark will be visiting.

Cheder Service, *continued*

A number of people supported the effort, including all the cheder parents, Nick Silk, who helped teach the service in the early stage, and Maurice Naftalin, who recorded the songs.

The new cheder teacher, Shani Zour, was on hand to see her pupils lead their first service.

Well done, Naomi, Leora, Adam, Rohan and Sarah!



For more information about cheder, contact Stewart Green.

Thanks to Stewart Green for his photos and contribution to this article, as well as his work with the children.

News from the Sukkat Shalom Council

Update of Members' Data and New Directory - reminder

By now all members should have received a mailing from the membership secretary requesting that they update their contact information. This mailing also requests information for the new members' directory. Please be sure to complete your form and return it to the membership secretary as soon as possible.

Human Rights Shabbat

December will be the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ELJC is planning a human rights shabbat in commemoration. For more information, or to get involved, contact Lauren Fox.

Holiday Details

Tickets and Security

For reasons of security, **ADMITTANCE TO ALL SERVICES WILL BE BY TICKET ONLY**. All members will receive a ticket by post prior to the High Holy Day services. All visitors, including friends and relatives, who wish to attend services are requested to apply for a ticket. We do not make a formal charge for tickets, but ask those who are able to do so to make a donation. We suggest a donation (if you receive a wage) of £25 for a ticket.

We look after our own safety and security on Yom Kippur, as at all our services. To do that effectively we need volunteers who are prepared to take their turn —The more of us who volunteer, the less time each of us has to spend on the door. It is an important role, not to only to make sure that we are secure, but also to be a welcoming face to members and guests. If you would like to volunteer or to find out more, please contact Gordon Barclay on security@eljic.org

Kol Nidrei Appeal

The Kol Nidrei appeal will this year go to : Cosgrove Care, Marie Curie, Physicians for Human Rights, and Tzedek.

Yom Kippur: Breaking the Fast

We will be going to a restaurant after the conclusion of the Yom Kippur service. If you would like to go and/or for further details, please contact our secretary Nancy Warren (secretary@eljic.org).

Children

We do not plan to have a crèche during any of the services. However, we will have some 'worksheets' relating to the High Holy Days which children will be able to complete/colour in. For those parents wishing to take children out of the services to use the worksheets, there will be a separate room at St Marks.

During the Yizkor service, Gillian Raab and Nancy Lynner will lead a children's activity.

There is a service specifically for children at 5pm on Yom Kippur, to which adults are also invited.

Memorial Service

If you have a relative whose name you would like to be remembered in the memorial service on Yom Kippur, please let Nick Silk have details (Hebrew name, English name and relationship; details provided last year are still on file). It would be helpful if these details were given prior to Yom Kippur.

Prayer Books

The Liberal Judaism prayer book *Machzor Ruach Chadash* will be used for all High Holy Day services. Some of you will already have copies of the machzor. If you would like to purchase a copy before the High Holy Days, please contact Nick. The cost of the books is £16.90.

The Sukkot and Simchat Torah services will use the 'usual' Liberal Judaism prayer book *Siddur Lev Chadash*.

Building/Decorating the Sukkah

We are holding our Sukkot service this year during the festival, on Saturday 18th October. **We will be decorating the sukkah from 9 am**, so please bring along greenery from your garden, plus fruit from your garden, your allotment, bought from a shop etc.

The service will start at 11am and after the service we will have some 'nibbles' – hummus, cake and the like – together with fruit from the sukkah. Please bring along some appropriate 'nibbles'! Help will also be required to dismantle the sukkah although at the time of writing we have still to confirm details as Columcille may wish us to leave the sukkah up for a while. We'll confirm details via the newsletter.

Simchat Torah

The service starts (and finishes!) earlier than normal evening services, so we hope as many children as possible will be able to attend. Any contributions of sweets for the children – and adults – to eat as we parade the scroll will be most welcome. Children are encouraged to make flags and bring them along.

Our Rabbi

Rabbi Haskell Bernat, an American Rabbi with over 40 years' experience, will be leading our High Holy Day services.

Your Newsletter Needs You

We hope that you enjoy the newsletter and we're always looking for ways to make it better. But pulling the newsletter together from scratch each month is actually a very time-consuming task. If we want to have a substantive, sustainable newsletter each month, we need more participation from the community.

We need regular contributors or columnists. Would you like to write a column on Jewish food, activities for children, Jewish arts or culture, events? How about a Jewish book review column? Have you always wanted to be a crossword or puzzle designer? Here's your chance! Young people – would you like to write about Jewish life and issues from a young person's point of view? These are suggestions, so if you have other ideas, please propose a subject! Columns could be less frequent than monthly, but I'd like to put them on a regular schedule so that I know when to expect them. Columns could also be shared. Another option would be for someone to take over as a subject editor (eg, Jewish arts editor) and commission others to write about that topic.

A number of people have commented about how they've enjoyed recent articles contributed by members, like Katy Bromberg's account of her travels through Jewish Eastern

Europe. This month's newsletter offers a feature by Michael Hornsby on Judaism in contemporary Poland. We hope to keep these feature articles coming, but for that we need you! Want to share your interest in a subject? Write a feature. To discuss subjects, length and schedule, call or email the editor.

Finally, I'd like to plan a few special issues or series per year. So I'm issuing a call for contributions for the following.

First, the 'kosher issue'. In contemporary life, there are many different perspectives and practices informing the way that we do (or don't) keep kosher. How do we, as Liberal Jews in a small community, approach kashrut? Essays, notes or comments are welcomed! These could cover a range of topics, from personal experiences, to LJ perspectives, to philosophical debates.

The second special issue might be described as 'coming to Jewish Edinburgh'. Our community is very diverse, including members from many countries and backgrounds. Some of us draw upon experiences of different approaches to Judaism as well. This issue would give us the chance to share stories of how we came to Jewish Edinburgh, our experiences of being Jewish in Scotland and what the ELJC community has meant to us in the process.

If you're interested in contributing in any way to either issue, please contact the editor at newsletter@eljic.org or 0131-466-9356 to indicate your interest and I'll be able to provide details about style, suggested word counts and deadlines.

Kristi

The Exchange

Do you have something you'd like to buy, sell, trade? Want to announce an achievement, or just share a bit of news with others in the community? Send contributions for the Members' Exchange to the editor at newsletter@eljic.org.

Kol Yisrael Chaverim ...

These words were said to me during my stay in Lublin, in eastern Poland, at the beginning of August. A trip back to the city where I had my first job, back in the late 1980s, had unexpectedly turned into a kind of Jewish adventure.

When I first went to Poland, to teach English and Welsh (yes, you read that correctly) to undergraduates at the Catholic University of Lublin in 1988, Communism still reigned supreme and there was little, if any, sign of Jewish life in the city. There were certainly signs that there had once been a thriving Jewish community there before the war, but these amounted to relics from the past – a small, two-room synagogue that had somehow escaped the destructive tendencies of the Nazis, graveyards, the buildings that used to house the Jewish hospital and Yeshivah Chochmei, among others. None of these sites was functioning in their original capacity, of course. For all intents and purposes, Lublin (and indeed the whole of Poland) was Judenfrei, or 'free of Jews'.

I returned ten years later, and with the fall of Communism, there were signs of resurgence in interest in things Jewish, but I felt there was a real danger that the memory of Polish Jews was becoming folklorised; a romantic view of the Jews as inhabitants of pre-war Poland, a surface affection for Poland's Jewish past, which sometimes hid virulent anti-Semitism. It was almost unimaginable that a modern Jewish life was possible in the Poland of 1998.

Ten years on, and I found myself once again in Lublin. Much had changed – the Communist-imposed names had disappeared from the streets, American-style malls had sprung up and a café-style culture was springing up in the town centre and the old town. (If you have ever seen 'Yentl', part of it was filmed in Lublin's old town). What had changed ever more was the feeling of a Jewish presence in the city. Whereas, according to one of the few Lublin Jews I was lucky enough to meet, Paweł Matraszek, there were only 45 Jewish people in the city today (compared to an estimated 15,000 in the whole of Poland), 'Jewish' Lublin seemed to be experiencing a sort of renaissance. A recently-established Jewish-style café in the Old Town, called Madragorza, acts as a centre for people interested in all things Jewish. The owner makes frequent trips to Israel and as well as serving Jewish-style food in her café, also sells a variety of objects of Jewish interest: copies of a recent bilingual (Polish-Hebrew) siddur; Jewish calendars; mezzuzot, etc. Lublin also plays host to

occasional visits from a rabbi based in Warsaw, Rabbi Tanya Segal, an Israeli of Russian origin, who brings a taste of Reform Judaism to a city renowned in the past for its centres of Chasidic learning. But, according to Paweł, few Jewish people go to such meetings – audiences are mainly composed of Poles wishing to learn more about Judaism.

This Jewish 'renaissance' was also visible outwith Lublin too. On a trip to Kazimierz Dolny, a town with a sizeable pre-war Jewish population and where, according to one poet, 'w Kazimierzu Wisła mówi do mnie po żydowsku' ('in Kazimierz, the river Vistula speaks to me in Yiddish'), my hosts and I attended an open forum with a 'Jewish family', as the event was advertised. It turned out that it involved a young, married couple from Warsaw who had converted on discovering their Jewish roots and who had chosen to become 'dati', or ultra-orthodox. It was a fascinating event, not only from the perspective of the answers they gave, but also from the questions the audience chose to ask. The initial questions focused on food and sex! As the audience began to see that this couple was merely a little exotic and not in fact from another planet, the questions became less outlandish. The couple told of discovering their Jewish roots a few years ago, going to conversion classes in Warsaw, meeting each other ... and the rest was history. As no one else seemed to be asking what to me was an obvious question, I raised the point about their orthodoxy – why choose to be ultra-orthodox, when other options were available? Their answer did not surprise me – for them, being ultra-orthodox was being 'authentically' Jewish. It is a return to an idealized past, no doubt, but it is also, I feel, an extreme reaction to the extreme events of the Holocaust, a mirroring of and a distancing from the denigration and destruction of Judaism by attempting to become as Jewish as possible.



The most poignant event during my stay, however, concerns the encounter we had with

some Israelis. We met them by the most amazing of coincidences. My friend's husband works for Radio Lublin and in his role as a reporter, was walking through the Old Town one day, microphone in hand. He was spotted by the Israelis in question, one of whom called out, "Voice of Lublin, Voice of Jerusalem!" Of course, the Israelis had nothing to do with Jerusalem radio, but my friend's husband got on the phone straight away to his wife, to let us know Israeli 'reporters' were in town. In fact, we were just round the corner, and so we made our way to where the Israelis were sitting. We found them, bizarrely enough, at a coffee stand being maintained by American Evangelical Christians! The location of the stand was the key though – it was directly opposite the apartment where two of the Israelis had their roots. Apparently, their family had lived at 5 Grodzka Street since the 17th century. While looking for this flat, the Israelis had been kindly invited to take a seat by the Americans and this is where we met them (and got our free cup of coffee too!)




We soon heard the amazing tale of the two people looking for their roots. One of them, Heniek, had been born in 1946 in a parallel street, Lubartowska, which was the main street of the Jewish area in pre-war Lublin. He was on the hunt for his birth certificate. This led us on what turned out to be a wild goose chase. We went to a variety of government buildings and eventually found the registrar's office for births. Frustratingly, the one post-war year for which all records were missing was 1946. We then tried what had been the Jewish hospital, even though Heniek had been born at home, in the hope that they might hold some sort of record of births. No luck here either – all records were destroyed once 10 years had passed. Even though I had no personal investment in the search, I too could relate closely to the frustration this must have generated in the Israelis. I felt some sort of connection to their plight and indeed some sort of obligation to help them as best I could, by

translating necessary information where I could. It was at this point that one of them said to me, "Kol Yisrael chaverim" ('The whole of the Israel is friends') and this really summed up for me why I probably felt I had to do the best I could for them during their stay in Poland. We said goodbye to them that afternoon, as they set off in their hire car to go to Kraków, via the death camp at Majdanek. I visited Majdanek the following day myself, in order to remember a victim who had been murdered there, and found two Israeli memorial candles already there. I like to think it was our new Israeli friends who had left them there.

My stay in Poland left me with mixed emotions. It had been the most Jewishly-informative trip I had ever made to Poland. More than ever before, Poland seems to be embracing its Jewish past. On the other hand, though, old attitudes do not die easily, and anti-Semitism is still visible there. For example, we went to the only remaining Jewish prayer room in Lublin, on Lubartowska Street. It is a like a time capsule – it is as if the worshippers had just stepped out, and were due back at any moment, even though any services held there after the war can only have been intermittent at best. Paweł, mentioned above, is the current caretaker of the synagogue, showed us a bucketful of stones that he had collected, stones that had been thrown through the windows before Paweł had had the windows boarded up ... though I suppose it would be easy to exaggerate the significance of such acts. I remember being in the Southampton shul a few years ago and a rock being thrown through the window there too. My hope is that the common sense and decency of the vast majority of the Polish people will prevail, especially as the political climate there changes, due to increased contact with the European Union.

Michael Hornsby






liberal judaism

Statement of Communal Collaboration

Liberal Judaism has just released a joint statement together with the Movement for Reform Judaism and Masorti Judaism, calling for greater collaboration within the Jewish community. The Statement proclaims that, "Pluralism means living creatively with diversity. It is based on treating other groups and their philosophies with respect, while maintaining the right to uphold the value of one's own position. Diversity is a reality within the British Jewish community; true pluralism is, as yet, not. We believe that British Jewry both needs and deserves better." To read the statement in full and to see related articles, go to <http://bit.ly/communal-collab>.

Global Debt Week 12th - 19th October

Liberal Judaism has been a strong supporter of the campaign to bring about the cancellation of all illegitimate and unpayable debt on the world's poorest countries. Over ten times as much money is paid from developing countries as debt service than is received in development aid. In many countries, such as Kenya, the government is forced to prioritise debt payments over providing basic education and healthcare or simply feeding the vast numbers of malnourished Kenyan citizens. For Debt week this year we would encourage as many congregations as possible to take part in action to help bring an end to this unjust global situation. Following this link www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/debtweek will provide all information needed to take on a project, from simple petition-style lobbying to a mass 'stand-up' that last year involved 43.7 million people in 127 countries.



liberal judaism

'tent' Seminar in Berlin

6th - 9th November. 'tent', Tamar Olami and "Jung und Judisch" (Germany) are co-producing a seminar called Lech Lecha, with some of the most inspiring presenters and teachers from Progressive Judaism in Europe . Bursaries are available to help those who find it difficult to meet the cost of the seminar. Interested? Lech Lecha - Lechi Lach: make your Jewish journey part of ours and join us for a wonderful weekend! Registration opens on 5th August 2008 at www.tamar-europe.com. For more information email: [jewish.journeys@gmail.com](mailto: jewish.journeys@gmail.com) or contact Avivit on a.katzil@liberaljudaism.org.

Passport to Liberal Judaism

The Passport to Liberal Judaism has now been launched on the Liberal Judaism website. The scheme is for people aged 20 - 35 who would like to become more involved with Liberal Judaism without committing to one particular community and who are you prepared to pay a modest amount to associate themselves with Liberal Judaism values and practices. The Passport to Liberal Judaism offers benefits such as discounts at Liberal Judaism and 'tent' events, access to all Liberal Judaism communities and complimentary tickets to High Holy Day services. For more information or to apply please go to <http://bit.ly/lj-passport>

Leo Baeck College Invites You to Study with Skype

The second and last of the Leo Baeck College Skype Shiurs ("because you don't all live in North London") is on the evening of Tuesday 28th October, from 8-10pm. **Jews and Power** looks at the clash of religion and politics in the run-up to the US presidential elections. To find out more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/skype3ts>.

New Jewish Book Club

Members of Edinburgh Hebrew Community have formed a new Jewish book club and invite members of the Liberal community to join. The informal meetings are generally held in someone's home, and usually start at 8pm. The books for the next three meetings are as follows:

Wednesday 15 October: ***Rabbis and Wives*** by Chaim Grade (available on Amazon in the used book section)

Thursday 20 November: ***Credit Draper*** by J David Simons—A very special evening as the author is coming; start time 7pm (not 8pm) The next three books will be chosen at this meeting.

Monday 5 January: ***The Clothes on their Backs*** by Linda Grant

If are interested in attending or would like more information, email Betsy Dorfman, brdorfman@yahoo.com.

Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre Future Events

26th October - Quiz night.
22nd November - Race Night
20th December - Chanukah Dinner
25th January- Burns Supper

Latif Bolat

Turkish Mystic Sufi Musician, Singer and Composer, Latif Bolat (www.latifbolat.com/) will be visiting

Edinburgh on **Saturday 4 October 2008**. His visit will feature two events.

Day Workshop: Turkish Mystic Sufi Literature: Poetry, Storytelling, Humour and Philosophical Writings.

Healing Sounds of the Wandering Dervishes of Turkey: Turkish Mystic Sufi Music, Poetry, Stories and Images

See: www.mesp.org.uk, for time and venue and online booking, or contact Neill Walker (0131 331 4469) for more information

New and returning members

Our membership numbers now exceed 60 adults, for the first time ever! We welcome **Michael Hornsby** (see article on page 5) and also the **Stern family (Elaine, Guy and sons Casey and Sam)** recently arrived in Edinburgh from London, but before that from New Jersey and from Germany, where the boys spent their early years.

We also welcome back former member **Rebecca Wober**, now in Edinburgh after a spell working in London. Rebecca will be collaborating with her partner Gordon Duffy in his architectural practice Studio DuB. Their latest event was a Doors Open Day talk (architectural tour) on Studio DuB's conversion of the Basil Spence Southside Garage (<http://bit.ly/ssg>).

Gary Dickson Tour 5769

I wish all of my fellow congregants at Sukkat Sholom, a healthy and fulfilling New Year (and a life-affirming fast). Alas, I am unable to be with you in Edinburgh.

My excuse? I'm off on an American university lecture tour. I'll be speaking on subjects connected to my book **The Children's Crusade** which is published in the U.S. as well as the U.K.

Crossing the country from the east coast to the Pacific, I'll be stopping off at universities in New York, St. Louis, Baltimore, Richmond, North Carolina, Philadelphia, New York City, Berkeley, and Stanford.

Thanks to kind invitations from a Hillel Foundation and a Jewish Theological Seminary, I shall be be looked after for Rosh Hashanah in Baltimore and Yom Kippur in New York. Jews really do welcome strangers, don't they?

So have a good Yom Tov. Next year in Edinburgh!

Gary Dickson

Spotlight on... Katy Bromberg and Alasdair Gray

Spotlight on... is a new column. Each month we interview someone from the community to learn more about them.



When Katy and Alasdair met during their first week at Edinburgh University, they didn't realise they were renewing an old acquaintance. At age 10, Katy attended a violin workshop at St Andrews. Alasdair's family, who lived in Cardiff, were there for a country dance workshop at the same time. Many years later, when their parents met for what they thought was the first time, Katy's mother, much to Katy's surprise, unearthed a picture of young Katy and Alasdair with Alasdair's father.

Growing up in the States (Michigan), Katy fondly remembers a community where her rabbi dressed up as 'Super Rabbi' for Purim. This same rabbi performed Katy and Alasdair's wedding last year.

Katy always wanted to live in Scotland and came to Edinburgh for university. Although she initially attended Edinburgh University she soon transferred to the Edinburgh College of Art, where she studied photography.

Katy works in student services for the Open University and Alasdair is a research associate in the Department of Computing Science at Glasgow University. They both do lots of dancing. Katy mainly takes (and sometimes teaches) ballet classes and Alasdair teaches Scot-

tish Country dancing. After a short-lived swing dancing experiment they are currently taking a tango class. Those who attended the ceilidh last spring got to see a demonstration of their dancing skill.

In addition to her work for the University, Katy is also starting a craft business, which involves sewing, quilting, crochet, tating and photography. She is particularly interested in working with found fabrics. She made the chuppah for her wedding and has also made a variety of baby quilts. Check out her website at www.misericordia.co.uk to see her designs. She also takes commissions.

Katy is part of an informal crafting circle made up of friends who meet in each other's homes to work, chat, and have tea and cake. They are happy for new people to get involved, so if you are crafty – or interested in learning – contact Katy for details.

Katy's other interests and talents include cooking. She has lots of recipes from her great grandmother (for whom she is named), although she admits to always tinkering with recipes. Alasdair confirms that the results are usually good! Katy has even bribed reluctant friends to donate blood with her cinnamon biscuits, though she says that is a secret recipe.

Next month Joe Goldblatt takes over as the editor of "Spotlight on..."

Artist Donates Paintings

Two years ago, ELJC member Miriam Vickers was at risk of losing her sight in one eye following a complex retinal detachment. After major operations at the Princess Alexandra Pavillion, her sight was restored. Miriam was recently in the news when she generously donated a series of six paintings to the Princess Alexandra Medical Pavillion, in thanks for the support she received from the staff. For more details, see the story at <http://tinyurl.com/mvickers>.

Letter from Edinburgh

When Kristi and I first talked about this column, it was going to be a “Letter from America” and so it still is—in spirit! Although I’m back now, a few impressions of my six weeks stay in New York City still remain. I’m afraid that the one that stands out produces mixed emotions: I was working on 7th Avenue, exactly across the street from the world headquarters of Lehman Brothers, when their ship went down. The view from our windows was the huge animated sign on Lehman’s frontage, obscured for a time by telescopic cameras elevated from vans parked in the street so that they could peer into 1st- and 2nd-floor offices. Students on our course, brand-new employees of Morgan Stanley, spent more time watching the MS stock price than they did listening to our wise words!

Work was quite demanding—more than I’m used to! I was teaching a much broader range of subjects than usual, so I had a lot to learn. Although, since some of the syllabus was truly ancient for an IT course, I could use things I learnt before the students were born! It was reassuring to find that I remembered ancient things as well as ever, although it made me feel ancient too.

Having an apartment in New York certainly boosts one’s popularity, I found. The friends and family who visited gave me pretexts for sightseeing. Max Goldblatt (Joe and Nancy’s son), who lives in NYC, generously gave up a day of his time to show Daniel and me around, with a sighting of the Statue of Liberty through sheets of rain, and a memorable visit to the Tenement Museum (www.tenement.org) which vividly brought to life the triumphs and tragedies of 19th-century immigrants under the terrible conditions of the time.

Of course, I had to take advantage of being in the world’s biggest concentration of diaspora Jewish life. A group called Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) thoughtfully timed their annual picnic for my first weekend in New York. I found a lot of

good company there, and helpful orientation to New York city life. It was through them that I heard about a free concert the following weekend starring Pete Seeger, who at 89 still puts on a good show! That at least was one audience in which I didn’t feel too ancient.

The picnic was in a Brooklyn park. I couldn’t help thinking how much at home Steve Engleman, a Brooklyn boy and very much a JFREJ, would have been. It felt a bit like a pilgrimage!

Equally of course, I had to see what the huge variety of progressive shuls had to offer. In fact the first one I tried was so congenial that I went back twice more. I really enjoyed my first two visits, and felt we had a lot to learn from the wonderful blend of informality and learning that characterised the services. You can perhaps imagine my disappointment when on my third visit, the sermon—on previous occasions more like a shiur—was replaced by a ferocious exhortation from a visiting Reform Zionist dignitary for his audience of New York Jews to make “part-time aliyah” (summer in NYC, winter in Israel) on the grounds that Israel is now as comfortable to live in as New York!

All in all—and hard work notwithstanding—I enjoyed my time in NYC immensely. My work was well received, but whether I’ll be asked back to teach for Morgan Stanley depends not only on my performance but on that of Morgan Stanley too. And for that and the much bigger issues, I’ll just have to wait and watch, along with the rest of the world, the unfolding drama in the months to come. L’shana tovah indeed.

Maurice Naftalin

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 Friday, 17th October. Please email all contributions to newsletter@eljc.org.

**ELJC Support Group
07904 813162**