

November /
December 2007

Number 28

NLPJC Newsletter

North London Progressive Jewish Community



NLPJC events....

- “The Iron Wall”

Following our Erev Shabbat Service and Pot Luck Supper on **Friday 23rd November**, we will be showing the powerful & thought provoking film “The Iron Wall”, followed by an undoubtedly lively discussion! (See page 2 inside for more details). Service 7.30pm, Supper 8.15pm, film 8.45pm. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share. *Venue: The Community Rooms*

- **Chanukkah Party**

We will be celebrating Chanukkah on **Sunday 9th December at the Community Rooms.**

3.30pm Children’s party, with craft activities, games, stories, doughnuts and latkes.

6pm. Chanukkah evening service.

7pm Supper, followed by *Chanukkah, truth, myth and fantasy*. Exploring the Chanukkah story, with Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu. Please bring vegetarian food and drink to share to both events.

Dates for your diary....

- **Family Walk**

We are planning a walk to Highgate Woods on Saturday 19th January after the Service & cheder. Everyone welcome.

- **TuB’Shtvat Seder**

We will be celebrating TuB’shtvat with a seder meal on Mon 21st January at the Community Rooms at 6.30pm. More details in the next newsletter

See our website at www.nlpjc.org.uk

So many different voices

This year, during Yom Kippur, something very special happened. It was during *Mussaf*, the additional service, which happens in the early afternoon. Traditionally held as the holiest point of the day, *Mussaf* has within it the contemplation of the High Priest’s devotions during the days of the Temple. This year, for the second time, we used the special *Mussaf* service completed some years ago by members of Bristol and West Progressive Synagogue.

The first twenty pages or so recount the course of our people’s historical participation in the covenant. On the spur of the moment, I decided we should hold this part of the service in a completely different way.

I felt inspired by the Greeks, who hung their Aeolian harps upon the trees, and allowed the wind to create music by blowing across the strings. This is music created by chance, and we decided to create an aleotric service. For these twenty pages, we would simply wait until someone felt ready to read. We would follow the text in Hebrew and English. We

would begin the service and allow it to conduct itself. And so we did.

It was an incredible experience. A slow and careful journey through the words, with a surprising number of us tackling long paragraphs of Hebrew. For once, there was time. What stays with me still is the sense of our voices. So many different voices.

I have wondered at times about what a community really is. I used to think that what I loved the most about a community is getting to know, and like, the sorts of people I would never usually meet. Community then was a place to deal with difference.

I have also discovered the extraordinary and sometimes strange experience, of getting older with the same bunch of people. Is it only them who look so much older or me as well? Community here is a place to hold us as we move through our lives, with children being born and some of us dying. Bigger than a family. A place that holds up mirrors as we watch ourselves live.

I learned on Yom Kippur

that community is a place for speaking and listening. For a multiplicity of voices. Many voices expressing our inexpressible experiences.

For speaking and listening you have to be present. This demands a choice. The choice to be present and to be part of the conversation. Not being present means that you simply experience. Is our community a place where everyone is welcomed, where every voice feels able to speak? Is everyone heard? Do we feel ourselves part of a diversity of unplanned, surprising and creative noise-making, or is there a pressure to conform to certain ways of talking?

Do you join in with the music, or are you simply listening in?

Rabbi Shulamit
Ambalu



We sadly say good bye to Simon Grosser, who has been an active part of our community for some years, and became a full member after his affirmation in July. Simon (left) blew the shofar at the end of Yom Kippur and will never be forgotten for his extraordinary sound!

Many of us have come to know him well. We will miss him but wish him all the best in his new life in Australia. We hope it will be not good bye but *lehitraot*, see you soon.

liberal judaism

NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism

We are all Creative – A View

What does art or creative performance mean to you - pictures in an art gallery to admire or an evening at the theatre watching talented actors, far removed from your daily life? Or is it your living – how you earn your keep? Do you think it is working for the marketing department writing a report to promote new products?

As human beings we have creative potential that can enhance our lives and relationships with others. Over the last few centuries body and mind has been increasingly separated and this has been reflected in the way children have been brought up, communities function and societies organised. In a competitive world it is not surprising that the general view is that only those deemed talented are considered creative and everyone else is not.

NLPJC is growing and we want to encourage creativity. Everyone can contribute, share and create together, whether it be suggesting ideas for social events and organising them effectively, creating beautiful services, thinking creatively when discussing issues and making decisions, taking care of the environment or enabling others to get more out of life. Our cumulative creative energy can be a real force to push us forward in more meaningful and satisfying ways. Do we really only want the ancient, medieval and Victorian

thoughts, tunes, poems and prayers? We can treasure these and benefit from them as our inherited tradition, but should not we be adding by creating more that expresses what is meaningful to our experiences in the present, so that our efforts and achievements can be passed on for future generations?

Should almost all modern Jewish creativity come from America and Israel just because there are more Jews there? Isn't there experience from living in England or London or NLPJC?

At NLPJC we have the ideal opportunity to offer space and encouragement to everyone who is part of our community to allow their creative energies to develop and be enhanced. We can be a community where skills and ideas are shared to help create a more positive, constructive, meaningful, enjoyable and prosperous world. A contribution towards Tikkan Olam – healing the world and making it more whole for all humanity. This is for our very young and very old and everyone in between.

As some examples Rabbi Shulamit, Laura Miller our Cheder head teacher, parents and members have created an exciting bar/bat mitzvah programme; the wardens are creating a better environment for services and there are new exciting education programmes for adults and the children. We have supported the Rock and Roll Mops, a local young Jewish Klezmer band, by giving

them occasions to share their music with us. We have promoted The Solomon Sisters, local singers and dancers who performed at our recent fundraising event, and they have publicised us on their handouts. Several artists have exhibited at our events and the children have performed at services.

It will be really wonderful when we have our own bands, singers, visual artists and flower arrangers as well as creative befrienders who could all enjoy themselves and be available for events and celebrations. This gives art and performance a positive place in life rather than it being rarefied and separate from everyday life.

NLPJC will flourish if we build on previous experience from the past and go forward with a sense of confidence and willingness to encourage others and ourselves to be more creative. It is a way of living and being, rather than just living through time with no awareness or zest that life needs to be more than just the mundane. We can enhance life if we are open to new ideas, are inventive, take risks and learn and share new skills. We can aspire to be more than we are at the moment. In this way we are living in God's image or, for those who take the secular path, we are living life to the full!

To life! L' chaim!

Jackie Richards

“The Iron Wall”

"The Iron Wall", directed by Mohammed Alattar, a Palestinian American from Jerusalem, is an excellent and clearly presented hour long film starting with Jabotinsky's original concept of the iron wall, and then tracing the history of the early settling of Palestine, to the settlement project since 1967 and now the building of the Separation Wall. It also shows the impact of the settlers on Palestinian towns and villages, and most dramatically in Hebron. Many of the people interviewed are Israelis, Dror Etkes of Peace Now, Jeff Halper of ICAHD, Haaretz journalists etc and also settlers themselves, and includes key Palestinian representatives.

Abe Hayeem of Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine will take the discussion after the showing of the film.

Friday 23rd November

Erev Shabbat Service at 7.30pm, Pot Luck Supper at 8.15pm

followed by film and discussion at 8.45pm.

Please bring vegetarian food to share

The Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk, Stoke Newington Church St, N16

Celebrating the New Year



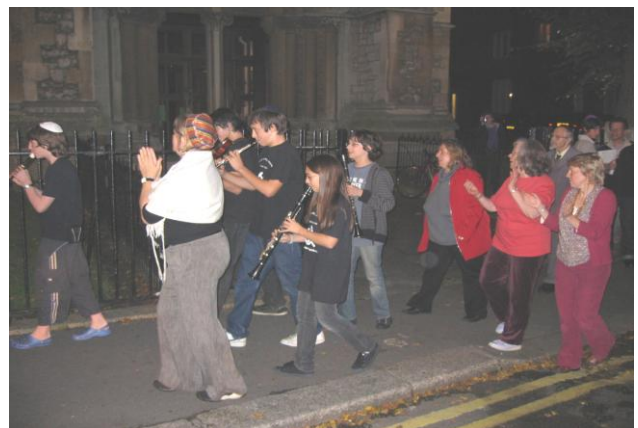
Feeding the ducks at the *Tashlich* ceremony (above)



Rosh Hashanah lunch (left) and decorating the Sukkah (right and below left).

Dancing in the street (below right) at Simchat Torah!

Photos taken by Simon Lukes & Simon Grosser



Many thanks to Cal Marcus for collecting the palm fronds & foliage, (once again kindly donated by Hackney Council Parks) and for building & creating an even more beautiful sukkah than last year's! After the sukkah was taken down, the fruit was donated to NLAH (North London Action for the Homeless).

HHD Appeal Update

Grateful thanks to everyone who has donated so generously to our High Holy Day Appeal. We have so far raised £1,196 to be divided between our 3 chosen charities : **Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID)**, **Street Child Africa** and **Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage (CCECH)**. We will be closing the appeal on November 15th, so there is still just time for anyone who would still like to make a donation. You can send a cheque made out to NLPJC to us at PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR.

Jewish Skills: Liberal Insights

Adult Education Term 1 ~ Autumn 2007

Our Adult Education Programme continues on Tuesday evenings at the Community Rooms

Teacher: Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

Contact for more details: 020 7403 3779 / nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

Download & complete the application form at www.nlpjc.org.uk ~ or just come along!

7pm- 8pm **Hebrew Level 1** For Absolute beginners and rusty readers
 8pm -9pm **Hebrew Level 2** Advanced course
 9pm- 10pm **Faces of God** This course is suitable for anyone with an interest in Jewish texts and philosophies(see below). Knowledge of Hebrew not necessary.

Date	Faces of God Session Topic
16 th October	Who or what is God? Exploring three 20 th Century Jewish Thinkers I
23th October	Half Term
30 th October	Who or what is God? Exploring three 20 th Century Jewish Thinkers II
6 th November	Thinking about God after the Holocaust I
13 th November	Thinking about God after the Holocaust II
20 nd November	A Guide for the Perplexed: Understanding Maimonides.
27 th November	Does God want us to suffer? The Talmud on Suffering
4 th December	Is there a Hidden Face of God? A Response from the Talmud
11 th December	The Creation of Humanity: a Divine Mistake? Exploring a Midrash

Sessions attended per week	Members of NLPJC	Members (Concs.)	Non-Members	Non-members (Concs.)
2 or 3	£80 per term	£40 per term	£120 per term	£60 per term
1	£40 per term	£20 per term	£60 per term	£30 per term
Drop-in for one off evenings	£10 per evening	£5 per evening	£15 per evening	£7.50 per evening

Join us at Limmud

Rabbi Shulamit & Rebekka Wedell will be at Limmud Winter Conference in Warwick this year. If you are going to Limmud & want to meet up during conference, please do get in touch on 020 7403 3779.

Limmud 23 – 27 December 07 :

www.limmud.org/conference Tel/email: 020 8438 6555 / office@limmud.org

Mazal Tov to Simon Lukes

Simon became a full member before Rosh Hashanah this year, and was one of the eight people called to read from the Torah at Simchat Torah. Simon opened the new Torah reading cycle with the first verses of Genesis. A great new beginning!

NLPJC Members News

A warm welcome to our new members & friends:

- ❖ Marc Turner
- ❖ Ben & Therese Steele & their children Leah & Amos
- ❖ Sheila Melzak
- ❖ Avishag Argov
- ❖ Anwen Grant

Mazal Tov....

To Miriam, Hannah & Kezia Davis, children of Anne Solomon & Aeron Davis, on the occasion of their Welcoming Ceremony on 20th October.

In the event of the death of an NLPJC member, please contact the Funeral Directors Martin Broad & Son 020 8441 6047 and Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu 020 7403 3779.

Donations

We see it as our duty to raise our income so that we are more fully able to fulfil our obligations towards each other and create a vibrant and inclusive community.

Some examples of the community's expenses:

Shabbat morning service = £120	Hosting a festival = £ 150
1 Adult Education evening = £200	1 Cheder session = £ 75
Creche materials = £30	Pot luck supper with speaker = £ 80
Special Kiddush £30 - £80	1 Newsletter print run = £150
Chollah £2; Kiddush wine £6	Insuring the Torah scrolls £700 p.a.
Showcase community event = £1, 400	
Buying & equipping a building = £2 million!	

Donations can be made at any time by cheque to NLPJC and sent to PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR. If you wish, you can earmark a donation for a particular purpose. Many thanks for your continuing support.

CHEDER CORNER

We start another year...

And this year, let one of our mitzvot be to come to cheder on time and regularly. We only meet every two weeks, and in some months not that often. Sessions skipped mean that important ideas and discussions are being missed by the Cheder students, since each of our students is an important voice in the community. This year, make it a 100% attendance year!

Thanks to everyone who came out on a Sunday night to talk about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah programme. The discussion was very open and freewheeling...as it always is in our community.

Some excellent suggestions were made about the programme, so now I am asking for your ideas. We need to add to the list of books and films in the programme on pages 14 and 19 on the programme. So here is a plea: **I need the names of books or films on Jewish themes or about the lives of Jews to add.** Please, anything that is available that you think would be appropriate for a 12-13 year old. I have already added some writing by Sholem Aleichem and IL Peretz, and *My Glorious Brothers* by Howard Fast. Another suggestion was that we add to the "Becoming an adult" list on page 7. Again, I am open to suggestions, so

please do make them.

Separate topic: Although I am not the greatest technological wizard on earth (or even in Etherley Road-actually I think my dog Toby could do as well as I do) I would like to set up a website (or something) for the Cheder. I would make sure that what we cover is there, so that students and parents can read about what we've done each session, and add suggestions/comments or ask questions during the interims.

Now, I am going to need help from those who know more than I do about this topic, so if you see me heading in your direction with a fixed look in my eye, please don't walk away...and if you can suggest a way of doing this even before I ask, please do! Some questions I am pondering: Should this be a yahoo group? Should I set up a website on geocities with email capability? Is there a better programme out there in cyberland that I don't about know yet? Can I do this without losing my mind...? Watch this space.

If you would like to know more about our Bar/Bat mitzvah programme, or have any suggestions for Laura, you can email her at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

Laura Miller
Head Teacher

The 100 club

This year, when you renew your membership, you will also be given the option to join our "100 club". Why should you? The idea is simple enough. We are asking you to pay £5 per month for a number. People can buy more than one number and the numbers are assigned in order. Each month, we will conduct a draw, and the winning number gets 50% of what has been collected. So, if 10 people have bought a single number each, then each month one of them gets to win £25. The more mathematically inclined will notice that this also means that NLPJC gets £25 per month. But that is a bonus..... More details with your membership renewal pack

Are you reading this?

This space could be working for you....

If you would like to advertise in our bi-monthly newsletter, please contact Julia by email at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or by post to PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR

Introductory Costs

Number of editions	Cost per month		
	1	3	6
Size of advert			
¼ page	£15.00	£13.50	£12.00
⅓ page	£20.00	£18.00	£16.00
½ page	£30.00	£27.00	£24.00
Full page	£50.00	£45.00	£40.00

Shiva Chairs in need of a good home

If anyone would like to volunteer for the mitzvah of looking after NLPJC's four fine shiva chairs, we would be most grateful! Please let Julia know by email nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or post: PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR

NLPJC 'Who's Who'

All officers and chair can be contacted at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or by post to PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR

Rabbi : Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu
Co-ordinator : Jackie Richards
Hon. Secretary : Claire Helman
Treasurer : Hannah Forbes
Prayers & Spirituality Chair : Joanna Ryam
Education Chair : Sue Lukes
Head & Cheder Teacher : Laura Miller
Children's & Adult's Hebrew Teacher : Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu
Volunteer Creche Worker : Anna Sklair
Membership Secretary: Daniel Casson
Administrator : Julia Chalfen
Social Action Co-ordinator : Daniel Casson
Marketing & Promotion: Claire Helman
Befriending Group: Kerry McCarthy & Prince Balwah
Fundraising : Joanna Ryam

Vacant Posts:

Befriending Co-ordinator
Family Representative
Youth
Senior Warden
Intergenerational
Social Events Co-ordinator

If you are a member of NLPJC and are interested in joining one of the groups, or would like to fill one of the vacant roles, we would be delighted to hear from you.

NLPJC Newsletter is edited by Julia Chalfen. The deadline for the January/February issue is 10th Dec. Please send articles for publication to: nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

NLPJC events calendar

November 2007 - January 2008

Most events are held at *the Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16*, unless otherwise stated

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>
Saturday 3 rd Nov	10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children / <u>crèche only</u> Shabbat Service	
Tuesdays 6 th , 13 th , 20 th , 27 th Nov	7pm/8pm/9pm	Adult Education Programme (<i>see pg 4</i>)	
Saturday 17 th Nov	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder (no crèche Shabbat Service but toys available)	
Friday 23 rd Nov	7.30pm / 8.15pm	Erev Shabbat Service / Supper & "Iron Wall" Film (<i>see pg 2</i>)	
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Saturday 1 st Dec	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder & creche Shabbat Service	
Tuesday 11 th Dec	7pm/8pm/9pm	Adult Education Programme (<i>see pg 4</i>) <i>End of Term 1</i>	
Sunday 9 th Dec	3.30pm / 6pm / 7pm	Children's Chanukkah Party / Evening Service / Supper	
Saturday 15 th Dec	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder (no creche Shabbat Service but toys available)	
Friday 21 st Dec	7.30pm / 8.15pm	Erev Shabbat Service / Supper	
<hr/>			
Saturday 5 th Jan	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder & creche Shabbat Service	
Tuesdays 15 th , 22 nd , 29 th Jan	7pm/8pm/9pm	Adult Education Programme (<i>see pg 4</i>) <i>Term 2 starts</i>	
Saturday 19 th Jan	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am....	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / cheder (no creche Shabbat Service but toys available) Followed by family walk to Highgate Woods	
Monday 21 st Jan	6.30pm	Tu B'shvat seder	
Friday 25 th Jan	7.30pm / 8.15pm	Erev Shabbat Service / Supper & Speaker (to be announced)	

Contact us at: North London Progressive Jewish Community, PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR.
Call Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779
email nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or see our discussion group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nlpjc>