

September / October /
November 2011

Number 45

NLPJC Newsletter

North London Progressive Jewish Community



NLPJC events....

• Early Erev Shabbats

This year, we have programmed in just one more of these highly enjoyable evenings for **Friday 9th September**. Then, unless there are huge objections (speak now!) our plan is to stop them over the winter, then resume again next Spring. Arrival from 5.30pm for a 6pm start. Candle lighting, food, games and maybe some songs. Please bring vegetarian food to share. *At the Community Rooms.*

• New Hebrew Course

Starts in November ~ see page 3

• New Members Kiddush

Sat 5th November ~ see page 4

• Batmitzvah of Esther Hobbs & Rachel Sklair

Sat 19th November ~ see page 4

• Rabbis for Human Rights 7pm on Sunday 27th November

~ An evening with Rabbi Nava Hefetz, Education Director of Rabbis for Human Rights, one of the most important organisations working within Israel for justice and democracy.

Rabbi Hefetz will lead an evening of learning and discussion.

Cost: £5 / £3 concs

Please bring vegetarian food to share for supper

Venue: The Community Rooms

Thinking of joining us?

Why not do it now? We offer a pro-rata system for anyone joining throughout the year, and if you join now your High Holy day tickets are included in your membership.

You can contact our administrator, Julia Chalfen, at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org for a membership pack or phone Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779 to discuss membership options.

See our website at www.nlpjc.org.uk

Sukkah:

a fragile, temporary booth
.....a tabernacle.....a
ramshackle temporary
structure that is nevertheless
beautiful and fragile.....
decorated with leaves and
fruit.....it is a place to
welcome honoured guests.....



A Sukkah is a beautiful, temporary place, but it's what goes on inside it that really counts. This year we are asking you to **Bring a Neighbour** to our communal Sukkah on **Shabbat afternoon, 15th October, from 1pm onwards.**

Bring your friends, colleagues, or the people from next door. Bring someone who has never been to a Sukkah before. This is a time to reach out beyond our Jewish community.

Come with your neighbour and bring vegetarian food and a story to share. *At the Community Rooms*

Sukkot Service: Wednesday 12th October

5 for 5.30pm Decorating the Sukkah

7pm ~ Special Sukkot Service & Supper in the Sukkah

Simchat Torah Service: Wednesday 19th October

6 for 6.30pm ~ Special Simchat Torah Service, followed by Celebrations & Supper

All welcome ~ adults & children.

Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

High Holiday Ticket Applications

Not a Member and need tickets for the High Holidays?
Already a member and want to buy extra tickets?

Most of us feel that we would like to avoid the crush of people buying tickets at the door during the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services. **Once again, we will only be selling tickets in advance.**

Please order them directly by post (to arrive no later than **Wednesday 14th September**) using the application form enclosed in this newsletter. If you have any queries please feel free to email Julia at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

Forms can also be downloaded from our website: www.nlpjc.org.uk
We look forward to welcoming you all.

Cheder Camping Trip ~ June 2011

"Camping was really fun. It was hot and sunny. We went for a very long walk to a village for ice cream. We spent the evenings round the campfire and we met some birds of prey"
Ella Tober Collins



liberal judaism

NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism

Communities & Connection

Summer is here, but summer in London is a short and quite provisional experience.

We have to learn to enjoy the brief bursts of sun, between the clouds and rain, because this time is so short. Soon, the leaves will turn and the days are already shortening. Autumn is coming, and with it the annual gathering for the high holidays.

Our community, both our members and the many people who have a long term connection, will once again come together. This might be something you are starting to think about, and it shows that although we are at times far apart, there is also a continuous thread of virtual connection. A reminder that we are always, somewhere, there, and that there is also a place to go when the shofar calls.

The thread is there whether the feeling of connection is important to you, or not. The thread is part of what makes it possible for this very newsletter to find its way into your hands. It's a thread that can feel demanding, even a bit annoying. Yet somewhere in the conscience or buried in the unconscious, is the knowledge that the connection is always there.

This is the tail end of the summer. At this summer's heart we saw or went through some terrible times, in Hackney, Tottenham and other parts of Haringey. The immediate shock is over, and the emergency responses are drawing to a close. Most of us will have been through a variety of responses. Anger, shock, sadness, the struggle to understand. Yet, during our listening campaign, as part of our work with North London Citizens, we found out that the most common worry for our members was a sense of disconnection. A feeling that it is sometimes very hard to make real relationships

across our communities.

People spoke about the need to connect with others across our differences, to build friendships with our neighbours. Our younger people want to feel safer on our streets.

When we came together, in June, with leaders of other Haringey schools and faith communities we discovered we were not the only people to say this. The feeling was strong enough for the entire Haringey group to make the issue of relationships across and within our communities, together with safety on the streets and employment, our highest priority.

And then came the summer riots. I think our listening campaign did pick up on a foundational truth, an uncomfortable reality that for many people underlies the everyday.

Looking at it from a Jewish perspective, one might well wonder about the essential human threads of connection. Where are those connecting threads? Can we really talk about a 'community' in the absence of proper enduring mutual connections? Is this why the young people trashed their neighbourhoods, because they simply are not 'theirs', the connections are just too occasional, fragmented and weak? And for the community in turn, are the young people 'theirs'? Are they 'ours'?

When the time will come to bring a particularly Jewish understanding to what goes wrong in some of our communities, I think it will be this. We can draw on our experience, of living with an underlying knowledge of connection. I call this a covenantal thread, the lifelong tug of obligation that keeps every one of us, however vaguely, connected. It can be a virtual, occasional, or even spiritual

reality. Ticking away silently in the background, perhaps, ready to awaken should the need arise, or should the time of year call, as it does at Rosh Hashanah or the other Jewish festivals. It's also a reminder that we are not really alone.

A Jewish response to this summer's riots might well ask, where are the other threads that should connect us to each other? And can communities start to build them? Proper real two way connections make us accountable, and they make each person count.

The courts are dealing with this summer's rioters, but a local community could demand that everyone involved should come face to face with the damage they have caused, and do something to put things right. The two way thread of connection means the young people, too, should also ask, 'what about me? What kind of future can I look forward to?' The community should then insist on each person's dignity. As we say, in our prayers, may we not be dependent on the support of others, may we live an upright way of life.

I believe that as we begin to join in the work of the wider community and working, I hope towards a stronger and safer society, there is something incredible in being able to offer a uniquely Jewish perspective. But it's not only for others. It begins with the self. A call or a tug, toward reflection and connection. And another New Year.

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

This year's Kol Nidre Appeal

This year we have chosen to support Music in Detention and ourselves, NLPJC.

Us, well, you know about our amazing work, so here is an introduction to **Music in Detention** and their amazing work!

Sue Lukes writes:

About 28,000 people were held as immigration detainees in 2010. Almost half of them were asylum seekers, and about half were held for two months or more. Some are deported, but a third are released into the UK, often getting leave to remain eventually. But detention centres are hidden away, detainees may not want to talk about their experiences and immigration detention is rarely the focus of public attention. It is all too easy to say "we did not know". But Music in Detention aims to stop us being bystanders.

Music In Detention exists for immigration detainees. We want the shared experience of music-making to build supportive relationships between detainees and the surrounding community. Our work helps detainees to cope with detention, and people in the wider community to understand their experience of it.

We deliver participatory music workshops in immigration removal (detention) centres. But we also run a programme of exchange workshops, taking detainees music to local schools, day centres, choirs, youth clubs, enabling people there to hear detainees, respond to them and work with them via the musicians. Sometimes these result in public performances.

Detainees value what we do

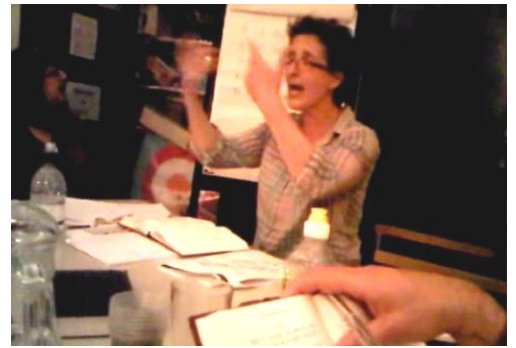
"For me we are giving this workshop because being in here does not change the fact that you are a human being and you deserve to enjoy yourself; your life should not be reduced to thinking about your case and worrying about your situation."

"I have spent a long time locked up. I'm in prison but when you see someone from the outside coming in, coming in to speak to us and do music with us, the hope to be outside is big. You find a way to feel positive. I think I will sleep well tonight."

We are an independent charity, and we believe that the life-affirming experience of group music-making, the confirmation that a person can still feel joy despite what they may have suffered, and the knowledge that, although they are locked-up and sometimes vilified, there are people in the UK who care about what they are going through, can go a long way to giving detainees strength. The strength to cope with their situation and the strength to change it.

Music In Detention, Kings Place Music Base, 90 York Way, London, N1 9AG www.musicindentention.org.uk
Tel: 020 7014 2811 | Mob: 07828 065624

We will be collecting for our chosen charities at the Yom Kippur services. If you know you won't be at the services but would still like to make a donation, you can send it in to the PO Box from anytime now until the end of October. Please write "for the Kol Nidre Appeal" on the back of your cheque. Thank you



Live music, singing, study and listening at Shavuot on 7th June (left and centre), and Rebekka Wedell leading the Shabbat tunes singing course in June this year.



NLPJC Hebrew Fluency Course November 2011



Tuesday evenings

1st , 8th , 22nd November & 6th December

Teacher: Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

6.30pm -7.30pm ~ Absolute Beginner's Hebrew Course

7.30pm – 9pm ~ Hebrew Fluency Course

for anyone who can already read Hebrew, no matter how slowly! This course is for you if you would like to follow and lead a service with confidence.

Cost for 4 weeks Beginners Hebrew OR Hebrew Fluency:	Members of NLPJC	Members Concessions	Non-Members	Non-members Concessions
	£40 per term	£20 per term	£60 per term	£30 per term

Please note: bookings for these classes must be received in advance, and by **Monday 24th October** at the very latest

Venue: The Montagu Centre, 21 Maple Street, London W1T 4BE

✂-----✂

Hebrew Courses ~ November 2011

Name.....
Address.....
Telephone.....
E-mail.....

I would like to attend Absolute Beginner's Course / Hebrew Fluency Course
(Please circle)

I am a member / non-member I am waged / concession **(please circle)**

I enclose a cheque made out to NLPJC for £

**Please return with payment to NLPJC, PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR
By 24th October at the very latest. Thank you**

Bat mitzvah

Esther Hobbs & Rachel Sklair

All NLPJC members, friends and visitors are warmly invited to the bat mitzvah of Esther Hobbs and Rachel Sklair during the Shabbat service on **Saturday November 19th**. There will be a special kiddush after the service.

Esther and Rachel will be raising funds for Water Aid as their bat mitzvah tzedakah project.

Water Aid helps provide safe wells and drinking water for people in some of the world's poorest countries. This relates to their Torah portion, *Cheyyei Sarah*, which includes the story of Rebekkah at the well.

At the Community Rooms

Message of thanks

To Rabbi Shulamit and the Cheder School

We wanted to say a huge thank you for holding such a beautiful ceremony for Ruby. I was surprised how emotional I felt during the service but I guess that demonstrated how important rites of passage are in a person's life.

The tallis you made for Ruby is just wonderful and I have kept it somewhere special for her until she understands how to use it properly (not for peekaboo!!!)

Thanks again for all your effort,

Best wishes from

Nadine, Rob and Ruby Adamski

New Members

Kiddush

Saturday 5th November

We will be holding a special kiddush to welcome anyone who has joined us this year. Please do come if this means you, and feel free to bring friends and family.

At the Community Rooms

NLPJC Members News

A warm welcome to new members:

- ❖ Linda & Howard Weinstein
- ❖ Esther Thompson

Mazel Tov to Krisztina Kovacs (see photo, left) who we now welcome as a full member, following her success at the Liberal Beit Din (Rabbinic Board) on 16th June

Our 100 club winners

- ❖ Alison Turner (June)
- ❖ Gill & Jeff Ackerman (July)
- ❖ Alison Turner (August)

With more members now taking part in this draw this year, the winning total each month is now £52 – it's not too late to join ~ please ask Julia for more details nljpc@liberaljudaism.org

In the event of the death of an NLPJC member, please contact the Funeral Directors M.M. Broad & Son on 020 8445 2797 and Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779.



Krisztina Kovacs (3rd from left) celebrates her conversion with a special welcome to NLPJC on 16th July, with her parents (far left and right) and Rabbi Shulamit

Our 'better late than never' Purim photos!



Cheder Corner

The New Year

As I write this, it is raining cats and dogs (two kittens and a puppy just landed on my window sill) and it looks like summer is over – what there was of it. Oh well, that means the school term is starting again.

I always look forward to September, to the start of a new school year AND Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur. Somehow this period of time always feels like a fresh start to me. The first of January is just a holiday.

The bad news is that we don't have many sessions for Cheder this term due to school holidays and when the High Holy days fall. We will start on 17 September, then have a session on Rosh Hashona and another on Yom Kippur. Then the 15th of October and the 5th November. The 19th of November is a bat mitzvah so Senior Cheder students will be there. There will be a session on the 3rd December and a Family Service on the 15th December so no Cheder that day.

Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashona will be (as always) appropriate to the occasion but we'll fit in the theme as well. The theme this year is Ethical Considerations. These will be dissections of issues that are discussed in every community, but looking at the way Liberal Judaism and others see divorce, mixed marriage, eating animals, women as rabbis and other contentious issues. Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashona will include some aspect of these considerations, especially Yom Kippur with the emphasis on atoning for the decisions we have made throughout the year. Some of the interviews with young people who took part in the "disquiet" in Haringey and other areas over the summer will form a part of these

discussions. Should parents / community members have suggestions about these or any other issues they would like to see discussed, I would be more than happy to include them. We will, in general, be looking at these issues by using the leaflets (now out of print) that Liberal Judaism produced, as well as using films, songs etc. There are 15 of these leaflets so we should just be able to fit them all into our 2012 Cheder sessions.

Group discussions will also continue for the bat mitzvah young women, and if any parent is considering bar or bat mitzvah and would like to know what the social considerations are during the year prior to the actual ceremony, please speak to me. We have a booklet for all bnei mitzvot young people which fosters discussion within families of what this rite-of-passage means to them as well as to the individual candidate. This runs alongside of the work that the wonderful Shulamit and the Hebrew teachers do in preparing young people for the ceremony itself.

On a personal note, if you happen to go to UCLH you will see my photograph in a montage of four taken to advertise the UCLH booklet "How patients have helped us with our research." I volunteered to take part in the genetic study of Ashkenazi Jewish women in which the doctors/scientists are looking at the most productive ways of screening for breast, ovarian and prostate cancers. Apparently Ashkenazic Jews have a 10 – 20% higher chance of acquiring these cancers because of a faulty gene



Hebrew learners celebrate completing units of the *Eizeh Kef* programme on the last Shabbat of the academic year.

(Any suggestions on the historical, religious, medicinal or ethical reasoning, for those of an enquiring mind? I wonder what the Rabbis of old would say about this?) Because of my shy and retiring nature, they decided to interview me for an article in one of the Jewish newspapers, and then to use me in putting out this leaflet.

The doctors are still looking for volunteers, men and women – they want to test several thousand people, and since there are only about 260,000 Jews in the whole of England and Scotland that means a big proportion of the Jewish population have to volunteer. If you would like to help you must have four Ashkenazi grandparents. Whether or not anyone in your family has or has had cancer is not important. No one in my family except me has ever had cancer, but they need a control group, too. It's very easy – just a blood test and some paperwork. I'll be happy to give you the information and/or show you my photograph, if you really want a fright...

In the meantime, I take the study and discussion of ethical considerations very seriously, so I repeat that I really would appreciate any ideas you might have. I was taught by my Ashkenazi grandfather what the Prophet Mohammed put into such elegant words "The best of people are those who are most useful to others."

Laura Miller

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
Chair : Claire Helman
Hon. Secretary : Liz Reiner
Treasurer : Hannah Forbes
Education Chair : Sue Lukes
Head & Cheder Teacher : Dr Laura Miller
Cheder / Jewish Studies Teacher: Rachel Epton
Hebrew Teacher : Vicky Millan
Volunteer Creche Worker : Anna Sklair
Parent Representative: Leila Baker
Prayers & Spirituality Co-ordinator: Maria Egan
Senior Warden: Joanna Ryam
Administrator : Julia Chalfen
Fund-raising Coordinator: Joanna Ryam
Membership Secretary : Jackie Richards
Marketing & Promotion: Claire Helman
Social Action Co-ordinator; Dan Ozarow
Befriending Co-ordinator: Sheila Melzak

Vacant Posts:

Youth; Intergenerational

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.

Advertisements contained in the NLPJC Newsletter are the sole responsibility of the persons that post the advertisement.

NLPJC does not make any guarantee as to the accuracy, completeness, truthfulness or reliability of such advertisements.

NLPJC Newsletter is edited by Julia Chalfen. The deadline for the Dec/Jan/Feb issue is 15th November. Please send articles for publication to Julia at: nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

only found in us. Sephardi Jews are spared for some reason.

Mitzvah Day ~ Sunday 20th November

Mitzvah (loosely translated as "Good Deed") Day is, put simply, the Jewish community's national day of volunteering. The 'ask' is simple and yet unusual: because the one thing you are not allowed to give on Mitzvah Day is money. Instead, it is about giving something far more valuable: time. Mitzvah Day has only been running in the UK for five years. It started with around 400 people at a hotel in Primrose Hill under the auspices of the Jewish Community Centre for London. Now it attracts about 15,000 volunteers in countries all around the world.

This year at NLPJC we have offered our help to the Hackney Migrant Centre and will let you all know soon how they would like us to help them on that day. Watch this space.....

NLPJC events calendar

September – November 2011

Most events are held at *the Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 9ES*, unless otherwise stated

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>
Saturday 3 rd Sept	10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service	
Friday 9 th Sept	5.30pm for 6pm	Early Erev Shabbat supper, candle lighting & games (<i>see front page</i>)	
Saturday 17 th Sept	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder (<i>no crèche / toys available</i>) Shabbat Service	
Friday 23 rd Sept	7.15pm / 8pm	Erev Shabbat Service & Pot Luck Supper	
Wednesday 28 th Sept Thursday 29 th Sept	7.30pm 10.30am / 1.30pm	EREV ROSH HASHANAH ROSH HASHANAH (with cheder & crèche) / Lunch	
Saturday 1 st October	11am	Shabbat Service	
Friday 7 th Oct Saturday 8 th Oct	7.30pm 10.30am	KOL NIDRE YOM KIPPUR (with cheder & crèche)	
Wednesday 12 th Oct	5pm / 7pm	Decorating the Sukkah / SUKKOT SERVICE & supper (<i>see front pg</i>)	
Saturday 15 th Oct	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am 1pm	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder (<i>no crèche / toys available</i>) Shabbat Service "Bring a neighbour / friend to the Sukkah" lunch (<i>see front pg</i>)	
Wednesday 19 th Oct	6 for 6.30pm	SIMCHAT TORAH Service, Celebrations & Supper (<i>see front pg</i>)	
Friday 28 th Oct	7.15pm / 8pm	Erev Shabbat Service & Pot Luck Supper	
Tuesdays in Nov 1 st , 8 th , 22 nd , 29 th	6.30pm / 7.30pm	Beginners Hebrew / Hebrew Fluency (<i>see pg 3</i>)	<u>Montagu Centre</u>
Saturday 5 th Nov	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder & crèche Shabbat Service with NEW MEMBERS welcoming ceremony and Kiddush (<i>see pg 4</i>)	
Saturday 19 th Nov	10am / 10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service with the bat mitzvah of ESTHER HOBBS & RACHEL SKLAIR (<i>see pg 4</i>)	
Friday 25 th Nov	7.15pm / 8pm	Erev Shabbat Service & Pot Luck Supper	
Sunday 27 th Nov	7pm	'Rabbis for Human Rights' Discussion & supper (<i>see front page</i>)	

Dates for your diary.....

CHANUKKAH PARTY ~ Tuesday 20th December from 4pm – 7pm at the Community Rooms

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 visit our website www.nlpjc.org.uk