

## *President's Report* 2012-2013 Season

The Lit's 124<sup>th</sup> season was a potpourri of drama, film, music, biblical exegesis, history and philosophy. It had eight events in total. The attendance was good overall. We seem to have levelled off at typically 20-25 attendees per event.

The season was opened by our own **David Neville**, speaking of his experiences and interests in playwriting and producing for BBC Radio. He told us how he first encountered live theatre at Glasgow's old Metropole Theatre, and was hooked for life.

We saw the bittersweet Israeli film "Aviva Ahuvati" (Aviva My Love; Zarhin; 2006) about a housewife aspiring to be an author, and the family antics that ever get in her way.

Our third event was one of musical offerings, presented by **Lord Julian Goodman**. Several members of the community described their favourite piece of Jewish music and the special meaning it held for them. We heard excerpts ranging from "El Norah" to Leonard Cohen's "Story of Isaac."

The second half of the season opened with the historian **Dr Shirli Gilbert** giving a fascinating glimpse into the Jewish life of German refugees, focussing on a particular individual who typified much of the self-delusion of German Jews before the war, and their desperate lives afterwards.

**Jeremy, Lord Beecham** introduced the documentary film "Strangers No More" (dir. Goodman/Simon; 2010) about the remarkable Bialik-Rogzin School in the heart of Tel Aviv where children from 48 countries learn together. It was a moving film telling the story of children refugees who were able to start a new life in Israel, but, as refugees, still faced an uncertain future.

**Norman Crane** gave an insightful discussion of the Book of Judith, part of the apocrypha. Walking us through this raunchy tale of sexual titillation, political intrigue and gruesome violence, Norman convincingly demonstrated how it was a fanciful piece of probably Pharisaic samizdat in response to the Book of Maccabees and the self-aggrandising practices of the Hasmonean dynasty.

**Dr Daniel Davies** gave a reflective presentation of Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed*, arguing that, unlike most interpretations, Maimonides's intention was not to present arcane and seemingly contradictory discussions in order to exclude the uneducated from learning deep, but potentially confusing, philosophical truths, but rather to train the educated in methods of philosophical analysis.

The season concluded with an enlightening discussion by **Dr Alex Guilherme** of the debate between Gandhi and Martin Buber over Zionism and methods for confronting anti-semitism, a clear illustration of how two great humanitarians from very different backgrounds can talk past each other.

Finally, the President would like to express his gratitude to Tony Gilbert who served as Secretary and also provided the lovely posters advertising the events, and to our Treasurer Micheline Brannan. Both provide the essential and substantial efforts needed to keep the Lit running. Thanks are also due to Hannah Holtschneider and Maurice Naftalin for maintaining the Lit's website. The other Lit committee members and some of the Lit members deserve our thanks as well for helping to set up and clean up after the meetings.

Avery Meiksin, President  
Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, 19 May 2013