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GILAD TO SEE YOU!

Israeli hostage hero to visit London... and he's got Premier League tickets!

BY JUSTIN COHEN

GILAD SCHALIT is to visit London next month for the first time since being freed from captivity.

The former soldier, who was kidnapped in a cross-border raid in 2006 and was held for nearly six years in Gaza until last October, has accepted an invitation to join hundreds of other young people from across Europe at a major conference in north London.

The 26-year-old (pictured) - who now writes a weekly sports column for one of Israel's biggest newspapers - is also expected to attend a Premier League football match during the course of his private visit. The trip, which will see him accompanied by a friend from his village, is due to last for several days.

"He's never been to London," the 26-year-old's father Noam told the *Jewish News*. "He's very much looking forward to his visit to the UK - especially to attend



the football match."

The B'nai B'rith Europe Young Jewish Adult Forum, held in association with B'nai B'rith UK and attended by delegates from 25 countries aged 25 to 45, will include workshops, services at a local synagogue and a gala dinner with live band. The former captive, who has

listed travelling the world as one of his top priorities for the during the next year, will be presented with honorary membership of B'nai B'rith during the event.

Countless British Jews campaigned hard for Gilad's release and for him to be granted visits from

the Red Cross. At the 2010 Young Adults Forum, participants signed a petition to the UN urging action on the issue. John Reeves, international VP of B'nai B'rith International and chair of the Young Adult Commission of B'nai B'rith Europe, said: "Gilad's visit to London is a 'thank you' for the long and intensive campaign for his release pursued by members of B'nai B'rith along with other organisations.

"Gilad is the true embodiment of the indestructible survival of the Jewish spirit. His service to the army and country is a demonstration of the young in the support of Israel, which is the pre-eminent aim of the forthcoming B'nai B'rith Forum in November."

Expressing delight at the presence of the special guest, BBUK President Jean Etherton said: "It will be a wonderful opportunity for Gilad to be together with young Jews from all over Europe for a weekend of information, education, inspiration, fun and entertainment.

"We extended this invitation to Gilad in the hope that his presence at the Forum will inspire those who are attending from around the world as an example of someone who has overcome great adversity in his life."

• To book tickets for the forum call 01923 776669



MEET OUR MUMS!

Channel 4's new four-part series, following the *Jewish News*' heart-warming search to find a woman uniquely qualified to be crowned Jewish Mum of the Year, begins at 9pm on Tuesday night. Episode one sees our eight mums given the daunting task of organising the key aspects of a barnitzvah.

Full story and preview on pages 4 and 5

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