

# The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

June 1995

No. 21

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ERECTED BY CITY OF EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
AND LoTHIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH EDINBURGH HEBREW CONGREGATION  
ON 14 MAY 1995  
TO COMMEMORATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE LIBERATION OF BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP  
BY THE BRITISH ARMY

IN MEMORY OF THE SIX MILLION JEWS AND OTHER  
INNOCENT VICTIMS KILLED BY THE NAZI ATROCITIES  
IN WORLD WAR II, AND THOSE WHO CAME TOGETHER  
IN THE UNITED FORCES TO LIBERATE EUROPE FROM FASCISM

"MAY THEIR SUFFERINGS NOT HAVE BEEN IN VAIN"



# The Edinburgh Star

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# Editorial

We make no apology for devoting a large proportion of this issue to the fiftieth anniversary of end of the Second World War. The sentiments expressed by the dignitaries at the dedication ceremony of Edinburgh's Holocaust Memorial sum up the feeling of the Jewish Community and the fact that the initiative to have a Memorial in Edinburgh came from the civic authorities symbolises the excellent relations which have been developed over the years. This was underlined earlier when two of our friends, Rev Dr R.W. Walker of the Council of Christians and Jews and Rev W.D. Brown of the Presbytery of Edinburgh appeared unexpectedly in the Synagogue in January bearing letters which we reprint in this issue. Rabbi Hugo Gryn's talk to the Literary Society on Jewish Survival is particularly relevant to our theme and the fact that it was given as a tribute to Ruth Adler adds to its significance. Bertie Hornung and Vicky Gruneberg paint a picture of life in Europe immediately before the holocaust and on a local level, Ian Shein rounds up the troops and we hope to carry this feature on to the next edition.

Danny Sinclair's appointment as Principal of Jews' College in London gives him the opportunity of teaching and influencing the next generation of British Rabbis and we publish his sermon at last years Edinburgh Festival as a textbook example of what a sermon should be. We wish him success in his new position and look forward to his next visit to Edinburgh.

Our travel correspondent Eva Erdelyi continues her series on Israel which this month describes the beautiful 'TAYELET' in Tel Aviv. The Acting Editor met her 'on site' on Passover and discussed with her plans for future articles.

This summer sees the departure of Rabbi and Mrs Shapira back to Israel. Tribute will no doubt be paid to them elsewhere but there is no doubt that Rabbi Shapira's efforts and enthusiasm in getting the Edinburgh Star started and keeping it going deserve special mention. We wish them well in their retirement.

Finally, it is with great pleasure that the Editorial Board announce that as from the next issue, the Editor will be Michael Adler.

*Front Cover:* 14 May 1995. Judy Gilbert's montage of the unveiling of the Holocaust Memorial in Princes Street Gardens show TOP Malcolm Rifkind addressing the gathering with seated left to right The Very Rev. Gilleasbuig Macmillan of St Giles' Cathedral, Lord Provost Norman Irons, CBE, The Lady Provost, Councillor Paul Williamson of Lothian Regional Council, Rabbi Shalom Shapira, Dr Nathan Oppenheim, President, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. MIDDLE The Plaque. BOTTOM Part of the Assembly.

*Typing:* Valerie Chuter

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*The Board would also like to thank Mr and Mrs Harold. Mendelssohn for kindly defraying the cost of sending "The Edinburgh Star" overseas.*

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# EDINBURGH'S HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

by Philip Goldberg

Fifty years ago, Scottish Regimental Units of the British Army liberated Belsen concentration camp. On Sunday 14th May 1995 Lothian Region, the City of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation jointly commemorated the event by unveiling a Memorial to the Holocaust in Princes Street Gardens in the protective shadow of Edinburgh Castle adjacent to the War Memorial.

To a crowd of over 150 people, Councillor Paul Williamson of Lothian Regional Council insisted that "we must not allow the memory to fade or be distorted". Over the past fifty years there had been many attempts to misrepresent or reduce the significance of the 'Final Solution' and this reflected the difficulty that people had in coming to terms with the true causes of Nazism. It was only through a thorough examination of the past that that subjective guilt could be replaced by objective understanding.

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Norman Irons unveiling the commemorative plaque spoke of the "evils, horror, intolerance and prejudices of the past giving way to the united community of all

denominations in Edinburgh forging links for the future. This memorial was a permanent symbol of the City's aims."

On behalf of the Armed Forces, the Secretary of State for Defence, Malcolm Rifkind said that there was no such thing as innocence and that evil only prevails when good people do nothing. The positive outcome was the birth of the State of Israel three years later. He then read the poem "Babi Yar" by Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

*"No gravestone stands on Babi Yar  
Only coarse earth heaped roughly on  
the gash*

*Such dread comes over me; I feel so old  
Old as the Jews. Today I am a Jew...*

*On Babi Yar weeds rustle; the tall trees  
Like judges loom and threaten...  
And feel that I am slowly turning grey.  
And I too have become a soundless cry  
Over the thousands that lie buried here  
I am each old man slaughtered; each  
child shot*

*None of me will forget"*

Dr Nathan Oppenheim, President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation thanked the Regional Council and the City for "this eloquent gesture of friendship" and emphasised that the memorial should be a sign to ensure that truth, peace and justice be the rock on which their future and the future of their children was founded and that evil acts of godless men should not pass without public outcry.

Non-denominational prayers were recited by the Minister of Saint Giles Cathedral, The Very Rev Gilleasbuig MacMillan and the Rabbi of Edinburgh Rabbi Shalom Shapira intoned the "El Mole Rachamim" and recited Kaddish which was followed by a one minute silence.

After the ceremony, there was a reception at the Council Chambers in Parliament Square.

## Letters

121 Dalkeith Road  
EDINBURGH EH16 5AJ

27 January 1995

Dear Rabbi Shapira

The Presbytery of Edinburgh does not meet until later this month, but the Moderator of the Presbytery, and the Clerk to the Presbytery have authorised me to represent them at the service of divine worship in the Synagogue on 28 January 1995 on the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp in Poland.

The Secretary of the local Ministers Fraternal and the Minister of the local Church of Scotland Parish Church, the Rev Tom Johnston also wishes me to convey the loving regards of his congregation.

Rev Dr Robert Walker desires to be with me also.

On any other official occasion that drew us together, I would sincerely convey joyful greetings from all whom we represent, and deepest thanks to the Jewish people for all the things of God that they have given us. No words could ever be adequate for that thank you. But this occasion is not for greetings, or even speeches, just simply to stand beside you all, with a symbolic arm about the shoulder and weep with you in silence.

Some griefs have to be suffered and then let go. This is of such a nature that it sadly must be held on to. I do hope and pray that at this time your people will draw strength and comfort from the thought that the hundred and more Christian Churches whom we represent surround you with loving regards and prayers as these dreadful, dreadful times are re-awakened.

Shalom,  
(signed) William D Brown (Rev)

More Letters on Page 21

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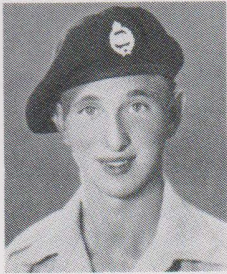
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## WHERE WERE THEY?

*To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe our Editorial Assistant, Ian Shein asked current members of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation to tell us in their own words what they did in the war. Some entries have been left over to the next edition and any ex-serviceman or ex-servicewoman who has not been contacted should tell Ian by 31st July 1995.*

### WILLIE CAPLAN



A member of the Territorial Army, he was called up at the outbreak of the war and enrolled in the Lothian and Borders Horse.

After a spell in this country, he was given embarkation leave, married, and after two days was sent abroad. It was 3½ years before he saw his bride again. Headed for Egypt, his unit disembarked at Durban, South Africa, where he spent Pesach with a Jewish family. On reaching Egypt he became part of a tank replacement crew and served as a tank driver with the 8th Army during the battle of El Alamein in 1942. Thereafter he was posted to Italy with the Durham Light Infantry as a Beach Commando, with responsibility for looking after mechanised transport. He saw active service in Salerno, Rome and Florence before being demobbed after six years service.

### IAN SHEIN



On his call up, reported to the infantry training centre at Fort George in north Scotland. Posted to the Royal

Corps of Signals, he served as a radio operator before being attached to Special Operations Executive. Further training in Shropshire was followed by a posting to Bari in south Italy. His duties were to make radio contact with Allied agents operating behind the German lines in Yugoslavia. Transferred to Sienna, he remained

there during the last days of the war in Europe. Thereafter he was posted to India where he served as a radio operator in Calcutta. A family bereavement saw him being granted compassionate discharge after three years service.

### NORMAN DORFMAN



Was called up in 1941 to the Royal Air Force and was stationed at various bases in Britain. He served as a leading aircraftsman with the

ground crew of a Mosquito Squadron in Norfolk. Nearby was a US bomber base of Flying Fortresses, very large four-engined bombers carrying a crew of about ten. The Commander invited any RAF personnel who wished to fly with them over Germany to get a first-hand view of the destruction caused by the Allied air forces. He took advantage of this and found it an experience never to be forgotten. The damage to cities such as Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg was indescribable. By now all were aware of the horrors of the concentration camps, and as such, he states that he found the above experience very moving. He was demobbed in 1946.

### MICHAEL CAPLAN



Joined the army in 1941 and enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps. After initial training and service in this country, he was posted to the 78th or 'Battleaxe' Division attached to the

American 1st Army. In 1942 he was with the invading Allied Armies during the landing on enemy occupied North Africa known as 'Operation Torch'. He fought through the campaigns in Sicily and Italy and was badly wounded in the leg. He however remained with his unit into Austria. He was demobbed in 1945.

### JOE RIFFKIN



Joining the Armed Forces in 1941, he was stationed in Yorkshire in the Royal Corps of Signals. Thereafter he was transferred to the 52nd Lowland Division and spent several months in Banffshire. He was selected for a Commission and after a period at an Officers' Training Unit, was posted south to a Transport Company in the Royal Army Service Corps. From there he went overseas to Belgium and ultimately to Germany where he was in charge of a petrol company. His good knowledge of German made him an ideal choice to liaise with civic dignitaries and order suitable billets for the troops. As a



result of family problems, he was demobilised in February 1946 with the rank of First Lieutenant.

### DAVID GOLDBERG

(see a 'Profile' in 'Edinburgh Star' edition No.19)



At the age of 18 volunteered for the army and was posted to the Pioneer Corps. Initially stationed in Liverpool and thence to Penicuik, this gave him the opportunity to come into Edinburgh and attend the forces' dances held in the local Jewish community centre. In 1944, on D-day plus three, his unit was shipped to the Normandy beaches at Arromanches in France where heavy fighting took place. In 1945 he returned to England before his proficiency in German resulted in his being sent to translate documents at the Nuremberg Trials, set up to try Nazi War Criminals. Latterly he was posted to York as a corporal where he worked in the stores. He refused the opportunity of a commission and was demobilised in 1946.

### ANDREW KAYE

Called up in 1940, served initially in the Field Artillery, being stationed near home in Longniddry. Posted to England he thereafter embarked on a troop ship for Capetown, subsequently ending up in Suez. Transferred to the Durham Light Infantry, he took part in the battle of El Alamein in 1942. The invasion of Italy in 1943 saw him in Naples



and Cassino. As a sergeant in charge of an anti-tank gun, he saw service in Austria and in the British Guard Zone of Vienna when Russian troops were in the city. His duties also included that of regimental tailor. After one year in Austria, he was demobbed in 1945.

### BETTY GOLD



In November 1942, with other Edinburgh girls, including Babette Shulfine, embarked on the 'biggest adventure of their young lives' on reporting to a remote area near Brechin for a months training in the

Womens Timber Corps. She had to learn how to fell trees with the old cross cut saw, trim them and measure and load them on to lorries for dispatch. A three mile walk there and back from the base, an old hunting lodge, in heavy boots added to the adventure. She was posted twice doing the necessary work to replace the Canadian lumberjacks who previously were employed and releasing them for military service. Thereafter, after she found difficulty in settling in an ordinary job, she joined the Land Army and obtained a diploma in Horticulture. She remained there until 1950.



### JOE LURIE

During the early days of the war served in the Royal Air Force in this country. Thereafter he was posted to the Far East and saw service in India, Burma, Thailand and Singapore. Whilst in Thailand, was Senior Flying Control Officer and was responsible for organising a Flying Control School for redundant air crew including officers in the Thai Royal Air Force. At the end of the war, he was offered a contract by the Thai Government to be Controller of the airfield in Bangkok. He had already met his future wife Sheva there and decided to return to Britain after almost five years in the Forces.



# ROBERT GUTTMANN

Prague Bohemian and Painter

by Bertold Hornung

Of the 78,000 Jews who lived in Prague in 1939 there now remain only some 1,400. Yet, once more, after decades of neglect and oblivion the city takes pride in the legacy of eleven centuries of uninterrupted flourishing of a Jewish community and great centre of Jewish learning. The Al-tenaii Shul, Europe's oldest, has come to life again as has the Jewish Town Hall, known for the Hebrew numbers on its clocktower; the ancient Pinkas synagogue, a memorial to Holocaust victims, which had been let to rot under the previous regime, is being restored. There is a widespread revival of public, including gentile, interest in all aspects of the Jewish heritage.

Recently, an international conference took place to commemorate the centenary of the now much regretted urban renewal (read wholesale demolition) of what had been the admittedly unsanitary Jewish Town, named 'Josefov' in honour of the emperor who opened up the ghetto. Last Spring a festival of Jewish music took place in Prague, with compositions by Gideon Klein, Ervin Schulhof, Ernst Bloch, David Popper and others who perished in the Holocaust. Hans Krása's children's opera *Brundibár*, first performed in a dusty loft of one of Terezín's barracks in 1943, is back on stage. The Kinsky Palace in the Old Town Square - part of the National Gallery - hosted an exhibition of synagogue treasures not seen before. Re-editions of Czech-Jewish writers, which had been unavailable during Communist rule, like the delightful stories of *Modche and Rézi* by Vojtech Rakous, are on sale, alongside scholarly works on the history of the Jews in the Czech lands.

Among the many events there is one which deserves special attention: the exhibition of some 50 extraordinary paintings and



Robert Guttman

drawings by Robert Guttman from the collection of the Jewish Museum of Prague. The exhibition is in the Franz Kafka Gallery, in a renovated mediaeval building overlooking the Old Town Square. As you enter you find on your left a private gallery and bookshop; up at first floor level you may be tempted to look into Café Milena which bears the name of Kafka's friend Milena Jesenská. A few steps and a narrow corridor on the right leads you to a small room. It contains the fantastic and mysterious world of Robert Guttman.

Most of the painter's earlier works were destroyed. Only three oil paintings and several pencil drawings dated between 1935 and 1939 are on display here. The paintings you see had been created predominantly in the last year, or perhaps the last months in the life of the artist who was born in 1880 in the South

Bohemian town of Susice and died in 1942 of starvation in the Ghetto of Lodz. He painted them during 1940-41 from memory, in the seclusion of a tiny attic in Na bojisti Street which belonged to a Jewish charity. It was his home until 16 October 1941, the day the first transport from Prague went East to the extermination camps.

In his time Guttman was best known for his eccentric attire and appearance. I remember well the short figure with the shock of long wavy hair, big moustache and protruding chin, who used to walk about town in a dark blue velvet jacket and enormous green bow, always with a fresh flower in the buttonhole and a large sketchpad and drawingboard under the arm. His pictures were rejected as bizarre, primitive, amateurish, suffering from opulence of colour. But Arsen Pohribný, Stefan Tkáč, Dr Arthur Heller and others have



Chanukah 1941



thrown new light on their uniqueness and powerful expressiveness; they discovered similarities between this work and that of Van Gogh or Rousseau-Douanier.

Guttmann made portraits of famous personalities including (according to Pohribný) Theodor Herzl, Max Nordau, Martin Buber, Nathan Birnbaum, Max Brod as well as Thomas Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Benes. He painted Rabbis, Chassidim in Ruthenian (Sub-Carpato-Russian) synagogues, countrywomen in their colourful national costumes, children, and genre scenes of markets and Jewish domestic life. In 1932 I looked over his shoulder as he was sketching the faces of boys and girls in our classroom in Ostrava, during a stopover on one of his long journeys on foot. He used to walk every year to the remotest corners of Ruthenia, then part of Czechoslovakia, nearly one thousand kilometres east of Prague. A passionate Zionist since 1896, when he had read Herzl's *Judenstaat*, he travelled on foot to the Congress of Basle and across Europe to other Zionist gatherings.

These last paintings before his brutal death show, according to Pohribný, where 'Guttmann used to return to in his memories of happy moments and great mysteries'. Pohribný also quotes Guttmann's own words: 'Posterity will see the real worth of those works'. The public responses to the exhibition seem to confirm this.

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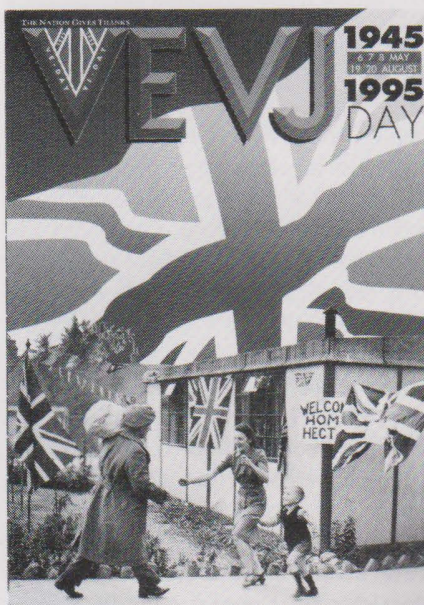
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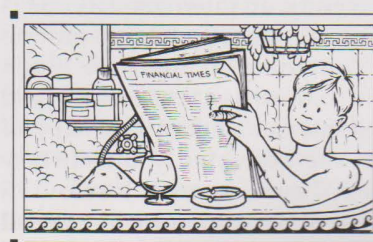
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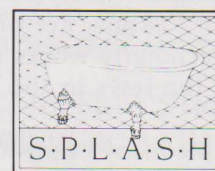
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***Nigel stags a bull***

It had been a long day. The money market was up but Nigel's mood was anything but. He closed the bathroom door and turned the tap, noticing the satisfying touch of antique gold plated fittings. He lay back, the water gently lapping round the beautiful porcelain bath. It felt like a very expensive haven, designed with utmost style and taste. Life looked better already. And to think Nirvana could be gained just by visiting Scotland's premier bathroom specialist. Upwardly mobile? Right now Nigel felt wonderfully horizontal – and with his complete suite costing a mere trifle who could question his watertight business position?

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# THE 'LEGACY' OF 9 NOVEMBER 1938

by Vicky L Gruneberg

After his Jewish Polish parents had been very cruelly deported from Germany to Poland, the young Hirsch Grynszpan, got himself a gun, went to the German Embassy in Paris and shot the first person who came his way. In the same round of deportations, the Gestapo had come to deport me and my parents as well, because my father had been born in Poland and we happened to have Polish passports, but we had been warned and told to leave the house. When they came, our au pair answered the door and could truthfully say we were not at home. We returned home a few days later.

This was the historic background to events, which I described to the students of the Drama Department of Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh. They had asked our community for somebody, who had lived through the Kristallnacht (Crystal Night), to give a talk to them on the political atmosphere in Germany at the time. I was approached as I come from Germany and I accepted the invitation.

Not knowing what to expect, I naturally could not prepare anything but as those days are still unforgettable in my mind I was not too worried. The theatre class of the college were putting on a play about that period and the Jews in Germany. The play, called Legacy, was staged during the first week of February this year and written, directed and produced by the very talented Shauna Kanter. She received me as I arrived at the college and told me just to talk about my experiences and describe the background of the Kristallnacht.

Hirsch Grynszpan had fatally wounded Herr von Rath, an employee of the German Embassy, who came from Dusseldorf. Von Rath died a few days later. After the announcement of his death, with the appearance of a spontaneous revenge, the Nazis organised the

burning of our synagogues and smashed virtually all the shop windows and houses belonging to Jews on 9 November 1938. They even smashed quite a few shop windows where the names of the shops sounded as if they could have been Jewish. Some 90,000 Jewish men were taken to concentration camps. In the process of this action about 1,000 of our people were killed, but this was kept secret. The death of von Rath was just an excuse for a further round of persecution of Jews. All the concentration camps had been prepared for Jews and this radical act. It is ironical that Grynszpan, who was Polish, was imprisoned during the war by the French but lived and saw freedom after France was liberated.

I was in Dusseldorf with my father on the day following the Kristallnacht. Wherever one walked in the streets broken glass lay about 3 centimetres deep in places. It was said that Dusseldorf was one of the worst places of destruction in Germany as Herr von Rath came from that city.

One of my personal stories I told the students related to the experience that I had with my parents and one of my sisters. About three o'clock in the morning, the Nazis came to smash our windows. We were all paralysed with fear because no one knew what was going to happen. One boulder that crashed through a window and landed in a crystal chandelier in our drawing room. The chandelier swung madly from one side to the other. In the past, whenever the chandelier had to be cleaned, strings of crystal pearls were always broken in the process and it was in permanent need of repair, even after just touching it. And here it was with a big boulder resting inside and swinging and nothing happened and not a string broke or any pearl broke loose. We could only stand there and watch in

sheer amazement. This was little short of a miracle for us and after that the Nazis left and did not bother us any further.

This all made quite an impression on the students and they put very intelligent questions to me, which I tried to answer as well as I could. My contribution was acknowledged in the theatre programme of Legacy, which I saw a week after my encounter with the students in the college. I can say the play was performed with imagination and skill under relatively primitive conditions. It got a well-deserved round of applause and was well attended. Following Edinburgh, Shauna Kanter was putting the play on in Bristol and London.

After her father's death, Shauna had discovered one of his old passports, dated from the thirties, out of which apparently two photographs had been torn. The passport was American as her parents were living in the United States. She investigated the mystery of the page in the passport like a detective, and discovered that her father had illegally rescued two Jewish children from Germany. The missing photos must have been of the children he rescued and this is what the play was all about.

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## THE LOWRIE REPORT

### Synagogue Kiddush Presentation

Dr Oppenheim, our President, presented Pearl and Ian Shein with an engraved silver Kiddush Cup and Coaster to mark their recent marriage; in his remarks he especially welcomed Pearl into the community where she was already kenspeckle and had many friends. Ian, in thanking the Council and community for their very kind gift, seemed to think he was a bit of an 'old sweat' as he was celebrating his 'Golden Wedding' - a whole 50 days!

### The Shein Kiddush

On 18 February, some 100 people, mostly from the community but with a fair leavening of family from England, attended a Kiddush given by Pearl and Ian to thank the Council and Congregation for all their kindness and for being so welcoming to Pearl.

### Barnet Adelman's Kiddush

Barney gave this on 5 March to mark the birth of a great-grandson. The grandparents - Barney's daughter and son-in-law, Rosalind and Barry, came up from Cambridge for this very lavish Kiddush which the ladies from the Friendship Club and the Ladies Guild helped to prepare. On behalf of Barney, Rosalind thanked everyone for their good wishes.

### Mrs Christine Burns

On the occasion of her 50th birthday, Mrs Burns was the recipient of good wishes and numerous gifts from the Community. We take the opportunity to wish her good health and happiness.

### The Joyce and Norman Cram Quiz

Ian Shein, as Quizmaster, welcomed everybody to the Quiz and said how much he regretted that Joyce could not be with us due to bereavement in her family.

The evening then got under way with Norman operating the 'Swingometer' and the markers being Anita and David Mendelssohn and Pearl Shein. Ninety-one people attended including two tables of students. The Quiz opened with three rounds: General Knowledge, History and Geography, Art and Literature; supper was then taken followed by four more rounds: Lovers, Characters, Religion, Sport and a Marathon Picture Round.

After mounting tension, the winning team was announced as: Judy Gilbert, Doreen and Laurence Bowman, David Mason, Irene Mason, Richard Rifkind, Joyce and Jonny Sperber, Lesley and John Danzig and Lorna Nicholsby, who were then presented with their prizes.

Ian thanked Leila Goldberg and the Ladies Committee for organising a more enjoyable supper. Anita thanked those who had the onerous task of marking and was in turn thanked by Norman for doing the research.

Everybody gave the Joyce and Norman Cram Quiz Evening top marks!

### Yom Ha'Atzmaut

On 3 May at 7.30 p.m. a special service was held and afterwards Rabbi Shapira made Kiddush in the Community Centre. The refreshments, by courtesy of the Ladies Guild, were your genuine Israeli, brought back by Rachel - Borekas, Falafel, Humous - there were also Israeli-type salads prepared by Rachel and Vicky.

A varied programme of entertainment followed - Rabbi Shapira showed a video of Israeli dancing from the annual Three Day Carmiel Dance Festival. Esti played the piano, Bill Simpson the clarinet, Margaret Aronson sang beautifully Yerushalayim Shel Zahav, with the company joining in the chorus. Many Israeli songs - some based on the liturgy - were sung, Eli and Julian leading the chorus. The energetic joined the Rabbi and Rachel in dancing the Hora. A happy if exhausted company voted the evening a great success.

### A Shapira Wedding in the Offing

When the Rabbi and Rachel were on holiay in Israel in February, their youngest daughter Efrat became engaged to Tomer Seraya whose father is Yemeni and mother is Persian. The wedding will take place in Jerusalem on 21 August.

We wish them Mazeltov and much Happiness.

### WIZO

Lunch at Katie and Ronnie's, Sunday, 13 August, 12.30 to Repletion



*The Winning Team*



## BAIRNS' NIGHT FOR THE ALYN CHILDREN

On Saturday, 21 January, a concert was given in aid of the physically handicapped children of Alyn Hospital in Jerusalem. It was held in the Community Centre, rather than the Music School where concerts for Alyn have been previously held, in the hope that more people would be tempted to come and support the event.

It was specifically timed as closely as possible to our well-loved Burns' night, and featured as the aptly named Bairns' night.

Members of the fund-raising committee, Val, Rachel and Judy, co-chaired by Dorothe Kaufman and Sue Barratt, surpassed themselves in an effort to publicise the event, and it paid off handsomely, because there was an unusually large response.

Musical contributions came from pockets of the community and its associates not hitherto recognised for their musical abilities, as well as the professionals we all know and love.

The programme commenced with an amateur quartet consisting of a saxophone (Riona), clarinet (Tony), bassoon (David) and flute (Judy), and was followed by a saxophone quartet (Bill, Bobby, Elaine and Ian) playing with the

assured confidence of professionals. The programme continued with a collection of Israeli songs by Esti in which she accompanied herself on the guitar. The audience was tutored briefly and encouraged to join in the choruses or other directed moments; even the children joined in with enthusiasm.

During the interval hot drinks and tasty home-made biscuits, produced by Rachel, Val, Vicki, Pearl and Judy, were served free of charge.

The programme continued with a wonderful rendition of Cole Porter and Gershwin songs sung by, who else, but Margaret, and accompanied on the piano by Fiona, who later made a solo contribution of her own.

The concert was very well received by the large audience whose numbers exceeded all expectations and a profit of over £500 was made. The success of the event will almost certainly guarantee a return programme next year, and, who knows, maybe we will see some new talent from people who were too nervous to come forward before, but could see how informal it all was - not to be taken too seriously, but a fun way of raising money for a very good cause.

### KIDDUSH FOR DAVID

On Saturday, 28 January, 1995 the congregation held a Kiddush to honour David Kaplan and to mark his election as National Chairperson of the Union of Jewish Students.

David who was born in Edinburgh, expressed his thanks to his parents and to the community for their role over the years towards his Jewish education.

Rabbi Shalom Shapira stressed the relevance of the occasion as a sign of Jewish continuity in light of the previous week's 50th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Also present at the Kiddush was Rabbi Richard Marker, senior advisor to Hillel on International Affairs. He presented a certificate marking the founding of Edinburgh Hillel to committee members Myrna and Morris Kaplan and Paul Albert, Edinburgh J-Soc Co-Chair.

Rabbi Marker spoke about the work of Hillel around the world, declaring that only this year a Hillel House was opened in Moscow.

The previous evening, a Friday night meal was hosted in the Edinburgh Hillel House by the Hillel Committee. Gerry Lucas, Director of National Hillel, attended with his wife Angela, and Andrew Shaw, UJS Education Officer, gave a 'Devar Torah' incorporating the relevance of the liberation of Auschwitz with today's tormented society.

Lionel Levy, a resident of Hillel who comes from Marseilles, made Kiddush and recited Grace before meals, while David Kaplan said Grace after meals.

Applications are now being received for Edinburgh's Hillel House for Session 1995/96. Please telephone 0130 661 3035 or 0131 447 7386.

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## LODGE SOLOMON'S DIVINE SERVICE



*Rabbi Shapira, Cantor Ernest Levy, RWM Alec Rubenstein.*

On Sunday, 5 February 1995, Lodge Solomon held a Divine Service in the Synagogue, Salisbury Road to celebrate its 75th Anniversary. The service was conducted by Rabbi Shalom Shapira and Cantor Rev Ernest Levy. The Synagogue Choir was directed by David Mendelsohn. The Lodge was led by R W M, Mr Alec Rubenstein. The City of Edinburgh was represented by the Lord Provost, Mr Norman Irons. Attending the Lord Provost were the High Constables of Edinburgh, all looking resplendent in their colourful regalia. Council members of both Edinburgh District and Region were also in attendance. There were representations from the Grand Lodge of Scotland and from over forty other Lodges, including the City, the Lothians, Fife and Linlithgowshire.

After the Service refreshments were served in the Marian Oppenheim Hall. Alec Rubenstein thanked the Lord Provost for his attendance and congratulated him on being made a CBE in the Queen's Honours List. The Lord Provost replied and commented upon how much he and his colleagues had enjoyed joining in the Service and in the singing of the metrical Psalms.

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## COMMUNITY CENTRE SHOP SALE

The Community Centre Management Committee held a shop sale in Dalry Road on Monday and Tuesday, 3-4 April. £450 was raised from the wide variety of goods generously donated by members of the community. Grateful thanks are due to the willing helpers who turned up on the above two days and also on the previous Sunday when the goods were delivered to the shop and separated into the different categories.

Special thanks must go to the indefatigable Michael Wittenberg who was not only responsible for the acquisition of the premises, but also for cleaning them out, the borrowing of a van, arranging the collection and delivering of goods, the sale notices, the disposal of left-over goods and even, when the occasion warranted it, the delivery of items to purchasers' homes. He also found time to make tea and coffee for his band of helpers. An untiring and enthusiastic leader, he contributed significantly to the success of the venture.



## JEAN AND RICHARD'S WEDDING

On 9 April 1995, Jean Shaw married Richard Winetrobe. Jean is the youngest daughter of Hannah Shaw and the late Bernard Shaw and Richard is the youngest child of Sybil and Berl Winetrobe. Although Jean and Richard were in the same class at Shawland's Academy and both attended Queen's Park Chedar together, they did not become romantically involved until they met again at the Edinburgh Discussion Group. Jean is Deputy Manageress at one of Argos' Retail Stores and Richard is a Senior Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer at the Regional Virus Laboratory, located at The City Hospital.

Jean looked radiant in a Mary Queen of Scot's style wedding dress and the guests were entertained by a Ceilidh Band.

The young couple have set up home in Morningside.

We wish them every happiness in their new life together.



## Hillel Dinner

"One of the best evenings we have ever spent in the Community Centre" was the comment of many as they left the Dinner to celebrate the opening of Edinburgh's Hillel House held on 12th March. It was completely sold out and the organiser, Morris Kaplan was well satisfied that his careful and detailed planning of the event had been very worth while. Three speakers graced the top table, Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Defence, Brenda Katten, Chairman of the Hillel Foundation and David Kaplan, National Chairman of the Union of Jewish Students. Also present were the Deputy chairman of the Hillel Foundation London, Jeffrey Green, the Student Chaplain, Rabbi Dovid Cohen, several notable figures from the Glasgow Jewish Community and three tables of students and it was the latter led by Nick Cohen who good humouredly hijacked the Grace after Meals with their typical student rendering. In his speech, David Kaplan spoke of the problems, dangers and challenges facing Jewish Students on the Campus. He highlighted the rise of Islamic fundamentalist organisations like Hizb-ut-Tahrir who he said were active in about 50 campuses throughout the country



*Left to right: Brenda Katten, John Cosgrove, Malcolm Rifkind, David Kaplan with two students in front.*

who were not only anti Zionist but who described the Holocaust as a 'fairytale'. He pointed out that whilst Jewish Education was of primary importance, it received only 4% of the total money raised for Jewish causes. Jewish 'change' was needed rather than Jewish 'continuity'. He paid tribute to the Edinburgh Jewish Community of which he was proud to be a product said that it could stand high when compared with other communities.

Brenda Katten on behalf of the Hillel Foundation congratulated the Edinburgh Community on the founding of a Hillel House and noted that not only was the current chairman and the chairman elect of

the UJS from Edinburgh but that Edinburgh had provided many institutions including Her Majesty's Government with fine leaders. She said that University was the last opportunity and structure for reaching out to our children to fight the three a's antisemitism and antizionism, apathy and assimilation. Hillel had no other raison d'être but to support Jewish students on campus. As far as the future was concerned it was not enough to trust the future, we had a duty to ensure it and we could do this by supporting our Jewish students.

Malcolm Rifkind commented upon the fact that John Major was visiting Israel that very day and that there was a significant improvement in the relationship between the two countries more so than at any time since the birth of the State. He felt safe in saying that this was the first time that a Secretary of State for Defence had addressed a Hillel function and congratulated the Hillel committee on its success in a particularly worthy venture. He spoke about what a great impression the newly opened Holocaust Museum in Washington had had upon him and about his recent visit to Israel where he had had talks with Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin who was also the Defence Minister.

John Cosgrove was in the chair and paid particular tribute to Morris Kaplan for his hard work which had ensured the success of the evening.



*Left to right: Hilary Rifkind, Brenda Katten, Jeffrey Green.*



## COMING EVENTS

### June 1995

25 Sunday	Cheder Prizegiving	12 noon
	Cheder Picnic & Sports Day	1.30p.m.
28 Wednesday	Synagogue Annual General Meeting	7.30p.m.

### July 1995

9 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
30 Sunday	Tea to bid farewell to Rabbi & Mrs Shapira	3.30 p.m.

### August 1995

5 Shabbat	Kiddush given by Rabbi & Mrs Shapira	
13 Sunday	WIZO Annual Lunch at 2 Ettrick Road	12.30 p.m.
	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
27 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.

### September 1995

10 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
13 Wednesday	WIZO Ladies' Supper/Speaker	7.00 p.m.
25 Monday	1st Day Rosh Hashanah	
26 Tuesday	2nd Day Rosh Hashanah	

Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1.00 - 3.00 p.m. For further information, contact Cassie (452 9112)

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every alternate Saturday afternoon in the Cosgrove Library

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 noon

The Mother and Baby Group meets on alternate Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.

Meetings are subject to alteration

The above events, unless otherwise stated, take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road.

## EVELYN

from 'Memories of a Family'  
by Rocky (Rae) Levey  
(on her sister, the novelist,  
Evelyn Cowan)

When last to arrive, a little girl  
came,  
Who in the future, would rise to  
fame.  
Then we all sat around, and each  
chose a name.  
When Father died, she was only  
six weeks old,  
But family and neighbours took  
her into their fold.  
What did she know of a father  
who was dead,  
Of the wonderful things he did,  
and said.  
Of different opinions she would  
hear,  
Of a man whose love had known  
no fear.  
She loved organising, and taught  
all kinds of games,  
And knew each mature person,  
by their own names.  
So well thought of, she had many  
friends,  
Into any company, she would  
blend.  
Through the long dreary war, she  
was company for Mother,  
Who was to her father and  
mother, for she knew no  
other.

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## FUTURE GENERATION : JUNIOR CHOIRS PAST AND PRESENT

by Judy Gilbert



*Junior Choir with David Mendelssohn*

It hardly seems any time at all since my own children (now grown men) stood sheepishly on the Bima to sing not only anim zemirot but sim shalom ain kelohaynu adon olam etc. in piping innocent voices.

Danny Sinclair was the man at the helm at that time and his own daughter Yael would often be amongst the jostling crowd. David Mendelssohn would be called upon to give the finishing touches for festivals. The choir learnt different melodies which originated in Israel. It was always with some anticipation that the congregation waited to see which rendering would be used, who sang which part and with whom.

As the children began to grow up and the boys voices took the plunge, only the braver tenors would continue to sing, leaving a somewhat depleted little gathering.

Danny was succeeded by Shalom Shapira who was and still is as eager as his predecessor to continue with the choir. His paternal welcome to any volunteer is always reassuring.

Sadly a time came when many of the previous songsters had migrated to various parts of the UK in pursuit of a higher education, leaving a very small retainer group who felt they were too old for the job. Often we were to behold

Shalom looking pleadingly at the one very post-Barmitzvah possibility only to receive a flat refusal to sing anim zemirot in a baritone voice.

Happily events are coming full circle and a new and talented junior choir is being coached.

Last year we listened to the new generation of singers launching into the Hymns of Glory and things seemed to take off from there. With Kita Dalet well on the way to confident renditions we observe kita gimmel creeping up behind.

The Rabbi rehearses with an enthusiastic group after cheder for about half an hour and it gives everyone great pleasure and pride to hear them sing on every first shabbat in the month.

The junior choir of yesterday was certainly motivation for the younger members of the shul to attend, if not on a regular basis then just occasionally. It is so important to give the children something to look forward to in a service; we all remember what a long couple of hours it used to be when we were young.

We must encourage the next generation to put a new vitality into our community.



*Danny Sinclair with a junior choir*



## The Ruth Adler Memorial Lecture JEWISH SURVIVAL

by Hugo Gryn

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to add my own tribute to Ruth's name and memory. This afternoon many of us were together in the cemetery at the stone-setting officiated by Rabbi Shapira and still deeply moved by Fran's tribute. I speak for all of us here this evening when I extend to Michael and to Jonathan and Benjy and to Peter and your family our sympathy and our condolence and this sense of shared loss and grief.

This lecture is dedicated to her memory and in preparing I was very conscious of her passion for justice, her commitment both to her own people, to the family of Israel and to the vulnerable everywhere — reflected in the causes that she served and the institutions that she enhanced ranging from the abuse of women, children's justice, fairness in justice throughout Scotland and through Amnesty in all the oppressive places of the world. I was also conscious that this evening it is Erev Tu Bishvat, the birthday of trees which consoles with the notion of ongoing life. This month will also mark the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz which is where Ruth's own grandparents were murdered and the only consolation is that thanks to the escape of Lotte and Rudi Oppenheimer - and I cannot help thinking what an act of faith it was for them to have a child born in October 1944! - Ruth came into this world. The fact is that Ruth's life and work illustrate that something of the ethical values and the decency that was part of their Jewish life managed to survive. I also want to add that I have very fond memories of the open and warm and very generous hospitality that Michael and Ruth gave me last time I visited Edinburgh and I miss her more than any words of mine can express. It is also the first time that my wife Jackie and I are here



Rabbi Hugo Gryn

together after 38 years and we have already decided that, no matter what happens, we are going to come here once every 38 years.

In fact it was at the Edinburgh Festival and after visiting a Braque exhibition that I proposed to her. Happily for me she accepted. It is also good to be near Lasswade and Polton House where those of us who came here after the war regained healing perspective. That also speaks about survival, which is my theme this evening, in a very direct and personal fashion. My main point is that Jewish survival could never be taken for granted and I will try to illustrate this by reflecting on a series of turning-points. I shall try to squeeze a year's course into a 45-minute bottle. I will no doubt fail, but I won't worry too much when you start looking at your watches. In any case my situation this evening is better than what happened not long ago in my Synagogue. There was a man who had to leave very early and there was another man who was coming in very late. The man who was coming in very late said to the man

who was leaving very early 'Tell me, has Gryn finished his sermon yet?' And the man leaving said 'He finished it a long time ago but he's still speaking'.

My thesis this evening is that Judaism is an interpretation of the drama of human experience. Its paramount aim is to build a sound society - we call it the Kingdom of God. Consequently, Judaism developed the very distinctive philosophy of history which is seen not so much as a succession of chronological events but as a gradual unfolding of a moral process. This philosophy also holds that men and women see this process only in fragments and only in retrospect. In its entirety, it is only known to God. The way in which I would like to illustrate and argue this thesis is by pointing out some key turning-points in our history. The very first one, when survival was absolutely at stake, came to a head in the year 722 BCE. You will remember that at that time the Jewish people were divided. There was a southern kingdom of Judah and a northern kingdom of Israel. If our history would have been "normal", then after 722 BCE when the Northern Kingdom was destroyed, Jews should have exited from the world's stage (because that was the pattern that happened to most peoples at one time or another, sooner or later) and we should have become a chapter in Near Eastern Studies possibly entitled "Unitarian Hebrews". That this did not happen is the first chapter in this remarkable story.

The image that I would like to present is that of a sort of spiralling spring. My thesis is also that there are tensions and pressures - external and internal - plus an unshakeable religious faith which make for Jewish survival. The phrase that I seize on for myself is that for Jews to do well, we need to



have conditions of moderate stress! The "Tzoroh" is with the word "moderate", because if there is too much stress we go under. With none we tend to dissipate. There were prior to 722, four sets of pressures which at one time or another and in some form or another, remained in our history and continue to the present. In the pre-722 period there were religious pressures and tensions which expressed in the "Baal v YHVH" worship. A constant struggle which goes on. It goes on under the heading always of "idolatry versus faith in God". And idolatry is always very attractive, very seductive and it takes on all kinds of guises. The other - political stresses - were in the form of "prophet versus king" which also goes on. The "king" stands for power - and the "prophet" in our tradition certainly has always been the critic of power. The prophet stands to the left of the king, and incidentally the priest generally stands to the right of the king. The result is that we have, within the same religious tradition, those who bless power and therefore have to go along with it and those who remain critics of that power. But the tension and the pressure are there and at work at this very moment. The third is the social tension and pressure. In that time it was "rich versus poor" and that too hasn't altered that much. Then the "national versus the tribal". At that time there was the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. They knew they were the same people, but they also didn't trust each other. All these elements plus the weight of shifting empires contributed to the downfall of this northern kingdom of Samaria.

This is where the story becomes so exciting, because whereas it would have been normal for Judah, the southern kingdom, sooner or later to follow suit, it didn't. They learned a lesson from this and they did a number of things fairly quickly. First of all they switched in the southern kingdom of Judah to a guild system; there were major



Ruth Adler

economic reforms. It is interesting because the later prophets like Isaiah and Micah did not preach like the prophet Amos about the gap between rich and poor. Judah was able to reform itself and to narrow the gap between rich and poor. The notion of "tzedakah" became a very important principle in Jewish life. There were also major religious reforms. The Book of Deuteronomy which was "discovered" in the year 622 in the reign of King Josiah, reflects tremendous religious reforms. In many ways it "spiritualises" religion. Judaism from that time onwards is very much a spiritual tradition. Of course this is reflected in the other books of the Torah as well. I resent being told that 'Christianity is the religion of love and yours is a religion of law'. First of all there is nothing wrong with a religion of law; secondly, the great commandment. ... OK, this is absolutely true: Not long ago I was speaking to a group of very sympathetic, Christian people about Judaism and somehow I used the phrase from Leviticus 19 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself'. A lady got up and said how touched she was that a Rabbi like me should use a quotation from Jesus. I said "Excuse me, it is in the Torah". She said "Oh, so your whole tradition took it on!"

When the Southern Kingdom of

## Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society



### Jewish Survival

Rabbi Hugo Gryn  
(West London Synagogue)

on Sunday 15th January at 8.00pm.  
in the New Jewish Community Centre

Judah also collapsed - in 586 BCE - Jewish life did not end. In part because of the lessons of 722 and also because the prophets of the time served Judaism so well. Especially Jeremiah whose advice to the early exiles in Babylonea was that they should affirm and continue family life, lead productive lives and "pray for the wellbeing of your city ... because in its welfare is your welfare...".

It is also clear that by the time some of those exiles can return to Judea 70 years later, they and those who remain in Babylon have a powerful sense of shared history and the feeling of mutual responsibility. They are key ingredients in the saga of Jewish survival.

The next severe test is connected with the Hellenization of many of the Jewish people and especially of their leaders and the Hasmonean Revolt in the period of 168- 165 BCE celebrated in Chanukah. Not too many Jews read the First and Second Books of Maccabees in the Apocrypha. That's where you get the real story. In the Talmud, we read "Mai Chanukah?" — "What about Chanukah?" and it simply tells you the story of the miracle about the little jar of oil. The reason why the Rabbis don't want to talk about Chanukah is that they are ashamed of what happened to the descendants of the Maccabees. How



those heroes in the space of not that many generations had degenerated and eventually made the deal with Rome that brought them to Jerusalem. This is also the time when something very very exciting comes into Jewish life. The generations after the Hasmonean Revolt and victory say 'Wait a minute, what can we learn from this?' Assimilation is the big issue in the conflict with Hellenism. Hellenism was very attractive. Technologically, I emphasise the word technologically, it was superior to anything in the world of its time. The issue for most cultures is what do you do when a technologically (I have to keep stressing the word technologically) inferior civilisation confronts a technologically superior one? Most of the time there is utter opposition to it and that's why so many civilisations go completely under and disappear almost without trace. I am prepared to argue that only two civilisations had the good sense not to rubbish the new thing, but actually to take to heart what they were about. In the case of Hellenism they were the Jews and the Romans. When the Jewish sages reflected and asked 'What was it that was so attractive about Hellenism?' they correctly located what was the strength of it. And that goes under the Greek term of "paidea" meaning to achieve perfection through education. And you have an extraordinary situation, that within about 150-200 years after the Hasmonean Revolt, Judaism insists 'Ein am ha-aretz chasid' that an ignorant person cannot be a pious one. I think it is reasonable to say that from about the first or second century onwards, no Jewish male is illiterate! And we took that lock stock and barrel from the Greeks. Not only that, this is the time when suddenly there is a realisation how powerful literature can be, especially pamphlet literature. The market, as it were, became flooded with pamphlets in which Sophocles and Orpheus and Plato himself acclaim monotheism and the Shabbat and they quote

from the Bible and they think Moshe was a very great person. They are forgeries of course, but extremely popular.

When the next trauma comes, as it comes in the year 70 CE with the destruction of the Temple and when Rome is now the source of almost unbearable pressure. What happens there is now happening already to a people rather than a nation.

Another difficult question of definition - what are we, Jews? I can tell you what we are not: we are not a race in any biological sense. Are we a nation? Are we a religion? Increasingly we tend to call ourselves a people 'Am'. It is sufficiently vague that it can accommodate this notion of shared history. When the Temple was destroyed in 70, it could have been the end, it was not. A process starts in which Judaism re-roots itself from the dimension of space to the dimension of time. A transference takes place from the temple to many synagogues. You will remember the seminal story about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai who escapes the destruction of Jerusalem by being smuggled out from the besieged city. A short time after the destruction, he and his disciples come back from Yavne where they continue their studies and the disciples walk in the ruins and they cry 'Woe unto us, for the place where atonement could be made for our sins is no more'. And Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai says 'You don't understand! Something as good, if not better, has been given to us. A life of prayer and of good deeds'. This too becomes a saving motif in Jewish life. It is part of the clue to survival. We now have from the Temple the many synagogues; the move is from sacrificial cult to prayer and study; the leadership role of the priesthood yields to that of the Rabbi. Instead of an aristocracy, it becomes a meritocracy. Instead of one state there are many communities. For the next two thousand years it is not possible to speak of a monolithic Jewish people or a

Jewish nation, but you have to speak about the fate of divergent communities.

Let us now jump almost a thousand years. There was the rise of Christianity, and the Roman Empire by the fourth century becomes officially a Christian Empire. Not long after comes the rise of Islam and Jewish life becomes bound up mainly with Islam. If you and I would be together, as it were, a thousand years ago, it would have been very clear to us that our fate was bound up with the fate of the world of Islam. Those Jews who came over into Europe, mainly to the Iberian peninsula, are there as part of the Islamic expansion. With the collapse of the Bagdad Caliphate this expansion takes place at quite a rapid rate. Something happens, every now and then it is possible to date things very precisely - 1146 - was a crucial turning-point for Jews, because in that year a particularly fanatical Muslim sect, the Almohades, invade first North Africa and then they come over into Europe. They are fanatical and with them it is either you become Muslim or you die or you flee. And many Jews flee. Overnight, it seems, the scene shifts. For the next thousand years after 1146 the fate of Jews is bound up now, not with the world of Islam but with the world of Christianity.



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For Jews the mediaeval period is characteristically an unbroken series of rises and falls. England in 1290 is responsible for the first large-scale expulsion of Jews. France, Germany, Spain, Portugal follow. As the process of the Christianisation of Europe goes on and as the Church is gaining ground (and it is a very uncertain and insecure Church) - so the condition and the situation of Jews is deteriorating. There is a direct ratio between them. Jews fall increasingly in the category of 'unrepentant', meaning that they know the truth about Jesus but won't admit it. Or that they want to make the host suffer the agonies of the Passion again. In Europe around Easter-time and especially in the period of the Crusades, Jews lived through unspeakable terrors. The phenomenon of 'the wandering Jew' dates from this period. If you ask 'How did our people survive this period?', I can only say they had unshakeable faith. It is as simple and as moving as that. They became inward-looking and they became people who learned how to cling to life, any life. Look at the literature of the period, the poetry that's produced, and you will see an extraordinary affirmation of life.

The only direction where Jewish life can shift is towards the East. What happens in Eastern Europe is a remarkable story of Jewish survival. First of all, the system which helps Jews to survive, the system of the 'Kahal' the community, becomes a highly organised, very important embracing institution. New people coming in are looked after; the vulnerable are cared for; the community accepts basic responsibilities and nothing will let them abdicate them. In Poland and Lithuania, Jewish life is organised, it is disciplined, and it is also highly meaningful.

But always - and again Jews get caught in the middle. The vast majority of Jews now live in a world in which there are three classes. There is the upper class, the aristocracy, the landowners; the 'pan' and next to them comes the

'chlop' the peasantry, serfs; and the Jews are a third category. They are often employed by the upper class and are seen as hostile to the peasants. There are three religions: Catholic, Russian Orthodox and Jewish. There are three nationalities: Polish, Russian and Jewish. There develops a tragic pattern. When there are crises - economic or political - it is the Jews who pay the very heavy price. The vicious pogroms in 1648 happen because the Jews are in the middle and betrayed by those who promised safety. I am over-simplifying it a bit but not too much. Survival in East Europe is partly due to the fact that there was nowhere else to go. You had to make a go of it. Within the Pale of Settlement, within the Jewish community, there was a high cultural and social organisation. The 'Kahal' structure, the community structure was a saving influence. It was also helpful

that religious life and theological speculation continued to be both this-worldly and life-affirming.

When Jews enter the modern period, the 2000 year old problem of assimilation raises its head again. Again there is a reaction and a response to it. Chassidism is a response to it and so is Reform Judaism and the Haskalah Movement. Everybody is trying to mend the fabric of their world - and do it more or less successfully. Or rather they are all partly successful and they are all also a partial failure. In the 19th century, Nationalism becomes the great movement. Eventually it emerges in Jewish life as Zionism. Industrialisation is the flavour of the century and there is migration to the United States, to this country and to many new lands. Not enough as it turns out, nor quickly enough but there is survival taking place. However, the tragic fact is that the powerhouse of



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Jewish life for the past thousand years, which was European Jewry became trapped and it was destroyed.

I am very conscious that when we speak about Jewish survival, six million Jews did not survive, which is why the process of survival that is taking place now has extraordinary importance. The rediscovery and the reconnection with Sepharadi and Oriental Jews which is happening in Israel, is of great importance and it is something that will characterise the coming century and the time beyond. The fact is that almost unexpectedly the one significant remnant of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, the Russian Jews or rather of the former Soviet Union are also able now to reconnect. Twenty years ago nobody could have predicted this.

Let me sum up. It is no longer possible to think of Jewish survival without Israel entering into our thinking. For people my age and older, Israel is a miracle. For our children and our grandchildren, it is a fact of life. I have, as we are here speaking and thinking about this fiftieth anniversary of Auschwitz, an obsessive thought. Theodore Herzl's 'Diary' has an entry in August 1897 where he says at the end of the First Zionist Conference and I quote from memory, 'Today I founded the Jewish State. Now if I said this out loud people would consider me mad and possibly lock me up. But I know that it is founded in the will of the people and in ten years, twenty years, but certainly in fifty years time everybody will see this.' Well it didn't happen 10 or 20 years later or even when places like Iraq and Syria and Jordan were getting their independence. It happened exactly fifty years later in 1947 when the United Nations agreed to the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state which then became a reality in May 1948. Here is my obsessive thought: We are a very old people, what is ten years this way or that? But just think, supposing that Jewish State would have been established in

1938 and not 1948? Just ten years earlier. Do you doubt that if Israel had one aircraft, that it wouldn't have taken off and gone to bomb the railway lines leading to Auschwitz, something that the whole might of the Allies could not or would not do?! Survival is never guaranteed and I believe that for the foreseeable future it is not only a matter of a sense of shared history which we have but what is also necessary for Jewish survival is to have a sense of a common destiny! Something remarkable happened in April and May 1967. This was the time, you may remember, when Nasser was threatening to drive the Jews of Israel into the sea. We and the world expected a blood-bath and there was an extraordinary sense of vulnerability on the part of Jews everywhere. In that unforgettable spring of 1967, which exploded into the Six Day War in the beginning of June, we realised that our destinies had become intertwined. What was happening at that time in Israel affected every conscious and self-affirming Jew. Not very long afterwards, when an Israeli plane did take off against all kinds of odds to rescue captive Jews in Entebbe, it was an illustration of the new situation: that we do have

a sense of shared history and a sense of common destiny.

Let me summarise those elements which contribute to our survival. There is religion which is developing and this-worldly. There are our institutions: the Temple that became the synagogue; the 'Kahal' or 'Kehilla' and the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is part of it. There is a philosophy of optimism but actually it is an ingrained respect for life. There is inwardness every now and then, the ability to withdraw from a hostile society, but not to withdraw from life. There was also an ability to become time-rooted even when we were displaced from space and this is now changing. If you were to have me come back here to give this lecture, not in 38 years time but in about 200 years time, some very interesting things will have happened. So watch this space please.

*With Compliments  
from  
John and Hazel  
Cosgrove*



Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society won the Glasgow Jewish Community Quiz for the second time. Left to right: Jonny Sperber, Elaine Samuel, Janet Mundy and Ian Leifer with Question Master Barry Adams-Strump.

Photo: Courtesy of The Jewish Telegraph



## BEACH-COMBING IN TEL AVIV

by Eva Erdelyi

My cousin Hilda came from Santa Monica, a Pacific beach-resort near Los Angeles, to Tel Aviv for a few days last year. Nothing in our town impressed her as much as our beaches. 'How marvellous,' she exclaimed, 'to live in a city where the seashore belongs to everybody, not only to the few who can afford luxury hotels or villas with their own, private bit of beach. And the promenade, running along for miles! I have never seen anything like it'. She was right. In our city the beaches are almost all public, and the fine, clean sands extend from the mouth of the Yarkon in the north to the outskirts of Jaffa in the south, forming a scalloped, white fringe backed by the patterned ribbon of our promenade, which in Hebrew is called 'Tayelet'. This is where I should like to take you for a walk.

The map of Tel Aviv, like that of other planned cities, including the Georgian 'New Town' of Edinburgh, shows a network of traffic arteries running approximately north to south and east to west. Take any of the roads or streets westward, and it will eventually delight you with a glimpse of the Mediterranean. If we board a west-going bus No.55 in Arlosorov Street, it will bring us, after crossing Dizengoff and Ben Yehuda Streets, to Hayarkon, named after the river which defines the northern edge of the town. We cross at the traffic lights, and are facing the stately Hilton Hotel, which stands like a massive sentinel on its rocky elevation. The lawns and rock-gardens on this promontory continue northward into Independence Park. This we enter by climbing an easy slope to the cliff-walk, where we are rewarded by an exquisite panorama of the littoral. Below us are the white sands of a public beach, and further away I can point out to you the exceptional private beach, or rather the twin beaches, reserved for separate

bathing of males and females, satisfying the strictly orthodox. This establishment forms a triangle pointing seaward, to the breakwater in front of it. A high wall is bisecting the triangle, and if there are any chinks or loopholes in it for a religious Pyramus and Thisbe, they are certainly not visible from the cliffs.

Instead of climbing down to sea-level, we now make our way at the back of the Carlton Hotel to a cavernous shopping arcade. Here you may buy souvenirs tax-free, and then put on your darkest glasses before we emerge on the sun-drenched Kikar Ha-Atarim, also called Kikar Namir, or simply, Tourist Plaza.

Let us sit down and have a cup of coffee on the Plaza, choosing the table with the best view. To the south the silhouette of Old Jaffa floats on the horizon, reminiscent of an Italian hill-town with a church on its crest. In front of us, we look down on the Gordon Swimming Pool and the Beach Club. They block our view of the sea, but the vivid turquoise of the pool and the pleasant lawn and palm grove of the Beach Club make a pretty picture, enhanced by the swaying masts of the yacht harbour in the background. As a concession to

non-members, the outside of the high wall guarding the privacy of the Beach Club is decorated with an attractive mural by the painter Rami Meiri. The Plaza itself is not very popular with Telavivians, and offers no attractions apart from a litter of eating places, cafes and kiosks, as well as pricey restaurants with nicely laid tables under beach umbrellas made of dry palm fronds.

Leaving the Plaza, we find a palatial stairway which descends to sea-level in three flights, the total number of steps - I have counted them several times - amounting to 66. We have now come down to the paved promenade, with a public beach on our right, the second in a row of eight, each of them watched over by a life-guard, and provided



Tel Aviv Promenade.



with a mole and breakwater. On our left we are passing a group of sky-scraping hotels, every new tower rising a little higher than the others. The prettiest, and one of the newest, is the Holiday Inn, with a surface of white strips of wall alternating with vertical strips of balconies, each balcony showing two white chairs, on a background of pastel blue glass. A special feature of the Holiday Inn is a nautically decorated so-called 'Pub Inn', which offers refreshments to hotel guests and promenaders alike.

But where are the hotel guests? In or out of the tourist season they seem to be more conspicuous on Dizengoff or Ben Yehuda Street than on the Tayelet or on the sands, which obviously belong to the Tel-Avivians. From sunrise to sunset the beaches are never deserted, and when the elderly bathing or swimming enthusiasts arrive early enough in the morning, they may find the beach-campers still rolling up their sleeping bags. Just now, most of the comfortable plastic chairs on the edge of the promenade seem occupied by a variety of people, some reading newspapers, others chatting with their friends, others just basking in the morning sun. Two elderly men on a bench in the shade are playing chess. Others, in their bathing suits, have taken the plastic chairs to the sands, free of charge. Those who are willing to pay for their comfort, rent one of the thousands of gaily-coloured beach chairs for their sunbathing. (They are very luxurious.) But it is still early and cool enough to enjoy some physical exertion, and behold: a small group of assorted Israelis doing vigorous gymnastic exercises, led by a shapely young instructress. They are obviously enjoying themselves.

The beaches are not noisy, except for the clip-clap of paddle balls, beach ping-pong being one of the favourite seaside amusements. There is more noise on Saturday nights, summer evenings and school holidays. Then the Tayelet with its numerous restaurants will be crowded, loudspeakers will dis-

pense popular music, and if you are lucky, or know the right time and place, you may see some lively folk-dancing, surrounded by a big circle of spectators. The busiest part of the Tayelet is the strip between Gordon and Frishman Street. Here the red and white mosaic of the pavement has blossomed out into its characteristic curvilinear pattern, part of which is covered by tables and chairs of outdoor restaurants. In addition, there are a few pavilions projecting onto the sands, where tables are sheltered within a glass verandah. If you care to stop at one of these places for a plate-lunch, I can promise you that it will be tasty, full of vitamins, and very ample.

While waiting for service, look at the swarms of seagulls rising, settling, and rising again into the cloudless sky; watch the white sails issuing slowly from the yacht harbour, the placid fishermen on the breakwater, and the more exciting spectacle of the surf-board riders, practising their skill. Near the shore, semi-naked toddlers are climbing in and out of plastic playhouses, while older members of their families are basking in the sun, or picnicking in the shade of sunshelters. Having enjoyed our pizza, or as much of it as we could manage to eat, we pay our bill and proceed on our promenade, admiring as we pass them the beautiful

displays of bedding plants on the edge of the pavement, where it borders on the beach.

After passing another group of sky-scraping hotel towers, we come to a building remarkable for its width rather than its height: the famous Dan Hotel, or rather the back of it, for the entrance faces Hayarkon Street. I must confess, that for years I did not recognise this as the back of a hotel, but took it for a huge office building, decorated with vertical stripes of muted rainbow colours. Now I know better, and can even tell you the name of the artist, Yaakov Agam, who devised this striking colour scheme. As we walk on, the beaches continue to our right, but on our left the Tayelet now borders on a noisy motor road, the Herbert Samuel Boulevard. Eventually we arrive at the junction of Allenby and Herbert Samuel - I wonder if they ever met in the flesh? - a point distinguished by a beautiful fountain, and by the not so beautiful Opera Tower which occupies the space of the original opera house of Tel Aviv. Let us turn our back on this offensive, multilevel monstrosity and admire the waterfalls of the fountain, before returning to the Tayelet. This part of it, and the adjoining seashore, is designated as 'Jerusalem Beach'. The memorial stone says: 'Dedicated to honour

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the city of Jerusalem and its mayor, Teddy Kollek, on the 20th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem, on the 28th Iyar, 1947'. And legend adds, that this gift was chosen, because the city of Jerusalem lacked nothing but - a beach. The above quoted inscription is, of course, in Hebrew which I hope I have translated correctly.

To distinguish 'Jerusalem Beach' from all the other beaches, two rows of sunshelters have been erected, similar to the single ones which have been dotting the Tayelet with their attractive, latticed Pagoda roofs. Each of these two rows forms a colonnaded pergola, with a semicircular bench in every bay, where the elderly are resting, and young couples are doing whatever can be done decently in public. One bay at the far end is occupied by a grubby, bearded beach-comber who is having his lunch, using a plastic chair for his improvised table. The criss-cross trellis-work of the roof casts a dappled shade over them all. Between the two pergolas the pavement is decorated with a circular mosaic, a kind of mandala, walked on by humans but respectfully avoided by a swarm of pigeons, probably because they dislike its slippery, polished surface. The beach itself is much like other

beaches, with a life-guard's look-out, a breakwater and the verandah of the 'Jerusalem Beach Restaurant' projecting onto the sands. The surf is foaming as whitely here as elsewhere, and the view back on the forest of hotel towers is quite spectacular.

If you want to continue your walk on the Tayelet, I warn you, it will be noisy with the roaring traffic of Herbert Samuel Boulevard on your left, and some of the beaches are littered with unsightly shacks. If you persevere, you will discover the 'Dolphinarium', a favourite holiday attraction for children. Also a real mosque with a graceful minaret, badly damaged during the war but now restored after many years of being shrouded in scaffolding. You may like to go on as far as the clock-tower of Jaffa, but as for me, I have



*Jaffa in the distance.*

seen enough for the day and am ready to make my way home, hoping that you have enjoyed this perambulation as much as I did.

## — Letters continued from Page 2 —

16 Cumin Place  
EDINBURGH EH9 2JX  
28 January 1995

Dear Rabbi

I write as a Minister of the Church of Scotland, though in a purely private capacity, along with my wife, to say that you and members of the Jewish Community have been in our thoughts and prayers at this special time. We know that nothing can blot out the awful memory of what happened at Auschwitz and the other extermination camps, but we wanted, if we may, to stand with you, even if only in a small way, in your relived great grief and horror at the unbelievably evil wickedness of the Holocaust. The 'why?' of the appalling events of those dark days remains a mystery, though it does tell us how terrible is mankind's rebellion against God but mercifully that the grace of God is greater.

Will you please accept an all too inadequate feeling of our sorrow with you just now, as also for ourselves and many others of the Church with us, at the sense of shame at any part that the Church has had in the past which in any way fostered or provided the climate for anti-Semitism. We deplore any forms of this anywhere in the world today and pray that those who would engage in such practice may be thwarted, and certainly that the world will never again see a repeat of the monstrosities of Hitler's devilish reign.

With kindest regards, yours sincerely  
(signed) R W Walker

Dov Bet-El  
25 Uziyahu Street  
Kiryat Gat 82000  
ISRAEL  
31 January 1995

To the Editor

I was the Shaliach to FZY from September 1967 to October 1970. During that time I made a great number of friends in many parts of Britain. I would very much like to see them again.

This year FZY is celebrating 85 years of activities. As part of the celebrations a reunion of The Dov Bet-El Era has been suggested.

We would like to get the reactions of your readers. Who would like to join me, John Samson, John and Tabby Corre, Mel and Kosky and many others in November 1995 for a giant get-together.

If you would please contact Geraldine (Symons) King at: Weddings, 172 High Street, Watford WD1 2EG. Tel : 01923 233 445 (day). Fax : 01923 227 227 380. 01923 245 715 (night).

B'Shalom.



## ANOTHER SORTIE INTO THE PAST

by Ian Shein

Extract from the Minutes of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Council of 27 August 1916.

'A letter was read from the South Shields Hebrew Congregation Building Fund offering for sale two numbered tickets for the purpose of participating in the drawing at which a full sized Sepher Torah was to be presented to the winner. The Council decided to purchase one ticket by contribution from themselves'.

Extract from the Minutes of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Council of 11 March 1917.

'The Secretary informed the meeting that a telegram had been received stating that our ticket number 219 had been successful in the drawing for a Sepher Torah on behalf of the South Shields Hebrew Congregation Building Fund. A letter was read from the Secretary of the Fund asking if a responsible person of the Executive could come to South Shields for the Sepher Torah in preference to its being sent by passenger train. Mr H J Levitt kindly agreed to bring it from Newcastle and the Secretary was instructed to write to the South Shields Congregation and make arrangements'.

Eleven year old Valerie Patterson walked past the undistinguished, gaunt building at the corner of Ogle Terrace and wondered what went on behind the heavy locked doors and stained glass windows. She was spending her usual summer holidays with her school friend in South Shields, the then-mecca of Tyneside seaside resorts, some three miles from her home in sooty Jarrow. 'That's where the Jews pray', explained her friend. Valerie experienced a strange surge of excitement. She had heard of Jews but had never met any and did not think there were any in Jarrow. For some unknown reason she would have loved to have gone into the building but did not know how to do so, and in any case her friend would surely make fun of her. She took one last hurried look and somewhat reluctantly ran past the Synagogue.

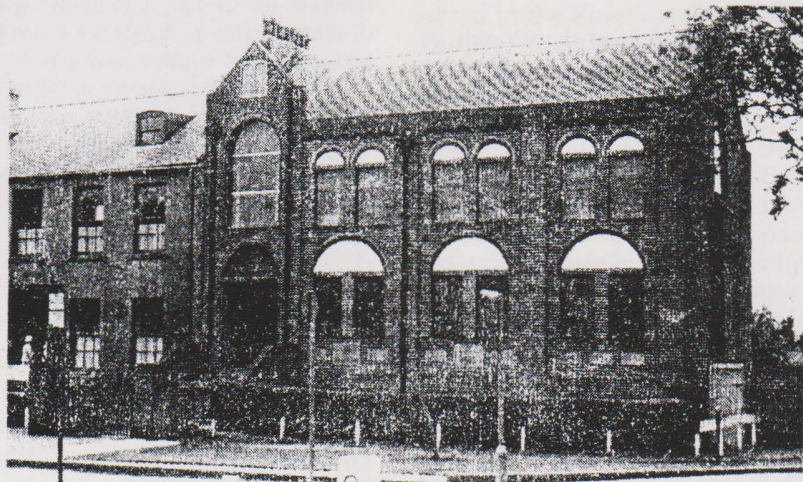
Over 30 years later, Val Simpson (nee Patterson) walked past the red-brick building in Salisbury Road with a sense of *deja vu*. The same feeling of excitement took over. She knew this was where the Jews of Edinburgh came to worship and was now determined to carry out her childhood wish to enter a Synagogue. It was one of the most fateful and momentous days of her life. In 1987 Val and Bill Simpson converted to Judaism, an event which brought them the very pinnacle of achievement, contentment and fulfilment in every possible way. It brought the Edinburgh Jewish community two

most welcome assets.

One summer day in 1994 Val and Bill walked down Ogle Terrace with a great deal of sadness as they saw the gaunt building of Val's childhood now closed and empty. After 80 years of service to the tiny South Shields community, the Synagogue had failed to maintain its identity due to decreasing membership. The shell of the building stood bravely, stalwartly proud, but the inside was being converted into an arts centre. Val very much wanted some little memory to take back with her. All she could find were a couple of pages from an old prayer book which lay forlornly in the murky corner of the yard. Clutching these precious pages, she and Bill strolled towards the exit gates. As they left, Val's eyes strayed to a grid where was trapped what was obviously a letter, a dampened ball of paper. On

smoothing it out, it transpired to be a letter dated 1943 to a congregant who had failed to pay his subscriptions. For some reason, Val kept it and later showed it to her friend Pearl Shein, a fellow Geordie. Pearl, in amazement, told Val that the author of the letter, the Secretary of the Synagogue, was her father Mark Rose. Even more coincidental, the name of the previous Secretary was shown to be Nathan Gatoff, the father of Pearl's oldest friend Joyce Shein.

And so continued the South Shields connection, if sadly the South Shields community no longer exists. Members moved away, some to far off destinations, others to the nearby congregations of Newcastle and Sunderland. Perhaps in some long lost minute book, there are entries relating to a raffle with the first prize of a Sephar Torah being won by a Scottish Synagogue.



South Shields Synagogue.



## EDINBURGH FESTIVAL SHABBAT - Summer 1994

*by Rabbi Dr Daniel Sinclair*

It is a great pleasure to be occupying the pulpit of the Edinburgh synagogue after a hiatus of some seven years. The memories of my ministry to the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation during the years 1984 - 1987 are fond ones, and Debbie, myself, Yael, Yonatan and Noam have been most touched by the warmth of the welcome extended to us on this visit. Edinburgh is one of the most beautiful cities in the world and it continues to cast its magic spell over all those who walk through it. Looking around, I am delighted to see so many familiar faces. At the same time, I am aware of the gaps within the ranks, and of the losses suffered by the community over the last seven years. Our thoughts and feelings have been with the community in times of both joy and sadness, and we hope and pray that the future will be a mainly upbeat one, both for the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, and for the community at large.

The pleasure of accepting the invitation to address the community on this very special Shabbat was, however, tinged with a certain amount of anxiety. The Edinburgh Festival is a glorious celebration of drama, music and art. The city is filled with light, gaiety, song and dance. But does Judaism look kindly upon all this? If it does not, then how is one to speak from the pulpit on Festival Shabbat without offending the tenets of our ancestral faith? Indeed, on the question of the proper religious response to the Edinburgh Festival, it is fascinating to speculate upon the attitude of a Scottish religious notable such as John Knox, and the type of sermon he would have preached, had he been asked to address a congregation on this very theme!

Now, in the Jewish tradition we look to past authorities for guidance on contemporary religious questions. This process has been described in Rabbinic sources in terms of the parable of the dwarf sitting upon the shoulders of a giant. The ancient authorities are the giants whose spirituality and learning are vastly superior to that of the present generation of Jewish

leaders. Contemporary authorities are the dwarves whose learning and stature are both deficient. When the dwarves sit on the shoulders of giants, however, they can see farther than the giants themselves! In the same way, modern authorities who steep themselves in the learning and wisdom of the past are capable of extending that body of insight and solving a new problem in the light of ancient wisdom. A precedent upon which to build a response to the celebration of art, drama and music is therefore the first step in any attempt to answer the question posed.

Before doing so, it is interesting that this parable is cited by a Rabbinic scholar, Rabbi Isaiah of Trani, who lived in 13th century Italy. He attributes it to "one of the wise men amongst the philosophers" and it is in fact traceable to Bernard of Chartres and is preserved in the writings of his disciple, John of Salisbury, a 12th century English scholastic. This parable, which is part of the heritage of the 12th century renaissance finds physical expression in the cathedral of Chartres, where stone images of dwarf-like apostles do indeed ride upon the shoulders of the images of the prophets!

To return to our theme. It is fortunate that a positive precedent is available in a fairly recent rabbinic source. The Bezalel Academy for Art and Design was established in Jerusalem in 1906, and was named after the Biblical artisan who supervised the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The name, incidentally, means 'in the shadow of God', and according to a rabbinic source, Bezalel was, indeed, standing in God's shadow as He laid out the Divine blueprint for the Tabernacle. At the time of the opening of the Academy, the rabbi who was to become the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Mandatory Palestine, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hachohen Kook, was living in Jaffa. He sent a letter to the Founding Committee, in which he observes that the desire for beauty

and art is a manifestation of the Divine spirit, and although practical individuals may claim that there are more pressing goals for the Jewish settlement in Palestine to be pursuing at this time, the demand for aesthetic stimulation comes from deep within the spirit of the people, and, as such, constitutes a sign of life and hope for the national soul, which is no less important than the physical body politic. Rabbi Kook did not see any contradiction between the development of an aesthetic sense and the demands of the Torah, and he regarded the establishment of the Academy as a means for 'nurturing the sensitivity for beauty and purity amongst the children of Zion' and believed that it would result in the positive 'uplifting of many souls'.

At the same time, it is clear that art has a moral and spiritual responsibility as well as an aesthetic one, and Rabbi Kook was moved to remind the Academy of this point in the following remark: 'Our nation has always related in a positive and pleasant way to the artistic beauty manifest in the creative works made with human hands, but our respect for art is also limited. Even in purely lofty and exalted spiritual matters, we are cautious of excess. Righteousness is a central principle, nevertheless, we read in Scripture: 'Do not be over-righteous' (Ecclesiastes 7:16). Wisdom is the light of our lives, yet we say: '... nor make yourselves over-wise' (ibid.). This is the principle that embraces all aspects of the eternal nation's life'. Art must, therefore, never lose sight of the moral and spiritual underpinnings of society, and has a responsibility to those values upon which healthy societies are founded.

Rabbi Kook's words extend to all branches of art, and express in quintessential form the Jewish approach to the Festival we are celebrating this Shabbat. His reference to moral and spiritual matters, however, takes me in to the weekly Torah portion, the conclusion of which is the commandment to wipe out the tribe of Amalek (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).



This tribe is singled out for total destruction, and one cannot help but wonder at the enormity of the crime which justifies such a punishment. The answer may lie in the reason given by the Bible itself for the eternal campaign against Amalek. According to Scripture, Amalek is condemned to destruction because they attacked the tired and the weary who were straggling in the rear and 'did not fear God'. Now, Amalek was not required to fear God in the same way that the Israelites were required to fear Him. There must, therefore, be a minimal level of fear which applies across the board to all nations, and Amalek was in breach even of that very minimal level. The symptom of Amalek's breach of basic morality is the persecution of the weak and the defenceless, i.e. the tired and the weary. A tribe or nation which has lost the very basic moral intuition that it is wrong to persecute the

weak - just because they are weak - may very well constitute such a profound threat to the moral fabric of society, that the only possible reaction is along the lines of the Scriptural one. Without going into the Biblical punishment meted out to Amalek, however, it would appear that there is a salutary message here for society in general. We all share a responsibility for basic moral and spiritual standards and must do our best to ensure that they are maintained in every walk of life and in every aspect of human progress and endeavour.

It has been my privilege this morning to have shared my thoughts with very special guests of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. We are delighted to welcome the Lord and Lady Provost, and the Convener of the Lothian Regional Council and members of the Regional and District Councils to the synagogue. This is not the first

such function which has been graced by their presence, and we trust that there will be many more in the future. Our prayer is that the values underpinning our common Scriptural tradition will continue to inform the governance of the city, and that the Festival will bring light and joy to it for many years to come.

Shabbat Shalom!

*With Compliments  
from  
Jess Franklin*

205 STENHOUSE STREET  
COWDENBEATH, FIFE, KY4 9DL



Mrs  
Susanne  
Barratt

It is with great sadness that the Edinburgh Friends of Israel

and the Scottish Friends of Alyn have to report the death on 13 March 1995 of Mrs Sue Barratt, after a long illness.

Sue had served on the Committee of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel for a number of years and was well known to several members of the Jewish Community in Edinburgh. Following the Edinburgh Friends' visit to Israel in 1987, which included a trip to the Alyn Hospital for Handicapped Children in Jerusalem, she formed a fundraising group together with Dorothea Kaufmann. To date the Scottish Friends of Alyn has raised some £8,000 which has been used for the purpose of buying much-needed long-term medical equipment. Sue was very pleased that latterly a Committee was formed to continue with this important fundraising work.

### PRAGUE CHILDHOOD

*The following is adapted from Sue Barratt's memories of her early childhood in Prague, as recalled by her for the benefit of her children and grandchildren. We are indebted to the Barratt family for their kindness in allowing us to reproduce these very personal reminiscences.*

I, Susanne Flusser, was born in a Prague nursing home on 2 February 1928 about two hours after Liesl, my twin sister. Our brother John, born two years earlier, had died when he was 18 days old and was buried in the Jewish Cemetery. Twins in those days were a rarity!

My father, Otto Flusser, had come to Prague from Vienna when he was a small boy. He worked as a Director of the German Opera House which was about 5 minutes walk from our home. The theatre is still there, is largely unchanged and is now known as the Smetana Theatre.

Our family were all Jewish. Both grandparents were very Orthodox and we used to be taken to their synagogues (two different ones) on the big festivals. My parents spoke Yiddish, attended the synagogue sporadically and did not observe many of the laws. Liesl and I received no religious education as such. Grandfather used to teach us a little and I clearly remember him saying prayers over us with his hands on our heads.

We were sent to Hebrew classes and religious instruction when the Germans first invaded Prague (March 1939). That was quickly discontinued and we went to the local Catholic Church (5 minutes from home) to be converted to Catholicism after my father had been told that he could get us out of the country

more easily if we were Catholics. So we became RC as did our parents, although it did not do much for them. On a more cheerful note we always had a Christmas tree and presents!

Leisl and I came out of Czechoslovakia on a May 1939 Kindertransport through the help of Mr Winton, the Briton who organised the child evacuation programme from occupied Europe.

We later learned that Grandfather Fried and Grandmother Flusser both died in Theresienstadt. The Lang family (Julius, Marta and Heda), Paula Fried and our parents all died in Auschwitz. I know from a letter from Aunt Klara Klapp (my mother's aunt) written to me in September 1946 that my father went to Auschwitz in August 1944 and my mother on 23 October 1944 - the war in Europe finished in May 1945! Not an easy thing to accept! I sent a Red Cross Message to my father on 18 June 1942 and had a message back on 22 September 1942. There was another message from our parents on 9 December 1942 and the last on 24 February 1943. (I now find these messages incredibly sad - there must have been so much they wanted to know and all they got was 25 words.)

*The Scottish Friends of Alyn would like to commemorate Sue Barratt's work and initiative by adding a leaf in her name to the Tree of Life which stands in the entrance foyer of the Alyn Hospital in Jerusalem. If you wish to contribute to this memorial, please send your cheque made payable to 'Scottish Friends of Alyn' to the Secretary, Mrs Valerie Simpson, 3 Hallhead Road, Edinburgh EH16 5QJ.*



