

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

February 1997

No. 26

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מִתְחַלֵּם לְיָמֵינוּ
מִתְחַלֵּם לְיָמֵינוּ



וְשִׁמְרָתָם אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת
בִּי כְעֵצֶם רָדִים תִּהְיוּ

קוֹמֵס לַסֵּדֶר קִיּוּן פֶּסַח אֶת קֶשֶׁת
אֵין מִצְוָה לִרְכֹּשׁ דִּינְסֵר אֵין לִפְתֹּחַ

לֹא צִוִּיתָ דִּוְנָה קִיּוּן טַמְאָה וְיֵאָחַד
כְּשֶׁיִּיָּאָרְזוּ לֹא טֹאֵה מִאֲסָרֵי־יָאָח:

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שערים אבותיהם

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לְיָמֵינוּ מִתְחַלֵּם



לְיָמֵינוּ מִתְחַלֵּם

The Edinburgh Star
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IT IS somewhat paradoxical that, at an institutional level, Jews seem to get on better with other religions than they do with each other. The unseemly row over whether or not the Chief Rabbi should attend the Thanksgiving Service for Rabbi Hugo Gryn or the recent Memorial Meeting organised by the Board of Deputies and, if so, in what capacity has not only been a source of embarrassment to many Jews but also a complete mystery to many non-Jews.

Why is this? The good relations with other religions are partly due to the fact that Judaism is not a proselytising religion and, as long as other religious faiths refrain from attempting to convert the Jews, neither Jews nor non-Jews appear to be threatened by the other. Although Jews regard themselves as the Chosen People, in the Diaspora at least, they only ask for the right to observe their religion in the same way as other religious groups observe theirs. Inasmuch as they think about it (which, it must be admitted, is probably not a great deal in most cases), they are natural supporters of religious and cultural pluralism.

In Israel, which was established as an explicitly Jewish State and is neither a liberal nor a pluralist society, the situation is, of course, rather different. Jewish religious practices and conventions are increasingly imposed on others - on non-religious Jews and non-Jews alike. I was very struck by this on a recent visit to Jerusalem. Orthodox Jews who do not themselves drive on *Shabbat* were seeking to prevent others from so doing by closing roads in orthodox neighbourhoods for the duration of the day of rest. However, there was no *quid pro quo*. Non-religious Jews living in the new housing developments on the periphery of the city who do not own their own cars cannot travel on *Shabbat* because religious Jews will not countenance the introduction of bus services.

External relations between Jews and non-Jews appear to be guided by principles of mutual tolerance and respect. Of course, it has not always been so. As long as Christian Churches regarded Jews as apostates and infidels for their 'obstinate refusal to recognise the divine origins and authority of the Church', harmonious relations between Christians and Jews were impossible. Fortunately the attitude of most Christian Churches towards the Jewish religion has changed and, as a result, the different religious beliefs and alternative conceptions of what is right and good are now able to coexist.

By contrast, the internal relations between different Jewish religious traditions and denominations, between Lubavitch, Federation, United Synagogue, Masorti, Reform and Liberal Jews can hardly be described in terms of mutual tolerance, let alone mutual respect. While ecumenicalism has made great strides within Christianity and different Christian Churches in the UK are now much more prepared to argue and discuss their differences, relations between the different Jewish denominations in the UK appear to be as acrimonious as ever and are characterised by an almost complete absence of dialogue.

Why is this the case? It is because some of the religious authorities, in particular the more orthodox ones, not only claim that their interpretations of *Halachah* and *Torah* are right (and thus that others are wrong) but that there is no point in dialogue. They believe that their approach to matters of Jewish law and practice constitutes the only way of achieving eternal salvation and must therefore be defended at all costs. Never mind the fact that the world has changed, that, although the external threat to Judaism seems to have receded, the Jewish religion is now faced with an equally great challenge from assimilation, intermarriage and demographic decline, or that patterns of religious belief are now much more heterodox than they were in the past. Until and unless the various denominations and traditions within the Jewish community start to talk to each other on the basis of mutual tolerance and respect, until persuasion and consensus replace dogma and authoritarianism, the future of the Jewish community (here in Edinburgh as well as in the UK as a whole) will be at serious risk.

This issue of **The Edinburgh Star** is even later than usual. This is for reasons largely outwith the control of the Editor or the Editorial Board. It is primarily because our secretary, Valerie Chuter, who has valiantly typed more than 20 issues of the journal, suffered a stroke and we had to find a replacement at very short notice. Valerie is now back home and making good progress. We wish her a full and speedy recovery. As a result of the ensuing delay, we lost our place in the printer's queue. We hope that the contents of this issue will compensate for the delay and thank our readers for their forbearance.

MA

THE LOWRIE REPORT

GLASGOW'S MR WUGA DEMONSTRATES ARTISTRY IN VEGETARIAN COOKING

At a Vegetarian Supper to launch the Ladies' Committee Cookery Book on the 4th September, Mr Wuga, the Chef, not only showed how to chop onions and how to deal with garlic but also how to judge the ripeness of melons, pineapples and grapefruit. Mr Wuga, the artist, emphasizing the necessity of very sharp knives, showed a rapt audience of ladies how to cut these fruits into attractive shapes and make radish roses and lemon baskets. He then made a *Gazpacho* tasty enough to take any Carmen's mind off Toreadors and went on to make *Crepes Suzette* - going through all the stages from mixing through tossing to flambé. However, for many, the making and then assembling a *Noisette Gateau* on a turntable stand, showing the correct usage of the piping bag, was the highlight of the evening.

There was no doubt that those present thought that Mr Wuga well merited the bottle of whisky which Rose Orgel presented to him as a token of their thanks for such an enjoyable evening. Rose also thanked the Food Conveners, Pearl Shein and Vickie Lowrie, for organising the very enjoyable vegetarian meal, as well as the Cookery Book Conveners, Anita Mendelssohn and Sandra Caplan who, together with their team of dedicated ladies, brought the Cookery Book to fruition.

Eighty-two copies of the book were sold on the evening and many more have been since. Copies are available from Anita Mendelssohn at £7.95 each.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB GO "DOWN SOUTH AMERICAN WAY"

Well, to be accurate, 32 members went down Leith Walk way on Wednesday, 25th September to see *Evita*, who was pleading with Argentina not to cry for her! The Club certainly didn't, for they had a most enjoyable matinée and are now contemplating their next outing.

SYLVIA DONNE'S WIZO LUNCHEON GUESTS 'TAXED' BEYOND THE THRESHOLD!

No matter how hard the 18 ladies tried, they could not match the allowances which kept being raised at this mouth watering fork buffet on Wednesday, 30th October.

Myrna Kaplan took first prize at the raffle (a basket of fruit), Rachelle Braverman the second prize (a bottle of wine), and Betty Franklin the third prize (a silk flower arrangement). A total of £110 was raised.

IRENE HYAMS HOLDS DOMINION OVER WIZO LUNCHEON

Twenty-four ladies attended this superb finger buffet at the Hyams emporium on 8th October, retiring replete after raising a total of £120 from the afternoon's proceedings, including the raffle. As usual, the food was prepared by the hard-working ladies of the WIZO Committee.

80TH BIRTHDAY KIDDUSH

There are not a lot of people around today who can claim to stay above the shop and even less who can claim to have been born above it, but Arthur Kleinberg can since he was born above his father's Baker's Shop.

Arthur celebrated his 80th birthday with a Kiddush in the Communal Hall on 26th October and, naturally, everything delicious to eat had been made by himself. Synagogue functions are no stranger to the Kleinberg delicacies



*Arthur Kleinberg, Baker Emeritus to the
Edinburgh Hebrew Community.*

for Arthur has baked for them on innumerable occasions, sparing time from his hobbies of reading and swimming to tickle the tastebuds of the Luncheon Club members with his more-ish puddings.

He has been a member of Lodge Solomon since 1970 and Ajax, Bnei Brith and the Royal British Legion have also counted him in their ranks. His qualifications for Ajax and the RBL come from his war service when he was away for five and a half years, including one year in Gibraltar; and then with the 1st Army in North Africa; three months in Tunisia; one year in Italy with the last four months near Graz in Austria.

Arthur had six brothers and two sisters. In 1947 he married Rose Glasoff, a London girl, and they had one daughter, Belita, who is married to Adrian Simons and lives in London with their three children, Craig, Dean and Emily. Belita, Adrian and family made the journey to be with Arthur for his special Kiddush and to hear Ian Leifer wish him Mazeltov on behalf of the Community. Arthur, in his reply, thanked everybody for attending and went on to express his gratitude and thanks to his dear friend and companion, Betty Franklin, for helping him through some difficult times.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

Some even knew an answer or two, and at the Quiz Night on Sunday, 13th October, it turned out that table No. 11, Samson and Ros Abramsky, John and Lesley Danzig, Ian and Joan Leifer and Stanley and Elaine Raffel knew a few more than the rest of the 108 Brains Trust members, thus winning not only loud acclaim but also a diary each.

The Communal Hall Ladies' Committee showed that they knew a few answers themselves by having a few rounds of the Quiz to whet the appetite both for the excellent meal, and then for the remainder of the quiz that followed.

Rose Orgel made a presentation of a Flower Basket to Joyce Cram who, together with her husband Norman, aided and abetted by Anita and David Mendelssohn and Norman Dorfman had put together and presented the Quiz. Rose also thanked the Food Conveners, Avril Berger and Alit Sedley for organising such a good meal.



The Winning Team

KATIE GOODWIN'S WIZO KIDDUSH

Katie gave a Kiddush on Saturday, 14th December, to thank the Community for its continued support of WIZO events in the past year, which had raised a total of approximately £3,500.

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- ✪ Ilford
- Kenton
- Mill Hill
- ✪ Muswell Hill
- Pinner
- Sephardi Centre
- ✪ St. John's Wood
- Stanmore
- South Hampstead
- Wembley
- West End
- West Hampstead
- Woodside Park

London - South

- Catford & Bromley
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- Ealing
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- Richmond

NATIONAL VENUES

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- South Manchester
- ▷ Whitefield

Birmingham

- ▷ Brighton
- ▷ Bournemouth

Edinburgh

Glasgow

Hull

- ▷ Leeds

Liverpool

Newcastle

Norwich

Nottingham

Oxford

Solihull

✪ Southend & Westcliff

St Annes/Blackpool

- ✪ Indicates Daytime Venues
- ▷ Indicates Venues with Daytime & Evening Classes

BARMITZVAH KIDDUSH

David and Anita Mendelssohn celebrated their grandson Roy's *Barmitzvah* with a splendid *Kiddush* in the Communal Hall on 16th November. Roy's parents, Harold and Esther Mendelssohn, his sister, Cassie, and his maternal grandmother, Mrs Lola Davis were present.

The President, Dr Nate Oppenheim, wished Roy and his family *Mazeltov* on behalf of the Community, reminding us all of the untiring work that David and Anita have done for the community for more than 30 years - David as Choir-master and Anita as Shul Council member, Communal Hall Committee member, present Chairwoman of the Management Committee and Luncheon Club cook.

Roy was *Barmitzvah* in Jerusalem at the Western Wall, and many members of the Edinburgh Com-



A Wailing Wall Barmitzvah - three generations of Mendelssohn men.

munity attended, as did Rabbi Shalom and Rachel Shapira. Some 60 people gathered at the King David Hotel for a brunch to celebrate the *Simcha* and later that evening at a dinner dance. Anita and David stayed in Israel for two

weeks where David took up parasailing in Eilat (maybe he is thinking of taking up Charioteering?) It must run in the family for Roy is interested in skiing and go-kart racing - do we have a budding Jackie Stewart in the making?

THE JUDAH SILVER WEDDING KIDDUSH



Sassoonhai Judah and Nora David on their Wedding Day 21st November 1971 in Bombay, India.

After Sas made *Kiddush* on Shabbat, 23rd November, the President, Dr Nate Oppenheim, in his address said that Sas, who had been most active in Queens Park Synagogue in Glasgow, holding executive offices of *Parnas* and *Gabbai*,

had brought the same participation to Edinburgh where he has been a member of Council, looked after the library, helped with the **Edinburgh Star**, acted as *Baal Tefillah* on many occasions and has addressed the Congregation with erudite opinions on *Torah* readings in relation to current happenings and moral issues. Sinora had cooked at the Luncheon Club on a regular weekly basis for several years and had been on both the Ladies' Committee and the Ladies' Guild. Sion, a product of the Edinburgh *Cheder*, was well able to take Services and was, in this way, following in his father's footsteps.

On behalf of the congregation, Dr Oppenheim wished them 'Good Health and Happiness' for the future. Sas, in his reply thanked the community and paid tribute to his wife, his 'beautiful bride of 25 years', for her encouragement and continued support throughout their married life, for standing by him 'in sickness and in health' and for her selfless devotion to the family and home, whose companionship he valued most sincerely. She was, said Sas 'a true *Eshel Chayyim*'. He then thanked the Ladies' Guild and other

friends, including 'Wee Wendy', for their help in preparing the *Kiddush*, their sincere felicitations, good wishes and gifts.

Most of those who were present at this superb *Kiddush* must have wondered a little at the circumstances that brought them together to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of a marriage that took place by the confluence of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. How did the romance begin? Was it moonlight on the *Taj Mahal*? A holiday romance aboard the house-boats on the Lochs of the High Kashmir? Or a summer spent in the cool of the Upland Hill Stations with shades of the *Raj*? No, for it was, appropriately, in Sion - Sion Railway Station, that is, but before we get to the romance proper, a necessary filling in of the more prosaic bits of the story.

Sas, an Executive Officer with Anchor Line (Runciman Shipping) was told that it looked as if he would be slinging his hammock on a ship of the Line with a draft chittie on his way to being Manager of the Marseilles Office.

Being an enterprising young

fellow Sas was soon friendly with Nora and eventually they wed and departed for Europe. Not, however, to grey and rainy Marseilles but to the sun-kissed shores of Scotland and the delightful environs of Glasgow, where Sas was to be Anchor Line's Marine Insurance and Claims Manager. In 1984 the Glasgow office closed and Sas berthed in Leith: an argosy from the Bhima at Bombay to the Bima in Edinburgh!

So we ask, how comes the metamorphosis of Nora to Sinora? Well, we all know that few things in this world are unique, but the name Sinora is.

Sas also wanted to maintain the family tradition of names beginning with S - Sas, Samson, Solomon, Saul, Sarah and Sion. However, there is an anomaly as the rule on S is not strictly enforced for Sas and Sinora, who have no family in Scotland outside their own immediate one, say that the Edinburgh Jewish Community has become their wider family through its friendship and kindness to them since their arrival in Edinburgh in 1984.

So from A to Z we all say to Sas and Sinora *Mazal Tov!!*

FRIENDSHIP CLUB RUBY ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

Rose Orgel and David Goldberg arrived at Astley Ainslie Hospital on Sunday, 1st December, to convey Betty Caplan, the Friendship Club's Secretary, to the 40th Anniversary luncheon, for it would hardly be complete without her as it was all Betty's idea.

When the invited guests, Dr Nate Oppenheim, the President, Dr Eve Oppenheim, Anita Mendelssohn, Chairwoman of the Management Committee, David Mendelssohn, Rose Orgel, David Goldberg, and Leila Goldberg, Convener of the Lunch Club, were all seated, the Club Chairman, Willie Caplan, bade everybody welcome; David Goldberg made the *Motzi* and the 'senior' member, Sammy Latter, cut the birthday cake, which had been kindly donated by William Wood, the baker.

The superb luncheon, prepared by Chef Harold Abrahams, was enjoyed by all. The special vote of thanks to Harold made by Willie was well merited. David Goldberg benched while Willie formally welcomed all who had come to celebrate this very special occasion. The President, on rising to propose the toast, conveyed the Rabbi and Rebbetzen's regrets at being at a conference in London rather than at the luncheon. He went on to express his and his wife's pleasure at being invited for they always enjoyed the Club's birthday parties. The Club, declared the President, was like a really good whisky for it improved with age! Betty's determination to be present, he said, exemplified the Club spirit. Originally started by David and Celia Leigh, Willie and Betty Caplan have worked hard to keep it running and he assured them that the Executive and Council of the Synagogue would try to help them in every possible way. He then proposed the toast that 'The Friendship Club should enjoy many more years of Health and Happiness'.

Rosa Lassey replied and thanked the President for his kind words, all those who had attended and Harold for the fine meal that he had cooked. Michael Gold, the Club Treasurer, handed Rose Orgel a cheque for

£150 for the use of the hall with the Club's thanks and praised Betty and Willie's hard work for the Club. Rose gave her congratulations on the Club's 40th anniversary saying that she hoped Betty and Willie would carry on the good work for a long time yet.

Ian Shein proposed the Toast to the Chair with his usual aplomb. Betty then thanked the Ladies' Guild, Management Committee of the Communal Hall and all friends for their visits, cards and gifts during her stay in hospital.

There was unanimous feeling that the luncheon would have been far less the celebration it was had Betty not been able to attend. That her recovery was in everybody's thoughts was made evident by the speakers who all expressed their hopes for her complete recovery.

After the raffle there was an entertainment - Mr Larry and Mr Adler (no relation to your Editor) upon their harmonicas! (Ian Shein and David Goldberg blew and sucked their moothies). It was all nostalgic and reminiscent of the Regal Cinema Talent Spotting Contests in war-time Sunday nights: Lili Marlene, Blue Birds OTWCOD, Wooden Heart, Happy Wanderer, Violetta, Down Mexico Way, *Maoz Tsur*. The Bottler, Michael Wittenberg, attempted to take a collection -



Willie Caplan (the Chairman) and some of the invited guests at the Friendship Club's Ruby Anniversary Luncheon.

more bottle than collection! Then there was a musical interlude when Henry Mann sang 'I left my Heart in San Francisco', 'You'll never know just how much I love you', 'Falling in love with you', 'Sonny Boy' and 'Yiddishe Momma'. By special request (anonymously) the Moothies came back to play 'Spanish Eyes' and 'Que Sera Sera'. Norma Benjamin and Solly Lann made the journey all the way from Glasgow and everybody was delighted to see them.

From us all, a huge Ruby Mazeltov to the Friendship Club.

AVI SEDLEY CELEBRATES HIS FIRST CHANUKAH WITH 90 GUESTS

After the guests had welcoming and welcome drinks, Avi's Deputies started off the evening's activities. Rabbi Sedley lit the *Chanukah* candles and with the *Rebbetzin* led those present in *Maoz Tsur* - he then made the *Motzi*. At the end of a splendid four course meal the lights were extinguished and the waitresses brought in a special Lemon Ice Dessert each with a sparkler.

After the Rabbi led the benching, Rose Orgel, on behalf of the Communal Hall Ladies' Committee thanked the Catering Conveners, Anita Mendelssohn and Carole Cowen, and the ladies of the committee who had worked so hard to provide the meal; she also thanked Sinora Judah for her most artistic decorations, and the indefatigable Christine Burns for all her help. She then welcomed Shirley and Peter Bennett, who proceeded to entertain us most professionally. Peter's guitar work behind Shirley's vocals brought well-merited applause. The duo worked their way through a very varied programme from Burns to Blues, from Israeli to Jazz, from Country and Western to the Beatles. Peter welcomed our resident virtuoso of the saxophone family, Bill Simpson, who joined them on the Jazz and Blues numbers. Rose thanked the musicians for a wonderful evening and presented Shirley with a gift.

The evening closed with the Jiggers in the company jumping around to the music of the Buena Vista Disco.

The function raised the sum of £546.

AVI SEDLEY'S DOUBLE FIRST

As it was his first birthday, Avi decided he would also hold his first *Melave Malka* in the Communal Hall on Saturday, 14th December. To this end, he had recruited his Mama to bake a most delicious cake and his Papa to tune his guitar and loosen up the vocal chords with the odd doh-ray-me or two! Well tuned-up, the Rabbi started off the evening - after making *Havdalah* - by telling a few *Melave Malka* rabbinical anecdotes. He then followed up by playing and singing Hebrew and Israeli songs in which everyone joined in, and introduced the guests to a 'new ditty' 'Puff the Magic Dragon'. The most important part of the evening came next when Avi cut his birthday cake and, in true Yiddisher fashion, pressed large portions on anybody within reach! More guitar and some funny stories by the Rabbi were followed by Bill 'Strummer' Sinclair, who accompanied that musical Mann of ours, Henry, who sang 'My Yiddisher Momma' and 'Sonny Boy'. Not the easiest of acts to follow but who better to do so than that entertainer extraordinaire, Julian Goodman, fresh from his highly successful open air concerts in Edinburgh's streets and closes! His highly original rendition of the old Lonnie Donegan Hit Parade number 'My Old Man's a Rabbi', 'Bei Mir Bist Du Shein', 'Rozhinkes Mit Mandeln',



Avi Sedley on his first birthday.

'Mamele' and his piano medley which rounded off the evening's entertainment, were all accorded a high volume of applause. Julian refuses to confirm that he is Benny and Harry's long lost relative!

The goodly company present voted Avi's *Melave Malka* a great success.



Shirley and Peter Bennett

A NOTE ON THE SCALE OF THE MUSICAL BENNETTS!

With a catholic performance in music and while disclaiming playing before large audiences, both Shirley and Peter have a varied and wide musical experience. Shirley has started to take her singing seriously once more, for in the past she has sung in the Edinburgh Academy Choir and also with an Edinburgh Opera Company and is now singing at various popular venues in the city. Peter, in his teens, started a group initially with a few friends in the Community and subsequently with friends outwith it. The group was very successful in the 60's playing at many dance gigs in the Edinburgh area. Peter gave up when he got married in 1964 and thus the sextet known as *The Rapiers* was, alas, sheathed! It is good to be able to report that Shirley's renewed interest in her singing has re-awakened Peter's interest in the guitar and thus the duo is in business.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Editorial Board offers its congratulations to:

Dr Jonathan Bard on his promotion to a Readership in the Department of Anatomy at Edinburgh University.

Dr Shari Cohn-Simmen on obtaining her PhD in Parapsychology from Edinburgh University. She is now a Research Fellow in the School of Scottish Studies at the University.

Nicholas Cosgrove on his engagement to Caroline Christie and an appointment as Director of Labour Friends of Israel.

Sas and Sinora Judah on their silver wedding.

Arthur Kleinberg on his 80th birthday.

Harold and Esther Mendelssohn (Roy's parents) and **David and Anita Mendelssohn** (Roy's grandparents) on the occasion of Roy's *Barmitzvah*.

Dr Jonathan Secke, currently Professor of Endocrinology at Edinburgh University, on his appointment to the Moncrieff Arnott Chain of Molecular Medicine at the University.

William Wood, the baker, on winning the Commercial Customer of the Year Prize donated by Coalite Smokeless Fuels for his solid-fuel fired ovens.

In addition to the families of those whose obituaries are included in this issue, the Editorial Board sends its condolences to Edith Rifkind and her family on the death of her mother **Mrs Roma Steinberg**.

NOTICES

Betty Caplan wishes to thank everyone for their cards, gifts and visits to the hospital - she has now been moved to the Astley Ainslie and we hope she will soon be back home with her family and friends. The Editorial Board sends its best wishes to:

Mrs Sadie Abrahams in the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital.

Dr Philip Lurie, also in the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital.

COMING EVENTS

February 1997

8 Saturday	Social: 'Meine Yiddisher Carmen'	7.30 pm
9 Sunday	Literary Society: Michael Gold: 'Mahler'	8.00 pm
17 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 pm
20 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews: Esti Sheinberg: 'Music in Jewish Liturgy'	7.30 pm
23 Sunday	Literary Society: Esti Sheinberg, Margaret Aronson and Heather Valencia: Songs by Else Loskes Scheuller	8.00 pm

March 1997

17 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 pm
20 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews: Rev Professor J C L Gibson: 'Book of Job'	7.30 pm

April 1997

14 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 pm
22 Tuesday	First day of <i>Pesach</i>	
23 Wednesday	Second day of <i>Pesach</i>	

The Friendship Club meets every alternate Sunday at 3.00 pm. For dates for the current period, contact Willie Caplan (667 7984).

Junior Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm. For further information, contact Judy Fransman (447 5861).

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Jacqueline Bowman (339 7557) or Howard Nicholsby (317 7563).

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every month on a Sunday in members' homes.

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30 pm.

The Mother and Baby Group meets on alternate Sunday mornings at 10.00 am.

All meetings are subject to alteration.

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

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EDINBURGH COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

The Aftermath of the Israeli Election: David Capitanchik, 17 October 1996

The Chairman, Dr Ian Leifer, introduced the speaker at the first meeting of the 1996/97 season, David Capitanchik, who is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Aberdeen. He began by explaining the complicated method of voting used for the first time in which everyone had two votes - one for the Prime Minister and one for the Knesset. This was an innovation intended to give more power to the Prime Minister and less to the small religious groups, but the result did not in fact prove to be what was intended, and Mr Capitanchik was himself taken by surprise at the result.

According to the speaker, Binyamin Netanyahu's priority is security, and he appears to think that he can secure peace without making the concessions which Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Perez had been willing to make. The opening of the tunnel near Temple Mount was clearly provocative, and while most people in Israel support the Oslo Peace Process, little progress was then being made. However, the speaker believed that there was a new attitude among the younger generation who do not want to block the Peace Process. The

number of those wanting to stay in the army has fallen, and the benefits of peace are obvious in the possibility of trading with the rest of the world if peace is established. Fewer building permits are being granted, and in spite of the recent eruptions of violence in Gaza and the West Bank, Mr Capitanchik was optimistic that peace will come. In his opinion there is no possibility of complete Israeli sovereignty, and he suggested that some form of partition of the Holy places between Jews, Christians and Moslems might be a solution.

Einstein and God: The Very Reverend Professor T F Torrance, 14 November 1996

Dr Leifer introduced Professor Torrance as a long-standing member of the Council who had spent a great deal of time and thought on the debate between science and religion and, like the subject of his talk, had come to the conclusion that a better understanding of God could be obtained through science.

Albert Einstein was born in the city of Ulm on the the Danube on 14th March 1879 to secular Jewish parents. There was no precedent in his family history for any special scientific or intellectual achievement but, through his mother, he developed an early taste for classical music, particularly that of Mozart and Beethoven. He also played the violin and composed. He grew up with a deep love of mathematics and science, and later studied electrical engineering at a famous polytechnic and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1922. He married into a Greek Orthodox family, but never lost his love of Judaism even while recognising the existence of Jesus and admiring the Christian Church for its stand against Hitler in later years. As a schoolboy he had come to detest his authoritative schoolmaster and retained a hatred of Germany throughout his life.

Einstein eventually settled in Princeton, U.S.A., where he

continued to pursue research into the theory of relativity. He saw no conflict between science and religion and, on one occasion, after hearing Yehudi Menuhin play the violin, he was moved to exclaim "Now I know there is a God!"

He believed that science contributed to religious understanding, that they complemented and supplemented each other. In a comment on religion and science he wrote "I believe that intelligence is manifested throughout all nature. The basis of all scientific work is the conviction that the world is an ordered and comprehensible entity and not a thing of chance." Another memorable comment was "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind."

Blanche Mundy

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SAM LATTER : MAN OF THE CENTURY

by Ian Shein

In 1931 a sprightly young man set up home with his young wife Flora in the Liberton area of Edinburgh. Today that sprightly young-at-heart man still resides at the same address, sadly on his own, Flora having passed away in 1990. When not at home, he is to be found involved in a wide range of activities. A very able treasurer of the Luncheon Club, he swims, plays bridge, drives, does some gardening and is a very regular attender at the Synagogue. Nothing remarkable about this were it not for the fact that Sam Latter celebrated his 93rd birthday on 4th January of this year.

Sam was born in the Gorbals district of Glasgow, an area rich in Jewish culture and tradition. He was the youngest of two boys and four girls in a close-knit family. His parents came from Latvia, his mother from Riga and his father from a small village near that city. The latter started a tailoring business in Glasgow, and the

family subsequently moved to Govanhill.

Sam had no aspiration for tailoring. He attended Strathbungo High School, where his great ambition was to play football. He succeeded in doing so for his school football team and for Southern YMCA. At the age of 14, whilst playing for the latter, his team won through to the fourth round of the Amateur Cup, resulting in a complaint by the losing team that Sam had failed to attend Bible Classes, one of the conditions for membership of the YMCA. Faced with the prospect of losing his place in the team and being deprived of a possible cup medal, he somewhat apprehensively elected to attend two consecutive Bible Classes, the minimum requirement for membership. An anonymous letter to his father informing him of Sam's transgression into the New Testament failed to meet with the anticipated punishment due to his father's inability to read English.

Retribution, however, followed when Sam's team was beaten in the next round!

His first job on leaving school at the age of 15 was as an office boy with a firm of stockbrokers and chartered accountants. He continued to play football for junior teams in the East Stirlingshire League, winning various medals and trophies. He then worked as a salesman with Philip Wolfson, a firm of fancy goods wholesalers. One of his duties was to push barrows of samples through the city centre to the railway station for uplifting by other salesmen for their train journeys to various customers. The era of company cars was not yet to hand! Sam then moved to a similar situation with his brother-in-law's firm, Sless Brothers. It was after playing trials for several junior teams including Clydebank and Kilsyth Rangers that he signed professional forms in 1928 as a part-time player for the successful and colourful Third Lanark. He received the then princely wage of £6.50 per week and played for them for four years, winning a second division championship medal.

In 1931 Sam married Flora Strachan whom he had met the previous year. The wedding was one of the last to take place in the old Graham Street Synagogue in Edinburgh, and Rabbi Dr Daiches officiated, assisted by Rev Levinson and Rev Ordman. Shortly afterwards, the new Synagogue in Salisbury Road opened. Settling in Edinburgh, the young couple became involved in the activities of the Jewish community. They were responsible for starting the Institute, a club for the youth of the city, which had its premises over Fairley's Bar in Leith Walk. The chairman was Esta Henry, later to become a colourful city councillor, and the enthusiastic young committee included Harry and



Sam Latter (second from right in the back row) with members of Third Lanark FC, 14 December 1929.

Philip Glass, Elkie and David Rifkind, Philip and Queenie Stoller, Henry and Mollie Vinestock, Simon Poliwansky, Joe Simonoff and Harold and Clara Smith. The Institute was highly successful in attracting young boys and girls away from the West End haunts and several friendships subsequently blossomed into marriages.

Sam and Flora opened a gown shop in the city, eventually increasing the business to three shops in South Bridge, High Street and Nicolson Street. The war in 1939 created problems of supply and after some time the shops were closed when goods failed to materialise.

In 1941 Sam joined the RAF and, after training as an armourer, became a corporal instructor training air gunners. He logged up 300 hours flying during his spell of duty. Initially he was stationed at Drem in East Lothian where he met several Edinburgh boys including Morris Brown, Hymie Abrams and Morris Levy. He likes to recall the time when, as duty armourer, rumour swept the camp that German paratroopers had landed nearby. He was ordered to report to the Commanding Officer with a sub-machine gun. Entering his office with a ready salute, he froze when he saw the officer seated on a chair enveloped in a tablecloth being given a short back and sides by the camp hairdresser, Corporal Henry Mann. It is not recorded whether Henry's scissors made a useful contribution to Sam's armoury. What is recorded, however, is Sam's, and the country's, relief that no such paratroop landing took place.



Sam and Flora Latter on their Wedding Day in 1931.

In 1945 he received his discharge from the army, and he and Flora bought a small sweet and cigarette shop at the exit to the Caledonian Goods yard in the West End. The couple ran the shop for 21 years until the lease expired. Thereafter a business was bought in Lauriston selling motor car batteries, tyres and radios. A Mr Tom Farmer sold him tyres and they became good friends. Mr Farmer, who ultimately became Mr Kwik-Fit, spent a great deal of time in Sam's shop - and this may have provided the inspiration for the gigantic empire he subsequently built up.

In 1973 Sam retired, not to a life of rest but to contributing to the social life of the Edinburgh Jewish

community. Last *Simchat Torah*, he was honoured by his being appointed *Chatan Torah*. Flora sadly died in 1990, a few months short of the couple's diamond wedding. Sam has resided for 65 years in his present home and would find it very difficult to leave a place where so many happy memories are enclosed within the four walls. It would appear that Viewpoint Housing Association, which has suggested that he might like to consider alternative accommodation, will have to wait a long time to entice this youthful man from his home. Sam Latter's ready wit, cheerfulness and warmth make him a vibrant part of the community. Long may he continue to do so.

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CHAIM ZUNDEL MACCOBY

by Rowan Hendry

Chaim Zundel Maccoby, was known as the *Kemenitzer Maggid*. He was a great individual, an early supporter of religious Zionism who was considered by many people to be a genius. For all these reasons, I decided to devote my *Bat Mitzvah* project to him.

My great-great-grandfather, Chaim Zundel Maccoby, was born into a poor Jewish family in Poland in the late 1850s. As a child he showed a great understanding of Judaism in the heart as well as in the mind. It was his ability to communicate this knowledge that led him to be known as a child prodigy to Jews in many parts of the world.

At the tender age of six Chaim began to study the Prophets at *cheder* in his home town. If you or I were to go back in time to observe Chaim as a boy we would see him carrying a Bible everywhere with him - he would not let it leave his hands.

Once, when he was 13, he took the place of a travelling preacher or *maggid* who was supposed to be coming to speak to the congregation but did not turn up. He gave a wonderful speech which amazed the congregation. Chaim continued his education in Rabbinical knowledge and other subjects.

Chaim became so well known as a speaker that people all over Russia talked about him and he became known as the *Kamenitzer Maggid* (the Maggid of Kamenitz). When he was 25 the organisation *Chovevei Zion* (Friends of Zion) in Moscow gave him the job of encouraging people to go to live in Israel. As a spokesperson for *Chovevei Zion*, he was invited to speak all over Russia. In his speeches he told people of how their suffering would be over when they moved to Israel. These speeches led to the setting up of new *Chovevei Zion* branches (some 300 in all) wherever he spoke.

He would often speak for hours at a time. He never had any notes and always spoke straight from the

heart, amazing everyone from toddlers to old women and men who heard his speeches. Soon people from all walks of life began to follow him around the country. He was reported in the newspapers of the time to be one of the greatest Jewish speakers of all time.

Whenever Chaim was scheduled to arrive in a small town the streets would be filled with people rushing to get to the Synagogue. Shopkeepers would hang up signs outside their shops telling people that they would be closed that day; families would pack a picnic to take with them; they all knew that when Chaim started talking because everyone was engrossed for hours.

As Chaim became more popular with the Jews, he was increasingly feared by the Russian government who denounced him as a revolutionary. He and his family escaped to London. Word of his talent for speaking about religious Zionism in public had reached London's Jewish community, and on 1st February, 1890 he gave a speech at a meeting of the *Kadimah*. Four years later he was appointed *Maggid* of the Federation of Synagogues, which was a position he held until the end of his life. He was also offered the post of *Dayan* or religious judge. Some of the duties of the *Dayan* would have interfered with his vegetarianism which he would not give up; he refused this post but was still a very respected Rabbi. Chaim went down in the Jewish history books for other reasons.

Just because he was in a new country did not stop Chaim travelling. He travelled widely, speaking to congregations all over the British Isles. These speeches resulted in another string of *Chovevei Zion* branches and raised large sums of money for worthy Jewish causes. No matter how little money Chaim had he always had something to give to charities. He had a subscription with no less than twenty charities. He never took gifts of

money from anyone, no matter how little money he had, because he believed that, if he accepted gifts of money from people, he would no longer be independent. He died at the early age of 58 in 1916.

Although Chaim and I come from very different backgrounds in very different eras he has been a great influence on my life and I am aware of my inheritance of character from him. The most obvious inheritance is pride in Judaism mixed with strong opinions that are not always conventional. One other characteristic is vegetarianism - our willingness to make sacrifices for our belief that eating meat is cruel and unnecessary. Another similarity is that we both look towards Israel for inspiration. To my knowledge Chaim Zundel never visited Jerusalem. When I make my first visit to the Western Wall at the end of 1996, I shall think back to my ancestors, especially Chaim Zundel Maccoby, the *Kamenitzer Maggid*, my great-great-grandfather.

Rowan Hendry was *Bat-Mitzvah* last summer and chose to write about her great-grandfather for her *Bat-Mitzvah* project. She represented Britain in the world final of the 'Jerusalem 3000' Youth Quiz which was held in Jerusalem in December.

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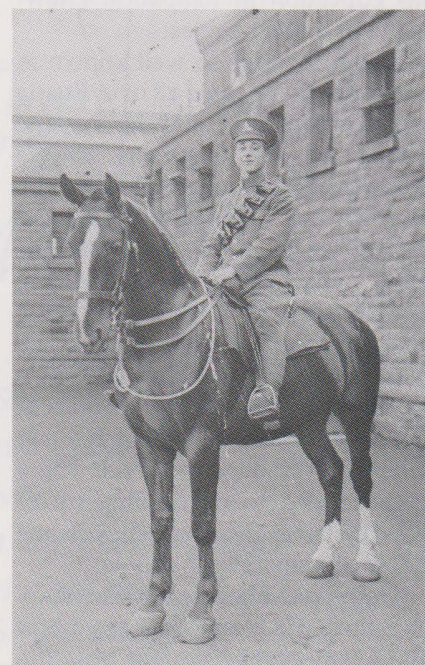
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What did you make of the photograph in the last issue? The 'elders' of the Community, who were photographed, in morning dress, leaving the old Communal Hall and crossing Salisbury Place to attend a Service in the Synagogue to mark the occasion of the tercentenary of the return of Jews to Britain in 1656, were members of the (still all male) Synagogue Council. From left to right, they were Abel Phillips, Elkie Rifkind, Samuel Nathan Dorfman, George Bindman, Reuben Cohen, George Magrill, Isaac George Cowen, Jack Levinson, David Leigh and Louis Lindley.



THE LAST JEWS OF GREENOCK

by Mark Smith

Eight old Jewish gravestones stand in a lonely corner of a Christian cemetery in the town of Greenock on the west coast of Scotland. So few Jews surrounded by so many gentiles!

I saw the graves for the first time on a recent visit home. They made me think about my mother, who had died only weeks earlier. She was not buried in Greenock, but rather in the Jewish cemetery in Glasgow.

Greenock is an unlikely place to find Jews today. The town sits on the southern banks of the River Clyde, where the waterway widens into a firth. The old people here still remember the great steamers that plied this river and the shipyards that stood shoulder to shoulder for a three-mile stretch along the jagged shoreline. They also remember the sound of a thousand men hammering shut the huge steel hulls and the sight of throngs of people disembarking when ships from every country in the world came to dock in the harbour. Yet they don't remember Greenock's Jews.

Today, Greenock is an industrial black spot. When there is rain, which is often, it is perhaps the dreariest place on earth. Dilapidated, grey, post-World War II housing sprawls across the hills behind the river. The shipyards have been bulldozed. This generation will recall unemployment, crime, alcohol and, perhaps, the rain.

I went to the town's archives in search of old newspapers for some mention of Greenock's Jews. I wanted to find out why, around the turn of the century, eight Jews had been buried in the Christian cemetery when a Jewish cemetery existed in Greenock. I read for hours and found nothing. I asked the librarian if she could help me. "There were nae Jews in Greenock," she said, shaking her head in an adamant, stubborn way. "Definitely, nae Jews in Greenock." "My family lived here for nearly 100 years", I said, "and they were Jews."



She pursed her lips, still disputing the point. No amount of argument, however, could alter what was and what had been. My memories are a voucher for the truth.

In Greenock I celebrated *Chanukah*. At *Pesach*, my sister and I asked the Four Questions and my father answered them. On Friday nights my mother lit two candles, waved her delicate hands over the flames and welcomed in *Shabbat*. That made us Jews.

I could have told the librarian much more. My mother had handed down her own memories and she also recalled the stories her mother and grandmother had told her. Around the turn of the century, Jews poured into Greenock by the thousands. Great steamships loaded with Jewish refugees pulled up the River Clyde alongside the giant clippers, fishing boats and tugs. In those days, Greenock was one of the busiest ports in Britain.

Jewish boarding houses were established and kosher soup kitchens were set up at dockside to cater to the thousands of homeless Jews. Some remained only long enough to catch the next ship out. Others stayed on and were later helped to America with the aid of the Jewish community. Others travelled inland to Glasgow or south to London, Manchester, Leeds and

other places where great Anglo-Jewish communities exist today.

But some Jews remained in Greenock itself, my great-grandparents among them. Many were penniless or too tired to go further. Still others who had paid full fare to America were hoodwinked by captains who told them Greenock was New York.

When my great-grandmother was asked why she hadn't gone to America, she replied "Because the boat stopped at Greenock. They told me to get off, so I got off". Her sisters came on another boat the following year, making it as far as Belfast in Northern Ireland, the next port of call after Greenock. They didn't know America from a piece of strudel.

Jews had been in Scotland as early as the 17th century. The Edinburgh Hebrew congregation was founded in 1816. The Glasgow Jewish community was established in 1823, and by 1850 there were 200 Jews in the city. These pioneering Jews were merchants, mostly from Holland and Germany. But it was between 1881 and the beginning of World War I that nearly 3 million Jews fled Eastern Europe in an exodus greater than anything seen in the days of the Inquisition and the expulsions from Spain. No one knows exactly how many Jews came to Greenock then, but about a third

of all passenger ships that crossed the Atlantic from the Baltic ports to New York stopped off there.

In Greenock, Jews lived side by side with Highlanders, who were forced from their crofts by greedy landowners, and the Irish, who were starved off their land by famine. My ancestors fled Latvia after pogroms and expulsions in Riga, the Latvian capital, and the surrounding province of Livonia. Jews were being arrested in the streets and in their homes, and sent into the Pale of Settlement. Hundreds were killed and thousands were made homeless.

When my ancestors came to Greenock in 1894, a sizeable Jewish community had already been established. In that same year, Greenock Synagogue was built. Ten years later my great-grandparents were married in that synagogue and the Kaminsk household set up on Brougham Street. My grandmother was born in March 1906, the same month a demonstration supporting Palestine took place in the streets of Greenock. There were eventually seven Kaminsky children raised amid the smells of Jewish cooking and the sounds of Yiddish. There were also hundreds of visitors.

My mother grew up when Jewish life flourished in Greenock, when Jewish homes hosted 20 people around the *seder* table, when Jews owned the tobacco store, the news agency, the draper's shop and the hairdresser's, when meticulously combed Jewish children played in the street, and when letters still came from family members in Russia. My mother remembered the holiday atmosphere of *Shabbat*, the white tablecloth, the braided, sweet *challah*, the candlesticks, the men walking to synagogue and the serenity that permeated even the poorest of homes. On Saturdays, strangers and refugees - Jews and gentiles alike - would be invited into my mother's home to share a *Shabbat* meal.

Gradually, by the 1940s, the Jewish population began to dwindle. Jews moved, mainly to Glasgow, London, America and

Israel. The synagogue and the Jewish cemetery next to it were levelled by *Luftwaffe* bombers during the war. Religious services continued in the homes of the pious. After the bombings, Greenock Jews were buried in Glasgow.

But the Kaminsky house on Brougham Street continued to draw Jews for decades to come. Every Sunday, Jews would arrive by the car-load from all over Scotland. In the summer, they also came from Ireland and America. Sometimes it was so busy that visitors, who often came back to find the past, could not get through the door. Here in Greenock, old-time Jewishness was still alive. Yiddish was still spoken and the strudel and chicken soup tasted the same as they remembered from their childhood. They came, too, to look at the River Clyde, to remember when they stepped off the gangplank of the refugee boat, fatigued and hungry, and thanked God they were alive and among their own.

In 1962, my sister was the last Jew to be born in Greenock. By 1970, when I was 10, there were only three Jewish families left, mostly older ones whose children had emigrated. Not many families came to visit anymore.

A new generation sprung up, one which was already spoiled by the

fruits of its parents' labour. The new Jews did not know Yiddish or have memories of the *shtetl* and pogroms. No one cared about Greenock anymore. My family remained because they had a hairdressing business there. For me, my great-grandmother's home still echoed with the sounds of Yiddish. There was still a strong sense of Jewishness.

It seems sad that not a trace of that life can be found today. As I mourn the passing of my mother, I lament the passing of that community. She alone carried on Jewish life long after the other Jews had deserted Greenock. Yet I believe that to be a Jew means to live with memory.

The librarian's words came back to me: "Nae Jews here". It began to drizzle as I walked through the town with my father. He is the last Jew in Greenock, but in a few weeks he will be leaving too, and this town will have no more Jews. The eight Jewish graves in Greenock's Christian cemetery remain a mystery. They are the only sign that our people once inhabited this place.

Mark Smith is a freelance writer based in France. His article first appeared in the Spring 1996 issue of 'Inside' magazine and we are grateful for permission to republish it here.

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THE POOR JEWS' TEMPORARY SHELTER

(Part 1)

by Aubrey Newman

This is the first part of a two-part article based on Professor Newman's talk to the Jewish Literary Society on 8th December 1996. The second part will appear in the next issue.

The basis of my work on Migration Studies is the movement of millions of Jews out of Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the very beginning of the twentieth century. It is probably the most important period of modern Jewish history, the migration which made all the difference between the survival of Jews and the non-survival of Jews, because if those millions had not moved out of Eastern Europe from 1880 to 1914 they would all have been there in 1941, 1942 and 1943, and the communities which developed in America and in South Africa and in Australia and in South America would never have existed, so that the proportion of world Jewry killed in the holocaust would have been immeasurably higher than it was even at that.

Many of these migrants, of course, had every intention of going to America, the free country, free from religious persecution, free from political persecution, free even in many cases from being Jewish at all. In going to America many would come through Great Britain, and a great deal of work is being done on this pattern of out-movement. What impact did they have upon the communities through which they came? What impact did they have upon the communities into which they went, and more particularly, how did the pattern of movement itself, where they went and how they got there, interact with their eventual destinations? To what extent did the actual shipping routes, and the needs of the shipping companies themselves, have an impact upon the movement of so many migrants? How was it, for example, that you have in Eastern Europe virtually every governmental province or *Gubernia* sending out hundreds of thousands

of Jews to America? We have a report in 1910, picking out precisely Jews going from various *Gubernia*, nearly all of them going to America, most of them North America, some of them going to South America, and then it tells a peculiar story, that in one governmental district, that of Kovno, for some peculiar reason nearly all the movement is going to South Africa. Why? And why should South Africa have become such a strongly *Litvak* community? In answering that question it becomes important to look particularly at one of the institutions which is highly relevant to this whole pattern of movements, the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter.

What was the problem? The problem was basically that at the end of the 19th century where Anglo-Jewry had achieved its emancipation and had become anglicised, all of a sudden there were hundreds of thousands of Jews passing through from Eastern Europe, dressed still in the rags and the costumes of Eastern Europe. One must say rags particularly because one of the great myths of this migration, particularly those who came from Lithuania, was they were fleeing from Russian pogroms; most whose families come from that part of the world will have heard all sorts of stories, for example about the persecutions and the Cossacks. In fact however there were no pogroms in Lithuania. What there was was sheer, grinding poverty, so that these travellers were what would nowadays be termed economic migrants and economic refugees. They came through with little money, on trains with very few facilities, they were met in Berlin, were washed, fed, watered, and then put on trains to go west from Berlin as quickly as possible. They

came to England. Most of them had never seen, let alone been on, the sea before, and they were coming across the North Sea in boats about seven or eight hundred tons, packed, so that it is easy to imagine the state they were in by the time they reached Hull, Grimsby or London Docks. Many of them, when they arrived, had nowhere to go, were picked up by various crooks, and if they had any money that was quickly lost. They had to find some sort of shelter. There was a baker, Simcha Cohen (Simcha Becker) who allowed them to sleep in the back of his bakehouse - not exactly the most sanitary of all sorts of accommodation, and it was to be closed down because it was unsanitary. Almost immediately there was a hooh-ha, and so several leading members of the community established a shelter for these people - the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter. Now every single word of that title has significance: Poor - therefore they did not necessarily have to pay anything; Jews - mostly for Jews, although as it developed it served as a facility for non-Jews as well; Temporary - since the idea was that they were only going to be there for a short while (fourteen days as a maximum stay); Shelter - not luxurious accommodation; in its heyday there were two major dormitories in that building, with the beds in the dormitories separated by partitions, four feet high. The Shelter wanted them to be five feet high. The LCC, which was the licensing authority for lodging houses, insisted on a maximum of four feet for fire reasons, so therefore almost certainly there were only men in the Shelter and not women and not families. The Anglo-Jewish community tried desperately to impress upon the

non-Jewish community around them that the Shelter was not intended to attract people into Great Britain on a major scale. They were dreadfully scared that they themselves would come under criticism, and that if they were too successful in helping these migrants people would be drawn into England and their own position in the community would be upset. And it was a real fear; in that in the 1870s the community was something like 60,000 members but by 1914 that community was over 300,000 people, which is not just a natural increase but represents a considerable amount of settling in England.

If those were the reasons why a Shelter was started in London, it follows that there were equivalent institutions elsewhere in Great Britain, every place where there are people arriving, intending to go on elsewhere. They may have been short-lived but they all followed a standard pattern - meeting strangers coming in and getting them on to the boats as quickly as possible. But these other shelters did not seem to have the same sort of permanence as the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in London, which has registers from 1896 until at least 1914 and sometimes even later than that.

The main records of the Shelter are its Registers, enormous double folio volumes, listing names, places of birth, age, marital status, where they were coming from and where they were directing their steps. In all, for the period before 1914, there are eighteen such volumes. While it is not easy to deal with these Registers in their manuscript form an opportunity for analysing them became available when it was decided in the History Department of Leicester that all undergraduates had to do computing studies. This work has now been proceeding for some eight years and have provided a number of problems for our non-Jewish students such as trying to understand people's names, such as Jacob Itsiklovitch, or their occupations, such as *Schochet* or *Sofer*. That can be very amusing, but what

becomes more serious is that now with the computer all sorts of questions can be asked - and answered. Nearly everybody would have assumed that the majority of people going through the Shelter were going to America. With all the various variations on North America migrants to there in the Registers represent less than 10% of the total. The area that appears most frequently, about 40% of those going through the Shelter, turns out to be South Africa. And when the computer is queried on the place of origin of those going to South Africa the answer is that they come from Lithuania, and more precisely from the Kovno *Gubernia*. Something like 90% of those passing through the Shelter going to Africa are Lithuanians, and that about 90% of Lithuanians are from Kovno, and we have now virtually finished our main series of investigations over the years. Of some 45,000 names on the computer 40% are going to Africa; there are over 14,000 names of individuals from Kovno, and the next largest place is Vilna with 3,000. So the problem for the historian is why do we have such a large number of people from one particular small part of Eastern Europe making their way to South Africa?

One of the things that was realised was, firstly, that the ships that were mentioned in the register as going to South Africa were all ships from the Union Line and the Castle Line, amalgamated in 1900 into the Union Castle Line. In looking at the financial records of the Shelter it became clear that the Shelter from 1895 onwards was increasingly dependent on getting substantial cheques from these companies, so that their cheques in most years more than paid for the running expenses of the Shelter. There were references in the registers not only to the names of people and the boats they went on but also to such items as 'plus 50 more met and seen off only'. There was a copy letterbook from the Shelter for the year 1906, with letters to the Union Castle Company

detailing the people who had gone off on the boats, how many nights they had stayed, and the fees therefore that had to be paid to the Shelter. All sorts of issues begin to come up. Although the Shelter begins in 1885, the registers of the Shelter begin on the 29th of May 1896. Since there are gaps between then and 1914 where some volumes of registers have disappeared without further record of them, it would normally be assumed that the volumes before 1896 have also disappeared. On the other hand the first entry in the first volume for the 29th of May 1896 is number one and thereafter, with one exception, the numbering on the volumes changes on the 1st of November each year, which is the beginning of the financial year of the Shelter. Each time a new volume begins, not in November, the last number of the previous volume is the number before the first number in the succeeding volume. In other words there are no gaps in the numbering as between consecutive volumes and, therefore, it would appear that there were no volumes before May 1896. But there is a record in the minutes of the general meeting of 1896 of a request from the floor of the meeting, that there be evolved some sort of system to try and create an effective record of those passing through the Shelter so that the appropriate charges can be made. This was in February 1896 and in May 1896 the records start.

There is also a series of reports of the numbers passing through the Shelter each year, with a statement of where the individuals were going. For the first eight years or so the numbers each year vary between 900 and 1300, and their destinations are variously 'America', 'England', 'back to their own country', 'countries unstated'. Then in 1894 a new category appears - South Africa. Four hundred go to South Africa. The next year, 1894/5, eight hundred go to South Africa. In the year 1895/6 two thousand go to South Africa, and the rest of the numbers remain static. If you take out the South African numbers

going to the Shelter, the numbers actually passing through the Shelter from year to year remain more or less the same.

So clearly there is something involving the shipping companies which go to South Africa because they are paying and these two companies appear to be responsible for these people coming through. Then an examination of the shipping companies themselves reveals that both the Union and the Castle Line had engaged in an enormous shipbuilding programme between 1889 and 1895, building between them something like fourteen new ships designed for the mass passenger trade, containing in addition to their formal classification of passengers, as first-class, second-class, and third-class passengers, a further group of passengers travelling steerage, or what was known as 'open accommodation'. These companies had mail contracts with the South African government which meant the ships had to go on a regular basis between London and South Africa regardless of whether they were full or not. The ships seem to have been built when many Cornish tin miners were going to South Africa after the collapse of Cornish tin mining, but the trade died away when they started going home again. The companies would therefore be left

with their ships full of empty berths. Now this is where alternative sources of information have to be sought. Such sources of information include the tickets issued for the Union Castle ships and still retained in South Africa. You would be surprised the number of people in South Africa who still possess the tickets that were issued to their families before 1914. All were issued in London, but one or two of them seem to imply that they were issued in response to vouchers originally purchased in the Baltic port of Libau and then exchanged in London. There is certainly no doubt that these migrants were an important part of the shipping companies' income. Sir Donald Currie might not have wanted to see himself regarded as the founding father of South African Jewry, but he needed to get his ships filled. The importance of these migrants is indicated by his reactions in 1903 when the South African governments announced that they would only accept new immigrants if they were literate in European languages. It was Currie who insisted that Yiddish was a European language and therefore they should be allowed to come in. I do not think he did that because he was pro-Semitic. But if you look in the Shelter registers, there are hundreds of names appearing in

London and the entry against their names reads 'Money returned - unable to proceed to South Africa'; there is page upon page upon page of these names and clearly Currie is in real trouble. The Cape Government then changed to a demand that all immigrants had to possess adequate means of support, defined as having £20. Originally, nobody had registered themselves in the Shelter with any money at all when they were going to South Africa; that did not mean that they had none but they did not register the amount. Suddenly, after 1904, everybody had £20. I suspect those numbers with £20, I suspect that when they got to the Cape they were asked "Have you got £20?" "Yes, here's my £20". The immigrant would be allowed in, and he would quietly pass it on to the next person who would also say he had it. We know that that was what happened in New York at Ellis Island.

(to be continued)

Professor Aubrey Newman has taught in the History Department at Leicester University since 1959 where he is now Emeritus Professor of History and Honorary Associate Director of the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies. Amongst other interests, he is currently working on a study of the migration of Jews from Lithuania and on the activities of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter.

REFLECTIONS ON MY RECENT SABBATICAL IN ISRAEL

by Michael Shewan

My sabbatical began with a drive through Europe to southern Italy to the port of Brindisi and continued with an overnight ferry to Greece and a drive to Pireaus, where I boarded another ferry to Haifa, arriving in Israel on 28th April, 1996.

On my arrival I made my way north to visit *Kibbutz Eilon* on the Lebanese border. Driving up to the *kibbutz* on Sunday morning I was conscious of how quiet the road was beyond Nahariya. The reason for

this was that the last Kytusha rocket fell two days previously on nearby *Kibbutz Hanita*. 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' had just come to an uneasy end, and everyone was still very anxious in case things should start up again. This was brought home to me when my *kibbutz* friend, Henia, an elderly lady and survivor of the camps in Germany, told me that the TV repair man would not come to Eilon from Haifa in case of any trouble. Driving along the border

from *Rosh Hanikra*, I have to admit to some feelings of trepidation. Welcome to Israel!

It was indeed a great privilege to spend ten weeks in Israel visiting friends, making new acquaintances and having the time to study and travel extensively. It was a fascinating experience to be in Israel in the aftermath of 'Operation Grapes of Wrath', to observe the elections and to understand a little more of the ongoing situation regarding the

Peace Process. On a personal note it was very special for me to have Judith and the children fly out and join me for six weeks and to be able to introduce them to the land and peoples of Israel.

We had the opportunity to stay in a variety of locations which included the homes of friends we have made over the years. This afforded us the chance to hear first hand the hopes and fears of ordinary people. Under the surface there is a great deal of tension and fear. Many people refused to go anywhere near large crowds and avoided going by bus in the aftermath of the bombings. A 'drive by' shooting took place only a few miles from Reut, where we were staying, killing a young couple returning from a wedding late in the evening. Their young baby in the back seat survived. The morning we were due to return to Jerusalem from Tiberias along the Jordan valley, an army patrol was ambushed and three people were killed. That morning we had decided to visit Caesarea and to take the coast road but, had we kept to our original plan, we could easily have been caught up in the incident and the subsequent security clamp-down.

On a lighter note, it was good to stay in a village and experience typical Israeli life. Our Kibbutz Bed and Breakfast at *Beit Geshit*, near Mount Tabor, was both enjoyable and educational for the children. Every morning before breakfast we would visit the cows and check whether or not there were any new calves. Sadly, the *kibbutz* movement is in severe difficulties. Many *kibbutzim* are bankrupt and kibbutz members are leaving by the score. Many *kibbutzim* have to hire outside labour. More and more people are no longer satisfied with *kibbutz* life. They want to be independent and have their own home and income. The *kibbutz* ideology is increasingly a thing of the past and troubled times for the *kibbutz* movement clearly lie ahead.

We also had the opportunity to visit a *moshav* which was on the

border with Gaza and next to the Erez border crossing. The family we visited had been relocated from the Sinai peninsula when Israel handed it back to Egypt. They produce flowers and seedless fruits for the European market. This seemed a very affluent *moshav*, due partly to the compensation many families had received from the government following relocation from Sinai.

We were made very welcome at the Church of Scotland School in Jaffa by Mrs Beckett, the Head Teacher. The plans to refurbish and update the school are well under way. It is undoubtedly a unique school with an international representation and includes a wide range of religious faiths. The school continues to be held in high regard in Israel. We also enjoyed our various visits to St Andrew's, Jerusalem, and our stay at the Church of Scotland's Guest House at Tiberias. The beauty of the gardens by the lake makes it an ideal retreat, and it is a pity more people from Scotland do not enjoy it.

The Israeli economy is growing rapidly. New roads are being built everywhere. New towns and settlements are appearing throughout Israel, and it looks as if the building boom will continue unabated for the foreseeable future. There continues to be a demand for houses and prices continue to rise. As an example, the market value of the house we stayed in at Reut, between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and on the 'Green Line' overlooking the hills of Samaria, increased by 150% over the last two years. Many new settlements are appearing along the Green Line in Israel. To me this seems like a security measure to populate the likely border with an independent Palestine. With such an investment it goes to show how serious Israel was, at least under the last government, about giving independence to the Palestinians. It is widely known that the economy of Israel depends largely on American money, but economic growth is also due to many high tech industries in which Israel is a world leader. There is a shift taking

place from the traditional image of Israel being an agricultural country to the new image of Israel as a high-tech country. Another reason for this shift is that the problem of water still determines the viability of traditional agricultural production.

This leads me to mention the most significant change in Israeli society that I have noticed since my days as a *kibbutz* volunteer in the 1970s and 1980s. The Zionist vision is no longer a powerful force on people's minds. Instead, personal gain and fulfilment in a market economy are what appear to motivate people. Israeli society is not what it used to be. With access to cheap labour, there is an unhealthy attitude to any menial task and, with the closure of the West Bank, there has been an influx of foreign labour. Workers from Thailand and Romania are to be seen building roads and houses. Philippine women are working as house servants and child minders. Gordon, the great Zionist visionary, emphasised the importance of working your own land and not being dependent on others. Such idealism is now long gone. The attitude of many Israelis, especially the young, is a combination of pride and arrogance and this turns many people, including fellow Israelis off. At an everyday level, the rudeness of some people is quite unacceptable.

Israeli society wants to be like America. America is the example in every sphere of life as evidenced in the number of McDonald's 'fast food' outlets. Even the Israeli equivalent, McDavid's is Americanized. A few years ago it would have been unheard of to have a cheese burger in Israel. An example of how far Israel has become like all other nations was experienced first hand when we were offered a pork steak at a barbecue. Of course, many Israelis are unhappy with this imposition of culture and with the slide away from traditional religious observance. Secularisation is fiercely contested by orthodox Jews and is producing a backlash. There is pressure to reinstate the observance

of the Sabbath and increase religious education in schools, and with the increased parliamentary representation of the religious parties, change is certain to come.

The recent elections highlighted the divisions in Israeli society. The country is clearly split in half on the issue of the Peace Process. There are political parties representing Russian immigrants, religious groups and the list goes on. There is a lack of cohesiveness, with self-interest groups vying for power and influence. The whole fabric of Israeli society is in danger of being torn apart. On one hand, there is fierce opposition to giving back the Golan Heights; on the other, many people would be happy to concede half of Jerusalem if that would bring peace, something I was surprised to discover as I always thought Jerusalem would be non-negotiable.

Even amongst the Israeli Arab community things are not always as reported in the media. I was again surprised to discover that 30,000 Arabs voted for Benjamin Netanyahu. Why should Arabs want a 'right wing, hard line' government to rule them? Why should thousands of Palestinian Arabs, from such places as Hebron and Nablus, queue outside the Jerusalem office of Israel's interior ministry in the hope of acquiring Israeli citizenship? The answer is they do not want to be ruled by Arafat and his police force. The Palestinian Authority is both hated and feared by many Arabs. During my visit, a London trained psychiatrist and Director of the Independent Palestinian Commission for Citizens' Rights (IPCCR), Dr Eyad Sarraj, was arrested and imprisoned for nine days. He was arrested after the New York Times published an interview with him in which he complained that restrictions on his freedom of expression were a hundred times worse under the PLO than they had been under the Israelis. Before being released, he had to write a personal letter to Arafat apologising for 'any personal hurt'. After his release, the IPCCR announced its intention to sue the Palestinian Authority's

Attorney General for wrongful arrest. Meanwhile, Sarraj wrote to Arafat again, pleading with the PLO Leader to recognise the 'corruption, nepotism and torture in PLO prisons'. The PLO police picked him up again in the early hours of the morning and, during his internment, he suffered interrogation and beatings. He was charged with the illegal possession of drugs and his human rights office was closed down. In a letter smuggled out of prison he expressed his very real fear for his life. He was also accused of hitting a policeman, but due to international outrage being expressed, he was finally released.

In a recently released report, Amnesty International attacked the Palestinian Authority's first months in power, characterising them in terms of torture, extra judicial killings and unfair trials. According to the report, 'Methods of torture included severe beatings, electric shocks, prolonged standing in painful positions, burning with cigarette and suspension from the ceiling'. Kneecapping was also reported. The Palestinian press went on strike against infringements of freedom of speech. In the face of such blatant attempts to stifle dissent, opposition to Arafat's methods is growing.

The PLO continues not only to abuse human rights but also to abandon specific agreements signed with Israel on areas such as illegally held weapons, details of the Palestinian Police Force which now numbers 50,000 (which is at least 20,000 more than the number set by the Oslo 2 agreement), the failure to remove from its covenant a clause calling for Israel's destruction, (discussion has taken place but the clause has not been removed) and failure to hand over murder suspects. Speaking to a reliable source I learnt that much of the international aid is being creamed off into personal foreign accounts. A South African firm of accountants has the job of producing a record of accounts. If too many questions are asked they will be dismissed. This is common knowledge but it does not

seem to be an issue. How long can the international community tolerate such corruption? But then, what is the alternative? With such dissatisfactions we can easily understand why there has been a growth of support for Hamas and why 30,000 Arabs voted for Netanyahu. Many Arabs, particularly Christian Arabs, are leaving the country and emigrating to America in the face of such pressures.

Politically the future is very uncertain. The continuation of terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens, the fragmentation of Israeli society, the vulnerability of Israel should the 'Land for Peace' deal continue and the private army of Arafat (50,000 armed militia in the West Bank and Gaza) are all causes for concern. On top of this is the nationalism of President Assad of Syria and the build up of non-conventional weapons in that country. Syria has close links with Iran. On 26th June the two leaders met to discuss the need for solidarity against Israel. Iran poses a real threat to Israel and the western countries with its nuclear potential and chemical arsenal, not to mention the terrorist cells all over Europe and America. Should this not be resolved, we can expect a pre-emptive strike from Israel. Hizbullah in southern Lebanon continues to be a headache for Israel, with soldiers being killed in every skirmish. Little wonder many Israelis feel perplexed by the situation and consider emigration.

My three months sabbatical was a very worthwhile experience. The journey itself was an adventure and I hope to do it again with a group in the Spring of 1998. It has increased my understanding of the current Middle East situation and I enjoyed reading and writing on the subject 'The Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith'. Altogether, my sabbatical was a great success.

Rev. Michael Shewan is Minister of Ratho Parish Church. The group visit to Israel referred to in the final paragraph of his article involves travelling by coach to Greece and then by boat to Haifa and might appeal to readers who cannot fly but would still like to visit Israel.

BEYOND THIS GATE THE FIELDS WEEP –

the inscription at the entrance to Salaspils
concentration camp in the Rumbuli forest, Latvia

by Joyce Caplan

If the fields weep
they weep stones not tears.
When sunlight gnaws at the forest shadows,
and the mushrooms' pale astronomy
charts the forest floor,
the rocks are sleeping demons.
In spring they wake and bear
another crop that gathers into heroes' graves
to lie beneath the dome of heaven
awaiting the divine rain.

On broken borders are darkened rooms;
museums of the heart,
full of the heat's debris
with suffering pasted on a wall
each day fading to insignificant sepia.

Somewhere other journeys began
sustained by steady winds and
the passage of remembered ships.
The gilded smiles of domed citadels
launched them on opal waters.

Here the terrible winter
wove a shroud of ashes and birch leaves
for those whose travels shortened
as the days grew longer.

The ghosts gather beneath the trees
in drifts of flowers
that are the ruins of dust;
the terror of history.
Only tears will redeem them
in shattered vessels
overflowing with a light
that blinds the stars.

The plants devour the past.
Soft ferns, the first of creation,
smother the shrivelled earth
and consume the margins of time.
There is only a clearing in a wood
pierced by sunlight
that illuminates the word.
A gate that opens
and closes with a broken catch.

THREE WOMEN OF VALOUR

by Eva Neuburg-Erdelyi

Ruth

She was no alien, gleaned in the fields
Of Bethlehem. A Moabite no more,
She made the daring choice, that ever yields
A life reborn, more blessed than before.

Did she not cling to Noemi like a child
Clings to her mother, all her former life
Extinguished from her memory, unbeguiled
By double loyalty or inner strife?

They wandered footsore, begging food and shade
Until they reached the mother's home at last.
The 'House of Bread'. Ruth, humble as a maid,
Reaped her reward: feast after feast.

No alien she, who serves and lives like Ruth,
Finding her Motherland in Love and Truth.

Esther

She was a quiet girl, serene and shy,
Devoted to her uncle, without friends.
She liked to sit alone, with folded hands,
Dreaming and looking up into the sky.

As chosen queen she still remained the same,
Was shy, and only did what she was told,
Until she heard, her people had been sold -
Then she became as noble as her name.

She faced her husband proudly, as his wife,
She braved him, like a newly wedded bride
And stood revealed, a daughter of her race,
Accusing him, who planned the genocide
Until the order came, to hide his face.
Then armed her brothers, to defend their life.

Hannah at Shiloh

"You are the son I prayed for in this place,
After long years of barrenness and shame.
Perhaps the priest will recognize my face -
Let us approach, and call him by his name.
Here you will learn to serve and to obey,
You will not need the favours of the great;
You will be taught, to listen and to pray,
Perform the ritual and refuse debate.

So let us say farewell without a tear,
Fulfilling what I vowed with willing mind.
My love will stay with you, so do not fear;
Be brave, my child! Your tutor will be kind.

I shall return to bring you in the fall
A fitting coat, when this one gets too small."

OF NETTLES AND ROSES : AN ANCIENT YIDDISH FOLK TALE

Theatre Workshop Company Christmas Show, devised and directed by Robert Rae, 2-24 December, 1996

Reviewed by Elaine Samuel

Sure to 'captivate and enchant all ages - or so we were promised in the flier. Did, then, the Theatre Workshop's 1996 Christmas production *Of Nettles and Roses: An Ancient Yiddish Folk Tale* live up to its billing? I was accompanied by five other critics, and separated from four of them by some 40 years, to see if the Theatre Workshop Company was as good as its word. And the short answer to the question is a resounding "Yes".

The longer answer is that we attended the last performance of the production on 24th December, and I cannot think of a better way to have spent that particular afternoon in Edinburgh. *Of Nettles and Roses* was Theatre Workshop's own adaptation of 'a story told in the Yiddish speaking Jewish communities of Eastern Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries and written down in the 1930's', and the production was offered as a 'tribute to a culture and a people who were so brutally destroyed'. Not the usual stuff of Christmas pantos - but neither was the fiddler on the roof (a cellist, in fact), the screen puppetry or some truly macabre scenes which reminded me of early productions of *The Dybbuk*. True, there were some remarkable similarities with the Cinderella story, but there were also similarities with themes in *Megilat Esther* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. And not a single mention of Santa Claus, reindeer, or the festive season either. What a joy and what a pleasure, then, for those of us who were attempting to escape the usual commercial hype and religious messages of a British winter.

Yet this was no dour event. The two step-sisters (Gillian Kerr and Shonagh Price) did what they always do at pantomimes - only more so. We loved their impromptu repartee and spontaneous banter with the audience, even if it was sometimes at this reviewer's expense. The responsibility for that, however, falls on one of my young companions who volunteered me when the call for an 'unusually strict adult' went up from the stage. We were captivated by the versatility of Nabil Shaban, that most talented disabled actor, for his performances as Merchant, King and Goodfather. We were horrified by the crime of which the heroine was accused, and we were well contented by the story's cathartic ending.

So I shall end with the unsolicited opinion of my own 11 year old on his return from a school trip to the major commercial pantomime in town. "The other one was much better", so he advised, "because it had all the fun of a pantomime and yet you never knew what to expect". Yes, *Of Nettles and Roses* obeyed all the conventions of traditional pantomime, but unlike so many commercial productions, it surprised, delighted and enchanted us with its freshness. I, for one, turned to face 25th December with a vigour which I could hardly have anticipated.



A pantomime with a difference at the Theatre Workshop.

PHOTO: MARC MARNIE

ESTHER GREENBERG (née CAPLAN)

It is sad to report the death of my cousin Esther Greenberg at the age of 71, after a prolonged illness which she bore cheerfully. When I saw her for the last time just a few days before the end, she took over from me and began to describe to a friend my research on the Temple of Jerusalem.

I ask myself, why should Esther, a woman of noble character, modest to the extreme and of pleasant disposition, depart from this world at a comparatively young age after much distress? And my only answer is to be found in the book of Isaiah:

For My plans are not your plans,
Nor are My ways your ways
(Isaiah 55, 8)

Excluding fourteen years of separation, Esther and I lived in close proximity, at first in Edinburgh and then in Israel. In our childhood and youth, our homes in Edinburgh were separated by no more than about 60 metres and our two families lived together like one big family.

I should like to recall something of these early days in our lives. In winter, the long Friday night of *Shabbat* after supper was spent in Esther's home. The children of both families studied the weekly *Parashah* under the supervision of Esther's father, Pesach Caplan, a well respected member of the community. I remember one interesting question. How did Noah and his family, together with the animals, breathe freely at a height in excess of 5,157 metres, the height of Mount Ararat? The answer was correctly given by the budding scientist Esther. She said "The water displaced the air upwards and so they were able to breathe freely".

Uncle Pesach, who was the pioneer of the family in establishing a connection with *Erez Yisraël*, had volunteered to serve in the Jewish Battalion in the first world war. And so it was, that during our *Parashah* discourse, we were transposed in our imagination from Edinburgh to *Erez Yisraël*. 'And (Abraham) planted

a tamarisk in Beer-sheba.... "Indeed," said Uncle Pesach, "I saw the tamarisk there." And before the children separated, we tucked into Shammuti oranges from a crate sent from *Erez Yisraël*.

Esther's father himself taught his children the basic tenets of Judaism and Hebrew. I would enter their home and find Esther writing Hebrew in a jotter ruled with squares. With a clear hand, each letter was assigned to a square.

Esther was brilliant in her schooling and, in 1941, she was dux of her school, James Gillespie's High School for Girls. She continued by studying chemistry at the University of Edinburgh and in 1945 graduated with first class honours.

Esther and her family settled in *Erez Yisraël* before my family. When we went on *Aliyah*, it was natural that our first port of call should be Esther's home where we spent our first *Shabbat*. And this attachment became closer when she and her family moved to Jerusalem where we had already settled.

I feel that Esther sacrificed her profession for the sake of her four children. In the infant State of Israel, life was far from easy. Esther reared her children under these conditions which were quite different from those in post-war Britain.

I had the privilege of bringing her back to academia at the Hebrew University. I thought she should have the opportunity of reaching out for a Ph.D. Was the gap of twenty years too wide? Or was that word of encouragement lacking in academia?

Esther was blessed to see 17 grandchildren. Her husband Terry, her children and her sister Carmel should be proud of a charming person:

Her mouth is full of wisdom,
Her tongue with kindly teaching.
She oversees the activities of her household.

(Proverbs 31, 26-27).

May her resting place be one of honour.

Asher Selig Kaufman
Jerusalem



ESTHER REBECCA KAPLAN
(née RIFKIND)

My mother-in-law Esther Kaplan passed away on the 6th Tishri 5757, corresponding to 18th September 1996. She was born in Edinburgh in 1911, the seventh child of Charles and Pessel Rifkind. Her youth was spent, not only with her nine siblings, but also with the large extended family, consisting of Hoffenbergs, Luries, Lichtensteins, Dorfman and Simenoffs. Nothing gave her more pleasure than reminiscing about her Edinburgh childhood.

Esther was always very proud of her family, especially its rich Jewish heritage. Her father, Charles Rifkind, was a devoted Torah scholar and regularly taught from the family 'Shas' (*Talmud*), which is now housed in the Edinburgh *Beit Hamedrash*, and which he, himself, was given the honour to open.

In 1936 Esther married Daniel Winston Kaplan, an optician from London. They moved to Glasgow and had two sons, Morris and Charles. Morris moved to Edinburgh in 1967 after his marriage to Myrna Levine and they have one son, David. Charles married Sandra Shaw and they have two daughters, Ruth and Judith.

In her home in Glasgow, Esther was a constant welcoming presence, cheerful and caring, even in adversity. Despite a certain naïveté and unworldliness, she was a wise,

thoughtful and heroic figure, with a spirit which was unbroken and an ebullience and a gratitude for life, the good and the not so good.

She derived a lot of 'Nachus' from her family and their many achievements. Above all, she was a real character and will be sadly missed by all who had the privilege to know her. She was and departed an 'Eishet Chayil'.

Myrna R Kaplan



SYLVIA RAPHAEL
(née DAICHES)

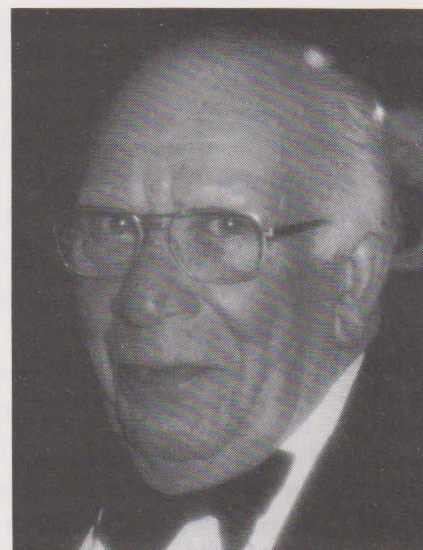
Sylvia Raphael, a brilliant linguist and literary scholar, who was best known as translator of novels by Balzac and George Sand, died in London last October. The elder daughter of Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches, she was born in February 1914 in Sunderland, where her father was rabbi, and came to Edinburgh with the Daiches family early in 1919 when Dr Daiches took up the position of rabbi of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. She was educated at George Watson's Ladies' College (then in George Square, and separate from George Watson's Boys' College) where she distinguished herself, particularly in modern languages, and at Edinburgh University, where she graduated in 1936 with first-class honours in French language and literature with German as a subsidiary language. A short period of school teaching was followed by research in French philology at

Oxford, where she gained a B.Litt. in the record time of one year. The outbreak of war prevented her taking up a scholarship for further research and, after marriage to David Raphael, whom she had met at Oxford, she worked as a civil servant in the Treasury for the duration. After the war she went to New Zealand with her husband, on his appointment as Professor of Philosophy at Otago University, Dunedin. Her linguistic gifts were recognised by the university, and she developed her remarkable skills as teacher of French prose writing and of translating from French. She returned to Scotland a few years later when her husband obtained an academic position at the University of Glasgow (eventually as Professor of Moral Philosophy) and had a further opportunity of displaying her skills in language teaching in the French Department there. From Glasgow the family (now with two daughters) moved first to Reading, where her husband became Professor of Philosophy, and then to London, where she tutored in French prose writing and translation at Imperial College, when her husband became Professor there. Her gifts as a translator and her sense of French and English idiom and how they could be interchanged enabled her not only to produce noteworthy translations herself, but also to inspire generations of students with an awareness of how language works and in particular, of how one language can relate to another.

Sylvia maintained her contacts with Edinburgh, where she had many friends; indeed, she remained throughout her life the centre of a large circle of friends and relations to whom her sympathetic character, her tolerance and understanding, as well as her great linguistic gifts, were a source of love and admiration.

She is survived by her husband, her two highly talented daughters and their children, and her two older brothers with whom she grew up in Edinburgh.

David Daiches



JOE RIFFKIN

Joe Riffkin, my father, was born in Falkirk on 3rd January 1908. His mother, Yetta Bloch had arrived in this country in 1896, aged 16, from the village of Mesad in Lithuania, having left behind her parents and six sisters to seek a better life in Scotland. She went initially to relatives in Dundee and thereafter to Glasgow. In 1900, she married Harris Riffkin, who came from the same Lithuanian village and who had followed his childhood sweetheart to Scotland. He worked as a travelling credit draper in and around Falkirk and subsequently settled in that town where my father and his three elder sisters, Rebecca, Leah and Minnie were born.

Falkirk had a small Jewish community numbering some 40 families and maintained a small synagogue in the High Street. My grandfather was well versed in Jewish traditions and teachings and was responsible for my father's religious education, preparing him for his *Bar Mitzvah*. In the 1920s, due to a dwindling community, the synagogue closed down.

My father Joe was educated at Falkirk High School and excelled in maths, science, Latin and German gaining five highers and three lowers by the age of 17. He also performed well at all sports, representing Falkirk High School at football and cricket. He entered the University of Glasgow School of Medicine in 1926, winning the gold

medal in his first year. However, his studies were cut short in 1928 when his father died leaving his mother and two unmarried sisters in his father's retail furniture business. In spite of his mother's protests, Joe left Medical School to go into the fledgling business, refusing to allow his family to struggle in order to support his medical career.

Until the onset of war in 1939, the business developed and three more shops were opened in Falkirk. Joe returned to his medical studies at the age of 31 but was called up into the forces in 1941, and posted to the Royal Corps of Signals. Thereafter he was transferred to the 52nd Lowland Division in Banffshire. Selected for a commission, he was posted south to join the RASC. After a period at an Officers' Training Unit, he went overseas to Belgium and ultimately to Germany where he was in charge of a petrol company. His excellent knowledge of German made him an ideal choice to liaise with the civil authorities and to arrange suitable billets for the troops. Joe was demobilised in 1946 and returned to Falkirk to look after his mother and pick up the reins of the family furniture business.

In 1949, he met Freda Oppenheim and, on 25th July the following year, the couple married and ultimately settled in Edinburgh. As a member of the Jewish community, my father gave much of

his time to the Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion where he was first Treasurer and subsequently Chairman. His greatest communal contribution, however, was reserved for his work as Recorder, Treasurer and Vice President of the *Chevra Kadisha*. He took this work very seriously and lent great dignity to the services of preparation, interment and consecration. He gave a great deal of time and effort to these activities, in all weathers, for well over 20 years, both before and after retirement from business, and it was only in the last three or four years that he reluctantly stepped back from this work.

Aside from his business interests and communal duties, Joe was an extremely practical and technically competent individual. He was physically and mentally extremely strong and he delighted in participating in artisan trades. He was a sound carpenter, joiner, amateur clock maker, painter, electrician, metal worker and builder. His greatest love was gardening and he was an expert in vegetable growing, particularly tomatoes. He loved domestic animals and was especially fond of the Boxer breed of dog, of which he had four over the last four decades. The most recent addition, Bruno, was personally selected by my father who accompanied me some two years ago on a

trip to Ormskirk, Lancashire where the world-famous Marbleton Boxers are bred. Unfortunately, due to illness, he was never able to give Bruno the attention he was able to give to his previous dogs. However, he enjoyed having the dog around - my mother's enjoyment has been less obvious.

Joe Riffkin should be remembered as perhaps sometimes - and in his own words - a 'dour laddie' but most of all as a strong individual with an enduring personality, a congenial host, an honest straight-talking individual, and a good companion. He was a faithful and loving husband for 46 years and a wonderful father. He leaves behind his wife, Freda, my sister Yetta and me, and his five grandchildren Nicola, Rebecca, David, Elizabeth and Jennifer, all of whom retain that vital spark of character that was Joe Riffkin.

Harry Riffkin



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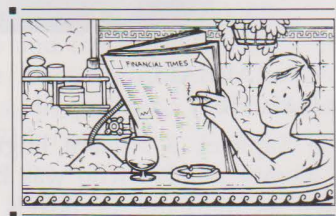
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BATHTIME TALES NO 1



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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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Emergency Appeal

As you may be aware, and as was reported in the Press, the cemetery at Piershill was a target of serious vandalism, as a consequence of which some 94 headstones were desecrated. It has now been ascertained that the cost of these sad actions will be in the region of £11,500.

While it is possible to trace a third of the heirs, regrettably it is proving impossible to make contact with some 70% of families concerned, as descendants have over the years left Edinburgh. It is for this reason that we have launched the above Emergency Appeal and are appealing through your columns for support. We hope that readers will find themselves in a position to make a financial contribution to the cost of repairing the damage. We would like to restore the cemetery to its former dignity, and it is the Congregation's intention to re-consecrate the desecrated headstones at the conclusion of this sad project.

Cheques should be made payable to EJBFS Emergency Appeal and addressed to: M. S. Cowen, Appeal Convenor, Synagogue Chambers, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5AB.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Simpson

Hon. Secretary

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Upturned headstones at Piershill.

PHOTO: SCOTSMAN PUBLICATIONS



Dear Sir,

Readers of the **Edinburgh Star** may be interested to know that I have taken on the responsibility of sending reports of events within the Edinburgh Jewish community to the **Jewish Chronicle** and the **Jewish Telegraph**. Obviously it is not possible for me to attend every activity that takes place. However, I would be happy to receive contributions for sending to the newspapers. Please send them to me (c/o Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation) in any form (a scribble on the back of an envelope will do!) along with your name and phone number so that I can contact you for further details if this is required. We know that we are a lively and vibrant community, but we need to take every opportunity to publicise this fact to the rest of the country!

Yours faithfully,

Janet Mundy

23 Forth Terrace, Dalmeny

South Queensferry

West Lothian, EH30 9JT

Tel: 0131 331 3795

