

THE EDINBURGH

# STAR

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**Joe Lurie**  
1917 - 2002



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



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# Editorial

## End of an era for the Star

The Edinburgh Star was first published in March 1989. It was born out of the considerable effort and determination of a number of people including its first editor, Eitan Abraham and Rabbi Shalom Shapiro. A major component of the original group whose vision led to this esteemed publication was John Cosgrove, at that time a member of the first editorial board. John continued to use his considerable literary and computer skills to the benefit of the Star with a short spell as editor from February 1995. Since that time, he has been Chairman of the editorial board and has been a major influence on the magazine's development.

It is with much sadness that I must report John's departure from the editorial board with this issue being his last as Chairman. I have carefully looked through my archive of past editions and he is the only person who has been associated with the Star continuously since its foundation. He has persistently sought out interesting material and has also been a popular contributor. There have been occasions when continuity of the magazine has been in doubt but John has doggedly remained optimistic and sought the co-operation of capable people to keep the dream alive. For me as a new editor, he is a wonderful source of advice and comment. As an editor himself and as a regular contributor, he has demonstrated a unique ability to present serious topics with a light touch and gentle wit which has given our readers much pleasure. It is much hoped that we shall continue to benefit from John's wisdom and literary talent. He is succeeded by Judith Sischy who has worked hard to support me in this issue and I am sure that you will join me in wishing Judy well in following the high standard set by John.

While on the matters of the Star, I would like to personally thank the many people who wrote, telephoned and e-mailed their kind comments on the new style of the Star. Some of these comments are reproduced on the letters page.

## End of an era for the community

The community bid farewell to one of its most loved and respected characters. Joe Lurie or Jos as his wife Sheva called him took his final leave from us on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April following a long illness. For the many people who have lived in the Edinburgh Jewish Community during the past half-century, Joe was the fulcrum round which life revolved. His butchers shop was the centre of all information about everything and everyone. It was the hub of the community, a place where the needy could find help, the lonely could find company, newcomers could seek guidance and the rest of us could find a kind and friendly shoulder to lean on no matter what the problem. There is little that I can add to the moving and poignant obituaries published in this issue.

So many people have since his sad parting, told me stories and anecdotes about Joe that I have, with the agreement of his family, decided to publish a collection of these in the next issue. If your life was touched in some way by Joe and you would like to tell the story, please write to me or e-mail.

## End of an era for the Synagogue Council

June 2002 sees Dr Ian Leifer retire after four years as President of the Synagogue Council. There are few people of our generation who have contributed more to the religious life of this community and to good relations with our non-Jewish neighbours. Ian's tenure on the executive of the Synagogue Council has lasted for twelve years and his contribution has reached far beyond that which might be expected. With the falling numbers of the Edinburgh Community, it has been increasingly difficult to attract a Rabbi and as a result, we have relied for long periods on the management and conduct of services at Shabbat and many festivals by

lay members of the community. In that role, Ian has demonstrated a commitment far beyond that which we were entitled to expect. It is easy to take such commitment for granted and in a community where many are far from the orthodox ideal, a full appreciation of his contribution may only be apparent to a minority. Our loss is compounded by the decision of Ian and his wife Joan to move home to Glasgow. They will both be sadly missed and we hope that friendships established here will see them return on a regular basis.

## The new era of exciting Star contributors

I am particularly keen to see now contributors to the Star and will welcome all interesting writings. In the last issue, we welcomed Debbie Sinclair as a contributor from her home in Jerusalem. Her delightful first article was well received and I am pleased that she has agreed to become a regular contributor of a ' Letter from Israel'. Welcome contributors in this issue include Sir Malcolm Rifkind to honour the Queens Jubilee, Edgar Prais who gives us his unique view of Israeli issues and a most interesting portrait of an immigrant to Edinburgh in the early part of the last century from Eva Edelyi. My thanks to them and all others without whose support this publication would be all the poorer.

Peter A Bennett



Retiring Chairman John Cosgrove with his successor, Judy Sischy and editor, Peter Bennett. Behind them is previous editor, Michael Adler.



Rabbi David

# Katanka

John A Cosgrove

## All that you wanted to know about our new Rabbi but were too shy to ask. An interview with Rabbi David Katanka

**Where were you born?**

I was born in Hammersmith, London in 1950.

**Did you always want to be a Rabbi?**

I began my career as a Chazan but always had leanings towards the Ministerial side – pastoral and educational. In one of the Communities, I found myself with an aging Rabbi who relied upon me more and more in the Rabbinical field and with the encouragement of the late Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits I decided to study for Semicha (Rabbinical Ordination). This was when I was in Sheffield and I used to commute regularly to Manchester to study at the Kollel there.

**What ministerial appointments in Anglo-Jewry have you held?**

New Bayswater (now the Saatchi Synagogue), South London, Leeds, Sheffield and Golders Green.



**There are Edinburgh connections with Leeds and Sheffield. The late Rev Sam Knopp came here from Leeds and Rev Abraham Brysh went to Sheffield from Edinburgh.**

Yes it’s quite a co-incidence because when I applied for the Leeds position, they told me they wanted someone in the mould of Sam Knopp, a good all rounder and I directly succeeded Abraham Brysh who now lives in retirement in Bournemouth.

**Your late father was the renowned Cantor/Chazan of Princes Road Synagogue in Liverpool, famous for its architectural beauty, its decorum and its mixed choir. What influence did he and Princes Road have on you?**

Both were absolutely enormous. I was brought up in Liverpool with my sister Ruth who still lives there and as a child, I regarded Princes Road as second only to the Temple in Jerusalem with my father the equivalent of the High Priest. It was a clockwork Shool. The services ran very smoothly and always to time and in particular, the High Festival services, with the Chazan and fine choir’s huge repertoire of Synagogal music. It was inspiring and the decorum was impeccable. I love the “Minhag Anglia” (the Anglo-Jewish tradition) and I always strive to work towards perfecting the presentation of Services. I am constantly looking for beautiful melodies to incorporate into the Edinburgh repertoire both classical and modern.

**What is your opinion of mixed choirs?**

In Jewish Law they are not permitted.

**To my knowledge, Chief Rabbis Adler, Hertz and Brodie attended services in Garnethill (Glasgow) which like your father’s Shool had a mixed choir.** It is clear from historical records that they just did not have the power to abolish them!

**On the subject of choirs, there is the tendency for a choir to perform and for the congregation to listen, would you rather see the congregation join in the singing?**

Yes in Princes Road the choir did tend to “perform” and the congregation listen. I feel there has to be a balance. The real reason for a choir is to help the people to daven. That is the whole point of it. I feel that in Edinburgh the more (congregational) participation the better it will be.

I feel like a religious salesman trying to put over my spiritual wares and hope that it will spill over into the Edinburgh Community.

**You have come from the very centre of Jewish life in the United Kingdom (Golders Green) to Edinburgh, which by any reckoning must be at least in Jewish terms, a remote outpost. Are you traumatised or challenged by this move?**

I feel like a religious salesman trying to put over my spiritual wares and hope that it will spill over into the Edinburgh Community. I have lived in small communities before and I believe that as long as one has a commitment then it can work.

**Do you like working in small communities?**

I do actually. You get to meet the people and work closely with them. Of course it is much harder because you have to do more. For example in Golders Green, the Cheder was regionalised, the Kashrut supervision centralised and I rarely had to layen as there were plenty of people willing to do it. But I think that working in a small community is more rewarding and I like

being a Communal Rav in the full sense.

**How do you cope with the travelling?** I regard it as part of the job and I use the time for preparation. I always take a Tikkun with me on the plane to practise the Layening undisturbed. Obviously it’s tiring and can be frustrating when it goes wrong. You know I never cease to be amazed at the distance one can cover so quickly by air to get to London in one hour. The whole journey from door to door takes four hours on a good day.

**How do you cope with being separated from your family on Shabbat?**

I always feel sorry for people who are alone on Shabbos. On the Friday nights since I’ve been here I’ve been eating regularly with the students at the Shool which has been a good opportunity for me to get to know and talk to the students. I have also started a regular Seuda Shelishit to which everyone is invited, so I regard the Community as an extended family and I hope to build on these Shabbaton activities. Obviously I am very happy when my wife and family can come up and participate and be part of the Community.

**Tell us about your lovely wife and children. Where did you meet Mrs Katanka?**

My wife Marilyn comes from Westcliff on Sea. She used to work in the Jews’ Temporary Shelter in the East End of London and commuted regularly. I was invited by a medical student friend to a party in a Succah for students at the London Hospital in the East End. Marilyn was invited by a friend who was a student

nurse at the hospital and we soon discovered that we were the only non



Katanka children, Back row: Moshe, Elisheva and Rochel Front row: Eliezer (the Barmitzvah Boy), Soro and Chana.

I like the Community very much. I like the people, I like the atmosphere — it’s upbeat! It’s got a lot of go in it and I look forward to advancing it in many ways.

medical people at the party. Marilyn has always a tower of strength and supportive in all aspects of my ministry. Her knowledge of the Anglo Jewish scene is put to good use in her present position as PA to the Director of the London School of Jewish Studies (formerly Jews’ College). In my opinion, she is a natural.

**How many children have you?**

We have eight children. Two of them are married. Our oldest son Shlomo(28) is studying in a Kollel in Israel. Gideon (25) is studying accountancy and lives in Hendon. Moshe (20) is a student at Gateshead Yeshiva. Two girls Elisheva (17) and Rochel (15) are next. They are both pupils at the Hasmonean School. Eliezer (13) who celebrates his Bar mitzvah in May is at Menorah Grammar School. Soro (11) and Chana (8) are at Menorah Primary.

**And Grandchildren?**

Shlomo and his wife Hannah Leah have three children and Gideon and Michelle (his wife) have two.

**What work are you engaged in, in London?**

I am Religious Adviser at Nightingale (House – Home for Aged Jews) in South London.

**What does that involve?**

Looking after the spiritual side and religious

affairs of a large home for the elderly. There are about 300 residents and I also have the responsibility of teaching the largely non Jewish staff, (there are about 300) what they need to know about Judaism. I give shiurim there, do pastoral work, try to raise the profile of Jewish life in the Home and look after Kashrus as well. There is a shool there that I run. It is rewarding work and I enjoy it very much.

**Do you have any spare time for hobbies, sport, music, books theatre, opera etc?**

I don’t have much spare time but since being at the Home I have developed an interest in pottery. I am also interested in Sofros (being a scribe) and I spent a sabbatical, attending an intensive course on the scribal arts in Israel. It goes without saying that I like music and I do like walking. I am a qualified mohel but can’t do much these days as it is too difficult to fit in with my busy schedule. I did have the honour of performing brisses on two of my sons and two of my grandsons which is a very special mitzvah.

**What do you think of the Edinburgh Jewish Community?**

I like the Community very much. I like the people, I like the atmosphere —it’s upbeat! It’s got a lot of go in it and I look forward to advancing it in many ways. There is a lot of work to be done with the children and the cheder and I want to raise the profile of the education of the children and at the same time adult education. I also enjoy pastoral work and even when I am not in actually resident in Edinburgh, through email, fax and the telephone, I can still be doing some of the work. I talk to Jackie Taylor (the Congregation’s administrator) every day so I am up to date with all the news and I deal with any problems that may arise. The experience that I gained in Sheffield which is a similar community where I was the sole Minister has proved extremely useful. I would like to see full congregations on Shabbos mornings and Friday evenings and all our services. It puts everyone in a good spirit when there are lots of people present and they meet all their friends and we can have a much more exciting service because of the atmosphere created and this was demonstrated on Purim and Yom Atzmaut this year. I am very pleased that the building is used so frequently — there is always something going on. I am delighted to see people come to the Community Centre even not for a religious service but



We are fortunate in having Christine Burns who in my experience must rate as the best Synagogue caretaker in the United Kingdom!

just to feel part of the Community and I welcome them whatever their religious affiliation. We are fortunate in having Christine Burns who in my experience must rate as the best Synagogue caretaker in the United Kingdom!

**Do you think there is a future here for a Jewish person?**

If a person, through my influence, felt so strongly about their Judaism that they wanted to move to a larger Jewish community, I would reluctantly regard it as a success story. It would be both happy and sad. Happy that they had progressed in that way and of course sad to lose them here in Edinburgh. But I still feel that there is a lot that can be achieved within the confines of this Community especially nowadays when there are all the opportunities of being in contact with other communities. There is no reason why we can't bring in speakers or field workers of calibre from other centres to help us. Edinburgh, in my opinion has got two great



advantages that other small communities don't have. Firstly there is the large student population and secondly the many visitors who come. You just never know who is going to come through the door of the Shool for a Friday night service and because of this, you never feel cut off.

**Do you think we could do more for our visitors?**

We are very friendly to them but I would like to build on this and set up a system of Shabbos hospitality both in Shool and in private homes and also some way of providing ready made meals that could be stored in a freezer for them provided of course, we knew they were coming.

**What are your views on the current tragedy in Israel?**

Sadly, it's a deadlock, but you have to be positive about it. Jewish people throughout our history have always had difficulties of one sort or another and we have always pulled through. Hopefully the other side will realise that there can be prosperity and that it can become a wonderful region if only they put their minds to it and there is peace.

**How do you view the current anti-Semitism in Europe?**

It is a spin off of the very bad reporting in the media of events in the Middle East and emphasises the importance of having strong links with the wider community and of fostering good relationships with the non Jewish world. Earlier this week I had a meeting with the Minister of St John's Episcopal Church in Princes Street regarding the mural outside his Church at Easter which gave such offence to Jews all over the world. We will be issuing a joint statement shortly.

**Can you see a light at the end of the tunnel?**

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks tells the story that some years ago they discovered in Theresienstadt a makeshift Shool and on the wall there was an inscription in Hebrew which said "with all that's going on, we never forgot You, do not forget us" In the depths of despair, they never became dehumanised. They did everything possible to lead a normal life. They had adult education, davening, art and music—— they never gave up the hope that one day, things will improve.

Many people have been outraged by the Easter mural displayed at the St. John's Episcopal church at the West End of Princes Street. As a result, a meeting was arranged between Rabbi Katakga and Rev. Dr. John Armes, Rector of St Johns. The outcome of that meeting was the following statement:

May 2002

**JOINT STATEMENT BY:**

Rabbi David Katanka, Minister, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

AND

Rev Dr John Armes, Rector, St John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh

Rabbi Katanka indicated to Dr Armes the unease aroused in the Jewish Community in Edinburgh by the Easter mural at St. John's Episcopal Church, which had appeared to them to be anti-semitic.

Rev Armes assured the Rabbi that there had been no intent to express or condone anti-semitism. The mural was a criticism of the Israeli Government's policies with respect to the Palestinians. It was also expressing the Christian hope that God is to be found amongst all who suffer. The Rabbi accepted these assurances.

Both stated their firm commitment to peace in general and in the Holy Land in particular. They agreed to explore with their congregations ways in which they might rebuild goodwill and grow in mutual understanding.

# Three Worlds

Eva Erdélyi

One fine day in September 1938 we arrived in Edinburgh, I was not then Eva Erdelyi, but I was Eva Griffel, the wife of Dr. Wladimir Griffel and mother of Peter, then almost five years old.

One fine day in September 1938 we arrived in Edinburgh, I was not then Eva Erdélyi, but I was Eva Griffel, the wife of Dr. Wladimir Griffel and mother of Peter, then almost five years old.

We had left Vienna six months after the invasion of Austria. My husband, Dr. Griffel was a physician and, in order to qualify for medical practice in this country, he was required to study at a British University. This re-training usually ran for two years but Edinburgh University offered a one-year course. We accordingly decided to come to Edinburgh, city we only knew by name and fame for her romantic history and great literature.

Our first impressions where promising; the unique beauty of the city but even more so, the friendly welcome which we received from the landlady of our flat in East Saville Terrace. We had two rooms, a nice bathroom and a large kitchen, which had a range providing hot water, and a built-in bed for the maid. This kitchen-bed became our son Peter's retreat for the night and he was delighted with it.

Following our emigration, we had spent the



Eva Erdélyi

first two months in London and we were already moderately fluent in English, speaking it at home with Peter who integrated easily in a very good kindergarten, a part of St. Margaret's Girls School, if I remember correctly. There he spent weekday mornings, making friends and acquiring an Edinburgh accent. I gradually began to discover the 'Three Worlds' which made my first year in Edinburgh such a rich and important period of my life, overshadowed though it was, by anxiety about my mother, who had been left behind in Prague. There was also our anxiety about the gathering storm of war.

Because I had been used to living in a thorough assimilated environment, the strangest and most puzzling of these new worlds to me, was the world of the Edinburgh Jewish community, centred on the Synagogue in Salisbury Road. This stately building had replaced the more modest Synagogue in Graham Street, mainly through the efforts of Dr. Salis Daiches who was our Rabbi. He was a noted scholar, had an impressive personality and was a real leader of the community combining Orthodox Judaism and Zionist enthusiasm with Scottish patriotism, not to mention the philosophy of Kant, which he had imbibed at University. We were once invited to his home for a family dinner on Shabbat, and I remember Mrs. Daiches as a very charming and accomplished hostess in contrast with the rather intimidating presence of her husband. I imagine that the influx of mostly non-orthodox, and even non-religious continental 'refugees' was welcomed with rather mixed feelings by the leaders of the community such as Dr. Daiches, and by the brothers Ruben and Louis Cohen, who were successful businessmen and who alternated as 'Parnass' of the congregation.

I am sure that they gave financial assistance when needed but they must have resented the intrusion of this second one of my 'Three Worlds', which differed so much from their own.

It was Mrs. Davis who introduced me to 'gefillte fish' and took me to Mr. Kleinberg, the baker and to Mr. Lurie the kosher 'Delicatessen'.

Of course there was a 'fringe' to the Scottish Jewish Orthodoxy, and this is where I made friends, where the two worlds of Jewishness seemed to mingle. For instance the Davis family, with their leftist and anti-establishment convictions, I enjoyed many evenings in their hospitable home, while my husband was studying for his examinations, and their older daughter Cissie became a close friend of mine. It was Mrs. Davis who introduced me to 'gefillte fish' and took me to Mr. Kleinberg, the baker and to Mr. Lurie the kosher 'Delicatessen'. I do not think that she kept a kosher kitchen but she observed some of the culinary traditions of 'the old country'. Mr. Davis, or Alfi, as he was usually called, was a gentleman's outfitter with a first floor shop in Princes Street. He was a devoted reader of a Yiddish newspaper and equally devoted to his game of golf. In fact all the members of this family were devoted golfers. Another Scottish-Jewish couple I made friends with, or they with me, were Victor and Nessie Brown, who lived not far from our flat. Nessie Brown, like Mrs. Daiches, was much more westernised than her husband, but equally warm-hearted, if





Arthur Erdélyi

sometimes a little severe. They were a happy couple, tiny but very active, who cultivated their well kept back garden and went bird-watching together. They, like the Davis's, had numerous friends among the continental newcomers.

Even further out on the non-orthodox' fringe' were the brothers Sam and Juli (Julius) Lipitz, both medical practitioners of distinction. They took no fees from their many poor patients and in general lived up to their left-wing convictions. I think that at Juli remained a member of the communist party to the end of his life. Another couple of brothers that I remember were Morris and Hyman Levy. Hyman, who was a distinguished scientist, had left Edinburgh for London and only came up occasionally to visit Politically also on the far left, until he came back quite disenchanted from a trip to Russia. Morris remained in Edinburgh and later married Posy, an Irish-Jewish lady who became a valued friend and a well-loved member of our circle. This circle formed, as it were, a border country between two of my worlds: the Scottish-Jewish and the continental-Jewish.

## II

If the Synagogue was the centre of the Scottish-Jewish world, and Rabbi Daiches the spiritual leader of it, the Continental-Jewish world had a centre also, and instead of a spiritual one, it had a musical leader. This centre was the elegant home of the Fürsts, in Gordon Terrace, and its musical leader and presiding genius, Dr. Hans Gal. Every Thursday evening there was an 'open house' in Gordon Terrace, and all the guests were German-speaking, and actively or passively musical. The two sisters had come from Frankfurt am Main, and had

brought their cultural traditions as well as their property with them. The evening entertainment always included a recital, performed by one or more of the guests, and was organised or conducted by Hans Gal. He and his charming wife Hansi, were originally Viennese, but had lived in Mainz, Hans had conducted the orchestra of the Operhouse there. They had come to Edinburgh after the Nazi take-over, at the invitation of the great musicologist Sir Donald Tovey. Hans was a conductor, composer, pianist and later the author of popular biographies of Schubert, Brahms, Verdi and Wagner. He was a member of the Edinburgh University staff and in his spare time had created a small refugee orchestra, which performed classical music. Olga Stadecker, the companion housekeeper of the Fürsts played first violin in a way far superior to the rest of this amateur orchestra.

The circle of friends which congregated on Thursday evenings included medical doctors, scientists, and 'mere' wives like myself. Dr. Fürst and two other medics had come from Germany in the early thirties and received their British degrees some time ago. Another was Kate Herman a forceful, well-known character, who was a Consultant Neurologist at the Royal Infirmary. During her later years she became a regular guest and helper at the Synagogue Luncheon club, and will be remembered with affection by some of the ladies who did volunteer work in the kitchen. The other medical doctor from Germany was Rudi Gruneberg, an orthopaedic surgeon and a fine pianist. He occasionally gave a recital or played the piano part in chamber music at the Fürsts. A German-Jewish eye-specialist, my dear friend Anne Schloss, did not live in Edinburgh at that time. I only met her after my return in 1942. Three of the medical doctors, including my husband, were Viennese. Hugo Schneider, a dentist, had such a charming manner, that it was almost a pleasure to treated by him. Dr Adler, was a GP who opened his practice after qualifying and settled near Salisbury Place with his wife and their little daughter Liesel. Mrs. Adler had a doctorate in biochemistry and she worked in a laboratory of the Science Faculty housed at the foot of Blackford Hill, in the 'King's Buildings' Also in the King's Buildings department of Animal Genetics, was Lottte Anerbach who worked as an underpaid assistant of

Professor Crewe. She was an outstanding geneticist who later became the first female member of the Royal Society. In the refugee orchestra she played the cello (pronouncing it 'Shello' and playing it very badly). She had only started to take lessons on this instrument because she could not transport her grand piano from Berlin to Edinburgh. Lotte, and her mother Selina Anerbach, lived in Fountainhall Road., in a furnished room with a kitchen, sharing the bathroom with their landlady. I often went to visit Frau Selina, who was house-bound.

A rare but honoured guest at the house-parties was the renowned physicist Max Born, who spent the war years in Edinburgh. A friend of his was the much younger Hungarian mathematician, Arthur Erdelyi, who also played in the refugee orchestra. He was at home in all three of my Edinburgh worlds. Three years later, he became my husband and 25 years later, the head of the Department of Mathematics at Edinburgh University.

She lived and slept in the kitchen. Lotte remained my good friend throughout her life and was one of the finest people that I have ever met. Another important member of this group was Willy Gross a botanist, who also worked in the Science Faculty. He had been able to bring from Vienna not only his wife and two boys but also his wife's parents, a very upper class couple. Dr. Gross was a likeable, modest person, who I think, played second violin in Hans Gal's orchestra.

A rare but honoured guest at the house-parties was the renowned physicist Max Born, who spent the war years in

Edinburgh. A friend of his was the much younger Hungarian mathematician, Arthur Erdelyi, who also played in the refugee orchestra. He was at home in all three of my Edinburgh worlds. Three years later, he became my husband and 25 years later, the head of the Department of Mathematics at Edinburgh University. Many of his younger friends and colleagues, as well as his students, are sill alive and remember him with affection.

Of course I also made friends with the other 'wives'. For instance Grete Gross, who used to invite me for tea with her and her parents, while Peter played with George and Julian in their garden. There was also Bella Schneider, who like her husband, used to be a dentist. She had given up dentistry on hearing that she would have to resit all of her examinations - in English! But being a wife and the mother of a gifted son was not enough. She learned weaving and became so proficient in that art that she soon designed her own original fabrics and eventually became a respected member of the Scottish Weavers Guild. Dr. Gr?neberg also had an attractive and gifted wife called Vicky. But the family lived on the northern edge of town, too far away for casual contacts. The uncrowned queen of



Willy Gross, Max Sugar, Hans Gal, Hugo Schneider while interred on the Isle on Mann – Summer 1940.

the wives was, undoubtedly, Hansi Gal. She had the charm and skill of a born hostess. She entertained in their spacious flat facing the Meadows. There Dr. Gal started his 'Collegium Musicum' which I was privileged to attend. I remember distinctly one performance of the Bach Cantata 'Schlage doch gewünschte Stunde' when Hans let me strike the wished- for hour on two half filled water glasses. In

later years, after the family had moved to a big house in Blacket Place, Hansi's dinner parties became a regular feature of our social life.

It was Arthur who linked the three worlds together for me,

## III

It was Arthur who linked the three worlds together for me, being as closely connected with the Synagogue as he was with the circle of assimilated Scottish or Continental Jews and with the assorted members of his University Department. In fact, it was a case of integration rather than mere connection! As far as I was concerned, all the Edinburgh 'natives' that I came into contact with during that first year, seemed admirable and wonderful. Starting with our landlady in East Saville Terrace and the owners of the small shops where I bought our supplies, the teachers in St Margaret's Kindergarten, and the young woman with a load on her back, who arrived from Arbroath to sell her fish in the street, while the housewives came out to buy and

Street and run by the Society of Friends. I had started to work there in the hope of obtaining a domestic permit for my mother, which was the only way of bringing her to this country. Not having any secretarial training, all I could do was to deal with the pitiful letters that we received from Nazi-occupied countries. Mrs. Born was a Quaker, and I was told a very passionate one. But it was to the two Scottish ladies that I would turn to for sympathy and moral support. Not only the Quakers, but also the Presbyterians seemed to hold the 'people of the book' in high respect, which was not always the case with Catholics. Thus the general atmosphere of 'live and let live' coupled with an extra-cordial welcome to strangers, captivated all of us newcomers. From a place of refuge, Edinburgh became our home town, and nobody dreamed of going back to where we came from. Nobody did in fact, go back after the war, except Max Born, who returned to Germany with his non-Jewish wife.

Thus the general atmosphere of 'live and let live' coupled with an extra-cordial welcome to strangers, captivated all of us newcomers. From a place of refuge, Edinburgh became our home town, and nobody dreamed of going back to where we came from.

Let me finish these memories with a grateful mention of one who died recently; Professor Norman Porteous, of the Faculty of Divinity, whose extra-mural class I attended. He lectured on inter-human relations in the Old Testament stories, highlighting the gracious and decorous behaviour in dialogues between father and son or master and servant, and the deference shown by a good husband to his wife. This coming from a Christian clergyman, made a lasting impression on me and , I am sure, helped me to come back to the Bible and Judaism.

All this happened so long ago, that I may have may not have remembered all of the details accurately.



# The Queen's Jubilee

Sir Malcolm Rifkind

A Golden Jubilee is an extraordinary event for anyone. When it is to celebrate fifty years on the throne it has some impact on all our lives.

A Golden Jubilee is an extraordinary event for anyone. When it is to celebrate fifty years on the throne it has some impact on all our lives.

I was fortunate, during my 18 years as a Government Minister to have many meetings both with the Queen and other members of the Royal Family. Most of these were on public occasions; from time to time they were more private. One saw the person behind the monarch never entirely off duty, but relaxed, humorous and entertaining.

I do not know the Queen's thoughts on her Jubilee but they will be distinctly royal. On one occasion I was seated next to her at a luncheon at Holyrood Palace and she remarked on a conversation she had had with the Shah of Iran. He had asked her whether she had had more years with Conservative or Labour Prime Ministers since 1952. "I had to tell him" she said to me "that I hadn't the faintest idea. I had never considered it."



Meeting the Queen at the Signet Library in Edinburgh.

When you think about it you know what she meant. Prime Ministers come and they go. She has had ten over the last 50 years starting with Winston Churchill. Their party complexion means less to her than to almost anyone else in the country. That's what constitutional monarchy is all about.

The Queen is often thought of as a rather severe and serious person. That she is but she also is a delightful mimic, has a great love of mischief and a developed sense of humour. When I was Secretary of State for Scotland I was invited to spend the weekend on Britannia as it sailed from the Firth of Clyde up the west coast of Scotland.

The invitation, I have to confess, was not just for the pleasure of my company. The Queen was due to visit the Ardnamurchan lighthouse on the Monday morning and I was expected to accompany her. Because Ardnamurchan Point is miles from anywhere, the easiest access is by sea. The result was an extraordinary weekend, including a royal picnic on the island of Oronsay.

On the Sunday morning the Queen noticed an article in the Sunday Times reporting that she had visited a heart specialist in Harley Street and speculating that she might have heart trouble. The Queen was annoyed. She was in perfect health. The visit to the specialist had been merely because she was advised to have a check-up. She devised a splendid way to make this clear.

On the Monday morning when we arrived at the Ardnamurchan lighthouse the Press were there in force, no doubt hoping for evidence of an ailing Queen. Knowing this perfectly well, the Queen sprightly mounted the dozens of steps of the lighthouse, right to the top, leaving the Lord Lieutenant and

the rest of the Royal party (including the Secretary of State) puffing behind her. From the top of the lighthouse she waived cheerfully to the Press. That was the last we heard in the Press of speculation that she might have heart trouble.

Many of my meetings with the Queen were as a member of the Privy Council. Every few weeks four or five Privy Counsellors, who are also Cabinet Ministers, join with



With the Prince and Princess of Wales.

the Queen at Buckingham Palace to dispatch official business. When one first becomes a Privy Counsellor and Cabinet Minister, one has to take the Oath of Allegiance and the Privy Counsellor Oath on bended knee before "kissing hands" with the Queen. While taking the Oath one holds in one's right hand a miniature Old or New Testament depending on one's beliefs.

Each time one changes Cabinet posts one has to take a new oath. This almost got me into a rather embarrassing situation. When I arrived at the Palace with my Cabinet colleagues the Queen's Private Secretary handed us each miniature New Testaments. I explained I would need an Old Testament. He immediately apologised and went to look for one. A few seconds later he returned saying he couldn't find one. I stressed it would not be possible for me to swear on the New Testament.

Time was running out as the summons from the Queen to go into the Audience chamber would come any moment. After



On the Royal Yacht Britannia off the West Coast of Scotland.

another hectic search the Private Secretary returned with the only Old Testament he could find which was both very large and very heavy.

The five ministers trooped in to meet the Queen; four with miniature New Testaments; I with my large heavy one. I felt rather like a cross between Ian Paisley and an Old Testament prophet. Not by word, look or sign did the Queen indicate anything unusual about my appearance. What she was thinking, I would rather not speculate!

As Foreign Secretary I, together with Edith, accompanied the Queen and Prince Phillip on State Visits abroad. One unforgettable event was when they visited the town of Brno in the Czech Republic. The whole population was out to greet her with many thousands lining the streets to cheer and waive. As we passed the local hospital we saw on the balcony, waiving and applauding, several doctors still in their operating gowns and face masks. I felt rather sorry for the poor patients who had clearly, been left on the operating table.


I also had a number of meetings with the Prince and Princess of Wales. On one occasion, when I was Foreign Secretary, Princess Diana invited me to Kensington Palace for lunch to discuss her overseas visits. At the end of lunch my official car had not yet turned up. I suggested that she left me at the front door but she insisted on us returning upstairs to the drawing room for further conversation. I allowed myself to be persuaded!

A final reminiscence; this time of the Queen Mother. Seated next to her at a luncheon when she was already well in to her nineties I asked her if she watched a lot of

television. "Oh, no" she smiled sweetly, "I don't have time". Game, set and match to the Queen Mum.

The Royal Family come in for their share of criticism like everyone else in our society. But in my experience, both in private and in public, they are serious professionals dedicated to the welfare of our country. We are lucky to have them and the Queen most of all.

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# A Jewish view of Jesus

Alan Greenbat



Marc Chagall La Crucifixion Blanche

Theologians talk of the leap of faith. Religion is not an exact science and if I could prove God to my own satisfaction, then where is my faith? There has to be an element of mystery and trust. Belief in God is such a leap and for the Christian, acceptance of the divinity of Jesus must be in the same category. It is, I suppose, considerably easier to be agnostic or even atheist where one is left without invisible means of support

However, what we people of faith share is the comfort that goes with mental security. Those who subscribe to the tenets of the Council of Christians and Jews are by assumption people of faith. In our deliberations and discussions we examine and learn of our common concerns and in like manner we consider those things which divide us, and we do so exercising tolerance, caution, moderation and understanding. We are united by a belief in God. The nature of that God and His revelation provides difficulties in the relationship for both Christians and Jews. And one of the very real hurdles we face is the fact that the difficulties appear to be unbridgeable without radical departures from accepted principles. Then we move out of the realms of discussion and into the agitated environment of persuasion, conversion and pressure. But that need come about only if we try to insist on conformity.

Realistically we must appreciate that there are fundamental differences between Jews and Christians and among the most basic of these is the interpretation in respect of the person and

life of Jesus. But there are other areas of disagreement. There are those who would express our differences in the starkest terms:

**Jesus was Divine** - No he was not  
**Jesus came to save me** - I don't need saving  
**Jesus died for my salvation** - No he didn't. There is no salvation through death  
**He rid me of sin** - I did not have it to start with

Those issues, of course, permeate every aspect of consideration of our inter faith discussion. For the Christian, the life and teaching of Jesus is paramount. For the Jew the Torah fills that role. The Jew identifies with Ecclesiastes who says - "What is the final conclusion? Respect God. Observe his commandments. This is the whole duty of a human being." And we all surely subscribe to the teaching of the prophet Micah who in answer to his rhetorical question "What is required of you?" answers "Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God."

There are of course fundamental differences between Christianity and Judaism, which stand outside the history and personality of Jesus. The most obvious is the concept of original sin - so important to Christian belief but not acceptable to

Jews believe we are all born pure in the image of God and have free will in how we develop our relationships with our fellows and our Maker.

Judaism in any shape or form. Jews believe we are all born pure in the image of God and have free will in how we develop our relationships with our fellows and our Maker.

Jews still await the coming of the Messiah. The Jew hopes to expedite the coming of

the Messiah by observance of the laws of Torah (the Mitzvot). There is a beautiful teaching that says the Messiah will come when every Jew observes the Sabbath on two consecutive weekends (when the era will of course be upon us). Alternatively the Messiah will come if every Jew profanes the Sabbath on two consecutive weekends (when of course we will be in dire need of him).

It is difficult to imagine that a Jewish congregation would accept (even if it fully understood) that salvation could be achieved by faith alone. For the Jew, good deeds are the priority. The foundations of society are listed by the Jewish Sages in Avot 1(2) as Torah, Service and Good Deeds. When belief takes precedence over actions, people exert pressure and carry out distasteful acts in the name of religion.

**The life of Jesus was a Jewish one.** He was circumcised - went through a procedure of examination to ascertain his knowledge.

When belief takes precedence over actions, people exert pressure and carry out distasteful acts in the name of religion.

He was observant and encouraged others to be the same. He respected Torah and followed the Hebrew calendar. He taught in synagogues and stressed the importance of caring for one's neighbours. He was a respected and knowledgeable teacher. - His famous prayer is impeccably Jewish. His teaching as reported in Matthew 15(24) concentrated on the lost sheep of Israel rather than an involvement with the non-Jewish world.

BUT Jews cannot grant him Divine status or the right to be the exclusive channel for atonement or admission to the presence of the Almighty. His followers gave him such status and evolved the concept of the Trinity. From a Jewish viewpoint he was 100% human from birth to death and thereafter.

A very real difficulty in inter faith dialogue on these contentious issues is that Jews do not accept the sanctity of the New

Testament. In fact, Judaism rejects the naming of the Old Testament as such,

A very real difficulty in inter faith dialogue on these contentious issues is that Jews do not accept the sanctity of the New Testament.

because of the implications it raises. Thus we speak of Torah (the five books of Moses) which are the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, or Tanach - the Hebrew Bible.

There is also total Jewish resistance to an interpretation of Jewish texts that are



Alan Greenbat receives his OBE

explained as predicting the life of Jesus. The famous Isaiah 53 chapter is seen in Jewish tradition as foretelling an event in the life of King Ahaz some 700 years before the birth of Jesus. The martyrdom described is that of Israel and the reference to a virgin birth is not an accurate translation of the word used by Isaiah 7 (14) and repeated by Matthew 1(23). Alma is a young girl without any reference to her virginity. We find it used in Exodus of Miriam when she watched over her brother who had been placed in a box in the Nile. The exclusive word for a virgin in Hebrew is Betulah and that is not used in the proof passages (nor is it used in any Hebrew/English translation of the New Testament published by the Trinitarian Bible Society).

The experiences of the Crucifixion and

Resurrection also provide problems. That the Crucifixion took place is undeniable and there is no question that some Jews were involved in the incident, but Luke himself says 23(34) that the populace was unaware of what it was doing. Jesus is quoted as saying: "They know not what they do".

It is a terrible dilemma that the Crucifixion was an integral part of the Jesus story. It, together with the Resurrection, was the ultimate proof of Divinity - and yet the Jews and their successors bore the blame as decides across the centuries.

One of the dilemmas for evaluating the life of Jesus is that the synoptic gospels (those written by those who had first hand knowledge, i.e. Matthew, Mark and Luke) speak in the main in more gentle and general terms than John who regularly puts into the mouth of Jesus the first person singular and in whose gospel the phrase "I am" plays a significant part. In Judaism the supreme "I am" is God who uses the phrase in what Jews consider to be the first of the Ten Commandments.

An innovative teaching of Jesus is where he is reported as giving views unacceptable in Judaism on the power to forgive sins. When Jesus tells the man in Matthew 9 that his sins will be forgiven, the religious authorities describe him as a blasphemer.

The Jewish position in respect of the forgiveness of sins is clearly elaborated in the Talmud (Yoma 8/9) where the power of forgiveness is given exclusively to the Almighty with one very crucial exception. Where an individual has wronged another, only the victim can give absolution. Even God does not claim that authority.

A further division between Judaism and Christianity is in the concept of turning the other cheek. Judaism believes that wrongdoing should be punished. It does not accept the position that one should pray for the well being of those who hate you or persecute you except insofar as they may be turned from their evil ways.

I refer to those who would attribute collective guilt of the Jewish people. The statement entitled Nostra Aetate, the Vatican II declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions. It says that blame could not be allocated to all the Jews even at the time of the Crucifixion. How much less therefore



should it be transmitted to subsequent generations. In recent years the Vatican has made generous gestures towards the Jewish people - the Papal visit to a Rome synagogue. The Pope's Millennium journey to Israel, his prayer at the Western Wall and his constant references to the monotheistic faiths as the Children of Abraham, are all much appreciated.

There are unfortunately still pockets of hostility but no major changes ever occur overnight in patterns of behaviour. The Vatican now has diplomatic relations with Israel and that was quite a dramatic step forward when one considers the Church Fathers' interpretation of Jewish dispersion. A recent Vatican pronouncement has not been viewed with favour. It would appear that the situation where acceptability of other faiths has been recognized may have been put on the back burner for a while.

But we are, thank goodness, a long way from the statement by a Slovak archbishop in 1942 when asked to raise his voice in protest against the Nazi extermination of Jews. He replied. "It is not just a matter of deportation. You will not die there of hunger and disease. They will slaughter all of you,

young and old alike, women and children at once. It is the punishment you deserve for the death of our Lord and Redeemer. (Quoted by I Greenberg in Judaism and Christianity after the Holocaust - 1975).

So where does all this leave us? I sum up by saying that Jews cannot accept the concept of a divine being who lived an ordinary human life, except insofar as each and every one of us has the spark of the Divine within us. It is impossible for us to accept the Trinity. For us, God must always be a unity (The Shema Deuteronomy VI v 4). Nor can we take on board the proposal that the timing of and the reaction to the messianic claim was such that it is necessary for a second opportunity to be made available. We continue to wait. Assuredly acceptance of the Kingdom of God and the era of all embracing peace has been remarkably absent in the past 2000 years.

We are however, fortunate to be living in a time of religious reconciliation and understanding, and tolerance does not have to insist on our finding common ground. The bulk of religious hatred between our two faiths has, I believe, been

eliminated and the time of harmony is upon us.

But for me, from where I stand - no Trinity I'm afraid - no Divine Being in our midst. I hope we can accept that we can hold individual views and even differ from one another yet remain people of good faith and believe without hesitation in "Our Father who art in heaven". A journey can be undertaken and completed by many different means. What is important is that we reach our destinations safe and sound. We do not all have to travel the same way.

Alan Greenbat, OBE, JP was born in 1929 and is a Qualified Youth and Community Worker. He is a cousin of the late Rev Mendel Ordman who was a minister in Edinburgh during the Rabbinate of Dr Salis Daiches.

He commenced his career in the Armed Forces and in 1954 was one of the organisers of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. He is a visiting minister to the small communities (from Aberdeen to Plymouth) and for the past ten years has worked as a consultant in the Office of the Chief Rabbi.

# Society Reports

## Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

In the second half of the Lit's season, we had four meetings covering very varied themes.

The opening meeting was unusual in character, interesting and entertaining. **Professor Michael Jacobsen**, accompanied by a highly talented septet of musicians, presented a historical and musical offering commemorating the re-publication of a songbook of Jewish, Yiddish and German music. This book had originally been assembled and published by Michael's father, a distinguished Rabbi in Hamburg during the 1930's, as a sort of rallying call for Jewish people at a time of appalling persecution (see Professor Jacobsen's article in issue 40). The evening showed revealed Professor Jacobsen to be a man steeped in Jewish learning, and it does seem a great pity that no contact was ever established between him and the Jewish community in Edinburgh while he lived and worked here.

**Professor Christina Lodder** of the Art History Department of St Andrews University was the next speaker. An old friend of the Lit, she gave us an in-depth account of the life and work of Naum Gabo. She illustrated her talk with excellent slides of his work, including some of the sculptures actually created and also designs he submitted for sculptures, but which never came to fruition. She also informed us about Gabo's outlook on life, this in part based on interviews with his widow, whom Professor Lodder came to know well after Gabo's death.

The penultimate talk of the session was given by **Rabbi Rubin of Giffnock** and Newlands Synagogue who spoke about Jewish Responsibility. This is the most recent theme to be promoted by the Chief Rabbi, and Rabbi Rubin said that this had been a source of inspiration to him. In his talk, Rabbi Rubin distinguished different forms of responsibility and drew on biblical stories to illustrate these. He traced the origins of our having responsibilities to Adam and Eve's acquisition of knowledge, and considered how various forms of

responsibility evolved thereafter. Rabbi Rubin spoke with great enthusiasm and he emerged as a deeply committed religious leader.

Our final talk was by **Dr Anthony Joseph** on Jewish Genealogy. This was a riveting talk given by probably the most authoritative person on the subject in Great Britain. His own work in the area for others as well as himself has led to his having a huge circle of contacts. One consequence of this was the entertaining discovery that he and one member of the audience are fifth cousins. His talk generated a deluge of questions afterwards, and it was undoubtedly an exceptionally good talk to end the year on.

## Edinburgh branch of the Council of Christians and Jews

The Edinburgh branch of CCJ held two significant events on the evening of May 2nd, the Annual General Meeting and a visit from former Bishop of Edinburgh, Richard Holloway.

The AGM was marked by the resignation of Chairman John Cosgrove and Secretary Rose Orgel. A presentation of a large bouquet was made to Rose, who has served as Secretary since 1988. However, her services are not lost to CCJ, as she has been elected joint Chair of the branch. Micheline Brannan has been elected as the new Secretary.

**Bishop Holloway** gave a very enlightening talk on the theme of ethics. He started by explaining how the scientific concept of shifting paradigms can be applied to religion. He described a scientific paradigm as a "constellation of views" that are accepted until they are challenged, tested and accepted in a "paradigm shift". A Catholic theorist, Hans Küng, has written on shifting paradigms in Judaism and Christianity. He argues that each religion has been through five paradigm shifts, and that each is on the cusp of a new paradigm - post-modern. However, he claims that, unlike science, religion never abandons its previous paradigms.

Bishop Holloway then went on to expand the concept of paradigms more generally to ethics and gave as an example the position of women in society and religion.

He accepted that in modern society it is difficult to structure our "moral selves" and accepted that there is a multiplicity of points of view. He suggested that three or four points are emerging to help create a moral framework:

We should accept that good people can disagree about moral issues.

We should make a distinction between sin and crime in such matters as adultery and homosexuality.

We need a distinction between personal preference and moral judgement. He offered as a definition of a morally wrong act - one that manifestly harms others or their interests.

There is a new moral principal of consent - fundamental in all sexual practice, which is why sexual acts against children are always wrong. This could have disturbing effects on certain religious communities, for example arranged marriages.

He finished his formal talk by making the point that in every shift there are losses as well as gains and that any stage is uncomfortable, but that in his opinion modern society is exhilarating.

A question and answer session then touched on subjects such as religious fundamentalism, his personal vision of G-d, Judaism, the Middle East and agnosticism.

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# Ian Leifer

Ian Shein

## Ian Shein talks to retiring President Ian Leifer and invites comment on 12 years' service to the Edinburgh Jewish Community on the Executive of the Synagogue Council.

In 1998 I interviewed Joan and Ian Leifer to compile a profile for the 'Edinburgh Star'. At that time Ian was in his fourth and final year as Treasurer of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. There was a slight touch of déjà vu when I called on him to prepare this article at the end of his statutory four years as President. "It will soon be D-day, Deliverance Day", he quipped. The humour was obvious but tinged with a degree of honesty as he recalled his interesting but often difficult and demanding years in office. Twelve years on the Synagogue Executive is a long time; four years as President is an eternity. When asked how difficult it was, he replied that the situation eased considerably when Rabbi Katanka arrived a few months ago to take up his position as part-time Rabbi of the community. Prior to that, the President was responsible for making sure that all Synagogue services were carried out efficiently. He was extremely grateful to the small band of dedicated congregants who had participated in this in various ways. When asked what made a good President, he was not too sure. He believed that one had to be a good listener but at the same time be prepared to make up one's own mind and act in pursuance of what was considered best for the community. Pressure from groups and individuals on a variety of subjects, and subsequent criticism if ideals were not matched, were commonplace. A sense of humour was an asset and in fact quite essential if one was to retain a sense of proportion. Relating back to a most difficult General Meeting of the community, he still regretted that the controversial housing plan had been turned down and believed then, and still does, that the meeting had made the wrong decision. He had seriously considered resigning at that time, believing that a valuable facility for the community had been lost. Comments then that the sale of ground for

the flats to be built would be tantamount to "selling the family silver" had, in Ian's view, been totally unrealistic and unjustified, especially when balanced against the enormous benefits that would have been possible.

So what had he achieved as President? An ever-existent problem had been maintenance of our Synagogue and associated buildings. These problems were still with us but application had been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources for grants and Ian was hopeful that



they would be favourably received. An offer in principle of a substantial grant had in fact been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund. However this grant could not be used for the caretaker's house, the Synagogue heating system or for landscaping the grounds. The Synagogue is classified as a public building whereas the former is not. What has been particularly gratifying to Ian was finding a Rabbi after a long and frustrating search. "Rabbi Katanka is an excellent Minister but needs and very much deserves much more support from the members of the congregation".

"You cannot be everything to everybody and certainly you cannot expect to please all.

I asked Ian whether he agreed that a Synagogue President required the attributes of a religious leader, an administrator, a financial guru and a public relations expert. "You cannot be everything to everybody and certainly you cannot expect to please all. Religious knowledge is of course an asset but public relations are important with respect to members and to the wider community within the city with whom we have an excellent relationship. I am grateful to my often sorely-pressed, hard working Executive".

I was aware that Dr. Leifer once resided in Dundee, which had a miniscule Jewish population but now has a lovely little modern Synagogue. Services there were often only possible on a Friday evening. Edinburgh certainly is not in that situation but I asked him what significant changes, if any, he had seen during his Presidency. He replied that the community is getting smaller and very evident from the size of the congregation on Shabbat. We appear to be losing 2 or 3% of our members every year. To my suggestion that we were resilient, he agreed but this did not address the problem of declining membership. To a related question on whether he believed that there was a divide within the community, he did not aspire to the notion that this was between town and gown. The community interacts and supports in various degrees the numerous organisations and functions which keep the centre alive and vibrant. There had been a suggestion at one time of a divide between

newcomers and the indigenous members but he had found little evidence for this. All communities have a number of different factions and pressure groups and Edinburgh is no exception.

Was he concerned at any attempt by the Reform movement to secure a solid base in Edinburgh?

I put to Ian the inevitable question of Reform Judaism. Was he concerned at any attempt by the Reform movement to secure a solid base in Edinburgh? "I would be worried if we were losing members as obviously we cannot afford to do so. However I do not believe this to be the case. I am aware that Reform services are being held in the city. Inter-marriage may possibly be one of the reasons for this but I am sure not the only one. Rabbi Katanka is aware of the situation and I have discussed this important and emotive subject with him".

My own experience as an ex-member of the Executive occasioned the question of our present constitution. I commented on our twelve council members, two wardens

...it takes four years to 'get the hang of it.'

## Star Trek into the Past

Do you recognise anyone here?

Answers on page 23.

and three vice-presidents who can, if they wish, attend council meetings. Does this not entail a cumbersome and confrontational session when everyone, as I recall, thinks he/she is a potential President? Ian fondly recalled his predecessor, the late Nate Oppenheim. "Nate told me that it takes four years to 'get the hang of it'. Now I am demitting office I am achieving just that! It is important for all members to have their say at the meeting but only if they would learn to speak one at a time. Also the two or three sub-meetings which go on simultaneously can be very distracting. Perhaps a slightly larger Executive to meet more frequently in addition to above could be considered. Hon. vice-presidents have considerable experience and, by not having to stand for council, leave vacancies for others. A sub-committee, of which I am not a member, has been looking at the constitution and the possibility of an entirely new organisational method for the community. This has been shelved at the moment but could well be revived in the future".

When asked if he approved of any change in the hierarchy of the Synagogue, he considered that some of the new ideas had merit but had to be worked through. Any new format would have to be seriously considered and the community would have to approve suggested changes in the constitution.

Being well aware of Ian's sense of humour, I asked him why top-hats had been discarded by the President and Treasurer.

After one or two jocular comments he replied "personally I found them to be uncomfortable and hot! As Treasurer I wore them in deference to Dr. Oppenheim and although I knew that quite a number of congregants wished me to continue this tradition, I did not wish to do so. Wearing a top-hat is not a halachic requirement and dates back to Victorian times and beyond. In most Synagogues now you will see the Executive wearing yamalkas. I do not think it is that important. Maybe the next incumbent will revert back to that old tradition. I do not know."

Finally I approached him on the news of the Leifers departing from Edinburgh after Yomtov. He told me to blame Napier University. "I have been part of Napier for over 27 years but in 2000 the University closed the Faculty of Science and ceased the intake of physics/chemistry students. Consequently I had to accept early retirement and part-time work which ends this summer. Edinburgh is a lovely city. It is small but has all the advantages of a much larger city. However we are going to live in Glasgow as Joan will be continuing as Director of Glasgow Jewish Housing Association and we will be living within one mile of her office instead of the nearly 60 miles as at present".

I could only conclude by wishing the Leifers all good luck and best wishes which I know are echoed by the community and which I am sure will be related to them before they depart. They will certainly be very much missed.





# From the Top of a Mountain

## - A Personal Perspective

Debbie Sinclair



The Amphitheatre on Mount Scopus

On April 15, 1948, at a time of great unrest in the soon-to-be-born State of Israel, a large convoy of armoured buses, ambulances and supply trucks made its way towards Mount Scopus, on the northern outskirts of Jerusalem, carrying academic and administrative staff members to work at the Hebrew University, and doctors, nurses and patients to Hadassah Hospital. The only access to Mount Scopus was via a road leading through the residential Arab neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. “Scopus” (Heb: Zofim) means “scouts” , “lookouts”, but the scouts were evidently occupied elsewhere at that time, for attacks on buses making that journey were frequent. On this dark day, a mine was detonated as the convoy reached Sheikh Jarrah; by evening, the ambush had claimed 78 lives.

Israelis are shadowed constantly by fear of catastrophic disruption in even the most mundane of their daily activities. At such times, it is natural to seek a haven. My haven, despite its bloody past, is Mount Scopus.

It is exactly 54 years to the day as I sit and write these lines, and Israel is once again in the throes of terrible turmoil and anxiety. Israeli regular and reserve soldiers are engaged in yet another war, “Operation Defensive Shield”, aimed at protecting the civilian population by destroying the terrorist network that has been established in Palestinian townships, villages and camps, and ordinary Israelis are shadowed

constantly by fear of catastrophic disruption in even the most mundane of their daily activities. At such times, it is natural to seek a haven. My haven, despite its bloody past, is Mount Scopus.

As children in Melbourne, Australia, my sister, brother and I spent a cumulative thirty-six years at Mount Scopus War Memorial College, the largest Jewish day school in the southern hemisphere. Throughout the years of primary school, our weekly Monday morning Assembly closed, after the dose of Headmasterly inspiration had been duly administered, to the sounds of hundreds of childish voices singing the school anthem “שָׁלוֹם לְךָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם” – “From the Peak of Mount Scopus, Peace to You, Jerusalem...”. Even at the age of six, I thought it was the most beautiful song in the world. (Unfortunately, by the time I reached secondary school, two Hebrew grammar teachers, struck by the Muse who this time had aimed particularly badly, had convinced the authorities to adopt as the school anthem their rather banal composition which went something like “With joy and great enthusiasm we lift our voices to sing the praises of our school, etc. etc....,” set to a strident marching tune.)

Throughout my late teens, there was never a doubt in my mind that I would be heading for Israel – which for me, as for many Diaspora Jews , meant Jerusalem – upon completing school. I had chosen to study Law: it was 1972, and it was my good fortune that when Mount Scopus once more became accessible in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War, the University authorities decided to locate the Faculty of Law in the

original University building on the mountain. Today, the Mount Scopus campus is by far the most heavily populated of the four Hebrew University campuses, home to all the non-experimental Faculties (the Humanities, Social Sciences, Law,) various Schools (Education, Social Work and Business Administration, Occupational Therapy and the School for Overseas Students), libraries, institutes and more. Thousands of students – Israelis, Arabs, immigrants from all over the world - live in the student dormitory villages on the mountain, and a new multi-million dollar Sports Centre will be officially opened next week. (Dr. Judah Magnes, one of the founders of the University, is reported to have said: “I looked at a mountain and dreamed of a University”; today we say, “I look at a University and dream of a mountain”). But in 1972, the Law Faculty was one of the few buildings on Mount Scopus. The earth movers were tremendously busy digging up the mountain, preparing for the new buildings; in that first year, access to the Law Faculty was along a dirt road, ending in a rickety wooden staircase which took one up to the building.

The views from the windows of the Law Faculty were breathtaking, so much so that at times, classes began late because the students were in the corridors watching the sunset. However, nothing could compare with the magnificent spectacle from the room under the dome at the very top of the Law Faculty – probably the highest spot in Jerusalem in the seventies - which houses the Library of the Institute for Research in Jewish Law. My husband Danny, whom I met on my first day at the Faculty, studied and worked in this Institute for many years, and as students, this was our favourite meeting-place. It was surely scenery such as this which had prompted Sir John Gray-Hill, a London lawyer and supporter of the Zionist cause, to buy what he called “a bit of land on the Mount of Olives” as a second home. His 125 acres were purchased in 1914 by the World Zionist Organization for £21,500, for the purpose of setting up the

Hebrew University. It must be said that “Hill” is an appropriate name for an owner of this real-estate, but “Gray” is most definitely not. The hills of Moab and Gilead to the east, above the Dead Sea, are pink, mauve, purple, azure and many other colours whose names only Lawrence Durrell would know; the golden Dome of the Rock atop its blue mosaic facade dominates the southern view; north are the cream and yellows of the desert, and to the west lie the white apartment blocks and houses, often covered by red roofs, of modern Jerusalem.

I completed my studies, worked for a few years in private offices, and we then left for Edinburgh. Soon after our return to Israel in 1987, I was offered a job in the Office of the Legal Advisor of the Hebrew University, which I accepted eagerly. The Office was then situated near the Knesset, on the Givat Ram Campus, which had been built to house the University after the Mount Scopus campus became inaccessible in 1948; about six months after I began working, space became available in the Central Administration Building, and thus I returned to Mount Scopus, where I have had the pleasure of working ever since, bar the three years that we spent in Scotland.



The Law Faculty Building

I often walk at lunchtimes. My favourite route takes me out of the campus down to the British military cemetery, so serene with its uniform white headstones laid out in perfectly lined-up rows on a beautifully tended lawn. I backtrack past the original Hadassah Hospital Building, where our two sons, Yonatan and Noam, were born. Once back in the campus grounds, I take the path that leads me to the University Botanical Gardens. This almost hidden garden, devoted entirely to plants of Eretz Yisrael, is divided into various sections, each representing a different geographic area. Besides the botany, the Gardens are also good for a dose of history, for set in them is the Tomb of Niconor, a cave which was once the last resting place of a wealthy

Alexandrian Jew whose contribution paid for the bronze doors to the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Niconor no longer rests in his Tomb, which was apparently looted in ancient times; in his stead lie Yehuda Pinsker and Menachem Ussishkin, two prominent Zionist leaders from the pre-State period.

Leaving the Botanical Gardens, I walk across the Nancy Reagan Plaza, bordered by the Frank Sinatra Building, over to the distinctive pink stone building - the first building to be completed on Mount Scopus after the Six-Day War - housing the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, which supports major studies on the history, politics and social development of the non-Western world, with particular emphasis on the Middle East.

My last stop is always the amphitheatre at the north-eastern tip of the campus. This was the site of the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University in 1925, where Jewish leaders and dignitaries from all over the world gathered to acknowledge the early stages of realization of a dream, expressed by Chaim Weizmann at the Laying of the Foundation stone seven years earlier, that “under the aegis of this university there will be a renaissance of the Divine power of prophetic wisdom that once was ours ... under the atmospheric pressure of this mount, our Jewish consciousness ... will be rekindled and our Jewish youth will be reinvigorated from Jewish sources ...”. It was here, when the amphitheatre was still in a state of disrepair just three short weeks after the Six-Day War, that Major General Itzhak Rabin was granted a Doctor Philosophiae Honoris Causa from the Hebrew University; to his own question, “What is there in common to military activity, and the academic world which represents civilization and culture?” he said that “the answer lay not in the glory of military victory, but in the imperative of morality in warfare, the absolute necessity of deep spiritual values in carrying the soldiers forward, far more than their weapons or the technique of warfare.” Golda Meir spoke here of her vision of a society able to withstand difficult days and prevail if it would be united in one great spirit; from the stage of this amphitheatre I have heard Aharon Barak expound his vision of justice, and Elie Weisel talk of memory and survival. I have attended

concerts here where the strains of Beethoven or Bloch were accompanied by the plaintive bleating of the goats from nearby Bedouin herds or punctuated by the sounds of fighter jets flying by above, such a symbolic combination of the diverse elements which constitute our lives in Israel.

the strains of Beethoven or Bloch were accompanied by the plaintive bleating of the goats from nearby Bedouin herds or punctuated by the sounds of fighter jets flying by above, such a symbolic combination of the diverse elements which constitute our lives in Israel.

Tomorrow is the Day of Remembrance for Israel’s Fallen Soldiers. At 11 a.m., together with millions of others throughout the country, I will stop whatever I am doing and observe a minute’s silence in memory of all the victims of our long, still unended national struggle. I will look out of my office window, from the top of Mount Scopus, and my heart will beat to the rhythm of a song and a prayer: “Peace to You, Jerusalem”.

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# My Country

Edgar Prais

## I am an Israeli citizen flitting by the hour between embarrassment and despair, sympathy and outrage as I watch my adopted country's conduct during the intifada No. 2.

I must of course, eschew the sort of temptation to pontificate which all too often imbues putative commentators with the chutzpah to imagine that an overnight or weekend visit warrants the authorship of a definitive guidebook or manual. Corstorphine is (not yet) the West Bank. Distance distils. Objectivity omits emotion. Personal views are no more than that, enjoying no monopoly, producing no panacea. There is no answer to the resident of Netanya, Haifa or Rishon le Zion who points out that the proof of the pudding affects his or her stomach and not mine. I can visualise a future; Israelis will have to live through the real thing. It's a kind of pure versus applied scenario.

And yet Israelis are asking for the moon (as well) if they expect only extra territorial applause, failing which, silence. Do Jews have and express views? Is the Pope a Catholic? Israel enjoys and benefits from existential support throughout the Diaspora. What it cannot take for granted is the kind of universal love, which is blind to any fault. Criticism, as well as praise, is inevitably going to be on offer.

As a Jew, as an Israeli, as a close and regular – if too often bemused – observer of the Middle East, I cannot imagine why I should be precluded from speaking what I call my mind. If I'm wrong, misguided, foolish, naïve – well, all I can say is “Not again”. What I will not and cannot accept is either that it's none of my business or that I am an anti-Semite. I shall leave that to the totalitarians (whoever they might be) to wave the banners of “my country/people, right or wrong”.

I came back yesterday (May 12) from my second visit to Israel this year. I have close family there, I know quite a few Israelis, and I speak and read the language after a fashion, on top of all of which I participated

this time in a conference attended by some thousand Israeli “professionals”. Come to think of it, I even had the traditional conversation with a taxi driver (no, he was not from New York). What follow are the impressions I have gleaned and the conclusions I have drawn as a result of my exposure to the phenomenon that is Israel – or perhaps more accurately, that is the Israeli. What I don't do is anecdotes. Nor do I do thrillers, so there's no room for suspense.

I have concluded that the right wing is flying the Israeli bird, with its left counterpart contributing little more than the occasional feeble flap. Inevitably that means that what are being described are ever decreasing circles – up which part of its anatomy that bird may eventually disappear, I'll leave to your imagination. Just as there is no sense of direction, there is also no truly long-term vision. Solutions so-called, are for tomorrow. Symptoms matter; underlying causes must at best wait. Truth is thought to emanate from the end of the barrel. That Israel is going through hell is an understatement; that terrorism wreaks havoc is obvious; that strong reactions are natural is indisputable. What does follow is that politics has to take the form of a tank. May 12 is when I came home. It's also the day when Likud returned to its true home, a fortress with no space for Palestinian neighbours.

Just when leadership is essential, populist demagoguery prevails. Israelis have the leaders they deserve, not those they need.

Israel's politics has become the politics of the fait accompli. Take it or leave it. Any colour as long as it's blue and white. What worries me above all is that that approach does represent the democratic wish of the large majority (and I was the one who earlier denounced the totalitarians). Just when leadership is essential, populist demagoguery prevails. Israelis have the leaders they deserve, not those they need. Negotiation is a dirty word. Sexy concepts are barriers and buses (to transfer the Palestinians). Particularly chilling is the treatment meted out to those who dissent. Yaffa Yarkoni, for decades an Israeli entertainment icon, faces death threats and virtual exile for questioning current policy. A professor speaking at the conference I mentioned earlier was jeered and catcalled for suggesting that occupation was in conflict with human rights. A prize-winning lawyer, addressing a dinner held partly in her honour, caused a mass walkout by having the audacity to challenge the law's handling of Palestinians.

Freedom of expression amounts to very little when exercised in an empty hall. Parents of children at a Haifa school saw fit to go to court to attempt (mercifully, without success) to interdict a performance by the pupils of the musical “Hair”, not because it was rude or condoned drugs but because it favoured draft refusal in the Vietnam context and could be interpreted as relevant to the present Israeli situation. What next – book burning?

I wish I could claim surprise at the discovery that Israeli society does on occasion exhibit something of a shortfall in the tolerance department. It is, I feel, a little difficult to view the country as a functioning melting pot. Certainly, it contains as varied a population mix as could be expected of any destination reached by refugees and immigrants from every quarter of the globe.

And yet the catalyst that it must have been hoped Zionism would constitute has singularly failed to produce the desired reaction. Jews they may all be but some are white, some are black, there are Russians, Ethiopians, Moroccans, Hungarians (my mother-in law even after fifty years), Americans, Poles, Lithuanians and.... divisions persist both socially and politically. My father-in-law (and this may be hard to credit) preferred a Scot to a Sephardi from anywhere. Needless to say no map of the fissures criss-crossing Israeli Society (and hence it's politics) is complete without the thick lines separating the religious from the secular.

Diversity can be glorious but that needs mutual understanding and co-operation. Without practical tolerance diversity very quickly amounts to division and dispute. Regrettably, Israel continues to be living proof of precisely that danger. Nowhere is that phenomenon more pronounced than in politics – except perhaps in the sphere of religion. Political parties tend to reflect rigidly sectional interests – Russian immigrants, Israeli Arabs, Moroccans, North African religious groups, Ashkenazi religious groups, settlers, secularists and so on and so on. Rivalry among parties all too rarely relates to political ideology (hence national unity governments can arise when sectional interests are deemed best served

by sharing power with political opponents) but far more generally emanated from the total rejection of whatever it is in the background and approach which renders any group distinctive. What counts is not what people think but who they are and

Where the Israelis are surely right and we are wrong is that they do (over there) and we talk (over here). Remember that bit about all evil needs to succeed is for good people to do nothing.

from where they come. That is an attitude which even applies to the dispute between the religious and the secular; no attempt is made to distinguish among differences within these generic camps – simple attachment to one group or the other suffices. Tolerance of nuances is non-existent. By far the most stormy not to say violent session at last week's conference was on the subject of religious versus secular influence on the state. All the speakers were simply shouted down by their opponents in the audience. Free speech was mugged. No argument was allowed to be heard, let alone assessed. I

am no fan of Karl Popper but I couldn't help thinking of “The Open Society and its Enemies”. It is in precisely this kind of setting that one has to look for tolerance of minority views on the current crisis – and one looks in vain. Do you know that one of the conference speakers suggested that lawyers apposed to government policy should not be permitted to plead cases in court.

To compound those differences, which arise out of a lack of tolerance, the less than popular left and centre-left have been deserted by those who should be leading them. The leader of the Labour Party is Sharon's Defence Minister; Shimon Peres is his Foreign Minister. If I didn't know better, I could almost be cynical about politicians. This is a vacuum, which has all too readily been hovered up by the right.

Israel is not a monolith and, knowing Israelis as we all do, is never likely to become one. What it is however, is decidedly lopsided. The fear has to be that it will topple over and crush all faint hopes of peace. One last (true) story. Years ago in Italy I met a charming Israeli medical student. When I saw him this year, he is now a consultant; the former liberal and active member of “Doctors for Human Rights” had become a Sharon supporter, favouring Palestinian transfer. He can no longer face the prospect of premature deaths of his three children. I have little right to take issue with him. I only regret that he is being offered no realistic political choice, that the alternatives are being portrayed either as victory through strength or as abject surrender. The intifada's ultimate victim is compromise.

Fine, I've blamed just about everybody – but not quite everybody. I want to add at least two more people to the list; they are you and me. Where the Israelis are surely right and we are wrong is that they do (over there) and we talk (over here). Remember that bit about all evil needs to succeed is for good people to do nothing.

Edgar Prais is a lawyer practicing in Edinburgh and married to an Israeli.



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# Dear Editor

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on the redesign of the Edinburgh Star; the colour palette and layout very much conform to my 'less is more' approach. Well done.

I also wish to state my admiration for Janet Mundy in writing such an honest & relevant letter to The Star in which she did not shy away from relating very personal details of her life to express her views.

As the wife of a Reform Jew, I can only say that having been welcomed and accepted into the Reform Community in both Glasgow & Edinburgh, as a non-Jewish partner with something to offer, has been a very positive experience. I feel that my involvement in the communities has benefited my husband and I in our relationship with each other and with our immediate family.

Far from diluting the Community, the involvement of non-Jewish partners has enriched and strengthened the feeling of family and enabled traditions to be passed on in an atmosphere of love and meaning.

The understanding that the world is such a different place now means that tolerance of each other within faiths and communities must be achieved in order to give the correct message to everyone, regardless of religion.

Leading by example is the only way to show that we are more about action than endless talk.

Yours sincerely  
Clare Hogg

## Dear Editor

The International Women's Club in Edinburgh Scotland had a unique opportunity to visit the Edinburgh Synagogue thanks to Shirley Bennett.

The outing was a very successful visit indeed After a substantial morning coffee, Mr. Ian Sheen gave us the benefit of his

wide knowledge of Judaism with a very interesting talk, both in general terms of the faith and in local historic terms. After the talk, we were guided through the Synagogue itself and were impressed with the internal fittings and spiritual treasures.

Although it was a cold winters morning the sunshine filtering through the stained glass window was quite beautiful and uplifting. It was a joy to be given the opportunity of such a visit, and Shirley's excellent arrangements were much appreciated.

Best regards,  
Paula Wallis *IWCE President*

## Dear Editor

I am a member of the Council for Christians and Jews so I read The Edinburgh Star. I do want to congratulate you as the Guest Editor of Issue 41, Jan 2002. It is a superb publication and so professionally produced. I have read it with great interest from cover to cover as has my husband, John. You have transformed The Edinburgh Star and we look forward to your next issue (if you are willing to continue in the Editor's chair.) With warmest congratulations

Yours sincerely  
Judith O'Neill

## Dear Editor

Please allow me to congratulate you on the dramatic and highly effective transformation of the Edinburgh Star.

I hope the improved quality of the contents will be maintained in future issues. Also your Editorial was the most intelligent and literary one that I can recall.

Yours sincerely  
Bill Sircus

## Dear Editor

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed your edition of The Edinburgh Star.

Firstly, it was nice to have a really colourful edition, secondly it was nice for me to read and see so much more about the community and thirdly, I must congratulate Ian Shein on his lovely article on Mum and Dad (Cram).

A 'Community' magazine should be about the community and not just highbrow articles for intellectuals. After all, those sort of publications can be bought. I say to you Peter, keep up the good work and I would like to see you continue as 'Guest Editor' for a long time to come.

Yours  
Hilary West

E-mail comment included:

From the founding Editor, Eitan Abraham..

I was very happy to see that my original format was challenged and replaced by a far superior one; it was long overdue.

From Dr Frank Abramson, London

Just thought I'd add my congratulations to the list on your bringing The Edinburgh Star into the 21st century in respect of design/style although I recognise some credit must go to Debbie for her actual design contribution.

*With Compliments  
from  
Mark & Judith  
Sischy*

# Book Review - Be Well!

Dr Kenneth Collins: Jewish Immigrant Health and Welfare in Glasgow, 1860 - 1914.

Tuckwell Press Ltd., East Linton, East Lothian. 2002. Paperback 194 pages. £12-99.

Reviewed by Philip Harris

This is an important, well researched book by the distinguished Jewish scholar and historian, a medical doctor, and a leader of the Glasgow Jewish Community. It took him ten years to write. The book is illustrated, has an extensive bibliography and a good index. The title: "Be Well", is taken from Chaim Bermant's book: "The Jews- (London, 1978): "Among Jews in Eastern Europe the parting greeting was not the meaningless "cheerio" or "goodbye", or even "au revoir", but "zei gezunt" (be well). The expression zei gezunt represents not merely a benign wish, but is tantamount almost to a positive commandment".

In his Foreword, the Chief Rabbi, Professor Jonathan Sacks quotes the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "Seek the peace or prosperity of the city, to which I have carried you and pray to the Lord for it, because its welfare will be your welfare". This indeed is what Dr Collins unfolds in his book. We are presented with a vivid, fascinating account of many of the trials and tribulations of the Jewish immigrants, the result of persecution, mainly from Eastern Europe - Russia, Poland and the Baltic States, coming to Glasgow. Most remained there, some transmigrated, usually to the U.S.A. The majority were poverty stricken, and many had physical and mental despair and anxiety. There were practical problems, in particular of language and of religious practices.

Glasgow had much to offer, as an important large flourishing city. But at that time, the mid-Victorian period, there were some noticeable local problems, including housing and health. Diseases such as tuberculosis and trachoma were rife, nutrition was often poor, and infant mortality was high. Some Jewish people had already settled in the city, and Garnethill Synagogue played a major leadership role in the institution and development of a variety of necessary facilities for the newcomers. A network of very important welfare support organisations evolved, each with wise, progressive leaders. These

institutions complemented the not wholly adequate statutory services existing at that time. Such welfare bodies as the Glasgow Jewish Board of Guardians and the Glasgow Hebrew Philanthropic Society were a tremendous boon to the immigrants. Thus in the years under review in this book, 1860-1913, there was a remarkable, successful human endeavour, with benefits not only to the immigrants, but also to the already established citizens of Glasgow. There was reasonable acceptance of Jewish, and of other immigrants - for example Irish, and indeed also some Gaelic speaking Highlanders. Housing was a significant problem. Other main difficulties related to language, diet and to religion, but gradually integration, assimilation and indeed acculturation occurred. Initially some immigrants became sweated workers, with long working hours, often in

Such welfare bodies as the Glasgow Jewish Board of Guardians and the Glasgow Hebrew Philanthropic Society were a tremendous boon to the immigrants.

unsatisfactory, unsanitary workshops and factories. Main occupations were in the manufacture of clothing, peddling, shop keeping, shoe making, and cigarette making.

Serious illnesses such as infectious diseases and rickets were, apparently less common amongst the immigrants than occurred in the general Glasgow community, and the infant mortality rate was lower. Some of the newcomers presented with trachoma, an important condition affecting alien entry into Britain and into the U. S.A. As time went on the number of cases with trachoma decreased, due mainly to better nutrition and hygiene. Language-communication, unfamiliar

surrounding, illnesses, family separation, and the problems of culture, all played a part in the appearance in some of the immigrants of disturbed mental health. Discussing the medical profession situation, the author observes that by 1859 there were four medical graduates of the Jewish faith from Scottish Universities. By the beginning of the First World War about 20 Scottish Jews had graduated in medicine. There were fewer arts and law students; The Scottish Legal Profession then was considered to be difficult to enter. An interesting profile of the remarkable Dr Asher is given. He graduated aged 19 years, as the first Jewish born person in Glasgow to gain, in 1856, the degree of M.D. He was an excellent physician, a visionary, dealing superbly with such vital matters as poor hygiene, housing and with malnutrition in Glasgow. He continued his work in London, and then, indeed, internationally. The obituary of this remarkable doctor in the Jewish Chronicle stated that "Dr Asher exemplified the union of thought combined with practice in the noble tradition of the great Jewish physician, Maimonides". Regarding hospitals in Glasgow, the Victoria Infirmary, and Merryflatts Poorhoused later, called the Southern General Hospital, were mainly involved. The latter developed a Kosher Kitchen.

Dr Collins devotes an important chapter on some of the serious problems concerning Christian Missions, with many attempts, often successful, of conversion from Judaism. But the majority of Christians pursued a purely humanitarian approach to the immigrants. It would be interesting to know something of the cultural aspects, skills and aptitudes of the immigrants. Dr Collins concludes by saying that the situation in Glasgow at the time, was repeated in many countries in Western Europe and in North America, with similar charitable welfare and medical activities for immigrants, and being associated with statutory provisions. Indeed, one would say that there was the beginning of "a welfare state". The book is highly recommended to readers of the Star.



# Obituaries

## Joe Lurie

1917 - 2002



Joe Lurie aged 18.

Joe, or Jos, as he was always called by his dear wife, Sheva, and many others, was born in Edinburgh on 13th June 1917. His parents, Abraham and Annie Lurie, lived at that time in Buccleuch Terrace, and then moved on to West Preston Street. Joe was the second child and the first son. He had three brothers, Philip, David and Michael, and an older sister, Judith. Joe's parents, who came from Lithuania, had a number of brothers and sisters living in Edinburgh, including the Rifkinds, Simonoffs, Lichtensteins, and Hoffenbergs, who sadly have all passed away leaving the grandchildren and their families.

Joe as a child received his schooling first from Sciennes and then, after what at that time was known as the qualifying exam, passed on to Boroughmuir Secondary School, together with other Jewish children, of which I was one. We all remained in the same class, both at primary and secondary.

They were happy days. Growing up, there were the usual activities - football, cricket and tennis. Also of course Maccabi, where first we met at 5 Duncan Street, and through the good offices of the late Israel Marcus

and John Morrison, we progressed to having the use of Sciennes School gymnasium, where we were taught badminton and other athletic sports.

During the war, Joe volunteered for the services and was accepted by the RAF. He served in this country before being posted to the Far East. He saw service in India, Burma, Thailand and Singapore, where he was a senior flying control officer.

During his time in Thailand, he made contact with the Jewish Community, and that is how he met his darling wife. A case of love at first sight, they married in Bangkok on 9th April 1946 so they had been married 56 years on 9th April 2002. Ill as he was, Joe never let his anniversary go by without sending Sheva a card and carnations, of which she is very fond, with the help of his daughter Anne.



Wedding Day 9 April 1946

Joe was offered a contract by the Thai Government to be controller of the airfield, but having been away from Edinburgh for 5 years, Joe and Sheva decided to come back to Edinburgh in 1946.

It took no time at all to find Joe and Sheva in

the swing of things. both took up the challenge to help in every possible way. Joe joined his father in the butchers shop, whilst Sheva joined many societies in the city.

The butchers shop was the hub of social life. Nothing, but nothing, ever happened in the city without being discussed first in Joe's shop and given the seal of approval. It was always a joy to go in there and receive the usual sample of the best salt beef made in the country. However, I never did take to the haggis, although it was in great demand from organisations and societies throughout the world, and which Joe sent by air, sea and rail.

Once Joe and Sheva were really settled, it was not too long before they were blessed with the birth, first of a daughter, Anne and then a son, Michael. Both children were brought up with loving care and still the Luries managed to find time to join and be part of the many societies and organisations in the City. Their hospitality knew no bounds, not only to their friends, but also to the many students who came here to study.

Socially, there were a number of young couples; the Biermans, Luries, Vinestocks, Rubensteins, to mention just a few, who met every weekend for dinner dancing at the George Hotel during the Winter months, and we all had a great time. We met on Sunday evenings for canasta at our homes, which sometimes totalled 20 people and never less than 10. Then came bridge. We played every Thursday evening at each other's homes and whereas Joe was not the top player, we were all desperate to get him for a partner as he often held the most wonderful hand; every bridge player's dream, particularly when you are playing for money.

Joe was on the Committee of the Edinburgh Jewish Burial Society for many years and became President. It was during the early years that he took over the arrangements for burying the dead and he spent hours arranging with others involved, to be sure that everything went with precision. He also made a point of attending the Shiva House

every evening. Generally, no matter what he was doing in the shop he would stop and try to solve anyone's problems. This went on from the very early years until he actually closed the shop and retired.

Joe served on the Synagogue Council for many, many years, and was always either top or second in the polling (which included Executive Members) and did a wonderful job there. He was chairman of the Jewish British Legion for many years and was also a Council Member of the Scottish area of the British Legion, at which time the late George Magrill OBE was chairman. He gave a great deal of time to all Societies and particularly to the J.I.A. and A.J.E.X. He was President of B'nai Brit and the Board of Guardians where he served as Treasurer. He made sure that no one in the city should suffer because of any financial difficulty. On many occasions he would stand as guarantor should any one require assistance, as I know because he asked me to stand as 2nd guarantor as required by law. He did not make a fuss about these things but quietly went on his way to help the poor or needy.

Not only did he work his heart out, but he was the first to put his hand into his own pocket when called upon to give charity. Many people, not only in this city, but throughout the world, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Joe and to Sheva for their wonderful work.

Joe was a life member and treasurer of Lodge Solomon. He was made a Depute Master in 1993 and 1994 and attended meetings regularly until his illness. At the request of the Master, I made a tribute to him at a recent meeting and was touched by the number of members who came forward and asked me to convey their condolences to the family. Over a hundred members present stood in silence for a minute to his memory.

He was a member of the Community Centre, Council of Christians and Jews, the Lit, and Edinburgh Hillel, to which he gave the use of his late father's house until they purchased their own premises, and many more. He supported these societies and always loved

to mix with those present, and have a chat.

One of the highlights for both Sheva and Joe was, of course, the marriage of their son Michael to Sharon Glass and they in time gave them further 'nachus' with the births of two grand-daughters. It was also a dream come true when they celebrated their golden wedding and gave a reception to the community in the Community Centre after the Shabbat morning service. The late Dr. Nate Oppenheim, as president, complemented and congratulated them on this achievement and also for their work over the 50 years.

I speak personally when I say that I have lost a great and dear friend. We shared each other's joy and sadness. I suppose that most people will feel the same way as there was only one Joe and truly he had a heart of gold.

Alex Rubenstein.

...

Dad was a gentle man in every sense of the word. He believed that life was for living and for sharing with and caring about his fellow man. He had a wonderful sense of humour and loved good company. He valued friendship and knew that it is one of the most powerful tools that we have.

He met his soul mate at the end of the Second World War, and they complemented and drew strength from each other throughout their magnificent partnership of 56 years.

Dad was always bringing visitors to shul back to the house for a meal and a little bit of homeliness. Newcomers to Edinburgh were quickly made to feel welcome and all were made to feel part of the family. And today that family stretches all around the world and Mum and Dad are proud to have so many true friends. Dad always found the best in people, was there when he was needed, knowing the right things to say and do.

But most of all, Dad was a family man and Ann and I could not have wished for a better Father. He was a wonderful and loving Husband, Father and Grandfather and we will miss him sorely - but we will never forget him. May his dear soul rest in peace.

Michael Lurie

...

**Anne, Michael and I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to family and friends for their many kindnesses and words of comfort so warmly given to us during dear Jos's ill health and since. It has helped us greatly and is very much appreciated.**

Sheva

## Star Trek into the Past Answers

### Photo of the Edinburgh Junior Maccabi Committee 1966/77:

Back row (left to right):

Harry Riffkin, Michael Fisher, Bernie Davidson, Jonathan Hyman, Ian Brodie, Lennie Love

Front row (Left to right):

Rona Leighton, Jenny Hyman, Tony Cowan, Joyce Stoller, Anne Lurie, Steven Hankin.

*With Compliments  
from  
Jess Franklin*

*205 Stenhouse Street  
Cowdenbeath, Fife KY4 9DL*



# Freda Riffkin Reports

## BURNS SUPPER

On 3rd February 2002 The tireless Committee of the Community Centre held a Burns Supper which attracted a large company. The Hall was tartan clad with all the trimmings, and delicacies served included a Kosher Haggis, This was Rabbi Katanka's first Burns Night and it must have shown us in a new light.



Piper leads Chef, Harold Abrams with the traditional haggis.

The Address to the Haggis was made by Fred Lowrie and the Immortal Memory by Gordon McInally who entranced us all with a very witty and informative address. Ian Shein proposed the Toast to the Lasses and your correspondent responded.



Gordon McInally proposed the Immortal Memory

John Cosgrove in impeccable tartan breeks presided and we had the pleasure of songs from Heather Boyd, accompanied by Norma Brodie.

As always the catering was excellent and all agreed that it had been a most successful evening.

## CONCERT EVENING

A month later on 3rd March we were entertained to a Concert evening by our own home-grown talent. The New Torphin Chamber Group, Solly Banks and his grandson Samuel Danzig, Hannah Newman, Joel Raffel, Ari Kummer, David Gonshaw, David Mendelssohn, David Goldberg and the fourth David, David Grant were among those who contributed to an evening's entertainment well organised by Judy Gilbert.

## RYDER - ON PAST EDINBURGH FESTIVALS

WIZO held a supper, which was addressed by Mr. Ryder on 'Past Edinburgh Festivals'. Mr. Ryder who is a well known lecturer in the University English Department told us many fascinating tales of by-gone Festivals and answered questions from the audience. It was a most interesting evening well catered for by the WIZO Committee.

## YOM HASHOAM MEMORIAL SERVICE



Some of the Congregation at the Yom Hashoam service

A large number of our Community attended the Memorial Service at the Holocaust Stone in the Peace Garden, Princes St, Gardens on the 9th April 2002. The Edinburgh City Council was represented by a Councillor who apologised for the Lord Provost's absence as he was in the US promoting Tartan Day.

A moving service followed led by Ian Leifer who was ably assisted by David Goldberg, Sas Judah, Alec Rubenstein and John Cosgrove.



Ian Leifer leads the Memorial Service

## COMMUNITY CENTRE QUIZ NIGHT

Once again this was a great success with over 90 people competing for Top Team. This was won for the second year by a team including Lady Cosgrove and Mr. John Cosgrove, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Cowen, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Rifkind, Dr. and Mrs. B. Osborne, Mrs. Eve Oppenheim and Mrs. Freda Riffkin. A most enjoyable supper was prepared and served by the Ladies' Committee.



The Winning Team

## FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPER

On 4th May in the Community Centre, this popular evening was hosted by Mr. David Goldberg and Mr. Arthur Kleinberg. Approximately 100 congregants attended first the Shabbat Service conducted by Rabbi Katanka and then the supper. A most delicious meal with the courses interspersed by the singing of Shabbat songs was enjoyed by all.

The hosts were thanked for a lovely evening by the President, Dr Ian Leifer. In reply mention was made of Mr. and Mrs. M. Kaplan who had inaugurated the Friday night suppers. The evening ended with heartfelt rendition of Grace after Meals.



Rabbi Katanka with Cantor Speier

## YOM HAATZMAUT 2002

On 17th April 2002, a service was held in the Synagogue to celebrate Israel Independence Day. This was preceded by a Memorial Service for the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during Israel's Wars. The Service was conducted by Rabbi David Katanka and was followed by a Kiddush prepared by the Ladies' Guild. Afterwards there was a concert at which the Guest was Cantor Dov Speier of London and formerly Sweden who entertained a large audience with Hebrew, Yiddish and Israeli songs. To the delight of the audience, Rabbi Katanka also sang accompanied by Dov Speier on the guitar and piano.

## Congratulations

**Dr and Mrs. Merrick** on their daughter **Anna's** marriage to **Julian Stern**.

**Joanna Seckl** on her Batmitzvah.

**Dr. Audrey Lister** (nee Oppenheim) on being appointed a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

**Lady Cosgrove** on her second Honorary LLD) degree in one week, this time from Strathclyde University.



**Annette** (née Hart) and **Stanley Curry** on their Golden Wedding anniversary. (and an apology for omitting this from our last issue).

**Steven Robinson** on his engagement to **Nicola Marks**.

**Freda Riffkin** on her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**Philip Harris** on his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**Rabbi Katanka** on his son's Barmitzvah

## Thank you

**Anita** and **David Mendelssohn** would like to thank family and friends for gifts, flowers cards and good wishes received on the occasion of their golden wedding.

## Apology

In the Edinburgh Star of September 2001, we omitted in error the names of Sheri and Amanda Ciput from their family Yom Teruah entry. We apologise to the Ciprut family for that omission.



### How much Inheritance Tax can you save?

Inheritance Tax takes a bite out of many Estates, but it can be easy to avoid. Through wise planning and drafting, some or all of that tax can be saved.

Harvey Bratt of KKL Executors and Trustees is recognised throughout the community as being an expert in this area. He is a solicitor with a difference. For a start, he'll come to you if you prefer. For another thing, he won't charge a fee, because KKL's services are free if JNF benefits from a legacy.

For over 50 years, KKL has helped thousands of people to write their Will and keep it up to date, minimising Inheritance Tax.

Your Will is more than just a legal document. We offer a professional legal service, with a deep understanding of Jewish concerns and a human face.

Call to arrange a confidential meeting or request a free booklet.

*Harvey*

**Freephone 0800 358 3587**

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**KKL** Executors and Trustees



# Coming Events

**Junior Maccabi** meets on alternate Sundays from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. For further information contact David Brannan, Samuel Danzig or Joel Raffel (229 5541).

**Senior Maccabi** meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information contact Rowan Hendry (331 3795) or Benjy Bard.

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

**The Parent and Toddler Group** meet on Sunday mornings at 10.00am.

**The Friendship Club** is temporarily suspended.

There are no meetings of the **Literary Society**, the **Council Christians and Jews** or **Lodge Solomon** during the summer months. In each case/ meetings commence after the High Holidays.

**WIZO Annual Lunch**  
**Katie and Ronnie Goodwin** will be extending hospitality for a Bagel Brunch on Sunday 16th June at 12.30pm  
**Venue:** 2 Mayfield Gardens

**Running Repairs Ramble**  
The Community Centre Committee are organising a sponsored walk on Sunday 14th July. Those interested should contact Doreen Bowman.



## Support The Edinburgh Star

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A black and white photograph showing a large stack of newspapers, likely the Jewish Chronicle, piled up on a surface. The text 'Now available daily.' is overlaid in large white font.

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