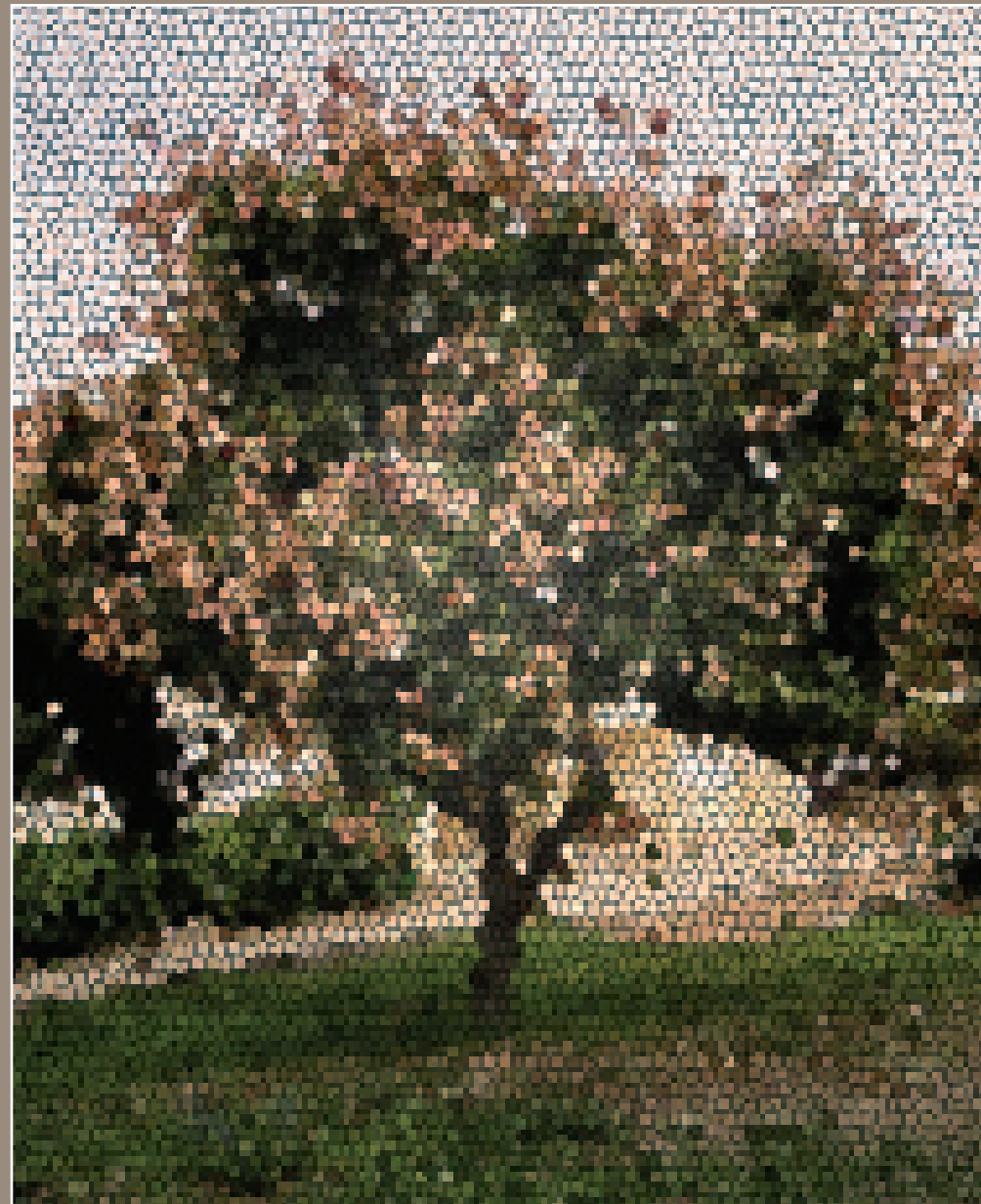


THE EDINBURGH

STAR

No.53
February 2006
Shevat 5766



- Were there two Arthur Balfours?
- Historical details of Scottish Jewry and the birth of its communities
- Counter thoughts on the 10 Commandments (see Star edition 51)
- Community news, and reviews
- Winner of that bottle of champagne

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



The Edinburgh Star
Synagogue Chambers
4 Salisbury Road
Edinburgh EH16 5AB

Cover Picture
Almond tree in Netanya

Editor
Judy Gilbert

Editorial Board
Peter Bennett
Sidney Caplan (Treasurer)
Phillip Harris
Stephanie Brickman
Janet Mundy
Eve Oppenheim
Rabbi David Rose

Design
Debbie Bennett

Artwork
Helen McFeely

Printing
Meigle Colour Printers Ltd
Tweedbank Galashiels TD1 3RS

The Editorial Board wish to thank the advertisers and the following for their support since the last edition:

Miss S Baker, Mr SR Spark, Mr and Mrs J Donne, Mrs S and Miss A Lurie, Mrs B Guyer, Dr and Mrs Rubin, Mr and Mrs Harris, Mr M Dorfman, Mrs S Spair-Guyer, Mr and Mrs W Harwood and Dr and Mrs A Gilbert

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

All pieces are accepted for publication at the absolute discretion of the Editor. The Editor has the right to make such amendments to any piece chosen for publication as may in his absolute discrepute be required in the editorial interests of this publication and to avoid exposing this publication or its staff to any criminal or civil liability or otherwise to avoid bringing this publication or its staff into disrepute. Copyright subsists in this publication and in its typeset. No part of the publication may be reproduced by any means, including electronic, without the express written consent of The Edinburgh Star and without an acknowledgment of such consent, when given, being clearly printed together with an identification of The Edinburgh Star as being the source of such material.

The views expressed in The Edinburgh Star are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of The Edinburgh Star, its staff or publishers.

Contents

Editorial	1
Jews are a strange people – Rabbi David Rose	2
Jews in Scotland: Myth and Reality – Nathan Abrams & Harvey Kaplan	3
Edinburgh to Australia - The Story of John Lazar – Harvey Kaplan	7
jews in Blacksberg Shtetl - Esti Sheinberg	8
Were there Two Arthur Balfours? – Brian Klug	11
Around and about - Ian Shein	14
Star Trek	14
Limmud 25 – Jonathan Kish	16
End of an Era – Sidney Caplan	18
Society Reports	20
Reviews	22
For Generations: Jewish Motherhood – Janet Mundy	22
Jacobs Gift – Gillian Raab	23
Further thoughts on the 10 Commandments – Val Simpson	25
Obituaries	26
Dear editor – Marianne Laszlo	28
Announcements	
Forthcoming Events	

From the Editor

While I finalise the contents of this edition my ears have just pricked up to the worrying news that Hamas has won the Palestinian election. And how do they celebrate? With gunfire and riots, between their own supporters and those of the losing party, ‘Fatah’. What does this say about a people who allegedly want peace? It was hard to completely trust Mahmoud Abbas when he failed to condemn suicide bombings, so how are we going to trust the new incumbent, who heads a party that refuses to renounce violence, give up arms or recognise Israel as a state. Will Israel be able to negotiate with leaders of a militant party that advocates terrorism as an option if all else fails? We can only wait and see. Surely the withdrawal from Gaza was the ultimate proof that Israel was serious in its intentions towards appeasement. Why then cannot the Palestinian people accept this with grace? How sad and ironic that the moment things began to look as if they were taking a step nearer towards peace in the Middle East, Ariel Sharon, the moving force behind change, is removed from the playing field. Naturally those whose only reason d’être is to keep the fires of hostility burning have seen this as a blessing, but the majority of people will be fervently hoping for the recovery of a courageous man, whose new Kadima party is a symbol of possible change and negotiation.

During the past year of Sharon’s powerful leadership, it is true that Hamas has held a cease-fire, can we now expect Abu Mazen to honour this pledge any more than Mahmoud Ahmaddinejad, who calls for ‘Israel and the Jews to be wiped off the face of the earth’? These are not the ravings of an ordinary man, who one might feel tempted to disregard, but the outpourings of none other than the President of Iran. This man too once signed an agreement, one not to develop nuclear weapons. And yet at this time he appears to have reneged. He assures us that opening their uranium encasements would really only be to carry out some ‘important research’, the nature of which has hitherto remained identified. By now the world should have learned to recognise how influential such unstable men as these can be.

The only comfort one can draw from such a radical refusal to conform to UN agreement, is that this might be the very catalyst needed to create a strong and united front against potential terrorist acts in Israel or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world.

But perhaps the unexpected victory of Hamas will mollify its leaders sufficiently to display a new generosity of spirit towards Israel. Let us hope so. The rest of the world will be watching them very carefully and they know it.

It is easy for Jewish people to become paranoid while they seem continually to be the target of ill will, but in this edition Marian Laszlo wonders if we are not sometimes our own worst enemies.

She reflects on the concept of who is a Jew. This is a highly pertinent subject of particular interest to Kate and Ronnie Goodwin, Shirley and Peter Bennett and Anthony and myself; all of us who have recently delighted in the birth of our grandchildren, Isaac, Charlotte and Ethan respectively, and whom we would like to congratulate despite the uncertainty of their eligibility as Jews; something to ponder over.

And while we are still on the subject of new beginnings, Rabbi Rose asks why we have such a strange preoccupation with New Years in his article ‘Jews are a strange people’. And

commemorating the rebirth of Anglo-Jewry, we acknowledge the fact that it is 350 years since the re-establishment of Jewish communities in Britain. Nathan Abrams, Harvey Kaplan and Sidney Caplan highlight the founding of Jewish communities in Scotland in particular.

Sadly we have had to say farewell to the well-loved kosher bakery formerly run by Arthur Kleinberg. But it will not be goodbye, only au revoir to the Edinburgh Challah!

As usual there are plenty of interesting reports on Edinburgh community activities and additionally, a fascinating and amusing description of a rather different community in deepest Virginia, by one of our own, much missed, ‘ex pats’, Esti Sheinberg.

So despite the gloomy beginning of this editorial I am sure the following articles will prove that as ever, we can rise above all adversity.

Happy New Year to all those trees!

Judy Gilbert

THE EDINBURGH

STAR

Support The Edinburgh Star

Send us your letters and articles.

Next Copy date: Thursday 1 June

The Editor, The Edinburgh Star, 4
Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB

Jews are a strange people

Rabbi David Rose

- For most people one New Year is enough, but Jews have four.
- Most New Years are for people; we have one for trees.
- Everyone else has a New Year at the beginning of the month; we have one in the middle.
- For most people, tax deadlines are a cause for stress; we make it a cause for celebrations.

All of this oddity is of course connected with one of the most unusual, and therefore interesting dates in the Jewish calendar: Tu’ B’shvat. Tu’ B’shvat is a New Year for trees, taking place on the 15th of the month and basically a cut off point for tithing. That, in fact, is its origin. The Torah mandates the giving of tithes, basically a tax on agricultural produce, and establishes a seven year tithing regime for doing so. The Priests get their tithe for six of the seven years, as do the Levites. The poor get a tithe only on the third and sixth year; on the first, second, fourth and fifth years, the owners must eat it, or its equivalent, in Jerusalem. During the seventh year, the Sabbatical year, no one gives anything, as no one works the land and all the produce belongs to everyone. It is obvious that in order to make this simple system work we need a cut off point for each tithing year. Produce on one side of this date has this rule; on the other a different rule. And that’s where Tu B’shvat comes in.

For, even though the above makes Gordon Brown’s tax credits look simple; we haven’t finished yet. One would think that the obvious beginning of the tax year would be Rosh Hashanah. This, however, is Judaism and that would be far too simple. In fact, the beginning of the year for most produce, including vegetables, is Rosh Hashanah. However, not for everything. Animals have their own New Year on the first of Elul, which, for some reason, no one much cares about. Fruit, on the other hand, begin their tax year on the 15th of Shevat; hence Tu B’shvat. Actually, even that is not so simple. Like most things, it is the basis of an argument. Bet Shamai, not unreasonably, thinks that the fruit year should begin on the first of the month. However, Bet Hillel, whom we follow, holds that it is on the 15th. Why? Because that is the date by when the majority of that season’s rains have fallen; and so the trees have received their sustenance. Any fruit budding before that date are regarded as belonging to the previous season, those after, to this year. That, at least, is simple.

“Animals have their own New Year on the first of Elul, which, for some reason, no one much cares about.”

So why do we celebrate the beginning of a tax year as a festival? There are basically two answers. One is the modern, environmentally conscious answer. Trees, as we all know, are important for the environment. They provide oxygen, soak up

carbon and prevent erosion. All good for the planet. By celebrating their tithing, we show that we understand that we don’t own the world. We need to give something back to the planet for what we take out. All very politically correct but not very traditional. The real reason we celebrate this tax date as a festival is far older and more specifically Jewish. Tithing, which is what the day is all about, only applies to produce grown by Jews in Israel. It thus doesn’t apply to Scottish strawberries but does apply to Israeli oranges. It stands to reason then, that when there were hardly any Jews in Israel, Tu B’shvat would cease to have any meaning. Quite the opposite is the case. It was precisely in the Middle Ages, when the Jewish population of Israel reached a nadir and no one was doing much tithing, that it appears Tu B’shvat began to be celebrated as a festival. A festival that celebrated that basic connection of Jews to the Land of Israel at the very point when that connection was physically so tenuous. It became the custom to eat fruit of the Land to remind us where our true home was. This was amplified by the Kabbalists of Safed when they returned to the Land after the expulsion from Spain. They added a mystical dimension to the celebration of the Land, including the institution of the special Tu B’shvat Seder that is so popular in our time. It is this essential connection to the Land of Israel that lies at the heart of Tu B’shvat and is of great importance for us today.

“Pretending that their anti-Zionism is not really anti-Semitism, our enemies deny the centrality of Israel to Jewish life.”

But that connection to the Land is under attack. Pretending that their anti-Zionism is not really anti-Semitism, our enemies deny the centrality of Israel to Jewish life. They obfuscate the essential connection between the Land of Israel and Judaism. They pretend you can be a good Jew and deny the intrinsic right of Jews to the Land of Israel. Tu B’shvat comes to give the lie to their claims. You can no more be a Jewish anti-Zionist than a Jewish Christian; it is simply a contradiction in terms. When we celebrate our connection to the Land on Tu B’shvat, we, like our ancestors in the darkness of the Middle Ages, confirm our eternal bond to the Land that lies at the heart of Jewish belief and practice. Furthermore, when we consume the tithe fruit coming from Israel, which we especially eat on this day, we should thank G-d that our generation has merited to return to the land our ancestors could only dream of. Tu B’shvat, then, is an important holiday, very relevant to today and well worth celebrating.

And if all the above was a bit heavy or confusing and you feel in need of a wee dram, remember: barley is tithed on Rosh Hashanah, not Tu B’shvat; though it probably doesn’t come from Israel anyway.

Jews in Scotland: Myth and Reality

Nathan Abrams & Harvey Kaplan



Garnethill Synagogue

Very little is known about Jewry in Scotland because of the small numbers, and what little evidence there is, has often been handed down by word of mouth. Much of Scottish Jewish history is surrounded in mystery, myth, rumour and conjecture. Accurate records of Scottish Jewish existence before the 18th century, together with statistics of Jews in smaller Scottish Jewish communities, are hard to come by. This is because no systematic study of Scottish Jewry has been undertaken and until such time that it is, the subject will remain shrouded in mist.

“a ‘great number of ‘em fled to Scotland, which is the reason why so many in that part of the Island, have such a remarkable Aversion to pork and black-puddings to this day’”

Medieval Scotland: Judenrein?

According to Rabbi Salis Daiches, once the de facto head of Scottish Jewry, ‘Scotland remained for the Jew throughout many centuries a terra incognita’. There seem to have been hardly any Jews in Scotland at all prior to the nineteenth century and it is only in the early decades of that century that Jews began to settle in its two principal cities. Individual Jews did, however, have interests in Scotland without actually settling there, as shown by an official regulation passed in 1180 by the Bishop of Glasgow forbidding churchmen to, ‘ledge their benefices for money borrowed from Jews’. Cecil Roth adds that no Jews ‘are encountered in Scotland in pre-Expulsion times, but Jewish financiers did business from time to time with the Scottish sovereign’.

There might have been a trickle northwards after the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290. Sidney Caplan writes, ‘The

Jews who escaped from York, after the expulsion by Edward first in the 13th Century, travelled to Berwick on Tweed, which was then Scotland’s main port.’ Royalist author and translator, James Howell, wrote in 1653 that it ‘is thought divers families of those banished Jews then fled to Scotland where they have propagated since in great numbers; witness the aversion that Nation hath above others to hogs flesh.’ Similarly, John Toland, an early enlightenment thinker, opined in the early eighteenth century, a ‘great number of ‘em fled to Scotland, which is the reason why so many in that part of the Island, have such a remarkable Aversion to pork and

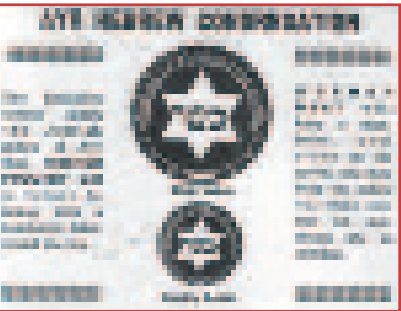
black-puddings to this day’. A. M. Hyamson, in his A History of the Jews of England, quotes Josippon as stating that many Jews ‘are also said to have taken refuge in Scotland’. Abraham Levy adds, ‘it is natural to surmise that some of these refugees may have made their way northwards.’ Yet, The Universal Jewish Encyclopoedia records the following: ‘There is legendary reference to Jewish children having been transported north to Scotland during the persecutions that preceded the Expulsion in 1290, in the effort to effect their thorough conversion. Of such migrations, however, there is no record.’

Furthermore, following the massacre of Jews in York in 1190, a royal army came to punish the perpetrators. ‘But’, wrote William of Newburgh (1136- c.1201) in his History of English Affairs, ‘the chief and best known actors of the deeds done, leaving everything they had in the country, fled before his face to Scotland.’ Would Jews have subsequently moved to a country which harboured their killers?

More doubts have been thrown on these surmises. There were no reports of Jews moving to Scotland. Levy has written ‘this route of escape could have hardly have commended itself to many. Despite the “golden age” in Scotland that preceded the wars of independence, Jews had not yet spread into that country from the south and lacked Scottish experience and connections. Following the expulsion, England no longer provided a stepping stone for immigrants by land’ the disturbed Scottish scene was not such as to encourage direct

“Jewish merchants gave Wallace letters of credit to buy arms in Europe. ”

immigration by sea from the continent. Patricia Skinner adds that ‘it is tempting to speculate that Jews fleeing England in 1290 might have looked northwards rather than across the Channel, but the combined factors of their distribution prior to that date (none further north than York, apparently, Newcastle having expelled its community in 1234), and Edward I’s invasion of Scotland in 1296, massacring the inhabitants of Berwick before ruling the country until 1306, render the likelihood of a post-1290 Scottish Jewish community somewhat remote.’ (However, Skinner notes that a ‘Thomas Isaac’ was recorded in Aberdeen in the fourteenth century but that he was ‘unlikely to have been Jewish as he married the king’s daughter.’) David Ditchburn, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Aberdeen, writes decisively that later medieval Scotland (c.1215-1560) had no Jewish communities.

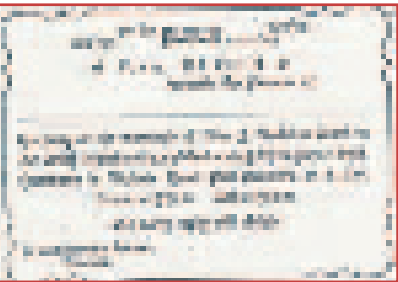


Ayr 1941

Nonetheless, Sidney Caplan, quoting unconfirmed rumours, writes that there was a Jewish presence in Scotland during medieval times mainly down the east coast of the country. According to Caplan, Nigel Tranter, the famous Scottish historian and author, said that after the Battle of Stirling Bridge, when Edward I army was defeated by the Scots under William Wallace, the Jewish merchants gave Wallace letters of credit to buy arms in Europe. Sadly, as mentioned above, Edward came north again and captured Berwick, slaughtering all the inhabitants, Jews and Gentiles alike. Nonetheless, Caplan maintains Jews were merchants trading with the city states of Northern Europe, amounting to about thirty families. As evidence, he refers to the initials ‘I M’, carved

around an engraving of Moses on a wall of John Knox’s House along the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, which refer to Isaac Mossman, a goldsmith to Mary Queen of Scots and also her financial advisor. It is thought he came to Scotland from Lorraine with Mary when she returned from France. Mossman was executed when Mary fled to England, not because he was Jewish, but because he had backed the wrong side.

Whether Jews were here or not, since Scotland did not have a Jewish community with ancient or medieval roots, unlike many countries of Europe, there was no blot on the historical record, as there were no expulsions or massacres of Jews. Although there has been some prejudice and bigotry, Jews in Scotland have generally lived in an atmosphere of tolerance, respected by the Presbyterian Scots as the ‘People of the Book’.



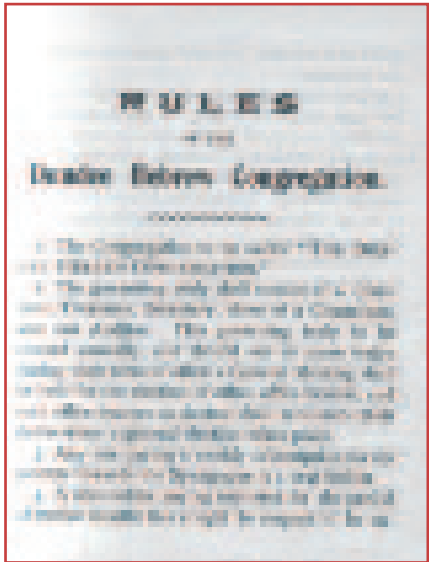
Dundee invitation

A Tale of Two Cities

According to Caplan, though Cromwell allowed the return of the Jews after their earlier expulsion from England, the small Jewish community in Scotland were never affected, as expelling them had never been a Scottish policy and they had never been victims of such action. Neither did the 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England have any effect, as Scotland and England, even to this day, have different laws. The first actual record of any Jews in Scotland is not until the mid-seventeenth century, when isolated individuals who were converted European Jews arrived in the capital as Hebrew teachers. Levy gives examples such as Julius Conradus Otto, a converted Jew from Vienna, who became Professor of Hebrew and

Oriental Languages at Edinburgh University in 1641, and also Paulus Scialitti Rabin c.1665. However, the first openly-practising Jew to settle in Scotland appears to have been David Brown, given permission to trade in Edinburgh in 1691. Elsewhere, Kenneth Collins has written that there is an entry in the matriculation album of Marischal College in Aberdeen for Samuel Suecus in the session of 1634-35. His name is similar to that of Samuel Suero, the son of Menasseh ben Israel, the Jewish scholar who negotiated with Cromwell the return of Jews to England in 1656. Suero claimed to have a doctorate from Cambridge but the university refuted this claim.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Jewish individuals and families settled in Edinburgh, but there is no evidence of there being an actual community. Joseph Hart Myers was the first Jew to study as an undergraduate at Edinburgh University, and graduated MD in 1779. Herman Lyon, a dentist and ‘corn operator’, came to Edinburgh from Prussia in 1788, and obtained a burial plot for himself and his family on Calton Hill in 1795 (lost for many years, the site was rediscovered in 1994).



Dundee rules

It was not until the nineteenth century that we see the establishment of the first Jewish communities in Scotland. The distinction of the first Jewish

community in Scotland belongs to Edinburgh, where the first synagogue opened in 1816 in a lane off Nicholson Street, serving twenty families. In 1820, Scotland’s first Jewish cemetery was opened in Braid Place (now Sciennes House Place) which was used until 1867. The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre (SJAC) has a list of around thirty burials in this cemetery. Rev. Moses Joel was minister, teacher, baker and butcher to the small Jewish community of Edinburgh c.1834-1862. A Jewish Philanthropic Society was formed in 1838. From 1825-1867, the synagogue was in a converted tenement in Richmond Court, while from 1833-1840 there was another independent congregation in the same street. Today, there are only a few hundred Jews in Edinburgh, still supporting an Orthodox synagogue, a Liberal congregation, and a rabbi.

The first Jews came to Glasgow in the 1790s. They were predominantly Dutch and German merchants, furriers and businessmen. One of these early settlers was Isaac Cohen, a hatter, who came from Manchester to Glasgow (which at that time had the largest hat industry in Europe) and was admitted as a Freeman of the City of Glasgow in 1812. The first synagogue in Glasgow opened in the tenement home in the High Street of Moses Henry Lisenheim, the minister, Hebrew teacher and schochet in 1823. In the early 1830s, there was a community of around fifty people. The first Jewish cemetery opened in 1832 – a Jewish enclosure in the newly opened Necropolis, a prestigious burial ground overlooking the Cathedral. Indeed the very first burial in Necropolis was that of the quill-maker, Joseph Levi, in 1832. The SJAC has a list of over fifty burials in this cemetery, 1832-1851.

As the Glasgow community grew, the synagogue was moved to ever-larger premises in the city centre. However, by 1879, the community was around 800 strong, and the first purpose-built synagogue in Scotland was opened in Garnethill in 1879 (still Scotland’s oldest Jewish building, and home to the SJAC). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Jewish communities of Glasgow and

Edinburgh were transformed by an influx of East European Jewish immigrants, fleeing religious persecution, discrimination, and severe economic hardship – many of them en route for America. In Glasgow today, there are six synagogues (five Orthodox and one Reform), a primary school, a yeshiva, a kollel, two nursing homes and sheltered housing for the elderly, a welfare centre, facilities for those with learning difficulties, a golf club, a sports centre, a community newspaper, youth groups and two delicatessens.

Beyond the Belt

Regarding those towns and cities beyond Edinburgh and Glasgow, the earliest rumour of any Jews in Aberdeen occurs during the reign of James VI who granted charters to Jews to settle where they pleased in the country; a few came to Aberdeen but did not stay long and returned from where they came because they could not make a living. According to Caplan, however, around 1495, when the Bishop of Aberdeen, William Elphinstone, wanted to open a university in the city to train doctors, he approached the Earl of Huntly, head of the Clan Gordon for financial help. Huntly agreed on condition that a few Jews should be admitted. The reason for this was that the Gordons had a good relationship with the Jewish merchants in Europe and had helped Huntly out when he had financial problems. It is said that this is one of the reasons that there is an ancient Jewish family called Gordon.

Over 170 years later a letter purporting to be sent from Aberdeen referred to a boatload of Jews who claimed to be the lost ten tribes of Israel, putting in at the port in a boat of satin sails and silk ropes. No one knows from whence they came or where they ended up, but presumably if they existed, they were on their way to join the pseudo-Messiah, the Shabbatai Sevi, in Turkey. However, though, we know for certain that Jewish doctors trained at Aberdeen’s two medical schools – King’s and Marischal – as they did not require religious oaths. Indeed, they were the first universities in the English-speaking world to allow Jews

to study and graduate in medicine. However, as was common practice at that time, the degrees were taken in absentia and, as far as we know, no Jews moved to Aberdeen. Aberdeen’s current community dates back to the 1880’s but was formally established on 7th September 1893 when a synagogue was consecrated. It continues today and is currently listed as being 200-strong, although probably only 50-60 participate in communal events.

Elsewhere, the first mention of a Jew in Ayr was Max Michael Maier (known as Michael Maier) from Bavaria who was naturalised in 1890. The Ayr Community was founded around 1902 and although the synagogue was wound up in 1975 it was replaced by the Ayr Jewish Community Charitable Trust. About 40 Jews continued to live and worship there until 1985.

The Argyll and Bute Jewish community was established in 1993 but renamed itself the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands when Jews from the Mull of Kintyre up to Ullapool and others further east linked up with the group, no longer making Oban the obvious focal point. In 1997 it was listed under ‘Dunoon’ in the Jewish Year Book for the first time. It currently has 15-30 members.



Graham Street Synagogue

The Dundee community dates from the early 1840s and a synagogue was established in 1874 and for a time was the largest Jewish community outside of Glasgow and Edinburgh. It was founded by German-Jewish textile merchants who not only revolutionised aspects of the Jute trade in Dundee, but also played a vital role in the city's civic and cultural life. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Dundee's numbers were swelled by the influx of Jews from Eastern Europe, leading to, for a short while, two rival congregations – a situation unprecedented outside of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Although it continues to the present, its numbers are no more than ten according to its de facto President, Paul Spicker (although the Jewish Year Book puts it at 22).

Perhaps the earliest mention of Jews in Dunfermline is in 1880. Isidore Lyons, a jeweller born in Poland, married Hannah Markson in Dunfermline in 1880, and in the Census of 1881 is shown living with his wife Ann at 72 Netherton Street. In addition, two Jewish travellers called Cronson and Rubeins, of Russian extraction, lived as lodgers at 21 Carnegie Street. Dunfermline Hebrew Congregation was founded in 1908 and, although the synagogue closed in 1947, the Jewish community remained there until the 1960s when the population was approximately 25. A small number of Jews continue to live in the West Fife area.

A David Cohen from Russia was resident in Falkirk when he was naturalised in 1889. The Falkirk Hebrew Congregation was established in 1917 and minyanim and yartzheit were carried out on a regular basis until c.1980. Jews continue to live there today.

The official Greenock community dates back to 1894 when its first services were held, but in 1874 a legal case involving two German Jews was reported in The Greenock Telegraph and several Jewish families were listed in the 1881 census. A synagogue and cemetery were established by 1905 but, according to Collins, 'the community was dissolved by 1936 as the Jews began to leave town' from the 1930s onwards. However, a siddur



Falkirk community

was presented to the Greenock Hebrew Congregation in 1942!

At least two Jewish families were living in Inverness in 1881, according to the census, as well as some Jewish travellers. The community was founded in 1905 and Jews continued to live there until c.1970 when the population was listed as 12. Jews still live there today. Unfortunately, not much more is known about Inverness, which still remains shrouded in mystery.

All of these communities had, at one time or another, synagogues, resident ministers, schochetim, mohelim and Hebrew teachers. Aberdeen, Dundee, Greenock and even Inverness had dedicated Jewish burial grounds, usually part of a larger public cemetery.

Finally, we must mention those Jews who chose to live in even remoter places, scattered and isolated throughout the Scottish isles, some as

far as Lerwick in the Shetland Isles. **Conclusion** Scotland has had a long history of vibrant Jewish culture which, as we are well aware, continues today. How far back this goes, however, we still do not know for certain beyond mere speculation. Much work remains to be done on Scottish-Jewish history to break out of the predominant paradigm of Anglo-Jewish historiography. We have only begun to scratch the surface here. Thus we both would very much like to hear from anyone with memories, reminiscences, information, photographs or memorabilia related to any of the Jewish communities in Scotland.

Nathan Abrams is a Lecturer in History at the University of Aberdeen. Harvey Kaplan is the Director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre. We would like to thank Sidney Caplan for his contribution on medieval Scottish Jewry.

SELLING YOUR HOME?

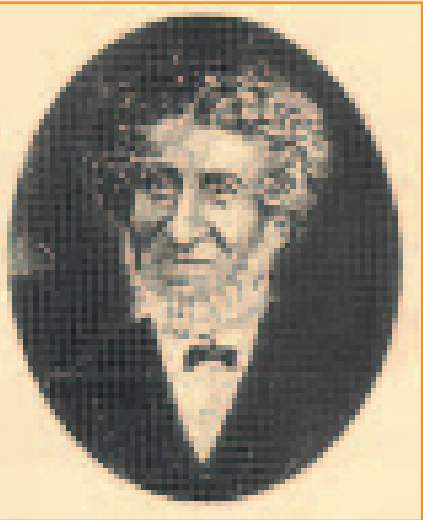
"Highly recommended service."
"Honest, professional, friendly and efficient."
"We were able to sell our house quickly and at a profit."
"Excellent service from start to finish."
"Great value for money."
"We were able to sell our house quickly and at a profit."
"Excellent service from start to finish."
"Great value for money."

Stewart Saunders

Edinburgh to Australia

The Story of John Lazar

Harvey L Kaplan MA



In the late 1830s and the 1840s, John Lazar was an actor in, and manager of theatres in Sydney and Adelaide. He was highly regarded as a comedian and a competent manager, although he was sometimes criticised for the racy nature of the entertainment he provided. He was also criticised by some, not for playing Shakespearean roles, but for being unable to disguise fully his Jewish accent. His daughter Rachel Lazar became a dancer, while his son Abraham Lazar was also a theatre manager.

The Lazars were active in the Jewish community. In 1839 Mr and Mrs John Lazar pledged £25 to the Sydney Synagogue Building Appeal - surely a vast sum in these days. Later John became a founder member of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation. He sang Kol Nidrei at the first Yom Kippur service there in 1848.

In the early 1850s, Lazar left the theatre for the jewellery business, and in 1853 was elected an Alderman of Adelaide City Council. From 1855-1858 he served as the fourth Mayor of Adelaide, and his portrait in oils hangs in the Freemasons Hall there. He retired from the city council in 1859.

Not a man to stay put for long, and having sustained disastrous losses due to mining speculation, Lazar and his family emigrated to New Zealand in 1863. He took up politics again, becoming Town Clerk in Dunedin and Hokitiki. When he retired as Town Clerk of Dunedin, he was held in such public esteem that he was granted a gratuity of £200. He died on 8 June 1879 in New Zealand (Julia died in Sydney in 1889). As he had been a prominent Freemason, they erected a memorial to him at the cemetery.

Sources:
Helen Bersten: Jewish Sydney - The First Hundred Years 1788-1888
Abram Levy: The Origins of Scottish Jewry (JHSE, 1958)
Philip Parsons (ed): Companion to Theatre in Australia

Douglas Pike (ed): Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol 2 1788-1850

This article first appeared in the Jewish Archive Centre Newsletter 1, Spring 2002


Few people today will be aware of the Edinburgh Jew who became Mayor of Adelaide in Australia. John Lazar (or Lazarus) was born in Edinburgh on 1 December 1801, at a time when there were only very few Jews in the city (the Jewish community was not established until 1816). His parents were Abraham Lazar, a stockbroker, and Rachel Lazarus. He married Julia Solomon (daughter of London furriers) in London on 2 November 1825.

In 1836, John and Julia left with their young family for Australia on the Lady McNaughton. John was listed as a tailor who could read and write. Julia, aged thirty, was also literate. The ship was struck by an outbreak of scarlet fever, and more than 120 passengers died, prompting an official enquiry. Amongst the fatalities were three of the Lazar children (Mary, Lazarus and Priscilla). Four children survived: Abraham, Samuel, Rachel and Victoria.

Soon after the family's arrival in Australia, Lazar wrote to the government to say that he had been paid only £2 3/- for clothes that had been destroyed at the quarantine station. Their value was £5 4/6d. His claim was rejected.

P.I. ELECTRICAL SERVICES

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS



- Domestic & commercial
- Rewiring, installations
- Lighting
- Free estimates
- Fully insured
- All work guaranteed

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT
PETER DENNINGTON
0800 440 1902 MOBILE 0800 440 1902
www.pielectrical.com
100 Gairloch Drive, Edinburgh

Jews in Blacksburg *Shtetl*, Virginia, USA

Esti Sheinberg



Aerial view of Virginia Tech. Campus

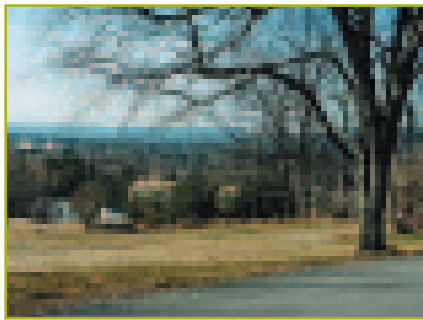
It is Shabbat morning, 10am. About twenty people sit in a circle mumbling a ya-ba-bam-dai-dah-duh neo-Hassidic tune. One of them is in shorts, dark socks and Birkenstock sandals. The other wears a large, white cowboy hat and a pair of jeans, his flannel shirt hanging over his belt. The lady sitting next to him is wearing tie-dye baggy trousers, her shoulders are covered with a tallith but she wears no head cover. Near them a gentleman sits dressed with a suit and tie, without any head cover. His wife is wrapped in a tallith and a large woollen head cover leaves just a little of her long curly hair showing. Across the circle, a family with two teenagers: the girl is wearing a knee-length skirt and the boy wears an embroidered yarmulke and a tallith. Their parents are among the most vociferous supporters of Reform innovation in Judaism. This peculiar crowd sits on simple chairs, in a hall devoid of any other comfort. Beyond the extremely functional Ark (at its North-East wall), the only other feature that catches the eye are the identical stained-glass windows, all representing some kind of goblet, which could be interpreted as a Kiddush cup, of course, but just the same as the Grail. Indeed, this building was built and functioned as a church. Now, however, a large, proud sign on the external wall claims it is the “Blacksburg Jewish Community Center” and “Hillel Jewish Student Organization Center.” Another sign, clearly posted at eye level, states the prayer times. Standing proudly on the corner of East-Roanoke and Church Streets, this synagogue is not

making even a minimal effort to disguise its present identity nor its past.

The tiny congregation - men, women, and teenagers - hold prayer books, the

content of which can easily be identified as a Shabbat morning service, albeit, as the cover of the first edition of the translation of Hamlet’s into Yiddish said, “farkurtzt unt farbessert”. The reading is a mixture of Hebrew and English, with much favour, I mean favor, to the latter. The Hebrew is mostly sung. Everybody joins in. When Hebrew is not sung, it is read slowly, so that everybody can follow and take an active part. When English is used, the pace quickens, but again everybody (except for the stubbornly unsociable writer of these lines) joins in with a clear undertone of relief granted by familiarity and understanding. We are in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Where is Blacksburg, Virginia? This is not so easy to explain. Take a World Map. Follow the route of the 1745 Scottish refugees across the Atlantic Pond to the north of America’s East Coast. Follow their route; escaping the love of their Bostonian English brethren down the coast to the last “N” of “Washington” (D.C.). Now finger your way down, south-west, following the 1-81 interstate freeway (the one that



Blacksburg countryside

“in the middle of the nowhere, from within the map’s Appalachian dark browns and greens, a major-mode Adon Olam tune is heard every Shabbat”

was built following the route of the 11-Virginia-Highway, the one that was built following the Piedmont Indians’ seasonal migration route, the one that follows the direction of the Appalachian mountain ridge). Continue until you arrive to the name “Roanoke,” printed in small bold type (by now you have probably switched to a more detailed map of the United States of America). Continue. Don’t let yourself be distracted by other town-names in the area, such as “Salem,” “Christiansburg” or “Lynchburg” (yes, they do mean “the city of Christians”; yes, it is named after that Mr. Lynch). Just ignore them, as we all do here. Continue relentlessly in the same south-west direction, leaving the I-81 and venturing into smaller paths, to the small-plain-type-Times-font “Blacksburg.” Yes, there, right there, in the middle of nowhere, from within the map’s Appalachian dark browns and greens, a major-mode Adon Olam tune

“the head cover fashion ranges from black yarmulkas to cowboy hats”

is heard every Shabbat around noon, mostly in a spontaneous two-part version. The proud performers are we, a tiny part of a tiny Jewish community whose whole list of members cannot fill up an A4 page.

What is Blacksburg? Well, since it has a mayor and a municipality building, it could be called a town. Why is Blacksburg here? I have no idea. Blacksburg was founded in 1797 by William Black, who purchased the land from two ladies who lived in a farm nearby, and whose land it was because they said so; and because they said so in English, which the Indians around did not understand, there were no

objections raised. Nearly a hundred years later, trying to heal the deep wounds of the Civil War, an institute was founded on the farmland, with the intention of teaching young men the skills of mining and agriculture. This institute grew up to be the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where presently 26,000 young men and women learn the post-modern skills of getting an academic degree, and providing bread for about 16,000 not-so-young men and women who, mostly disguised as “doctors” and “professors,” serve the youngsters faithfully. These 42,000 people represent the lion’s share of Blacksburg’s population with the odd bookstore, print-copy or coffee shop owners as exotic decorations, mainly serving the university’s needs. The great majority of the Jewish Community in Blacksburg is here, therefore, on teaching and research positions at the university. Our community’s website



Deer in the snow

(<http://civic.bev.net/bjcc/>) has links to Shofar, our monthly online magazine, and to other useful information, directed to anybody who wants to know anything about Blacksburg Jews but never dared to ask. The following quoted paragraph, under the heading “Who We Are” says:

“We are the only organized Jewish community in the New River Valley. Our goal is to meet the religious, educational, social, and cultural needs of Jews in the New River Valley, and that is what we try to do on a totally lay-led (that is, all volunteer) basis. We warmly welcome and indeed we need the participation of all local Jews of every possible Jewish background, and we hope you will join us and make us stronger and better through your support.”

U-huh, you heard right: “every possible Jewish background.” Oh, and no, we

are not disappearing nor converting en-masse to Christianity. On the contrary: utterly secular in its views and behaviour, Blacksburg’s Jewish community is a stubbornly independent group that makes a point of being Jewish. For example, kosher food. A successful campaign was conducted for the large super-markets around – “Kroger,” “Walmart,” and even “Food Lion” – to enlarge their variety of kosher food supply. Even before that campaign, on Pesah, Rosh-HaShana and even Khanuka you could find appropriate products



BJCC building

accompanied by congratulations and good wishes for the specific holiday. In the last two years, though, under the persistent pressure, “Kroger” began to sell frozen kosher meats, so to that end, we no longer need to travel north to Roanoke. Why bother? To make a point: we are Jewish. Maybe paradoxically (and maybe not), none of us is Orthodox, or even Shomer Shabbath in any traditional sense: everyone drives to the Synagogue not only on Shabbath, but also in fact even on the High Holidays. Resident areas in Blacksburg are far from our “downtown area” (it is still debated if the tiny group of two-floor buildings around one traffic light deserves that title), where our Community Center is. Given the distances, it is an either “drive” or “not-attend” choice. From our home, for example, to get to the 10am Shabbath service, we would need to leave around 4am and embark on a (non sponsored!) vigorous hike of about 12 miles uphill in country roads, a very healthy undertaking were there any sidewalks. Nevertheless, our non-Orthodox driving does not seem to make our community any less united nor less committed to our cause. Again – it seems that the contrary is true: our small number almost forces us to be totally accepting and welcoming in a social atmosphere where gossip and criticism are almost unknown (I know this sounds unbelievable, but it is true). The ability of each member to contribute in his (or her) own way to the community is respected and cherished, and disagreements are not

only swept aside, but intentionally ignored. We are too dear to each other to engage in theoretical arguments. This creates an environment where people feel mostly at home, and indeed, the involvement of community members in our Jewish life is quite high: once a month, after the Shabbat morning service, there is a lively community “potluck lunch” – each member brings “something to eat”, and everything is accepted as long as we stay within the limits of dairy/vegetarian menus; events – whether communal or personal, such as Bar-Mitzvah, are celebrated by the whole community. We are together not only in celebrations, but also in times of need: it is not a rare event to read an e-mail to the community saying something like “Hi everybody, I have a bad back pain, and would appreciate it if people would bring cooked food to my family” – and there it goes – rest assured her family will be well fed for weeks to come (and the kids brought to school, and the shopping list taken and products delivered home) even after the lady in question is back dancing happily in the gym.

As our “online statement” says, we don’t have a rabbi. First, we don’t have enough money to hire a rabbi; second, who is the rabbi that will agree to come and live in a half-Reform, half-Conservative Kasrivilke, in the middle of nowhere, and where every member will be entitled to tell him (or her) what to do, how to do it, and why he (or she) should not interfere in our decisions? Several times a year, the rabbi of the Roanoke Jewish Community pays us a visit for an “Adult Education Class,” but this is the exception, not the rule. On a Shabbat-to-Shabbat regular basis we have to conduct the services ourselves. Several members of the community can lead a Shabbat service, and some of us can chant the Haftara or even leyn when needed (with advance notice and preparation, of course!). In the majority of the services, however, the Parasha is read by each one of us, silently (obviously most people read the English translation), and then a discussion is held about its content. As strange as this practice may seem, it keeps everybody involved, active and interested, and

certainly reflects the mitzvah of ve-dibarta bam: the commandment to learn and discuss the torah. And, boy, we discuss! In the name of pluralism and to accommodate various members’ needs and wishes, the services alternate: one week it is Conservative, and the other – Reform. Since it is important to have a Minyan (yes, women are counted, what kind of a weird question is that?), people who feel more comfortable in a Conservative service attend the Reform, and vice-versa. There is no dress code (except, of course, the basic requirements that are written on most store-doors around here: “shirt and shoes required”). Women come in jeans or in skirts, men and women alike wear (or not) tallith and/or yarmulka, the head cover fashion ranges from black yarmulkas to cowboy hats to nothing, and nobody is bothered about what anybody else is doing (or not). Maybe because of the small number, and maybe because of the way we are sitting, in a circle, there is no “social talk” during the service. Families sit together. The older children sit with the adults. Younger children sometimes sit with us, and when they get tired they go to the side, read a book or play with their toys. We have a “Sunday School” and a “Hebrew School” for the kids. The teachers are, again, volunteers from the community and Hillel students who receive an incredibly meagre salary for their (hard!) work with the younger children. Generally speaking, the contribution of the Hillel students to the community (and vice versa) is significant, since during the academic year the number of Jewish students exceeds the number of community members. Therefore, the community centre is also the Hillel centre, hosting in fact three Jewish student organizations: the Hillel, a fraternity and a sorority (these peculiar, uniquely American student organizations deserve an article by themselves).

Non-Jewish spouses and children of mixed marriages are most welcome, although non-Jews are obviously not called for Aliyah. The Jewish member of the couple, however, is not just merely tolerated, but fully one of us, and there is no discrimination against

them or against the children of this marriage, who are considered wholly Jewish and therefore fully deserving all the services, social environment and education that a Jewish Community can supply.

Coming of age is taken extremely seriously. When the children in our community reach Bar/Bat-Mitzvah age (which here is 13 for boys and girls alike) they lead a whole service by themselves: Shaharith, Aliyoth, Haftara and Musaf. For that they need to be really familiarized with the Siddur, understand the structure of the service, know the prayer tunes and understand the Parasha – in short, no “parroting” is accepted. Who teaches them? Members of the community that can do it, and who volunteer their time. The boundaries between Reform and Conservative, traditionalists and innovators, don’t count. What is important is to educate the children toward an informed and responsible membership in the Jewish Community in Blacksburg and – taking into account that no American teenager stays near his family during his/her college year – beyond. Even if we remember that a considerable part of the service is in English this is still quite impressive. I can count on less than one hand the number of Israeli kids that I know, who would be able to undertake such a task!

Being part of an academic community, where every Joe, Moe and Larry is Professor, Professor-Emeritus or even,

nominee for, Nobel prize has its drawbacks, the most important of which, I believe, is a wee lack of intellectual modesty. For example, that also partly explains why we don’t have a rabbi. Indeed we don’t have the money; indeed it is hard to find somebody who would be willing to live so far from any Jewish centre. However – it is also a matter of priorities and, shall we say, a kind of hubris: after all, we are all academics, and therefore oh so clever, so why would we need a rabbi, right? The fact is that we do have money for other things, which the community finds important. For example, there were no arguments about the high priority of building an elevator that would allow the old and disabled to reach the synagogue hall without needing to climb stairs; also, incredibly high sums go towards “cultural events”: inviting a klezmer group from Maryland or Matisyahu, the Jewish neo-Hassidic rapper, from New-York, or organizing a grandiose “Jewish Film Festival” at Virginia Tech. Another high priority is to help the poor of the local community, not necessarily Jewish, seeing it as a part of Tzedaka. This, by the way, means that no community donations go to Israel. And this is the last – and, for me, sad – aspect of our community’s special character: as usual, the highly liberal Jewish academics of the USA, most of whom are Vietnam War Baby Boomers, are not necessarily pro-Israeli. But this, of course, is a subject that should be kept for another time.



Were there Two Arthur Balfours?

Brian Klug

On 1 January 1906 the Aliens Act came into effect. In this article I shall not be looking back at the Act per se but at a conundrum about the Prime Minister at the time: Arthur James Balfour.

On the one hand, Balfour’s name is inseparable from the Declaration he signed as Foreign Secretary in 1917 in which the British Government expressed support for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. On the other hand, the 1905 Aliens Act was aimed specifically at restricting the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. So, which was he: friend or foe of the Jews? Some say, “There’s no riddle here: keeping Jews out of Britain and packing them off to Palestine were just two sides of the same anti-Semitic coin.” But this would be too hasty and too cynical. The truth is both more complex and more intriguing.



The Balfour Declaration

Let’s begin by looking at Balfour’s support for Jewish nationalism. Two kinds of motives appear to have been at work. One was Realpolitik: he thought that supporting Zionism was in the British and Allied interest. First, there was the question of India, a passage to which was blocked at the time by Ottoman holdings in the region. Second, he wanted to keep Russia in the First World War and draw in the United States. Believing that the “vast majority of Jews in Russia and America as indeed, all over the world” were Zionists, he thought that a pro-Zionist declaration would be “useful propaganda”.

Balfour appears to have overestimated the extent of Jewish support for Zionism at the time. More significantly, he seems to have assumed that Jewish influence in the world at large could be decisive. This assumption was a commonplace in the British corridors of power. British officials widely believed that ‘the Jews’ were behind

Bolshevism in Russia, imperialism in Germany, and the Turkish Government too. Their perception was not based on a sober analysis but merely, or mainly, on the connotations of the word ‘Jewish’. But did Balfour himself see Jewry this way? We shall come to his view of Jews in due course.

The second of the two motives behind the Balfour Declaration is more idiosyncratic. Zionism was one of the enthusiasms of his life. Chaim Weizmann relates that when he explained “the Jewish tragedy” in Europe to Balfour, the latter was moved “to the point of tears.” Balfour’s niece Blanche wrote: “Near the end of his days he said to me that on the whole he felt that what he had been able to do for the Jews had been the thing he looked back upon as the most worth his doing.” Towards the end of his life, Balfour “came to relish his role as protector of the Jews, even writing to golf clubs in the Home Counties in an attempt to remove their

“He denounced, “the bigotry, the oppression, the hatred the Jewish race has too often met with in foreign countries”

ban on Jewish membership.” Yet he presided over the passage of an act that, although it dealt with aliens in general, targeted Jews from Eastern Europe in particular – and at a time when they were suffering acute and sustained persecution. In the same year in which the notorious Black Hundreds was founded in Russia (1905), Jewish immigration into Britain was curtailed by Parliament. Moreover, Balfour played a prominent part in steering the Aliens Act through the House of Commons. His speeches show that he was well aware of the conditions of life for Jews in Eastern Europe. He denounced, “the bigotry, the oppression, the hatred the Jewish race has too often met with in foreign countries”. But just before the question was put to the House, he argued as follows: “In my view we have

a right to keep out everybody who does not add to the strength of the community – the industrial, social, and intellectual strength of the community.”



Brian Klug

It almost seems as if there were two Arthur Balfours at two different times: a later Balfour who saw himself as protecting Jews against their enemies, an earlier one who sought to protect Britain against Jews – or those immigrant Jews who did not ‘add to the strength of the community’. However, the Government that introduced the Aliens Act also offered Theodor Herzl – in 1903 – the prospect of a Jewish homeland in British East Africa; the so-called Uganda proposal has been called “the first Balfour Declaration”. In the debate in Parliament over the Aliens Bill two years later, Balfour cited this offer to prove that he was not “indifferent to the interests” of “the Jewish race”.

In the same sitting, Balfour gave a revealing glimpse of his view of Jews. He said: “a state of things could easily be imagined in which it would not be to the advantage of the civilization of the country that there should be an immense body of persons who, however patriotic, able, and industrious, however much they threw themselves into the national life, still, by their own action, remained a people apart, and not merely held a religion differing from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen, but only inter-married among themselves.” Previously, he had argued that the bill “only excludes, broadly speaking, those who are likely to become a

“The question had changed: it was not about who adds to ‘the strength of the community’, but who belongs”

public charge.” But in this imaginary scenario, the people he deemed undesirable were neither shirkers nor spongers. He was no longer referring to Jews as ‘aliens’ in the technical sense of non-citizens but ‘aliens’ in the mythic sense of strangers, outsiders, ‘a people apart’. The question had changed: it was not about who adds to ‘the strength of the community’, but who belongs.



Arthur Balfour

When Balfour spoke of the community he clearly meant the nation. Moreover, he had a particular idea of what it means to partake of British ‘nationality’ – and thus belong. In one parliamentary speech he made a contrast between immigrants and “Englishmen, Britons” whom he referred to as “our own flesh and blood”; and it certainly seems as if race, in some shape or form, played a part in his idea of nationhood. He frequently used the expression ‘the Jewish race’; but the language of race was commonplace and did not necessarily imply (any more than it does today) a fully-fledged theory of difference based on biology. Balfour admired the way America took “men of many distinct nationalities and many races” and turned them “by a process of natural alchemy” into “citizens of the United States”. He called this “a marvellous power”; but added that “it has its limits”. In particular, he believed that there was “an unbridgeable abyss” between black and white: “the white and black races...are born with different capacities which education cannot and will not change.”

Although the precise role played by race is unclear, Balfour’s idea (or ideology) of nationhood was a fundamental part of his political credo. It lies in the background of his view of Jews as ‘a people apart’. If he admired the Zionists, it is partly because he held “strong views about the inspiring power of true nationalism”; and he regarded theirs as authentic. “What was at the back of the Zionist movement,” he told a meeting of the War Cabinet on 4 October 1917, “was the intense national consciousness held by certain members of the Jewish race.” The Jews, he told the House of Lords in his maiden speech on 21 June 1922, have maintained “a continuity of religious and racial tradition of which we have no parallel elsewhere”. Furthermore, he thought that the Jews “are the most gifted race that mankind has seen since the Greeks of the fifth century.” “The Jews are too great a race not to count,” he wrote to his sister in July 1918, “and they ought to have a place where those who had strong racial idealism could develop on their lines as a nation and govern themselves.” Thus Jewish nationalism, for Balfour, was not only authentic, it was exemplary.

It was also, he thought, vital – not only for Jews but also for the sake of Europe – that the Zionist movement should achieve its goal. For, as he saw it, the very virtue of Jews – their “intense national consciousness” – was also the root of the ‘problem’ that they posed for the nations among whom

they dwelt: the problem of refusing to blend into the general populace, of remaining ‘a people apart’. In an Introduction written specially for Nahum Sokolow’s History of Zionism (1919), Balfour explained the double value of Zionism: “If it succeeds,” he wrote, “it will do a great spiritual and material work for the Jews, but not for them alone. For as I read its meaning it is, among other things, a serious endeavour to mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilization by the presence in its midst of a Body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb.”

As this passage shows, Balfour had some sympathy for the predicament in which ‘Western civilization’ was placed by the Jewish ‘Body’ in its midst. In January 1917, he met with Lucien Wolf to discuss discrimination against Jews in Russia. He acknowledged that “the treatment of the Jews was abominable beyond all measure”. But he went on to point out that “the persecutors had a case of their own”. Furthermore, when he met with Weizmann three years earlier, he mentioned a conversation with Cosima Wagner, the composer’s widow, and said he “shared many of her anti-Semitic postulates”. In a letter to Lloyd George, he wrote “the Jews undoubtedly constitute a most formidable power whose manifestations are not by any means always attractive”; though he went on to say that “the balance of wrong doing seems to me on the whole to be greatly on the Christian side.”

“For Balfour, the basic problem was the presence of a Jewish ‘Body’ that the British nation was ‘equally unable to expel or to absorb.’”

Balfour’s attitude to Jews has been called ambivalent. But he was not ambivalent about seeing them as larger than life: a people with unique qualities (good and bad) and possessing special significance for the world. For they were, in the first place, the people of the Bible. His ideas about Jews were rooted in the Old Testament brand of Christianity on which he was raised by his Evangelical mother. It seems likely that she transmitted to her son the idea of the Jews as a special people and the ideal of restoring them to their ancient land. Given his concept of nationhood, there were only two possible solutions to the problem that was afflicting both the Jewish people and, in Balfour’s view, the Western nations in whose midst they dwelt. The “problem”, he told Weizmann, “would not be solved until either the Jews became completely assimilated here or a normal Jewish society came into existence in Palestine”. A true-life vignette captures Balfour’s perception of the ‘Jewish problem’. Once, some years prior to the Parliamentary debate over the Aliens Bill, he paid a social visit to the Sassoons. Describing the experience in a letter to a friend, Lady Elcho, he said that the house was “peopled with endless Sassoon girls”. He continued: “I believe the Hebrews were in an actual majority – and though I have no prejudice against the race (quite the contrary) I began to understand the point of view of those who object to alien immigration.” The English house, brimming with ‘endless Sassoon girls’, the house

where ‘the Hebrews’ were ‘in an actual majority’, was a microcosm of the imaginary Britain in his speech in the Commons: a nation that housed “an immense body of persons who...remained a people apart”. For Balfour, the basic problem was the presence of a Jewish ‘Body’ that the British nation was ‘equally unable to expel or to absorb’.

In conclusion, the alien on Balfour’s mind was not simply the immigrant as such; it was the Jew. And far from being contradictory, the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1905 Aliens Act were two sides of the same nationalist – but not simply anti-Semitic – coin. There was only one Arthur Balfour. Dr. Brian Klug is Senior Research Fellow & Tutor in Philosophy at St. Benet’s Hall, Oxford, a member of the Faculty of Philosophy at Oxford University, and an Honorary Fellow of the Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations at the University of Southampton.

This article is adapted from, my article ‘The Other Balfour: Recalling the 1905 Aliens Act’, The Jewish Year Book 2005, ed. Stephen W. Massil (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005) and from a paper that was first presented to the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society in February 2005.

Jon Kimche, The Unromantics: The Great Powers and the Balfour Declaration (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), p. 41.

Leonard Stein, The Balfour Declaration (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961), pp. 154-5; Ronald Sanders, The High Walls of Jerusalem: A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the British Mandate for Palestine (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983), p. 120.

Max Egremont, Balfour: A Life of Arthus James Balfour (London: Phoenix, 1980), p. 296.

Ibid., p. 313.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 145, col. 795.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 145, col. 804.

David Fromkin, A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East (New York: Avon Books, 1989), pp. 274.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 149, col. 178.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 149, col. 155.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 145, col. 801.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 145, col. 805.

Parliamentary Debates, 4th Series, vol. 145, col. 796.

Ibid.

Egremont, op. cit., p. 215.

Mrs. Edgar Dugdale, The Balfour Declaration: Origins and Background (London: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1940), p. 29.

Doreen Ingrams, Palestine Papers 1917-1922: Seeds of Conflict (London: John Murray, 1972), p. 11.

Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, vol. 50, House of Lords, col. 1017.

In conversation with Sir Harold Nicholson in 1917, as recalled by the latter, quoted in Stein, op. cit., p. 157.

Egremont, op. cit., p. 295.

Arthur Balfour, ‘Introduction’, in Nahum Sokolow, History of Zionism 1600-1918, vol. I (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1919), p. xxxiv.

Stein, op. cit., p. 164.

Ibid, p. 154.

19 February 1919, in Ingrams, op. cit., pp. 61-2.

Kenneth Young, Arthur James Balfour (London: Bell & Sons, 1963), p. 258; Stein, op. cit., p. 165; Gainer, op. cit., pp. 117, 119.

Young, op. cit., pp. 257, 387; Egremont, op. cit., pp. 296, 340.

As related by Weizmann to Ahad Ha’am two days later, quoted (and translated from the Russian) in Stein, op. cit., p. 154.

Sanders, op. cit., p. 119.

Ibid.

ACCESS ALL AREAS

A Jewish Chronicle digital passport, newspaper subscription enables you to access every aspect of the Jewish world.

Receive all the features that **theJC.com** brings, while still reading your copy of **the JC**. Get your local newspaper at £68 for an annual subscription.

Log on to **theJC.com**, fill in the online subscription form, nominate your chosen newspaper and open up your world.

Subscribe at **www.thejc.com** or call **020 7465 1570**.

The JC
a new kind of Jewish daily

Around and About The Shein Scene

On 1 October WIZO organised an evening at the King's Theatre for members and friends to see 'Stones in his Pockets', a comedy of parts with two actors, well known to Edinburgh pantomime lovers, taking no less than seventeen different parts in a hilarious production which entertained the 24 members amongst the large audience. After the show, the group made their way to the home of Kate and Ron Goodwin to partake of a satisfying supper and to participate in WIZO and inevitably, local gossip.

The annual Remembrance Service took place in the Synagogue on 13 November, when Rabbi David Rose conducted the service to commemorate the members of the Congregation who gave their lives in the two World Wars and in the Sinai campaign. A bugler playing the Last Post added to the poignancy of the occasion. Alec Kleinberg and Lenny Berger carried the banners of the Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion and AJEX. After the service, tea was served in the community centre. In the morning, along with other representatives of organisations, Lenny attended the City Chambers where he laid a wreath in the shape of a Magen David.

The annual Chanukah Dinner and Social took place on 17 December which on this occasion took the form of an after dinner speaker in the person of Gordon McNally. After a superb meal in which the catering staff excelled, Anita Mendelssohn welcomed everyone and wished a hearty Mazeltov to Hazel and John Cosgrove on their 38th wedding anniversary. She also asked John to introduce the speaker, Gordon McNally,



a partner of 22 years in John's dental surgery. He stated that Gordon was no stranger to the community centre, having delivered the Immortal Memory at a Burns Night a few years ago when his wife Heather also sang. An ex president of UK Rotary, Gordon was in great demand as a speaker and had been instrumental in raising a considerable amount of money for charity. Gordon then addressed the audience with what can only be described as a tour de force. His comments on dentistry, Rotary and life in general were interspersed with hilarious anecdotes and sharp witticisms, which saw the audience literally begging for more. The evening passed all too quickly as Joyce Sperber presented Gordon with a gift from the community centre management committee. Anita thanked Gordon and everyone for supporting what proved to be a most pleasant and highly enjoyable evening.

A white elephant jamboree, for want of a better word, took place on 19 November with hilarity, dastardly deeds and so much fun that it must be repeated next year. But book early because it was agreed that the number attending, was just right. 22 participants sat round in a circle with eyes fixed on the pile of gifts in the centre; each one of us waiting for our raffle ticket to be called and thereby allowing us to choose from some beautifully wrapped and, it must be said, some highly suspicious and disreputably wrapped parcels. Who could have foretold that the little ceramic wall plaques would prove

irresistible to the gentlemen? How many times must the Vivaldi CD change hands before it was stolen, yes stolen by... well perhaps I'd better keep mum. Those darling opera glasses, so highly sought after went back and forth and found their final resting place with Susie Kelpie. Laurence kept ringing his crystal bell and making us think that some latecomer was at the front door. How de rigueur was that blue plastic waste bin, and the beguiling cylindrical offering turned out to be nothing more than a tin of baked beans (kosher of course). This was such a fun event and even made £140. Well done Doreen for thinking this one up.

WIZO

On 21st September the WIZO season started with a Ladies Lunch at the home of Mr. and Mrs Mendelssohn; not only a delicious lunch but also the chance to see round Esther's wonderful show garden. The ever popular Ladies lunches continued on 30th November at the home of Arnold and Hilary Rifkind. This was a very well attended event and everyone enjoyed the chance meet up after the long break during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. With some generous donations and Hilary's fine cooking, the grand total of £250 was raised.

We now have our winter programme complete and look forward to another busy and successful year.

Star Trek

Guess who, answers on back page.



Chanukah Dinner



Limmud 25 pilgrimage from Edinburgh

Jonathan Kish

An amazing number of excellent speakers spoke to 400 attendees at LIMMUD 25 this year in Glasgow. 70 pilgrims from Edinburgh attended and they were not disappointed. It would be impossible to cover all events, but in order to represent as many events as possible Jonathan Kish has outlined his perspective, and my own has been incorporated. JG

First, the name Limmud was just another new word for me, having started attending Shul only a few months ago and dipping my toes gingerly into ‘Jewish waters’. When I thumbed through the program I fretted about diving headlong into matters that interested me totally but of which I had scant knowledge or in many cases no awareness whatsoever.

It is so easy with hindsight; how could I have worried when on the day all was well and everything flowed with smooth efficiency?

Getting to Glasgow was made easy: a coach was laid on, albeit with seats designed to accommodate primary school children, and while waiting I met several members of the Edinburgh Jewish community.

It was a dullish day, the journey uneventful and we arrived at the venue in good time.

The reception area buzzed with chatter and to a first-timer’s senses it was pandemonium. No time to acclimatize as the first sessions were about to start and I panicked about finding the rooms in the labyrinthine – or so it seemed to me – spread throughout the school. Oh, me of little faith: willing helpers with smiling faces were on hand in strategic places to direct us.

Rushing to my first choice, and the first choice of too many others! – it was full and I was re-directed to my alternative: ‘I’m Jewish, my partner isn’t’ by Jonathan Romain. Why would I, divorced, retired, pick such a theme? Curiosity? Some inner impulse? ‘My fist Limmud lecture... I hope it’s going to be good.’

Was it good? – to say that the lecturer was well-informed would be so unfair. He was a well of information, his

offbeat, slightly quirky delivery style had me riveted to enough content, though barely scratching the surface, to last me a lifetime. The variety of experiences possible! The ingenuity of solutions, the challenges to perseverance ... I left the room with my ideas, based on my ‘foreigner-English’ marriage experience suitably chastised and duly modified.

No time. No time! – on to the next talk, this time ‘Parenting children the Jewish way’ by Richard Woolfson. Here I go again. What compels me to ...? My children are grown up! Perhaps I wanted to know what principles I had applied in their upbringing that would stand them in good stead and which others I had neglected that would give them an excuse to blame this parent! (I resist the temptation to quote Phillip Larkin’s well-worn observation about his parents.)

Another speaker with the gift and skill of presenting his expertise in his field with ease, and in Richard Woolfson’s case with the endearing ‘Glasgow-patter’ that tickled my unaccustomed ears throughout. His teenage daughter’s first disco excursion rang the familiar alarm bells in this father’s memory! I left feeling a mix of smugness and hope that my parenting efforts fell somewhere safely within the limits of the 80/20 rule (only my children could say as to which way).

Lunch. In the hubbub of mingling bodies I forgot about my ‘No salt diet’ and headed for soup: excellent, tasty, wholesome, hot. Trays of finger rolls with a variety of fillings plus salads and fruit .. as well as cakes and biscuits; Tea and coffee all day long. Lunchtime flew by. Thank you and well done organizers and caterers.

Another serving by Jonathan Romain on ‘Approaches to afterlife in Judaism’ and this time I knew I picked a good’n and that I would be exposed to more than what I wanted: to get to handshaking terms, at least, with a topic that should interest everyone? Jonathan was at his sparkling best, finding that fine balance in dealing with his matter that neither impaired the serious nor shied away from the lighter aspects of his talk material. The lecture unburdened as well as enriched my

soul.

Seth Kunin presented ‘Biblical ideas of sacred space’. I’d be hard pressed to give an account of what I had listened to especially as – as it can happen at such events - interruptions by some participants eager to share their familiarity with the subject breached the limits of my tolerance and my attention wondered... not so badly as to fail to impress upon me, how superbly prepared and knowledgeable were all the speakers; totally at ease with their chosen subject.

Whereas my previous choices were speculative, my last one was ‘deliberate’: ‘Sex, drugs and Kabala’ on the basis that I should ‘end on a high’, challenged, intrigued, even titillated by a topic that is a ‘wee bit wayward’, (by whose standards?) but rendered acceptable by the subtitle ‘touching the hidden face of G-d’.

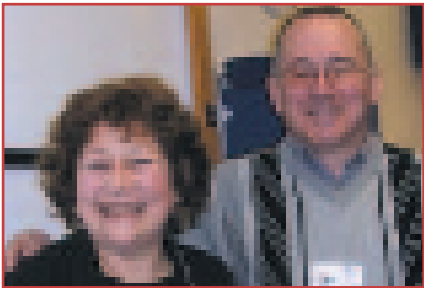
Max Kohanzad waded into his subject with the almost apologetic caution as if an adolescent before his parents until he was satisfied by the overall feedback from his audience: this erred on the side of urbane nonchalance about such ‘mundane’ matters as sex, drugs and Madonna... and then he confidently eased us into the more profound depths of his subject. I was grateful for the timely action by the supervising Official to firmly dampen the enthusiasm of those listeners who wanted to engage our attention on their particular take on these esoteric realms. An hour was far too short as it was.



Seth Kunin



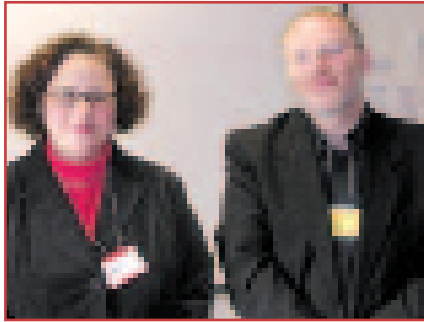
Max Kohanzad



Maxine & Nigel Allon

Nigel Allon gave a fascinating account of the huge risks he and his wife Maxine took in their clandestine activities to deliver Jewish resources to Refusniks in Russia in 1982. Nigel filled in the missing picture of what I partly understood to happen during those years, with his riveting stories of their cloak and dagger activities.

Rabbis Nancy Morris and David Rose took the floor to give varying perspectives on modernity within religious practice. The subject gave rise to animated discussion during and following the highly erudite delivery from both Orthodox and Reform representatives.



Rabbis Nancy Morris & David Rose

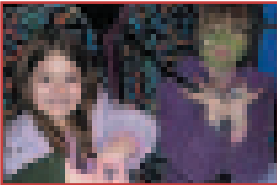


Nathan Abrams

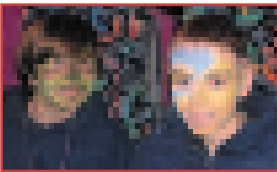
Nathan Abrams put across an entertaining but thoughtful exposé on the film device of inferring a character’s religion using overt images of food, to giggles of embarrassment, recognition and delight. A more detailed account can be read on a similar theme in the section on Society Reports.



The dining hall/common area was packed for the final ceremonies with appeals and speeches of thanks and mutual appreciation while ‘Beyond the Pale’ played Klezmer music, and jolly enjoyable it was too. Yet again the organizers and caterers excelled and there was lots to eat and drinks to refresh.

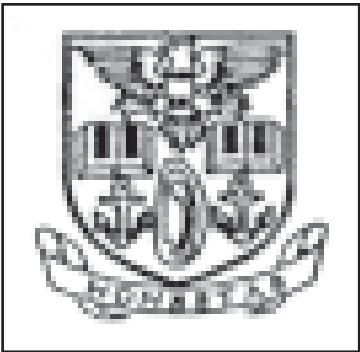


Orderly departure by all; everything well orchestrated to the end. A busload of tired but happy adults and face painted children arrived in Edinburgh, in rain and darkness.



It would be remiss of me not to mention what great value this event is: the fee, the food, the fantastic fare of lectures and activities.... and we could only sample a few.

Thank you Limmud organizers, helpers and lecturers; I am looking forward to the next one.



MUSSELBURGH OLD COURSE GOLF CLUB

The Club at the World’s Oldest Golf Course

With Best Wishes

from Lionel Freedman, former Honorary Secretary & Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES WELCOME

10 Balcarres Road, Musselburgh EH21 7SD
t. 0131 665 6981
e. mocgc@breathemail.net www.musselburgholdlinks.co.uk

End of An Era

Sidney Caplan interviews Arthur Kleinberg

Was baking a family tradition?
My father trained in Glasgow at the beginning of the last century. At the end of his apprenticeship he came to Edinburgh and opened a bake house in East Crosscauseway.
When I was 16, I went into the business where my father taught me to be a Master baker. I worked in the bakery until I retired. During the war I continued, as baking was a reserved occupation.

Over the years what were you most proud of that you produced in the bakery?
With out doubt my ‘Challah’. People came from far and wide to buy them.

What do think of the quality of supermarket bread?
In one word horrible. With the individual bakeries closing things will not improve. I call this type of bread, Plastic Bread.

Apart from your marriage what has been the highlights of your life?
Seeing my lovely daughter grow up, get married and give me three grandchildren. Seven years ago I had the great delight of going to my Grandson Craig's Barmitzvah.

How do you relax?
Work in a Bakery is during unsocial hours so I became a great reader. I also in my younger days played cricket for Maccabi. I liked football and when ever I could I went to Tynecastle to watch Hearts.

What is the most important lesson that life has taught you?
Do not trust anyone until you know them well. Do not go on face value. I learned that lesson to my cost.

Where did you meet your late wife Rose?
We had in our community a Debating

Society and we went to London for a competition and that is where I met Rose, We married in1947.

Any regrets?
Giving up the Bakery due to age and not finding a worthy person to take over.

What about the future of the Edinburgh Community?
As we shrink in numbers it is time that we stood up to be counted and not leave things to others. For example what is to stop the gentlemen once a month helping to make up a ‘minyan’ either on a Friday evening or Saturday morning. And what about functions they should be supported as it is for our own good to raise monies for the upkeep of our buildings and facilities.

Finally what would you motto be?
Do your giving while you are living.

KOSHER BAKERY PLAITS ITS LAST EVER BRAID
At the age of 89, Arthur Kleinberg says farewell to the bakery he inherited from his father 70 years ago. When Arthur retired, the establishment was handed over to a new owner on the condition that it remained within the strict law of Kashrut and it has been the Challah lifeline of Edinburgh Jewish Community until very recently. The shop has finally closed. The mystery of where the most recent owner has disappeared is unsolved. On Monday 28th November Arthur, Rabbi Rose, David Goldberg and I were interviewed on 'Scotland Licked' on Radio Scotland where they were heard talking about how the Edinburgh community will be managing with the demise of this last bastion of traditional ‘Jewish bread’ baked in Edinburgh. If you would like to try your hand at making your own Challah, according to Arthur's traditional recipe, read on. You will also find a slightly more modern version, in case you have succumbed to easy bake yeast, with a few adaptations to accommodate it.

Arthur's Challah Recipe
2lb strong white flour
1oz salt
1½ - 2oz sugar
2oz fresh yeast
1 egg, lightly beaten. Some extra egg for glazing.
4 fl oz oil
1pt warm water (start with a little less)

Arthur’s method using the fresh yeast
1.Put the egg, salt and sugar in a bowl, add about ¾ of the water and stir.
2.Mix the remaining water in with the yeast.
3.Put all the flour in a bowl.
4.Add the yeast mixture without waiting for it to bubble.
5.Mix it together slightly and only then add the oil. (It is quite sticky)
6.Mix it all together; add more flour to firm it up.
7.Knead (10 mns) adding more flour as necessary.
8.Put the dough into a bowl, cover with a clean, dry, tea towel and prove. When doubled in size (about 1 hour) knock back the dough, shape and leave to prove again.

Plaiting with 4 strands
Divide the dough into two. Divide each portion into 4 rolling each into a rope. Pinch the four ends together spread out into a fan shape. Starting on the right, number each rope 1,2,3,4. Lift 1 over 2 and 3 over 4. Place 4 between 1 and 2. Repeat. Tuck straggly ends under to finish.

Brush the loaves with beaten egg, sprinkle with poppy seeds or sesame seeds, 375°F, 190°C, gas 5 for 30 - 40 mns. (Dependent on the size of loaf and the efficiency of your oven)

Allinson ‘easy bake yeast’ method
1.Mix all the dry ingredients together.
2.Make a well in the centre then pour in the egg, oil and most of the water. (Start off with a little less than the pint)
3.Mix with a wooden spoon until the dough begins to come together. It is at this point that you will be able to assess whether you need to add more water or not. Knead the mixture a little in the bowl then turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, knead for 10mns. If the mixture is too sticky to work, sprinkle more flour on the work surface until it is manageable.
4.Shape the dough into 2 plaited loaves, loosely cover tray and loaves with plastic bag, (there is no need for intermediate proving with this yeast) leave to prove until doubled; about 30 - 40 mns. Don't worry if they have not doubled in that time they seem to rise well despite that when baked.

Brush the loaves with beaten egg, sprinkle with poppy seeds or sesame seeds, about 170° 30mns. (Time and temperature reduced because of my fan-assisted oven)

Bake until brown and hollow sounding when tapped.

KEEPING OUR HEAD ABOVE WATER ... BUT ONLY JUST!

Dear reader, we believe that you look forward to receiving the Star. Thanks to all those who have ever given us support in the past. However the following worrying statistics have been identified. We appeal to you, the reader, to reverse them.

- 5% increase in the cost of producing and distributing each edition, which is between £1800 – £2000.
- Donations have dropped 22% over the last 2½ years.
- Only 25% of all the community members have made a donation in the last 2½ years.
- Only 1/5 of all expatriates receiving the Star make a donation.

PLEASE COME TO OUR AID SO THAT THE PUBLICATION CAN CONTINUE TO BE VIRTUALLY FREE OF CHARGE TO EVERYONE.

Society Reports

History and authority in the halakhah: the problem of ‘agunah’ – Professor Bernard Jackson

Avery Meiksin

The Lit opened its 118th season with the expert in Jewish Law, Professor Bernard Jackson, the Alliance Professor of Modern Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester. Professor Jackson spoke on the sensitive, ‘Problem of the Agunah.’ There is perhaps no issue in the practice of Jewish law in the modern world that is more contentious and more bitter. While marriage requires the mutual consent of both adult partners, the granting of a divorce (a get) may only be done by the husband. What happens when he refuses? The woman becomes ‘chained’ (agunah) to the husband. She may not remarry, and worse, may remain the victim in an abusive marriage for years. Even the occurrence of agunah cases is hotly contested. Feminists claim there are thousands of cases worldwide. But rabbis count far fewer, using the stringent criterion that the husband must refuse to grant the divorce after having been ordered to do so by a Bet Din, and to remain disobedient for at least a few years before they will regard it a case of agunah.

The problem is as old as Jewish marriage. Perhaps no issue of Halacha has more perplexed the rabbis over the ages. Proposed solutions have ranged from bribery to violence. Even Maimonides ruled that beating the refractory husband into submission was permitted, on the grounds that it was the evil yetzer that was being beaten out of a husband who deep down wished to observe Halacha!

But in today’s world of diminished authority of rabbis and Bet Dins, such a desperate recourse is impossible, neither was it clear it ever really worked. Professor Bernard Jackson suggested that historical scholarship might assist the search for a solution, by helping contemporary rabbis learn how their predecessors understood Halacha in the past. One example is the practice of the ancient Babylonian Bet Din, which for 300 years took on itself the authority to grant the divorce to a wife when the husband refused. This would seem the natural solution today, but it has been rejected since an alleged decision by Rabbi Tam that the Babylonian Bet Din was in error since its procedure was not rooted in the Talmud. Scholarship has since cast doubt on Rabbi Tam’s decision on two grounds. First, he may have possessed a defective Talmud, as there is evidence of a Talmudic text that could have served as a basis to the Babylonian Bet Din’s actions. Secondly, Rabbi Tam’s decision is known only through his students, and it may be they did not fully comprehend the reasons and conditions for his objection, which may have been severely limited to special situations.

Today rabbinical authorities have turned their gaze increasingly to the way Heredi communities cope with the problem. The Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance has also initiated a campaign to seek a solution. Perhaps ultimately it will be social pressure from Heredi women who will persuade the men of the communities of the urgency of their rabbis’ finding a halachic solution.

David Daiches-an Edinburgh Legacy

Anthony Gilbert

On Sunday November 13th, Jenni Calder addressed the Lit to give an appreciation of the life of her father, David Daiches, who had died earlier in the year.

Jenni opened by saying that in the recent months, she had been giving considerable thought about her father’s life and his career. She felt that she had attained some sort of perspective, and that to do so, she had had in some sense ‘to stand back’, yet despite this, she felt that what she was about to say would probably not be completely objective, and nor did she altogether want it to be.

As background, Jenni gave an autobiographical sketch of her father’s life, touching on his Edinburgh childhood in the extraordinarily vibrant atmosphere of his parents’ home and his very distinguished academic career in Scotland, England and the USA before returning to England and finally, in 1977, back to an Edinburgh much changed from the one he had left 40 years earlier. (For some further detail on this, readers could refer to Jenni Calder’s obituary of her father that appeared in the previous issue of the Star).

Jenni drew particular attention to her father’s ability to acquire or perhaps, inhabit, various ‘worlds’ as he moved through life, and to incorporate these into his various literary endeavours. The most familiar of these are described in his well-known book ‘Two Worlds’, but other worlds informed his life too, notably those of the various languages he had learnt, of Scottish writers and poets, and of word-play: he was an inveterate punster, and this world is celebrated in his book ‘Was’. She also said that he felt a strong need to forge connections between these worlds, citing this as the motivation for his translation of foreign poets into Scottish, and quoting David’s own words on the matter, ‘Bridge-building, bridge-building is my vocation’.

The talk was illustrated by varied readings from some of David’s writings by Jenni’s daughter, Gowan Calder. Among the readings were his description of the language of the ‘trebblers’, described in Two Worlds, and now as vanished as the trebblers themselves, and a fascinating piece of correspondence between David and his father, somewhat philosophical in character, written shortly before the war at a time when there was some soul-searching occurring between the two men.

Jenni’s talk and the accompanying readings, gave us a fascinating insight into the life of a remarkable man, and she imbued the talk with an intimacy stemming directly from her close relationship with her father.



Abraham Geiger: the Rabbi as historian – Susannah Heschel

Avery Meiksin

Susannah Heschel, on leave from Dartmouth College in the US where she holds the Eli Black Chair in Jewish Studies, told us about her favourite nineteenth century Jewish thinker, Abraham Geiger. Growing up in Germany soon after the Jewish emancipation, Geiger studied religion at the University of Bonn in 1829. It was there that he first encountered the Qu’ran. It was a revelation: the Qu’ran was compendium of midrashim! This astonishing discovery was especially a surprise to Western Christian religious scholars who had generally dismissed Islam as a degenerate form of monotheism. His prize-winning PhD was hailed as a breakthrough, and initiated serious scholarly study of the Qu’ran in the West.

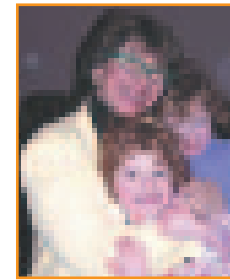
Geiger’s historical interests drove him more deeply into the origins of rabbinic Judaism. Already an object of suspicion in the Orthodox community for having obtained a PhD, his innovative views on the Pharisees as liberalisers of Judaism challenged the Orthodox view and further estranged him from the Orthodox community. Eventually he went too far. Caught up in the nationalism issues following the Jewish emancipation, he broke with traditional Judaism over the key question: can a Jew be a loyal German citizen and still lay claims to Jewish nationhood? Jews he believed should relinquish all claims to Jewish nationhood. While shunned by the Orthodox community, he has been regarded by many as the father of Reform Judaism, though in truth he remained Orthodox in his practice.

His attitudes toward Christianity were similarly iconoclastic, with similar consequences. Geiger argued, contrary to Christian belief, that Jesus was in fact a Pharisee and that he taught nothing new that wasn’t already espoused by other Pharisee rabbis. This not only infuriated Christian religious scholars, it even led to the back reaction among the more extreme of claiming that Jesus was not a Jew, but an Aryan!

Today many religious scholars, both Jewish and Christian, have come round to aligning more strongly with Geiger’s views. He was ahead of his time, but has none the less retained his aura of controversy among many.

The Jewish Dream Factory: Jews and the American Film Industry - Nathan Abrams, Steve Engleman

Nathan Abrams is a lecturer at Aberdeen University with an academic background in both Film Studies and American Studies. While film and television clips along with humour were ever present in Abrams’ talk, the content of the session, namely how Hollywood’s treatment of Jewish actors and Jewish subject matter which mirrored the status of Jews in the United States, required a disciplined and serious approach. To illustrate his thesis, Abrams divided the 20th century into three (approximate) periods, 1900-1945, the post-war period



up to 1990, and the post-1990 period.

For most of the first half of the 20th century, the United States (at least when immigration laws permitted) provided a safe haven for Europe’s Jews. At the same time, however, in much of the country, overt anti-Semitism was not uncommon. In the early years of the film industry, Jews headed most of the emerging powerful film studios. They believed that the climate of the times demanded that Jewish actors play down their Jewishness and change their names to ones more acceptable to mainstream America. Abrams describes this period as the “Hidden Period,” a period in which Hollywood films were characterised both by the absence of Jewish subject matter and by the rise of a number of Jewish stars who for the most part, were not recognised as Jewish, at least by their non-Jewish audiences

As anti-Semitism declined in the post-war period, and particularly overt anti-Semitism declined, films about Jewish subjects began to appear. Abrams divided the second period from 1945-1990, into two sub-periods, the first of which ended about 1967, and which he depicted as an Idealised Period” or “Golden Age.” One example referred to was the 1947 classic, Gentleman’s Agreement which focused on the less overt forms of anti-Semitism that were prevalent at the time. Interestingly, a non-Jew was selected to play the star role, as likewise were a number of the stars in the 1960 film Exodus. The 1967-1990 sub-period was considered by Abrams to be best described as the “Nostalgia” period, featuring more obviously Jewish actors in films such as Fiddler on the Roof and films about the holocaust. These films invariably featured Jews either as victims or as stereotypical Jewish characters, including somewhat feminised Jewish men.

Interestingly Abrams characterised the post 1990 period as one of “Jewish Arrival” in film. Obviously Jewish actors and characters began to appear both in film and on television as rather normal people who happened to be Jewish, and like other people, with both good and bad traits. He referred to recent hugely successful TV programmes such as Friends and Seinfeld, where Jewish characters were shown to be sometimes devious and occasionally cruel. This was vividly illustrated in a clip from a Seinfeld episode where a secular Jew tricked an observant one into eating a lobster omelette. Likewise, “Jewish Arrival” in film can be seen in films that show Jews being portrayed as other Americans might be portrayed. Thus a clip from “American Pie” that harked back to a passage in Portnoy’s Complaint, showed a Jewish American teen-age boy performing a sex act on an item of food. Unlike in Portnoy’s Complaint, however, the food item in question was not the “Jewish” liver, but rather the quintessentially “American” apple pie.

One question that the talk raised for me was whether now that Jews have “arrived” and the floodgates are now open for Jews to be depicted as any other group, will the Anti Defamation League (a Jewish organisation) feel compelled to complain about these less positive aspects of “Jewish Arrival,” in much the same way that the Italian Anti Defamation League (a rather obvious copy of the ADL) complains about film and television depictions of Italian Americans?

At the end, the relatively large audience indicated their appreciation of Abrams’ efforts to both cover and analyse 100 years of Jewish experience in film in the short time allotted to him and a lively discussion period followed.



Reviews

For Generations: Jewish Motherhood

Edited by Mandy Ross and Ronne Randall

Five Leaves Publications in association with European Jewish Publication Society

Janet Mundy

This book is a collection of essays and poems by Jewish women, primarily from the UK but also the States, Israel and other countries, about all aspects of motherhood in general and the particular Jewish perspective. Many of the essays were commissioned especially for the book, although the earliest was written in the early 17th century.

The book is divided into separate sections, starting with “Sources” – looking at mothers in the Torah, Talmud, Yiddish Poetry and the traditional “Jewish Mother”. Other sections look at pregnancy and birth, family life, motherhood in “The Shadow of the Shoah”, mothering daughters and sons and new types of Jewish motherhood including mixed marriages and in same-sex relationships. A section is written by Israeli mothers and another specifically on motherhood in the Diaspora. A final section deals with issues around not having children.

The editors of the book are both Progressive Jews, and although Orthodox Jewry is represented (for example, by Marlena Schmool, who has addressed the Literary Society on her research on behalf of the Board of Deputies), there is a predominance of Progressive and non-observant Jewish writers.

The Jewish mother stereotype is discussed in several essays, many quoting the horrendous representation in Philip Roth’s “Portnoy’s Complaint”. However, this stereotype is challenged throughout the book.

The collection starts with “Mothers in the Hebrew Bible” by Rachel Montagu. This looks at well-known Bible stories from the mother’s perspective. For example, Sarah died of grief because she believed her son had been sacrificed by his father, and the mother of the dead child judged by Solomon may have been suffering from post-natal depression.

Ayala Ronen Samuels, in her essay

“Other Mothers: a Feminist Reading of Biblical Stories”, reminds us of (or introduces us to) lesser known biblical women, such as Bilhah, Leah’s handmaid, who gave birth to Dan and Naphtali, but was never married to Jacob, and had no control over her own life or that of her children.

Both Ayala Ronen Samuels and Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi, in her essay “Mothers in the Talmud” point out that the Bible and Talmud were written by men for men and women were incidental in their version of our history. The latter gives examples of various aspects of stereotypical Jewish motherhood in the Talmud, from “Kimchit, the idealised, retiring, modest mother” to the more challenging mother of Rav Assi, who cannot cope with her demand to find her “a husband as handsome as you”.

I loved the small collection of Yiddish poetry of Rashel Veprinski and Rajzel Zychlinsky, whose poem “Mayn Kind Klap” (“My Child Knocks”) starts:

*Mayn kind klapt mit farmakhte vies
Im dem toyer fun der veit.
(My child knocks with closed lashes
At the gate of the world).*

Nadia Valman deals directly with Portnoy’s mother in “Literary Representations of the Jewish Mother”, and gives examples of very different images of Jewish motherhood in 19th century European novels. Angela English, writing on “Jewish Mothers on Film” reminds us that the original “Mammy” in “The Jazz Singer” was a Jewish mother. Mandy Ross contrasts the Islamic telling of the story of Hagar and Ishmael with the Genesis version.

Several contributors deal with the lack of prayers and blessings for momentous occasions in a woman’s life. Dr Giuseppe Coen wrote a collection of poems for his wife as a wedding gift in the 18th century, and his beautiful “Prayer to be Said When She Nurses for the First Time” is included in translation. In a more



modern era, Karen Worth quotes the blessings that she and her female partner wrote for her son at home and synagogue ceremonies celebrating his birth. Rabbi Marcia Plumb writes her own brachot to mark pregnancy, cutting the cord, changing a nappy, stopping breastfeeding and cutting her son’s hair for the first time. In Mandy Ross’s short story “Nativity”, the narrator, noting the same lack of brachot, settles for the Shechechiyanu.

Several essays discuss circumcision from the mother’s point of view. Two authors are relieved at giving birth to a daughter, thus avoiding the situation. Ronne Randall writes a journal of the day of her son’s bris and Sara Goodman composes a letter to her son to explain why he was not circumcised, while Anne Harris agonises over whether her uncircumcised son will be accepted as Jewish, and Julia Bard writes of giving in to family pressure.

Grace Paley, a well-known American short story writer, writes beautifully on “Other Mothers”, for example using the American-born mother, the Russian-born mother and the Polish-born mother to illustrate the rich variety of life in the early 20th century Bronx.

Only a few contributors write from the perspective of traditional Orthodox Judaism. Isobel Braidman’s “Letter to My Children” is a beautiful illustration of life as a rebbetzin, who still antagonises her husband’s congregation by putting family life before that of the synagogue. Elana Maryles Sztokman, who rebelled against her already observant family by

insisting on wearing long skirts – “the classic Orthodox girls’ uniform”, questions this choice of attire for her own daughter as she struggles to help her daughter assert her independence within an Orthodox framework. Anna Sullivan’s contribution “Letting Go” reflects on her daughter’s religious rebellion against Anna’s secular mothering in the light of her own childhood with atheist communist parents.

Two essays remind the reader how lucky we are to be living in a relatively peaceful, tolerant culture – Kitty Hart’s reminiscences of her time in Auschwitz, protecting her mother, and Ayala Ronen Samuels’ realisation at the birth of each of her three sons in Israel “that they might become soldiers one day”.

Ann Joseph writes about her experience of “Jewish Adoptive

Motherhood”, more complicated than natural parenthood, but less so than the experience of Lisa Saffron, who has one natural daughter and undertook fostering other children along with her same-sex, Catholic partner.

Marlena Schmool examines a different example of mixed marriage – not only Ashkenazi/Sephardi, but also British/Israeli. She uses her knowledge as a researcher into the demographics of British Jewry to reflect upon her own children’s upbringing.

In the section on Israel, Rakefet Zohar writes a fascinating essay on the difference between kibbutz life now and in her childhood, and her more general examination of feminism and socialism within the kibbutz movement. Other pictures of domestic life in Israel come from Batya Jacobs writing about her life as a mother of ten children on

Yishuv Mattityahu and from Shirly Eran, whose children attend a Jewish-Arab school.

The most memorable part of the section “On Not Having Children” is a short story by Sidura Ludwig about a naïve Canadian girl who discovers she is pregnant in an era when single parenthood was not an option.

As is always the case with anthologies, the quality of work varies enormously. However, there is much of interest here for anyone interested in the subject of Jewish motherhood – its history, stereotypes and religious and secular issues. I’m sure most (female!) readers will identify, as I did, with at least one of the writers’ experiences, and I found it fascinating to learn about women’s life styles very different from my own and yet still grappling with similar problems.

Jacob’s gift by Jonathan Freedland – a personal view

Hamish Hamilton an imprint of Penguin Books first published 2005. Hard back retail £16.95
Gillian Raab

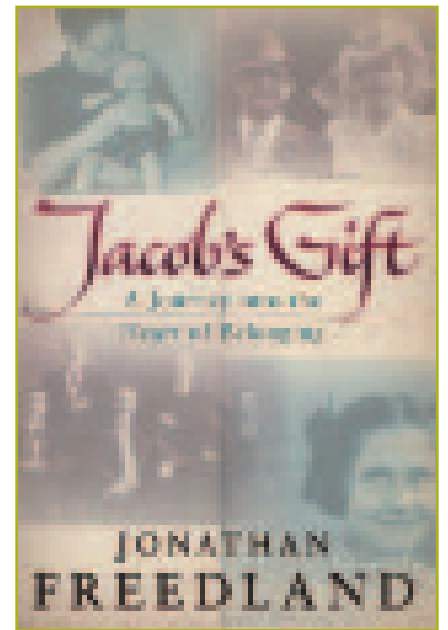
The book starts with an account of Jacob’s birth and his brit milah and his father’s joy. But the joy is tinged with concern, concern for the contradictions of his own Jewish identity and what it was, blessing or curse, that he would be passing on to his son. Was it fair to lay the possibility of anti-Semitism on his small shoulders? Was what he was passing on a genetic inheritance, a religion or a folk tradition? And how did the state of Israel fit in to the picture? Rather than trying to answer these questions, he approached it by telling stories. As Jewishness is passed down through families and the home, the stories are those of Jonathan, and so Jacob’s forebearers.

The core of his book consists of the interleaved stories of the lives of three members of his family. And these are lively stories, each reading like a novel rather than a dry family genealogy where the characters really come to life. Yet it is all meticulously researched with sources quoted. Entertaining family myths are quoted but carefully acknowledged for what they are.

The first story is that of the life of his great uncle Nat Mindel, born in the shtetl, educated in England but spending his adult life in Palestine Israel. We learn how, after enlisting during the First World War, he was posted to Gallipoli and thence in 1918 to spend his first Pesach in Jerusalem, shortly after Allenby had taken the city. He fell in love with Israel and became an ardent Zionist, returning to settle there by means of volunteering as a member of the British armed forces and subsequently getting a position in the Occupied Territories administration in charge of immigration. Nat felt dual loyalties to Britain and to Israel, but these continually pulled in opposite directions. He had to suffer the unmasked anti-Semitism of the British army and a lack of acceptance in the British Protectorate Administration who systematically removed other British Jews from their posts. After a gesture of defiance he came close to resigning but took Chaim Weizman’s advice to

remain in post. His immigration work meant that he often had to implement policies that prevented people much like himself from making aliyah, although there were instances such as the granting of entry to the Tehran orphans, where he was able to make a difference even within the constraints of the British Authorities. After the war he was distrusted by the Israeli government because of his British government experience and was given only a very mundane job from which he soon resigned.

The author draws parallels between his Uncle Nat’s experience of being a ‘Bloody Jew’ according to the British and a ‘Bloody Englishman’ to the Zionists with his own situation as a correspondent at the Guardian. When Jonathan Freedman quoted Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks as ‘feeling very uncomfortable as a Jew’ on seeing some reports from Israel, both Jonathans were denounced from several English rabbinic pulpits. Within the Guardian, in contrast, he would find himself defending Israel when she was portrayed as an incorrigible villain.



Uncle Nat was ultimately a sad, almost tragic, figure but the tale of the second great-uncle whose tale is told is a much more cheerful one. Uncle Mick grew up in the political turmoil of the Jewish East End in the 1920s and 30s. Steeped in politics from an early age by his Bundist father, Mick became an active Communist. On a visit to Germany to play in a football tournament for the Stepney Jewish Association, he witnessed first hand the rise of Nazism. These experiences were behind his lifelong commitment to work for the solidarity of all workers in the trade union movement. A tailor, he joined the United Ladies Tailor Trade Union and soon became its organiser, working hard to improve the conditions in the sweat shops. He and his comrades raised the crowds of Jews and non-Jews who marched against Oswald Moseley’s Blackshirts in the Battle of Cable Street. He maintained his loyalty to the working class in Britain despite an approach from Ben Gurion himself to come to Israel. He remained loyal to communism in spite of the Nazi-Soviet pact at the beginning of the war and the disenchantment of the Stalinist period, even though he had to formally resign from the party to take up an appointment for a national trade union. Union activity became his life’s work, helping new immigrant workers in the garment trade to organise themselves and taking pride in the achievements of their families..

In his tribute to his Uncle Mick, Freedland sees him as an example of the Jewish imperatives to fight for justice and a better world, tzedakah and tikkum olam.

The final family story told is that of the author’s own mother, Sara. The tragedies that she has lived through would be hard to credit in a work of fiction. The story tells how her family escaped a life of starvation and neglect in 1930s Palestine to return to the poverty of East End London. Her separation from her mother due to wartime evacuation was finalised when her mother was killed by a V2 bomb in one of the last air raids of the war. Returning as a young woman to her Yeshiva bocher father in Palestine she was again neglected by him and his family and was rescued by a social worker who had her cared for in a Zionist boarding school. Recovering from all these adversities she had some happy years during her marriage and Jonathan’s childhood, only to be struck down by devastating illness from which it took years to recover. Although leading a scrupulously Orthodox life, she does not have any belief in God, perhaps because of the hardships of her own life and this scepticism has been passed down to her children.

Jonathan explains this apparent contradiction in terms of the inheritance of Jewish-ness as a cultural tradition, not just or even necessarily a religion. He points to the absence of belief in Jewish organised religion and to synagogue services as serving as great a social and cultural function as anything that involves personal commitment to belief in a deity. This ‘god-shaped hole’ is even suggested as what leads to JUBUs and Jews for Jesus.

The final chapters of the book rehearse the authors concerns with his Jewish identity is clearly demonstrated in the stories from his family. Typically they do not answer his questions but illustrate them and there is a sense that his gift to Jacob is his family history and the support of all his immediate Jewish family.

It is a warm and readable book that I enjoyed immensely, but its conclusion about the passing on the Judaism of the family, and the support of the family around us is not one that could apply to my situation. I think the same would be true for many

other Jews especially in places like Edinburgh with small communities. As a convert to Judaism, certainly I was aware of taking on some of the traditions of what was to become my husband’s family. But one could hardly go through conversion without there being some religious aspect. At the same time, it was the lack of a formal creed and the lack of emphasis on blind belief that was one of the things that attracted me to convert in the first place. I have always had a special place for Edmund Fleg’s poem that appears in the Liberal prayer book starting ‘I am a Jew because the faith of Israel demands of me no abdication of the mind’. Religion is not just about belief. It is about righteous conduct, observance, studying Torah and ketuvim. And Jacob’s Gift is full of all of references to all of these,

Few Jews outside Israel and perhaps some close-knit communities in London or New York are surrounded by the kind of extended families that are described in this book and that one senses are still there for Jonathan, Jacob and their family. My own children have no Jewish relatives in the UK and curiously those in the US, although surrounded by other Jews, do less to maintain Jewish traditions than we do. Like other people in the UK, many more Jews now live alone or in reconstituted families where everyone may not be Jewish.

One of the characteristics of Jewish families is the discussion, debate and even outright disagreement, often around the crucial topics such as anti-Semitism and the place of Israel, that are the main topics in Jacob’s Gift. To keep Judaism alive and well, we need to create opportunities to keep these debates alive even though the setting may no longer be that of blood relatives.

Winner of the Caption Competition

Mr Thomas Lowrie will be receiving a bottle of champagne, kindly donated by Barbara Kwiecinska, for his winning entry to the caption competition which can be seen incorporated into the image below.

Runner up was Jonathan Kish whose suggestion was.... ‘Well here we are; not a penny to rub together between us!’

The editor could not resist the temptation to suggest ‘Last one to blink’s a cowardly custard.’



Further thoughts on the 10 Commandments

Val Simpson



I read with interest the two articles submitted by Rabbi David Rose and Dr Anthony Gilbert concerning the relevance in today’s world of the Ten Commandments. I realize that Dr Gilbert had been asked to put forward a view counter to that of the Rabbi – though I fail to understand the relevance of this. However, I read both with interest.

I feel that it perhaps deserves a third opinion, though many readers may think that the point has been more than adequately dealt with. At the risk of boring our readers I would like to speak, however.

G-d, in presenting the children of Israel with His Ten Commandments, placed at their head a Declaration of Faith. Why?

The First Commandment is G-d’s signature to what follows. He reminds His chosen people and those who are to follow them that He has a great record, one which no other deity could surpass.

‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me’.

Like any author, inventor, scientist or mathematician, G-d knew that credence demanded respect and authority. If one read a work by Einstein, which had been written anonymously, would it have the same impact and veracity? On reading this anonymously written theory could a scientist then embark, with faith on any experiment based on it – no matter how convincingly it had been written? Unless the scientist knew of previous works done by the author he would most certainly hesitate and probably not embark on any experiment.

At this point in their history one wonders why G-d feels that He must remind His people of His past influence on their lives. His hand is seen in every breath they have taken – Preventing the murder of all the male babies; the plagues; the Passover; the Exodus; the parting of the Reed Sea

and its subsequent closing and trapping of the pursuers. In all His works He had made a moral claim, as their benefactor and redeemer, on their gratitude and obedience.

The Second Commandment is so easy to misconstrue.

‘Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation of them that hate me’

The Torah does not teach that sins of guilty fathers should be visited upon innocent children. In Deuteronomy 24, v16, it states that ‘fathers shall not be put to death for children; neither shall children be put to death for fathers. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.’

This Commandment has a much deeper meaning, which can apply to every generation – that in human experience, bad examples set by a father frequently corrupt those that come after him.

A confused mass of humanity was assembled at the foot of Mt Sinai that day, some of whom were ready to worship Him whilst others already planned future idolatries. He did not ‘persuade’ or ‘cajole’ them into accepting His Covenant – he ‘compelled’ them to accept the mission which went with the bestowal of the Law.

He told them that they were to be a ‘peculiar treasure’ to Him, above all people; also, that they would be ‘unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.’

A kingdom of priests – to the Israelites this must have been a fearsome prospect. A priest, any priest; does not live like other men. He is compelled to observe rules which govern his entire way of life. In order to carry out his ministry a priest must not only sacrifice his material comforts and possessions, he must also subordinate his everyday life, his eating, drinking, freedom of movement and affections, to regulations which isolate him from secular man. How could those listening to His words observe all the rules

which were to follow? Diet; purification; circumcision; marriage; Sabbath observance, and jurisprudence, which the profane were bound to brand as anachronistic because they could not understand that they were eternal. This was no ‘Fixed Term’ contract – it was ‘Eternal’.

They stood there, a wretched, struggling people, weakened by two hundred years of persecution, then thrown by G-d’s will into a long and dangerous march through wild, hot and hostile desert. They must become a ‘Kingdom of Priests’ – a destiny of utter isolation.

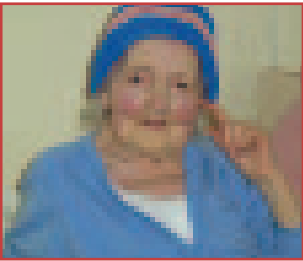
Moses must have trembled as he awaited the response of these people. ‘And all the people answered together and said ‘All that the Lord hath spoken we will do’.

Only six weeks had passed since they had left Egypt. Why had G-d moved so quickly? Their frailty was the key. He knew their weakness so He gave them the Commandments to ‘lean upon’. In the many tragic episodes of our history, how many devout Jews have found comfort and strength from ‘leaning upon’ the Commandments and the Torah, which G-d had revealed to his servant Moses.

The moral laws – murder, adultery, theft, bearing false witness and coveting another’s property, were not new to these people. Archaeological research has shown that many other tribes held these laws, long before the Israelites left Egypt, but the addition of the first Five Commandments – belief in the utter one-ness or unity of G-d, having no other gods; no graven images; not taking His name in vain; observing the Sabbath Day and keeping it Holy, and honouring parents, separated for ever this chosen people from the rest of the world.

I apologise for this lengthy dissertation. I hope that it has demonstrated the – for want of a better word – ‘importance’ of the first Five Commandments. Reading the Ten Commandments out of context is like watching a play without scenery. It is too stark and would soon become meaningless without that wonderful moment when our ancestors bound themselves to their G-d.

Obituaries



Miss Anne Goldberg

1902 - 2005

It was very much in the latter years of her life that some of us came to know Miss Anne Goldberg. Visits to see her at the nursing home where she stayed in North Berwick were always memorable occasions – never to be forgotten. Young or old, she was always pleased to see anyone who made the trip from the Jewish Community out from Edinburgh.

Whenever anyone walked into her room her reaction was always the same ‘Who are you? – Where have you come from?’ – said very much in a tone of total unexpectedness that anyone would wish to come and see her – she was always so thankful and after questioning looks and full explanations from any visitors, there was no stopping her. No-one left without being enormously enriched by a rich array of stories about her life and her family. Photographs around the room usually provided the starting point for such stories. A couple of hours would go by in no time.

They brought out the clear strong ‘yiddishkeit’ in her. That became especially evident at Pesach when she was particularly grateful to receive her Pesach order, the cool contents of which she placed in a cleaned out fridge which the nurses at her nursing home used for 51 weeks of the year but not the week of Pesach!!!

She was certainly a character and at over 100 years still very much larger than life. Those visits to her at North Berwick will I am sure be missed by all those, young and old, who made the trip to see her.

Cecilia Szpera

1923 - 2005

Cecilia Szpera was born in Edinburgh in 1923 and was brought up in an orthodox Jewish family on the South Side where at that time resided the majority of Jewish families in the city. Cissy, as I always knew her, was a very lively girl, a tomboy as she was often described, who made friends easily and was very popular. Educated at Boroughmuir School she thereafter gained employment in a secretarial capacity. In 1939 the family moved to Dundee and Cissy worked in the office of a jute firm then as an inspectress in a war factory before joining the family tailoring business. In Dundee's tiny Jewish community, she became a member of the youth group, participating in their weekend activities. It was in that city that she met and married Henryk, a Polish soldier who had decided to remain in this country on demobilisation.

The couple set up home in Fife. They retained links with Edinburgh by becoming members of the Friendship Club and immensely enjoyed their outings. They had three children but tragedy struck the family six months ago when Malcolm, who resided in Jersey, died of a brain tumour when aged only 49. Although Cissy never did openly portray emotion, that heavy blow took its toll.

Cissy was an exceedingly affectionate caring person, considerate of other people and one who lived for her devoted husband and family. I recall fondly the overwhelming warmth with which she welcomed one to her home in Kinghorn. Neither she nor Henryk were big city types but loved the intimacy and bonhomie of village life where they spent all of their 55 years together. They were the personification of all that was wonderful in married life. She was an intelligent out-going person with an ever ready smile and a genuine interest in those around her. We will cherish the memory of afternoons spent sharing her love of



music and the reminiscences of days gone by. She was my ‘big sister’ even though I towered over her. She had a great capacity for understanding and tolerance and I shall always remember her genuine and sincere concern and unselfish attitude towards others.

She leaves her husband Henryk, daughters Jacqueline and Louise, Daughter-in-law Deirdre and three loving grandchildren Pearl and I shall miss her enormously.

Ian Shein



Ellis Abrahams (Alex)

6 November 1917-31 October 2005

My father was born and brought up in Glasgow. He was the sixth of eight children, (four boys and four girls). His formative years were spent in the Gorbals, home being Hospital Street. His days in the Jewish Lads Brigade helped form relationships that would last all his life. Having served his apprenticeship as a tailor's cutter he volunteered for the Armed Forces at the outbreak of World War 2. His exploits during the war, mainly in Egypt, have been previously well documented in this magazine. Shortly after the war he returned to Glasgow and in January 1946 married my mother Betty [Peshky] Davidson.

I well remember the many occasions during my early years explaining to friends and school pals that my cousin Bernard [Davidson] was my cousin twice! His mother being my father's sister and his father being my mother's brother!

A move to Edinburgh, sometimes referred to as immigration, to open his own business, was a big adventure and a risk for the family, now added to by my birth in 1946 and Ronald's in 1949. ‘Elite Cleaners’ soon established

itself, and for almost 35 years he repaired, altered and cleaned clothing for many Edinburgh residents and visitors to the capital, including it is claimed Judy Garland! Although never an enthusiastic participating sportsman, he had won a cup for boxing in the army, the route to its acquisition always unclear! His main sporting contribution was to the Sunday morning snooker gathering in the Communal Centre in Salisbury Road. He was an enthusiastic armchair expert. Snooker, horseracing and boxing being his particular favourites, however almost any sport on TV would attract his attention. He was a ‘well kent face’ at his local bookmaker. His attempts over many years to outwit the odds generally proved fruitless. However this did not deter him attending greyhound and horse racing meetings whenever the opportunity arose, the latter with my mother usually by his side to carry home the winnings!

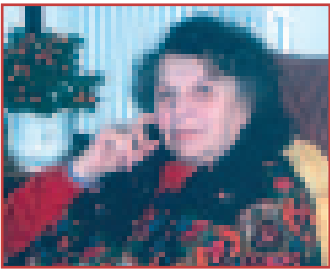
The love and support he gave his family cannot be measured. Everyone benefited, he was always ready to offer help and advice. Only recently I learned of acquaintances who are full of praise for the advice they received many years ago.

My father died at the end of October having fought bravely for four months following two falls that resulted in two hip replacements and the rapid deterioration of his one kidney forcing his dependency on dialysis. His gradual deterioration was bravely borne. He never complained, always had a smile on his face.

He will always be loved and missed by all his family and friends.

Martin Abrahams

With Compliments
from
Mark & Judith
Sischy



Sylvia Kaye (Katz)

née Factor 1918 - 2005

This must be both one of the hardest and yet easiest things I have ever had to do. Easiest because I can reel off dates, times, places without much thought, hardest because how can you describe the essence of a person who was so prominent in your life for so long, in a few short paragraphs.

What can your say about a woman who for years kept her age hidden even from her husband? Who when she was in hospital having me four years after my older brother Maurice was born, told the doctors she was five years younger than when she was first there having him!

‘Mrs Kaye’ admonished the doctors, ‘How can that be?’ ‘If I say I am, then I am!’ And so it was.

What can you say about a woman who, during WW2, was told she was going to be transferred, went to her commanding officer and asked not to be? When asked by her commanding officer, ‘Why?’ my mother replied that she liked where she was and that all her friends were there. Amazingly enough she stayed put! But that was my mum, a very difficult person to say no to.... but for all the right reasons.

My most wonderful mother was 87 years young when she died very suddenly at Liberton Hospital on 5 November 2005. She was born to Florence and David Factor. My mother was the youngest of nine, the ‘baby’, spoiled by her brothers and sisters from day one. She never knew her father as he died of influenza when she was only six months old. Her mother and older siblings worked hard to keep the family together.

She began work at a very young age

for Morrison Assoc. Company as apprentice window dresser and worked her way up to become head window dresser for all of the Morrison shops throughout Scotland. When WW2 began, she eventually joined the ATS and was stationed at Feltam in Middlesex for the duration of the war. In 1949 she met my father at a wedding in Glasgow. They married in 1950 and two years later my brother Maurice (v) was born and a few years later me.

When my brother was killed in the Yom Kippur War in Israel, my mother and father's lives were changed forever. I know that they never recovered from the shock of losing their precious son.

She was married 53 years to my father, which is an amazing accomplishment judging by today's standards. Within that time, she created a warm, loving, safe home. We grew up experiencing her unique sense of humour. Some of my fondest memories of my mother are her reminiscences about her youth. She adored her family and was extremely happy in her day-to-day work.

In 2003 when my father (v) passed away, my mother came to live with me and her grandchildren, Ryan and Hannah. Although her health was failing, she never lost her sense of humour and that mischievous twinkle in her eyes. A funny, kind, compassionate lady who will be dearly missed, more than words can say, by all who knew her. (Not forgetting Harry, our dog, her special companion).

Sharon Findlay

With Compliments
from
John & Hazel Cosgrove

With Compliments
from
Jessie Franklin

Dear Editor Who is Jewish?

On 25th of September we had a very successful coffee morning in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road.

I was pleasantly surprised by the number of visitors, who were mostly members of the other Jewish community in the City, namely the Reform community.

There are two Jewish communities in our City and both are not very large and it would be really wonderful if we could amalgamate occasionally, or even on a regular basis, in a United Hebrew Congregation. We have differences in our customs, but we are all worshipping the only one G-d and both our Rabbis are conducting the services and reading from the Torah and observing all the Holy days.

In these troubled times, when we can not avoid noticing the slowly growing anti-Semitism in our midst, wouldn't it be advisable to unite, at least to a greater degree than we do, instead of keeping ourselves apart? We should not forget that strength is in unity.

Let me remind our community that 60 years ago when the Jews were rounded up by the fascists and exterminated and burned, they were not selected according to their religious customs. It did not matter to which group one affiliated.

At that time we were all united. In the eyes of the Christians it did not matter whether one had side-locks or was clean-shaven and assimilated; as long as we had Jewish blood in our veins we were forced to wear the yellow star on our garments.

We all know that there are mixed marriages in our children's generation

in our Conservative Community and the babies of Jewish mothers can be considered Jewish. What about if the father of the baby is Jewish? In those days long ago when our Rabbis wrote those fixed rules and regulations for our religious observances, it was not possible to determine who the father of the baby was, thus they had to fix it to the mother. But nowadays with the advancement of science it is possible to determine if the father of the baby is a Jew by DNA testing. Would it not be appropriate to update this?

After all the ancestor of King David wasn't a Jew at all and he is exalted by our religion. The beauty of Judaism is that it is flexible and that is the reason that it survived for 5,000 years.

Marianne Laszlo

I can write your Will for free



Writing your Will for the first time, or updating an existing one can be over and need not cost you a penny.

Harvey Kroll of KKL Wills & Estate Planning, is a solicitor with a difference. He speaks plain English, avoiding complex legal terms and will come to you. If you prefer, KKL's services are free if JNF benefits from a legacy.

For over 55 years, KKL has helped thousands of people to write or update their Wills, minimising family disputes and 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 to request a Free booklet.

Harvey Kroll

KKL Family and
Charity Matters

Freephone 0800 350 3527
www.kkl.org.uk

Will Writing • Estate and Trust Administration •
Inheritance Tax Planning • Legacies • Charity Accounts •
Tax Affairs of Overseas • Payroll Giving • Charity Tax Reliefs •

KL, Kroll and Sons, Solicitors is a member of the law firm of Kroll, Kroll and Sons, Solicitors. Kroll, Kroll and Sons, Solicitors is a member of the law firm of Kroll, Kroll and Sons, Solicitors. Kroll, Kroll and Sons, Solicitors is a member of the law firm of Kroll, Kroll and Sons, Solicitors.

Leave Home!

Tribe Bnei Mitzvah Weekend

For all Year 7 in anticipation of your Bnei Mitzvah Year

Friday 31st March to Sunday 2nd April
at Carmel College

Come and join Tribe for its annual Bnei Mitzvah Weekend Away. We're getting together Year 7 kids from all over to have a great time. From the moment the coaches leave the weekend will be action packed. From our Fantastic Friday Night complete with After Dinner Oneg right the way through to our Special Sunday Challenge. There'll be loads of food (of course), drama, songs, games and plenty of schmoozing!

Don't miss out on the biggest weekend of the year.

- For an application form contact your Shul Youth Director or Tribe on 020 8905 6885 or info@tribeuk.com
- Price: £55 for Tribe members / £90 for nonmembers (Join Tribe FREE at www.tribeuk.com)
- Assistance with travel arrangements from Scotland
- Closing date for applications 17th March

Places are limited and will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.



This weekend is accredited by the ALC as part of the Bar Mitzvah Course



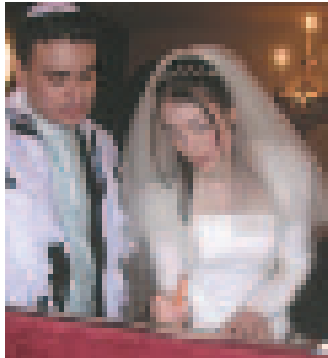
tribe TEENS

www.tribeuk.com

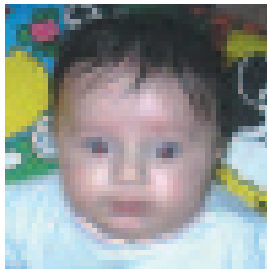
© 2008 Tribe Bnei Mitzvah Weekend. All rights reserved.

Announcements

Mazel Tov to



To **Doreen** and **Laurence Bowman** on the marriage of their daughter **Jacqueline** to **Joseph**, son of Raiselle and Charles Gaffin on 11th December 2005.



Eliot and **Caroline Cowan** on the arrival of their daughter **Olivia Brooke** born 15th October 2005 sister to

Danielle, second grandchild to **Malcolm** and **Andrea Cowen**.



Cassy and **Jonti Carro** on the birth of their son **Jack**, brother to **Lilly**, grandson to **Harold** and **Esther Mendelssohn**, great grandson to **Anita** and **David Mendelssohn**.

Get Well Soon

The Board would like to wish **Ian Shein** continued improvement in his health and look forward to hearing about his complete recovery in the near future.

Thank you

Esther Mendelssohn wishes to say thank you to all those kind people who sent letters, emails or phoned with

messages of sympathy on the death of her mother **Lola Davis** at the end of last year.

'Everyone has been so supportive and I wish to express my deep appreciation and acknowledgement of this. I wish for happier times ahead for us personally, and for the Edinburgh community as a whole.'



Melia Faye Rosen who was Bat Mitzvah in Minneapolis on 17th September 2005.

Back in September 2005 in

the USA, I had my Bat Mitzvah. It took a lot of effort and preparation. Even though there was a lot of stress, I thoroughly enjoyed it. From start to finish, all my family and friends were there watching and supporting me. I got to chant from the torah, lead services and deliver speeches written in my words.

I want to thank the Edinburgh Jewish Community for being so kind to me. I really appreciate Rabbi Rose, my teachers and friends for enhancing my learning and spirituality, throughout the whole experience. You added to my Bat Mitzvah a richer dimension.

Melya Rosen

With Compliments
from
Green & Frederick Jewellery
0131 226 7000

Forthcoming Events

February

13 Sunday

Tu'B'Shevat

20 Monday

Lodge Solomon 7.00pm

22 Wednesday

WIZO bridge evening in the Communal Hall

March

4 Saturday

WIZO supper and evening with Edward!

5 Sunday

EJLS. Cohn Shindler on 'The Triumph of Military Zionism; Nationalism and Origins of the Israeli Right' 8.00pm

19 Sunday

EJLS. Beyond the Pale; Klesmer Music and other entertainment for Purim 8.00pm

20 Monday

Lodge Solomon 7.00pm

April

13 Thursday

First Day Pesach

24 Monday

Lodge Solomon 7.00pm

June

11 Sunday

WIZO annual dinner

Senior Maccabi meets on

Sunday evenings in members' homes.

For further information, contact Alice Kelpie (337 1894)

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

All meetings take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road, unless otherwise stated. All are subject to alteration.

Star Trek Answers

Back Row Jack Cowan, Anita Levinson, (nee Lewis) Ronald Hoffenberg, ??, Frank Abrahamson, Mickey Cowen.

Front Row Ivor Klayman, Shirley Bennett, (nee Zoltie) Anne Sterne, Harold Sterne, Sheela Smith, (nee Gordon) Mervyn Smith,

Direct front ??