

THE EDINBURGH

STAR

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THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



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The Edinburgh Star

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We would like to ask our readers to support the people who have kindly agreed to advertise in The Edinburgh Star, in return for the support that they themselves give us.

Editorial

Kativah vechatimah tovah to all our readers!

This is the second issue of the Star that I have had the privilege to edit. Heartfelt thanks to so many readers for their kind words about Star 68! They particularly welcomed the focus on Edinburgh which we intend to maintain.

It is wonderful to be able to begin this issue with coverage of the EHC's new Beit Hamidrash, which was rededicated on 2nd September. This development provides a partial response to Rabbi Rose's message below as it is planning for a future in which 4 Salisbury Road continues to be the centre of orthodox Judaism in Edinburgh.

The Star aims to be a chronicle of our life in Edinburgh and inevitably, some coverage goes back a few months, to Purim and Pesach. However we are also bang up to date with last minute coverage of all the Jewish fun of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, covered by ace theatre critic, Lord Julian Goodman. David Neville, the architect of the Festival Open Day, is also featured, with his family, as a well-known member of the

community who does a nationally important job with the BBC.

As editor I want to highlight our oldest and youngest members. I am sure readers at home and abroad will be delighted to see so much of Rabbi Shapira, whose visit coincided with the May coffee morning at Salisbury Road, renewing his friendships with many of EHC's older members. It is also delightful to have a report of the Diamond Jubilee celebration at the lunch club, an odyssey in blue, red and white. At the other end of the age range, the Cheder children's prize giving at Salisbury Road was an occasion to make us proud of our young people

Enjoy your High Holyday reading.

Micheline Brannan



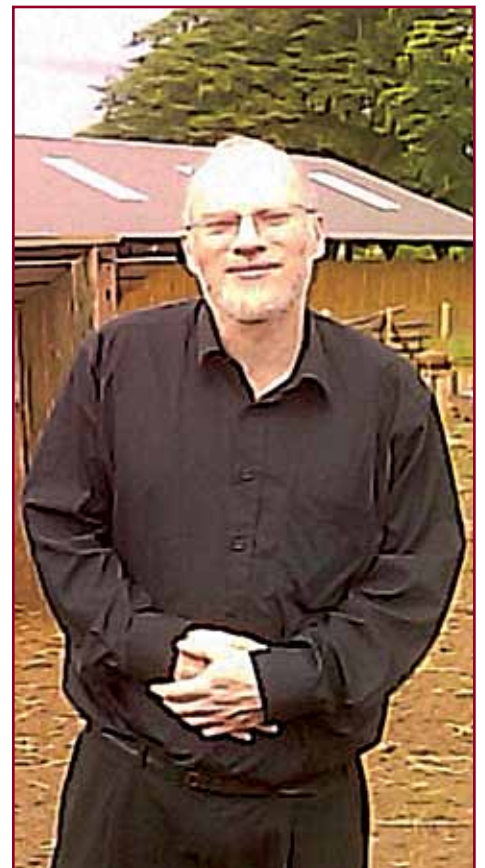
Rosh Hashana Message

We have just experienced the excitement of the Olympics. The Paralympics especially are a source of inspiration.

We see men and women who have had their lives destroyed, often in an instant, overcome their handicaps and achieve great things. While the Olympics are about competition the Paralympics are also about transformation. That is also the theme of this time of year. During the High Holiday period we are called upon to engage in the process of Teshuva. This is often translated as repentance or return but its true meaning is transformation. We are given the opportunity to transform our lives and become something better. Many things can stand in the way of this transformation, however, especially the belief that we cannot change the situation we find ourselves in. It is true that we cannot change our physical attributes,

mental ability or our family and societal background. Yet the Paralympic athletes teach us that we are determine how we react to our situation. It is that choice that is at the heart of this special time of the year. This is true for communities as well as individuals. We cannot change many of the factors that shape the situation we find ourselves in as a community. We can, however, determine our attitude to the situation. We can be disheartened and negative and believe that our decline and eventual disappearance is inevitable. Or we can be optimistic, believe we have a future and work to ensure it. This year let us resolve as a community to do the latter. Let us look forward with hope not despair and together transform our future.

A Happy New Year
Rabbi David Rose



Completion of Beit HaMidrash project

Edward Green

The refurbished and transformed Beit Hamidrash was re-dedicated by Rabbi David Rose and re-opened by Alec Rubenstein at a service on the afternoon of Sunday 2nd September attended by over a hundred congregants, representatives from Netherlee, Clarkston and Queens Park Synagogue in Glasgow, and other guests.



Beit Hamidrash being opened by Alec Rubenstein

It was an afternoon of celebration - not only does the newly refurbished area look splendid but we also mark that we as a community have risen to the challenge of moving with the times and recognising that the needs of our congregation have changed.

The old classroom where the revered Samuel Rubenstein, father of Alec, taught so many of our congregants has now been incorporated into the enlarged Beit Hamidrash. This together with the former Brides Room has created a comfortable and spacious area for the ladies of the community to enjoy services; sitting in pews taken from the main synagogue allowing the ladies not only increased comfort but the opportunity to really feel part of the service and not be hidden behind a bamboo screen or wall hatch as previously. Additionally, the corridor that was outside the Beit Hamidrash that led to the Brides Room and the Resource Centre, and the Resource Centre itself, have now been incorporated into the enlarged space allowing the two outstanding stained glass windows, by the late renowned William Wilson, to be an integral part of the enlarged Beit Hamidrash.

Two further stained glass windows by the same artist rarely seen in the back corridor of the main shul have been moved into the Beit Hamidrash for us all to enjoy and these together with a gift of a further two new stained glass windows each side of the Oren Kodesh, especially commissioned by the children of the late Violet and Meyer Oppenheim in memory of their parents and their grandmother Pearl Levitt, have ensured that the whole area has a wonderfully spiritual and ecclesiastical air. The space has truly become more than a Beit Hamidrash; it has become a warm, bright and inviting smaller synagogue where we can enjoy services on the colder winter Shabbats, on Friday nights, Sunday mornings and through the week, and when family services are held.

The new area is pleasingly bright. An enlarged roof light in front of the Oren Kodesh and a new roof light in the incorporated corridor together with a new beautifully positioned window in the shape of a Magen David has ensured that the Beit Hamidrash is now

flooded with natural light. Glass panels have been fitted into the outside entrance doors, and the steps that previously led to this entrance have now been replaced with a raised area ensuring easy disabled access down the side of the building to the Beit Hamidrash, negating the need for any steps or ramp.

The walls have been painted a warm ivory, the carpet, a gift from the closing Netherlee, Clarkston and Queens Park Synagogue is predominantly blue in colour with black accents, picking up the colour of the metal mechitza, another gift from Netherlee. We were also delighted to be given a Sefer Torah from Netherlee, lighter in weight than our usual and for this most welcome. Edinburgh has been so fortunate in having received these items and others from Netherlee at just the right time for them to be incorporated and used in the refurbished Beit Hamidrash, allowing a financial saving for Edinburgh, and the welcome plus that these furnishings will continue to be used in a Jewish place of worship. The committee remain most indebted to the Trustees of Netherlee, Clarkston and Queens Park Synagogue.

A warm shade of sky blue with silver fringes and embroidery has been used for the ark curtain, torah covers and other items in similar vein within the Beit Hamidrash, a departure from the traditional jewel colours seen in so many synagogues. They have all been made in the United States and most incorporate the "Tree of Life" in their design. We have also been most grateful to have been gifted full furnishings in white (with silver embroidery) for the High Holydays also made for us in the same design.

After the wonderfully uplifting rededication service where Joe Aronson sang Mah Tov as the Torahs were brought into the Beit Hamidrash, and Rabbi Rose spoke so movingly and poignantly about the EHC's capabilities for adaption and change where necessary, the members and their honoured guests repaired to the Community Hall for a wonderful afternoon tea - beautifully arranged and prepared by Hilary Rifkind and the Events Committee. The tea was very kindly and graciously sponsored by Jackie and Raymond Taylor to mark their recent 60th birthdays.

At the tea, the Chairman spoke thanking his colleagues on the refurbishment committee, Morris Kaplan, Arnold Rifkind and Raymond Taylor for their enormous support in helping to bring the project to such a satisfactory conclusion. He also thanked Alec Rubenstein for so kindly agreeing to open the newly refurbished Beit Hamidrash describing Alec as the “father” of the community, for his continuing and unswerving contribution to the life of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, and for his sage advice and knowledge of all things to do with Edinburgh Jewry. Finally, the Chairman thanked all those at the tea for their presence, making the day such a memorable and special day for the community.

A vote of thanks to the committee was very kindly made by the Honorary Life President, Mickey Cowen. Alec Rubenstein

also stood to thank all for bestowing the kind honour on him of re-opening the Beit Hamidrash, praising the committee for a job well done and expressing felicitations on the Taylors for their very special birthdays.

This whole project would not have been possible without the wonderful financial support that we have enjoyed not only from our own members but from many outwith the community who have retained a link with Edinburgh, whether through birth, through time spent within the town or by having family or friends within the city. We on the committee have been humbled by the outstanding response we have received and we speak for the entire congregation when we voice once more our sincere gratitude to the many supporters who have made this possible.



Events committee preparing the tea

Deconsecration of Netherlee, Clarkston and Queens Park Synagogue

Netherlee, Clarkston and Queens Park Synagogue was deconsecrated on Wednesday 18th July, to which representatives from the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation were invited. We were to receive a gift of a Sefer Torah for our newly refurbished Beit Hamidrash, as well as furnishings. Member of the Beit Hamidrash Refurbishment Committee, Arnold Rifkind, was on hand to receive the torah and had the honour of carrying it from the Aron Kodesh.



Harvey Livingston, the Rabbi and Arnold Rifkind



Martin Livingston with Arnold Rifkind





Before



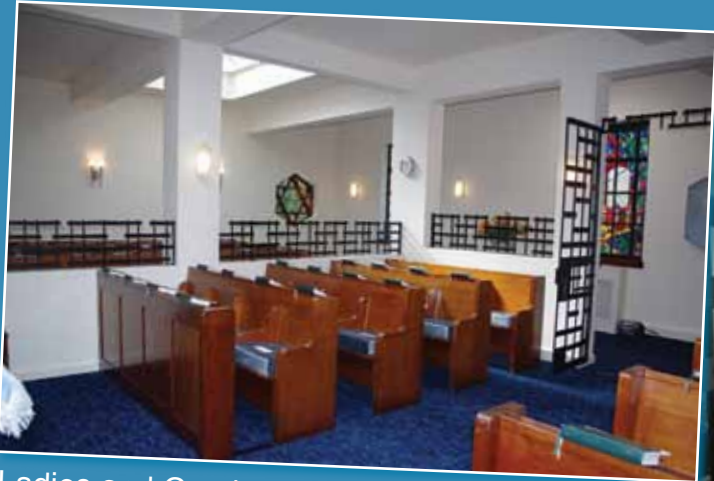
During



View of Oren Kodesh



Torahs arriving back into the Beit Hamidrash



Ladies and Gentlemen seating



Rabbi's first sermon in reopened Beit Hamidrash



New front garden



Back garden of Synagogue complex

An Interview With Rabbi Shapira

Edward Green

Rabbi Shalom Shapira looks back on his seven years of service as Rabbi to the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, from 1988 till 1995, as the most enjoyable and rewarding of his working life. This period had an enormous impact on him and on his late wife Rachel. They both made true and valued friends, allowing him a period of his life that he continues to look at with enormous affection and nostalgia.



Then ...



and Now

This appears to be fully reciprocated by the Edinburgh Hebrew Community who remember them with the same affection and zeal. During his time, Rabbi Shapira became personally involved with so many of the community and has continued to be so since he left over 17 years ago. It is the measure of the man that, when he visits Edinburgh primarily to visit his grandson and his family, he spends so much of his time visiting with members of the community.



With Rose Orgel

Curt Leviant, in an article from the Jewish Frontier published in the summer of 1993, refers to the Rabbi and his late wife, Rachel. "Rabbi Shapira, a seventh-generation Jerusalemite, came here five years ago after retiring early as an official with the Jewish National Fund in Israel, and after taking a degree in Jewish history at the Hebrew University. Since his arrival, he and his wife have breathed new life into the community, which obviously adores the couple. The Shapiras proudly show me a scrapbook with articles pertaining to Jewish life in Edinburgh. One highlight was a feature story in the Scotsman celebrating the couple's 2000th guest."

Shalom Shapira was one of seven children; he has only one brother surviving who is five years his junior. He remains close to him although he lives in Haifa away from Ra'anana where Rabbi Shapira and his wife, Jehudith, a lawyer from Tel Aviv live. Jehudith became his wife in 2003 after the sad loss in May 2001 of his wife, Rachel, the mother of his four children.

When Shalom talks of his late wife, his memories of Edinburgh flood back. Theirs was a perfect partnership with Rachel



With Janet Mundy and Blanche Mundy.

ensuring that the Rabbi's house was open to all. He will never forget his visit to Edinburgh shortly after her death, when the Community spontaneously organised a memorial evening for Rachel and how humbled he was by it.

He also recalls with great fondness and gratitude his visit in 2004 with his new wife, Jehudith, where they were both welcomed with enormous affection, and how Yehudith was so impressed by the strong ties between him and the community.

It's undoubtable that Rabbi Shapira is a family man. He talks lovingly and movingly of his four children and ten grandchildren and the further three children and eleven grandchildren that Yehudith has. He tells with pride how all their children were present at their wedding on March 2003 at the Sharon Hotel in Herzelia.

Shalom's oldest child, Kalya (54), is a graphic designer and lives in Tel-Aviv, with her adopted daughter Dabielle (5). His only son, Yair, 52 this year, living between Israel and Scotland, has a D.Sc. in applied mathematics and has authored 3 books in the subject, 2 of them in a second edition. He has a son, Roy, in the army in Israel and a second son, Amir, who is 11 and attends Sciennes School. His wife, Marina, is a Doctor of Sociology at Edinburgh Napier University.

Then comes Yael, (47), who lives in Ra'anana and works for Bank Hapoalim. She has three daughters by her husband Ilan; Shachar (19), in the army, Noa (15), and the youngest Shira Rachel (9).

Last is Ephrat, a well-known graphic designer in Israel, married to Tomer with four children, Yotam, 15 years old and a basketball player, Rony, recently bat-mitzvahed, Uri (8), and Ido Shalom who is 3. They live near Jerusalem.



With Jonathan and Susie Adler (Dr Susie Shenkin)



With Jonny Sperber and Tom Griffin



With Lord Julian Goodman



With Marcia Berger and Marianne Laszlo



With former Star Editor, Judy Gilbert

Shalom talks most proudly of his grandchildren and sees a good deal of them undertaking 'grandfatherly' duties of all forms. One can be sure that the affection works both ways!



With Tom Lowrie and Lynn Cooper

Shalom divides his time between his family, his health club and other pursuits. Although retired, he is still called upon to run the High Holyday services and the Seder for the Aduth Yisroel community in Berlin. For many years, he had run the Seder at various hotels and at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. Having grown up in a very Orthodox family with his father a Lubavitcher, who established the Lubavitch Yeshiva in Jerusalem, it seemed inevitable that he would one day be a member of the clergy.



With Norma Brodie and Marcia Berger

He sees his greatest achievement during his time in Edinburgh with the establishment of this publication, the "Edinburgh Star". He recalls the first meeting for the Star held at his home and is justly proud of how the magazine has remained to this day a most valued part of Edinburgh Jewish life.

Whilst talking, he also reminisced about his first day in the Edinburgh Cheder when he was given young David Mason and Michael Rifkind to teach. He chuckles, thinking how David always asked the most searching questions in true rabbinic fashion. It never came as a surprise to him that David chose the Rabbinate as his profession and it has been a source of pride to him that one of his students did so.

There is no doubt that Rabbi Shapira commands the respect of those he meets by the respect he shows them. In his departure message, which was posted to all members of the community here in Edinburgh, he spoke of striving to fulfill the duties and wishes of the community, which were fortunately identical to his personal aspirations, welcoming everyone who came to the community as a brother.



With Norman Dorfman and Betty Caplan



With Rabbi Rose and Shari Cohn

Similarly, he has wished the community to be part of his life. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, he gave a special Kiddush in Edinburgh. He also had a surprise party in Jerusalem where his daughters presented him with a "This is your life" book in front of his large family and many friends.

The book captured in words and pictures all the stages of his life, concluding with congratulations from many of his Edinburgh friends.

Now in his eighty-fourth year, Rabbi Shapira keeps his youthful appearance with an exercise regime, keeping abreast of all around him both in and out of his family circle, and by being still called upon by various communities. He tackles writing sermons and speeches and delivering them on request, as he must always have, ensuring the same detail goes into them as would have in the past. His wife Yehudith maintains her interest in attending study groups tackling varying topics of Judaism. Together, they make a wonderful couple and the Edinburgh community is all the richer for the kindness and concern still shown by Rabbi Shalom Shapira and his wife, Yehudith.



With Morris Kaplan and Edward Green



With Steven Hyams and John Danzig

Eve Oppenheim adds her own reflections on Rabbi Shapira's visit:

It was great to see Rabbi Shapira again during one of his regular visits to Edinburgh. He was, as usual, in great form, looking extremely well and as ebullient as ever. He told me how much he enjoys participating in the life of our community where he is so warmly welcomed and particularly values his close links to many members here.

He admired the contributions to the 'Edinburgh Star' by the members of our wider community and the students and particularly noticed a very positive attitude to the many events in which he participated during his busy schedule.

His enthusiasm embraces the whole community and we look forward to welcoming him back on his next visit to Edinburgh to see his son and family.



With Clarice Osborne and Eve Oppenheim

לשנה טובה

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The Nevilles

Edward Green

Michele and David Neville and their lovely twin daughters, Sarah-Beth and Katie, are well known and well loved within the Edinburgh Jewish community.

They are known not only for their wonderfully warm and friendly personalities, but also for their attendance and involvement in shul activities, and for the Festival Open Day, started by David several years ago.

Michele and David were married in Norrice Lea Synagogue in 1987 and lived in London and Birmingham before moving to Scotland. They see Edinburgh as offering the most spectacular way of life, and they love the city, the architecture, its pace and its accessibility.

David is a drama producer working for the BBC for the last 17 years producing radio plays and series. That means that he sources material, develops writers, casts, actors, directs them in the studios and produces the end product. He has worked with such luminaries as Billy Connolly, Andrew Sachs, Alexander McCall Smith, Jane Asher, Brian Cox and William Gaminara. David is also a freelance writer and playwright, writing plays for theatre, television and radio. He has written scripts for the Jewish Museum, London and for Holocaust events at Giffnock Shul in Glasgow. David's Jewish heritage is obviously important to him as to all his family; he has often written plays of Jewish interest, and in his younger years ran a youth theatre at the Western Synagogue in London. David also gives talks and workshops, and, when I visited, he was to be a guest speaker the following weekend at the Association of Jewish Refugees in Newcastle.

Michele's work is quite different. She is an economics teacher at George Watson's College, as well as the Principal Teacher of Careers, and you can see quite easily why she would be. Her relaxed, concerned and patient manner allows her to offer sensible and reliable guidance. She is also an examiner in economics for the Scottish Qualifications Authority and finds time for the Yiddish class in the shul every Tuesday. Michele also has a very unusual passion for football, instilled in her by her late father; as he had no sons, she would join him at football matches whenever possible. Michele and David have a shared love for the theatre, music, ballet and dance and attend productions whenever they can.

Sarah-Beth and Katie were born in 1992, eleven minutes apart.

(Michele is also a twin – her twin Susie is a doctor). They are as close as sisters can be; Sarah-Beth is now reading law at Cambridge whilst Katie is reading economics at Nottingham. Both girls are seen frequently in Edinburgh where they retain close friendships with their peers from Cheder. In the first term of her second year Katie was "Shabbat Officer" in Nottingham, cooking for 120 students each Friday night. Sarah-Beth has been a "Freshers' Rep" this year helping to arrange Freshers' Week and other activities.

The girls took their Jewish studies very seriously, flourishing in Cheder, taught by, amongst others, Sam Danzig and Joel Raffael, and undertook the Israel Tour at the age of sixteen. They attend the Noam summer camps and are popular Youth Leaders. Michele and David look back on their bat-mitzvah; the shul was busy, Rabbi Rose officiated, and David Goldberg z"l recited Mussaf with a jolly tune for 'Adon Olam'. Sadly David's father had just died in the March before the bat-mitzvah, which was held in November. David recalls how kind Philip Mason, the President at the time, had been to him, and how Rabbi Rose and other members of the community came through to Glasgow for the Shiva.



Michele and David value friendship and have built up a strong and close group of friends in Edinburgh since moving here in 2001 after a spell in David's hometown, Glasgow. David and his family had been members of the old Crosshill Synagogue, which then merged with the now defunct

Queens Park Shul. Michele had been looking for a part time job in Glasgow, and found one in Edinburgh! As David had previously lived in Edinburgh and loved it, Glasgow's loss proved to be very much Edinburgh's gain.

Michele and David relish that, within our small community, everyone knows everyone else and is on hand to assist and participate when called upon. They were particularly pleased to have been asked to compère the Burns Supper for the community and to have helped put together the Festival Open Day held in the middle of August in the Community Centre. David has been able to build it up to a most enjoyable and entertaining day, enticing Festival and Fringe acts to present in our hall a 'taster' of their shows. It has proved to be a great success and the numbers attending have grown over the last four years. David also found time to stage his own play during last year's Festival and many members of the Community attended.

The Nevilles are a popular family for good reason and we hope that they will remain within our midst for very many years to come.

Future of the Jewish Community in Edinburgh

In this section we follow up the discussion of the Jewish Communities in Edinburgh which was started in Star 68. There are two contrasting points of view, from a long standing member of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, and from the Chair of Sukkat Shalom. Norman Crane's article held over from Star 68 also appears here.

Sidney Caplan

I am a traditional Orthodox Jew and come from a third generation family living in Edinburgh. I have been married for 46 years to a lady from Manchester from the same background and we brought up two sons in the traditional way. They married within the faith and live in London. We are members of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and our circle of friends tend to be of the same outlook. We also have many non-Jewish friends which helps to give us a better perspective on the world as a whole.

Both of us have been and still are involved with various organisations within the community. I think that you can take being Jewish either as a religion or as a member of the Semitic people. I personally am a Scottish or British person whose religion is Jewish. To live in Edinburgh and be an Orthodox, traditional Jew is not easy compared with in London or Manchester, but being in a small community has its advantages, as it is like being in an extended family with its good times and bad times just like any family.

I have only once had anti-Semitic comments made to me and that was when I was playing rugby for my school. My team mates took exception to the comments and in the end both the boy and the school apologised. I may have just been lucky, though Scotland has a history of being one of the few European countries which has never had a pogrom and is very tolerant of its Jewish population.

The future for our community will be one in which, though there will always be a Jewish presence in our city, it may dwindle to be similar to that of Dundee, Ayr, Blackpool, Southport, Sunderland and many other communities in the United Kingdom. Even Glasgow's Jewish population has fallen from fifteen thousand to round about four and a half thousand.

The answer for small communities is for the social aspect to be maintained by working together, whatever part of the religious spectrum the members may represent. With different 'denominations' in one city it is particularly important to keep

the religious parts of our lives separate as the current set-up in Anglo-Jewry is that the denominations do not readily mix.

As our community becomes older the problem is arising that no one is coming forward to take the place of the elderly committee members. Every one tends to leave the future of various committees with their neighbours forgetting that they are someone else's neighbour.

What does the future hold? I think that eventually over the next thirty years there will be only two significant communities in the United Kingdom and they will be London and Manchester. The problem with our community is that we are not sure what to do about this. If the Orthodox congregation at Salisbury Road continues to decline in numbers and in the availability of gentlemen members to lead or attend a Minyan, we may face a crisis.

At one time it was aired that we might come under the umbrella of the United Synagogue I would like to have heard what they proposed but this might not have solved the problem if there are simply not enough Orthodox Jews in Edinburgh to maintain a regular Minyan. The Minyan must not be confused with the building at 4 Salisbury Road, but of course the building itself is a terrific overhead to a declining community. The question then arises of whether it makes economic sense to share the premises with others but this is by no means a trouble-free option as we need to ensure Orthodox standards are maintained, for example regarding kashrut in the kitchen and Shabbat and Yom Tov observance throughout the premises.

Perhaps the best option for now is to accentuate the positives despite our Cassandras. We're not in a crisis yet. Quite the opposite! We have a new Beit HaMidrash, which will make the small numbers look like more of a crowd in the winter and keep everyone feeling warm. We have some joint functions with the wider Jewish Community such as the Burns Supper, the Purim Spiel and Yom HaAtzmaut, and we have been praised for being a warm, welcoming and dynamic community. Let's act as if we believe it ourselves!

With the passage of time, the decisions we need to make may become more clearly defined and more obvious.

A vision of the future

Gillian Raab

My family consists of my husband Charles (originally from New York), our son Jonathan (currently living in London), our daughter Anna, son-in-law Tim who run a restaurant in Bridge of Earn, Perthshire and their daughter Connie. I met Charles here and after a period of study, both here and in the US, I converted to Judaism with a Reform Rabbi in New York before we married in 1968. I knew from the start that this conversion would not be recognised by the Orthodox community.

We became members of the Glasgow New Synagogue (GNS, now Glasgow Reform) and attended services there and, from time-to-time, of the small group of Edinburgh GNS members. Both our children attended cheder and had their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs at GNS. Meanwhile we made contact with other Jews in Edinburgh, mostly through the Lit and in my case the 35s (Campaign for Soviet Jewry). Initially I felt very diffident about attending Lit meetings, knowing that some people would not consider me Jewish. At my first ever Lit meeting I sat next to Oswald Spark (zichrono l'vracha) who asked me during the talk "du bist a yid?" to which I gave a faint nod. But I soon overcame my embarrassment thanks to welcome from kind friends and went on to become secretary and president of the Lit.

Sukkat Shalom During the early 2000s the Edinburgh group of GNS had a revival with the encouragement of Rabbi Pete Tobias, then in Glasgow. Numbers grew and included people in Edinburgh who were not members of GNS. Eventually, in 2004, we decided to form our own community and to affiliate with Liberal Judaism who have proved to be a very supportive organisation. Since then we have grown both in numbers and self-confidence and we now have our own part-time Rabbi, Mark Solomon. This is not the place to go into the full history of our community, which you can read about on our web site (<http://www.eljc.org>). But briefly, we have a lot of activities, services every weekend and for all the major festivals. Our founding chairman was Maurice Naftalin and I have been chairman for the last three years, with one more to go.

The one difficulty we face is that we do not have our own premises. We do not have the resources to pay rent for the exclusive use of a venue, let alone purchase our own building. We rent community centres, church halls and the Unitarian Church (for High Holydays). Our belongings are stored in various cupboards at these venues or at members' homes (our Torah Scroll and ornaments). This all increases the work of organising the community.

The Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, the Orthodox community, larger and more established than we are, faces the opposite problem. They have premises but as their numbers are declining the current arrangement of their premises is not

suitable. They have a current project, soon to be completed, to refurbish the Beit Hamidrash and reorganise it to accommodate smaller services, particularly in the winter months, when heating the large main part of the shul is difficult. To an outsider an obvious solution would be that the two communities could share premises. But anyone inside the Jewish Community would know that there are problems, which might even seem insurmountable. But I am an optimist and I think that it is worth thinking about a future for the Jewish Community in Edinburgh that might involve some cooperation between the communities.

A Jewish Community Centre My ideal future for the Edinburgh Communities would be for us to have a Jewish Centre like some that I know to exist in other places (Oxford, Krakow, Hong Kong, various US cities) In her research work on Jews in Scotland, Fiona Frank discovered many Jewish people who wished to identify with their Jewish heritage but do not wish to affiliate to a community. A Centre could be a nexus for some of the activities that might attract them. The Centre would have to accommodate both Orthodox and Progressive services as well as cultural events. In addition it could be a place where Jewish students could be welcome. This may seem a distant prospect now, but in the rest of this article I will think about how it might be achieved, what we would need and what the problems might be.

The two Communities would have to work together. There are many social ties between individual members, going back many years. There are even some people who affiliate with both communities. We mix at other Jewish events such as the Jewish Literary Society and we have held joint events such as the Purim Spiels and the Burns Supper last year. Our Rabbis are on good terms. They have much in common: both are from the antipodes and both have had an Orthodox training, although Rabbi Solomon subsequently left the United Synagogue Rabbinate to join Liberal Judaism. Sukkat Shalom is affiliated to Liberal Judaism, and we would want to continue to receive support from the national organisation. If we were to share a building I think that, unlike the Oxford Congregation, we would have to be two Congregations under one roof rather than a single organisation unaffiliated to any organisation. Members of Sukkat Shalom would have to be scrupulous in respecting the needs of the Orthodox Community to maintain kashrut (but see below) and Shabbat observance. The issue for members of the Orthodox community might be to show respect to those of us who have converted via a progressive Beth Din. This has been the case for the vast majority of interactions we have had with members of the Orthodox community. But there have been a few cases, happily not recently, when the children of members of the Orthodox community have taunted our children by telling them that "of course they are not Jewish". But perhaps all of these personal issues would be lessened if it could be made clear that by being part of an umbrella organisation we are not giving up our individual values.

Could we share premises at Salisbury Road? This looks like an obvious solution but, at least for the present, there are

major obstacles. Many Sukkat Shalom members say they would always feel like second class citizens there. Also, any premises we shared would need to have two kitchen areas, one where kashrut was maintained strictly and another with less strict rules (e.g. no meat or seafood) that would allow people to share meals prepared outside, an important part of the Sukkat Shalom community life. This would also make it easier to allow other organisations to use the premises. The Oxford Jewish Centre has such an arrangement. I understand that EHC members might have objections to sharing their current premises on this and other grounds.

Could we establish a new Jewish Centre? Given the relatively small size of the Edinburgh Jewish Community this seems unlikely. But perhaps we should not be so pessimistic. If we were seen to be a place with an active Jewish Community declining numbers might reverse. In the Spring of 2011 a few of us, from all parts of the Edinburgh Jewish Community, had breakfast with Alberto Senderay. He is the European director of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). If you search under his name in Google you can find a video where he discusses the future of

diaspora communities in a very interesting way. We discussed aspects of Jewish life in the Edinburgh, including the difficulty of co-operation between the Liberal and Orthodox communities. He commented that our problems were common to all the European communities he worked with. The JDC supports many communities in Europe, mostly in the former Soviet Union, and perhaps they might be persuaded to support us too. Other more local sources might come from the City of Edinburgh who have supported other religious groups.

Is it a distant vision? As I write this it feels like my vision is fading, at least for now. But perhaps by setting it out others might be inspired to think how something of this sort might be achieved. Meanwhile, I very much hope that in the coming months and years we can do everything possible to strengthen ties between the two Edinburgh Jewish Communities through joint social gatherings and other activities. Please send any comments and ideas to me at chair@eljc.org.

Wishing all Star readers Shanah Tovah and well over the Fast.

Caption Competition

Judy Gilbert has done a lovely montage for Rosh Hashanah. A bottle of kosher wine goes to the best caption submitted by readers. Send your entries to the editor.



Norman Crane

My wife and I moved to Edinburgh from Manchester four years ago and joined Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community.



We joined Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community and much of our social life takes place within the context of contacts we have made at ELJC which we have found to be warm, welcoming and intellectually stimulating. We have also found the other sectors of the Jewish Community in Edinburgh to be welcoming friendly and helpful; a pleasant change from Manchester.

For me being Jewish is a key factor in my identity as a person. It is the group above all else to which I belong. It provides me with a religious dimension to my life without which I would feel bereft. I feel culturally enriched through my connectedness with an ancient tradition of spiritual and ethical searching enhanced by the performance meaningful ritual and ceremony and on-going debate about the nature of Jewish values. Much of my intellectual curiosity is devoted to dealing with the question of how we got to where we are now and what in our history has led us to this point.

At the moment the Jewish Community in Edinburgh provides me at least with the framework to pursue my Jewish interests. Is it likely to do so in the future? Clearly Edinburgh is subject to the problems that beset all small Jewish communities. Young people leave to go and live in larger Jewish centres or places which seem to be more exciting. I do not think all is lost on that score. Edinburgh as a capital city with, for example, four universities attracts a number of academic and professional people and will continue to do so. Of these a proportion will be Jewish.

Another problem is the age profile of people currently active in community affairs and activities. For example attendance at recent Literary Society gatherings has been heavily weighted towards the older end of the range. By contrast the impression I formed at the lighting of the Chanukiah in St Andrews Square was that attendance was more evenly spread across the age range. I think therefore that more attention should be paid to putting on events and social activities with an appeal to a wider age range particularly those geared to attracting younger people.

The community development project undertaken by Fiona Frank seems to me a very good vehicle for finding out what would work. The project focusses on getting people to say themselves where their interests lie and then to setting up projects to respond to those interests.

It is perhaps to second guess what the general trend might be but I think that as people have become less interested in synagogue attendance they have become more interested in Jewish culture in the widest possible sense: Jewish films, plays, dance, music, poetry, folk-lore and so forth. Opportunities for active participation in these and similar areas of interest should be made available alongside the usual lectures, talks, concerts and performances. If Jews ramble, cycle, trek and indulge in sporting activities together then this too strengthens the community. I am sure that many of these things happen already but I see their further development as being very important for the future well-being of the community. To take part in activities alongside people from the wider non-Jewish community would help strengthen our own sense of community. A klezmer/ceilidh event is great fun. To explain one's own tradition to people of another background enables one to understand and appreciate better one's own cultural identity.

An important factor in boosting the enjoyment of many activities is the appearance of food and drink at some time during their course. It's a cliché, particularly in Jewish circles, but especially important in promoting a sense of togetherness.

Providing resources to enable different groups of people to participate is also important. In some cases, for example, the provision of crèche facilities would be

very helpful. Similarly, laying on perhaps parallel activities for older children would mean that a wider range of people would be able to take part.

For me what is important about the things I have in mind is that they should wherever possible unite different sectors of the community. For us it has been very heartening to feel that we have joined a community, not just a congregation. I am convinced that young people are put off by inter-communal bickering. Given the small size of the community we cannot afford to disenchant people in that way. Of course individual sectors of the community must and will continue to develop their particular religious practice ideas and identities. But this should be within a sense of joint Jewish identity and co-operative venture. My great fear is that this collective spirit will be thrust aside and the community as a whole hijacked by one or another of its constituent sectors. The community might then shrink to something so small that to coming generations it might not seem worth bothering with. My great hope is that this will not happen because there exists currently within the community a vitality and spirit of good will that will prevent this from happening. I suspect that the community will shrink a little in overall numbers but there will, I hope remain a vibrant core.

The ideas that I have adumbrated here remain rather nebulous, directions for advance rather than any kind of detailed programme. I am not the kind of person for that kind of enterprise. There are others far more adept than I am at putting flesh on this kind of skeleton. In addition, not having been resident in Edinburgh for very long I am still rather hazy about the usual mechanisms for getting things done within the community. I am sure that within the community there are a number of talented and enterprising individuals who will be able to sustain and enhance the vitality of the community.



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Every Jew has a story to tell, and every story is different

Fiona Frank

SCoJeC's Being Jewish in Scotland project has found that Jewish people generally feel comfortable in Scotland, although some spoke about surprising examples of ignorance about Judaism and some disturbing examples of antisemitism, and we were told that the rise in anti-Zionist political activity has made people feel uneasy.

Being Jewish in Scotland was a small-scale inquiry carried out by SCoJeC with funding from the Scottish Government, to find out more about the experiences of Jewish people in Scotland, and more about the issues that are important to them. By the middle of July, 155 people had either completed the survey form, or given us an individual interview, and we had held 30 focus group meetings and events across Scotland; in total we received input from over 300 Scottish Jewish people, from Shetland to the Borders, including many from Edinburgh. This has helped us to build a better understanding of what affects the sense of security of Jewish people and communities, and so improve our support for Jewish people in Scotland.

We held events the length and breadth of Scotland, including a celebration of Jewish writing in Inverness, a Klezmer dance in Dunoon, a concert in the Borders, a lecture in Dundee, and discussions and dinners in Glasgow and Edinburgh. These activities revealed that there is a hunger for Jewish contact, especially among people who live significant distances from any settled Jewish community. Many Jewish people who are not affiliated to any synagogue or communal institution are still very interested in Jewish identity and Jewish concerns, and keen to take part in a 'Jewish conversation'. We were very pleased to find several organisations in the wider community that were willing to support local Jewish events.

Many people said they are concerned about the future of Jewish life in Scotland. They see the Jewish population shrinking and are worried that they or their children won't be able to find a Jewish partner here. There is concern about future political support for shechitah and circumcision, and some



also worry about the impact of double summer time – if Scotland were to change to European time, religious observances that depend on sunrise and sunset would become very difficult.

You can read more about what we found out in the special edition of SCoJeC's newsletter Four Corners that was published in June (available online at www.scojec.org/4cs/4cs.html – or contact SCoJeC for a hard copy). The follow up planned could include:

- More resources for people giving talks about Judaism in schools and to other groups
- Jewish cultural and social events all round Scotland
- Greater cooperation between Jewish communal organisations
- Web-based Jewish educational programmes with a Scottish context
- E-mail and online discussion groups
- A 'welcome pack' for Jewish newcomers to Scotland
- Joint events and activities between Scottish Jewish communities
- Leadership training for local leaders
- A network of Jewish people around Scotland willing to offer hospitality to visitors
- More support for elderly Jewish people outwith Glasgow
- A buddy scheme for Jewish students
- A national Jewish trail around Scotland
- A travelling exhibition of Jewish life
- More support for bar and bat mitzvah children outwith the central belt
- Better and more detailed information about the Middle East and support to engage with people holding different opinions



Would you like to be involved in any of these projects? For more information see www.scojec.org/jewishinscotland.html or contact Fiona Frank, SCoJeC project worker, email fiona@scojec.org or tel 07779 206522

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Incomers - Reflections

The Star begins a new regular column for people who have joined the Edinburgh Jewish community in recent years, in which they can reflect on their experiences.

Claudette Hudes

My parents were from Europe. My father was from Vienna, Austria and went to the United States before WWII. My mother was born in Stuttgart, Germany, she and three of her siblings first went to London with the Kinder Transport in 1939. Her older sister had gone to Israel to live on Kibbutz Hasorea in 1938. After over two years of waiting for their visa to the United States, my mother and her family were finally allowed to immigrate to the US.

Why do I start with my parents when this is an article about my Jewish experiences in the past and of my Jewish experiences in Edinburgh? I believe my experiences are those of where I have lived all wrapped up in the experiences of my parents ... especially those of my mother.

My parents were old fashioned, so to say 'old world'. I was expected to get married and have children. Higher education was not important for me ... I was a girl. This is what good Jewish girls did. That at least is what my parents told me. I however wanted something different. I loved science and maths and through a lot of hard work and lots of arguments with my parents I finally became a chemical engineer. Throughout my studies I seemed to have to battle with the same issues as with my Judaism. It was a man's world in both engineering and in the synagogue.

With my first job in chemical engineering I had the opportunity to work on a project in the Netherlands for nine months. I also had the opportunity to travel a lot. I fell in love with Europe. I didn't want to leave after nine months so I quit my job and got a job with Dow Chemical in the Netherlands. That is where I met my lovely husband Robbert. I lived in the Netherlands a further 10 years during which I tried to find Jewish congregations. I lived in an area where there were few Jews and the closest ones were in Belgium and they were all Orthodox. I didn't grow up in an Orthodox home and wanted something closer to the Conservative Judaism I knew.



Robbert got a job at Dow Chemical in Germany after he finished his studies. After several years we moved to Oldenburg where a Liberal Jewish Community was just beginning. Services were held in the chairperson's art gallery and we had a lovely visiting Swiss Rabbi with an English wife who had studied at Leo Baeck college in London. Because the old synagogue in Oldenburg had been destroyed by the Nazis, the town gave our congregation a building ... an old Methodist church. We also received money to renovate.

The community grew and we were able to have our own Rabbi. The congregation was made up mostly of people from other countries and many Germans who, because of the treatment of the Jews in the war, converted to Judaism. After the Swiss Rabbi left, I felt that the congregation got the letter of the law correct but it missed the spirit of the law. I missed the community feeling I had in the States.

Both in the Netherlands and in Germany I was surprised to notice an absence of Judaism around me. It was something I had taken for granted in the US. One of the advantages of a young country is that Judaism has always been part of the

country. I could always find Chanukah cards and in most grocery stores there were Jewish articles. People around me knew what Judaism was. When I lived in The Netherlands and in Germany I finally started learning about Judaism. The absence of it made me want to know all about it. I took courses at the University in Oldenburg, Germany which taught me much about the culture, history and politics of Judaism.

Moving to Scotland was like becoming free. I didn't have to wonder what the old people had done in the war. I soon found Sukkat Shalom and joined the congregation. Gone were the days of a woman having only one role in life. Here I am surrounded by terrific women doing everything. There are also a lot of terrific men. There is a wonderful sense of community here. They have the letter and the spirit of the law right.

We come to services and activities when we can. We live north of Edinburgh in the village of Milnathort so we don't always make it to everything. Since I retired it is easier for me to be more involved and I have since joined the council. I also am a member of the book club and sometimes we go to Lit evenings and Hebrew class and we have joined the Spinoza group. We very much like the services where we all bring a dish and have a communal dinner afterwards. Robbert is becoming known for his homemade bread.

We love it here. Moving here is so right for us. I knew it the first time I visited. I felt a peace that I had never felt before. Robbert says we may not have been born here but that we are Scots by choice. Sukkat Shalom is all wrapped up in that. I could never have felt at home without Judaism around me.

You could make me smile

this Rosh Hashanah

My name is Yoni. I am 10.
My daddy left us a few
months ago. My mummy
spent lots of time crying and
was very angry. She
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The Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Choir

Stephen Gruneberg

Each year for more than fifty years in the synagogue on Salisbury Road the choir has delivered the music at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur under the baton of David Mendelssohn. In all of that time David has been the choir master of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and has quietly carried out his duties unseen, if not unheard.



David with the late Reverend Sam Knopp and some of the members of the then choir in Leeds in 1977.

His leadership of the choir began well over half a century ago, when Reverend Brysh was the Chazan. There had been a choir under Jack Levinson and before that Jack's father had been the choir master for many years. When Jack Levinson gave up the choir in the late 1950s, David was asked to take over and was happy to do so.

There was already an established repertoire, which had been traditional in Edinburgh. The choir had a fairly involved part in services, particularly at Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and the occasional wedding as well as the Annual Civic Service and the Annual Armistice Service. However, on taking on the choir, David had to re-write all the music he had been offered to make it suitable for a male voice choir, as he was aware that the music had been written for a mixed voice choir. This was rather strange, he said, as the same music had been used by choir masters in Edinburgh for many years.



Choirmaster David Mendelssohn with today's choir, of Eli Atad, Norman Dorfman, Jonathan Kish, Lennie Berger, Anthony Gilbert and Joe Aronson



David's composing efforts began when John Cosgrove came to Edinburgh and joined the choir. It was because of John's great knowledge of Hebrew that David was able to begin writing new music for the choir. David's musical aims were twofold. He wanted to enhance the services with the choir's singing and he also wished to add his compositions to the traditional music to make the services unique to the Edinburgh community. John advised David, which parts of the services music could be added to, and over the following years several compositions were written, which duly enhanced the musical content of the services.

David has always emphasised that it would not have been possible for him to have composed any of the music, if he had not had the support of John Cosgrove. This friendship and partnership was responsible for David being able to include the following pieces of music in the services in Edinburgh, including Oleinu, Valkulom, Kivayom-hazeh, Eloheinu, B'Seifer Chaim, Shema Koleinu, Kadsheinu, Halleuyo and Kodosh-atoh. Kakosuv Kedushe is normally performed by a chazan but it was written to be performed by the choir alone, during periods when the community had no chazan! Another of David's compositions, Shema Koleinu, immediately became a particular favourite of Anita, his wife, and David dedicated his music of Shema Koleinu to her.

David remains very grateful to all of his choir members, including those who have left Edinburgh and settled in various parts of the world, and those who are still singing and continue to offer their support to the synagogue services.

Theodor Herzl

a complex man, with a vision.

David Gonshaw

Theodor Herzl was born on the 10th of May 1860 in Hungary, in the city of Pest, which became unified as Budapest in 1872.

He came from a middle-class Jewish family, who were Reform in outlook, like many Jewish families in Hungary, Austria, and Germany; this was mainly due to the influence of Moses Mendelssohn in the late 18th century. Theodor had a sister, Pauline, a year older. They were good friends and very close. Herzl's mother, Jeanette, gave Theodor her total devotion. His father, Jacob Herzl, was a businessman, and not an intellectual; he was a man who would continue to value the simple beauty of the Shabbat eve.

Theodor's Bar Mitzvah took place in May the 3rd 1873. In 1875 it was decided to send him to school specialising in literature, the classics and German values; in this environment he thrived, achieving high pass grades.

Theodor's great early hero was Ferdinand de Lesseps, because he admired what he had achieved regarding the development of the Suez Canal, despite the fact that he lacked academic qualifications. Herzl saw him as a genius, and a very talented man, little realising that he himself would achieve lasting greatness. His other great admiration was for Otto Von Bismarck, for the latter's limitless great diplomacy in bringing Germany together.

Tragedy struck the family in 1878 when Theodor's sister Pauline died of typhoid fever at the age of eighteen. The whole family was devastated by this, especially the mother, so they decided to move to Vienna that same year; the death of Pauline had a profound effect on Theodor. Herzl grew up to be a tall, handsome man with impressive good looks. He went on to study at the University of Vienna, taking law, which covered Roman law, German law, Austrian and Criminal law: He was not an outstanding student and

just passed the exam, going on to work in the Civil Service for about a year. He left the position so he could concentrate on writing plays, because that's where he thought his talent lay.

In 1883 Theodor received his first taste of anti-Semitism from a university fraternity he belonged to, and where he fought his first and only duel, trying to prove to gentile Germans that a Jew could do as well as they at being manly: in this duel blood was drawn. Herzl's first play was called "The Every Day" in the form of a short story in 1885. This was of great importance to Theodor, but he was not a successful playwright and is hardly remembered as a playwright in Vienna today. His style of plays was ten years behind the times. He wrote fifteen plays in all. His style of writing was impressive enough for him to be offered a prestigious position by the Viennese newspaper "Die Freie Presse" as its Paris correspondent.

Theodor Herzl was finally married in June 1889 to Julie Naschaur, who came from a wealthy Jewish family; Julie bore him three children Hans, Pauline and Trudi. While in Paris Theodor tried to revive his playwright aspirations, but without much success. Herzl wrote under the pseudonym, Albert Schnabel, but this strategy did not work for him. The play, called "New Ghetto" was an attempt to revive his career in the theatre.

Herzl's formidable position as a Paris correspondent gave him the chance to meet with personages in high places. Many influences brought Theodor to the realisation in 1895 that Jews would eventually need their own land. There can be no doubt that Herzl was moved by the "Dreyfus Affair", but that was not the catalyst or the definitive moment that brought about his conversion. There were the many instances throughout his life that had caused this change.

Firstly, there was the duel that he had fought in his fraternity days, which alluded

to anti-Semitism. There were the terrible pogroms in Russia, and the bad treatment of Jews in Romania at the time. He'd come across anti-Semitism as a journalist; all these things galvanised Herzl into action about the Jewish problem.

Herzl was in touch with many important personalities of the period, before his organization came to fruition. Prince Otto Von Bismarck; Baron Hirsch; Kaiser Wilhelm the 2nd; Sultan Abdul Hamid the 2nd of Turkey; Lord Rothschild; Joseph Chamberlain to name but a few. Herzl was now in a position to obtain donations from wealthy Jews, because of his organisational abilities. These donations were built up and eventually a bank in London was established where Zionist funds were kept.

It is important at this stage to make clear that Herzl wanted Palestine as the first choice for Jewish settlement. The reason he was willing to consider Uganda because Sultan Abdul Hamid had refused to sell any land in Palestine, and this was despite the participation of the of Kaiser Wilhelm 2nd, who spoke on behalf of Herzl. This event took place at Yildiz on the 18th of October 1898 where Herzl met the Kaiser. The Kaiser asked Theodor what he should ask the Sultan, saying, "Just tell me in a word what I am to ask the Sultan." As we now know, nothing came of this great effort that Herzl made. The British were not really serious about the offer of Uganda to Herzl that Joseph Chamberlain had mooted: people in the high echelons of the British government were against it. There were many places that Herzl tried for: Argentina, Sinai, Cyprus, Mozambique, Mesopotamia, now called Iraq.

The first Congress was held in Basel in August 1897, which was a great success for Herzl. There were 200 delegates representing different Zionist groups, mostly made up of middle-class Jewry. It is interesting to note that Herzl used great psychology on the groups by insisting

that they all wear evening dress, because he did not want it to become a rowdy gathering. After the first congress of Basel Herzl said. "Were I to sum up the Basel congress in a word – which I would guard against pronouncing publicly – it would be this: At Basel I founded the Jewish State – if I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly fifty, everyone will know it."

There were lots of personal jealousies in these Zionist meetings. These took their toll on Theodor: he was not a well man, even before the hard work of organising such a great conference. Many years before he had failed two medicals for the army reserve, due to heart trouble. It should also be remembered that Herzl financed a large part of the congress. The declared aim of Zionism was to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.

It was at the sixth conference in Basel in August 1903, that the "Uganda Project" was mentioned: it caused a storm, which nearly broke the movement up, and hastened Herzl's early death. The ironic thing, which I have already stated, was that Britain's offer of East Africa was tentative and not totally serious. The Russian Zionist delegation stormed out of the conference. Herzl still remained president of the organisation after this difficult time for him.

Theodor Herzl died on the 3rd of July 1904 in Edlach, lower Austria; he was forty four years of age. A day before he died Herzl told the Rev. W. Hechler, "Greet Palestine for me, I gave my heart blood for my people" Everything that Theodor Herzl said had come to pass, except on one point. "Once we begin to execute the plan, anti-Semitism will cease at once and everywhere."

What can we say of Theodor Herzl? I have come to the conclusion that he was a man full of complexities in his life, a man who in every sense of the word was totally immersed in German and French culture of the secular world, a man about town, a well known journalist, and despite all of this the Jewish soul shone through at a moment when it was needed. We can say in effect that Theodor Herzl returned to a tradition that he had disdained for most of his life, had put his reputation on the line, spending much of his fortune in the process. The French Prime Minister, Clemenceau, said this of Herzl. "He was a man of genius, not confounded with a man of talent. There are plenty of men with talent in the world. Men of genius are rare".

Ref: 'Herzl' by D Stewart, 1970, Published by Hamish Hamilton.

Yom Ha-Atzmaut Israel's Independence Day

Sharon Ogilvie

EHC SERVICE ON 25 APRIL

A service was held on Wednesday 25 April 2012 at 4 Salisbury Road to commemorate Israel's fallen soldiers and to celebrate Israel's Independence Day. This took place at 7.30pm and included Mincha and Ma'ariv.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES ON 26 APRIL

Sharon Ogilvie, Sigal Finlay, Gidona Henderson and Susie Shenkin were the leading lights of the family activities that took place on Thursday 26 April in the Community Centre at 4 Salisbury Road. These started with children's activities at 5pm. There were various tables and teams formed to get round the various activities against a time limit. One involved members of the community looking at pictures of members of the community in Israel and trying to guess who it was and where it was. There was also a puzzle of a map of Jerusalem which they had to make, smells they had to guess, and a memory game.

There was food and at the end the results were read and prizes were allocated to the winners. The winners got schnitzels and the losers got borscht.



Group with Michele Neville and Tom Griffin

Edinburgh Jewish Burial Friendly Society

Sylvia Donne

In 1899 when the Society in its present form was established the Community had outgrown the Newington cemetery and had purchased grounds at Piershill, where it remains to this day.

A Prayer Hall and later an extension were built and with future needs in mind the society purchased a further section of ground in the central area. And in 1981 there was an agreed contract between the Society and the Company on the maintenance arrangements, mainly relating to grass cutting, which is still in force.

The Society provides Burial Services for its members and also if requested for non-members, who are halachic Jews. There is no requirement to be a member of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and

consequently some members are not shul members and some shul members are not members of the Society. The cost of a funeral for a non-member of the Society is currently £3500.

All the officers of the Society are unpaid volunteers and their sacred work, carried out with dignity, is much appreciated by the Edinburgh Community.

This year has been one of change and increased costs. The appointed funeral directors Scotmid, who had for 14 years provided transport and use of premises for Tahara, reviewed its pricing policy and proposed an unacceptable increase of over 300%. The Society as a result has now entered into an arrangement with William Purves Funeral Directors at a more reasonable cost.

However the main burden of expense met by the Society is the maintenance/ grass

cutting contract which is now around £8000 per annum. This is not just to cut around the used lairs but includes the large unused ground in the central area. Clearly with a diminishing community, the majority of this area will never be used in the future. Discussions with the current cemetery owner, Mrs Fairbairn, are ongoing for her to "buy back" a large portion and as a consequence there should be a marked reduction in maintenance costs.

It is hoped that by the next issue of the Edinburgh Star there will have been further progress. It is surely in the best interests of all our members to keep running costs to the minimum and provide continuing good services when needed.

For further details on joining the Society, please contact the Hon Treasurer, Mr M.S. Cowen (0131 667 6312)

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Obituaries

Harold Abrahams

14 September 1951 to 6 April 2012

Stella Bierman

April saw the untimely passing of the kindest and sincerest person you could ever hope to meet – Harold Abrahams.

Harold and his twin sister Zelda were born in Glasgow but shortly after their birth their parents moved the family back to Edinburgh where their father Morris opened his barber's shop.

During their childhood, Harold grew up to be over six feet tall, while Zelda remained petite. Harold liked to say they were like the 'twins' in the Arnold Swartzenegger / Danny de Vito film of the same name.

Harold had two passions in life, helping others and cooking, and he managed to combine these by training and qualifying as a chef, specialising in cooking for vulnerable people.

First he worked for 20 years as head chef of the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital and when that closed, he became head chef of the Claremont Park Nursing Home. Catering to the sick and elderly gave him a particular satisfaction, like a vocation in public service. Harold promised his dying father that he would look after his mother – a promise that he kept faithfully, cheerfully and diligently for many years until she too passed over. They got a house in Portobello together, near the bingo hall to which Harold took his mother every week till she was no longer able to go.

He was a wonderful brother to Zelda and Sidney, and on the sudden death of his brother-in-law, Harold devoted himself to helping his sister Zelda in her time of loss. He was also a super uncle to his nieces, Mandy and Lisa, and a great, great uncle to his great nieces and great nephews.

Harold was well known to the Jewish Community on account of the many functions for which he catered in the Marian Oppenheim Hall, and at other venues over the years. Everyone who attended one of those functions had nothing but praise for the quality of the cooking and the artistic way it was presented on the buffet table and on the plate.

Harold himself was the epitome of the gentle giant, with a kind, courteous manner and he made a good impression on all who met him. He will be sadly missed by all his friends and family.



Beatrice Abrahams (nee Davidson)

1921 to 2012

by her son

Our mother, Beatrice Davidson, Peshkie, to most, was born and brought up on the South side of Edinburgh. Having spent her school days at South Bridge and James Clarks, she was always at home in this part of the City.



After a brief emigration to Glasgow she returned to Edinburgh this time with a husband and family. Ellis, better known as Alex, Martin and Ronald took up residence in Clerk Street. With a clothing alterations business established in West Nicholson Street, the family moved west again but this time only to Shandon. There they remained until 1997 when Peshkie and Alex returned to the South Side.

Peshkie enjoyed music. From her youth when she strutted her stuff at the Palais, and other Edinburgh dance halls listening to big bands and jazz. She enjoyed visiting the local casino, not to gamble, she could make £5 last all evening, but more to meet friends where she spent much of the evening chatting.

She enjoyed the Friendship Club, the lunch club and Wizo social events. All gave her the opportunity to chat, and more importantly to reminisce and 'to recollect, with friends of many years, stories of their youth.

Her determination to enjoy life to the full resulted at the age of 89 making a round the world trip visiting family in Australia and America followed last year by a Mediterranean cruise to celebrate her 90th birthday.

However what gave her most pleasure was her family. Her two sons, sorry three, including our big cousin, Bernard, her acquired daughters, five grandchildren, eight great grandchildren and many others that she took an interest in, always remembering their birthdays, anniversaries etc.

Her passing, although sudden and unexpected, was fortunate in that she was able to remain in her own home until the end. She made it clear on more than one occasion that she had no intention of ending up her days in a care home as above all other considerations she valued her independence.

The number of people here today is a great testament to how much she was loved by all and I know that she will be greatly missed by all but not forgotten. And so after 60 years together and a brief few years apart Peshkie and Alex are together again.

Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast

Jonathan and Susie Adler
Samuel and Ruth

Michael Adler and Sue Fyvel

Joe and Margaret Aronson
15 Arden Street
Edinburgh

James and Sally Barker (nee
Cowen) Samuel and Sadie
London

Clarice Been
80 Willifield Way
London

Shirley and Peter Bennett

Barbara and Leslie Bennie

Avril and Norman Berger
3 Kirk Park
Edinburgh

Marcia, Lennie and Yvonne Berger
Gillian, Gary, Talia and Hannah
Rudin

Allen and Anna Bloom (nee Brown)
450 Hounslow Avenue
Toronto, Canada

Doreen and Laurence Bowman,
16 Dunsmore Way
Bushey

Micheline, Duncan, David and
Shrutee Brannan
31/3 Rattray Grove, Edinburgh

Norma Brodie, Simon, Sarah,
Caitlin, Eilidh, Maia,
Daniel and Michael

Angela and James Brydon

Christine and Dave Burns

Jo and Joyce Capek (nee Stoller)
and family

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Benjamin, James and Zoe

Ian and Rachel Caplan and Olivia

Sandra and Sidney Caplan

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Andrea and Malcolm Cowan
49/5 Mortonhall Road
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Elliot, Caroline, Danielle and Olivia
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31 Harrowes Meade, Edgware

Carole and Mickey Cowen
58 Fountainhall Road
Edinburgh

Joyce Cram

Stanley and Annette Curry (Hart)
10 Riverine Lodge
Stanmore

Lesley, John, Samuel,
Benjamin and Jonathan Danzig
7 East Castle Road, Edinburgh

Joyce Davidson and family
London

Sylvia and John Donne

Betsy Dorfman

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

Dov (Bertie) and Elizabeth Dorfman
19/32 Shlomo Hamelech
Netanya, Israel

Fay, Max and Rodney Dorfman

Rachel and Bernard Dorfman
and family

Norman Dorfman

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

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Jonathan Field

Ruth and David Fluss
49 Parkside Drive
Edgware

Martin, Tammy, Jude, Karen and
Jonathan Fransman
41 Morningside Park, Edinburgh

Caroline and Lennie Freedman

Adam and Marla Gamoran
Madison WI, USA and
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Einan and Merav Gardi
Omri, Lotem and Shlomit

Judy and Anthony Gilbert
and family

Arnold and June Glass

Lord Julian Goodman
Newington
Edinburgh

Kate and Ronny Goodwin
2 Mayfield Gardens
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Edward and Gillian Gordon
55 Rodney Road
West Bridgford, Nottingham

Gerald Gordon

Maryla and Edward Green
and Freddie

Rev Dr George and Mrs Elizabeth
Grubb, 10 Wellhead Close,
South Queensferry

Gruneberg family

Millie and David Harris and family
20 Buckstone Drive
Edinburgh

Sheelagh and Phillip Harris

Gidona and Robert Henderson

Frances and David Hill
Shiona and Alasdair

Edwin and Doreen Hoffenberg
6a Downes Hill
Haifa, Israel

Ron and Rose Ann Hoffenberg
Canada

Hana L. Hornung

Irene and David Hyams
and Gary

Susan and Steven Hyams,
James and Amanda

Rosalyn and Bernard Jackson

Howard, Valerie
and Jacqueline Kahn
27 Blinkbonny Road, Edinburgh

David and Sheryl Kaplan

Cassie, Jonty, Lily and Jack Karro
Melbourne, Australia

Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast

Lilian Kessly (nee Dorfman)
and family, 27 Plantation Street
Menora, Western Australia

Isobel King

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Saul and Joshua Korn
Ra'anana, Israel

Ian and Joan Leifer
and family

Kleile(nee Fluss) Lerner
21 Massada Street
Ramat Gan, Israel

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3 Ross Road,
Edinburgh

Carol, Tom, Maurice and
Benjamin, Penicuik

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34 Ruthven Avenue
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Ron Lewis and Esti Sheinberg
3418 Deer Run Road
Blacksburg VA, USA

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Livingston

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23 Beeston Fields Drive, Nottingham

T.R. Lowrie
11 Greenhill Place
Edinburgh

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Sharon and Mike Lurie
Kate and Debra
10 Torr Lane, Plymouth

Sheva and Ann Lurie
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Edinburgh

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and family

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2 Goldenacre Terrace, Edinburgh

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23 Braid Hills Road
Edinburgh

Harold and Esther Mendelssohn

Roy Mendelssohn, Meaghan
and Archie
Melbourne, Australia

Gershon Mendick

Blanche, Janet, Rowan,
Grant and Martin

Michele, David, Sarah-Beth and
Katie Neville

Rose and Hannah Newman
and Samuel
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Geoffrey and Lorna Nicholsby
and family, Fleming Lodge,
3 Cammo Walk, Edinburgh

Eve Oppenheim and family
10 Ravelston Dykes
Edinburgh.

Harold Ordman
187 Springwell Road
Hounslow, Middlesex

Mrs Rose Orgel

Clarice and Berl Osborne
56/2 Spylaw Road
Edinburgh

Maurice, Dinah
and Samantha Penn
47 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh

Charles and Gillian Raab
and family

Greta and Jack Rabinowitz
1307 Steeles Ave W.
Toronto, Canada

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and Joel Raffel
31 Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh

Hilary and Arnold Rifkind

Michael and Sharon Rifkind
Eli, Natan, Avigayil and Maytal
Teaneck NJ, USA

Richard Rifkind

Malcolm and Edith Rifkind
and family

Francoise Robertson

Rabbi David Rose

Phyllis Rosenberg (nee Stoller)
27 Hillside Gardens
Edgware, Middlesex

Alec and Pearl Rubenstein
16 Hillpark Crescent
Edinburgh

Brenda and Julius Rubin
Netanya
Israel

Jonathan, Molly, Ben
and Joanna Seckl

Juliet Segal
Flat 1
49 Milverton Road, Glasgow

Yehudith and Rabbi Shalom Shapira
Ra'anana, Israel

Pearl and Ian Shein
37/4 Orchard Brae Avenue
Edinburgh

Vivienne Shreir (nee Goldberg)

Rabbi Professor Danny and Debbie
Sinclair, Noam, Yonatan and Orit
and the Bermans, Jerusalem, Israel

Judy Sischy and family

Rachael Skop

Carolyn and Mervyn Smith
43 Shirley Avenue
Cheam, Surrey

Gladys and Laurence Smith
20 Cammo Road
Edinburgh

Joyce and Jonny Sperber
Avigal, Mikael and Adina

Harold Sterne
12 Harharduff Street
Ramat Poleg, Netanya, Israel

Sukkat Shalom
Edinburgh Liberal
Jewish Community

Jackie, Raymond, Lawrence
and Michael Taylor

Carole Weinberg
6 Lyntonvale Avenue
Gatley, Cheadle, Manchester

Hilary, Graham and Martin West
Laura and Shlomie
Pinner, Harrow

Madeleine Whiteson
28 Mayfields
Wembley Park, London

Ruzena Wood

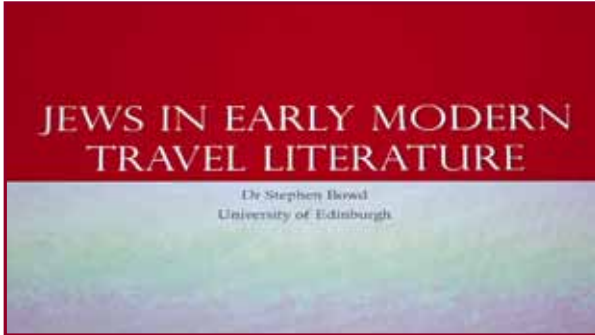
Sheila and Alfred Yarrow
9/4 Nof Harim
Jerusalem, Israel

Syd and Paula Zoltie

Reports on Community Activities

EDINBURGH JEWISH LITERARY SOCIETY

Avery Meiksin



Steven Bowd Talk

On 26 February,

Dr Patricia Allerston of the National Portrait Gallery presented to us a portrait by Sickert of the Jewish writer Zangwill, a friend of his. The talk was more an exercise in solving a mystery than art criticism. Why, where and even when the portrait was painted is unknown. It was the first purchase of a piece of modern art by



Steven Bowd

the National Gallery, or so it was thought at the time. But new research has brought this into considerable doubt, as there are good reasons for believing that the painting dates to the 19th century. Zangwill is apparently portrayed sitting at a café in Venice; but is he inside the ghetto, or possibly sitting outside its walls? Was the artist making a suggestion about the sitter? If so, what? The mystery remains.

The season concluded on 11 March with a talk by **Dr Stephen Bowd** of the School of History at the University of Edinburgh, on Jews in early modern travel literature. As a middle class began to emerge in Europe, so did touring. Guidebooks began to spring up



Tricia

indicating what not to miss, including the regional Jews. Regrettably, rather than promoting a deeper understanding of Jewish communities and their way of life, the descriptions often sought to reinforce stereotypes, some stemming from obvious misunderstandings, such as wearing a hat in Synagogue rather than removing it as in a Church. The literature indicated how wide a gulf there still was between Jewish communities and non-Jewish at these times.

At the AGM on 6 May, as President, I expressed gratitude to Tony Gilbert, who provided the posters advertising the events, while also serving as Secretary, and to our Treasurer Micheline Brannan.



Zangwill Talk

Both provide the essential and substantial efforts needed to keep the Lit running. Many thanks are due to Hannah Holtschneider and Maurice Naftalin for a major revamping of the Lit website, giving it a new e-look. The other Lit committee members and some of the Lit members as well deserve our thanks for helping to set up and clean up after the meetings now that we no longer have a caretaker's assistance. After some hiccups, this now seems to be working smoothly, without all of the burden on just the same few. The Lit will continue to require this added goodwill to ensure its future.

PURIM SPIEL 2012

Micheline Brannan

On Wednesday 7 March 2012, the annual Purim Spiel was performed in the Jewish Community Centre at 4 Salisbury Road. This was a joint event with Sukkat Shalom and EHC. Earlier in the evening each congregation had met separately for their own Megillah Reading.

Written by Nancy Lynner and Sophie Bleau, the Purim Spiel extravaganza featured exotic costumes and humorous dialogue, satirising everything topical from the impending Olympics, the Diamond Jubilee, and the scandal surrounding Rupert Murdoch and Rebecca Brooks to the proposed independence referendum. The magnificent costumes included a sequin encrusted salwar kameez under a rich cloak for Ahasuerus (Melissa Wood), and an impressively bushy beard with simple Middle Eastern robes for Mordechai (Jenny Underwood). An Oscar should have gone to Esther (Orli Meiksin) as an innocent and delightful Queen Esther. Sharon Ogilvie made a guest appearance as the fitness fanatic Queen Vashti, complete with dumb-bells. The Director was Professor Phil Wadler, seen opposite in his costume as an entrant to the Shushan beauty competition. Norma Brodie played the piano.

People came and went for various stages of the evening but it is estimated the audience for the Purim Spiel was 90. The evening concluded with an excellent Seudah with food provided by the Hebrew Congregation, and, of course, some drink for all who wished.

It was wonderful to have such a big crowd all together with people from both communities and some visitors. We hope we can have more enjoyable joint social events during the year.

Many thanks go to Hilary Rifkind and Marcia Berger for preparing the meal and co-ordinating the event, as well as to all members of EHC and Sukkat Shalom who helped on the night.

WIZO – ZAHAVA KOHN

Edward Green

On Wednesday 18th April, over 200 students of Fettes College attended a presentation by Zahava Kohn and her daughter, Hephzibah. Originally, our very own David Goldberg had been 'booked' by Freddie Green, currently a student at Fettes, to come to the school to talk of his Holocaust experiences. David was a frequent speaker at schools and other places of education. With his sad death just ten days before the planned date of his appearance, Freddie and his parents turned to Zahava Kohn to speak. This she was happy to do a few weeks after the original booking.

The next day, Lady Kohn and her daughter spoke to a small gathering including a handful of guests from Glasgow assembled at the home of Maryla and Edward Green by Katie Goodwin and Sylvia Donne for WIZO. It was a most moving presentation; Zahava Kohn told of her experiences as a child in Bergen-Belsen and her and her parents' eventual release from the horrors of the concentration camp.



Purim Spiel cast



Bigtan and Yonatan Eisenberg and Leora Wadler



Sharon Ogilvie as Vashti



Shabbat with the scooter



Norma Brodie at the piano



Zahava Kohn

The presentation was in a question and answer format between mother and daughter. Following Zahava's mother's death, Zahava was to find amongst her possessions a battered old suitcase. In it, and never shown to her during her mother's lifetime, was a collection of memorabilia and letters dating from the pre-war and war days, each item telling its own mostly tragic tale. These were to form the core of the presentation and ensured the most realistic, moving and heartfelt reminiscences.

EDINBURGH HEBREW CONGREGATION COMMUNAL SEDER

Editor's interview with Carol Levstein

On Friday 6 April 2012, the first evening of Pesach, EHC experienced the revival of the lapsed but not forgotten tradition of the Communal Seder. The revival of this event was principally due to the enthusiasm of Board of Management member Dr Carol Levstein, who took her inspiration from the words that came to Ray Kinsella in *Field of Dreams* "If you build it they will come". The Star caught up with Carol at home, to find out why and how she went about managing the challenge.

No-one can quite remember when or why the Communal Seder lapsed but, until 15 or 20 years ago, it was an annual event, and your editor well remembers joining in the koshering of the cutlery and veiking of the glass crockery in the kitchen at 4 Salisbury Road. Over 100 people used to attend, sitting at long tables, with the Minister of the day, or in the absence of such a figure, a lay leader like former president Ian Leifer, presiding.



Kitchen all covered

Receiving me in her large, friendly, kitchen, Carol told me, "Rabbi Rose has been encouraging EHC for years to have a Communal Seder. I had my own fond memories of the 'Third Seder' at Habonim, and of attending Kibbutz sedarim in Israel. I felt for members of the community who cannot travel to family or friends and who might otherwise be alone at Pesach." She continued, "I started by gauging support for the idea in a low-key way, and confirming with Mark Cohen of 'Mark's Deli' that he would be able to cater the meal and also that the community would find a catered meal acceptable. Hilary Rifkind, as Chair of the Board of Management, supported the idea and



Tables set close up

Rabbi Rose was, of course, pleased that this was now proposed, so I had the green light."

Jackie Taylor, as secretary of EHC, circulated a flyer to establish preliminary numbers. Carol meanwhile made some further decisions of principle. One was that there would be very little kashering and that as much as possible of the plate and utensils would be disposable. Fortunately there is now a supplier in Manchester (Masher) for presentable disposable tableware at about £2 a setting, and this cost, together with a simple but generous menu of eggs and salt water, fish and salad, followed by fruit and cake, with matza, grape juice and seder plates, led to a perfectly affordable cost of [£20] per head.

Carol explained, "I had a critical path. Four weeks in advance I bought a new urn, paper roll for covering the tables, and a kettle for such koshering as was required. Three weeks ahead I bought shemura matza from Mark, and grape juice. Then I went on a family holiday."

During Carol's holiday, John Masterson, our caretaker, steam cleaned the kitchen and the stoves. Two days ahead of the Seder, Carol, with Lesley Danzig and the Rabbi, met at the kitchen to kasher all the serving surfaces with boiling water, mop them up, and then cover them. Then came the shopping expedition for perishables – eggs, fruit and vegetables.

It was the Rabbi's job to boil the eggs at home, and to roast chicken fleigls to do duty as zeroa or the lamb shankbone that reminds us of the Paschal Lamb on the seder plate. This happened on Friday morning, while at the shul, Lesley and Carol, assisted by Janet Mundy, were completing covering the kitchen,

setting the table, and laying it out with the necessities for the seder. It fell to the Rabbi to assemble the seder plates while the others laid out washed lettuce, charoset and chopped maror. Meanwhile, Carol's husband, Tom Griffin, was deputed to drive to Glasgow to collect the catered dishes from Mark Cohen, who surprised the customers by adding pavlovas to the menu.

The numbers were augmented by an American youth orchestra and their parents on tour in Edinburgh, and some Belgian and French tourists. The Rabbi, aided by Lord Julian Goodman, conducted the Seder, inviting all guests to read from the Haggada in their preferred language.

It was terrific to have a Communal Seder again, and the preparations in the kitchen, particularly the new urn, enabled hot drinks to be served after some services



Tables set

and a cold Kiddush to be served on Shabbat. This enabled people who had missed the actual Seder to socialise after Shul.

We all hope that this will now become an annual event, building on the experience of 2012. Many hearty thanks go to the people mentioned in this article who helped make it happen and also to the guests who supported the event by coming along and participating so enthusiastically. Owing to religious restrictions the Star has no photographs of the event in progress but we have some of the covered kitchen and of the tables set before it started.

This was only one of **three** communal seders taking place in Edinburgh on that night. Chabad also held one, likewise Sukkat Shalom, both of which reported later in the magazine.

ANNUAL CHABAD SEDER

Josh Salter

For the 4th consecutive Pesach, Chabad of Edinburgh welcomed Jewish people to the Seder table, enabling the community to celebrate the festival together.

Over the two nights, more than 100 participants sat around the tables to sing, eat and lean to the left as they recounted the story of Pesach. The first night Seder took place in the large and prestigious Northumberland Hotel Hall. The second night Seder was hosted by Chabad of Edinburgh at their Chabad House.

A team of dedicated volunteers assembled to make the necessary arrangements for the events. Led by Rabbi Pinny and Rebbetzin Gitty Weinman, the team worked tirelessly in the run up to Pesach helping to make sure that the Seder nights would run smoothly and successfully.

Help came pouring in from all over the community; students of the University of Edinburgh, Herriot-Watt and St. Andrews offered their time to peel potatoes and prepare salads. Rabbi and Rebbetzin Weinman also welcomed support from family and friends who came from as far away as London and even Israel to assist and be part of the special occasion.

A mixture of locals, tourists and Israelis young and old sat down for the Seder meals. Jacob, a 20 year old student at the University of Edinburgh, was experiencing a Seder night for the first time in his life. Overcome with emotion,



he expressed his thanks and said, 'This memory will stay with me for the rest of my life'.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Weinman have organised communal Seder nights in Edinburgh for the past four years. Rabbi Weinman said, "Seeing people from all walks of life sitting together, singing and sharing in the Passover celebration is truly inspirational. It is fascinating to see the rapid growth of the Seder - in just 4 years from holding it in our small Chabad House, to this year - an overflowing crowd at the Northumberland Hotel".

Chabad of Edinburgh is one of 36 Chabad Centres around the UK. It was opened in September 2008 and provides a 'home away from home' for Jewish students studying on Campus and to any man, woman or youngster who walks through their doors.

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YOM HASHOAH CEREMONY

19 April 2012 Peace Park, Princes Street Gardens



The annual Yom HaShoah remembrance ceremony took place in the presence of the Lord and Lady Provost at the Peace Park in Princes Street Gardens. Sadly Rabbi Rose was indisposed and was unable to preside but Lord Julian Goodman stood in for him, reciting psalms 121 and 23, memorial prayers and kaddish. Introducing the ceremony, before inviting the Lord Provost to speak, Raymond Taylor said:

“Today, Jewish communities throughout the world commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day or Yom HaShoah. It is the day when Jews everywhere unite to pay tribute to the six million who died in the Holocaust. We are here to ensure that the legacy of all those who lost their lives will never be forgotten. The Holocaust was arguably among the most fearsome tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people in its long history.....As we stand here today we are closer to that moment when the Holocaust will cease to be living memory and will become history. This will happen when the next generation will not be able to hear the truth directly from those who lived through it. Unfortunately today we have proof of that with the recent passing of our dear friend David Goldberg. David spent many hours visiting schools and talking to children about his experiences of the Holocaust. A week before David passed away he recounted from his hospital bed with great clarity and emotion, to Rabbi Gideon Sylvester, stories of how he survived; how he was transported to the German-Polish border. Luckily for David, the Polish border was closed, and David returned to Kiel, later escaping Germany on the Kindertransport.

“On many occasions David visited our home, recounting stories of life in Germany. I will never forget the day when David handed me his identity card with his photograph and the letter J stamped inside. This document had a big impact on me. It was a death sentence for so many Jews. I really can’t understand how people were able to cope with their families being pulled apart, not knowing whether they would ever see each other again.

“Thus it is our duty to share their stories, to honour their legacy, and to preserve their memory for our children, our grand-children and for future humankind.

“Year-round we try to teach and inform others about the horrors

of the Holocaust. We confront the questions of what happened? How did it happen? How could it happen? Could it happen again? We attempt to fight against ignorance with education and against disbelief with proof.

“It is a day when we not only remember all those who perished in the Holocaust but also when we pledge our resolve and our commitment to ensure that the legacy of all those who lost their lives in the Holocaust will never be forgotten. Upon this one day, we remember those that suffered, those that fought, and those that died. Six million Jews were murdered. Many families were completely decimated. It is a day when we hope that humankind learns the lessons that it will only be assured of a better future if we not only speak out against such brutal acts but also learn from such atrocities the importance of understanding, tolerance, respect and dignity between the peoples of the world.

“We have been holding the Yom HaShoah service here in the Peace Garden for the past 18 years, since our dear late Past President, Dr Nathan Oppenheim, together with Councillor Paul Williamson, established a memorial here. The memorial stone commemorates the liberation of Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp by the British Forces in April 1945. We are very indebted to the City of Edinburgh for allowing us to hold our Holocaust Remembrance Day service here in these beautiful surroundings.



“We can’t change the past, but by remembering it, we might just change the future.”

In a ‘Thought for the Day’ broadcast on Radio Scotland on 18 April 2012, Ephraim Borowski MBE, Convenor of ScoJeC, reminded the public that Yom HaShoah was established to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943, when around 400,000 Jews who had been cooped up in the Warsaw Ghetto staged an armed uprising to resist the Nazis’ attempt to deport them to Treblinka. It is very important to remember that the Jewish people did not just go unresisting like sheep to the slaughter, although sadly the uprising was doomed to end in failure and the death of almost all of those involved.

COFFEE MORNING SUNDAY 13 May 2012

Janet Mundy

Coffee mornings are among the lower key events in the EHC community centre calendar. However, a large number of volunteers put in a lot of effort to bring them about, and they are much enjoyed by many members of the community, especially those who are unable to attend shul services or evening functions.

A further incentive to come along to the most recent coffee morning was the presence of Rabbi Shalom Shapira,

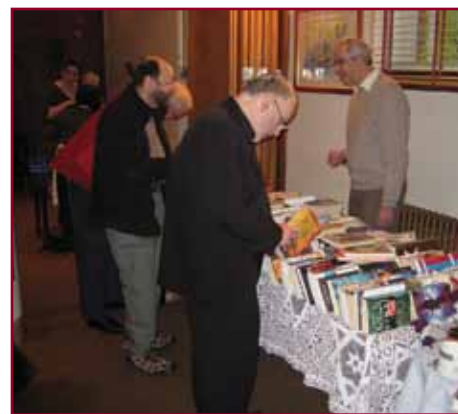
forming a brace of Rabbis with Rabbi Rose. Perhaps we should have charged to have a photograph taken with our emeritus Rabbi, as there was a long queue to do so!

The more usual attractions included a book stall weighed down with a wondrous variety of literature as well as CDs and plants, and the ever-popular cake auction. Large plates of sandwiches ensured that no one went hungry.

Forty-six people supported the event on the day, many feverishly bidding for cakes – one of the chocolate cakes raising the highest amount! Congratulations to everyone on the Community Centre Committee, and to all the cake bakers, for a very enjoyable event.



Hilary Rifkind with Rabbi Rose and Rabbi Shapira



The book stall



Marianne Laszlo, Janet Mundy and Blanche Mundy



Jackie Taylor making her selection from Gidona Henderson at the cake stall



Steven Hyams shows Betty Caplan in, with Ruzena Wood and Howard Kahn following up



Tom Lowrie and Morris Kaplan

EHC AGM ON WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2012

Micheline Brannan



Hilary gives her Chairman's report



Hilary passes the gavel on to Edward

The EHC AGM marked the start of a new era for the congregation with the election of Edward Green as the incoming Chairman of the Management Board, after 6 years during which Hilary Rifkind gallantly held the fort, going two years beyond the normal term of office in the absence of anyone willing to stand. Malcolm Cowan, who had also nobly continued as Treasurer for four years, having stepped in temporarily to fill a gap, was also replaced by Raymond Taylor.

Bidding farewell to Hilary and Malcolm, Edward Green, incoming Chairman, said:

"Hilary, congratulations on nearly 6 years completed. That's 71 months, or 2,161 days. That's calculating for one leap year, or 51,864 hours or 3,11,840 minutes of which I reckon half has been spent on the phone to Jackie. On behalf of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation I would like to thank you for all your effort and time.

"Malcolm, congratulations on 4 years in office as Treasurer. You stepped into the breach when Laurence Bowman moved to London, and at that time you agreed to stand in for one year. On behalf of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation I would like to thank you for all your effort and the extra 3 years. It is my personal regret that you are not continuing in office."

The AGM also saw the retiral of Jane Ansell, Joyce Sperber and Hilary Rifkind as members of the Board of Management and the election of Anthony Gilbert and Gershon Mendick to two of the vacant places.

Otherwise the main discussion at the meeting was of the proposal to submit an application to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator for recognition of EHC as a Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation. Thanks were expressed to Board of Management members Lesley Danzig and Carol Levstein for all the hard work they had done to develop the proposals and adapt the constitution to meet the requirements of a SCIO. It was agreed that these proposals should now be taken to the next stage.



Malcolm Cowan accepts presentation of a book token from Jackie Taylor



Hilary accepts flowers from Jackie



Steven Hyams reports on the activities of the Community Centre Committee



Members at the AGM

LUNCH CLUB JUBILEE LUNCH

Sidney Caplan



Everyone in blue, white and red



David and Anita Mendelssohn

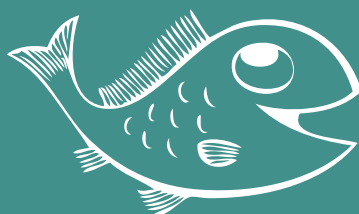
To celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, the Lunch Club sat down to a lunch for all the members, cooks and partners.

The starter was egg mayonnaise. The main course was fresh salmon with new potatoes, mixed vegetables and salad. Then came strawberries in puff pastry with coffee and mints to finish.

Rabbi David Rose gave the toast to The Queen then there was entertainment by Shirley Bennett, who sang songs from the forties and fifties. Lord Julian Goodman followed with music hall songs, finishing with Benny Hill's "Ernie, the fastest postman in the West". The afternoon closed with the singing of the National Anthem.



Rabbi Rose and Shirley Bennett



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ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES – 30 MAY 2012

Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre – 4 Salisbury Road

Halina Moss

Among the pleasures of belonging to AJR are the annual get-togethers between the different branches of the organisation. We meet and renew friendships and make new ones. We exchange views. Such



David Simons addresses the AJR

a meeting took place in Edinburgh, in the Communal Hall of the Edinburgh Synagogue, 4 Salisbury Road on Wednesday, 30th of May, 2012. Named as the Scotland & Newcastle Get-Together, it involved the attendance of members from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Newcastle. It was an opportunity for people living further out from these centres to come and take part.

The programme started at 11 am with a Welcome Reception. We were then greeted by the AJR Director, Michael Newman – in a wide ranging speech. We were also appropriately addressed by The Head of AJR Social Services, Sue Kurland, and The Head of AJR Volunteer Service Carol Hart.



Françoise Robertson and Jonathan Kish with other guests.

After a delicious lunch we retired to separate discussion groups. The group dealing with "Second Generation", conducted by Carol Hart, had, firstly, to define "Second generation". Then we considered social, therapeutic and other problems arising. The other two groups, "Europe Today, Has It Changed?" and "Have We Equipped Our Children To Be The Educators Of Tomorrow?" were equally erudite and productive.



Hilary Rifkind addresses the AJR about the work of SCoJeC

In the afternoon we listened to Edinburgh's Hilary Rifkind explaining to us the work of SCoJeC (Scotland's Jewish Communities), in representing our community and its needs to the country's Government and people of influence.

J David Simons spoke about his two novels, "the Credit Draper" and "The Emancipation Of Celia Kahn", based on the experiences of Jews in Scotland.



Marianne Laszlo with guest

As usual, the event was superbly organised, down to the farewell tea, by our coordinator, Agnes Isaacs.



Hana Hornung with Françoise Robertson and Jonathan Kish



Shari Cohn, Vivien Anderson and other guests.

CHEDER PRIZEGIVING 24 JUNE 2012

Janet Mundy

There is no doubt in my mind what is the best and least onerous duty in Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation – presenting the Cheder prizes, and I was very honoured to have been asked to do so. The instruction to wear a fancy hat was an easy one for me, two months after my daughter's wedding. It was a huge pleasure to see all the children again, one year after finishing my duties as a Cheder teacher after 10 years.

I was also delighted to see that standards had been maintained by the teachers and helpers. Each class gave a presentation before being presented with their prizes. Sarah Levy led Kitah

Hey, comprising Hannah Cohn-Simmen, Omri Gardi and Ben Ross, who had worked on a project on the Mishnah, illustrated their new-found knowledge through a short play demonstrating an example of the legal processes instituted in Nezikin, the fourth order of Mishnah. Elaine Levy introduced Kitah Hey's family history project, discovering their ancestors' European roots and their lives as immigrants, and their work was displayed on the wall alongside examples of work carried out by the younger children. Special prizes were awarded by the Rabbi to Dorothy Sherratt, who was presented with a Chanukiah, and to Connor Finlay, who received the boys' cup for 2012, duly engraved.



Aleph and Kitah Bet (Aiddie Finlay, Maya Stockdale, Ruth Adler - Saphie Ogilvie and Gillian Potts were away) in an excellent rendition of a children's song based around the Ten Commandments ("Thou shalt not steal" being transformed into "Don't take anybody's toys away" for example). Shlomit Gardi also participated enthusiastically in this performance and she and Gillian Stockdale were awarded prizes as "honorary members" of Cheder, being a little too young to join this year. Sarah also helped Kitah Gimel (Lotem Gardi and Sam Ross) to present their project about Jewish festivals, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation including photos of the children and the Rabbi. Kitah Daled (Dorothy Sherratt, Sam Adler and Connor Finlay) entertained everyone by presenting their project on Israel through a version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" with the support of Merav Gardi, which covered subjects as wide-ranging as football, Eilat and the religious mix of the country. Finally, Kitah

Merav Gardi gave special thanks to teachers Sarah Levy and Jessica Spencer, who will be starting university in the autumn, and to Clare Levy, who is continuing a fine tradition of teenage support for the Cheder.

Raymond Taylor, as chair of the Education Committee, thanked all involved and Edward Green, newly elected President of the Congregation, praised the high standards achieved by the children.

Plans to have a picnic at Vogrie Park were thwarted by the weather, but an excellent snack lunch was served by the Cheder parents and activities were organised by the children in the Shul hall before everyone went their separate ways for the summer break, before Cheder reconvenes at the end of August.

SCOTTISH JEWISH ARCHIVES CENTRE – 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Harvey L Kaplan, Director



Chupa in Edinburgh Shul

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, which was opened in April 1987. Based in Scotland's oldest synagogue, the centre has grown to become a popular and valued institution in the Jewish community and further afield.

We welcome school pupils, students, postgraduate researchers, journalists, authors, tourists, genealogists, as well as members of the local Jewish and wider communities.

Our remit is to document the Jewish experience in Scotland, including religious, organisational, social, economic, political, cultural activity and family life from Shetland down to Dumfries. We encourage the study of Jews in Scotland and publish books and articles.

Our collections include the records of Jewish organisations in Scotland, including correspondence, annual reports, membership lists and brochures from charity organisations, friendly societies, cultural groups, youth groups, political groups, educational institutions and Jewish businesses.

We have personal papers, naturalisation documents, immigrant passports, family trees, family histories, press cuttings; thousands of photographs, around 370 books and dissertations relating to Jews in Scotland. We have the complete run of the Jewish Echo (1928-1992). For the first time, we have gathered together the records of all 17 Jewish burial grounds in Scotland, indexed on our computer database of almost 38,000 Scottish Jews.

We also collect artefacts, such as ceremonial keys, silver trowels, memorial plaques from former synagogues, tennis trophies, old charity collection boxes, war medals. We have textiles - Torah mantles, sashes from friendly societies, and flags and uniforms from Jewish Scouts and JLGB. Works of art include sculptures by Benno Schotz and Hannah Frank, paintings by Joseph Ancill and Hilda Goldwag.

The Archives Centre oral history collection contains tape-recorded interviews with around 60 members of the Jewish community who have played a leading role in communal life or

were able to describe aspects of the history of the community.

Our museum display - A New Life in Scotland - includes a historical timeline, a graphic overview of Jewish immigration and themed display cases. We also have a growing series of topical information folders which contain information and illustrations from our collections. One of these folders represents the Edinburgh community.

Over the years, we have built up a collection of material on Edinburgh. This includes:

- copy of the circumcision registers of Rev. Moses Joel:1830-1860 and Rev. Jacob Furst, 1879-1907
- lists of burials in Braid Place, Echobank (Newington) and Piershill cemeteries
- Sketch of interior of Park Place synagogue (1867-1898)
- Minutes Book of Edinburgh Zionist Association: 1930-1936
- Jewish Students' magazine, 1923
- Minute Book, B'nai Brith, Dr Daiches Lodge, Edinburgh, 1961-1972
- syllabuses, Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, from 1920 to date (incomplete)
- set of Edinburgh Star from 1989 to date
- Sukkat Shalom (Liberal community), set of online newsletters: September 2004 onwards
- Merrick, Julia M (ed): The Lit at Home - A Celebration of the Centenary of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, 1888-1988; Edinburgh
- Phillips, Abel: First Jewish Community in Scotland - Edinburgh 1816
- Daiches, David: Two Worlds - An Edinburgh Jewish Childhood
- Kogosowski, Mendi: Looking Back? Cultural Memory and Cultural Amnesia in the Edinburgh Jewish Community (MSc dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2006)
- Booklet marking opening of new synagogue in Salisbury Road, 1932.

In our 25th anniversary year, we look forward to a bright future for the Archives Centre, as we continue to build up the collections, develop new storage facilities, conserve fragile old documents, continue the ongoing digitisation of collections and continue to provide a service to researchers. To help us in these tasks, please contribute to our 25th Anniversary Appeal - email us on info@sjac.org.uk for details. Visit our website at www.sjac.org.uk and visit the Archives Centre. We look forward to welcoming you!

Six months in South Africa

Isaac Ansell-Forsyth

I spent January to July of this year living in Durban and Umlazi Township, South Africa.

I was volunteering under the heading of the Jabulani (Happiness) Project. James Gillespie's High School, Edinburgh, founded a link with Zwelibanzi High School, Umlazi, and this project was recently established to continue and expand on the achievements of the incredibly successful school partnership. The Jabulani Project provides a means for people from Scotland and South Africa to share ideas and skills within bonds of friendship.

In this time I had the pleasure of working with, for and on behalf of two projects supporting street children, two township high schools, one special school, the Jewish day school, a crèche and an orphanage, to name but a few.

SISCO is a non-profit organisation and recently established itself to work for the welfare of street children in Durban. Its aim is to engage with the children and rebuild their trust and connections so that they no longer have to live on the street. It is a small project but with a wide reach; there are at least two hundred street children in the city centre. Part of my work with SISCO was with the children themselves, from counselling to running outreach programmes. I was however also involved in helping the charity open a shelter including all the paperwork and networking with which this goes.

At St Raphael's Special School I worked during the school day together with the teachers in and outside the classrooms to introduce a total communication system, specifically through the use of pictorial communication symbols. In the afternoons of those days I ran a series of workshops, in association with the head of special education for the district, for parents with children in the Autism unit. Autism is still not well known in South Africa and I understand these workshops were the first of their kind.



Playing football in Valley of a Thousand Hills with local kids.



Visiting Charles Memorial Primary School, rural school of 60% AIDS orphans.

In January, I would never have imagined I could achieve what I have. But in the words of Mandela himself, "It always seems impossible until it's done."

My colleagues, friends and projects with which I worked put their trust in me. Whether they knew it or not, their trust pushed me to learn skills that allowed me to be a real asset there and which I'm sure I shall take forward. I met many people along the way and I know I shall take them forward with me, as friends and as role models.

I was even able to bring some of my experience to Umhlanga Jewish Day School. The school asked me to come in to share with them an Autism and learning disabilities guidance session.

Throughout my time in South Africa, the people of Durban's Jewish community were incredibly kind to me. Families hosted me for Shabbat every week and, as if that wasn't enough, invited me for everything from meals to football games. They made me very welcome and I am so grateful for it.



With Benjamin, a former street child now reunited with his family.

Yiddish Books in the Mitchell Library

Heather Valencia

If the Jews are the People of the Book, then the Eastern European immigrants in Glasgow in the early twentieth century were no exception, as a group of five Yiddish students from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling have discovered.

During the past year Ellen Galford, Oron Joffe, Daniel Lines, Elaine Samuel and Heather Valencia have visited Glasgow's Mitchell Library regularly to make a database of Yiddish books which form part of the Mitchell's collections. One moving aspect of our work was to see from the borrowing slips how much these books were read and how well they were looked after – hardly any scribbles or torn pages; the survival of these volumes is a memorial to those Jewish immigrants who lived in the Gorbals.

There are three separate groups of books in Yiddish in the Mitchell. About five years ago the Glasgow Friends of Yiddish donated their library of about 140 volumes as well as a small collection of about 60 books from the private library of Harry Furst. All these books are already available on the online catalogue. The third and major category is the collection of more than 400 Yiddish volumes which came to the Mitchell from Gorbals District Library. This fact in itself represents a poignant piece of social history – for it symbolises the end of a vibrant Jewish community which had by that time mainly moved south of the river to form new communities in Giffnock and Newton Mearns, or beyond Glasgow. Needless to say, the language in which their parents worked during the day and read for pleasure in the evenings had largely disappeared.

These books all have shelf marks, but have been until now rather inaccessible. Though a simple list with translated titles was made by Morris Smith z"l, a



founder member of the Glasgow Friends of Yiddish, no bibliographical information was contained in it, and the task of locating a specific book would still be very difficult for a librarian with no knowledge of Yiddish. Our aim was to document information about each volume, and create a database which would make it possible for readers to see what the collection contains, and for librarians easily to locate books for potential users. We hope that eventually they will be made available on the Mitchell's online catalogue.

In the inter-war years, when most of the books in this collection were published, Yiddish came of age as a modern literary language. Of course, modern Yiddish literature did not spring into being fully formed with the coming of the three "classic writers" Mendeley Moykher Sforim (Mendele the Book-Peddler, the pseudonym of S.Y. Abramovitch), I.L. Peretz and Sholem Aleichem (the pseudonym of Sholem Rabinovitch). There had been a rich tradition of Yiddish writing going back to the twelfth century, ranging from prayers, charms and religious texts mainly, but not exclusively, for women's consumption, to courtly epics, love poems, prose narratives, medical treatises and satirical texts. The great social and political upheavals of the nineteenth

century fostered the development of a modern, European Yiddish literature which was influenced even more strongly than older Yiddish writing had been by the changing European cultural scene, reflecting literary currents throughout Europe and America and the changing lives of the modern Yiddish-reading public. From the mid nineteenth century on, there was a veritable explosion of plays, novels, short stories and poetry throughout Eastern Europe and, later, America. The modern Yiddish writer, though often born into a traditional religious community, had usually moved away from it and was more likely to be cosmopolitan, often secular, and au fait with contemporary literatures of other cultures. With the establishment of secular Yiddish-language schools in Poland and Russia in the 1920s, there was growing demand for educational material in Yiddish, and the needs of an increasingly open and sophisticated reading public were catered for by a huge amount of world literature being translated into Yiddish. Yiddish publishing firms sprang up in, among other places, Warsaw, Vilna, Riga, the United States and South America – reflecting Jewish migrations.

The Glasgow collection demonstrates all these aspects of modern Yiddish writing and publishing from the later nineteenth

until the mid twentieth century. The three “Klassikers” are well represented as are most of the great contemporary Yiddish writers and the popular novelists whose work was looked down on by the literary critics. Sholem Ash seems to have been one of the most borrowed, but some of the prominent modernist poets such as Aaron Glants Leyeles and Moyshe Kulbak were also read. The women represented were mainly well known poets, including Rokhl Korn and Kadya Molodowsky. Women also feature as translators, and indeed one of the most interesting aspects of the collection is the large number of translations from world literature. Among the translated authors are Dickens, Gogol, Hamsun, Victor Hugo, Ibsen, Omar Khayyam, Jonathan Swift, Mark Twain, Flaubert, Edgar Wallace and Zola, as well as the great Russian writers.

Political and educational works are also represented: writings by Chaim Zhitlovsky, treatises on Zionism, literary criticism: one particularly quirky title is the book by Morris Meyer, published in London, entitled “Dzhordzh Eliot: di englishe nevie fun der renesans fun yidishn folk” (George Eliot: the English Prophetess of the Renaissance of the Jewish People).

Yiddish books were usually produced as cheaply as possible, often by small, ephemeral publishers. Some of the books are in poor condition, but there are some fine editions from more prestigious Yiddish publishing firms: two particularly

good examples are a book of poems by Pesi Hershefeld, from the Chicago firm L.M.Stein, which specialised in beautiful art nouveau illustration, and a rare volume published by Gescher, one of the Yiddish publishers active in Berlin in the 1920s; this is a beautiful little edition of tales from the Odyssey and Iliad retold for children, by the Vilna educationalist Golda Patz - one of the texts used, no doubt, in the secular Yiddish-language schools in Eastern Europe. It is noteworthy that, even though finances were tight, Yiddish publishers attempted to produce aesthetically pleasing books, and a great many of the Mitchell volumes demonstrate this, being embellished with photos or drawings of the authors, with illustrations and vignettes, often from woodcuts, and the striking logos of the individual publishers.

A Yiddish collection like this, centred in one community, is illuminating not just from a literary and bibliographical point of view, but also raises fruitful questions and possibilities for socio-cultural research. What kind of journey, for instance, did these books make to arrive at the library in the Gorbals? It seems unlikely that the Glasgow library service ordered them from the publishers for the use of the Yiddish speaking populace, so possibly they were brought to Glasgow by immigrants over a period of time, and thus have a dramatic history of their own. Systematic research into the range of authors represented and an examination of which writers

were most frequently borrowed, together with borrowing patterns over the years – periods of highest frequency and falling off – would contribute to our knowledge of the changing social and cultural life of the Jewish community of Glasgow.

In 1892 Rabbi Simeon Singer gave a piece of advice to the newly arrived immigrants:

“I can conceive no good whatever in keeping up in Scotland for an hour longer than you can help the use of Yiddish. For a few weeks or months it may be of service; after that it is no longer necessary” (quoted in: Kenneth Collins, *Second City Jewry*, Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives, 1990, p.80). The survival and constant use of this collection, with borrowings as late as 1984, shows that the recipients of this advice did not follow it to the letter! It is nevertheless a puzzling and in some ways rather sad fact that Jews in Britain did assimilate faster than in most other countries to which they migrated, for example Australia and Canada, and native Yiddish speakers in the United Kingdom are now few and far between. This and other British collections of Yiddish literature are however being studied by a new generation of scholars and students, and new life, albeit of a different kind, is being breathed into this rich and diverse language and culture – a modest revival to which our work at the Mitchell Library is, we hope, a contribution.



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Sukkat Shalom Reports

Claudette Hudes



VISIT TO DUNDEE

On 10th March Sukkat Shalom held a Shabbat morning service in the Synagogue of the Dundee Hebrew Congregation. They had a congregation of between 30 and 40 consisting of Sukkat Shalom members who travelled from Perth & Kinross, Fife and from Edinburgh (mostly by train) as well as members of the Dundee Community.

It was a real treat for Sukkat Shalom to be in a proper synagogue, and the Dundee shul has a very pleasant ambience, complete with side lighting falling on collections of seaside stones down the left side of the sanctuary (as shown here). The Dundee community provided us with a splendid lunch and we concluded the afternoon with a discussion of Talmud selections on drinking at Purim.

LIBERAL JUDAISM BIENNIAL

It is interesting to see it is not only the Edinburgh Jewish Community that is concerned with drawing from our past and thinking about what our future will be. The Liberal Judaism Biennial was held in the sumptuous surroundings of Tortworth Court Hotel near the Cotswolds and the theme was 'Looking Backwards - Moving Forwards'.

We started the weekend with an activity in which some of the Rabbis present took the part of characters from Jewish History. They read the appropriate bits of the Erev Shabbat service and then went round the dinner tables trying to convince us that it was they who had contributed the most to Liberal Judaism today. There was a full weekend of discussion sessions, services and of course the opportunity to meet people from other

communities. It was interesting to compare what other communities saw as their problems and their successes.

PURIM 2012 - SUKKAT SHALOM

We were thrilled to have our Rabbi Mark Solomon with us again for Purim this year. We had another animated Megillah reading with Mark reading from the scroll (which he kindly lent us for the occasion) and and lots of us taking parts in the dramatised English translation. The sound of greggers and stamping shook the Marchmont St Giles Church Hall whenever the evil name of Haman was mentioned and cheers resounded to the name of Mordechai.



The Community excelled itself in fancy dress costumes this year, several lovely Esthers and a couple of nastyfaced Hamans. We are only sorry we did not manage to get more photos this year. Our only two are the odd Arab couple, and the Purim Wizard LotCaster and his Witchy wife. Helen and Stewart were splendid as Lion and Lion tamer but the lion must have escaped before we could shoot him. After the Megillah reading we all set off down to the Synagogue in Salisbury Road to join the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, who had just finished their own Megillah reading, for a joint Kiddush and Purimspiel.



COMMUNAL SEDER 5772/2012

- SUKKAT SHALOM

Sukkat Shalom managed to squeeze 90 people into the Marchmont St Giles Church Hall for their communal seder, led with his usual aplomb by Rabbi Mark Solomon. We celebrated our freedom from bondage but many times we also reflected on the plight of those who are now still far from free.

As in the last two years we used the Liberal Judaism Haggadah (B'Chol Dor VaDor). We filled a cup for Elijah and also filled a cup of water to celebrate Miriam's role in the deliverance from Egypt and to remind us of the importance of water to our survival.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the seder a success, especially Maureen Mackinnon for sorting out the bookings, everyone who brought the items for the seder plates, and the plates themselves and to Judith Stewart and her team from Butterflies Catering for preparing and serving the meal. Judith has perfected her kneidlach recipe and the staff were most helpful and understanding.

The Star in the Kitchen

Ellen Galford

I have a confession to make. (Well, it is the proper season for it, so if not now when?): I don't have much of a sweet tooth, and I don't particularly like the taste or the texture of honey. For 50 weeks of the year, I can take it or leave it—mostly the latter.



Mysteriously, all that changes when the High Holy Days come round. Who would have thought that symbolism and ritual could have such an effect on the taste buds? Once Rosh Hashonah arrives, nobody walks into our house without being offered slices of apples dipped in honey, in hopes of a sweet and fruitful year. It would be impolite to let guests eat on their own, which means I have to have a slice too. And maybe another, and then it would be a shame to leave that one last sticky sliver lingering on the plate...The sharp sap of a fresh apple from East Lothian or Fife takes that otherwise sickly sweetness into another, better place altogether.

So I find myself possessed with the urge to make something—maybe several somethings—featuring honey. Inevitably I turn to the ancient and tattered collection of the Jewish cookbooks I grew up with, the files of handwritten family recipes and, in one case, the ineffable memory of a much-loved Litvak (i.e. Latvian/Lithuanian/Belorussian) Rosh Hashonah delicacy that I'm quite sure goes back for several hundred years---and that nobody apart from my own relatives seems to have heard of, and that only my beloved grandmother (olevasholem) ever made.

This strange (and, in my view at least, strangely delicious) ancient dish is a savoury-sweet paradox called *Saltenuss*. The word "*Saltenuss*" is not completely unknown in Eastern European Jewish cookery; I've seen it applied, in a couple of very old cookbooks, to a dish of cheese-filled *kreplach* baked in a creamy sauce. But that's not the *Saltenuss* we knew. Our *saltenuss* is a meat dish, so simple that it's not a proper recipe at all, just a couple of sentences of imprecise instructions.

Basically, a large tray of previously cooked meat-filled *kreplach* is covered with a thin layer of runny honey and baked in a moderate oven (say 180°C), for something between half an hour and 45 minutes until the *kreplach* has turned crisp and golden, and everything is completely heated through.

I love it, but I'm not suggesting that you try it—unless you have an adventurous palate, some interest in the heavily sweetened meat dishes found in mediaeval cookery manuals, or a quantity of leftover *kreplach* not used up in your Rosh Hashonah chicken soup (unlikely as that may be...). Perhaps, like Proust's *madeleine*, its virtue lies more in its ability to trigger a rich store of memories than in the taste of the thing itself. But, for whatever reason, I find the very thought of *saltenuss* sets my mouth watering. Its odd blend of flavours raises a lot of questions and tells a lot of stories. And if there is anyone reading this who has heard of it, or anything resembling it, please do get in touch—we are probably related, or at least descended from families living in the same dorf back in Kovno Gubernia.

What I will suggest that you try, though, and give you the actual recipe for, is my grandmother's *lekach*--honey cake. About this very familiar Ashkenazic Yuntiff treat there is nothing mysterious or outlandish. But, like *saltenuss*, it goes a long way back in time. In *The Book of Jewish Food*, Claudia Roden notes that in the 1100s, Jewish boys were given honeycake to take to Cheder at the start of the new school term, conveying the message that Torah study is sweet.

There is nothing showy or spectacular about this particular honeycake. It's easy and unfussy, leaving you wondering if you could maybe manage one slice more.

Anna Broadman's Honeycake

Ingredients:

3 eggs

8 fl.oz/250 ml runny honey (the darker the better)

1 tsp baking soda

1.5 lb./675g. plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

8 oz/225g. sugar

4 fl.oz/125ml. oil (good-quality sunflower or rapeseed oil)

8 fl.oz/250 ml strong coffee, cold (Real coffee, not instant!!)

1 tsp ground cloves (or ginger, if you don't like cloves)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C
2. In a large bowl, beat together eggs and sugar until light and frothy.
3. Stir in honey and mix well.
4. Add the oil and mix well.
5. In a small jug or mug, combine the baking soda and the coffee and set it aside.
6. In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and ground cloves or ginger.
7. Add the dry ingredients to the original batter IN 3 STAGES, alternating each addition with 1/3 of the coffee mixture.
8. Stir everything together until very well blended.
9. Pour the mixture into an UNGREASED 10-inch loaf pan. (Non-stick pan is fine here, but I've also had good results with ordinary old-fashioned loaf pans, which is what my grandmother would have had.)
10. Bake for about 1 hour and 10 minutes, or until done. (i.e. when a small metal skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean).
11. Cool the cake in the pan completely. If the cake hasn't shrunk from the sides of the pan, loosen gently, using a palette knife or similar. Invert the pan and turn out onto a plate. (I always hold my breath here, but it does generally slip out easily.
12. It tastes fine straightaway, but the flavour will develop and deepen considerably if you leave for at least 2 – 3 days before serving. It keeps very well in an airtight tin or even simply wrapped in foil.

FESTIVAL OPEN DAY IN PICTURES

The Festival Open Day organised by David Neville and the Jewish Edinburgh Group took place from 12 – 3.30pm on Sunday 18th August at 4 Salisbury Road. Among the performers were Miriam Margolyes, Daniel Cainer, Naomi Paul and Arthur Kleinberg's grand daughter Emily Rose Simons.



Small sample of audience



Daniel Cainer



'The Hand-Me-Down People' by Adam H Wells



Emily Rose - 'My Little Song Book



Ruby Dolls



Vanessa Rosenthal - Karen's Way



...Satan's Playground



Dean Friedman



David Neville & Miriam Margolyes



Naomi Paul - Reshape While damp



David Neville & Naomi Paul



Annette Roman Hitler's Li'll Abomination



CIVIC SERVICE

EHC held their annual Civic Service to mark the Edinburgh International Festival on Shabbat, Saturday 18th August 2012. The Council was represented by **The Rt Hon Donald Wilson**, Lord Provost, **Councillor Paul Edie**, Member of the Liberal Democrat Group and guest, **Councillor Ron Cairns**, Member of the SNP Group, **Councillor Cameron Rose**, Member of the Conservative Group and one of the Ward Councillors for the Synagogue, **Councillor Frank Ross**, Member of the SNP Group, **Mr Danny Gallacher**, Head of Corporate and Transactional Services, **Mr Colin Beck**, Senior Manager, Mental Health, Criminal Justice, Substance Abuse and Homelessness, Health and Social Care, **Ms Lynne Porteous**, Early Intervention Strategic

Manager, Children and Families along with the 8 High Constables and their guests. The Synagogue Choir, under the direction of Mr David Mendelssohn, welcomed the guests with a rendering of 'Ma Tovv'.

The guests were welcomed from the pulpit by Rabbi David Rose who gave a sermon on inclusiveness as marked by events like the Olympic Games, whose closing ceremony featured all the athletes parading in together and the festival itself. Edward Green as Chair of the Board of Management welcomed the guests at a Kiddush following the service. The Kiddush was sponsored by Maryla and Edward Green to mark his 60th birthday.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2012

Lord Julian Goodman

As the country started hyperventilating at Team GB's steadily improving Olympic expectations, the battle for Gold Medal Audiences quietly commenced in the World's biggest Arts Festival.

The first week was somewhat subdued as expected, but suddenly, the crowds appeared from nowhere, and the traffic and flyer distribution chaos kicked in with a vengeance! Sir Chris Hoy's second Gold Pillar Box in Hunter Square by The Tron, was immediately overshadowed by the mass of people watching the traditional street entertainment on show for the duration, and Edinburgh settled into its annual month of mayhem!



Gerry Connolly
Photo Credit Douglas Robertson

My first show was **La Clique Royale – The Queen's Selection** at The Famous Spiegeltent, relocated on George Street outside the newly refurbished Assembly Rooms. The old favourite was back with a brand new show, and it well and truly set the mood for my whole Fringe experience. Once again it was like being a kid at the circus, and 90 minutes of fun whizzed by in the wink of an eye. The show was opened by HM The Queen, as portrayed by **Gerry Connolly**, with an hilarious and topical speech. The rest of the show was overseen by the comic magician **Paul Zenon**, with some amazing tricks (considering the circular



Curtain Call 11
Photo Credit Douglas Robertson

venue was covered with mirrors), and plenty of comedy. It was crammed full of eye-popping aerial gymnastics from **Didj Wentworth**, outfit changing from **Mirko** while in the middle of high rise handstands, singing from Croatian-Australian crooner **Mikelangelo** and brilliant Burlesque from the likes of **Agent Lynch** (what a job for a yiddishe girl!), hula-hooping **Lilikoi Kaos** and bawdy trapeze artistes the **Wau Wau Sisters**. The Queen closed the show with a brilliant performance on the piano while singing "I Did It One's Way" and we all left with huge grins on our faces from the whole experience.

My second show was **Fascinating Aïda – Cheap Flights** at The Gilded Balloon. Combining the talents of **Dillie Keane**, **Adèle Anderson** and **Liza Pulman**, **Fascinating Aïda** is one of the funniest acts performing cabaret today! It had been some years since I'd last been to see them, but I was delighted to pay a return visit. Their original material, written by Dillie Keane and Adèle Anderson, never fails to impress, covering all topics with



Wau Wau Sisters
Photo Credit Douglas Robertson

songs like *Companies Using Nifty Taxation Systems (Paying Taxes is a Grind)*, *The One True Religion (Is Me)*, *Mother Dear Mother* and a *Bulgarian Song Cycle* which was so funny and topical, including jokes about Andy Murray's nationality (British rather than Scottish) after winning Olympic Gold just a few days before. The highlight of course, was the current internet sensation, *Cheap Flights*, a song about a flight to Ireland supposedly costing 50p. If you haven't heard it yet, it is well worth seeking out on YouTube! The show was a sell-out, and the audience loved every minute.



Didj Wentworth
Photo Credit Douglas Robertson

The next day I found my hidden gem of The Fringe. **The Elephant and the Mouse** were performing **Repertory Theatre** by Eldad Cohen at C Venues @ The Edinburgh College of Art. This was the apparently the only Israeli production at this year's Fringe, and it was simply quite brilliant! Billed as "A crazy fringe comedy about the even crazier world of Rep Theatre", it was the story of a young, timid playwright who is invited by a neurotic, Hamlet-obsessed national theatre manager to discuss his debut play. The theatre manager has a hidden agenda concerning the playwright's deceased actor father, his best friend, who mysteriously died on stage while playing Hamlet, and also his alleged adulterous mother.

The first half of the play seemed to be the usual quirky, surreal comedy that one



Fascinating Aida
Photo Credit Steve Ullathorne

expects at The Fringe, but as the ghost appears, the twist halfway through the play suddenly explains so much of the strange dialogue and supposed technical errors as well as the manic behaviour, and was so clever and unexpected, it was real old-fashioned Fringe stuff, totally transforming an entertaining show into a brilliant piece of comedy theatre. The Elephant and the Mouse are a collaboration based in Tel-Aviv formed by **Erez Drigues**, who currently works at the HaBima Repertory Theatre and **Iftach Jeffrey Ophir**, rising star of the opposing Cameri Theatre. They played the theatre manager and playwright/ghost of father respectively, with such energy, they totally engaged and interacted with the audience, so that we all left totally overwhelmed by their performance.

My next show was **Hitler's Li'l Abomination** at theSpace @ Jury's Inn. Performed by **Annette Roman**, this was the irreverent true story of her rather unique parentage. Her father was a Holocaust Survivor and her mother was a member of the Hitler Youth for Girls. "D'you know why I married your mother?" her father asked, "To heal the wounds of war!"

Describing the different branches of her family, her upbringing and childhood, the break-up of her parents' marriage and her difficult relationship with her father, this was a fascinating story of human relationships in extraordinary circumstances. It was fascinating to hear how German refugees were treated and coped after the end of the war, how her

father had actually survived and had been drafted into a sort of army for Jews. Most of his family had been murdered, while her mother's family had naturally survived and went on to live in Canada and other places. Her father always 'played the holocaust card' and told her some very disturbing bed time stories. The strains in all his relationships didn't take long to show, yet her mother's family also had strange pressures and ways of dealing with them, including collective guilt for a nation, and embarrassment on meeting Jewish people, despite being married to one. However, because of the problems with her father, including not talking for 25 years, she explained that being a victim doesn't always make you a good person. It was quite a roller-coaster of emotions, with the dark subject of the Holocaust at the core, but with plenty of humour amongst the pains of life, because being a true story, that's how humans tend to survive the darkest times. Annette Roman gave brilliant characterisations of all the different family members, and held us all in its world because it was such an interesting story to tell!

For some years, I had seen **Dean Friedman** sing a few of his songs at the Festival Open Day at Shul, so this year I decided to go and see his whole show at The Malmaison Hotel. What a great way to spend an evening it turned out to be. I bumped into Dean at the hotel entrance and we had a pleasant chat, then, being a professional musician about to attend a gig, I went straight to the bar and ordered a very refreshing pear cider I'd just

noticed on the Kosher List. I found my seat and settled back to enjoy a laid-back, relaxing evening of mellow music and entertaining lyrics. Dean has a hard core of fans following him all over the world, and Edinburgh was no exception. Chatting with the audience, he established who his online followers were, and took us all on a journey through events in his life through song. Having only heard a couple of his songs, I was pleasantly surprised by his varied repertoire. He has a totally engaging manner, and one can't help but enjoy his company and performance. With his songs available online, I heartily recommend looking him out on Facebook or indeed his own website.



Mikelangelo
Photo Credit Douglas Robertson

Talking of the **Festival Open Day**, this year's was a great success as per usual. Hosted by David Neville, a capacity crowd in the Community Centre were once again treated to a selection of wonderful acts all appearing in the Fringe, and the delicious refreshments that never fail to impress. For most people, the star of the show was undoubtedly Miriam Margolyes. She was performing her show, **Dickens' Women**, over at The Pleasance Courtyard, however, it had been an absolute sell-out from the very first week and no tickets were available, let alone press tickets, so I had been unable to review it. In an entertaining interview by David, we learnt all about her Edinburgh connexions, as well as the more commonly known Glasgow ones, and were treated to her beautifully accurate Scottish accents, and when the Newton Mearns "twang" came up in the conversation, a cry of "ooh, I can do that one too!" preceded the proof that she indeed could. She described her love of Dickens and gave us great insights into many of his characters, explaining that Fagin was not, as often described, an anti-Semitic character, but an accurate portrayal of the truth of Victorian London and the peddler society. Dickens himself



Agent Lynch 10
Photo Credit Douglas Robertson

was horrified to learn he may have caused offence to the Jewish Community and tried to redress the balance in *Our Mutual Friend*, but Fagin is the character that everyone will always remember. She then gave us her portrayal of Mrs Gamp, the rather tipsy midwife from *Martin Chuzzlewit* who also lays out dead bodies. "She is a nurse of sorts whose specialty lies in the polar extremities of life, the lying in and the laying out." You could have heard a pin drop during this performance, and it was indeed quite a coup having one of the country's most accomplished actresses performing just for us! One of the highlights however



Dickens-Miriam Margolyes
Photo Credit Prudence Upton

had occurred earlier. I had bumped into Miriam Margolyes earlier in the week in the rather select, pre-audience queue for *Fascinating Aïda*, where she cheerfully declared to the director how loud and bossy she can be. On this Festival Open Day, the Glasgow bus, as well as bringing some Liverpoolians I was expecting, also brought my cousin & G-dmother I was not expecting. Not the quietest of women, (a family trait my late mother a"n was also blessed with), she and Miriam Margolyes having obviously met before, stood on either side of the kitchen counters and gustily talked AT each other for some time. I speculated that it must have been quite a novelty for both women to meet another who can match them decibel for decibel, and suddenly fearing that any moment they may suddenly decide to actually talk

at the same time, I retreated to the relative quiet of the hall where several hundred Jewish people were all talking at once, and I resolved that if ever the spectacle promises to repeat itself, I shall sell tickets and may even apply for an Arts Council Grant!

The next offering presented by David Neville was one of the Open Day's old favourites, **Daniel Cainer**, who was performing his latest show, **Jewbadour** at the Free Fringe at Mood. This was followed by **Emily Rose**, Arthur Kleinberg's granddaughter, who was also performing in the Free fringe. She told of her delight to be back in the Edinburgh Shul and her fond childhood memories of it, and sang two of her own original songs, *Daddy Sang Kiddush* and *I Wanna Be A Hamster*. We were then treated to a performance by **Naomi Paul**, who was appearing in her comedy show, **Reshape While Damp**, on the upper deck of the Comedy Bus at the Free Sisters. In a wonderful deadpan style, she told us tales of Jehovah's Witnesses that turned out to be Energy Companies wanting her conversion to them, her accidental enrolment on a Flirting Course, a Hogroast, Jewish DIY, and finished with us all singing along with her song about the demise of the library. I went along to her show on the bus, to hear even more well-crafted tales about Kafka and The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and plenty of observations on the failings of the Westminster ConDem Government, but was a little disappointed, not by her performance, but the small audience in a confined space. In the hall her excellent material and brilliant persona crested the waves of an appreciative large audience, but it is much harder ride the laughs of such smaller numbers, so I look forward to seeing her again enjoying the big laughs she deserves.

Back at the Festival Open Day, we saw excerpts of **The Ruby Dolls – Rubies in the Attic** which was showing at the Roxy. Opening with a rendition of *There Are Bad Times Just Around the Corner*, we were told how all the girls had mixed ancestry, with fascinating stories. So they had put together this show exploring that theme of personal family histories, so being half Jewish and half Swiss, we heard a lovely rendition of *Hashiveinu*. Other shows in the Open Day included **Karen's Way**,

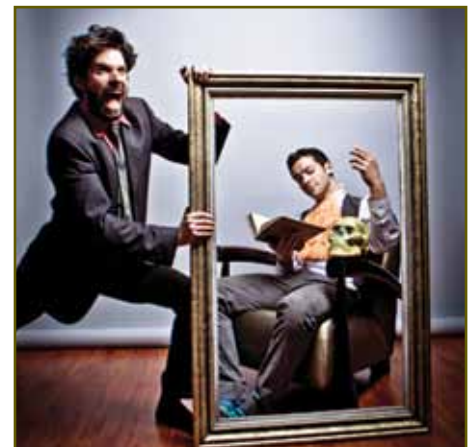


Mirko
Photo Credit
Douglas Robertson



performed by **Vanessa Rosenthal**. This was the true story of **Karen Gershon** who escaped on the Kindertransport and ended up in Edinburgh, descriptions of **13, Ghetto and Satan's Playground** based on a story by Isaac Bashevis Singer. **Hitler's Li'l Abomination** was introduced, which I had already been to see, another performance was given by **Daniel Cainer**, and a few songs from **Dean Friedman** entertained the masses.

As ever, there was plenty to see at The Fringe, but this year most of it was well hidden and not easy to notice in the programme, but that makes it more interesting when you do find it. This year, I toyed with idea of awarding a Gold Medal in the spirit of London 2012, but the recipient won it not just for their outstanding performance, but for the surprise they gave you in having a good old fashioned Fringe experience, so this year the Five Mogen Dovid's go to **The Elephant and the Mouse** and their production of **Repertory Theatre!**



Repertory Theatre

Batsheva Dance Company

Edward Green

The well-known and very respected Israeli dance company Batsheva were guests at the Edinburgh International Festival this summer staging a number of performances of their ballet Hora at the Playhouse at the end of August.

The company of six female dancers and five men were outstanding undertaking a melee of very contemporary and modern dance to music that was often surprisingly very popular and recognisable. The backdrop of an austere but very bright lime green stage brought the dancers to life as one's senses concentrated on the superlative movement and striking music and not on peripheries such as a cumbersome set would give.

The Israeli Ambassador to the Court of St James, Daniel Taub, attended the first performance as well as the Israeli Minister for Sport and Culture, Limor Livnat. The Honorary Consul for Israel to Scotland, Stanley Lovatt also attended with his wife and son. The large auditorium of the Playhouse was over two thirds full with an audience who had braved protests being held against Israel outside the theatre.

There were also a number of protests on all the nights within the auditorium. Whilst somewhat unsettling when they first happened, the audiences soon rose to the occasion with drowning out the protests by loud applause until the stewards removed the offenders from the theatre.



The stage would darken and the dance troupe remained stationary until peace was restored.

At the end of each performance, the audiences showed their enormous appreciation and admiration for the cast with a standing ovation and in turn the performers expressed their own appreciation for the support shown by applauding the audience.

First hand recollections (and confessions) of a 'Mikvah Maid'... in the early days

Judy Gilbert

Edinburgh Community, far from standing still and letting the world go by, has recently demonstrated how active its heart is. A splendid new version of the rather aging Bet Hamedrash has been opened for all to admire. Let us not forget, however, that prior to this refurbishment, a possibly less spellbinding but non-the-less vital ingredient of the spiritual component of a Jewish community has also been revitalised; the Mikvah.

Now don't get excited; if anyone comes out of this red faced it will be me.

There are a number of criteria for the simple task of preparing the ritual bath for ultimate immersion. I learnt in a number of painful steps to acknowledge the vagaries of the primitive system before its makeover. I have to remind you that my recollections cover the period before Raymond Taylor had the lion's share of what now takes place.

First you need to fill the bath to the required level with the special cold water mix whose component must contain a permissible quantity of natural water, such as rain or flowing river water, and I think you will agree that the former is easily the winning contender for the chosen ingredient.

It is fortunate that I live close enough to enable me to nip up to the Shul to turn on the tap and, rather than hang around, nip back home for a cup of tea or even a three course lunch. The filling used to take forever and a day, well about four hours; it rather depended on how obliging the system was feeling that day. With the water lapping gently up to the required little tile square and the faucet turned off the next job is to heat the water to a comfortable temperature. The warming up is really out of consideration to the 'immersee' rather than a law you might find in the Torah when rivers were absolutely



de rigueur and, let's admit it, in Israel! This heating activity could also take a day-trips-worth of time, dependent on the time of year.

So far so good.

One fine morning I was called upon to carry out this Mitzvah. Given the time involved, as explained above, the arrangement to immerse must be made sufficiently early to fulfil the above necessities. It just so happened that a few weeks earlier a driver failed to take account of a minor impediment that turned out to be me innocently cycling near the curb, before he, desperate to sample the joys of Texas Home Base, ploughed into me. The consequence was that I was slightly hampered on Mikvah duty day by an impressive piece of equipment drilled into the bones of my right arm and making me look, to all intense and purposes, like bionic woman...I wish.

Well it's easy enough to turn a tap on with your left hand, so turn it I did and went away for my three course lunch. To my horror I returned to witness a very biblical rolling of waters down the three steps of the Mikvah house; Mis-Judgement day had arrived! I couldn't get through the door fast enough only to be greeted by a surge of water. If Christine Burns, our caretaker at the time, had known what was going on just a few yards away from her front door she would have managed the calamity it in her usual calm and efficient way but if I could sort the problem quietly without anyone knowing I could still hold my head up high.

I turned off the tap and stopped for a moment to decide what to tackle first; reducing the water level; sweeping out the water or wringing out the carpets. With a left arm plan of action in place, sweeping forth commenced, followed by lifting of carpets and wringing of hand (singular). The most difficult of the three tasks was the 'receding of the holy waters'.

Bear in mind the prehistoric pump that resembles a mini nuclear reactor and used to empty the Mikvah, must have been designed by Noah and quite beyond my understanding or strength with two arms never mind one. The answer lay in the bucket and bath method. Dip, swill, heave,

bale out. After two hours of unmitigated toil accompanied by alternating hysterical laughter and tears, more water slopped onto the floor than landed in the bath to drain away but, 'lo... the waters did ebb'. More swabbing down, with a mop possessing only half of its statutory stringy bits and one handed wringing, and I could address the next item on my list of 'to dos'

I switched the heating on, and set forth with the smaller of the rugs under my arm; the one that reached from outside door to the Mikvah steps and would be the only one to be used by my client. The other would just have to dry naturally and hopefully before my sins found me out!

Home...It's amazing what you can do with a hair drier.

By the appointed time, the slightly damp rug, somewhat wavy in the middle and only a little curled at the corners, was returned. My client, unaware of the preceding drama fulfilled her Mitzvah in the usual peaceful and spiritual way.

Slightly less sensational were the two occasions in which heroism and devotion to duty were truly demonstrated. Both were brought about by the unreliability of the heating system and blind faith, or maybe fallibility, of the heating operator.

On the first occasion it was a particularly cold winter's day. I learned my first lesson concerning prehistoric boilers versus extreme weather conditions, not to be recommended as a practical experiment. Five hours of heating and an hour or so before the due time for immersion, I confidently set off to satisfy myself that all was well. Before refurbishment I would unlock and open up to be greeted by a rush of warm air because there was no inner door separating the ritual bath from the small passageway to the outer door. However on this memorable occasion there was no comforting warmth to greet me and I tentatively dipped my hand into a pool with the chill taken off but still bracing. My only plan was to pray very hard and hope that another hour would bring the temperature up a few more degrees. A hasty warning phone call to give the lady a chance to back out was no deterrent. I was filled with admiration as she assured me that it wouldn't be the first time she had immersed in unwarmed

water and that the Mitzvah far outweighed any discomfort. It was me that gasped when she finally disappeared beneath the water; not a word of recrimination and she truly deserved any forthcoming Mazel.

I can't make up my mind what my decision would be if I were forced to choose between being frozen or boiled. I generously gave the last of my victims the chance to make up her own mind. I am convinced that someone must have raised the thermostat temperature when I wasn't looking. Well that's my story and I'm sticking by it. I know - one should always check - but we are all human.

An hour before meeting up as arranged, I was greeted by a not so comforting tropical sauna. Once again the bucket and bath method, tried and tested, was redeployed. Fortunately by this time I had the full complement of useful arms. At the given time I led the lady into a comfortably steamy environment explaining that she might find the water a little on the hot side and that if she were prepared to wait a little longer I would do a bit more baling out and refill with cold water. Mikvah heroines are made of true grit and steel. Together we baled. The lady entered the water with only a slight wince and raising of eyebrows and I think, on reflection that if push comes to shove, hot is probably better than cold.

I have to say that ladies who fulfil the mitzvah of T'vilah are without exception delightful and generous both in spirit and generosity. The short time that I have with them shows two commendable aspects of their characters. They immerse with dignity and a simple but admirable faith and they have a sense of humour...well they have to don't they?

The Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Jewish Question

Michael Adler

Most readers of the Edinburgh Star will know, but some may not, that for three weeks in August, Charlotte Square is home to the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Over 800 celebrated writers and thinkers talk about the books they have published, or are about to publish, or about issues that concern them. It has become an enormous success and many of the 750 events are sold out. There was no identifiable 'Jewish' theme in this year's programme and no performances this year by some Israel's most prominent writers, such as Amos Oz, David Grossman or A B Yehoshua, all of whom have appeared in previous years. However, there were a number of events that the Edinburgh Star thought would be of particular interest to members of the Jewish community and, for the first time this year, we review some of them.

Caroline Moorehead: The Women Who Survived Auschwitz

— reviewed by Sue Lieberman

Caroline Moorehead wanted to write a book about the Second World War. She found her subject in the story of 230 ordinary French women, aged from 16 to 68, most of whom had helped the resistance, who were deported to Auschwitz in January 1943. Only 49 returned. The most famous, Charlotte Delbo, spent the rest of her life writing about the experience. Thanks in large part to Charlotte Delbo's memoirs, Moorehead was able to meet both the handful of survivors who were still alive and other survivors' children. *A Train in Winter* (Chatto and Windus £20.00, kindle and paperback due out very soon) presents the women's story.

Of the many harrowing and heart-rending stories of death and survival at the hands of the Nazis, this one seems to have fascinated Moorehead not least because it tells how differently this group of women behaved from men in order to survive. The

original 230 came from all over France and did not know each other before meeting in a French holding camp. They quickly formed a group, and mutual group support became key to their survival strategy. Like king penguins in Antarctica, one method involved their mutual protection from the intense cold. If forced to stand for hours in freezing temperatures, the women continually shuffled round so that no one was perpetually exposed at the edge. Such strategies helped, proportionately, twice as many women as men to survive – of the 1100 men deported on the same train, only 100 survived.

Moorehead is careful to context this story against the larger one of Jewish deportation. 70,000 French Jews were deported to Auschwitz, compared to 230 ordinary French women. But the difference she did not touch on is key. Despite the hardship and damage, especially to their children, all those who survived stated that they would do the same again: their 'small acts of resistance' were essential for France. The Frenchwomen chose to become actively engaged against the Nazi occupation, thereby making themselves targets. Jews were never in a position of choice.

Ian Black and Paul Mason: 'What Caused The 2011 Revolutions?'

— reviewed by Michael Adler

Ian Black has occupied a number of senior editorial positions on The Guardian – in more than 25 years on the paper he has been its European editor, diplomatic editor, foreign leader writer and Middle East correspondent and is currently its Middle Eastern editor. He is also the author (with Benny Morris) of *Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services* (Grove Press, used copies available from Amazon for £10.00). Paul Mason is economics editor of the BBC TV's *Newsnight* programme and the author of several books, most recently

Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions (Verso £12.99). Whether they were a 'scratch pairing' or a regular speaking duo was not made clear.

The changes that are taking place in the Arab world, widely known as 'the Arab Spring', are of great concern to many people and to many countries, not least to Israel, which is surrounded by three Arab states. Israel made peace with Mubarak and has a peace treaty with Egypt, which is unpopular with many Egyptians. With Mubarak gone and the Muslim Brotherhood in power, its continuation cannot be taken for granted. Over the years, Israel has learned how to coexist with Jordan but, if revolution were to spread to that country, it would clearly have serious implications for Israel. In Lebanon, the third of Israel's neighbours, Hezbollah – armed by Iran and Syria – is an ongoing threat to Israel's security. To cap it all, Israel's once close relations with Turkey are in ruins.

Neither of the speakers dealt directly with the implications of the 'Arab Spring' for Israel. Responding to questions from the chairman, the political commentator Iain MacWhirter, they compared the current spate of uprisings with the revolutions of 1848 (in France, Germany, Poland, Italy and the Austrian Empire) and 1989 (in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania). They both emphasised the contemporary significance of social media, such as 'Facebook', 'Twitter' and 'You Tube', which enable people on the ground to transmit images and reports of revolutions 'in the making' to the outside world and thereby to evade the restrictions of censors in authoritarian states, although it did occur to me that the earlier revolutions spread pretty quickly without them. However, Ian Black felt the emergence the satellite TV channel 'Al Jazeera' was of even greater significance since it provides access to independently-gathered news and commentary for millions of people across the Arab world.

Israel used to claim that it was the only democracy in the Middle East but, as this thought-provoking session made clear, the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, their replacement by more-open regimes and, in some cases, the holding of elections in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and a number of other Arab States, suggest that this is no longer the case. The fact that Israel's traditional enemies in the Arab World can now claim a democratic mandate is to be welcomed even if it makes it more difficult for Israel to reach an accommodation with them.

Rabbi Julia Neuberger interviews Bishop Richard Holloway

– reviewed by Gillian Raab

The largest tent at the book festival was filled to capacity for this interview about Holloway's new memoir *Leaving Alexandria: A Memoir of Faith and Doubt* (Routledge £17.99). Asked why he wrote the book he described how in 2009 he had found himself in tears in the graveyard of the theological college he had entered aged 14 from a poor home in Alexandria. He talked about his love of the place, its romantic draw and the fun he had there. But throughout his life he was seeking something he could not quite catch and, since the college had no room for doubters, the monastic life was not for him. He moved on to eventually become Bishop of Edinburgh until, as he put it, he gave up the purple underwear and threw his mitre into the Thames. The exchanges between the Rabbi and the former Bishop were wide ranging, covering the role of institutions, which Holloway thought ended up existing for their own existence. He spoke at length of disappointment with the split in the Anglican church over women bishops, wishing that different branches of religious institutions could forget about Union embrace pluralism and work together in affection. Although highly critical of religious institutions for their inability to adapt, citing Spinoza's excommunication by the Amsterdam synagogue as an example, he did see that they had a role, a human one to give a structure to life. He commented to his interviewer 'You Jews do it better, I might be thinking of coming over', to which she responded 'You're safe, you know we don't do conversions!' It was a great session and the many questions were

answered with wit and wisdom. Leaving Alexandria is a great read that I would recommend to anyone whatever their religious affiliation.

Sam Bourne/Jonathan Freedland: The Thrilling Tale of a Plan to Create the Master Race

– reviewed by Judy Gilbert



Jonathan Freedland wears many hats. He writes for the Guardian and The Jewish Chronicle, he presents 'The Long View' on the BBC and he is an author in his own right. He always nurtured a desire to write fiction, and approached the book publisher Jonny Geller with the idea. Geller was more than happy with the proposal on the strict proviso that a pseudonym be adopted to distance himself from instant rejection of a book written by 'just another pointy headed columnists for pointy headed newspapers'. Sam Bourne was to be the fictional writer, never to be confused with Jonathan Freedland the journalist.

Bourne's latest novel *Pantheon* (Harper £7.99, kindle £3.99) was inspired by research carried out in the 1990s, following shortly after the extraordinary discovery of photographs suggesting early moves towards 'eugenics'.

Pantheon is a historical novel set in 1940. Hero James Zennor, was shot in the shoulder in Spain, returned to Oxford and was declared unfit for national service. He returns home one summer's day, to

find his wife and son gone. They had fled to America sensing imminent German invasion. Zennor crosses the Atlantic in search of his family only to discover in Yale, an extraordinary study taking place in 'Ivy League' Universities, whereby fresher students were required to have completely nude 'Posture Photos' taken to determine if there were any correlation between physical and intellectual prowess. This research has dark overtones. It is connected to actual events that took place in Denmark, America and finally Sweden. Bourne explained that when the reality of what was happening in Nazi Germany came to light, even those most keenly advocating the posture study began to retract.

Asked why he chose to turn such thorough research into fiction rather than fact, Bourne replied that he thought this style of writing would be more accessible, and would reach greater numbers interested in the subject, than a more scientific approach. In answer to the question of whether the simplistic 'Posture Study' could lead to deeper interest in eugenics now, Bourne speculated, subjectively, that the crusade for birth control by Mary Stopes; the gradual elimination of disease; 'mercy killing' and 'designer babies', were all expressions of what could ultimately lead to the concept of eugenics.

This presentation by Sam Bourne was more than just a promotion of his tantalizing novel; it was stimulating, thought provoking and promised a thoroughly good read.

Howard Jacobson: 'Calling Time on the Novel'

– reviewed by Julia Merrick

Rodge Glass introduced Howard Jacobson with words from one of his critics as 'One of the greatest sentence builders of our time'. Jacobson does not want his readers to turn the pages of his books too fast but to savour the words and the argument. After the triumph of winning the Man Booker prize for *The Finkler Question*, a humorous but not a comic novel, he returned to a work he had begun some years ago that would be funny. A book started when writers and publishers began to be fearful of the future of paper publishing. His apprehension

is that the public no longer know how to read. Certainly, his readers have to take some rich Anglo-Saxon vocabulary and behaviour that is taboo in their stride. He warned that 'The reader needs a strong stomach' and 'A novel supersedes the attitude of the novelist. It's the art not the man'.

Howard Jacobson read from Zoo Time (Bloomsbury £18.99) to a warmly appreciative international audience at

the Book Festival, who did indeed laugh out loud. There was a delightfully sharp portrait of a fictional visit by his hero Guy Ableman to a book club of furious readers in Chipping Norton. As an author, Guy has a difficult time; his agent is in hiding and his publisher commits suicide. Guy has a beautiful red-haired wife and an equally gorgeous mother-in-law. Temptation is there. Jacobson explains to us that Guy had to be a figure of fun and that this is a novel of dystopia.

Jacobson tells the audience he has to consider how far he can take comedy into the realms of the unacceptable or into tragedy. He was also asked about anti-Semitic novelists and, while they make him wince, he thinks great writers should be read because in the novel you '[f]ind not yourself but understand how another life feels'.

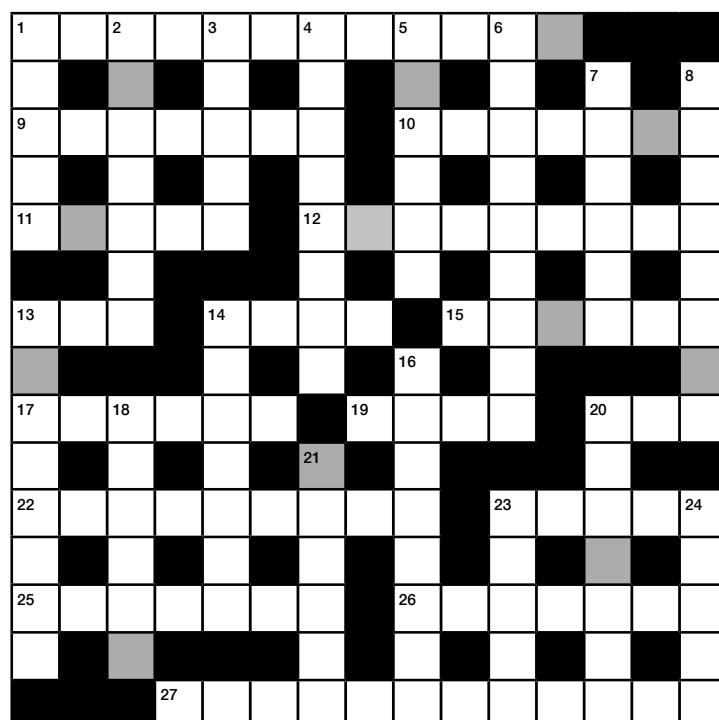
Star Crossword Set by Abenezra

Across

1. When we eat 5 and 3, Ross almost had Hannah half-heartedly taking drug. (4,8)
9. Nolan's work is a complex tome about half of humanity. (7)
10. Unkosher beast intended to drop a tone. (7)
11. Malaysian dish found in South American river. (5)
12. Wear casual clothes and get reprimand? (5,4)
- 13,15. Mince up my pork – I will have last chance to get in the 14 of 19. (3,6)
14. Reading material has chef moving up a grade at first. (4)
15. See 13 Across
17. Hear transport sound during 1 across. (6)
19. Existence in a sentence? (4)
20. Yid returned, swapping one for a 13 across. (3)
22. Entering into computer punting around about 1st and 2nd of Tishri. (9)
23. Japanese food made with some Fujitsu shiitake. (5)
25. Return Euro to entertain alternative view including old pennies – should have been done earlier! (7)
26. Plant restraint on number of plagues before doctor receives endless sickness. (7)
27. Grey areas – get around with "Shana Tova!" (5,3,4)

Down

1. Ancient civilisation's ascendant. (5)
2. Contract has Your Majesty's initials – please turn over, Ma'am, initial and sign. (7)
3. Cyclist goes round North East and apparently runs aplenty in Israel. (5)
4. Bloom wonders about losing energy before work. (8)
5. Kapels – took off head and tossed around with soft fruit, which was possibly forbidden. (6)
6. Confessions he turned out to make in/after the eighth month – terminally 25! (9)
7. Overthrown queen has overthrow to get back. (6)
8. Chief Policeman Mears killed Steve Irwin? (8)
13. Amen! High five the Old Testament in Jewish schools. (8)
14. Awfully bad latte contains old cockroaches. (9)
16. Perhaps David's performing round street in Jamaica. (8)
18. Raptor finds its food under Windows? (6)
20. Position reversed, without right, about warrant. (7)
21. Become aware like Solomon – out of bed! (4,2)
23. Cosine wave contains power. (5)
24. Couch potato took love from idol on long running US TV show. (5)

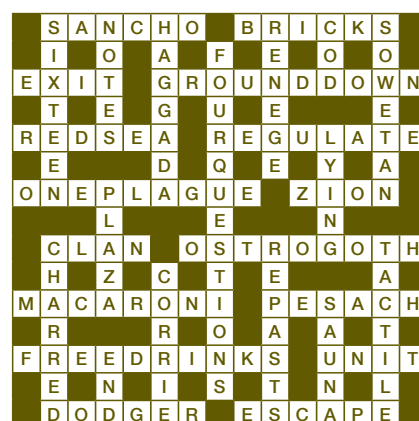


If you want to attempt the crossword please send completed entry to the editor, Micheline Brannan, 31/3 Rattray Grove, Edinburgh EH10 5TL. Either photocopy the crossword or ask me for a downloadable copy on: michelinehbrannan@msn.com

Prize for First Correct Solution (or nearest effort) received, will be a bottle of Kosher wine.

Solutions in Star 70.

Answers to Issue 68 Crossword



Congratulations



Mazal Tov to **Sylvia Donne** for her appointment as President of the Edinburgh Women's Bowling Association.

Mazal Tov to **Sylvia** and **John Donne** and daughter Debbie Byers and her husband, on the birth of baby Benjamin.

Mazal Tov to **Hazel and John Cosgrove** a grand-daughter Charlotte June Amelie, pictured here with her parents Caroline and Nick Cosgrove and other siblings.



Hearty Mazal Tov to **Avigal** and **Mikael Pommert** on the birth of baby Adina on 10 June. Mazal Tov also to proud grand-parents **Jonny** and **Joyce Sperber** (seen above with new parents).



Judy and **Anthony Gilbert** are delighted to announce the birth of their granddaughter, Cora Lillian, (Mayim Shoshannah) born to Leah and Paul 27th August 2012.

Sara Lurie & Matthew Shaps

Sara Lurie and Matthew Shaps are delighted to announce their engagement. Remembering with love their parents Ellen and Alfred Lurie and Anita and Cyril Shaps, who would have been overjoyed.



Mazal Tov - Sukkat Shalom

To **Anna Duncan** and **Itamar Nitzan** seen here at their wedding in the Royal Botanic Gardens on April 1st.

To **Rebekah Gronowski** on the safe arrival of a baby boy to her younger granddaughter, Charlotte, and Daniel on 16th April at 7lbs 10oz. He has been named Zachary Stephen [Stephen after his Grandfather]. Zachary means "Remembered by God": he is truly a miracle baby who has been sent to the family.

To **Maureen** and **Ruaraidh Mackinnon** on the birth of her granddaughter Sophia Rose who arrived just before Pesach.

To **Nick Silk** and **Gillian Raab** who each received a Chairman's award for services to their community (Sukkat Shalom) at the Liberal Judaism Biennial Conference.

To **Melissa Wood** and **Yonathan Eisenberg** on their wedding on 21st June. It was a wonderful occasion with guests from all over the world including Yonathan's family from Israel and Melissa's from Scotland.

Adam and Leora Wadler's Bar and Bat Mitzvah

On the final Shabbat in April, Adam and Leora, celebrated their Bar and Bat Mitzvah with Rabbi Mark Solomon and parents Catherine Lyons and Phil Wadler.

Simon Harris is the late father of two of our congregant, the brothers Phillip and David Harris. Phillip Harris has written to the editor as follows.



Dear Micheline

I am enclosing a photograph of my late father – Simon Harris. He served in the army in World War I, and was a staff sergeant, mainly involved in fighting in North Africa. Some years ago there was mention of services people in Edinburgh publicised in the Edinburgh Star but I did not come across my father's photograph until now. It would be very nice if you could please include it in a future number of the 'Star'. Congratulations for the current issue – excellent, timely and very interesting.

Sincere regards

Phillip Harris

April 11th 2012

Star 68 solution to Star Teaser

Honorable mention to Gillian Raab, the first person to correctly identify Star Founding Editor Eitan Abrahams in the picture on page 22.

Forthcoming Events

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Shabbat morning services take place every week at 10.00am in the Synagogue at 4 Salisbury Road. Friday night services take place weekly at times advertised on: www.ehcong.com

On **Sunday 28th October** we will be holding our Quiz Evening in the Marian Oppenheim Hall.

8 December - Chanukah Dinner will be in the Marian Oppenheim Hall.

At time of printing the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society programme is still in preparation. Planned meetings to date:

16 December - Chanukah Desert Island Disks

2013

6 January - Gilbert Shirl

13 January - Jeremy Beecham

3 February - Norman Crane - The Book of Judith

10 March - Daniel Davies

28 April - Alex Guilherme - Martin Buber and Gandhi

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday (meat) and Thursday (fish) at 12.30pm. New volunteers and/or helpers always welcome.

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

Sukkat Shalom

Our **Erev Shabbat service** will be on the **SECOND** Friday of each calendar month and our **Shabbat morning service** on the Saturday after the **FOURTH** Friday.

These services take place in the **Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace.**

Our **Kabbalat Shabbat** services take place on the **FIRST** and **THIRD** Fridays at **Marchmont St Giles, 1a Kilgraston Road.**

We also have regular **Tea & Talmud** classes, **Choosing Judaism** classes and a **Spinoza** discussion group.

Please check the website for exact dates and times: Web www.eljc.org For info: Email info@eljc.org

Patrons

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Mr & Mrs Edward Green,

Mr John & Lady Cosgrove,

Mr & Mrs Philip Harris,

Mr Leslie Wolfson

Sukkat Shalom