

# The Edinburgh Star

**Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community**

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# The <sup>☆</sup>Edinburgh Star

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## Editorial

It is with sadness that I return as your temporary editor following the death of Ruth Adler. Obituaries were published in the Scottish, English and Jewish press and we also publish a tribute to her.

There is not space in *The Star* to mark the deaths of all in our community but Mr Berger, at 98 years, was the oldest and was well known to many. I am grateful to his family for writing about him.

By our publication date Jerusalem Day will have been celebrated in Israel, and hopefully without violence. I have chosen to make the city a feature of this issue with emphasis on the buildings. Our rabbi, Shalom Shapira, spent his earliest years in Meah Shearim and he describes what it was like there before the second world war. Another of the articles describes the architecture of the '80s from the viewpoint of an Edinburgh architect.

Our Jewish community is fortunate that many Edinburgh people show interest in and empathise with our cultural heritage. Many make only occasional contact, some have joined the Friends of Israel, the Council for Christians and Jews or the Lit, but some have worked long and hard for us over many years. The Jewish community is much indebted to them and, in my view, should make them more welcome on all occasions.

Some of the problems of retaining a Jewish identity in the diaspora are presented by Malcolm Weisman, the minister to small communities, and also in a personal account by Anthony Gilbert. A very different diaspora community is described by Rene Levy from Marseille.

And there is more; great community events, reviews, advertisements, please read and enjoy!

Julia Merrick

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Ruth Adler, our editor died on 18th February 1994 after a long fight against cancer. Some 200 friends and colleagues joined her husband Michael, her sons Jonathan and Benjamin, her brother Peter Oppenheimer and her family at the funeral service which had to be relayed on a public address system to those standing outside the prayer house. The service was conducted by Rabbi S. Shapira and in the course of his address John Cosgrove said:

"It is interesting that she should have taken leave of us on the eve of Shabbat Zachor, because Shabbat Zachor is the Sabbath of Remembrance when we are enjoined never to forget the wickedness of the bully be he Amalek, Haman or Hitler, because Ruth throughout her life epitomised the champion of the underdog. One of her early achievements some 20 years ago was to help establish Women's Aid in Scotland, an organization which assists women victims of domestic violence. From women in need she turned to the needs of children and convened the group which set up the Scottish Child Law Centre. She gave of her time as a member of the Lothian Region children's panel for nine years. She was assistant to the lay observer for Scotland (the watchdog of the legal profession) and for the last two and a half years she turned her attention to human rights as the Scottish Development Officer of Amnesty International. Her public achievements were recognised in 1988 when she was made a Justice of the Peace and her hallmark on the bench was without a doubt — her compassion.

And yet she was not *just* a worker for good causes. She had a brilliant mind and was academically gifted. Her first degree was from Oxford she did a masters degree at London University and then a doctorate at Edinburgh. And it was typical of her tremendous modesty that she never used the title doctor or the initials JP after her name. She was a philosopher and a talented linguist and moreover, she possessed the

## RUTH ADLER

gift of being able to teach her specialised subjects to her students. Her impressive list of publications reflected her many interests.

And yet Ruth still found time for the Jewish Community. The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society or the "Lit" as she always called it was her special interest. She was always involved in some way or another, but her crowning achievement was undoubtedly as President in the Centenary year. She was only president for that one year and yet, *into her year*, she organised the learned Symposium, the Centenary Concert, the publication of the book about the Lit., the exhibition, a stunning series of lectures... capped by the most memorable of banquets which flowed with nostalgia, wit and wisdom.

But her main contribution to the Jewish Community was as editor of The Edinburgh Star. The last edition was number 17. She contributed in some way to every single edition becoming editor from issue number 6. Nothing was too much trouble for her. She edited, revised, condensed, expanded, completely rewrote if necessary, encouraged the young to write and the old to reminisce. She maintained the highest of literary standards and the Star is the envy of many communities around the country. She put so much care, time and hard work into it, that each edition will become a part of the history of our community and Ruth's contribution will always be remembered. We owe it to her memory to continue publication but it will be a difficult task without her. The last issue was produced on her sickbed and although she knew she would not live to see it, she started editing the next edition a few days before she died. She asked me to write the Editorial of the last issue which I did with some reluctance. I heard the other day that she approved of it but took exception to just one word. I had described her as our "esteemed" editor. You see she didn't like to be thought of as

esteemed, she just wanted to get on with the job. That was Ruth.

But anyone who had even a nodding acquaintance with the Adlers would know that Ruth's greatest love was her family. She was so proud of Jonathan and Benjamin and of course Mike. The boys were the apples of her eyes and the lights of her life. They meant everything to her and they adored her. She knew that she fussed over them a lot and she didn't mind being labelled a typical Jewish mother, in fact she rather liked the description. She was a wonderful and caring daughter to her parents and even from her hospital bed she was making plans for them. Even when Ruth was quite ill she would still make the journey to London to make sure all was well for them.....

And yet she wasn't just interested in her own family. She was genuinely interested in her friends and their children. Even when she was extremely ill she still maintained a genuine and warm interest. Her house was open to all her friends without an official invitation. So many times have the Adlers befriended a family new to Edinburgh. Ruth cared and she had room. Room in her heart to make many friendships, room in her mind to pursue so many different intellectual activities... Art, Music, Philosophy, Languages, Writing, Acting, a love for beautiful things for flowers and even for picking berries.

And of course there was the great inner strength that drove her. That absolute honesty and integrity. The idealism... the search for a better world for the underprivileged. She made her point of view *clear* and it did not matter that it brought her into conflict with other people. She enjoyed the cut and thrust of debate. She liked to win the argument, but was gracious, almost disarmingly so in defeat.

And it was that great inner strength which carried her through the last two and a half years. She fought that illness... Oh how she fought ... so valiantly. She herself



had the will to live and she found that that will was nourished by the support she received from Mike and the boys and those close to her who so much wanted her to fight on.

Although her background and upbringing was secular, her Judaism meant a lot to her. Friday night was sacred as a family night. She lit the Sabbath Candles every week, even in hospital and on Chanukah she had a small Chanukiah by her bedside.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Mike, Jonathan, Benjamin and Peter and to her dear parents Lotte and Rudi Oppenheimer.

**Extensive obituaries appeared in the 'Scotsman' the 'Guardian' the 'Independent' and the 'Jewish Chronicle'**

*In the 'Independent' (24/2/94) Juliet Cheetham wrote '... Her life was driven by three passionate concerns: for justice, for children and for her family. To all these she brought a formidable intelligence, unflagging energy, extraordinary determination and, above all, generosity of spirit and lovingkindness. These passions were to touch the lives of countless people.*

Born in 1944 to parents who, as newly qualified lawyers, were unable to pursue their profession in Nazi Germany and came to Britain as refugees in 1930, Ruth went to North London Collegiate School and Somerville College, Oxford.....

Ruth Adler was able to build bridges between different worlds and different people. The Adler household, with its warm, inclusive hospitality, draws all manner of people to it who are cared for and connected to each other in ways they never expected. This must be written in the present because what Ruth helped create was made to last. Children have a special place here, the object of real attention and interest; even those who met Ruth Adler only rarely remember her vividly and mourn her death.....'

*Fran Wasoff in the 'Scotsman' (22/2/94) wrote: '.....Her contribution at Amnesty was tragically cut short, but even after her illness was diagnosed, she made significant advances in promoting Amnesty's cause, establishing an Amnesty newsletter in Scotland and initiating schools programmes. Her commitment was so strong that she would not let chemotherapy detract from the success of the formal launch of Amnesty International in Scotland at a Burns Supper, memorably and humorously*



*Ruth Adler*

addressed by John Smith and Neil MacCormick in rare political agreement.....

She helped to set up the Child Law Centre in 1983; completed a PhD in jurisprudence which was published in 1985 as a well-received book, 'Taking Juvenile Justice Seriously' and prepared the first comprehensive database of child law in Scotland, also an important resource for lawyers, policy makers, academics and advice workers....

Ruth had many talents, some publicly displayed. She spoke German like a native and her translations of German legal theory were published in English. As an amateur actress she played memorable roles in the Edinburgh Graduate Theatre Group of which she was a stalwart for many years.

Ruth was also a painstaking and articulate editor of the 'Edinburgh Star' journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community.

She was always a feminist at heart, and her career bears witness to the great contribution which many women make while working part-time and reserving their greatest energy and affection for friends and family. Her many friends will never forget her.....'

*And in the Jewish Chronicle (1/4/94),*

*Elaine Samuel wrote: '.....As President of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society in 1988, she organised a dazzling series of events to mark its centenary year. She happily used her widespread network of family, friends and colleagues to bring Jewish speakers to Edinburgh, and her efforts were well rewarded by the controversy they often generated.*

She believed argument, opinion and debate to be the lifeblood of communal life; complacency, consensus and self-satisfaction its death knell. As editor of the 'Edinburgh Star', she put these ideas into practice. Her editorials and copy were never bound by convention or by subscription to any school of Orthodoxy.

She wrote what she felt had to be said and reached out to the furthest fringes of Jewish life. In the Edinburgh Jewish community to which she was so much attached, she was a force to be reckoned with.

With all her professional and communal commitments, she insisted on giving equal time to family and friends. Her calendar was a never-ending round of birthdays, anniversaries and celebrations. Proud of her young family's success, she showed deep concern for her parents, Lotte and Rudi Oppenheimer, until the last days of her terminal cancer....'





## ALEX BERGER

Kamaii, Lithuania, was the birthplace of Alex Berger who, as the youngest of four children, came

to Edinburgh with his parents in 1900. After leaving South Bridge school, he served his apprenticeship to become a master baker.

The intervening war caused him to serve with the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers Jewish Brigade on active duty in Egypt and Palestine under General Allenby.

After demob. in 1919 he decided to open a wholesale and retail fruit company, which his sons Leonard and Norman manage today. He married Sara Itcovitz in a joint ceremony with cousins Sonia and Sam Goldrich in 1929.

Alex was a very keen sportsman and for many years he was a wrestler with Milton Street Club. He

played football for Broxburn Athletic and won a boxing championship when in the army. He also played golf for Lodge Solomon and the Fruit Federation. Communal life was important to him and he served on the shul council. He was a founder member of the British Legion and AJAX and a life member of Lodge Solomon which he joined in 1920. At 98 he was the oldest member of the community. He is survived by his two sons, Leonard and Norman, daughters-in-law Marcia and Avril, and grand-daughters Gillian and Yvonne.

*(Contributed by the Berger family)*

## A GRANDFATHER REMEMBERED

*by Yvonne Berger*

One reads in history books about the Jews who came over 'on the boat' from the shtetl. For some it seems so distant, but I was lucky enough to have known one such person: my Grandpa Alex.

As children, my sister, Gillian and I would hear with excitement about his life. He used to speak of the family's wooden house, which was candle-lit, and how members of families would leave the village for a new start in Britain, the Golden Medina. Grandpa recollected the letters telling of the better life and thus, in 1900, my grandfather together with his parents, two brothers and a sister left for the port

of Riga and arrived in Leith.

Some of the memories that will remain most vivid in my mind are when he was 14 years old, his sister Sophia was threatened with blindness and so the whole family, including him, worked and saved until they had sufficient money to send her to Germany for treatment. Another reflection is Grandpa telling us of his war experiences in Egypt and Palestine, especially when he and his companions hid behind rocks in order to avoid being shelled. His memory was remarkable for when Gillian visited the pyramids in Cairo she found he had described them exactly.

Not all the recollections are of the past; I will never forget the image of him wearing the Kapa which Sophia had made for his Barmitzvah. My grandfather had a great love of life and even in his eighties he would accompany Gillian and me to the Commonwealth Pool for the occasional Sunday swim.

I am lucky to have known my grandfather for eighteen years and I find it phenomenal that this man knew of life from the primitive shtetl up to the present day. My Grandpa left a profound impression on all his family and will always be remembered.

## Israeli Ambassadors; Young and Older



*Left to right: Drs Oppenheim, the Ambassador, Malcolm Cowan, Rabbi and Mrs Shapira.*



*Centre: Adi Stern and Gilad Hamdany. Either side: Wendy Goldberg and Harvey Nicholsby. Behind: Irene Eivan and Rachel Shapira.*



# FROM YOUR LETTERS



I must take issue with the writer (Emma Levy nee Wolfe), on her article 'Memories of Cheder Days', which appeared in your January publication. The key-word being 'memories' but in the singular.

It appears to me that Emma suffers from a lapse of 'memory', indeed, she admits, when in class 2, her memory was vague, while in class 3, her mind wandered, yet when she was in class 1, at the age of only 5 years, she remembers her Cheder teacher, Samuel Rubenstein, falling asleep in class. This is either a figment of her imagination or possibly she is confusing her secular teacher with the Cheder teacher. The fact is that NO Cheder teacher taught from a seated position. This rules out the false impression, which she has given your readers. As a matter of interest I am the member of the executive committee of the Manchester Talmud Torah, and notice when visiting Chedorim that the Minhag has not altered, teachers still remain in the vertical position whilst teaching, a position not conducive to sleep!

It is 33 years since I took up residence in Manchester and during this period have come into contact with Torah sages in London, Leeds, Manchester, and Israel who new my late father, and all respected him as a man of learning, and for his humility. Likewise I have come across some of his former Talmidim (mostly professionals) who emanate from Edinburgh, and who give testimonial that they are still able to daven for the Omed, and recite a Maftir, due to the tuition they received from my late father, when he used to conduct a Boys' Minyan service every Sunday morning in the Beth Hamedrash.

Nat Rubenstein  
11 Ingeldene Court  
Upper Park Road  
Salford M7 4HY

In 1962 Samuel Rubinstein was featured in the Jewish Chronicle, Provincial Personalities column.

## ONE OR TWO LIBRARIES APPRECIATE FREE COPIES... I print a typical letter below:

Over the last two years a few issues of The Edinburgh Star have somehow 'floated' into our library. I found many of the articles extremely valuable material and they have made fascinating reading.

May I appeal to you to let us have a free subscription and perhaps also the back numbers. We do have issues 9, 11 and 13. Your donation will I think be of mutual interest. By having a set of the Edinburgh Star in our Library, it will insure the survival of at least one run for the benefit of future historians and researchers.

Thanking you in anticipation of your generosity.

Yours sincerely,  
Ezra Kahn  
Librarian, Jews' College  
Albert Road, London NW4 2SJ

The Star is an excellent magazine, well produced and with some interesting articles.

R W Walker,  
Edinburgh

Enclosed is a donation to say 'thank you' for enjoyable and interesting reading. May you continue to do so.

Looking forward to your next issue.

Sybil Black,  
Glasgow

I wish to thank you and all the members of the Editorial Board for producing such an interesting, enjoyable and beautifully presented journal. Thank you for continuing to send it to us.

Stanley Apunland,  
Cheshire

THE EDITOR AND EDITORIAL BOARD ARE MOST GRATEFUL ... to Dr Walker, Ms Black and Mr Apunland for their kind donations (see letters above) and to the following:

Miss S Baker	Mrs E Heyman
Miss H Balderston	Mrs V Lipetz
Mrs May Brown	Mrs R Orgel
Mrs Z Eunson	Mr and Mrs A Rifkind
Mrs J Franklin	Dr and Mrs J Rubin
Mr and Mrs A Gilbert	Mr and Mrs S Speculand
Mr S Gruneberg	Mrs F Wollmerstedt
Mr and Mrs W Harwood	

University of Edinburgh

# JEWSH

Society

**EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY  
JEWISH SOCIETY IS  
CELEBRATING ITS 85TH  
ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR**

To mark this historic occasion the society is putting together a commemorative brochure. We would therefore very much appreciate any photographs, memories, magazines and stories that people may have from their involvement with the Edinburgh University Jewish Society.

If you have any information please send it to

Miki Lentin  
3F2, 137 Warrender Pk Rd  
Marchmont  
Edinburgh EH9 1DS

## ISRAELI WEEK IN THE UNIVERSITY

Organiser of the Israeli week, Micki Lentin, chair of the Edinburgh Jewish Students Society, used materials from the Glasgow Jewish Resource Centre (exhibitions, videos etc.) as well as from the Information Department of the Israeli Embassy and the London based Tourist Office. The Israeli film 'Behind the Walls' was shown.

Danny Pelleg, Glasgow's Community Sheliach conducted a workshop in the University as the opening event. In it he commented on the peace process.

'The Peace Process in the Middle East, starting with the Madrid Conference and going through the dramatic development, the Israeli/PLO Agreement, opened new markets for Israeli exports and new possibilities which enabled the formal and final cancellation of the Arab economic boycott of Israel.'

For details of other Jewish student events contact Micki Lentin 031 228 9417.



# THE LOWRIE REPORT

## THE BURNS NIGHT SUPPER

Frae the Chair the maisterly kilted splendour o' John Cosgrove cried oot the Selkirk Grace an' a graun Burns Nicht wis fair awa. Oor ain chef Hairold Abrahams brocht in the Haggis wi Jim Cooper gartin the Pipes tae skirl — whit braw pipin'. An' then Vicky Lowrie's ain wee brither-in-law addressed the Haggis, an' tae Freddie whit can be said but:

*Fair fa yir honest sonsie face  
Graun Maister o' the Haggis ode  
Abun them a ye tak yir place  
Yir fame amang us is abroad  
Ye gied it laldy wi sic meesure  
Tae hear ye man wis sic a pleasure!*

As fur The Immortal Memory, weel tae Rosamund Steen it maun be said that there ur Immoartal Memories an there ur Immoartal Memories but hers this Burns Nicht wud be aye oor immoartal memory.

An jist tae shaw it wis aricht oan the nicht thir cam Ian Shein's Toast tae the Lassies.

*Mit ihr Stosst an die Dammen  
Ye fair hud them oorjoyed  
Wi sic a spaak ye hae makken  
Die Herz auf alles sehr freud*

Man tho Ian, ye had a match in yon Freda Riffkin, oh aye hen;



Harold Abrahams brings in the Haggis..

*Sic a rhyme dae ye mak  
When the Laddies toastin  
Yir talent disnae lack  
Mere man wid die boastin!*

Weel we hud music tae, wi Maggie and Joe Aronson, an weel we ken o Robert Burns and Mrs MacLehose but abody wud say:

*Sang Clarinda and Sylvander as thee  
But ne'er sae sweet!*

Fiona Mitchel played fiddle and oh she sang like a bonnie wee Lintie.

Rabbi Shapira made the Grace afore Meals and a graun Grace efter Meals tae the tune o' Scotland the Brave.

The vote o' thanks was gi'en by Anita Mendelssohn.

## THE EDINBURGH PROJECT JNF COMMITTEE

On Wednesday, 13 April, the Yom Ha'Atzmaut Service was followed by kiddush and refreshments in the Communal Hall. Afterwards Lord Balfour and Eddie Brown, President of the JNF Great Britain, addressed those present on the project that the Edinburgh committee, under the chairmanship of Malcolm Cowan,



Fred Lowrie addresses it..

has launched. This is to raise £25,000 to build a playground for new immigrant children in Nazareth Illit in the Lower Gallilee. Lord Balfour has agreed to be the patron and the appeal got off to a good start through the generosity of Johnnie Rosenbloom, on whose behalf the chairman presented a cheque for £8,500 to Eddie Brown.

Russian immigrants, Dmitri and Luba, winners of the Mozart Prize in Israel, then gave a world-class performance on flute and piano of classical and traditional Jewish music.

The audience was greatly increased by the Edinburgh Friends of Israel who had been invited to both the service and the kiddush.

All donations to Malcolm Cowan, please.

## MRS ELAINE SACKS VISITS THE LADIES COMMITTEE

Mrs Sacks had said that she would like to see Edinburgh during her visit on Sunday, 20 February, so she was duly met at the Waverley station by Anita Mendelssohn, Chairman of the Ladies' Committee, and Ian Shein, Honorary Secretary of the Communal Hall Committee and also qualified Edinburgh Guide, to be given the Grand Intensive Tour.

On arrival at the Communal Hall Mrs Sacks met the Ladies' Committee. After luncheon, Mrs Sacks — introduced by Anita Mendelssohn — gave a short, informative talk on '1994 The United Nations Year of the Family'. As part of this initiative Mrs Sacks is chairing the Jewish Marriage Council's project for 1994 and she also told us about her involvement with this work. After Ian Shein gave the vote of thanks, Anita introduced Mrs Sacks to everybody individually and it was obvious from her warm and friendly manner that she much preferred this more personal way of speaking to people.



## CHANUKAH DINNER

A bonus for the large appreciative gathering, after Rabbi Shapira had lit the candles and the Ladies' Committee's excellent meal had been consumed, was the entertainment introduced by Ian Shein and supplied by Julian Goodman accompanied by Fiona McColl at the piano.

For over an hour our very own stand-up comedian entertained us most richly with Jewish humour and also disclosed an excellent vocal talent, including in his repertoire a heartfelt rendition of 'If I were a Rich Man'! If talent were properly rewarded he could expect to be one some day.

Michael Wittenberg gave the vote of thanks.

## FRIENDSHIP CLUB — 37TH BIRTHDAY

On Sunday 19th December 1993 at 3 p.m. chairman Willie Caplan welcomed everybody to the party; then tea, sandwiches and cake were served, the Birthday Cake — donated by Wm Wood of The Bakehouse and following on the Kleinberg tradition — was cut by May Brown, after which the assembled company proceeded to enjoy an afternoon's musical entertainment with Margaret and Joe Aronson singing, Fiona Mitchell playing fiddle and Annette McClusky on piano.

The programme included music by Jerome Kern, Ivor Novello, Cole Porter, Gershwin and a Scottish selection, Hail Caledonia, and a ceilidh selection by Fiona on fiddle. Perhaps the most amusing part of the programme was Gershwin's 'Love Walked In' performed by that great act the Hirplin' Aronsons complete with Fred Astaire-type crutch waving — a real curtain stopper!

Dr Nate Oppenheim gave the toast to the Friendship Club and thanked the entertainers. He went on to say that he remembered the late David Leigh founding the Club and that the Club had followed the



*The performers at the Friendship Club Tea*

original guidelines, encouraging membership and friendship. The Committee, he added, were to be thanked for their constant hard

work in keeping the Friendship Club flourishing.

Rosa Massey replied on behalf of the Friendship Club.



*Rachel Shapira greets Elaine Sacks.*



## Rabbi Malcolm Weisman talks to the Lit about his small communities

Although I was not born in Scotland, the Royal Caledonian Society in London has told me that I do qualify as a Scotsman for an interest-free loan because my mother was born in Arthur Street, my grandfather lived here and my great-grandfather lived here. The following family names are connected somehow or another to my family so I throw them out just for the interest of any genealogist here: Seigel, Dorfman, Gordon, Rifkind, Lurie, Caplan. There are quite a few more names but I think that is enough to get on with. One of my great-uncles was your Life President. When I was last here I counted in the congregation that half of them were related in some way or another to me. So my connection with Edinburgh goes back over a hundred years and so coming to Edinburgh, which in my book is a major community, is very much of a homecoming.

*Perhaps I ought to try and define what is a small community in my book*

A small community is a community, which without persistence from me both of a spiritual and/or financial nature, will not survive or will not begin to get off the ground. I also deal with a large number of isolated individuals who are to be found all over the British Isles.

At this very moment I am in the process of trying to establish a community, not too far from you, in Dunoon. I have discovered a number of families there who have had no synagogue affiliation ever, who suddenly made contact with me. One man is busy chasing around a number of families who have recently decided to settle in Dunoon because it is a very attractive place. Now logistically it is a very difficult place to reach because you have got some water problems as you probably know from your geography; mileage-wise

it is very near if you have a helicopter, but my friends in Dunoon don't have helicopters. So this is one of the difficulties.

The problem is that I have to try and balance between 65 and 70 communities, all at the same time, and the connections that I have on a regular basis exist as far north as the Orkneys and the Shetlands right through the Scottish Highlands, all the way round the Aberdeen area and I have quite a lot of families lying between Dundee and Aberdeen, all the way along the Hadrian's Wall area, all the way down the west coast going out as far as the Isle of Man, all the way down the east coast, all the way through the Midlands, all the way through the south-west of England, right down to Penzance, Truro, almost to Land's End but not actually there. We also have families living not merely in Jersey, where I have built up a very viable community, but also we have a smaller group in Guernsey and a couple of families in Alderney. We actually had an Israeli poet who went to live in Sark for six months to commune, to get some inspirations for poetry. I understand

the poetry was never published, so the inspiration obviously didn't work in Sark. So my Sark community has disintegrated. But I mention that to show you how wide the dispersal is of people who wish to be identified with the Jewish community.

I had a gathering a few months back in Chester and we advertised heavily in all the local newspapers right through the Welsh mountains and you have no idea where people came from: villages that even the people in Chester had never heard of. I need to carry an Ordnance Map with me sometimes, not merely to find out where people live, but also to find out how to reach them if I have to visit them. Increasingly I get telephone calls and letters from people living in the most obscure places, how they came there I do not know. Sometimes the desire to live in the peaceful countryside gets to them and after a few months the novelty wears off and they realise that there is not much happening and then that kind of Jewish conscience that never originally worried them begins to trouble them and then that is when they



*Malcolm Weisman and Michael Adler enjoy a joke together.*



start calling on me.

### *The financial dilemma*

When I met your Rabbi at a Rabbinical conference a few months ago and we talked about this being a smaller community, I said as far as I was concerned, as I said to you before, you are a major community because you have all the facilities of a major community. You have an adequate number of people to run an effective community which can provide for your basic Jewish needs on a day-to-day basis; but there are some provisos. From a Minister's point of view, from a Rabbi's point of view, and this is my own personal view, the ideal sized community in order to get maximum advantage and maximum exercise over the members, the ideal number in my book is 100 families. But 100 families economically does not work, because if you are going to generate enough income then a 100 families is not enough to maintain a building, to maintain the facilities of education for children and all age groups, to maintain a Minister etc. Unless the 100 families are prepared to donate what may well be by ordinary standards an unreasonably high subscription per annum you cannot operate on that basis. But once you go over 100 families in my view, the Minister then begins to lose the ability to get to know each family and each

member of that family on a personal intimate basis, so that he knows their weaknesses, knows their problems, knows what turns them on from a Jewish point of view, what turns them off and what their spiritual needs are.

### *The strength of the small community*

One of the advantages of operating within a small community context, admittedly only being able to visit these communities on an haphazard irregular basis, is that sometimes one gets to know one's community better than the average Minister operating within the confines of conventional 1,000 or 500 family community in London. And it may well be that as a result of that, when we start our offences in different parts of the country, offenses in terms of trying to find Jews, we have sometimes been far more successful in getting them than can Rabbis and Ministers in a larger community within a huge Jewish congregation in north-west London or parts of Manchester for example. I say that because in my experience, and I stand by this, I suspect that if you stand in the middle of Golders Green on a Shabbat morning and you watch what appears to be thousands of Jews all going in the same direction to this or that Shul, you think 'What a marvellous place! How easy it is to be a practising Jew in such an environment'. What I say

to you is this: that in spite of what you see, don't be disillusioned (that's the wrong word) don't be under a wrong illusion, you *should* be disillusioned, because as far as I am concerned there are probably more Jews 'out' in Golders Green than are 'in', because it is very easy for the person who doesn't fit in properly to get lost.

One of the joys of a smaller community, and in this respect I would classify Edinburgh, it should be much easier for a Jew who feels a little lonely, doesn't feel all that sociable, it should be much easier in a community like Edinburgh for such a person to find a niche in the community, to find that he matters, that he counts, and that his presence and the presence of his family is very much valued. I think that that is one of the strengths of the smaller community. And this is where we begin to achieve the kind of success that I think is not always possible in the larger community.

*What is the difference between the modern small community and the older community and how did the small community begin in the British Isles?*

I think it is right to say that where Jews settled was really an accident depending on which train and boat they caught from Eastern Europe, which train and that explains why

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the majority of the Jews in the Northern British Isles tends to be of Lithuanian origin. Very often the Jews who were off-loaded at Dundee or Leith thought they had arrived in New York because of an unscrupulous captain and then the boat went on. Once you were settled in Edinburgh or Dundee then the rest of the family decided to join you.

Then if you look at how the small communities developed in other parts of the country, particularly south Wales, the answer is that there round about the middle of the eighteenth century a substantial number of Jews settled in Cardiff because of the commercial attraction of the area and peddling was the major occupation of many of the poorer Jews in the eighteenth century. You only have to look at many of the prints of the eighteenth century and you see pictures of rather disreputable-looking Jewish pedlars of the time. They would take their goods and peddle out and they would go as far as they could from Cardiff in an east or westerly direction, knowing that at some point they would have to turn round in order to get back in a slightly faster time, perhaps, because they would not do so much business on the return journey. So it meant that sometime on Wednesday evening they had to do an about-turn. Well, economically, this made a nonsense of trying to make a living and so people decided to go on a bit further but the problem was when they got stuck in Pontypridd or Newport or Abertillery or places like that on a Friday evening what did they do? So sometimes they arranged to leave some bread and a bit of cold meat or whatever with a non-Jewish landlady and they stayed and suppered a silent Shabbat in extreme loneliness and they thought this was not on. So they gathered a few fellow pedlars and started a small community. And that's how many of these communities started. Now that is one type of community.

Then you have another type of

community which, until I came on the scene, did not exist at all. Let me give you an example. When I first started this operation, a long time ago, a Jew rang me up, an architect, from Bognor Regis. Now if you told me in Edinburgh you don't know where Bognor Regis is I will not complain, but when I ask people in London where Bognor Regis is and they still don't know where it is I do get very angry because the mentality of mainstream Jewish community is 'the world stops at Watford' and Jewish life stops at the other end of the Golden Triangle. Do you know what the Golden Triangle is? It's an area that covers parts of Golder's Green/Hendon/Hampstead. Anybody who lives outside the area is not Jewish! Some of my would-be colleagues think the Jewish world ends at the end of the Triangle and they are not prepared to step out of it for any reason whatsoever. When I say hopefully 'Do you know where Bognor Regis is?' they say it's on the Central line or the Jubilee line or the London underground! When I tell them that it might well be, in the sense that you take the train to Waterloo Station, then Victoria and then on a train to the south coast, then they go white and hysterical and say 'Proper Jews don't live there, do they'. That's their really outrageous attitude.

### *Building a community*

Bognor Regis is to the west of Brighton, it's in-between Brighton and Chichester, it is a pretty desperately quiet sort of place but there are a few Jews living there. When I first got to know it my friend, the architect, had suddenly moved there and wanted to start a Jewish community. I said 'Are there any other Jews in the area?' I didn't know any Jews down there at the time. He said that what had happened was he had moved his architect's office to Bognor Regis because he had a big job that was going to take two or three years and he thought he ought to live down there. His wife who was used to a Jewish life in London was very

upset and felt very bad on Friday afternoon, no Schul, no Jews, what was she going to do? So he thought to keep her happy, he would buy her a nice dress. So they go down the High Street in Bognor and they walk into a shop and they see a dress, she puts it on. He doesn't want the shopkeeper to know what he is saying, so he says something to her in Yiddish and the shopkeeper said 'Are you Jewish?' It turned out that the shopkeeper was Jewish. So the first principle that you have to learn is that any decent dress shop in any small town or village is always run by Jews. I said to him 'Well, what happened?' He said, 'Well, I spoke to this man and said you are Jewish, how long have you lived here?' (This was in the 1960s.) He said 'Well we have been here since the beginning of World War II, we came down here just before the blitz'. So he said 'You must have a Schul here?' 'No, there is no Schul here now, there was a little one in the war'. He said 'Do you light candles on a Friday evening?' 'That doesn't happen now does it, that stopped in 1939'. I said 'Are there any more of you in this area?' He said 'Yes, I've got a wife and three children, in the same block of flats my mother lives upstairs, my sister-in-law lives next door, my brother in the next flat'. In the end he counted up about 15 or 16 Jewish people so they started a Jewish community.

The problem was, and this is crucial, my friend the architect couldn't read one letter of Hebrew. None of the other 15 or 16 people could read a letter of Hebrew either, they had no knowledge of the most basic Jewish traditions and you have to start, or I have to start a community from such fundamental basics. So how do we do it? I taught my friend the architect aleph, beth and on Sunday morning he taught the community aleph. When he got to gimel, then he taught them beth and when we started a service it had to be 100% in English about ten lines long. It took us about five years to get to a full service.

Many people assume that the average Jew who may be remote



from any sort of active community is fasting for an opportunity to identify himself with Judaism, has a strong Jewish heart beating that is going to be turned on immediately by the sight of Shabbat candles, salt beef and a bit of chopped liver. The answer is that the average younger Jew these days does not care two hoots, because he's not seen it, is not interested, and what I am telling you now is that if there is going to be any long-term future in the Anglo-Jewish community, the leaders of the community in this respect have got to recognise that in spite of all this wonderful business you hear about the revival of Jewish knowledge amongst young people in parts of north-west London and parts of Manchester, that the great majority of people are going in the other direction and do not want to know, and do not care, and the fault lies, not completely, but partially, at the feet of the Rabbinical/the educational leadership in this country because you have to lead from the front. And one of the problems I am finding now is increasingly that whenever I start a new community or find a new group of Jews coming to join me in the community is that they know absolutely nothing and you have got to try and arouse some kind of Jewish enthusiasm in the hearts and minds of people who don't know the first thing about it.

Sometimes the paradox of the situation is that when you come out of a small community, you begin to realise that what you took for granted as existing round the corner and being available when it suited your purposes, does not exist unless you do something about it yourself. When you are in a community where you might be the tenth man, you have got to do something about it and sometimes that's where the first beginnings of an understanding of your Jewish heritage begins to emerge. And so the result is that very often in a small community I find that some of the leaders who are very active are people who, if they had come from a large community, those people would

have been lost in a large community, considered to be of no consequence at all, suddenly find they are leaders, officiants and become very excited about Judaism and so we have some small communities where proportion-wise the numbers attending synagogue can put some large communities to shame. If I go to gatherings in Cheltenham, Exeter or wherever it is — the Isle of Man — I confidently expect to see virtually 100% of all the people in the community turning up. This simply will not happen in a large community.

### *Growing pains*

So sometimes there are some advantages but, in comes the punch-line — what about the children? I think that, sometimes, in these circumstances you can get closer to your children. You cannot give them the advantages of a tremendously wide social circle, but on the other hand the children and the very young can operate quite comfortably within a limited social group of, say, 10-15 children. I accept the problem becomes much more serious when you reach teenage and there we have to concentrate on making our members aware of the facilities available in a wider community through national youth organisations, you have got to use those. What does one do when the children want to socialise and what do you do when they start to want to go out and have boy and girlfriends? I have to admit that I have not got a very satisfactory answer to that question, save to say that one hopes that the intensity of the Jewish community that one gets even in an isolated household (and I stress that) should ensure that that child, subject to the exceptions that do happen from time to time, will be motivated when he/she gets into the wider world and would join a Jewish group either in the University or youth club in the town or whatever. Because when your children get to the teens it may well be that you find the facilities here

are not good enough. But then you have to be a realist and accept that, while you are a viable community in terms of routine, regular practices, in some directions you may have to make extra sacrifice. But if I tell you that there are people in London and Manchester, teenagers, who find that the Jewish scope is not big enough — they want to move further afield — if that happens in London, you should not be surprised if you find the same problem in a place like Edinburgh.

*So I suppose that when I say 'Is there a future for the small community?' there will be, there is a future for the small community but one has to be a realist and understand that certain extra troubles have to be gone through in order to maintain one's identity.*

You have to be prepared to travel a lot. Sometimes I have to say people have got to travel to a community to a synagogue in order to preserve their identity. In my Colchester community, and I've got about 70 families in that community now, only two of whom live within walking distance of a Schul, the majority of them live in Harwich, Ipswich, Great Easter, Little Easter, Coltishall, in all the little villages around; there's no way they can get to Schul except by car. And if they were not to go to Schul, they would lose their Jewish identity very quickly. So there are these problems. What about kashrut? That really is no problem these days, with the age of the deep freeze, the age of the car, there is no difficulty. Even if a particular couple has not got a car, then the other members of the community can help them out. But I think that members of these communities have got to make the effort and this is something which I think may be a problem as far as even a major community, like Edinburgh, is concerned.

What is interesting is that many of these small communities really put some of the large communities to shame in terms of the regularity and frequency of the social and cultural activity they have. And



some of the magazines they produce are impressive, almost as good as this magazine! But you are a big community by my standards and we have communities of, say, 50 or 60 families producing magazines like this too, of a similar nature.

So what I want to say is this: there is life in the small community and I think that as the economic situation develops and people find that they are forced more and more out of big communities by the cost of housing, the opportunities for jobs in smaller communities, you may well find that the smaller communities are going to become much more significant. But in terms of their Jewish commitment, the approach is going to have to be completely different; one must not take for granted Jewish knowledge, one has got to start from scratch and remember, as I have to in many of these communities, that many of the people I deal with have to be taught right from the very beginning. You can take nothing for granted.

## COMING EVENTS

### JUNE

5 Sunday	WIZO Annual Lunch at 2 Ettrick Road	12.30 p.m.
8 Wednesday	Friendship Club Outing to Dumfries	
12 Sunday	Maccabi	1 p.m.
19 Sunday	Friendship Club	3 p.m.

### JULY

3 Sunday	Friendship Club	3 p.m.
17 Sunday	Friendship Club	3 p.m.

### AUGUST

28 Sunday	Friendship Club	3 p.m.
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Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1-3 p.m. For further information contact Benji Bowman (339 7557).

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes.

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every alternate Saturday afternoon in the Succah.

The Luncheon Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 noon.

The Mother and Baby Group meet every alternate Wednesday morning at 9.30 a.m.

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

## JEWISH FESTIVALS

Monday 16 May Shavuot 1st day

Sunday 17 July Fast of Av

Tuesday 6th September 1st day Rosh Hashanah

## THE MOCK SEDER





# JEWISH GROWING PAINS IN SECULAR SUBURBIA

by Tony Gilbert

My attitude to my Jewishness is a muddle. I suspect that many British Jews feel like this, and that one explanation lies in the dichotomy, real or apparent, between religious observance on the one hand, which in some ways seems quite difficult, and on the other, life in Jewish suburbia, which is relatively easy, supportive and comfortable. In my own case, the situation is clouded further by my upbringing and training, which caused me then and still continues to cause me, not so much growing pains, as a deep feeling of unease.

My sister's and my own Jewish upbringing was not the conventional Jewish one: until I was eight years old, I was quite unaware that I was Jewish. The cause for this lies with a certain A Hitler; it was one of his lesser misdemeanours. My parents married in 1939. At the time, my father worked for a firm run by a moderately distant relative. I am not sure where they lived immediately after their marriage, but fairly soon after the outbreak of the war, this company, which was involved in production for the war effort was evacuated to Ware some 20 miles north of London, and the staff of the company with it. My parents moved at some point to nearby Hertford, where I was born just after the war, and where we lived until I was eight. The Jewish Community of Hertford was not large; in fact it was small, very small; it consisted of one family, the Gilberts.

In such circumstances, it is clear that the attitudes of my parents were a major determinant, and here is the first great confusion: my parents were like the north and south poles in their origins and their attitudes. My father comes from a line that has lived in England for a long time. I understand that we are on a minor branch of a small tributary of a quite distinguished old English Jewish family, the Franklin family.

According to a distant relative in this family by the name of Anthony Joseph, who is an amateur genealogist of considerable experience, we can trace our roots back to an ancestor, who, if memory serves me correctly, landed in Falmouth, having come from Strasbourg in 1703. This is certainly early by Anglo-Jewish standards. This familial distinction appears to have survived well into the last century. My sister, under the guiding hand of Anthony Joseph has traced in my father's genealogy, five brothers surnamed Isaacs (my father's original surname), all of whom were rabbis serving communities in the regions around Liverpool and Manchester. My parents still have a rather fine teatray with an inscription recording the gratitude of, I think, a community in West Hartlepool to one of these brothers in 1868. My sister has also found correspondence showing that at least one of the brothers served a community in Australia for several years around 1870. The correspondence is not terribly edifying: it mainly comprises pleas for a greater stipend and occasional grudging letters allowing this. It is not very godly, but it is perhaps indicative of the unchanging nature of mankind's problems. By the time of my father's generation, the process of Anglicisation was pretty much complete. I believe that his family belonged to a Liberal congregation in St John's Wood, and when as a man in his mid twenties and early thirties, he was a traveller in the Midlands, the religious bonds, if there ever had been any, pretty much dissolved. The social bonds, by contrast, did not. Though totally at home in gentile company, my father nevertheless drew his friends from other largely secular Jewish backgrounds, and this remains true to this day.

My mother's background is much

more traditional. Her mother was English, but not the previous generation: her father came from a family, I believe, of 13 children, living in Vilnius, where he was training in a Yeshiva. He arrived in London around the turn of the century with one of the great waves of immigration, applied for rabbinical training, and I am told was rejected on the grounds of his appalling accent. My grandparents lived in the East end, where they made some sort of a living from a greengrocer's shop. I have no doubt that it was very tough, but very very Jewish. My grandfather remained a pious man to his last day.

Given the hopelessly different backgrounds and characters of my parents, what drew them together remains for me one of the great imponderables. My mother has told me that after their marriage, she resolved to retain her Jewishness, to keep a kosher home, and set about doing this. But my father's lack of interest, the plain difficulty of doing this in Hertford in the war years and thereafter, and the total absence of any supporting community soon conspired to defeat her. This then was the background in which I spent my first eight years, and if there was any Jewish influence from home (and I do not recall it), it was totally eclipsed by the non-Jewish ones of school and friends. Being Jewish first really impinged on my consciousness in 1954. We moved to Edgware ... and suddenly I was Jewish. It was fun for two weeks and then it was misery and aggravation until my Bar Mitzvah. After that it became less painful, but more confusing.

Between the ages of eight and thirteen, I went pretty regularly to Cheder. After the initial novelty, I came to hate it. In part, I resented the loss of freedom, but equally I just did not understand what it was about. The trouble, I believe, was mainly due to lack of support. My parents did nothing except on High



Holy days, when my father would grudgingly take half a day off work at the insistence of my mother. In this respect, they are no different from much of secular suburbia, but I think my mother felt pangs of guilt. She would think of her earlier resolutions, of her father and of her own childhood, and to make up for this, my sister and I were subjected to what I would call Jewish gestures: we had to take such days off, put on 'posh' clothes and we were not allowed out ... except to go to shul. I hated it. I hated the lack of freedom; I hated the boredom of shul, because it was all incomprehensible to me. Why for about 360 days a year was I allowed to go about my usual life of school, homework and play in which Jewish existence played practically no part (except for the two barely tolerable hours each week at Cheder), whereas on these Holy days, we were subjected to these apparently arbitrary restrictions invariably to the accompaniment of screams, tears and recrimination. In such an environment did my Jewish experiences begin.

These circumstances certainly made me less than totally enthusiastic about my Jewishness, but other factors conspired too, which derive at least in part from my character. I know that I tend to view matters in rather black and white tones (perhaps that is why I like drawing in pen and ink). If this religion subjected me to all these restrictions, I wanted to know why, and I wanted a rational explanation. Why were the rules applied so inconsistently ... how was it that my mother could on the one hand serve up very non-kosher food to my father, could make a big song and dance over Christmas, and then expect us to go to shul on a High Holy day to mumble some text to which I felt deeply opposed ... I smelt hypocrisy. Curiously, I don't think I felt either then or now that my parents were hypocritical. I knew my father was not interested and that my mother was driven by pangs of conscience. What I feared was that I was being hypocritical:

that in going along with my mother's wishes, I was not being honest about how I felt about the matter. I also saw, perhaps unjustly, perhaps not, hypocrisy in others. I saw myself living in an affluent area, where conspicuous wealth was fairly conspicuously flaunted, something which I found disagreeable then and find disagreeable now. Many of these people were pretty hard-nosed businessmen who, if they lived for anything, lived for material gain. How did they square their mercenary attitudes five or six days a week with devotion to God on the seventh? It was perhaps a harsh judgment, though I still believe that it has a certain ring of truth to it; but its effect was to make me want to distance myself from everything that I felt these people stood for. In my approach to this, I do think that I was honest to myself and others. I think too that my parents understood, possibly even sympathised with, my feelings. When the subject of my Bar Mitzvah arose, I made it abundantly clear that I did not want one. 'But the presents?' I told my parents I would rather have no presents and no Bar Mitzvah; I felt that there was a fundamental dishonesty in what I would have to say at such a ceremony. Despite this, my Bar Mitzvah went ahead.

In a curious way, the Bar Mitzvah

was a sort of watershed. Something happened there, which I shall describe, which I then thought gave ultimate confirmation to my feelings about the hypocrisy of the whole system; but it also marked the culmination of Cheder for me, and so from my point of view, removed one of the more niggling sores. It also coincided roughly with the beginning of more serious study and so to the start of a process which in time would lead me to university and away from those influences which I found disagreeable.

The incident which I just alluded to occurred when the Rabbi made his address to me. As is usual in such addresses, the Rabbi talked about the obligations that coming to Jewish manhood conferred on one: the maintaining of Jewish traditions and practices; keeping a Jewish home and the like of such matters ... he referred to the Jewishness of my home life. From the assembled company, this drew an understandable titter of mirth, but my reaction was pure dismay. How I felt could the Rabbi, a man who in my eyes was the representative of religious authority, who believed in God, who should be a speaker of the plain truth, say such a thing which was so blatantly untrue? At the time, it just seemed the final confirmation of everything I felt; that the inconsistency and

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dishonesty extended not merely among the once a year visitors to the shul, but to the men of the cloth themselves. It seemed to be the ultimate Jewish turn-off.

With the hindsight of more than thirty years, I look back at this event, and see a kindly, elderly man having to make an address to a child he hardly recognised, a child who is ignorant of almost everything he reveres, from a family which, like many, is totally uncommitted. Not wishing to offend, he talks about our Jewish background. How could he know the bombshell this would release inside me?

The feelings I had then have indelibly marked me, but with

growing maturity, family life and the benign influence of the Edinburgh community, my attitudes have changed more than I could have remotely conceived. It is not all pure white: I am very conscious of religious hang-ups in my make-up ... and I dislike Edgware as much as I ever did ... but I do feel much more positive now about my Jewishness than I ever did as a boy. As I said at the beginning, I think that my attitude now is pure muddle, but I feel that is a vast improvement on my previous disillusion, and perhaps on another occasion, I will be able to tell you how this transformation came about.

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## RENE LEVY REMEMBERS MARSEILLE

*from an informal meeting of the Lit, chaired by Julia Merrick*

JM Scotland and England are known to some as the auld enemies; Scotland and Wales have a Celtic alliance, and certainly the friendship between Scotland and France, is known as the old alliance, so it was with pleasure that I welcomed Rene Levy from the Institut Francais to talk not on his growing pains but growing pleasure in Marseille.

RL Julia asked me to bring a French flag to this evening of reminiscences, I said yes, but I thought afterwards that it is not the right flag for me to bring, because if I have to bring a flag here, it is true that I do have to bring a French flag of course, but also a Turkish flag, a Spanish flag and an Israeli flag. And yet maybe I should not bring a French flag, because we were in Marseille where nearly all the families came from Turkey or Greece, with even a very few from Egypt, and also because we were not in France really. We were in Provence, and that has another way of life. All these families came maybe in the '20s of this century and they left Turkey because of Attaturk and the birth of the new nation. So they came to Marseille and they established themselves

among many communities, particularly Armenians.

It was a kind of community which is maybe of a kind you don't know — very lighthearted about religion, very easy going about life, but never casual about food. So we never learnt as I hear you learn about Judaism or Talmud. There were just a few words to be learned for Barmitzvah, that's all there was; but what we did learn is to live together. The community was what we called a very small community in those days, although we were already something like 5000 people, but it was like a family and what I experienced in school was just something else; my real life was with the Jewish community.

And all my childhood there was also something else that was outside your experience and that was Jewish Boy Scouts. This movement was established in something like 1940, just before or just during the war, I was just too young to remember the start, or not even born at the time. But it was a very great thing for Marseille because everybody was in this movement and so it was not like the Boy Scouts in a military way, it was something

completely different. Every parent knew the other parents so, for example, when we were eating — always eating — we always shared all the food, giving and taking from one to the other, you know, and we were always speaking about food and what our mothers were making to eat. It was always the same conversation. The cuisine was Turkish which is something completely different from Middle European or Russian Jewish cooking. So you see, that although, of course, my family was my natural family — my father, my mother my brothers — my real family was this movement, Keren Kayemeth L'Israel, I don't like the term boy scout, in French we were called Eclaireurs Israelites de France.

I also spoke about the Spanish flag because you see, I think it was similar in your countries with Yiddish, but for my kind of Jewishness my parents and also their parents were speaking in Spanish all the time. From the fifteenth century until now they have been speaking Spanish and not Turkish. My mother was born Turkish but after she went to France she never remembered one word of



Turkish, she spoke only Spanish - and French. And why French? Because of the revolution, the French revolution, because six Frenchman had founded the Alliance Israelite Universelle, which has established many schools teaching in French in many countries. They were at the same time Jewish and French. So there you are, that is the reason why they came to Marseilles, and the reason was the same for all the other families.

My best remembrance of religion was Kippur, the opposite of yours, because Kippur was something very nice for us. We didn't go to school, we were all together all day long in the temple (synagogue). We had an area just for us, for the youth. There we were all together all the day long, even outside. Of course, more outside than inside, and with great pleasure we walked in the town and looked to see what store was closed and what store was open — if it was a Jewish one! If it was a Jewish one everyone said, 'It's so bad, it's only once a year'. But it was a very good time. Also Kippur in Marseille is always a very hot day so we were all with the girls in the streets and in the gardens, it was a real feast it was not Kippur.

So it was; we did everything together and also at that time, maybe you are younger than me, but for us Israel was really, really

important. We were just older than the State but my father was very involved in Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel. He was something like the chairman and I was always hearing about Israel. Of course, in our Israeli Boy Scouts, we also heard every day about Israel, so if not many of us went there — I don't know why — Israel was something ever present. And don't forget that in Marseille we had many ships, including the *Exodus* and many of our parents were involved in this question. My wife's father was the doctor to the *Exodus*. All my group got married to each other like us, so now it is very complicated because we don't know if someone is a friend or a relative. Its very complicated and its even more complicated now because we are getting older and older and now our children are in the same movement and they are getting together and it is more complicated every day. Some of the group went to Israel, but very few, I don't know why.

Now the community is more complicated and it has become a very great community. We are something like 90000 Jews in Marseille because all the Jews from North Africa, from Algeria from Tunisia came to France and most of them stayed in the South of France. So you see now its quite sad for me, not because I don't like them, but the songs are different. Everything

is different and we are now too great in number to really be a family. So we are something else, very interesting and you see Marseille is also a very interesting town because there are big communities of 100000 or something, and you have many Armenians, you have many Italians, you have many arabs now, so Marseille is not a real town now its something like ten towns in a town.

## The Edinburgh Star

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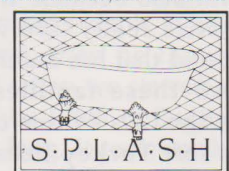
## BATHTIME TALES NO 1



### Nigel stags a bull

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# Jerusalem Under the Crusaders

by John Eivan

*On 8 February, Dr Dan Bahat, Archaeological Director of the Western Wall and Adviser on Archaeology to the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem and the City of David, gave a fact packed talk to the Edinburgh Friends of Israel about Jerusalem in the time of the Crusaders.*

Today's Jerusalem still conforms basically to a Roman city plan with the usual crossing main streets running North to South, East to West, allowing for some topographical kinks. The Crusaders, 1099-1187 and again for a time in the 13th century, occupied approximately what is now called the 'Old City', and divided it into 'Quarters' as it is today.

In 1133 a violent earthquake almost destroyed the city and tumbled the walls. Though rebuilt by 1164 there were some changes in alignments due to the earthquake damage. Later Islamic reconstruction however, almost obliterated the Crusader works except for a tiny piece of Crusader walling still visible under a window of the El Aqsa Mosque.

## Recycled stone

Crusader capitals, friezes and other carved stonework, usually much damaged, were reused by the Muslims as rubble, walling and occasionally as decorative pieces. Some fairly intact carvings of angels can be seen on reused capital stones in the streets. Of the dozens of Crusader churches, some remain as churches, for example large parts of the Holy Sepulchre and St Anne's, and some have been rebuilt as synagogues and Muslim buildings. A number of long-forgotten churches have recently been identified or at least located, to a total of 42 Crusader sites. Finally, nearly all the Arab markets in the Old City are largely Crusader structures with later Muslim and particularly Turkish renovations.

## Dyers saved from slaughter

There appears to be no sign of Crusader domestic architecture. During the advance of the Crusaders, the Muslims evicted all Christians from Jerusalem. When

the city fell, the Crusaders slaughtered all Muslims and Jews except for four Jewish cloth dyers because the technique was their prized secret. As well as extant gruesome accounts of the conquest of the city and the total massacre of its inhabitants, property records exist. Crusaders occupied Jerusalem and each soldier and knight was allowed to keep and use the house on which he hung his badge. If he was absent on campaign or home leave, he had to return within one year to keep his claim to the property.

Jerusalem was conquered before the remaining parts of the Holy Land. Most Crusaders stayed in Jerusalem, in the Mameluke houses. It was occupied and rebuilt by a multinational army and by thousands of Christian Bedouin from Transjordan who, called 'Syrians' in the documents, were brought in to settle in the city. They included builders, tradesmen, and doctors.

## Of gates, wall and towers

In the Damascus (northern) Gate, which is built on Roman foundations, a barbican once thought to be Roman is now shown to be a late Crusader addition in the 13th century. A Crusader postern gate remains in the Citadel.

Saladin was the first Ruler to introduce Income Tax, of 2% and intended it to pay for rebuilding the defences of Jerusalem. The money, wherever it went, was not so used. The walls of the city fell and were rebuilt three times in the 13th century and it is very difficult to date the Citadel. The base of Tancred's Tower, a famous Medieval pilgrim site has been found to contain broken Crusader ornamental stones as filling, and since the stone of the so-called

Tancred's Tower is of a different type from the usual Crusader material, it is now thought that the site of the real tower is under the school just inside the present line of the city wall.

## Carvings taken into care

Much Crusader decoration is 12th century French art. Dr Bahat showed slides of capitals and lintels carved with angels, and cartouches of the Last Supper, Palm Sunday and the Resurrection of Lazarus. Carved lintels from the Holy Sepulchre, removed for preservation by the British, remain unreplaced because of the administrative disagreements between the Roman Catholics and the Greek Orthodox. Dating of such decorative stonework remains uncertain, because 12th century masonry art from Europe may not have reached the Holy Land until the next century, being installed during the 13th century reoccupation of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.

## Entombed

When the stone bench, where monks sat to collect the donations of Pilgrims entering the Holy Sepulchre, was recently removed, the tombstone of Philip de Beni, 1236, who wrote the preamble to the Magna Carta, was uncovered. A number of Venetian family tombstones have been found. The Crusader Holy Sepulchre was a beautiful, roomy, well-lit Romanesque Church. The Greek Orthodox built thick curtain walls to keep the other sects out and blocked up many windows. During recent renovations the curtain walls were removed and for two days the open splendour of the Crusader plan was once again visible for all to appreciate. Then the Greeks rebuilt a screen wall to hang all their icons



on ... and blocked out the light again.

## Cloisters

There are Crusader cloisters still in (different) use in the Armenian and German Quarters, the latter a Benedictine one, and another has come to light during the building of an extension to the Police Headquarters inside the Jaffa Gate, close to the Citadel. One of the 14th century gates to the Temple Mount has two Crusader capitals. There is a cartouche of Daniel in the lions' den and a number of typical Crusader double-columns. Herod's Gate was once the Postern of Madeleine, and close by is another, as yet unexcavated, cloister.

## Jewish, Christian and Moslem architecture side by side

In the Aqsa Mosque are three battered but otherwise identical capitals depicting the Baptism of Jesus, complete with (damaged) angels. South of the Citadel was the Crusader Palace, now under the Police Station. The 16th century Suleiman drinking fountain contains fragments of Crusader stone carvings. Among the deeply rebated stones of the Herodian Period, and the rough faced Muslim Ayubite stonework, one can see a

scatter of smoothly dressed Crusader stones.

Under the Aqsa Mosque, which the Crusaders called 'Solomon's Temple' and from which they borrowed the design of the pointed arch, are the huge vaults known popularly as 'Solomon's Stables'. They were certainly used as stables by the Crusaders who built a defensive wall south of the Aqsa Mosque to defend them.

In the Dome of the Rock is a peculiar square pillar which now holds a box said to contain seven hairs of the Prophet. It is most probably a Crusader column. Close by are two Crusader copies of the Temple candelabra with typical pomegranate decoration. These 12th century French artifacts are now in the Islamic Museum.

The Room of the Last Supper, on Mt. Zion, was probably built in the 12th century and contains a 16th century mihrab (pulpit).

## Lost churches

Dan Bahat visited one Jewish gentleman who he found was unknowingly living in the top half of a Crusader church apse; the rest is still buried under the floors. Bahat would like other citizens of Jerusalem to look carefully at the

fabric of their homes and look beyond the immediate Turkish appearance of today's Old City.

Jerusalem was not a commercial power in Crusader times. After Queen Melisande ordered workers from El Bira to live in Jerusalem in 1152 there were about 100 churches to serve a population of only 25,000. So far only 42 of these churches have been identified; few excavated and even fewer still standing, let alone in use. There was also a Crusader cemetery at Haceldama, Field of Blood, south of Siloam, for Pilgrims who died before reaching the Holy City.

*The Vote of Thanks to the speaker was given by Mrs Catherine Myles. Mr John Eivan gave a Vote of Thanks to Rabbi Shalom Shapira for taking the Chair for the Meeting, and a special 'thank you' to Dr Ian Leifer for coping magnificently with a wayward slide projector and saving the visual part of the evening.*

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from  
Mark and Judith Sischy*



*Old Jerusalem seen through the architecture of the 1980s.*

*Photo: R. Emmerson*



# The Architecture of the '80s in Jerusalem

by Roger Emmerson

## The mantle of history

From the northern perspective of the city of Edinburgh it is possible to reflect on the architecture of the '80s in Jerusalem and, perhaps, to draw some conclusions from it. Clearly, Edinburgh is neither so ancient, has had as many alien masters nor shares Jerusalem's unique religious significance. That said, certain parallels remain. Both are cities of stone, both have an international heritage of ancient and more recent architecture and both have a history of attempting a reconciliation between cultural aspirations, the dictat of colonial powers and the creation of an appropriate architectural form. Such demands can produce either stultifying blandness or an authentic expression of the times lived: the mantle of history can oppress or release the creative spirit.

## The quest for a national style

Both David Kroyanker and Amiram Harlap have written of the search for authenticity in Jerusalem architecture, especially as it has developed in the 20th century in parallel with the increasing consciousness of a Jewish/Hebrew culture and the need for a homeland. David Kroyanker speaks of the need to establish a 'physical continuity between past and present' and notes that:

The common denominator of most of these attempts was the desire for both self-expression and formal originality, based on the physical characteristics of the traditional local heritage and on formal images derived from the language of the Bible.

The basic elements of this investigation of a national style — if it can be characterised thus — are the native Judaeo/Arabic forms of the domed roof, the cross-vault and the arched doorway.

Theoretical works on this topic appeared in the early decades of the 20th century, notably in Altneuland

by Theodor Herzl and in the writings of Professor Boris Schatz. Interestingly from our northern point of view it was Patrick Geddes and Frank Mears who were to attempt a concrete expression of Schatz's philosophy at the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus though it was to be Kornberg who would build there. This 'Zionist' phase saw little actual building and it was the colonial British during the Mandate of 1918 — 1948 who were to attempt to find a style appropriate to the times and the situation. They seem to have been unusually sympathetic to indigenous architecture and crafts.

Kroyanker has characterised this phase as 'Sentimental-Romantic' and has commented that:

This style sprang from several sources and displayed various facets, but common to all of them was a desire to return to blend in with the East and a yearning to return to origins. An emotional romantic motivation was strongest in advancing this style, which was expressed chiefly in official British structures, such as the High Commissioner's Palace on the Jebel Mukhtar range to the south of Jerusalem, the Rockefeller Museum to the east, the Scottish Church of St Andrews near the railway station, and the out-patients clinic of St John's Hospital on the Hebron Road.

Certainly, English (rather than British) empiricism would have facilitated such an approach especially in the face of the influx of professionals and craftsmen fleeing Nazi Europe and bringing with them the knowledge gained at the Bauhaus and in the ferment of the Modern Movement.

## Regulation

The British also established the practice of town planning with

Maclean's plan of 1918 which sought to safeguard the historic centre of Jerusalem by setting up 'prohibited' and 'restricted' zones and by ordaining the mandatory use of stone in the city. Subsequent plans by Geddes and Ashbee, 1922, Holliday, 1934, and Kendall, 1944, fleshed out Maclean's original diagram with more or less success and provided the structure within which architects could work. The results of such planning legislation on the architecture of the incoming Europeans is most clearly demonstrated in its effects on the work of Erich Mendelsohn during his brief stay in Jerusalem in the late '30s, early '40s. The lightness, mobility and expressionism of his best European work has been bent to the more static, traditional forms of Jerusalem.

## The state of Israel

Corporist planning and design which informed most public and private work throughout the West during the '50s and '60s killed much of this activity dead and led to the application of stone panels to buildings as if they were some very expensive wallpaper. This is something with which we are all too familiar in Edinburgh. The abandonment of genuinely investigative and innovative design for a series of formulaic solutions to programme, site and budget has scarred the two cities.

## One Jerusalem

For Jerusalem the turning point was clearly the re-unification of the city in 1967 of which Yaron Turel has this to say:

However, the unification of Jerusalem in 1967 once again steered the city's architectural historiography into national channels. New neighbourhoods were built at a pace dictated by political considerations, and the architectural style expressed a messianic enthusiasm which



prevailed in Israel and the world at the time.

This came to an end at the beginning of the '80s and moderate architecture replaced the pomposity that characterised the architecture of the '70s. The colossal size of the new neighbourhoods was replaced by adding extensions to old houses, and the distorted symbolism evident in the modular concrete arches gave way to careful handling of the buildings' specifications.

The intriguing aspect of all this is the reinforcement of local culture: universal ideologies rather than creating an international style are in fact nurturing indigenous architectures. Turel identifies eight key features of the new architecture in its Jerusalem context: 'scale: historicism: stone: other materials: blending in: conservative urbanism: inspiration: architectural pluralism.' He acknowledges that all of these factors are not necessarily present in every design of the period but does see them as a set of operative principles which can guide both design and its assessment.

The exhibition recently held in Edinburgh was invaluable for two principle reasons. Firstly, it allowed the widest dissemination of the investigations of Jerusalem architects in the past decade and extended the orbit of debate; secondly, it allowed us all, within the confines of our own cultures, to assess our own achievements and to seek to understand the philosophies which connect us rather than set us apart.

It would seem that Jerusalem wears the mantle of history lightly at present and has engaged in a creative dialogue with her past.

*With Compliments from  
Geoffrey and Lorna  
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## THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF MY LIFE IN MEAH SHEARIM

*from an interview with Shalom Shapira*

**My father was the principle of a yeshiva** which he established in Jerusalem during the first world war. My mother was a housewife. My parents went to Egypt when they were young and my older brother and two older sisters were born there. There was a famine in Israel which forced many Israelis including the leaders of the Yshuv to move abroad during the war. The crisis passed and my parents returned to Jerusalem where I was born in 1930. The orthodox circles were a large part of the population at that time.

There was already the British Mandate in Israel but I did not know much more than I saw from inside Meah Shearim when I was very young. Our income was not high, it was a rather lower than average income for maintaining a family but we were not poor and had a very fair standard of living compared with the people around us. It was a happy life even though the economic standard was low. The housing, if I think about it now, was very poor. They were not stone houses. We lived on the third floor with very steep stairs. There was no electricity, we had paraffin lamps. They were nice lamps, in the middle of the room we had a nice chandelier with one large lamp inside and this gave a lovely atmosphere. We didn't know anything else. The house had one main living room and a kind of a corridor and another room — this was supposed to be the bedroom for the parents and then gradually the family grew up, children were sleeping everywhere at night. We were seven children altogether, I was number six. I remember when my younger brother was born, it is one of my first memories of our family life. There was gasoline lighting in the streets and I remember the man coming with his ladder lighting these lamps.

**Not only was there no electricity there was no water.** It was brought to the house from reservoirs by certain people and we used to wash with water from jars and the children used to wash in the same water in containers. We washed ourselves once a week when we went to the public bath, to the ritual bath. The men and the women used to go on different days to wash themselves and dip in the water. The water carrier came as often as we wanted maybe once a day, in winter once in two days. He came at fixed times and everybody knew and there was always somebody at home. So we had a container with a big jar in the kitchen and he put the water there. It was a very small kitchen. The milkman delivered daily, climbing the stairs to each flat. You could buy as little as a quarter litre. He measured out the milk from a litre container which was also used as a lid to the four churns that he loaded on either side of his donkey. We always had to boil the milk.

**It really was a warm family life,** the religion and the orthodox way which was a part of life and a part of everybody else's life. All the people around neighbours and relatives were all of the same circle of observance. We (children) didn't know that there were unobservant Jews or that there were Jews outside Meah Shearim because our education was very poor. There was only religious education in my childhood; there was nothing of history, of politics. We learned this from life, from events that happened. There were almost no newspapers to read and no radio because there was no electricity. We spoke Yiddish and even outside Meah Shearim, at that time, Hebrew was not yet established. Hebrew became a very essential part of life for studying the bible, for reading the sources and for being able to



read and understand those texts in Hebrew and those in Aramaic, and the way of thinking of the orthodox law and of Judaism. Those were the first things we absorbed from our very childhood. We translated the Hebrew Torah into Yiddish language so that we should know what we were talking about, and then beyond it the commentators. We went really deeply into them and into Hebrew texts and Jewish religion. But as far as history is concerned or knowing more widely about the Jewish people, actual life, was very poor. We learned this from life itself and from glancing at the newspapers and trying to understand the modern Hebrew in which the newspapers were written. It was not so easy to understand because not all the words were in the bible, so we had to make it up to understand it.

There were certain events we knew about from hearing from one another. There were Arab riots for instance. The year before I was born there was a pogrom in Hebron. We heard what was going on in the United Nations. The news came from the public baths. There people used to hear all the news of what was going on in all the world. For the first ten or twelve years of my childhood I did not even realise the political state of the country, that we did not live under our own rule, that there were British who kept order. We did not know what the struggle was about. We got to know there was a Jewish people and they were struggling for something. Before the second world war started there was no awareness as far as I was concerned, of the political situation, of suppression, of certain national desires that were not fulfilled. I didn't feel anything of that. From the second world war when I was over barmitzvah my political awareness started. That was another life. Before that we knew that the Jewish people had lived in the diaspora since the destruction of the second temple and it was also the diaspora here. Maybe one day the Messiah would come but it was not something we longed for, we

needed.

We had good relations with the Arabs in Meah Shearim, this was natural. Somehow we knew they are Arabs, they are not Jews, that's all. It's all concerned with religion. They do not have to keep Shabbat because they are not Jews, and we have to and we do. It was very easy we could have a Shabbas goy just in case the fire or we needed some help on Shabbat.

All the children played games such as five stones and writing games, like noughts and crosses, not crosswords because we did not control the Hebrew language, and memory games. The girls played skipping or dancing with a rope and they knew French songs. The girls had quite a better education than the boys, concerning general education because girls were not supposed to study Torah so much so they went to school. We didn't go to school, cheder is not a school. In cheder we didn't even study the whole bible, for example Esther which we read (at Purim) we just read it we didn't study it, a bit of Joshua, the conquest of Canaan, not much just one or two hours per week. I rebelled against this when I grew up, and got a lot of trouble for this. Is this not Torah? Why only two hours a week to know what Samuel said, David and all this history from the bible. Why in the yeshiva you learn nothing, you learn just Gemarra and Mishnah, just Jewish law, but you know nothing of the Song of Songs for instance or any other biblical book. You had to read it on your own and to understand. I was very angry about this and later in my life I went to University to study this for myself.

Because girls were not supposed to study so much of Torah they went to school, to a school with a system of education with exams. They had to know a foreign language, they had to know English. My sisters learnt perfect English. The purpose was to be educated to become a secretary, this was the highest position, to become a secretary in an office, to be able to

type, write letters. This would be a most educated woman who can do secretarial work. This was the highest possible for a woman to get. She could be a nurse as well, there were probably schools for nurses and teachers for young children. The religious education has changed now. In those days the boys went only to cheder where there were only male teachers. For young girls maybe there were woman teachers but they did not have to be qualified. In the higher schools where my sisters went the girls got history, geography, a bit of maths while the boys got just nothing — one hour per day to be able to write letters, to write words and to do sums, arithmetic and Hebrew grammar. This was one hour a day, no exams. If you attended you learnt — if you didn't the attitude was that it did not matter much. All the motivation was in the religious studies. The study was all day long for a long week. We went in the morning and we came back in the evening, with a break at noon. The weekend was only Saturday, we started again on Sunday.

When I came home, I really felt I was at home, the family was very warm. I had the support of home, I had the motivation of home for study. When I came home my father went over the work because he was involved in the same kind of studies

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so he liked me to be able to discuss this with him and at the weekend really to be able to take the book and study and go through it.

**The standard of living was poor but nice. Friday evening we always had fish, gefilte fish, we had warm soup.** We also had meat once a week at least. It was only during the second world war, I remember the exception in order to remember the rule, the normal, there were exceptions when on Saturday there was no meat. I remember on a Saturday it was very poor and very distressing because it was vegetable soup and there was no meat. So there were cutlets of something different; we were not hungry. There were a oranges, a lot. On a Friday evening there was a festive meal and Saturday morning the synagogue and back from the synagogue was the usual food, the kugel and the cholent. My mother baked her own challas every Friday. She made her own lochshen and cut them. People bought in bulk because it was cheaper. For instance oranges at the beginning of winter were cheap and we bought a few sacks, just full, and they were kept in a cool place. Oranges were very cheap and very healthy, there were good oranges in Israel in the winter. We bought wine we didn't make it.

**There were arab women, they also had to make a living so they went to the Jewish houses offering**

**different services.** One of the services was to make couscous. As a child I remember this lady she was walking along the street shouting 'Couscous, couscous, who wants?' And they used to call her up, so she came up and made couscous, and another said 'I don't have time today, do you want to come tomorrow?' because it takes a few hours. So she used to sit down and she used to be given flour and the stuff and she had her instruments (equipment) and within an hour or two you had got a lot of couscous. We also had another service that of washing the clothes. It was also done by an arab woman. You had to hire her for a day and tell her which day you wanted her to come, Thursday or Wednesday or whichever day you wanted. She came in the morning and the whole day she was washing the laundry, not in the house but on a small verandah. She was sitting and doing the washing and of course, my mother and sisters were helping. The whole day was a day of washing. The whole house was different. You could not expect your meal on time. You could not expect a regular meal. Sometimes you got something different, this was washing day food, so it was a real mess. But it wasn't often, it was every one or two months when all the washing had accumulated.

**At Succoth we always had guests and for Pesach what I always remember was the preparation.** We had to bake the matzah we didn't buy it. We had to go to the bakery and every family had bought a certain time and I remember the cleaning. And of course the seder evening was very impressive because of everyone being together and the length of the time. I remember bad memories too. One Friday evening everything was set. We had a round table beneath the chandelier. Now this light was not enough so we had another small lamp on an additional table and once there was a catastrophe with this lamp. My mother had lit the candles and we went to shul. The flame went out and it started to

make a lot of smoke. What could we do so we started to find an Arab. Eventually we found the Arab and he came in and he got it diminished and the problem was solved but the whole room was covered with black soot. After that we had a week of cleaning and we also had to call a painter to do the room.

**There was a market place in Meah Shearim,** it still exists but in those days it was much livelier. There were lots of shops and some shops were selling live chickens, that's the way you bought poultry and kept it fresh. We had no refrigerator. Sometimes we kept the chicken a week or two to grow older and bigger. Outside the flat there was a sort of entry, two or three metres wide and maybe five metres long. This was the Hatzet, the court on every floor, and in that space we could keep a cage (you could buy a cage for tuppence) and keep a chicken. We used to feed them with left overs, so in a few weeks you could have a bigger chicken, and that's how you did not have lots of expenses. Now here is something you will not believe. One day in summer the window was open, we lived on the third floor, and a big dove came into the flat and she got trapped inside. I was a child less than ten years old, my brother was there and he caught this dove and sent it to the shochet and we had a very nice meal — and it happened more than once.

The standard of living I felt was normal, we ate enough, but what I remember is when we wanted shoes it was not so easy for my father. He had to know much before we needed shoes, this would be probably for Pesach, so he had to save some money to be able to go to the shoemaker to order shoes. You did not buy ready made shoes. I never saw ready made shoes.

This was my young life before my barmitzvah. I left Meah Shearim when my father was appointed Rabbi of the neighbouring area Beth Israel. I lived there until I was married. Of course there were many changes to the way we lived but that is another story.

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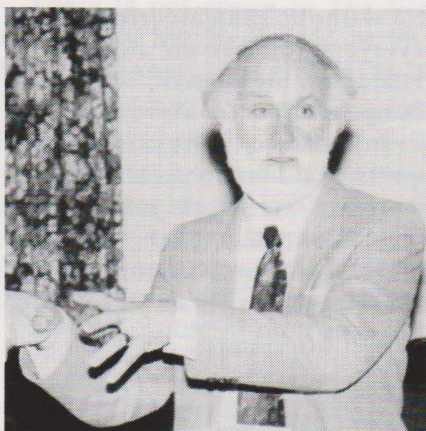
# SHATTERED ILLUSIONS

by Micheline Brannan

When Dr Peter Hayman addressed the Lit on Sunday 6 March he may have intended to shatter a few illusions; he warned us that the content would not be as palatable as on a previous occasion when he addressed the Lit about antisemitism in the Gospels.

The subject was 'Were the ancient Jews really monotheists?' With many scholarly references ranging from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Cairo Genizah, Dr Hayman established that our Jewish forebears believed in various spirits and demons and were a thoroughly superstitious lot. This was not such a surprise to readers of Isaac Bashevis Singer, for example.

However, circling around the kernel of his talk in ever decreasing rings, Dr Hayman homed in, at last, on the Jews of the Old Testament who, supposedly, had passed down to us the revelation of the oneness of God. The very fact that the prophets railed so mightily against idolatry proves that it must have been taking place on a grand scale. According to Dr Hayman, there are several gods to be found in the earlier books of the Bible each of whom was the champion of a particular nation or tribe. the particular champion of the Children of Israel was Yahweh, but the Canaanite god, El, appears to have been recognised by various peoples as EL Elyon (God on High), who occupied a position, like the Greek Zeus, as the king of the heaven above all the other gods. The Israelites believed in the existence of the other gods, including El Elyon, as well as their own Yahweh, but after the Babylonian exile, a determined effort was made by the leaders of the exiled Jews to bolster up Yahweh and to establish an identity between Yahweh and El Elyon. This explains why God has two names throughout the Hebrew Bible — Yahweh and El/ Elohim. The aim was to sustain the morale of the exiles and encourage their



*Dr Peter Hayman addressing the Lit.*

return to the Land which Yahweh had promised their forefathers.

The separateness of Yahweh and El Elyon continued in some traditions to a much later date than the return from the Babylonian exile. It is noteworthy that Kohelet, argued by scholars to be a 3rd century CE work, contains no mention of Yahweh, but only of El. The Rabbinic tradition, however, follows that of the 'Yahwists' and is the basis of normative Judaism today.

This talk generated much discussion. Some were tempted to

confuse a descriptive account with a normative message. I think, however, that Dr Hayman wanted to dispel historical rather than theological illusions and that he had no intention of influencing anyone's beliefs. Stephen Gellaitry, in giving the vote of thanks, expressed the audience's appreciation of a very learned talk, and we all hope that it will not be long before Dr Hayman addresses us again.

*With Compliments*

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## PERSONAL VIEW

*Schindler's List* has been on at the local cinema for some weeks now. My friends at work tell me 'You must go and see it, it's wonderful'. I reply, 'Maybe'. They go on 'There were three black caps in the row in front, crying, and they set me off too. You have to go and see it.' I demur 'I could not sit through three hours, maybe if it was shorter. I read the book by Thomas Kineally and thought it excellent.' I had also watched a television programme about the making of the film and some of the horrific images are still in my mind.

My childhood was secure in England, although my parents did make plans about what they would do if Hitler invaded, and so I have a protective distance between myself and these images. It is much worse for those who experienced the camps or whose close families were there. I feel the time has come to listen to Ernest Levy's views in *The Herald* (Mon, Feb 21, 1994) reported by John Linklater.

'It is practically impossible, just impossible, to put it out of your

head, and to let one single day go by without remembering. **I beg everyone to leave me alone, or to talk about the present, the future.** But people want to hear, and I feel its my duty to speak out, because we are not here for ever. The first ten years were OK. As you get older it gets worse. At this particular moment it's worse than ever, I'm unable to relax. The moment I close my eyes I am thinking. 'Should I write it down?' and: 'No Forget it. Constantly.'

I too have been guilty of asking survivors 'tell me'.

To return to my friends at work who had a question; they wanted to know why did people make a ring of stones round the grave at the end of the film. I replied that it is a custom to lay a stone at the grave of someone you respect—like building a cairn. I hope I have got it right.

A happier event of WW2 was marked in Edinburgh in an exhibition at the Danish Consulate on how they saved the majority of their Jewish population. It was reported in *The List*.

JM

## Eilat - A vacation paradise

by Marianne Laszlo

It was my second visit to Israel and I had chosen Eilat the 'desert outpost' for my winter sunshine holiday.

For thousands of years people have come from all over the world to the Red Sea to benefit from the remarkable healing and beautifying properties. Eilat, with its glorious landscaped, year-round sunshine, clear blue sea and endless new facilities for recreation and 'getting away from it all', is becoming more and more of a vacation paradise. This Red Sea port, close to the borders of Egypt and Jordan, is known around the world to sun worshippers, swimmers, nature lovers and marine life enthusiasts. Few places in the world can compare with Eilat's breath-taking coral reefs and rich underwater life, which may be observed through glass-walled and glass-bottomed boats, by snorkelling, skin-diving or visiting the underwater observatory.

The steady year round temperature of the Red Sea makes it possible to swim there in winter as well as in summer, for when Europeans are shivering at below zero temperatures it is approximately 30 degrees warmer in Eilat. Even the Canary Islands, Eilat's closest competitor for winter holidays, has a 16 degree water temperature, while Eilat's averages 22 degrees.

From being a desert outpost, Eilat has developed over the years to a burgeoning city. Plans for more parks and family hotels are under way and an ostrich farm, a dolphinarium and marine museum offer further recreational activities.

During my stay there, my impression was that Eilat was not influenced by the security situation in Israel. The visitors are mostly Germans, Dutch Norwegians and British with some Israelis at the weekend. I had a memorable two weeks in this city on the shores of the Red Sea. I shall certainly return again next winter.

## Poem by Abraham Ibn Ezra

(1098-1164)

Translated from the original Hebrew by Mrs Betty Gray

I go at daybreak to the prince;  
They say he's ridden out long since.  
I go again when day is done;  
"He's gone to bed", says everyone.

Either he's travelling out of town,  
Or on his couch he's lying down.  
Alas, what wretched lot is mine!  
On whom no lucky star will shine.

אֲשָׁכִים לְבֵית הַפֶּרֶץ

5. אֲזִי יֵעָלֶה מֶרְכָּב

6. אֲזִי יֵעָלֶה מִשְׁכָּב

7. אֲזִי לֹאִישׁ עָנִי

8. נֹלֵךְ בְּלִי כֹכֵב

1. אֲשָׁכִים לְבֵית הַפֶּרֶץ

2. אֲזִי מֵרִים כֶּכֶר רָכֵב

3. אֲזִי לֹאִישׁ עָנִי

4. אֲזִי מֵרִים כֶּכֶר שָׁכֵב

### A note on the poet Abraham Ibn Ezra

Abraham Ibn Ezra was born in 1098 and died in 1164. He established his reputation not only as a poet, but as a Biblical commentator, a grammarian and an astronomer. Abraham Ibn Ezra's poetic writings touch almost every subject imaginable. He wrote with a fine sense of humour, as evidenced by the above poem.

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