

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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The Edinburgh Star

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Front Cover: The British mandate ended on 14th May 1948. The photograph is of the special meeting on that day when David Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. The picture on the wall is of the early Zionist leader Theodor Herzl (1860-1904).

The Editorial Board acknowledges with thanks the secretarial assistance of Val Simpson.

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THIS ISSUE of **The Edinburgh Star** is rather different from recent issues in that it contains no feature-length articles. This does not represent a change of editorial policy but just reflects the number and quality of the items submitted. This time, there were plenty of good short pieces but no good long ones. No doubt I shall be criticised for this – since the magazine aims to be inclusive and to appeal to the whole of what is inevitably a fairly heterogeneous community, it is hard to get the balance right. But it will be a new experience if I am criticised for being too lightweight rather than too highbrow.

I sometimes feel that life is one long round of gatherings for family and community – some happy like *Bar (and Bat) Mitzvahs*, engagements, weddings, birthdays and the celebration of events in the community which we view with pride; some sad like funerals, stonesettings and events we regard with shame. As Jews, we seem to take these events more seriously than others but, just occasionally, one event stands out from all the rest as really meriting a celebration. The 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel on 14th May 1948 was such an event. Establishing a national home for the Jewish people and giving all Jews the right of return were events of the greatest significance, not only for those who elected to go on *aliya* but also for those who, for whatever reason, chose to stay in the diaspora. Although we may hold very different views about religion, about politics or about the peace process, we can and should put these aside in celebrating the 50th anniversary of this truly momentous event. This is exactly what the the Edinburgh Community did and **The Edinburgh Star** is very pleased to include in this issue an account of the Israel 50 Event by its organiser, *Philip Mason*.

We also include a report on the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibition at the Kelvingrove Art Centre by *Timothy Lim*, who explains how, on this occasion, Edinburgh was pipped to the post by Glasgow. Although that may provide grounds for disappointment, it does not constitute a good reason for missing out on the exhibition which continues until the end of August. Other items in this issue include some touching reflections on his medical career from *Philip Lurie* and a very nostalgic piece by *Alick Glass*, whose daughter Suzanne's article on Binyamin Netanyahu was one of the highlights of the previous issue. But it isn't all backward looking – *Edward Green's* reflections on his first two years in Edinburgh paint a picture of a vibrant and friendly community and are intended to complement these two pieces in pointing to some of our current virtues and strengths. Although the front page headlines in a recent issue of the **Jewish Chronicle** drew attention to the continuing decline in the size of Jewish communities outside London, decline is not inevitable and there are some welcome signs that the Greens are not the only Jews to see their future in our beautiful and hospitable city. And there is much more – **Issue No 30** contains a fairly heady mixture of items and the Editorial Board and I hope that readers will enjoy it.

The Edinburgh Star mourns the death of Chaim Bermant, the distinguished journalist who died in January, after our last issue had gone to press. His hard-hitting and witty column in the **Jewish Chronicle** will, no doubt, have delighted some of our readers and infuriated others but was always worth reading. He was born in Breslev, a Polish frontier town, moved to Barovke in Latvia when he was four and emigrated to Glasgow with his family when he was eight. Although he subsequently moved to London, and twice attempted to settle in Israel, he spoke with a strong Glasgow accent, thought of himself as a Glaswegian (and a Scot) and was generally regarded as such. With his wild, bushy beard, he looked liked one of the Prophets – and the resemblance went further because he was a somewhat larger-than-life character and had an instinctive sympathy for the underdog. He was fearless in his denunciations of what he regarded as failures and shortcomings in Jewish life in the UK and in Israel and used his column in the JC as a platform for his crusade against cowardice, weakness, arrogance, pomposity, abuse of power and other vices among those who should have known better. Like many people, I miss his wickedly witty prose and harsh (but almost always fair) judgements – in times like these, when it is all too easy to be smug and complacent, there is a great need for principled self-criticism.

FREDA RIFFKIN REPORTS....

BURNS NIGHT

The Ladies Committee chose the actual day, 25th January, to hold their Burns Night in the Community Centre. The event attracted a sell-out audience of 140 and was enhanced by the quality of the speakers and entertainers. The Chairman, John Cosgrove, an elegantly kilted figure, welcomed all in his inimitable style and recited the 'Selkirk Grace'. The big moment arrived when, to hushed expectancy, the haggis was piped in by David Pratt and held aloft by Harold Abrahams. The 'Address' came from the highly experienced Fred Lowrie, a candidate surely for the next Edinburgh Festival. After the excellent meal, prepared by the Ladies Committee and ably assisted by Harold, Morton McBurnie gave a most amusing treatise on the Bard in the 'Immortal Memory', which would have pleased Rabbie had he been in a position to hear same. The 'Toast to the Lassies' could not have been placed in more capable hands. Malcolm Rifkind, with his usual erudite, witty and effortless delivery, wooed the Lassies with great charm. The reply by his wife Edith was sheer and literal poetry in the form of 'Kate O'Shanter', a ditty on the labours, loves and trials of the Lassies. Interspersed were renderings from the piper David and the beautiful singing of Rachel Arbuckle with her attractive selection of Scottish songs. She was accompanied on the piano by Fiona MacColl. A vote of thanks by Ladies Committee Chairman, Anita Mendelssohn, wound up a first class evening.

*With Compliments
from
Mark and
Judith Sischy*

EDINBURGH WIZO DINNER AND SHOW

An enthusiastic audience of 140 enjoyed the latest Berger Extravaganza at the Communal Hall on 22nd February. A talented cast headed by Ian Leifer and Rose Newman and including Joe Aronson, Carole Brown, Andrea Cowan, Judy Gilbert, Rowan Henry, Vicky Lowrie, Gershon Mendick, Janet Mundy, Rose Orgel, Rachel Razbeau, Samuel Danzig and Joel Raffel entertained a very well-fed company and the Chairman of Edinburgh Wizo was delighted to announce that over £1000 had been raised.

Congratulations to Lennie for all his and the cast's hard work and to the talented pianist, Norma Brodie, whose playing was a joy to hear.

Lennie Berger explains how the show came to be put on:

A very interesting article in the **Jewish Chronicle**, written by Karen Glazer, caught my eye. It was about Alf Fogel recovering from open heart surgery. Alf had written many musicals for charity and I had not only seen one particular show ('Takeover') in Glasgow but also had the record. It gave me an idea

After getting in touch with Karen and explaining what I wanted, she

immediately put me in touch with Alf Fogel. He was both surprised and delighted that anyone from Scotland would remember him and sent me a copy. Now the original show ran for almost two hours so a great deal of cutting had to be done for a performance that could last for 50 minutes – no longer. When I had finished I gave it first to Vicky Lowrie who typed it up and then to Kate Goodwin, who approved and photocopied the script.

Unfortunately no music was available and Norma Brodie had to listen very carefully to the original record in order to reproduce the score. Bill Simpson produced a tape from the record and made copies for the cast. This was specially useful for Ian Leifer who had a great deal of dialogue to learn. In addition to this, 12 new songs had to be learned by everyone.

When I came to casting, there was a shortage of male actors and so a few characters on stage had to be changed. The tailor's part was then taken by Judy Gilbert who became a seamstress, whilst newcomer to Edinburgh, Carole Brown, doubled up as Sadie the Sales Lady and as a wine waiter. Carole made a great difference to the show, both by



The Director, Lennie Berger, on the left with members of the cast.

bringing in many costumes and also by acting as our choreographer.

Rehearsing this show took almost six months – every Wednesday evening for two hours (with a tea break) but everyone seemed to enjoy it. As it was set in the South of France, Ian Brodie obtained some white plastic tables and chairs. The colourful umbrellas also helped to make a magnificent setting whilst Daniel Brodie provided stage lights. And on each corner of the stage was a very bright pair of posters painted by our American star, Rachel Razbeau.

After a beautiful meal (provided by the WIZO ladies) the show, complete with a variety of gags and sketches and lovely new songs, got under way. It was all about a *chevyman* going to the South of France for a holiday but little did he realise his days were numbered in the shape of Freda Goldfarb, who had her eyes on him for matrimony. The workers joined him in the Hotel Magnifique run by Madame Alphonse. Jeremy Davis was looking for a manufacturing outlet with a view for a possible 'takeover'. A show was arranged with models (Samuel and Joel no less) in drag. In between Speigle had designs on Cynthia, whilst Judy took a very good part as the tailoress, wanting her gelt. The applause and laughter were greatly appreciated by the cast.

COMMUNAL HALL LADIES' COMMITTEE LINE DANCING EVENING

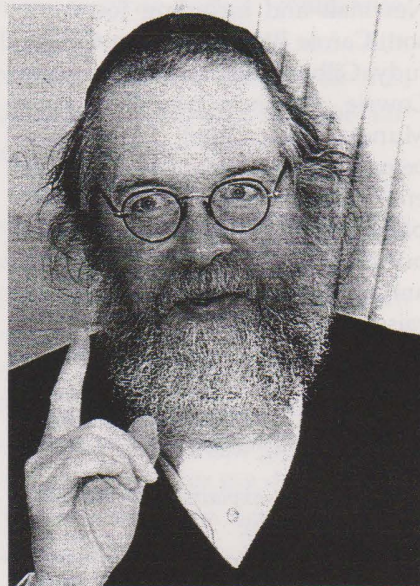
Inclement weather due to Winter coming after Spring caused a smaller attendance than usual at the Communal Hall's popular Line Dancing Evening on 8th March. However those present had a lovely evening and £100 was raised.

LITERARY SOCIETY PURIM PARTY PIECES

The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society held a most interesting and unusual Purim evening on 15th March. Readings and songs about Purim were given by Gillian and Charles Raab, Heather Valencia,

Judy and Tony Gilbert, David Goldberg, Micheline Brannan and Ian Leifer. Rabbi Sedley and Bill Simpson gave a delightful musical treat which was a real pleasure to hear.

An entertaining evening was rounded off by the serving of *Hamantaschen*, wine and tea.



VISIT OF RABBI ASHER WADE

On 27th April, Rabbi Asher Wade gave a talk, sponsored by the Future Generations Committee, entitled 'A Pastor's Conversion to Judasm'. Born as a Christian, his conversion to Judaism was indeed a fascinating story. After obtaining his first degree in the USA, Wallace Wade (as he then was) came to Edinburgh as a postgraduate student and obtained his PhD from the Faculty of Divinity at Edinburgh University. He became a Marriage Counsellor at the US Army Chaplaincy Center in Berlin and was ordained in Hamburg as a Minister in the Methodist Church. However, soon after his marriage to the daughter of a Lutheran Minister, he and his wife became disenchanted with Christianity and developed an interest in Judaism. Eventually they decided to convert and, in the process, Asher Wade obtained a second doctorate on '19th Century German Jewish Polemics'. He subsequently returned to the USA and then moved to Jerusalem

where he studied at a *yeshiva*, taking *semicha* and becoming ordained as a rabbi in 1992. According to Rabbi Sedley, 'no one who came to hear Rabbi Wade speak could possibly have gone away disappointed. He was a wonderful speaker with a unique story to tell. He spoke about his conversion, and the attitudes of others to his conversion, while he was working and studying in Hamburg. Everyone who heard him speak came away with plenty of food for thought'.

RAMBLING CLUB

Doreen Bowman reports:

On 10th May, a small band of intrepid explorers from the rambling club set forth to conquer the Pentlands.

At the outset, they had no idea that 'rambling' actually meant 'hill-walking', a subtle difference in terminology but no less important for that. For those experienced in this pursuit, the walk was taken from 'The Essential Guide to Hill Walking in Central Scotland', a book containing 100 hill walks which are easily accessible from Edinburgh.

The walk began at the car park of the Red Moss Nature Reserve near Balerno. We then walked around the Threipmuir Reservoir and ascended Black Hill by zigzagging up the very steep slope through the heather. One of our group, who shall remain nameless, vowed never to repeat the experience at this point, but to reach the small cairn at the top was an exhilarating experience and one surely to be repeated.

It was a beautifully warm summer day and the views were breathtaking. We then ascended to the Loganlea Reservoir, picnicking on the banks of a stream. Although the guide instructed us to continue over Hare Hill, we instead returned by walking on the flat through Green Clough between the hills. It was a wonderful day and the Rambling Club hopes to organise many similar excursions. (Anyone interested in joining the Rambling Club, particularly if they have ideas for walks, is invited to contact Arnold Rifkind.)

Congratulations to:

Dr Ian Leifer and Bill Simpson on being elected President and Honorary Treasurer of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Flight Lieutenant Simon Brodie on completion of his Final Part of Officer's Training and gaining the highest marks overall.



Lesley and John Danzig on the *Bar Mitzvah* on their son Samuel (above).

Paul Gilbert on graduating with a BSc in Biochemistry from the University of Kent at Canterbury last summer (and apologies from the Editor for the delay in recording this).

Jonathan Mason on graduating in dentistry from the University of Sheffield.

Elaine Samuel and Stanley Raffel on the *Bar Mitzvah* of their son Joel (see next page).

Robin Spark, whose recent paintings have been on display at the Marchmont Gallery of Contemporary Scottish Art.

Joan and Ian Leifer on the birth of their first grandchild, Dalia Rose Blass.

BBC RADIO SCOTLAND

"THOUGHT FOR THE DAY"

by John Cosgrove

Approx. 7.26 a.m.

Fridays - 14th, 21st, 28th August
4th September 1998

COMING EVENTS

The Friendship Club meets on alternate Sundays at 3.00 pm. For dates and further details of activities over the summer period, contact Willie Caplan (667 7984).

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

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

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

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

The Parent and Toddler group meets on Sunday mornings at 10.00 am.

There are no meetings of the Literary Society or Council of Christians and Jews during the summer months. In both cases, programmes commence after the high holidays.

All meetings are subject to alteration.

All the above events, unless otherwise stated, take place in the Community Centre at 4 Salisbury Road.

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TWO PERSPECTIVES ON A BAR MITZVAH

A disinterested observer reports:

Joel Raffel's *Bar Mitzvah* took place on March 21, 1998. The synagogue was full to bursting with a healthy turnout of locals and swelled by family from at least three corners of the globe. Taking their place on the back benches earlier than most in the proceedings and determined not to miss one bit of the action was a troop of Joel's school friends – the boys in maroon (*yarmulkes*).

Joel was called up to the *bimah* around 10 o'clock. He appeared to be going strong some two hours later and reached a crescendo around 1 p.m. By this time he had *leyned* a large portion of the week's double *sedra*, sung his *haftarah*, and even led the congregation in *musaf*. It was a composed, compelling, even commanding performance that both belied his years (he is thirteen if you have not already guessed) and displayed his immense enjoyment of it all. Joel also followed *Minhag Sedley* by delivering a *d'var torah* from the pulpit, in which he somehow managed to link Moses with Steven Spielberg and the idea of boredom with high adventure. Furthermore, he read his sermon as if he had written every word! For the first time this reporter can remember, the congregation actually burst into applause.

Ian Leifer added to what, by now, was quite a festive, relaxed, even exuberant atmosphere by presenting Joel with a *Siddur* on behalf of the congregation and thanking Joel's mother for being head mistress of the *Cheder* since 1883. This reporter cannot remember too much of what happened at the *kiddush*, presumably because the malt was flowing in an irresistible one-way direction by this time.

Shabbat lunch was enlivened (really!) by several speeches. Joel's father's performance was, according to some observers, quite a polished one. This is perhaps not surprising since he had been working on it

since his elder son's *Bar Mitzvah*, eight years ago. However, it has to be said that not all the guests were totally sure how their presence constituted a decisive rebuttal of post modernism. Joel's mother brought tears to many eyes with her moving tribute to dear departed relatives and friends even if she then proceeded to confuse us all by going off-message with rambling references to trips in Central Park. Joel's brother Aaron delivered a paean to his wee brother which characteristically set off discussions amongst the guests as to where they were and what they did to their own parents when they first heard they were required to 'welcome' a sibling into the family. Joel's uncle managed to interest all (well, one person did nod off, Editor please note) with an at once relevant and scholarly excursus on Jewish theories of silence (we don't talk about it) and time. Admittedly, some of us may want further clarification as to what exactly nostalgia for the future means. While all of this was going on, Simchah Catering was supplying a less abstract taste of both nostalgia (cholent) and our future/destiny (haggis).

But all in all it was Joel's day. He gave a performance which many have said they will never forget and, though he was not to know it at the time, even his choice of maroon *yarmulkes* was vindicated. Less than two months later, Heart of Midlothian Football Club lifted the Scottish Cup for almost the first time since the Jews left Egypt. And, soon after that, Joel was back on the *bimah* to *leyn* a little more.

The canny Bar Mitzvah boy offers some sage advice:

Hi, my name's Joel Raffel and I recently had my *Bar Mitzvah*. It went well and it is now a thing of the past. If you are going to have your *Bar Mitzvah* soon, you're are probably nervous. It wouldn't be a surprise if

you can't fall asleep, can't think straight and can't get those giant butterflies out of your stomach. I felt that way anyway. However, there is no need to worry. However badly you muck up, however many mistakes you make, however many times you forget your lines, people (and lots of them) will congratulate you. I'm not trying to say you will muck up but it's a possibility. There is always one family member who corrects your every mistake (in my case Sam Cohen) but the best idea is to blot them out and focus and talk to the people who sing your praises.

Another problem is the meal which often occurs after the service. Dozens of people crowding round you saying, 'You were so brilliant' or 'How could you be so calm?' A real nightmare! The key word, I found, is thanks. It's short, it's sweet, people think you're listening to them, it sounds like you're gracious and it doesn't make your mouth go dry by talking so much.

Some handy tips:

- ☛ Have a glass of water ready whilst doing the service.
- ☛ Sit amongst the kids for lunch to avoid pestering.
- ☛ Tell everyone that you loved their gift.
- ☛ Make your thank-you notes sweet but very short.
- ☛ Get your parents to write your speech (note that this can take some persuading).

Follow these simple instructions and you will cruise down the road to success.

If you don't, don't blame me

Good luck

Joel.

Profile

EVE AND NATE OPPENHEIM

'The Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is not ruled by Presidential fiat or edicts. The watchword must be constructive harmony. Consensus both within and without must be the theme for our joint efforts to keep the community alive and well'.

So wrote Dr Nathan Oppenheim in the 1994 Rosh Hashanah edition of **The Edinburgh Star** shortly after he was elected President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. Four years later, on demitting office, he has seen his aspirations fulfilled in the consensus decision-making of Council meetings he has chaired. During his extremely active and constructive Presidency, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation has maintained its reputation as a forward-looking and vibrant component of the capital's colourful and cosmopolitan scene. It is certainly alive and well and Dr Oppenheim can leave office in the knowledge that he has contributed to this in his own distinctive, affable, efficient and modest manner.

Born in Glasgow, the middle of three children, he was five years old when the family moved to Edinburgh where he attended James Gillespie's and George Heriot's schools. He completed his education at Surgeons' Hall School of Medicine, graduating as a doctor with the Scottish Triple Qualification. Called to the Armed Forces for his National Service, he was commissioned in the Royal Army Medical Corps and spent two and a half years in Hong Kong and Singapore attached to the Gurkha Rifles along with other units. On demobilisation, he returned to Edinburgh to attend a course in general medicine before securing a post of house obstetrician at the Western General Hospital. Moving to Middlesbrough, he worked as a General Practitioner and met his future wife before returning to Edinburgh to join the family business.

In 1952 he married Eve Halson, the younger child of a well-known Middlesbrough family. Eve's father



in his day had been Treasurer and President of the Jewish Community in Middlesbrough. After attending boarding school in the Lake District, she graduated MB, BS from Durham University. Eve worked as a house physician and as a casualty officer at Middlesbrough General Hospital before giving up these duties for the less demanding, if more productive, ones of matrimony. The couple now have three children and six grandchildren living in London and Manchester. After the family grew up, Eve returned to her profession, first as a research assistant in neurosurgery at the Western General. She was then appointed community physician to city schools in the north-west part of the city. She subsequently participated in the launch of the Scottish Breast Screening Campaign, working for several years at Springwell House.

Nate and Eve have both been deeply involved in Jewish and non-Jewish affairs in the city. Nate is one of the longest serving members of the Synagogue Council having been a Council member for more than forty years, the last twelve as a member of the Executive as Secretary, Treasurer and President. His Presidency has witnessed notable

and distinguished events in the community including the appointment of Malcolm Rifkind as Foreign Secretary and Hazel Cosgrove as a Judge of the Court of Session, the welcoming of a new Rabbi, the erection of the Holocaust Memorial in Princes Street Gardens initiated by the former Lothian Regional and Edinburgh District Councils, meetings with civic leaders on visits to the Synagogue, the march of the community into the next century by the computerisation of its records, an encouragingly enthusiastic *Cheder*, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and other time-demanding and, on occasion, inevitably controversial activities.

Nate has been President of the *B'nei Brith*, President of the Board of Guardians and was, for three years, the congregation's representative on the Board of Deputies, a duty for which his devotion to the community's interests was well suited. From a medical input, he has been involved with Newark Lodge in Glasgow, assessing the eligibility of Edinburgh applicants. Since his retiral some years ago, he has been a volunteer with the Citizens Advice Bureau and is part-time Treasurer of Carlton Welfare Association. A constant supporter of the Friends of Israel and the Council of Christians and Jews, he is a member of the Scottish Standing Committee of Jewish Communities. A very full diary leaves him with little leisure time. His interests are mainly family orientated and, after demitting office, he plans to spend more time with his children and grandchildren – just as busy a schedule if in a less demanding way.

Eve is Director of and Medical Adviser to the Scottish Adoption Agency and, on behalf of the

community, a member of the Scottish Special Housing Association sub-committee involved in the proposed provision of retirement flats. She is an ardent supporter and organiser of Jewish Childs Day and her very pleasant difficult-to-refuse approach has raised a large amount of money for that charity. She is quick to point out and praise the Edinburgh members for their generosity. On the Editorial Board of *The Edinburgh Star*, her clear,

concise comments contribute to the continued success of the magazine. With Nate, she enjoys attending antique fairs, reading and playing Bridge.

Edinburgh's Jewish community is small but very caring, warm and supportive and the contribution that Eve and Nate have made over many years has been considerable. Their sincerity, concern and 'constructive harmony' as visualised by Nate has proved to be a solid framework for a

contented, cohesive congregation. As Nate retires from high office, there is no doubt that his vast experience and knowledge will be continue to be called on in furtherance of this ideal. Their welcoming home is the venue for innumerable gatherings of family, friends and committee meetings. The community is most grateful to them both and looks forward to their continued participation in its progress.
IAN SHEIN

STAR TREK INTO THE PAST

In Issue Number 29, the two little girls in the upper photograph are Gillian Oppenheim and Elaine Mendelssohn and those in the happy family group are members of the Rifkind, Lurie and Simenoff families. Amongst familiar faces, Joe Lurie can be seen in the foreground with Ann on his lap.

In this edition, we feature two photographs. Does anyone know what brought the six women and one man together 50 years ago (in May 1948) and who they are? And, who can name the teacher and his pupils in the *Cheder* class of 1950?



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JEWISH?

Michael Adler introduces a new series of articles on the theme of 'Jewish Identities'

Judaism and Christianity have much in common. They are both monotheistic religions, they have the same roots and share the same body of holy texts (although Judaism regards the texts they have in common as complete while, for Christianity, they are really only a prelude to another set of texts), they both ascribe special significance to the city of Jerusalem and, for the last 2,000 years, they have developed alongside each other. However, they also have many contrasting features. Christianity is first and foremost a religion and, at the heart of Christianity, there is a set of beliefs to which Christians are required to assent. Judaism, on the other hand, cannot be reduced to a set of beliefs in this way and is often described, not least by Jews, as being 'not so much a religion, more a way of life'.

To be a Jew means, first and foremost, to belong to a group, the Jewish people, and religious beliefs are secondary to this corporate allegiance. The Christian also belongs to a corporate entity, the Christian Church, but the Church is defined as a body of believers and the Christian is defined in terms of his or her beliefs. Religious beliefs are only one ingredient in the make-up of the Jew and, for many Jews, not necessarily the most important ingredient. Indeed, there are many Jews who consider themselves to be Jews in every respect and who would deny that they had any religion at all.

What, then, does it mean to be a Jew? Well, it clearly means different things to different people. And how can we find out what it means? Well, there are several ways. One way, which has been carried out most successfully by the Institute of Jewish Public Policy Research (JPR) is to survey a cross section of the Jewish community. This is easier said than done because there is no register of Jews from which a representative sample can be drawn. Although it would be relatively easy to draw a sample of Jews who were members of a synagogue or supporters of communal organisations, a sample drawn up in this way would exclude those who are not synagogue members or known supporters of communal

organisations but who may, nonetheless, regard themselves as Jewish.

The JPRs *Survey of the Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews* (reviewed by John Danzig and Charles Raab in Issue No. 24) went to considerable lengths to construct a sample which was representative of the community. As a preliminary step in developing this sample, estimates were obtained of the Jewish population density (JPD) of every post code sector in the UK. These estimates were based on the frequency with which distinctively Jewish-sounding names (DJNs) occurred on the electoral register. Three separate sampling strategies were then adopted:

- in 'high density areas' (JPD > 15 per cent), questionnaires were sent to approximately one in every 30 households, irrespective of their name, on the electoral register in anticipation that a given proportion would reach Jewish households;
- in 'low density areas' (JPD < 15 per cent), questionnaires were sent to 1 in every 3.4 households with DJNs on the electoral register;
- in order to reach inter-married Jewish women in low density areas, newspaper advertisements and snowball sampling techniques were also used.

93.6 per cent of the 2,180 respondents had two Jewish parents and defined themselves as Jewish, 2.1 per cent had two Jewish parents but no longer regarded themselves as Jews, 2.9 per cent had one Jewish parent, while 1.4 per cent were either converts or people who simply regarded themselves as Jews. Among the most striking findings were that

- 9 per cent described themselves as 'strictly orthodox', 31 per cent as 'traditional', 15 per cent as 'progressive', 18 per cent as 'just Jewish', and 26 per cent as 'secular';
- 63 per cent were members of a synagogue while 37 per cent were not; among those who were married or living in a stable relationship, the rate of inter-marriage for the entire sample was

about 30 per cent;

- 38 per cent had non-Jewish partners among those looking for a partner, 31 per cent said it was 'very important' that their partner was Jewish, 28 per cent said it was 'important', 28 per cent that it was 'of minor importance' and 15 per cent that it was 'not at all important';
- 42 per cent expressed a strong and 38 per cent a moderate attachment to Israel.

Although statistical data perform an invaluable function by enabling us to generate an overall picture which can be used to inform our actions, they speak in generalisations and do not really do justice to the rich diversity of individual experiences. To understand these experiences requires a different approach. We may find it in works of literature – in books, in plays or in films – or by inviting people to describe and record what being Jewish means to them.

In the next few months, I shall be asking a number of local residents, religious and secular, young and old, those who are very open about their Jewish identity and those who are less so, those who have 'converted in' and those who have 'married out', about what being Jewish means to them. For some it will be the person's dominant identity, for others it will coexist with other identities which are equally, or perhaps more, important. Some will probably emphasise religion and ritual, while others will attach greater importance to culture and community. For some, it may connote support for Israel while, for others, it may express itself in terms of opposition to anti-Semitism and other forms of racism. I expect to find references to Jewish food, humour, friendship and family life and to negative as well as positive aspects of being Jewish. Being Jewish means different things to different people and my aim in this new series will be to bring out the rich diversity of meanings which people give to their Jewishness. Because there is no single sense of Jewish identity which applies across the board; but rather a whole range of identities, all of which have their own adherents, I am calling the series 'Jewish Identities'.

THE BUND IN POLAND: REMINISCENCES ON ITS CENTENARY

by MAJER BOGDANSKI

The *Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeterbund* (the Jewish Workers' Party) was founded in Vilna (Vilnius) in 1897. In Poland, between the years 1918 and 1939, the *Bund* eventually became the major political party in the Jewish community. Socialist in its ideology, it was much more than a political party – it became a national movement. No other socialist party anywhere has had to stand up in defence of its language. The *Bund*, however, was forced to defend not only the workers, who formed by far the largest part of the populace, but also Yiddish language and Yiddish culture in all its manifestations. There was a whole network of secular schools in which Yiddish was the language of instruction. The government did not contribute one single penny towards their upkeep. The *Bundists* struggled hard to find the finances necessary to keep these

schools in existence. In only a few cases were they helped in this task by the Leftist *Poale Zion*.

Successive governments – all of them semi-fascist and terribly oppressive to all citizens – were antisemitic to the point where, in 1938, the Prime Minister, from the platform of the *Sejm* (Polish Parliament), called on the Poles to boycott Jewish businesses.

The *Bund's* opposition to discrimination against Jews in employment was constant. The railways, the postal service and the coal mines were all nationalised but not one single Jew was employed in them. Only in the Town Councils where the Polish Socialist Party together with the *Bund* were in the majority was it possible for Jews to be employed in any capacity.

To counteract the boycotting of Jewish workers, the *Bund* convened

a Congress for Equal Rights of Employment in April 1926. Six hundred and four delegates from all parts of the country took part and the Congress was addressed by Polish workers, representatives of the Co-operative Movement and cultural organisations.

Overt anti-semitism was often induced. Left alone, Jews and Poles might have lived quite amicably, side by side. The *Bund* reacted promptly to every manifestation of anti-semitism and in this respect it was unique. After the pogrom in Przytyk on 9 March 1936, the *Bund* called a protest strike of the whole population on 17 March. It then convened a Congress against antisemitism in Warsaw, at which thirty-one organisations – professional, political and youth organisations, Trade Unions, sports clubs, artisans' groups and others –



A group of Bundists in London in the 1950s. Majer Bogdanski is second from the left in the front row.

participated. One thousand eight hundred delegates from three hundred towns would have attended but the Congress was forbidden by the government at the last moment.

Hitler's coming to power was a shot in the arm for all the many extreme anti-semites in Poland. It became necessary for Jews to defend themselves against attack. *Bundists*, armed with walking sticks, took up positions outside prayer-houses, the so-called *shtibles*, to guard the congregants inside against possible attacks by anti-semitic hooligans. Only the *Bundists* did this, and no other political party undertook to defend Jews in this way.

By so doing, the *Bund* defended the birthright of the Jews, who were the indigenous people of Poland. (Jews lived in Poland when the Poles were still pagans worshipping many deities). The Jewish people knew very well who were their defenders. And in December 1938, during the elections to the Town Councils all over the country, the Jews put their complete trust in the

Bund. In Warsaw, out of a total of twenty Jewish councillors, eighteen were elected from the *Bund*. In Lodz, eight out of eleven were from the *Bund*, and this was the pattern all over the country.

Life, hard as it was, was not only struggle. Jewish youth was emancipated and found time to indulge in the pursuit of all sorts of recreations: camping, rambling, sport, music, drama, dancing. In Lodz, the *Bund's* eighty-strong choir sang Beethoven's Choral Symphony in Yiddish – a graduate of our Yiddish school translated Schiller's text – with the Lodz Philharmonic Orchestra, under the most famous conductor in Poland, Berdyayev. The Vilbig Choir in Vilna sang for a number of years on the Vilna radio. A member of the Morgnshtern – the *Bund* sports club – in Lodz was at one time the champion weight-lifter of Poland.

One of the most important aspects of the *Bund's* ideology was its belief in broadening and deepening the education of working people, especially of children. It had

organisations for young people and children, which met regularly, where young people were encouraged to discuss and ask questions about all sorts of themes: about social justice, politics, films, literature and issues of the day (Remarque's successful and controversial novel 'All Quiet on the Western Front' and the work of Marie Curie are two typical examples). The *Bund* believed in self-education and enlightenment and improved the quality of life for thousands of socially disadvantaged young people in Poland between the wars.

Life was hard but meaningful and full of hope for a better future. In September 1939 Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia invaded and devoured Poland between them. That put an end to everything – the Holocaust had begun.

This article is based on a talk given by Majer Bogdanski to the 'Lit' in December 1997. Majer Bogdanski was born near Lodz in Poland and was very active in the Bund between the wars. He has lived in London since 1947.

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THE EVER PRESENT PAST

by ALICK GLASS

Edinburgh *Shul* was full on *Shabbes*. I arrived late. 'To *aleinu*' my late father would have said. And the *Shul* was packed, packed with the faces and the memories of my early years.

I could still see Rabbi Dr. Isaac Cohen in the pulpit. Reverend Zucker's voice rang clear as a bell as he reached the highest notes before the *Oren Chodesh*. 'A *rounde maileleh*' he would say, as I practised my *Maftir* and *Haftarah*. 'That is how to project your voice.'

My oldest and closest friends, Manuel Levitt and Raymond Cowan, so sadly departed so young, shared those times with me. Reuben Cohen and Abel Phillips adorning the 'executive box' in their shiny black top hats. My friends and me quivering when the palms of their hands struck like thunder on the lectern to call for decorum.

My father, sitting with Gerald and me near Lionel Daiches as he offered snuff to his near neighbours

on *Yom Kippur*. The Dorfman's, the Stollers and old man Rosenblum. Hearing the Barney Hoare bass reaching its 'Ba Din' depths. The Bergers, the Caplans, the Shulbergs, the Glasses and the Shemenskis. The sea of faces that filled the empty seats. Harold Smith, dapper in his brown suit and matching bowler. Louis Lindey passing on the latest gossip to Cecil Levinson as brother Jack, with gusto, led the choir.

Over the *kiddush* wine five or six 'hellos' reassured me that I was not completely amongst strangers. I know so many more in Piershill. I saw them all in *Shul* that day. I saw them and I missed them in the same confusion, and wondered what had happened to all those years. Hoffenberg, Greenstone, Levinson and Fluss at B'nai Brith. The meetings in Duncan Street and the communal hall before the conversion of the *Shul*. The picnics in North Berwick. The Maccabi

concerts and the annual *Shul* meetings, each a performance. The Glasgow breakfast dances to which we travelled on the A8 through Harthill. The skills of a Lipitz or a Mendelssohn at cricket, and the enthusiasm of the less talented teams they led. Waking dreams that flooded my mind in the 45 minutes that were left of the service.

They say you feel your age when policemen don't show theirs. I met the new Rabbi for the first time and knew I was growing old. But only on the outside. Deep inside me the memories stay young. They are held captive in that single Salisbury structure.

When John Cosgrove said 'your daughter contributed to *The Edinburgh Star*, what about you?' I replied 'I'll think about it. I might, if something special happens.' And it did. The Edinburgh *Shul* was full that *Shabbes*.

Alick Glass was born in Edinburgh and lives in London where he works as a Consultant on Fruit and Vegetables to a number of Supermarkets.

SAVE ONE LIFE AND THE WORLD IS SAVED

by PHILIP LURIE

It was 1949, I had just finished consulting and was about to leave to do house calls when there was a knock on the door. 'Come in', I called, and a young woman entered. Her face was tear-stained, she broke down and began to sob hysterically. A torrent of words escaped from her: 'Doctor you must help me. My husband is dying, you are my last resort. Please, please help me. I know you are not my family doctor but I am desperate.' When her sobbing subsided, a tragic story unfolded. While in the Forces during the war she met, fell in love with and married her husband, Harold. Unfortunately he contracted TB and was discharged from the RAF. He had been attending the chest clinic but his condition had deteriorated and his wife was told that he would not be recalled as no

more could be done for him; his case was terminal. I was in a quandary; he was the patient of another doctor but his wife was adamant that I should see him. Frankly, I did not have the courage or the heart to say no. Giving myself the opportunity to ponder over things, I said I would shortly visit her husband. I knew I could not walk away – if problems arose – then *que sera sera*.

When I arrived at the patient's house I found him in bed, clearly very emaciated. The first thing he said to me was, 'Doctor, please help me'. Apparently he had no appetite, had lost weight and was unable to get out of bed. I told him I would do my best to help him. As his wife and I left the room, closing the door behind us, she broke down and began to sob.

Having some knowledge of her

husband's condition, I could have wept for her and with her. I then remembered that a new drug had recently appeared for the treatment of tuberculosis. The previous week I had dropped into the local chemist in Craigmillar and had noticed a large azure blue container. 'Something new?', I asked the chemist, and he said 'Yes, it's para-amino-salicylic acid, a.k.a. PAS, a new drug for the treatment of tuberculosis, used with good results in Germany and beginning to be used in the UK, also with good results'. I asked him if there was any literature on the subject and he gave me all he had.

When I got home I read the literature and noted the dosage and frequency of dosage of the medicine and, luckily for me and my patient, I kept it on my person and so had it with me when I next visited him. I

told his wife there was a new drug but that it might be too late to be of use; however, we had nothing to lose. I wrote a prescription and marked it 'urgent' – he was to get a tablespoonful every two and a half hours throughout the twenty-four hours. Many years later his wife told me that Boots had had the medicine flown up specially since they had no stock in Edinburgh. I visited him every two or three days to replenish the drug. He gradually began to put on weight, his appearance began to improve and he was able to sit in a chair. After 4-6 weeks he had put on a stone in weight. I discussed his case with his wife and told her it was time he was seen again by the chest physician. She gave me his name, Dr Herzenhorn. The following day I phoned him and asked him to see a mutual patient. He asked the patient's name, I told him and he said he would get out his records. A few minutes later he said to me, 'Surely this patient must be dead.' I told him he was very much alive and had put on a stone in weight. I described my findings and treatment and he told me to send the patient up to see him by ambulance at the chest clinic. I duly did so and wrote a covering note. The following day the phone rang – 'Herzenhorn speaking, Lurie – it's a miracle! The latest chest X-ray shows no improvement compared with his last one, but there is definitely a clinical improvement and we'll take him in hand'. Harold attended the clinic regularly and new drugs were added to his regimen. When he was ambulant he would come to see me every week for streptomycin injections. Subsequently he underwent thoracic surgery to rest the lung.

I lost touch with Harold when I gave up the Dean Terrace surgery. A few years later, his wife phoned me asking if they could come to see me socially. When I saw Harold he looked hale and hearty, keen on gardening and critical of my own garden, of which he said 'Something should be done!' The following week I was invited up for supper – it was a joyful occasion. Sadly, however, it put me in mind of an earlier

time when I was unable to save a patient, a young girl of seventeen brought low by TB but still showing vestiges of beauty; she must have been a bonny lass before illness overtook her. I visited her weekly and although there was little I could do for her, she seemed to enjoy my visits. When she died I was very close to tears; not as yet a battle-hardened doctor.

A few years ago Harold's wife phoned me to say he was ill with cancer and he died shortly afterwards. At least he had had another forty years of good quality life. I phoned his widow two or three years ago to find how she was getting along, only to be told that she too had died. She had lived for Harold. Had she lost the will to live?

Self-praise is no commendation but I had been able to give him years of extra life, and there is an ancient saying in the *Midrash*, 'If you save one life you save the world, for every human being is a microcosm of the world'.

EPILOGUE

I chose medicine as a profession partly because friends and relatives were either doctors or medical or dental students, but also because of my mother's death. She was thirty-nine years of age when she died from hyperglycaemic coma. My father had begged her to see a doctor but she refused until it was too late. She had felt sorry for diabetic friends on insulin and yet they outlived her by thirty or forty years. Her death was so pointless, leaving a husband and five children behind her. I missed her very much. I was but fourteen years of age at the time. However, I had a most kind and wonderful father.

Throughout my years as a doctor I have recognised that one cannot always cure patients but one must do one's best and I have striven to live up to this aspiration. My patients were never only patients, they were friends as well.

Dr Philip Lurie graduated in Medicine from the University of Edinburgh and, until his retirement, practised as a GP in Edinburgh. He has been a Justice of the Peace since 1966.

THE FIRST TWO YEARS

by EDWARD GREEN

Knowing that there is such a 'one way' traffic amongst the Jewish Community from Edinburgh, our friends of long standing and our newer friends in Edinburgh have all raised the same two questions: why leave London and why choose Edinburgh? Perhaps I should start at the beginning. I was born and bred in St John's Wood, an affluent Jewish suburb in north west London. I remained at home until my father died when I moved across Regents Park to my own flat! Then approaching my 40th birthday, I was offered a very tempting position which involved a much bigger move to New York. I dithered; how could I relocate across 'the big pond' when crossing the boating lake in Regents Park had already been such an upheaval?

But move I did and with that came the realisation that there *was* a wide world out there and Jews were indeed a 'wandering people'. Life in New York proved to be totally different in some ways and yet so similar in others to the life I had known in London. I worked harder, socialised frenetically and lived at a faster pace, but the people and particularly the Jewish people I met were just the same, with all the same problems and concerns that I had become familiar with over the years. It was at this point that I realised that I could live elsewhere and that my life did not have to be limited to one square mile in London. My

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world felt as if it had suddenly expanded and that it would never be same again.

Maryla and I married while I was living in New York and fifteen months later, when we realised that we were to become parents, we felt we had to make a decision as to our future domain. I had already decided on a change of career and had resigned from my job. Maryla and I were then faced with the dilemma of staying where we were or moving on again. We soon reached the decision that, although life in the centre of Manhattan was most exciting and enjoyable for adults without family responsibilities, it was not a good place for a couple with a young child.

But where were we to go? Strange as it may appear, both Maryla and I reached agreement early on that returning to London was the option we wished to consider last. London has become a different place and appeared even more so from afar. It has become extremely busy but lacks the infrastructure to support the population, the city is choked with people and traffic, and violence has escalated and continues to rear its ugly head on the streets.

Maryla and I casually spoke of places near and far but nothing inspired us. Would we stay in New York after all or move elsewhere in

the States? We both hankered for the 'green hills of home'. And then one day, Maryla ventured 'What about Edinburgh?' I replied that it sounded all right and nothing more was said a few weeks. We both knew Edinburgh well, had travelled here often and loved the city. It seemed like the perfect choice.

Three weeks later, without much further discussion, we came up to look for a house and were lucky enough to find one immediately that suited us. A sealed bid was submitted (a completely new experience for us) and we found out that we had been successful on the day we drove back from the hospital after being told Freddie was on his way! It all seemed *besht*.

But why Edinburgh you may still ask? To us Edinburgh offers everything. It is quite the most beautiful city in Britain with majestic vistas in all directions and wonderful buildings at every turn. It offers a most attractive pace of life with a sobriety and formality that is to enviable. It offers our child the chance to grow up in a less competitive but more sophisticated environment where the emphasis is on culture, the arts and education and where aspiration for material things is not paramount.

Edinburgh has an added and most attractive bonus in its Jewish community. We have been made to

feel most welcome in this small but distinguished community where the word 'community' truly means something and this feeling permeates through every corner of the congregation. Its smallness undoubtedly creates its own problems and yet these 'problems' appear as trifles when compared to the problems of other congregations I have known. The synagogue is enveloping and spiritual, the members interesting and inviting but above all, giving of themselves. Maryla and I feel immensely fortunate to be part of it.

Two years have gone by amazingly fast, perhaps too fast. Although, I believe that a newcomer to Edinburgh never really, even after decades, becomes a native, we already feel settled and Edinburgh feels like home. We see our own future here and very much hope that more people will feel like us. If so, there may well be a revival in the fortunes of some of the smaller Jewish communities in the coming years.

Through the good offices of **The Edinburgh Star**, Maryla and I would like to take this opportunity together to thank everyone for their warm and hospitable welcome and for making us feel so very much a part of the Community.

Edward Green is a jeweller who previously worked for Asprey's in New York.

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A PESACH STORY

by EVELYN COWAN

The six-year-old boy in his Calderwood Lodge uniform sat at his Petite typewriter. Perspiration on his forehead, he studied the blank sheet in front of him. His parents had given him the toy for his birthday and his mother had taught him to type. Now his new ambition was to be like her and to write stories that would be published in books and magazines.

Painstakingly he began to type his first story. It was about a cleaning lady who took a job in the large house of an elderly Jewish widow. When the cleaner arrived on the first day she was shown round the house and warned about an upstairs cupboard she was never to open.

Some months later, it was *Pesach* and the cleaning lady was helping

clear away the *chometz* in time for the *Seder* night. Suddenly she burst into tears. The lady of the house sat her down in the kitchen and asked her what was wrong. Sadly the cleaner explained 'My little boy is starting school in the autumn and I haven't got enough money for his school clothes'. As she rose to continue her work, her employer hesitated for a moment and then said 'Come upstairs with me, I've something to show you'.

Taking a key from her pocket she opened up the secret cupboard and revealed its contents: a boy's school coat, a blazer, jumpers, shirts, shorts and a cap, all brand new and unworn. On the floor were three pairs of shoes. Now also in tears, the elderly lady said 'These belonged to

my little boy. Years ago he was knocked over by a car just before *Seder* night, not long before he was due to start school himself. They're yours to keep. Put them in your bag and take them home to your son. And let him wear them in good health'.

Satisfied, the young author removed the sheet of paper from his typewriter and took it with him to school. That year he won first prize in the *Pesach* story competition at Calderwood Lodge. But as he moved on to the High School of Glasgow, the Swiss School of Interpreting in Geneva, and Heriot-Watt University to complete an honours degree in modern languages, his literary ambitions began to take a back seat.

Later he went to live in London where he worked for several years as assistant to the then Member of Parliament and Board of Deputies President, Greville (now Lord) Janner. Finally, he moved over to the City where he became a merchant banker. Thus, it wasn't until the 1990's that his mind turned back to fulfilling those lifelong ambitions. After three years of hard work, he submitted his first novel, a political satire on life at Westminster, to the London publishers, Hodder & Stoughton. Fortunately, they were as enthusiastic about his efforts as Calderwood Lodge had been all those years before and last June, he signed a two-book contract with them.

Editor's Note: 'Brass Monkeys', Mark B. Cohen's first novel, came out in hardback earlier this year and will be published in paperback in time for *Chanukah*. His second book, 'The Blindfold Show', about a failing merchant bank, will be published next year.

Mark Cohen is the son of well-known Scottish Jewish author Evelyn Cowan, who died earlier this year. An obituary for Evelyn Cowan was published in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 10 April 1998.

Hermione

Or A Winter's Tale

by EVA NEUBURG-ERDELYI

Defamed, dishonoured, blameless put to shame,
She stood before her husband undismayed.
From him she cherished, honoured and obeyed
She suffered this insulting of her name.

Thus stood my people, guiltlessly accused
By the mad ruler of his realm and race;
Condemned to death, and worse than death: disgrace,
Doomed to extinction, ruthlessly abused.

Time mows the grass of crime inveterate;
Hermione, turned marble, comes to life -
The king in tears begs pardon of his wife
And she relents : repentance clears the slate.

Perdita kneels, the daughter of a king,
And Winter's Tale brings Happy End in Spring.

Eva Neuburg-Erdelyi has been a regular contributor to The Edinburgh Star. After almost 50 years in Edinburgh, she went on aliyah in 1987.

EDINBURGH CELEBRATES ISRAEL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

by PHILIP MASON

On the eve of 29th April 1998 (5th Iyar 5758), exactly 50 years to the day after Israel had gained its independence in 1948, 140 members and friends enjoyed an evening of celebration in the Communal Hall. The Hall had been superbly decorated by Senorah Judah the day before with Israeli flags and bunting. A full programme of activities had been organised during the previous two months by a sub-committee made up of representatives from many groups within the Community. In order to give ample time to each activity, an evening of two halves was organised around the *Yom Ha'atzmaut* Service. Within the first half, starting at the early time of 6 p.m., choice was of the order. Everyone could either watch an excellent video, kindly sent to us by the Israeli Embassy or stroll around the two extensive Poster Exhibitions. Sufficient time was allotted in the first half for the video to be shown twice in order to allow everyone who wanted to take in both the video and posters.

A central feature of the Israel 50 Event was the Art Exhibition by the *Cheder* Children. To mark the 50th year of Israel's Independence, all *Cheder* children were invited to create a poster or a poem on any Israeli theme. The final result was above what most expected. Colourful and very artistic sets of posters together with a very well-illustrated poem were received from 12 pupils – in fact one pupil, Jonathan Danzig, entered six. Judging the 17 posters and poem presented Robin Spark with a difficult task. The final result was announced during the evening's celebrations – prizes were

awarded to Amanda Hyams, Abigail Blumsohn, Joanna Seckl and Alice Kelpie. They were presented to the four winners at the *Cheder* Prize Giving on June 21st. Congratulations however are due to all the entrants – each of those who didn't win a prize was presented with special 'Israel 50' mug.



1948 ~ 1998

ISRAEL

POSTER: TONY GILBERT

A second Exhibition – a Poster Exhibition – depicted the Edinburgh Jewish Community's link with Israel over the past 50 years. Both sides of 11 poster boards (ie 22 sides in all), bedecked with Israeli flags, were filled with contributions, information, reminiscences and photographs kindly sent in from close to home (mainly from Edinburgh) and far afield (especially from Israel). Everyone was able to see how some 60 families from Edinburgh, like those from so many other communities throughout the Diaspora,

left to help Israel build the modern state we know today. It took immense resolve, courage and sacrifice – the period immediately after independence was one of austerity – and yet within Israel's first three and a half years the Jewish population of 650,000 more than doubled – in relative terms, the

single biggest migration of the century. Such resolve and courage by members of the Edinburgh Community was not only evident in the early years after independence – several posters recorded the help and assistance given by many young members to Israel at the time of the 1967 and 1973 Wars – assistance with essential tasks on *kibbutzim*, as civilians within the Army and one young member of the Community, Maurice Kaye, who sacrificed his life fighting for the State of Israel in 1973. In recent and thankfully more peaceful times such close links between Edinburgh and Israel have continued – in fact, many posters gave testimony to the fact that they have been strengthened. They vividly showed that the youth of our Community have continued to visited

Israel for many different reasons – to celebrate their *Bar Mitzvah*, to study at Israeli universities, to study at yeshivas, to work on *kibbutzim*, to attend leadership training courses, to attend *Ulpan* schemes etc. As a consequence, two of the main aims of the fledgling state 50 years ago continue to be fulfilled – to help young Jews sustain their identity and to acquaint them with their heritage.

An aim of the Poster Exhibition was to convey and illustrate not just the varied personal links developed

by members of the Edinburgh Jewish Community but also the strong and active links of many of its communal organisations. Posters revealed the immense amount of effort and time put in over the years by Edinburgh WIZO, Edinburgh Friends of Israel, Scottish Friends of Alyn, Jewish Childs Day and *Habonim Dror*. Although the latter group is no longer active in Edinburgh, an excellent poster sent to us by *Habonim Dror* was included in the Exhibition to remind everyone of the impact this organisation had on young people in the years following independence – so many were stimulated by it to go on aliyah.

Following the *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* Service, greatly enhanced, as usual, by the Synagogue Choir led by David Mendelssohn, everyone enjoyed the superb buffet reception set out in the Communal Hall. A

wide range of Israeli foods and salads were prepared by ladies from different communal organisations, especially Edinburgh WIZO and the Ladies Communal Centre Committee – our thanks are very much due to Hilary Rifkind and Leila Goldberg who organised the Reception.

At the end of the Reception, the President, Dr N A Oppenheim introduced David Capatanchik who then gave a relaxed, informal discourse of light and amusing reminiscences relating to his very close links with Israel over many, many years.

Following the Israel 50 Raffle Draw, kindly organised by Clarice Osborne and Eve Oppenheim, the evening concluded with a beautiful and inspiring rendition of several Israeli Songs by Shirley and Peter Bennett – especially 'Yerushalyim Zel Zahav' – it provided a truly mem-

orable finish to the evening – very many thanks to both Shirley and Peter.

The goal of the Israel 50 sub-committee was to achieve something different, something special for a very special evening. Our hope is that we achieved that goal and that the 140 adults and children who came enjoyed the activities and celebrations that were organised. *Mazaltov* to Israel on this momentous occasion – a dream just 50 years ago which has been gradually translated into reality – a transformation in which members of the Edinburgh Jewish Community have clearly played a significant part.

Dr Philip Mason chaired the Sub-Committee of the Council of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation which organised the Community's celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN THEIR HISTORICAL CONTEXT

by REBEKAH GRONOWSKI

Edinburgh was privileged recently to host the International Dead Sea Scrolls Conference. The event took place at the Faculty of Divinity at Edinburgh University on 5th and 6th May 1998. Although primarily intended for an audience of distinguished academics in this particular field of study (there were delegates at the Conference from several different countries and thirty academic institutions from all over the world), the Jewish communities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and students from the Faculty of Divinity were also present. The Conference to be a very interesting and lively event. It was fortunate in that it coincided with the opening week of the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibition at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow which runs until the end of August. Delegates were invited to a private viewing and reception hosted by Mr Julian Spalding, Director of the Glasgow Museums.

The Conference itself was organised into four plenary ses-

sions, during which distinguished experts delivered papers on their particular field of research, followed by question sessions. Shorter papers were also delivered on various topics in smaller, seminar sessions. Lectures and discussions focused on the ways in which the discovery of the Scrolls has shed light on our understanding of the Hebrew Bible, Judaism and Jewish Law and the beginnings of early Christianity.

In the first plenary session Prof. E P Sanders spoke on 'The Dead Sea Sect and other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps and Differences' and this was followed by a seminar convened by Professor Geza Vermes who, this year, gave the Gunning Lectures (entitled 'Jesus the Jew and the Dead Sea Scrolls') concurrently with the Conference. In the second plenary session Prof. Eugene Ulrich spoke of 'The Qumran Biblical Scrolls – the Scriptures of Late Second Temple Judaism' and in the third plenary session Prof. Lawrence Schiffman spoke on 'Halakah and Sectarianism in the Qumran Scrolls'.

In the final plenary session Prof. J Collins spoke of 'The Nature of Messianism in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls'.

The Conference was drawn to a close by a Reception hosted by the Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, Professor Duncan Forrester, which gave everyone who had taken part an opportunity to mingle socially, renew acquaintances, make new friendships and discuss their impressions. This was followed by dinner in the Faculty's Rainy Hall and the final event was a superb concert of chamber music given in the Martin Hall by some extremely accomplished young musicians from the City of Edinburgh Music School, a fitting end to a most enjoyable and stimulating Conference.

Rebekah Gronowski is a mature student at the Faculty of Divinity and is studying for combined degrees of BA/BD in Religious Studies. She has two grown up sons and five grandchildren, all of whom live in England and think it is great that Gran has gone 'back to school'!

SCROLLS FROM THE DEAD SEA EXHIBITION

KELVINGROVE ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM, GLASGOW

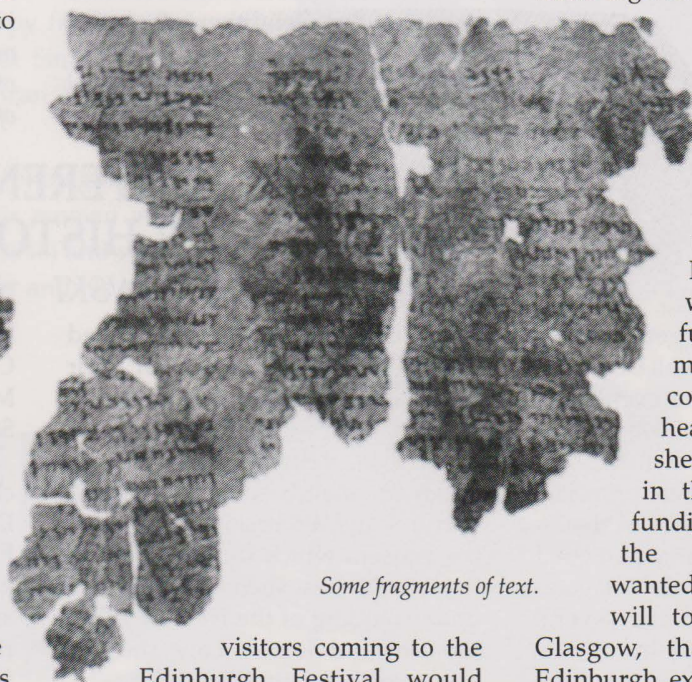
by TIMOTHY LIM

The Dead Sea Scrolls are in Scotland! If we were also to believe the publicity surrounding the exhibit, we might unwittingly think that this was the first ever visit of the Scrolls to Scotland and that Glasgow had been specially chosen to host this exhibit, along with Washington, New York, San Francisco and the Vatican. In fact, a generation ago the Scrolls toured the British Isles and Edinburgh hosted an exhibit at the National Library of Scotland. This time around, Glasgow is lucky to have the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit.

Now it may seem churlish to question the claim of Glasgow's publicity machinery. After all, the Scrolls are in Scotland and we should all rejoice at this event. Indeed, we celebrate together with Glasgow and its Jewish community, to whom the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) did a special favour on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. As the only British venue, it was indeed a coup, and those who have seen a few Dead Sea Scrolls exhibits will be impressed by the stunning displays that the IAA and Kelvingrove have put together. 'The best I have seen' one prominent Scrolls scholar told me. However, the record must be set straight: Edinburgh hosted the first Scrolls exhibit in Scotland and it was unlucky not to do so again.

About a year ago, as we were beginning to plan the International Dead Sea Scrolls Conference that was held recently at the University of Edinburgh (see report above), it was suggested that we should perhaps try to bring the Scrolls back to Edinburgh to coincide with this

event. I approached Dr Adolfo Roitman, who was a student with me at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is now Curator of the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, about this proposal and he gave it his enthusiastic support. The plan was to bring a Scrolls exhibit to the Royal Museum in Chambers Street from May to August 1998. The starting date in May would have coincided with our Conference and



Some fragments of text.

visitors coming to the Edinburgh Festival would also have had an opportunity to visit the exhibit in August.

On 27 August 1997, as a colleague and I were on our way to meet our collaborators at the National Museum to firm up arrangements, our discussions were pre-empted by the announcement that the Scrolls were going to Glasgow. *The Scotsman*, for example, gave its half-page article the headline "'Coup of a lifetime" will bring Dead Sea Scrolls to Scotland'. We had not known about Glasgow's plans and our Glasgow counterparts had not been aware of ours. As we later discovered, Glasgow had been negotiating

with the IAA while we had been doing the same with the Israel Museum: the channels of communication between the IAA and the Israel Museum are clearly as blocked as those between Edinburgh and Glasgow, although they are even in the same city.

After Glasgow's announcement in the summer, we considered whether it might still be possible to mount a concurrent exhibit in Edinburgh to coincide with the the

Conference. A joint application from the University of Edinburgh, the Museum of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland was sent to the Director of the Israel Museum. Meanwhile, bad news about funding for Glasgow's museums and galleries continued to attract headlines in the broadsheets and tabloids. It was in the context of severe funding cuts, and because the National Museum wanted to show some good will to their colleagues in

Glasgow, that the idea of an Edinburgh exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls was finally shelved.

It is not simply from a concern to set the record straight that I relate this background, but also to point out that while the Kelvingrove exhibit of nine fragmentary texts found in the caves by the Dead Sea, and accompanying silver coins, pots, sandals, and other artifacts, is well worth the price of entry, it has to be said that anyone hoping to see complete scrolls might well be disappointed. The 'Scrolls' displayed at Kelvingrove are fragments more than scrolls – some of the most important fragments of text to be sure, but for the casual visitor frag-

ments are not as visually impressive as complete scrolls. In fact, it is a smaller version of the travelling exhibit that went to the Library of Congress and New York Public Library.

Although events did not turn out as planned, it can still be asked (hypothetically) whether a second Edinburgh exhibit would have been better than the one in Glasgow. On one point at least it would have surpassed the Kelvingrove exhibit: visitors would have seen complete

scrolls rather than fragments. In my view, it is one of the great missed opportunities for Scotland that Edinburgh was offered and turned down five texts from the Israel Museum collection, one of which, the *Habakkuk Peshar*, is the one of the 'jewels' of the Dead Sea Scrolls collection.

Dr Timothy Lim has recently been promoted to a Readership in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

With Compliments from
JOHN AND HAZEL COSGROVE

The Food Column

By Shirley Bennett

Don't ask me why, but when Peter and I were in Switzerland at the end of January for our annual ski holiday, I thought of the lunch club! There I was sitting in an open air café high up a mountain, snow all around and drinking great coffee and eating – now wait for it – the most wonderful warm *Apfel Kuchen*. The helping they gave me was so large that I asked if they could keep some for my lunch!

Apfel Kuchen is a speciality of the region. It is eaten with lashings of cream. When I got home, it took me several attempts to get the recipe right but I got there and here it is:

Apfel Kuchen

Pastry

4 oz butter (or margarine)
8 oz plain flour
Pinch of salt
Enough water to bind
(about 1/2 cup)

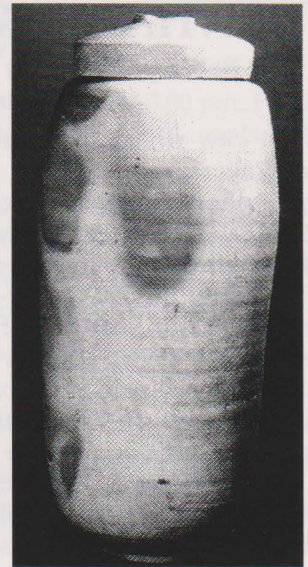
Filling

2 lb peeled and cored cooking apples
coarsely grated.
2 oz brown castor sugar

1 tsp cinnamon
1 oz fine matzo meal
1 small egg beaten
1 tsp grated lemon

Put flour and salt into a bowl. Rub in butter (or margarine) until the mixture has a bread crumb consistency. Bind with the water roll out the pastry. Place the pastry into an 8" loose bottom baking tin, leaving enough for the sides. Mix grated apples with all the other ingredients then squash down onto the pastry. Place a few blobs of butter (or margarine) on top then bake in a medium oven for 30-40 minutes. And serve with plenty of cream!

We have just returned from visiting good friends in Manchester. Ann Super was hosting a 'big' birthday party and her cooking is legendary. To give an example, there were 21 desserts (and I only managed to try 17 of them!). Anne grew up in Poland during the war years where, as a child, she literally starved and, as a result of her experiences, food means a lot to



The scrolls were stored in specially made pottery jars.



her. Herring is one of her specialities. Try mixing some *pickled herring with sour cream* and chives – very tasty! I shall have some recipes from her in following issues.

Not too many of my friends husbands can cook. The exception is Frank Abramson who is from Edinburgh and now lives in London. Here is his recipe for

Leeks cooked in Red Wine

Choose 6-8 small leeks and clean them. Slice them lengthwise. Heat 3-4 tablespoonfuls of oil in a pan. Put in the leeks side by side and turn them when coloured. Pour a cup of red wine over the leeks, add a little salt. Cover with a lid and cook for 7-10 mins until tender. Serve hot or cold. Leeks cooked this way are particularly delicious with fish or chicken.

Happy Cooking!

WHAT NEWS OF THE WAR?

by R Bober, published by Hamish Hamilton, 1998, 210 pp, £13.99

reviewed by Ros Abramsky

A stylish city, where the smell of coffee lingers, and artists and writers wile away the hours in streetside cafes to the languid strains of Edith Piaf. A city that aspires to lead the world in chic, savoir-faire and romance. And, yes, some of that excitement and magic adheres to a handful of French men and women who labour to satisfy some of those aspirations, craftspeople who can turn out beautiful, well-fitting made-to-measure suits that please the most exacting of individuals and store buyers.

Under the close eye of Monsieur Albert, and his wife Lea, three machinists take the pieces of cloth carefully cut out for them, deftly line them up and bind them into garments that can turn a boy into a bridegroom, a gangling youth into a credible lover – a man into a *mensch*, as they might themselves have thought of it. Then they turn them over to the pressers to complete the job.

As readers, we are privileged to be invited to spend some hours with the characters that make up this productive band. We hear them speak to each other. Not in the cultured tones of Moliere and Racine, but in a language that, while basically French, owes more to the soft tones of Yiddish they learnt at their parents' knees. For a few of them, such as Leon the presser, who moonlights as a player with the avant-garde Yiddish theatre, the language of the *shtetl* is a more living reality.

Through the banter of the workshop in the Rue Turenne, punctuated by the constant clacking of the machines, their stories gradually unfold. Now there is the relative stability they enjoyed in Paris just after the war. But they all live in the shadow of what went before.

Leon is one of the lucky ones. When his son was born in 1942, he was circumcised straight away, in spite of the danger of attracting the attention of the Vichy police by

summoning a *mohel*. Jacqueline, a non-Jewish finisher, thinks he was crazy.

'Since that's how they recognise Jewish boys, whatever made you have him circumcised?'

'Quite so', says Leon.

'It was precisely because we didn't know what would become of him that he had to be made a Jew as soon as possible.'

Fortunately Leon and his family survived, and his son Sam is soon to be packed off to infant school so his mother can concentrate on a new arrival. Charles was not so fortunate. Having given up hope that his family will ever return, he is too dispirited to claim back the flat that he was turned out of. But even after Leon and Albert hire a lawyer to effect the claim in the face of organisations set up to prevent such repossessions, Charles does not move back.

Instead he takes a room in the hotel opposite. Leon sometimes passes down the street, but he does not look up.

'I'm too afraid I may see Charles staring out of the window of his room, watching and waiting for someone to appear on the second floor of the building opposite.'

But not even then will life leave Charles in the peace where he has found a space to grieve. One night, he banefully fends off the somewhat crazed advances of Mme. Lea, married to his boss and mother of two young children. Under other circumstances, one feels, the outcome might have been different.

The elder of those two children has apparently 'ghosted' the book, coming out from behind the older characters whom he enlists as mouthpieces to narrate the closing scenes, set in the early 80s. Now grown up and a photographer, he visits M. Charles in a retirement home for old Jews. The only per-

sonal item in the room is a target depicting war criminals: Hitler, Mussolini, Petain, Goering, Goebbels, Laval, Doriot ... and some more Charles has to identify for the younger man. Charles has a basket full of cloth balls beside him, which he regularly aims at the Aunt Sally, sometimes downing it. But it always jumps back up.

Not all is gloom however. How could we despair in the face of the irrepressible Madame Paulette, who delights in keeping the workshop up to date constantly with the news of stage and screen. We hear how in the past she had gasped with excitement as she pressed the costumes of thespians who popped into the little shop she had once run with the husband who later abandoned her and the business, jealous perhaps of her constant fascination with the stars.

And then there is Madame Sarah, who augments her meagre living as a hawker by doing a little match-making on the side. Leon playfully points out that 'your list of those eligible for marriage smells of soap, Mme. Sarah'. Silence fell when the retort came back: 'did you prefer it when it was the soap that smelled of those eligible for marriage, M. Leon?'

There is indeed nowhere to go but up. And things do get better. Idealistic Jewish youths give hundreds of orphaned children a new lease of life at summer camps, preparing them for schools where at last a Jewish name does not invite a death sentence. There are memorials and reunions. Eventually the author takes pictures of the some of dwellings from which their loved ones were plucked before they are demolished. A few anti-semitic slogans also find their way onto his film before they are erased.

Nevertheless, I think the the author is telling us, in this charmingly touching but slightly disjointed narrative, that in spite of the casualties, mental and physical still in our midst, we can at last begin to move on from a time when 'news of the war' seemed like a pleasant distraction from enduring the 'peace'.

In Memoriam



ROSA COWEN
5.9.1908 - 20. 5.1998

Rosa Cowen's death is a great loss to the Edinburgh Jewish Community, particularly to her immediate family of whom I am privileged to be a member.

Born in Edinburgh to Myer and Priscilla Oppenheim she was a member of two distinguished Edinburgh families, the Oppenheims and the Rosenheims. She was the fourth of six children and spent

most of her childhood and adolescent years in Glasgow, returning to her native Edinburgh as the bride of Isaac Cowen almost 70 years ago. She entered into the communal life of Edinburgh almost immediately, serving on the committee of the Ladies Benevolent Society, but it was not until 1945 when the Ladies Communal Hall Committee was formed that she found her real niche and abiding enthusiasm. She served on this committee for many years in every capacity, ending up as one of its most successful chairmen. Under her guidance large sums of money were raised to sustain first the original Communal Hall across the road and then the present Communal Hall. She also served for my years as the First Lady of Edinburgh when her husband Isaac was President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Her elegance and graciousness were notable and her hospitality was renowned. She was a perfectionist in everything she undertook and this was reflected both in her

work and in her home. Her many friends will miss her and if I may add a personal note, I shall never forget the many kindnesses to me and mine. Truly a woman of worth, a real *Eshet Chayil*.

She is survived by her son Mickey, daughter-in-law Carole and three grandchildren, of all of whom she was proud.

Freda Riffkin

Alec Rubenstein, who delivered the *Hesbed* at the funeral, writes:

'Rosie Cowen, together with the late Annie Lindey and joined later by the late Sylvia Lewis (daughter of Annie Lindey and mother of Carole Cowen) were directly responsible for setting up the Communal Hall Committee which was formed in 1955. She was no 'push over'. I do believe that she ruled with a rod of iron for 15 years... I have no doubt that we all have our memories of her ever-smiling face, her cheery word and, dare I say it, 'a word to the wise'. The heartfelt sympathy and condolences of the entire community go to Mickey and his family.'



NAHUM (NOEL) ORDMAN
8.10.1919 - 25.2.1998

My brother Nahum was the son of the Rev. M. B. Ordman who came to Edinburgh in 1927 and served the Jewish community for over 20 years as *Shochet*, Teacher, Reader and *Mohel*, but it was as teacher of the

two senior classes of the *Cheder* that my father will be remembered by many of his surviving pupils.

The Jewish community of those days had five butcher shops, three baker shops, two grocers and a dairy. Families averaged five or more children and so youth predominated. Our family consisted of Lionel, Rita, Nahum, Harold (myself) and later on Hannah (Girlie) - the only Scottish lass amongst us.

I would like to express the feelings of gratitude which we exiles, who, in our youth, were nurtured by the education system and by the communal life of the Jewish community which prevailed in Edinburgh at that time. Although we 'took the road south into England' to pursue our careers, we are filled with admiration for the many Jewish parents (including my

own) who struggled to send their children to those excellent schools and colleges and to University in Edinburgh. I feel more than a touch of sadness at the effects of our departure on the Jewish Community.

Nahum went from Sciennes School (where the *Cheder* classes were held in the evenings) to George Heriot's School, which, in my time, was attended by 60 Jewish boys. He soon made his mark winning bursaries and playing a leading part in the life of the school. He headed the school Literary and Debating Society and won the prestigious 'Morton Prize' for Public Speaking. This was to contribute to his subsequent career. Although he graduated as a civil engineer, it was in the planning and implementing of major public works and schemes, that he achieved his greatest

success. I was destined to be known as 'Nahum's brother', to bask in his glory and to be embarrassed by not to achieving the same success. His subsequent career, which was outlined in an obituary in *The Times* (published on 4th March 1988), included wartime service in the Royal Navy, where he became a Lieut. Commander on Mountbatten's staff in Ceylon.

I will now attempt to sketch the life of the Jewish youth in Edinburgh prior to 1939, the outbreak of the last war. I suppose we 'old ones' look back to the days of our youth as being the 'halcyon' days. I remember, although I was too young to be involved, an abundance of organised activities. To name but a few; the Jewish Young Literary Society (The Young Lit.), which also ran picnics and outings and put on stage shows, provided recruits for the Senior Literary Society which, I am happy to note, is still thriving. The University Jewish Students Society which brought students from South Africa, the U.S.A., and

the Continent into contact with local students and the Jewish Community at large. Subsequently, Maccabi swallowed up the 'Young Lit' amid protests. It met in premises at the top of Argyle Place where our family lived. Our house became the meeting place for Jewish Youth and many surprise parties would arise. Together with Lionel and Rita Nahum played a lead in all this, becoming President of both the 'Lit' and the Students' Society.

Then came the WAR!!! We of the younger generation were left stranded in a wilderness. Naty, Berl, Jack, Rudolph and myself, with others, were reduced to going for walks, playing poker and ogling at the 'lassies' from afar – but that is another story. I conclude this brief obituary notice for my dear brother Nahum with an expression of appreciation for the cultural heritage bestowed on us and those of my generation by the Jewish Community in Edinburgh.

Harold Ordman
Leeds

According to the obituary in *The Times*, Nahum Ordman won a bursary to study Civil Engineering at Edinburgh University, and joined the Admiralty's civil engineering department shortly after graduation. In 1942 he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy and posted to Lord Mountbatten's staff in Ceylon, where he stayed until 1948, working in engineering and intelligence. He joined the Port of London Authority and rose quickly through the organisation, becoming the first Chairman of its Consultancy arm in 1970. He was for many years a first class member of the Smeatonian Society of Civil Engineers, serving as its President in 1994. In November 1994 he unveiled a plaque in Westminster Abbey commemorating John Smeaton, the great engineer best known for building the Eddystone Lighthouse.

Noel Ordman was also a Freeman of the City of London and a Fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineers. He is survived by his wife, Marie Louise, a son and a daughter.



SYDNEY SOLOMON

Died 12.12.1997 aged 89

Sydney Solomon was born in Leeds, the eldest of a family of seven brothers and sisters. The family moved to Glasgow shortly after he

was born and he lived there for nearly 30 years. He married Minnie (née Love) in 1939 in Edinburgh and lived here for the rest of his life – for 40 years in Marchmont Crescent and, after his wife's death, in Strathearn Road.

Sydney served in the REME during the Second World War and saw action in the Middle East. He was an upholsterer to trade and continued to work as an upholsterer until he retired. During his married life, he and his wife also ran a Kosher Boarding House and many out of town students spent enjoyable stays there.

A very keen sportsman, both as player and spectator, he coached

Edinburgh Maccabi Football Team. In his earlier years he was also well known for his eccentric dancing and gymnastic routines. Playing bowls was another of his passions.

In his later years he became a very keen bridge player and liked to combine this with various cruising holidays. He was a member of many Bridge Clubs and of Lodge Solomon, where for many years he held the position of Bible Bearer.

He attended *Shul* regularly and was well known in the community. He will be sadly missed by his family and by his many Jewish and non-Jewish friends.

Martin Solomon
Leeds

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I write to congratulate the Editor and Editorial Board for the most enjoyable and readable edition of February 1998. I feel the correct balance between our community news and views and national and international affairs has been struck.

Edinburgh was well represented by glimpses into the past, by the photograph of the Lurie family and the review of a new edition David Daiches's book 'In Two Worlds'. The present is excellently covered by Freda Riffkin, a worthy successor to Vicki Lowrie, covering the many activities of the community, and the future by pieces on the provision of a new Hillel House, the proposal for provision of Sheltered Housing and the controversial question of the Mikvah. Even the international content had an Edinburgh connection with the article by Suzanne Glass, Micheline Brannan's report on Sir Malcolm Rifkind's lecture and Lady Cosgrove and Lord Caplan's prominence in the meeting of International Jewish Lawyers.

We in Edinburgh, with our small community, have much of which to be proud. Our 'Star' shines brightly in the many parts of the world

where the magazine is read by our scattered ex-residents. Let us hope it continues to proclaim our many achievements for many years to come.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Joyce Cram
18 Swan Spring Avenue
Edinburgh EH10 6NJ

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for the two last issues of **The Edinburgh Star** which reached me in the Pinhas Rosen Home. I am delighted with the way you are keeping to a highly literate level and balanced choice of articles. I liked your outspoken December editorial and sympathise with it. There is, however, the valid argument that the Jewish people only survived and are still surviving in the Diaspora, because of their strict code of law and the resulting way of life. As to the obsolete passages in our prayer book I confess that I usually skip them but they do add a historical dimension which I should miss if they were omitted from the synagogue service.

The Pinhas Rosen Home is inhabited by non-observant German speaking Jews from Central Europe,

but we do have *Kiddush* on Fridays and holidays. Last year I also attended a very enjoyable *Seder* in the Home. Since my arrival here a year ago, I have been leading a group for English reading and conversation which meets once a week and have given readings and talks in German from time to time. The last one was on the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic and now I am thinking of a lecture on Herzl's 'Altneuland', the dream and the reality, 99 years after its publication.

In your last issue I was particularly interested in the Benjamin Natanyahu interview and in the article 'Israel at 50'. I thought Micheline's review of the enlarged edition of 'Two Worlds' was excellent.

Although the days of my annual visits to Edinburgh are, unfortunately, over, I try to keep in touch with friends and am always delighted to receive good news from the Community. Warm congratulations and best wishes from your long-standing contributor and old friend.

Eva Erdelyi
Aluf-David 185
Ramat-Gan 52222, Israel

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Dear Sir

If any readers are contemplating a trip to Poland, but, in light of recent history (and perhaps some current events) are uncertain of what they will find there, may I encourage them to include a visit to the Synagogue in Warsaw. They will undoubtedly receive a warm welcome. The *Nozyk Shul*, located at 6 Twarda Street in the centre of the city, is the sole synagogue in Warsaw to survive the Nazi occupation, though it was damaged by fire in February 1996.

On a recent business trip to Poland, I took the opportunity to seek out the synagogue on *Shabbat*. It was a surprise to find a children's play area outside, filled with slides and roundabouts and the same toys which can be found in any Edinburgh playground. This suggests that for some people, Jews do have a future in Poland.

The congregation on the day consisted of about 25 men, with a

dozen or so women in the balcony. Though many of the men were in their 70s and 80s, a substantial number were much younger. I do not speak Yiddish or Polish, and the older men could speak little English, but we somehow managed to converse. They were most interested in where my family came from (although in my case they came from Latvia and Russia rather than Poland). At the beginning of the service I was shown where *talisim* were kept and found a Singer's *Siddur*, donated by a member of the Hamburger family from Manchester. The service itself was conducted in the traditional *Ashkenazi* style.

I was honoured with an *aliya* and invited to join a *kiddush* after the service along with visitors from Israel and the United States. There were also representatives of a number of bodies attempting to improve what is left of Jewish life in Poland. The latter would welcome

the encouragement that visitors can bring.

Yours sincerely

(Dr) Howard Kahn
27 Blinkbonny Road
Edinburgh
EH4 3HY

Dear Sir

Do any of your readers know anything about a Rabbi Siskin, who was in Edinburgh around 1915? His son, Rabbi Dr Edgar E Siskin, lives in Jerusalem.

We have had an enquiry about Rabbi Siskin from Eilat in Israel.

With thanks,

Best wishes,

Harvey L Kaplan
Director
Scottish Jewish Archives Centre
Garnethill Synagogue
127 Hill Street
Glasgow G3 6UB

S U P P O R T

The Edinburgh Star

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