

THE EDINBURGH

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**Edinburgh hosts
Holocaust Memorial Day**

**We interview
Rabbi David Rose**

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



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The Edinburgh Star

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Girl with Yellow Star
by Marianne Grant

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Editorial

Since our last edition, we have started and sort of finished a war with Iraq. A war which, depending on your views was to rid the world of a tyrant, find and remove weapons of mass destruction, achieve a change of regime or secure a supply of oil for the United States. We fought this war with a clinical precision only made possible by Global Positioning satellites, unmanned spy planes, computers, precision guided missiles the Internet and a host of other state of the art technological widgets. So what did this achieve? Well we failed to find any weapons of mass destruction, the tyrant, although no longer in power is still at large. We are struggling to find the basis for a new regime because many local officials are corrupt and the whole region is a hotbed of complex tribal entities coupled with strong religious influence. So what have we achieved so far? A supply of oil for the United States?

One benefit of the war is to remove a potential threat to Israel where for so long we have been asking how long the terrible carnage can go on. Does the cycle of revenge and counter revenge endlessly revolve? As I write, we have something called a 'road map' devised by many countries under the leadership of the United States. We all know about road maps having used or misused them many times. It's easy really, first we decide where we are going then we need to know where we are starting from and for the bit in between, we then pick one of the many combinations of roads that will take us from the start to the end. Does that relate to the Israel/Palestine situation? Well it can, but first there needs to be agreement on where everyone is going, a Palestinian state? Yes that seems to be on the agenda. Security for Israel? The Palestinian leadership seem to allude to that but can they deliver with the continued prevalence of fundamentalist extremists? Then there is the issue of Jerusalem. We shall see. Sharon has for the first time suggested that there would be withdrawal from some settlements. The parties are talking to each other and that must by recent standards, be considered as progress. Lets all hope

and pray that we see more.

In April, we welcomed Rabbi David Rose to Edinburgh. Rabbi Rose has quickly risen in the affections of our community. He is a regular visitor to the Lunch Club, he attends the meetings of the Council of Christians and Jews and has already been elected as co-chair. He regularly visits sick congregants and entertains students and others at his home. Classes are now available to enhance our Jewish knowledge. It is nice to be reminded of the benefits in having a full time resident Rabbi and particularly one who is determined to see Edinburgh strengthen and progress as a vibrant if small community. Rabbi Rose is well qualified in the use of today's technologies and we are already receiving regular e-mails from him. In this issue, Ian Shein interviews Rabbi Rose.

I sometimes wonder at the compatibility of a very traditional religion and technology. I recently came across the thought provoking story of Shimon Bitan, an orthodox Jew, who was seen with his mobile phone held against the Western Wall so that a relative in France could say a prayer at the holy site. Shall we soon be seeing a virtual minyan?

But what of our Edinburgh community? In the last issue, we published a number of articles giving a variety of views on our community and some insight to the national issues. I thought this subject would be controversial and would attract a lot of comment but have to admit some disappointment at the small level of response reaching the editors desk. We are pleased to publish an article from Maurice Naftalin giving some insight to the activities of the small but active Reform group in Edinburgh. It would be good to reach out to find some way of including this group in more aspects of our community and that is a challenge for our secular and religious leadership.

If there is one event that links all my topics it is the honour given to Edinburgh as the host for this year's

Holocaust Day events. These horrific events which occurred over half a century ago were perpetrated by a tyrannical regime headed by a dictator who had a purist view of his people to the exclusion of other races especially Jews. Some may criticise the power of America as exercised in Iraq but today we have instant worldwide communications, which are independent of government control using satellite communication and especially the Internet. We have an active investigative press and a powerful superpower who, whatever its critics may say, claims to have a moral agenda imbedded in its global policy. There are still tyrannical regimes and Iraq was one but today we can act when we want to. The interesting question is to ask the circumstance in which we want to.

The moving and superbly staged events of Holocaust day are reviewed extensively in this issue with their recurring message. "Thou shalt not be a perpetrator, thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a bystander."

Peter A Bennett

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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Judith Sischy

Irony, is it not, that on the day the editorial board of the STAR decided to include an article on Holocaust Memorial Day in its next edition, war was about to break out in Iraq. The first words I had heard on the radio that day were: 'The countdown is virtually over' – that was 17 March 2003.

The year had begun with memories of an earlier war, as Edinburgh prepared to host the National Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2003. The third annual commemorative event in the UK was to be organised by the City of Edinburgh Council, the Home Office and the Scottish Executive. Together they planned, not only the commemorative ceremony in the Usher Hall, but also an ambitious programme which began in November 2002 and would continue until March 2003. The theme for 2003 was Children and the Holocaust.

The programme included a national essay competition for schools, a visit to Auschwitz / Birkenau by a group of 24 young people from Edinburgh, the production of an education pack for schools, a youth theatre production at the Traverse Theatre, a Scottish wide youth conference, a young people's music commemoration and a candlelight procession to the Holocaust memorial stone in Princes Street Gardens. Dr Phillip Mason, President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, was a member of the HMD working group.

A highlight of the programme was the formal commemoration event, held in the Usher Hall on the evening of 27 January. It was not a service, nor a concert nor an entertainment, although elements of all were present. It was more a story, a true story, told by young people from schools in Edinburgh, illustrated by music, song, poetry, readings, visual images and photographs. Little did we expect to be so moved by the experience which followed.

Sitting in the Usher Hall, we were taken on the journey of the Holocaust. The evening began with the Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon. David Blunkett, introducing the event as a testament to the children and the young people who died in the Holocaust. 1.5 million. A figure starkly inscribed in black squares on all the literature. Over 1.5 million children from across Europe were murdered under the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945. It was touching to see David Blunkett's fingers deftly moving along his braille, as he paid tribute to 'those ordinary individuals who when faced with choice, chose to stand up to prejudice, hatred and racism and to help others'.

The pictures staring from the programme focused on the suffering of the children. We see terror on their faces, fear in their eyes and despair in their meagre bodies. Their tragic

stories leap out from the drawings that were preserved from the concentration camps. In the beautifully presented resource list, reference is made to the June 2001 issue of The Edinburgh STAR, journal of The Edinburgh Jewish Community, as it contained several accounts and personal reflections on the commemorative event held that year. Reference is also made to Edinburgh's Jack Ronder, author of *The Lost Tribe* (1980) which tells the story of Lithuanian Jews who migrated to Scotland, put down roots in Dundee and later moved to Edinburgh. The programme contains a personal testimony from David Goldberg who joined the Kindertransport from Kiel in Germany, travelling first to Belgium, later to Leeds and arriving in Edinburgh after D-Day to convalesce; from Vicky Gruneberg who came to Britain from Germany in 1939 and who made her home in Edinburgh and from Irene Mason who talks of her uncle who was taken to Auschwitz but sadly did not survive.

In introducing the programme, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the Rt. Hon. Eric Milligan, said that hosting the UK commemorative event provided an opportunity for the community to join together to remember those who had suffered, and to reflect. The most impressive and poignant aspect of the whole evening was the way in which it was conducted by local children. It was a beautiful blend of Scottish, Jewish and other traditions. It seemed quite natural to be listening to a Scottish piper, to poetry delivered in a Scottish lilt, to the music of the clarsach and to the voices of the Scottish soloists, playing tunes and singing songs which we would normally hear at Jewish weddings and functions.

They told many stories and spoke of a visit one group had made to

Auschwitz. In a letter to the group, Rabbi Barry Marcus said that the young people of today have an important responsibility to all those

who perished: 'We need to see for ourselves, however painful, if only to strengthen our resolve not to forget the memory of the millions who were so mercilessly



butchered. We cannot face the challenges of the future without identifying with our past'.

'He who neglects to remember the past can expect to live it again'

It was moving talking to one young lady in the group, a history student from an Edinburgh school. What did she remember most of the visit? The cold, the freezing cold, was her immediate response. Visiting Auschwitz in November, as she walked up the gravel path to the great gate leading to the concentration camp, well wrapped in her coat, scarf and hat, she imagined that same journey for the inmates in their striped uniform and bare feet, cold against the sharp gravel. Everything felt icy, non-human and depersonalised. The shock and the trauma came when the young people saw suitcases, of all sizes, marked with each owner's name, age and date of birth; piles of hair, shoes, teeth, glasses, clothes including tiny baby clothes and other personal belongings.

What were their reactions? Shock, anger, despair:

'Don't learn you won't be able to use the knowledge,

don't hope there is no hope of a future,

above all don't dream

don't live,

you can't die if you cease to live.'

Rebecca Chapel

Then came a rekindling of hope, a sense of commitment, energy and a desire to make a difference, to avoid such tragedies in the future. The group recalled an inscription on the wall at Auschwitz: 'He who neglects to remember the past can expect to live it again'.

As well as looking back, the young people also looked forward. They sensitively reminded us that the days of prejudice were not just in the past but also of the present.

They illustrated the pain that can be caused by racial discrimination, by sex discrimination and by hurtful treatment of minorities. No one could fail to be moved by the three young individuals who courageously spoke out on behalf of their minority groups.

Towards the end of the evening, when Ernest Levy walked proudly onto the platform and let his voice, without accompaniment, soar above our heads, float around the auditorium and sweep towards the skies, every heart would have ached. Most of the audience would not have understood the Hebrew text of his prayer, but they all would have understood the significance of his message, that of an Auschwitz survivor now living in Glasgow who epitomised courage, sadness, humility, beauty and strength. At that moment I was conscious of a rare synergy, as the emotions of being Jewish and Scottish united in perfect harmony.



Ernest Levy addressing the Holocaust day gathering

Children are innocent and defenceless. The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, ended the ceremony with a moving tribute to the importance of children and young people in all our lives. If the perpetrators of genocide will kill children, they will kill anyone. At the Usher Hall event the young people were clear in their message: 'Do not be a victim, do not be perpetrator, NEVER be a bystander'. As David Cesarani wrote in the Guardian, a community that stands by while children are starved, tortured or killed does not deserve the description 'community'. One survivor who was just 15 when she entered Auschwitz left in 1944 to work in a factory and was one of the few to witness the extermination at first hand. For eight months she worked next to the gas chambers sorting through the victims' personal belongings. 'The lessons are threefold', she said. 'Remembrance, commemoration and education for future generations. Genocide still happens'.

Edinburgh helped us to remember.

Judith Sischy is a member of Edinburgh Star Editorial Team

We acknowledge with thanks the generosity of the Edinburgh City Council for the use of their photographs of this event.

Holocaust Memorial Day Events

Hosted by Edinburgh city Council

Judy Gilbert



For me the Holocaust Memorial this year in Edinburgh began on 22nd January at the Traverse Theatre where a very young company associated with Theatre Objektiv put on a drama called '**Out of Europe**' – **Children of the Holocaust**, by Raymond Ross. The House had a large representation of older school children, many of whom were going to be hard to please. The plight of the first innocent victims of Poland was emphasised with heavy symbolism such as rhythmic stamping which quickened to sound like a train.

This 50 minute drama was not so much another description of what happened, as an attempt to understand how and why. A kind of desperation to discover if anything positive could have evolved from the experience, was central to the action. Ross seemed to interpret the question of why, in his use of children, who can be so easily manipulated to act unscrupulously in response to adult propaganda. Children persecuting other children is not unusual even in a less intimidating climate. The why was inferred among other things, by the mindless chanting 'We are Slaves, we are slaves, slaves of the masterrace', and the chalk graffiti on the wall of the minimalist set, **THE JEWS ARE OUR ENEMY BEWARE OF THE JEWS**.

Ross chose a difficult method of depicting such a sensitive subject to a rather challenging audience some of whose negative comments were thankfully overridden by the more positive 'it gave out a strong message'. It was therefore to their credit that not a sound could be heard during the performance. Clearly any attempt to enlighten other young people of past horrors and injustices must be of value and also a warning of how easily history can be repeated. One of the lines spoken 'He who saves one life, saves the world' might safely be misquoted as 'He who tells one person, tells the world'.

On the morning of Sunday 26th Cheder Children of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation were taken to The City Chambers on the Royal Mile to sign the **Holocaust Book of Commitment** and to light candles in memory of the 1.5 million children who died in the Holocaust. This book has been adapted from the Declaration of the Stockholm Forum of Education, Remembrance and Research, signed by 44 governments around the world on January 27th 2000.

Eighteen children, their teachers and many parents queued up to sign the book. Once outside in the quadrangle where a gale was blowing, the assembly lighted

memorial candles in protective paper bags against the wind and placed them among the many other candles on the raised memorial plinth. Julian Goodman read memorial prayers to the silent and respectful group. The red nosed and blue lipped party returned in the bus organised by the Shul President's wife, Irene Mason, to resume Cheder lessons, having learned another very important lesson which is very much a part of their own history.

' Clearly any attempt to enlighten other young people of past horrors and injustices must be of value'

At 4pm just one day before the major event, The Usher Hall hosted an event called '**All Our Futures**'. It focused once again on the children who were systematically destroyed during that period. The most heartening aspect of this presentation, (some parts of which had been highlighted in 'Out of Europe' and later were to be incorporated in the major event), was the absolute involvement of such young people performing to an audience in support not only of their peers, but the children whose plight was being remembered. Everything that we were hearing and seeing at this event was encompassed in the three new commandments quoted at several different venues which were 'Thou shalt not be a perpetrator, Thou shalt not be a victim, Thou shalt not be a bystander'.

During the period which ran up to the actual Holocaust Memorial Day a number of highly relevant and moving films were shown. Sitting in the Film House across the road from the Usher Hall, I was aware that the tragedy of that period was as strongly in the minds of the young as it has ever been. The film was **The Pianist**. The

film maker, Roman Polanski, whose own ghetto experience must have been mirrored in his highly moving account of the impresario Wladislaw Szpilman. The images were harrowing but not sensationalised. The helplessness of unarmed, ordinary citizens was offset by the courage of the men and women who eventually formed themselves into a resistance, and who justified their futile attempts with the words 'At least I will be able to say I fought with pride and died with dignity'.

To review the film in just a few words would do it a disservice. Suffice to say the glistening eyes of every member of that audience was worth a thousand words.

A documentary film called '**I was a slave labourer**' and made over a period of five years by Luke Holland, told the inside story of one man's search for justice after his endurance of working as a slave labourer for IG Farben. The theme exposed the Nazi policy of 'Vertilgung durch Arbeit' (Extermination through work). Rudy Kennedy confronts the current management's of third Reich companies in search of an individual apology. It was pointed out that other companies such as Mercedes, Volks

Wagen BSFN and other well known names had profited by the blood of these people and continue to benefit from these past actions. Not many people appreciate that VW engines were used in the manufacture of the first 'Sputnik' and the V2 rocket.

Holland asks that the current managers acknowledge the foundations on which their empires are built, and to act responsibly by making reparations to people like Rudy Kennedy.

Luke Holland addressed the cinema audience after the showing of the film and was happy to answer many questions both about the content of this film and its making. The film showed some very unattractive attitudes among some of the company directors. The German Professor whose book on the film issue did not once mention the words Slave Labourer but some other euphemistic term, turned to anger when confronted about the omission and his demeanour will be for ever preserved on celluloid. One young German girl,

though in complete sympathy with the concept of the film, asked 'why did you not cut out the parts of the film which these people had specifically asked not to be shown?' She said she found it insensitive, provocative and potentially liable to enflame ill feelings by depicting modern Germans in an unfair light. Holland defended himself by saying that the unflattering images were what we were seeing seconds before the request to stop filming had been voiced. He also reminded her of how he had actually shown in the film, young Germans protesting about the activities of these industries, and who were committed to righting the injustices of their predecessors with whom they had no sympathy. Holland recalled that Chancellor Schroeder was reported to have announced in 1999 that 'We must address this issue about the people who are taking the ground from under our industries' (paraphrase) referring to the reparation sought by people like Rudy Kennedy. Holland asks that the current managers acknowledge the foundations on which their empires are built, and to act responsibly by making reparations to people like Rudy Kennedy.

Judy Gilbert is a member of Edinburgh Star Editorial Team



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Just One More Dance

An Experience

Just one more event. Was there time? Did I have the emotional energy? After a whole week of Holocaust events, would this be just one too many?



Ernest Levy

I had to push myself to go to Fountain Park to find the venue for Just One More Dance and I was late. No one seemed to know where it was until I was directed to an empty warehouse which, I was told, had been rented out for the event that week. I joined the inauspicious, motley looking crowd which was casually gathering by a make-do kiosk selling tickets. Yes, there were a few left. I recognised no one and asked a friendly looking lady, who turned out to be a teacher, if she knew about the play. She said she had come with several misgivings, as she had heard that it was one of those audience participating events – not really her style. Nor mine, I thought.

Having seen Ernest Levy at the Usher Hall at the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony, I imagined that a play

based on his autobiography would be moving but I was not prepared for the drama which followed. We were shown into a large, dark warehouse in which benches were arranged for seating. I was glad of my jeans and my fleece. My teacher friend was beside me.

The play began with scenes of Ernest Levy as a young boy, growing up with his family in Germany - typical, it seemed, of a bourgeois Jewish family coping with the rise of Nazism. The script held few surprises, yet the acting was powerful; daily life became poisoned and the family's terror grew. The Jews had to wear their yellow star, the persecution increased, the young Ernest was bewildered and we were ready for the moment when the family were routed from their home.

As the tension grew, so did the noise; the Nazis burst in and took over. Soldiers were shouting, women were weeping, children were crying, dogs were barking, whistles were blowing, until the sound of a train drowned out all else. Suddenly we were about to join Ernest on the dreaded train. 'Out', 'Raus', 'Here', 'Hier', 'Left', 'Links, LINKS, LINKS', 'Quick', 'Schnell, SCHNELL, SCHNELL...'

We were moving. The teacher and I and all around us were moving. We had to turn left, quickly, to obey orders and to follow the rest. We heard the shouting in the background but it was difficult to see in the dark. As we entered a narrow passageway, there were one or two torches, not so much to light our way, but to ensure

that we followed the crowd and did not deviate. Was this the audience participation? Where would it lead?

After walking to the left and along a semi circular corridor, we found ourselves in a mirror image of the theatre we had just left. The seats were facing the opposite way, as if we had completed half of a journey. As we were pushed to our seats, or so it felt, we heard the clanging sound of gates – we were locked in. As our eyes adjusted to the new surroundings, we realised where we were – in some sort of work camp with Ernest Levy. Here we heard of the horrors he had endured in Auschwitz before he arrived at this camp; we saw the depths to which mankind had sunk and we watched with some disbelief as Ernest encountered humanity in one of his captors. The acting was real, immediate, powerful and emotionally draining; to know that the story was true and that the hero was living in Scotland made it all the more moving.

At the end of the play, the camp was liberated and we were suddenly told 'Go. You can leave. This way'. We slipped out, quietly, silently, deep in thought. We were confronted with a screen, showing Ernest Levy, as he is today, telling the story of his life to date. I was desperately hoping that he would appear in person, but no, the rest was left to our imagination. It was a moving evening in which we were transported, literally, to another world for 50 minutes which will last a lifetime.

Judy Sischy

Where Next Edinburgh?

A reform view by Maurice Naftalin, Chair, Sukkat Shalom



Purim Play

Many in the Edinburgh Reform community read the discussion articles in the last issue of the *Star* with interest and sympathy. We have our own ongoing debates about the future, and I am glad to thank the editorial board of the *Star* for the opportunity to try to bring the two debates together.

I last wrote about the Edinburgh Reform Jewish Community (ERJC) in the *Star* a little over two years ago, so perhaps a brief recapitulation is in order. The ERJC has had a separate existence since 1997, as a group affiliated to the Glasgow New Synagogue (GNS). During that time we have gradually built up the number of our activities, starting from the monthly Erev Shabbat services which remain our central event. Over the years, however, we have gained confidence to add to these with services for other festivals, communal Seders, quarterly all-day events, study sessions, children's parties at Purim and Chanukah, and occasional social activities. Last September we marked the fifth anniversary of our first meeting with a formal inauguration as a community of the Reform Synagogues, with the Hebrew name of Sukkat Shalom. Our confidence continues to grow as we continue to add new activities: a crucial innovation last September was a monthly Cheder, and this month we are hoping to start a tradition of social occasions centred around a Havdalah service. Despite our growth, I feel we have preserved the informal and friendly

atmosphere with which we started. Although we greatly regret the departure from Glasgow of Rabbi Pete Tobias, very much the moving spirit in our early days, we feel confident that we will continue to flourish without his help.

We have our problems, too, of course. Our inclusivity, which leads us to welcome participation at all levels of commitment, can also make it difficult to motivate

formal membership (we have the same membership rules as GNS). So our formal numbers – around 50 – and our material resources don't really reflect the degree of energy and enthusiasm that we experience in the community. This leads to the second problem, the one which gives the officers the greatest everyday difficulties, that of finding a suitable venue for services. In this context we are bound to be disappointed that our tentative approach to the EHC in respect of Salisbury Road has not been answered. Our third problem is expressed through our own debate on perspectives: whether and at what point we should be seeking independence from GNS. We are tied to GNS by bonds of familiarity, participation, and gratitude for their essential help in getting us established, but we know that at some point we must seek our own way. The material obstacles are formidable, and the idea of attending High Holy Day services held anywhere but Newton Mearns is still hard for many of us to envisage.

Relations with the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation enter our discussions frequently. At a communal level they

have strengthened since I wrote enthusiastically about them two years ago. A number of Edinburgh Jews attend both Reform and Orthodox services and maintain good relations with both communities. There has been one informal and friendly meeting between officers of the two communities. We receive invitations to the social events of the EHC, and have enjoyed attending some recently. And at a personal level and through the Literary Society we get along fine – I hope!

At a more formal level, however, much more could be done. We don't seek to minimise the differences between Reform and Orthodox in practice and principle, but it is short-sighted to focus on these exclusively, ignoring the many areas of mutual understanding on which we could be building. The Oxford Story article in the last *Star* showed the degree of co-operation and mutual respect which different communities can achieve without compromising their principles. Of course, Oxford cannot be an organisational model for every city, but the spirit embodied in their arrangements can teach us a great deal.

The EHC took a brave step in opening its perspectives debate in the public forum of the *Star*. Our contribution to that debate comes from outside the Orthodox community, but from firmly within the wider tradition of Judaism. Declining numbers are a problem for Jews of all communities everywhere; in the Reform movement we are convinced that this problem can only be addressed through a renewed engagement with the principles of our faith and through working to reconcile tradition with the demands of life in modern society. But we don't claim that that renewal can take place only within our movement. On the contrary, we believe that – inspired by the same history and beliefs, and without compromising our central principles – Jews from many different movements can work together to revive our common faith and traditions.

Our contribution to that debate comes from outside the Orthodox community, but from firmly within the wider tradition of Judaism.

Marianne Grant

Judy Gilbert

A Statement and Interview with the Artist whose Holocaust artworks have preserved moving and terrible memories.

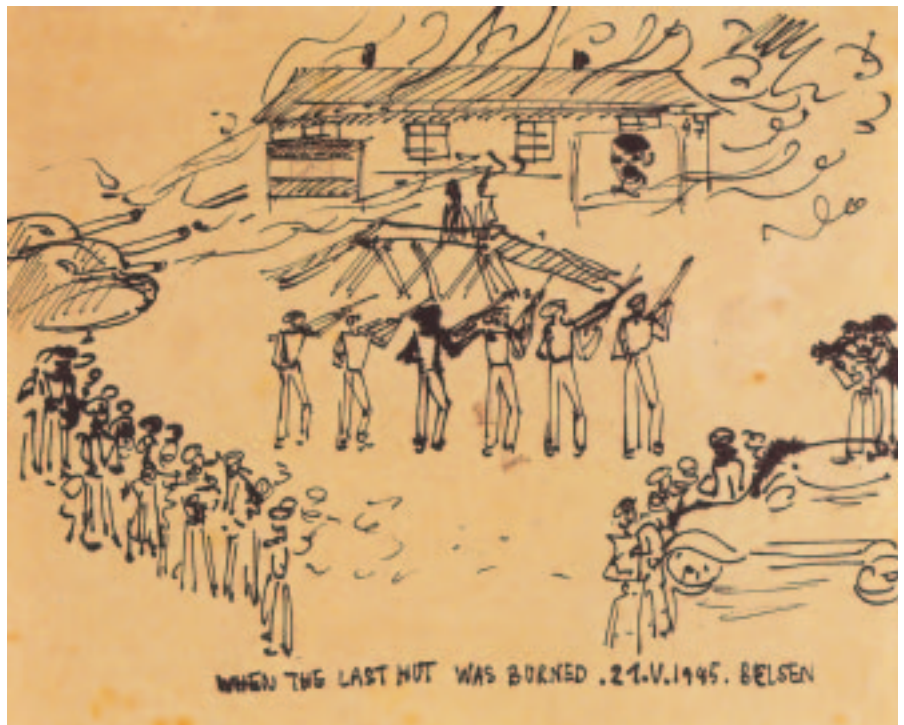


Marianne Grant

Marianne Grant personally suffered Nazi persecution between 1939 and 1945. She was a resourceful young woman who was able to use her artistic skills during those terrible years, as a means of survival 'I knew I was painting for my life'. Now her work bears witness to the horrors of enduring life in Theresienstadt, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Neugraben, Tiefstaak and finally Bergen Belsen and is a reminder of what should never be forgotten. She opened her exhibition at Edinburgh City Art Centre with the following declaration:-

'It is our duty today to remember all the victims of the Holocaust, the 1.5 million Jewish children, 4.5 million adults, political prisoners, dwarves gypsies, disabled and homosexuals, who were innocent victims, they

I hope that through my art and my story there is a message, to respect and tolerate different religious cultures, colours and races and we hope there shall never be another Holocaust again.'



Last hut being burned by the British soldiers at Belsen

suffered indescribably therefore it is too painful to hear about the denial today of the Holocaust. It is very hurtful to those who survived imprisonment, expulsion, loss of homes, loss of education, abuse and above all the loss of their large families. Today we have to try and achieve a free, tolerant, and democratic society. Hatred and anti-Semitism is inbred and can only be eradicated by mutual understanding and education of the young and the very old. I hope that through my art and my story there is a message, to respect and tolerate different religious cultures, colours and races and we hope there shall never be another Holocaust again.'

It was a privilege to be able to see Marianne's paintings and to be able to ask her one or two questions with regards to her experience during the period of occupation.

Are you still painting?

Yes Scottish landscapes and flowers.

How did you manage to come by the resources necessary for painting when you were a prisoner in Auschwitz?

I always carried my painting equipment, my brushes and paints and pencils, in my suitcase. I never went anywhere without them. When I was thrown out of Theresienstadt I just had those mainly, my most precious things. At Auschwitz Birkenau I packed them as well but we left the suitcases on the runway, we never saw them again. But I was working with the children on the

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John & Hazel Cosgrove*



Jewish Ghetto Police

children's block. You can see one of the photographs I painted on the walls of the children's block. I always liked children. I always looked after children. The guard came to see the children. He saw me drawing. I don't know where they came from but there were some drawing things there. I made Christmas presents for his children, story books told in pictures and in return he would bring me material. I also got permission to paint the wall. About 1997 I painted the same picture from memory. It is exhibited today in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. It was only supposed to be there for 6 months but it is still there after all this time. Mengele also ordered me to come and paint for him. He had 2 naked girls and I had to paint them for medical records. I was also asked to draw for research purposes in the dwarf camp. It was to be like a family tree. For example, the father was normal and he married a dwarf. There was a certain Hungarian gypsy family of dwarves. Later he gave me an architects draughtsmen's tools.'

How did you feel knowing you were working for a man like that? I didn't have a chance. I was sitting with the children and one of his runners



Inside Belsen

'Leufers' a little Jewish boy with curly hair, about 12 or 13 years old, wearing a uniform of red and gold, undoubtedly one of the many abused boys appeared. He just shouted "painter, painter where is the painter" and I had to just run immediately. You didn't know anything you weren't prepared for anything. You had no choice.

Marianne spoke about the sad but



Children playing in the Ghetto at Theresienstadt

true fact that many British Jews didn't want to know when refugees were coming in. She said 'In 1939 when my husband was a student, it was necessary to find £50 pounds as security. He pleaded with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council to help his parents and one brother, and they refused. I realise that there were other Jewish people perhaps 20 or so and that £50 then, was a lot of money, maybe they couldn't help it but he pleaded with them. In her most understanding way she said that in their defence she realised that there were many other people pressing for help and not everybody could be supported. "Some were lucky, others not so lucky."

Judy Gilbert is a member of Edinburgh Star Editorial Team



Rabbi David Rose

An interview with Ian Shein



Where were you born?

I was born in Auckland in New Zealand. My mother, brother and three nieces and nephews reside there. I have a sister and six more nieces and nephews who live in Israel.

Where were you educated?

At Lynfield College in Auckland, thence at the University of Auckland where I gained a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science. When I was 18, I went to Israel for one year on a Bnei Akiva programme. I later returned to Israel and took a qualification in Bookkeeping at the Technical Institute in Jerusalem. A mandatory spell in the Israeli army followed. In the late 1990s, at the Yeshivat Beit El, I received Ordination/Semicha from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. While at the Yeshiva, I spent three months working with a small team to provide educational, social and pastoral support and guidance to Jewish people in the city of Kharkov in the Ukraine. Currently I am studying for a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies at University College in London and hope to complete this later in the year.

When did you come to the U.K?

I spent about ten years in Israel and then went to Sweden where I became involved in a Beit Midrash education study as deputy programme leader establishing a project in an interdenominational community setting in Stockholm. I worked with and educated Jewish people of various backgrounds and beliefs, providing religious education for teenagers, and

social events, festival celebrations and visits to the elderly. This was financed by the large local Jewish community and the Jewish Agency. I remained there for two years before I came to England.

I understand that your first Rabbinate charge was in Richmond Synagogue. How long were you there?

I became Rabbi of Richmond Synagogue in Surrey in 1999. This is a small South London community where I had the usual responsibilities of a Rabbi within and without the community.

What made you come to Edinburgh?

I had heard about Edinburgh from Rabbi David Sedley, who was also from New Zealand and when I visited the community, I was impressed by its vibrancy and warmth. I was contemplating a move at that time, hence my application and subsequent pleasure at being appointed.

Had you always aspired to become a Rabbi?

Not really. Like many other young people at that time, I was unsure what I wished to do as an adult. I did have other ideas, including studying law, but ultimately decided on the ministry.

Do you prefer to work with small communities as both Richmond and Edinburgh come under that category. Do you think there is a future for them?

Yet I do. Richmond is in fact smaller than Edinburgh. I like the involvement in the smaller congregations. With regards to their future, one has to be positive and realistic. The strength of the cheder is obviously of considerable importance as it is the encouragement given to the children to become active participants in the community. I also believe that it is necessary to contact the local Jewish students as they, being a transient population, might like their association here, and could well return after their studies are completed. Edinburgh is a beautiful city and has a great deal to offer young people.

So how does one encourage young people?

Try to make them feel welcome. Create a comfortable environment for them, use

their talents, listen to them and endeavour to give them what they want.

(I know that Rabbi Rose practises what he preaches as during his very short time in Edinburgh, he has made contact with students and has entertained, with enthusiastic help from some of them, as many as twenty in his house during Shabbat. He describes himself as a “fair” cook).

What are your views on Reform?

I feel one should welcome all Jewish people into the community. I would encourage them to attend synagogue and educational functions, cooperate with them and be ready to talk to them on various issues. But the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is an orthodox community. What occurs in it must be guided by Jewish law.

What about Jews who are not strictly orthodox?

Jewish people like those of other religions have varying attitudes towards their religion. Everyone in the end must find their own level of Judaism. The main thing is to be involved.

In your very first Shabbat morning sermon you commented on congregants not coming to synagogue but who could still play their part ?

Yes, by their commitment to Jewish activities, social or otherwise. I recall a comment made by the Chief Rabbi when he was in Golders Green. Dr. Sachs said that he would like to see as many people in the synagogue during the week as on a Shabbat.

What did you achieve in Richmond which you would like to emulate here?

I feel that quite a lot can be done but perhaps we should wait and see. In Richmond there are quite a number of young families and consequently the cheder is larger than the one we have here. Obviously I would very much like to see more people in synagogue, more alternative services in the Beth Hamedrash and more communal involvement from congregants. During my very short time here, I already have found the community most responsive.

As a communal Rabbi, what do you see

as your duties?

I would wish to have contact with every age group in the community. I already have visited the twice weekly Luncheon Club a few times and here I must congratulate the cooks on providing excellent meals. I do enjoy meeting the members. In Richmond we had a Luncheon Club but it only met once a week.

Also as a communal Rabbi, the contact with the non-Jewish community is very important. When in Richmond, I set up a Council of Christians and Jews in conjunction with the local vicar and am very much in favour of this organisation.

I also on occasions spoke at meetings of JACS, the Jewish Association of Cultural Societies. These constituted a series of lectures to all age groups. In New Zealand I was active in the Citizens Advice Bureau and also the Bnei Akiva Youth Movement.

What are your interests?

I get a lot of pleasure in reading and listening to music and have a wide selection of both. I am attracted to science fiction books.

Would you like to give your views on the situation in Israel?

I of course do have political views. but do not feel it is right for a Rabbi to express a political opinion on Israel. But we must

support that country by visiting whenever we can, talking to others about the Middle East situation, giving the other side of the story and relating this if possible through the media.

Ian Shein is a member of the Edinburgh Star Editorial team.

Star Trek into the Past



Do you recognise anyone here? Answers on page 23.

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Polton House

A fascinating look by Herbert Dryden at the Kindertransport scheme which among other locations used Polton House at Lasswade



After the horrors of the Kristallnacht in Germany, a group of eminent British Jews approached Neville Chamberlain in November 1938 to ask him to permit the temporary admission of young Jewish children from Europe who might re-emigrate after retraining. The Jewish Community offered to act as guarantors for the children. The British Cabinet agreed to allow 10,000 unaccompanied refugee youngsters under 17 into the UK.

Representatives from The Refugee Children's Movement were sent to Austria and Germany to help select, process and transport the children. The BBC broadcast appeals for foster homes, all of which had to be inspected. Once the decision had been made which children to select, their parents or guardians were issued

with a travel date and departure details. Trains carrying the children passed through Germany to the Hook of Holland from where the boats sailed to Harwich or Southampton in most cases.

Although the children came initially from Germany, eventually children from Austria, the Czech lands and Poland came to the UK. It soon became apparent that accommodation was required in places other than private homes. A number of summer camps were located and the BBC made further appeals.

For the younger children the war years were marked by a struggle for education and work. Many entered the job market at 16 with few

qualifications but others subsequently made their way to college or university to make up for their lost years in education. While in the UK they were encouraged to write to their parents but once war started these letters had to be sent through a neutral intermediary or the Red Cross. During 1944 many found that the correspondence was all one way and the end of the war confirmed their worst fears about the fate of their parents and families.

Polton House

In 1942 Sir Philip Dundas made Polton House near Bonnyrigg available for use as a home for about 40 refugee children aged between 13 and 17. The cost of housing the children at Polton House was financed by a group of Jewish people in Edinburgh and while

they were in the UK all the children had to have a Jewish guarantor.

Life at Polton House was conducted in a kibbutz style and was managed by Mr Jacob Zurable. The regime at the House was considered a good preparation for anyone hoping to emigrate to Israel. Some of the children worked on local farms picking potatoes or sprouts while their own farm hands were on active service. Other children stayed at Polton House and worked a rota, doing kitchen duties, laundry, ironing and shoe repairing, or working in the market garden. Poultry and rabbits were also kept. Some of the children received Jewish education, including Hebrew, and some attended Bonnyrigg School. They had a good relationship with the local community. Their teacher at Bonnyrigg sometimes came to Polton House to read Scottish poetry and the children were invited into people's homes.

The children slept in dormitories, and were supervised by the older children as well as the headmaster and matron. The building had three storeys with a basement, and stood in large grounds. There were excursions to Edinburgh every second week, and local trips to the cinema and "chippy"!

The majority of those who were at Polton House in 1945 had to leave quickly to make way for others who had been liberated from the concentration camps and who were coming to the UK for rehabilitation. However, some children remained as counsellors for the new intake to help them adjust.

The Children's Stories

Mrs Ruth Wing

Mrs Wing's school in Berlin was burned down during Kristallnacht in November 1938 and she never received any proper education. She arrived in the UK aged 11 at Harwich 10 days before the outbreak of war in 1939.

She was taken in by Orthodox Jews in Stepney before being evacuated to Windsor for three years. She had to learn English but education was very elementary.

At 13, she was sent to Polton House. After a spell of working on the market farm, she was sent to a secretarial

college in Edinburgh.

Mrs Wing was very happy at Polton House but others were not. Being aliens, some children had a hard time. They knew nothing about what was happening or the concentration camps. They stayed at Polton House until the end of the war when they learned the fate of their families. Like most of her friends, Mrs Wing never saw her parents again. When she left Edinburgh she went to London where she knew no one.

Mrs Wing holds no bitterness but she does regret receiving no proper education. However in many ways she feels she has been privileged. Her father was a famous actor and in later years when she was traced as his daughter, she appeared on TV and was invited to the opening of the Jewish Museum.

Mr Peter Weinberg

Mr Weinberg and his sister arrived in the UK from Hanover in a cargo boat to Liverpool in May 1940. They left Holland through the assistance of a Dutch gentile lady. 12-year-old Peter Weinberg and his sister arrived in Scotland in 1941, first at Whittinghame in East Lothian, then Polton House.

Peter was glad to attend a local school as his education at home had been interrupted.

The residents had to organise everything themselves and the older children kept the younger ones in order. Peter was a keen Hibs supporter and enjoyed the fortnightly visits to Edinburgh. Peter was happy on the whole at Polton House. He learned to be resilient. He corresponded with his parents - who had gone to Turkey - through an intermediary in Switzerland as the mail was erratic. He has very fond memories of Edinburgh, the Highlands and the Scottish scenery.



Two rather poor quality pictures taken at Polton House during the war years.

Peter was at Polton House until it closed in 1947 when he went to London. He then joined his parents in Turkey but when they went to the USA he returned to London.

Peter was at Polton House when some of the young men came from the concentration camps for their rehabilitation. Among these was Hugo Gryn, the future Rabbi. Some years ago Peter met up with Hugo who was officiating at the service at the synagogue when Peter's grandson was blessed.

Peter paid a return visit to Scotland in 1958.

Mr Sidney Bratt

Mr Bratt lives in Pennsylvania, USA but brought his wife and family here in November 2001 showing them where he had spent time in the 1940s.

Mr Bratt came from East Prussia to Berlin where, at the age of 10, he and his family witnessed his father being arrested and led away for imprisonment during Kristallnacht. Sidney was one of a group to board the S.S. Washington at Hamburg which arrived at Southampton on 19th June 1939.

Sidney was taken to Clayton, near Ipswich. He then moved to another camp at High Wycombe where he had his Barmitzvah in 1942. In the same year he was taken to Polton House to prepare him to join relatives in Israel.

Sidney spoke very warmly of his time there. He attended Bonnyrigg School for half a day each day where the children were integrated with the locals. In the afternoons they worked outdoors at Polton House where they were self sufficient in growing their own vegetables and looking after their poultry.

Mr Bratt also spoke warmly of Jacob Zurable and his wife who were in



charge of Polton House. He said that, thankfully, they were kept busy during the day but at night their thoughts naturally strayed to their families and what might be happening to them.

He stayed at Polton House until 1945 when most inhabitants had to leave to make way for those coming from the concentration camps. Sidney went to London and found himself a job as a motor mechanic.

After the war Sidney met up with his father who had been released from prison at the outbreak of war on condition he left Germany immediately. He went to England where he was imprisoned as an alien in the Isle of Man. Eventually they had to accept that Sidney's mother, brothers and sister had perished. Sidney's father ultimately remarried and emigrated to the USA. Sidney also decided to go to the USA.

Mr Bratt several times paid warm tribute to the UK for agreeing to take 10,000 children and for giving them a life they might not otherwise have had.

Ben Nir

Mr Nir was 13 when he arrived from Germany under the Kindertransport Scheme. He first of all went to Whittinghame from where he came to Polton House. As he was one of the older children he was put in charge of a group of youngsters and asked to teach English and Hebrew. He studied for his matric with the help of a private teacher as he had only received seven years of primary school education in Germany.

Ben studied Electrical Engineering at Heriot-Watt College and graduated in 1945. He recalls celebrating VE day in a pub in Princes Street, and stayed on at Polton House until he was 21 when he left to become a graduate apprentice in Oldham.

His memories of Polton House include Mr Ellis's grocery store where he used to buy sweets, the picture house in Bonnyrigg, the ice cream saloon and the fish and chip shop.

While in Oldham he became a British subject and fitted in well with the local community. However, after three years he decided to go to Israel in 1951. He worked on a kibbutz, before enlisting into the Israeli Air Force. He holds a Doctorate in Control Engineering from Manchester University. He is now 76 and is enjoying his retirement. He is married, has three children and two grandchildren.

Reunion

Sidney Bratt referred to the reunions of the Kindertransport children held to commemorate the 50th and 60th anniversaries in 1989 and 1999.

Mrs Wing completely lost contact with the people with whom she stayed at Polton House until a few years ago when a search system was introduced in a Jewish paper for the Association of Jewish Refugees. A notice went out for information about people who were at Polton House and responses came from all over the world.

George Bendori said he knew Ruth Wing, Peter Weinberg and Sidney

Bratt. George and Peter slept next to each other in their dormitory in Polton House. He met Sidney 10 years ago in London when they both attended a Kindertransport Convention. Ruth he also met in London and surprised her by getting most of the "old" Polton House children together when she visited Israel a couple of years ago. Ruth Wing said that she has found it very interesting to meet up with people and while she said that all of the children bore scars from the period and that some would never get over their problems, all have an interesting story to tell. Despite the horrendous circumstances of their coming to Scotland, all the interviewees spoke of their time at Polton House with warmth and affection.

Herbert Dryden is Chairman of the Lasswade and Bonnyrigg historical Society. He decided to do some research into children who came to Britain through the Kindertransport Humanitarian Scheme and subsequently stayed at Polton House near Bonnyrigg. His research involved information from many sources, including several of the refugees who stayed at Polton House, Sheila Millar and her colleagues at Midlothian Local Studies at Loanhead, Mary and Archie Renwick, Mr Adam Rae, Mr David Hamilton, Mrs Sobic, Mrs Anita Mendelssohn and Mrs Dundas-Bekker, daughter of the owner of Polton House at the time. He also received assistance from the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, and gained knowledge of the period from two books: "The Boys - Triumph Over Adversity" by Martin Gilbert, and "Into the Arms of Strangers" by Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer.

Mr Dryden's interest in this scheme continues and if any reader knows one of the Polton House children or has related information, we will be happy to pass this on to him.



At a recent gathering from left to right - Peter Weinberg, Pamela Weinberg, Ruth Wing, Robert Wing

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Congratulations



Andrea and Malcolm Cowan with Eliot, Caroline and baby Danielle.

To **Andrea and Malcolm** on the birth of their first granchild, **Danielle** to their son **Eliot** and daughter in law **Caroline**.

To **Betty and Michael Gold** on the birth of a grandson in Cambridge.



Lily Mia

To **Esther and Harold Mendelssohn** on the birth of their first grandchild, **Lily Mia** to their daughter **Cassie** and son in law **Jonty**. Also a special mazeltov to **Anita and David Mendelssohn** as she is their first great-grandchild.



Hadassah Sara with her sisters Miriam and Esther

To **Julia and Malcolm Merrick** on the birth of their granddaughter **Hadassah Sara** to their daughter **Anna** and son in law **Julian**.

To **Debbie and Danny Sinclair** on the birth of a grandson, **Gil'ad** in Israel.

A black and white photograph showing a large stack of newspapers, likely the Jewish Chronicle, piled up on a surface.

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The Gathering of Clan Lev(e)y

By Dr Frank B Abramson



Levy family 1914 - Inset, Sam Levey

In addition to becoming a successful and respected businessman in the Edinburgh Community, Stan Rose had one other burning ambition to organise a Lev(e)y family reunion. So in late 2001 Stan embarked on this challenge and managed to contact all the surviving Lev(e)ys' from first through to fourth generation from around the world culminating in a weekend gathering of over seventy people at the beginning of May 2003 in Edinburgh from where the Lev(e)y family originated.

By the way, the reason for the hybrid spelling of Lev(e)y is that Jack, affectionately known as Yeudal, one of the first generation children, changed his surname and his offspring perpetuate this.

Incidentally, his other claim to fame is that he became the Scottish Amateur Billiard and Snooker Champion! Two other first generation brothers also changed their surnames, Hymie changed his to Leigh but Benny's was even subtler, he changed from Benny Levy to Lee Bennett.

If this is not confusing enough perhaps I should also draw up a diagram so that non-family members reading this article can get a better understanding as I go on to describe the generations.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Fanny and Harris Levy | The parents |
| First generation | The children (15) |
| Second generation | The cousins (25) |
| Third generation | The cousins' offspring |
| Fourth generation | The cousins' grandchildren |
| Fifth generation | The cousins' great-grandchildren |

Although there are only two of the first generation still surviving, Ethel Hallside and Jean Abramson, both in their nineties and living in London near their children, Frances Gordon and Frank Abramson respectively, and are too infirm to travel, the second through to fourth generation were well represented at the reunion.

But let's go back to the beginning...when it all began.



1. George (John Henry) age 19
 2. Hymie age 14
 3. Yudel (Julius) age 12
 4. Betsy age 11
 5. Julia age 15
 6. Dora age 17
 7. Bennet age 7
 8. Harris
 9. Solly age 6
 10. Moshe age 5
 11. Jean age 3
 12. Eva age 1
 13. Ethel age 4
 14. Fanny
 15. Leah age 9 months
 16. Hilda age 9
- Inset: Sam 22.1.1916

The story starts in a village in Lithuania towards the end of the 19th century;

we believe the village was called Brovneygevernay (no doubt miss-spelt in the transliteration!!). From there Fanny and Harris, with relatives and friends, travelled to the nearest port where they caught a ship that they believed was going to the Promised Land...America !!

My research, supplemented by my older cousins, is that the cargo boat, carrying pit-props (for the coal mines in Yorkshire and the Lothians) from the forests in Northern Europe and Russia stopped first at Hull and Fanny and

worked in the shops and subsequently owned them. The last branch to close (in the late 1960s) was owned by the late Sam Levy, father of Carolyn, Sonia and Martyn who were all at the reunion; Sonia brought her grandchildren too.

Mentioning Sam at this stage allows me to quickly refer to the family photo (shown here) that was taken before Sam was born, hence his photo as an inset. The family photo was uncovered some years ago and copies made for all the Cousins. As I mentioned earlier, two of the children still survive, two died quite young during the First World War, namely George who was killed and Solly who died of peritonitis; nearly all the others lived well beyond three score years and ten.

some time, then after her husband's death retired to California where she just recently died. Two other first generation members lived abroad for some time, namely Ethel (with her late husband Bert) Hallside in Israel, and Maurice Levy in America where he was a cop!! Both returned to England in the 1980s.

And the second generation has also spawned a few émigrés!!

Jacqueline (nee Hallside) married Jackie Bierman (an Edinburgh boy) and they live in Pretoria, whilst their daughter, Miriam, is happily married in Perth, Australia with a family of their own. Irene (nee Levey) married yet another Edinburgh boy, David Share, and they live in South America. Alec Levey is the hybrid; he lives, with his



Harris plus some relatives got off there and subsequently moved to Leeds where Fanny and Harris stayed a short time; the evidence for this is that Dora and George, their eldest girl and boy were apparently born there. However they eventually moved to, and settled, in Edinburgh.

They had adopted the surname Levy; we have never accurately traced our original name but some members of the second generation have been told is was something like LEVOVNAVITCH, hence the derivation Levy.

Whilst over the first quarter of the 20th century Harris developed a chain of fishmongers in Edinburgh trading as The Aberdeen Cured Fish Supply Company Limited, his wife Fanny bore him thirteen more children, making a total of fifteen, many of whom later

While many of the second, third and fourth generations have moved away from Edinburgh and live in such far away places as England, Africa, Australia, America and France only two of the first generation ever emigrated, namely Lee Bennett (remember he was Benny), and went to live eventually in California. He is survived by his wife Ruth, and two of his three children, Bonnie and Joel, came to the gathering, whilst Judd, an eminent gastro-enterologist, had to call off at the last moment. Bonnie comes to all the family functions like weddings, etc in the UK and keeps in touch with everyone; Joel and her husband live in a luxury (we saw the photos) mobile home and tour around the USA and Canada.

Eva was the other emigrant; she married an artist, lived in Spain for

wife, half the year in Florida and half in Scotland.

Frances Cox, Hymie's youngest lives in France with husband George, whilst Hymie's eldest, Rhoda, after a highly successful career in Local Authority work specialising in adoption has retired to the lovely Surrey village of Cranleigh with her partner. Their respective families, some of whom, with offspring, attended the reunion, mostly live in Southern England.

Carolyn (nee Levy) also married an Edinburgh boy, Mervyn Smith and they live in Cheam just south of London; others living in London include Frank Abramson and wife Jackie; he came with their daughter Michelle (she lives with her husband Warren and their two children in Pinner), and Maxine Julius who like her late father Eli, (the late Leah's

husband) plays a high standard game of bridge.

However for one person, Frances Gordon, this reunion was to also have been a reunion of her own family. Her daughter Deborah, with husband and two children were coming specially from Arbor, Michigan (USA); and her son Alan, from Japan, where he runs a school that teaches English to Japanese businessmen. Tragically Frances had a severe setback in her ongoing illness a few months ago and they all came then to see her. Fortunately Frances miraculously recovered but the children couldn't stay on. Frances even phoned Stan on the night of the Clan Lev(e)y gathering to wish him and it good luck. In return we all sent her a speedy recovery message and now she's back in her own home.

But the core of the Levy and Levey families from generations two through to five continue to live in or near Edinburgh. In fact Stan's own family and their offspring occupied about two tables at the Sunday night dinner of the Clan Lev(e)y gathering. However one 22 year old grandson (Scott) i.e. fourth generation, was hoping to leave Edinburgh soon to do his Ph.D. at Bristol University.

Although Gertie still lives in Edinburgh, her daughter, one of the third generation has ventured to Africa where she is a very successful corporate business executive; it was great that she managed to come with

her mum for at least part of the weekend. Gladys, the eldest of the second generation, being the daughter of the late Dora, the eldest of Fanny and Harris' children, lives with her husband Lawrence in the residential suburbs of the City. Aviva (Maxine's sister), assisted Stan in organising this event, lives here with her husband Scott; and Fay Levey, the cousin with the voice, has returned to Edinburgh to continue her career. Harold Levey, one of the late Jack and Joey's seven children (the others being Irene, Dolly, Fay, Louise, Alec and the late George) has recently moved with Allyson to Callander, about an hour away, but two of his sons remain in Edinburgh, Steven with his wife and family, and Brian, the entertainer, whilst his third son is off to South America which proves that at least the third generation is also adventurous...or keen to leave Edinburgh!

The fifth generation, great grandchildren of the second generation, are now starting to appear which heralds an exciting future for the Clan.

But sadly, already in the second

generation there have been some deaths and in his speech at the dinner Stan paid respect to them. They were Harold Strachan, Gladys' late brother, George Baker, Gertie's late brother, and George Levey. It was particularly pleasing to see George Baker's son at the weekend.

There were two main social gatherings for the reunion although most of the out-of-towners stayed with relatives. The first was an informal one (on Thursday May 1st) where everyone got to know long lost relatives and work out the family connections. The other was a formal; sit down dinner, with named seat placings, although within an hour everyone was moving around. Family albums and photographs were displayed and names put to faces that appeared in them. Attempts were made for over half-an-hour to take an official photograph of the Clan but the camera did not seem to work. Many newfound friends were made amongst relatives and there were even murmurings that we should do this again in ten to fifteen years time...but there were no volunteers on the night to organise it.

Finally, I apologise if I've missed out anyone who thought they should be specifically mentioned. Also, if I've got a piece of detail or information wrong, it was unintentional. I hope there will be no family fereebles arising from this article...hopefully the new generations are passed all that!!

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WIZO Mission to Israel

23rd - 27th February 2003

Barbara Kwiecinska

I must confess to setting off for Israel on the W.I.Z.O. mission with some misgivings.



WIZO Childrens Centre

Four days before departure the Foreign Office had "strongly advised against travel to Israel and that Britons in the West Bank and Gaza should leave "while the escape routes were still open". Yet, as I sat in the King David Lounge at Heathrow, I drew great comfort from my travelling companions - they all seemed to be related, albeit distantly! I am non-Jewish and had never before encountered this Jewish connection. I decided there and then that no possible harm could come to this big family! It was all rather unreal as was the weather in Israel.

The mission co-incided with the wettest February in Israel for 56 years - bucketing rain, blizzards in Jerusalem and roads blocked with snow, putting paid to our day there in the Knesset. The rain was good news for farmers, the Water Commission was delighted that the water level in Lake Kinneret had risen by 16 centimetres but, this being Israel, there was an added bonus. No big crowds were likely to gather so a suicide bombing was unlikely. Not that the weather was to deter us or our enthusiastic "chaverot" who met us at Ben Gurion. This was my third trip to Israel but the first whilst, not as a tourist, I would see something of contemporary Israel and the idea behind its evolution and ethos.

My knowledge of W.I.Z.O. thus far had been of a charity supporting women and children in need, but I had no idea of the size or commitment. W.I.Z.O. is the largest supplier of social welfare in Israel and it provides services that cannot be given by the government due to lack of funds. There are 150 day centres for children, 10 schools and youth villages and community centres in deprived areas. A formidable list, put under even more strain by the political and economic situation in Israel at the moment. The recession has affected everyone: 25% of all Israeli children are living below the poverty line, 1 in 10 Israelis is unemployed and in a recession it is always women who are the first to lose their jobs. This makes for grim reading, but behind the statistics is a vibrant and dedicated group of women doing a job they love and achieving so much.

W.I.Z.O. is the largest supplier of social welfare in Israel and it provides services that cannot be given by the government due to lack of funds.

The organisation of the children's day centres was particularly interesting. Payment must be made for a child to attend but it is graded according to means so no one feels a charity case and payment, however small, gives a feeling of commitment. The centres are also a kind of melting pot for new immigrant children to be absorbed into Israeli society.

The Shikun Dora Centre runs in a difficult area of Netanya. Of the 86 children, 30% were Ethiopian and many the children of single parents caught up in a cycle of deprivation made worse by the political situation. For them the centre was an oasis of

peace and calm from 7am-5pm and they were thriving! Happy and confident, they barely acknowledged our presence. An ugly reminder of the situation in Israel was in their music and play room with its radio, supplies of bottled water and sticky tape in case of chemical attack etc. It was heartbreaking to think that these little ones could be exposed to such horror and that on a more basic level, some of them out of necessity took home left over food from the centre.

A centre in a poor area of Herzlia had earned itself such a good reputation that the more affluent wanted to enrol their children. The priorities however were and always would be for poor mothers, single mothers, olim and social work cases. The 90 children came from loving families but were poor and uneducated and the first to lose their jobs. The director stressed the importance of nutrition in all W.I.Z.O. day care centres and the proven relationships between nutrition, behaviour and classroom performance. In their first three years here the children get a head start



WIZO Afula Community Centre

leading right through to the army. Though open from 7am-5pm care could be provided until 7pm when, having eaten and showered, the children were ready to go home and pop into bed.

The situation in Israel is now so bad that W.I.Z.O. has set up a new poverty fund covering a vast range of needs to include food parcels for the needy (donated breakfast meals are already

being delivered in Beersheba), meals for children, financial assistance for students, medical care and the organisation of workshops to help strengthen people's resolve in coping with adversity and distress. Resolve is something that Israelis seem to have been born with and certainly need - all too apparent at the Hillel Yaffe Medical Centre where we visited a children's day care centre. Israeli and Arab staff work together here offering a variety of excellent medical services but, this being Israel, it is in the "right place" to treat victims of terrorist attacks. On the coast between Haifa and Tel Aviv, it lies at a strategic point within easy reach of Hadera, Netanya and Afula, targeted areas because of their proximity to the Green Line which terrorists can so easily slip across. A simulation film showed the medical team's swift response to a suicide bomb attack and the efficient intensive care package ready for each badly injured victim. An X-ray showed how a serious injury had been caused by a fragment of rope! Equipped also to deal with chemical and biological attack, the hospital has come a long way from its founding in 1957 when treating malaria was its main concern.

Resolve is something that Israelis seem to have been born with and certainly need

The Chief Medical Officer at Hillel Yaffe had stressed how life must go on despite the horrors and it was just so at the W.I.Z.O. school in Afula where a pupil and parent had died in a suicide attack. Ethiopian girls danced for us, boys entertained us on African drums and we saw a girl being painted all over for an art project! Even at the W.I.Z.O. Community Centre, where a woman told us how, at the height of the Intifada, she had to decide whether it was worth risking her life to go into Afula to buy needle and thread, the centre was a hive of activity though the director preferred to call it an enrichment centre.

Afula has a population of 40,000 with 40% new immigrants including 4% from Russia and 10% from Ethiopia. For them the centre runs a five month ULPAN to bring them close to Israeli culture and for the Russians to reconnect them with the Jewish

religion so badly neglected in the former Soviet Union. This is a great help for the youngsters who do not flounder or feel outcasts when they start National Service. Their entry is delayed by six months. Immigrant mothers are taught Hebrew and computer studies to keep up with their children and not be dismissed by them as ignorant or useless. It runs courses for fun - judo, guitar lessons, drama and there we saw the distinctive Israeli slant on the absorption of new immigrants. A group of little Ethiopian children each carrying an Israeli flag and a rose sang "Hava Nagila". I thought of the debate in Britain as to how immigrants could show commitment to their new country with one suggestion being an ability to fill in Social Security Benefit Forms!

Deena, an Ethiopian woman, gave an immigrant's view. Aged 35, she had come to Israel via the Sudan 19 years ago, and now has four sons with two serving in the army. Initially, she had felt that Israel, which had helped her so much, was now her new home and she had wanted to put Ethiopia behind her. Then she decided she must remember her roots and culture because it had important facets that do not exist in other countries. Helped by W.I.Z.O. Deena had started a handicrafts cottage industry with other Ethiopian women and established a folk dancing troupe in Netanya and Afula. She had picked up Hebrew so quickly that she was able to translate for new mothers in the maternity hospital and now Ethiopian women work in every ward. For them all Deena is a very positive role model.

The army or I.D.F. had been mentioned constantly on the trip and it seemed to me that every child was being groomed for National Service. Unusually for a W.I.Z.O. trip we spent a day with the I.D.F. and it was fascinating to see how the army had been planned, not only for defence but as a kind of "social glue" for the new nation of Israel and to see how women were numerically necessary and vital in its structure. Shirley, a Lt Colonel with six majors under her command, gave a very professional analysis.

The Israeli army is the only army in the world where women are recruited by law. In Israel 30% of the military are

women: 14% in the U.S.A. and in the U.K. 8.5%. The army has no choice but to recruit women so in a sense it recruits society and influences women to be in society. It is a partnership of "my country" and equality. Women can volunteer for infantry and combat duty and because they are needed can serve anywhere in military duty. No Bedouin, Druse or religious serve (the religious only if they volunteer) but all women are excluded from serving in tanks or submarines because of the need for separate facilities. Shirley had been involved in research with the British Army and was about to leave for Canada to discuss with NATO the issues arising from men and women serving in close proximity. However, it is a proven fact that women do not make good cooks in the army, men are much better, but women are better drivers! Interestingly it was the men who gave the more human view of the I.D.F.

Ophir, a reservist paratrooper major, thought that without women the Israeli army was not a real army and each group of 100 soldiers totally appreciated their one female company secretary. Because they live outside like gypsies all their army lives, it was rewarding to see how women would cheer up the dining area with flowers and because the women kept themselves and their tents clean. Women are more mature than men and can help deal with emotional problems. As for being the glue of society, he explained that national service was a great ice-breaker at social occasions. "Where did you serve?".

Colonel Dayan was a pilot general who saw her job as a mission to protect Israel. "The Israeli military influences Israeli society and though it would create a military society, which is not good at all, it has avoided this." He told, poignantly and amusingly, how he had decided to let his son do what he liked in the year before entering the army. Colonel Dayan had wanted him to be "a prince in the home" and his son had acted like one. His mother had written a stack of letters to school to excuse "the prince from lessons and things he did not want to do". Then Colonel Dayan took his son to the army "in a princely convoy" with other parents and saw "the prince" become a little boy of 18 in a uniform with a commander aged 19!

Part of our military experience was a visit to Hatzor Air Base, more a village with its 80 families, 4 pre-schools, theatre and swimming pool. The base had opened in 1954 flying British Spitfires (I still feel surprised at how young a country Israel is) and had progressed through Mustang, Super Mystere, Saar and Phantom to the current F16 Barak (Lightning) plane. Ultra modern, sleek and sophisticated, it is operated by advanced technology and can fly at night and in any weather. The training is rigorous and of those selected only 15% are good enough to finish. Ilan Ramon, the late Israeli astronaut, had graduated from here in 1992 and just three months before the ill-fated space launch had been in training at Hatzor. Amazingly, in the midst of all this technology, pride of place was given to Aziza, the 85-year-old who comes every morning at 6am to prepare breakfast! All air bases had such a "mama" and they are all very much appreciated and cherished.

At Hatzor we met five young women soldiers, two of whom were religious and easily identified in their long skirts. Despite having exemption, they had thought it their duty to enlist. Of the 120 girls in their grade, only 20 had joined up and they had had no luck in persuading the others to enlist. Whilst their parents had been supportive, their teachers had initially disapproved because of the temptations in the army. Both had done 18 months military training, followed by two months teacher training and part of their job was to help in schools showing children how to put on gas masks. They were in special accommodation with other religious girls and were paid by the army to buy and prepare their own kosher food. The girls thought their brothers could not afford three years away from their studies and in any case they would find it difficult to take orders from women! Mindful of the controversy in Israel over the religious and their many exemptions, Colonel Dayan reminded us that it was the religious who had kept the Jewish religion alive throughout the centuries and for that they deserved respect.

Israel's bad press is something I have long been aware of, especially the alleged "massacre" at Jenin. We were told at Hatzor that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza is civilians against the army and Arab youngsters

are in a sense soldiers. "Arafat sends civilians to kill us, so can Israelis send back civilians?" Statements by the terrorist groups are prepared before the atrocities then read out in perfect English. Israeli responses alas are often delivered in the heat of the moment - disjointed and in broken English. Even three ambassadors to Britain have had no English at all. Sadly there seems no way out of this impasse and casualties in bus attacks will just remain as that with no mention of the appalling injuries.

I now have an even greater respect for Israel and the Israeli people and will continue to fight its corner. Just ask the taxi-driver who brought me home from the airport.

I was learning a lot about contemporary Israel and at Beit Heuss, near Herzlia, I saw how Israelis were combating what is a worldwide problem with drugs, alcohol and violence. The W.I.Z.O. run centre was in beautiful surroundings and it is Social Security who decides which person up to the age of 60 should benefit. Like all other W.I.Z.O. projects, it was operating on a tight budget but nevertheless it was excelling in its treatment and used as a role model for other countries. Its radical policy was that in just five days the lives of the residents could be turned round and transformed. No volunteers are on the staff, just totally dedicated professionals who provide "a bag of tools". Which tool do I use

in this particular situation? Most importantly the centre provides love.

Love and affection, I will always associate with W.I.Z.O. - the staff for the children, for each other, and the warmth shown to all of us in the mission. There are so many examples - the buffet prepared for us by the staff of the W.I.Z.O. day centre in the Medical Centre with food representing the ethnic groups in Israel, the home hospitality in Tel Aviv and our final farewell dinner at the Hotel Sharon in Herzlia. This was an emotional occasion rounded off with a stirring heart-felt rendition of "Hatikvah".

I would heartily recommend this experience to all W.I.Z.O. members. From the moment I landed in Israel, I had no feeling of danger and it was some time before I realised that the young man travelling with us was a security guard. I even spent time alone at the Diaspora Museum at Tel Aviv University and took a taxi to catch up with the others without a care in the world. My one regret is not arranging to stay on longer.

I now have an even greater respect for Israel and the Israeli people and will continue to fight its corner. Just ask the taxi-driver who brought me home from the airport. All the way into Edinburgh I gave him a potted version of the trip. He was genuinely interested, asking questions and confessing to not knowing "it was really like that". He also said I was the most interesting person he had had in his cab for some time - so I shall press on with the good work!

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Freda Riffkin Reports



John Cosgrove, Ambassador Avner, Kate Goodwin and Alex Steen

UJIA – Visit by Ambassador Yehuda Avner

A most interesting evening was held at the house of Mr. and Mrs. R Goodwin on the 20th February 2003 when Ambassador Yehuda Avner addressed a group on behalf of the UJIA on the present situation in Israel. Ambassador Avner was born in England and made Aliyah in the earliest years of the State, and has held many prestigious positions in the Israeli Diplomatic Service, including that of Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He has been a close adviser of most of Israel's Prime Ministers and told many anecdotes of his experiences.

During these years since it's creation, Israel has been in a state of perpetual self defence. He described having been at Camp David with Mr. Barak at the fateful meeting organised by President Clinton when there were great hopes of peace until Chairman Arafat refused to acknowledge that Israel had any claim to Jerusalem. At

this point the whole history of the Jewish people became a myth. He asked whether Jesus Christ had come to a mosque in Jerusalem or to a Temple.

This was the point at which the Intifada began and this was the point at which the whole economy of Israel began to collapse. There is now massive unemployment and people have to rely on soup kitchens for food. Soldiers cannot take their leave because there is no food for them in their parents' homes. Tourism has practically ceased and hotels and shops are empty.

Now Israel prepares for war. Gas masks have been issued and instructions to prepare sealed rooms have gone out.

Ambassador Avner is in favour of Saddam Hussein being removed and his hopes have been realised. He also believes that Chairman Arafat will also leave office as new generations of younger men with more moderate views are ready to take over. The appointment of a new Chief Minister and his cabinet since that time has born that out.

Ambassador Avner concluded with an appeal for UJIA.

John Cosgrove proposed a Vote of Thanks and the meeting was chaired by Mr. A. Steen of the UJIA.



Rabbi David Rose, Norman Dorfman, David Goldberg and Rose Orgel enjoy the delicious buffet at the Yom Ha'atzmaut evening.

Star Trek into the past Answers

Back, left to right **Rose Orgel, Mae Penn, Bella Cowan, Mary Dorfman, Leah Lowe, Unknown (do you know who she is?) Pearl Blunt, Lily Levitt, Leah Lurie, Rachel Braverman**

Front group, **Lady Provost (Not identified) Gladys Robinson, Rose Riffkind, Ray Wineberg.**



The Winning Team

COMMUNITY CENTRE QUIZ, 2nd March 2003.

The Communal Hall Committee held one of their successful Quiz meetings and as usual it was well attended and much relished by all the participants who enjoy a great spirit of friendly rivalry. A tasty supper was served midway during the proceedings. The winning team was composed of Michelle Neville, David Neville, Susie Kelpie, Sam Kelpie, Janet Mundy, Elaine Levy, Eddie Maher and Jane Ansell.



Philip Mason with Jo Wagerman

Edinburgh welcomes The Board of Deputies of British Jews
Never before had the Board of Deputies had so much Scottish hospitality thrust in their direction as when they decided to hold the annual plenary meeting in Edinburgh last weekend. Although the more sombre part of the business centred very much on the growing need to tackle anti-Semitism, and anti- Israel attitudes, more prevalent since the problems with Iraq, Hillary Rifkind, Irene Mason and Jackie Taylor had worked ceaselessly to ensure a successful weekend and forging of friendship between the Board members and the Community. Suppers and lunches were provided



over the duration and Jo Wagerman, President of the Board, delivering her profound and informative speech on Friday night, exhorted us to use the advice laid out in the booklet produced by the Board "showing everyone how to engage in this struggle for an unbiased and truthful media." She reminded us that "Israel is there for us when we need it. We must be there for Israel because she needs us now as never before."

On Saturday night, appetites satisfied, Pipe Major Iain Grant in full regalia, piped in Highland dancers Kirsty and Janice to the tunes of Flora McDonald's Fancy, and The Stinking trousers among others. Shul President Dr Philip Mason presented Jo

Wagerman, President of the Board of Deputies with a quaich. He in turn being presented with a gavel and block said "a real ruach has been blowing through Edinburgh this weekend and new friends have been kindled"

Later Ruth, Rachel, Hannah, and Samuel jazzed it up and Peter and Shirley Bennett serenaded the company with Scottish Ballads. Flo Kaufman', Treasurer of the Board giving the vote of thanks said "What you lack in quantity you certainly make up for in quality"

At the Plenary meeting the following day, Senior Vice President Henry Grunwald and Neville Nagler presided at the meeting. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, Margaret Curran MSP and Nigel Griffiths, MP were Scottish representatives.

Alan Senitt. Chairperson for UJS spoke of the increase of anti-Semitism on campus and appealed to everyone to have the confidence to stand up to attacks such as the one experienced by the only Jewish student on one of their anti-war demonstrations which was also very anti-Zionist. Alan said "she stood up to speak against it knowing that she was liable to receive a tirade of hate towards her...somebody screamed 'You are a fascist, you are a terrorist you are a Zionist, you have no right to be in this University'" Alan cited a number of vicious incidents against Jewish students and their property and said also that "Leaflets have been distributed by pro Palestinian Demonstrators using American Nazi propaganda" Ending on a more positive note however, Alan said that they were educating young people about Jewish Issues, they had stalls and T-shirts and more important they also had non-Jewish supporters.

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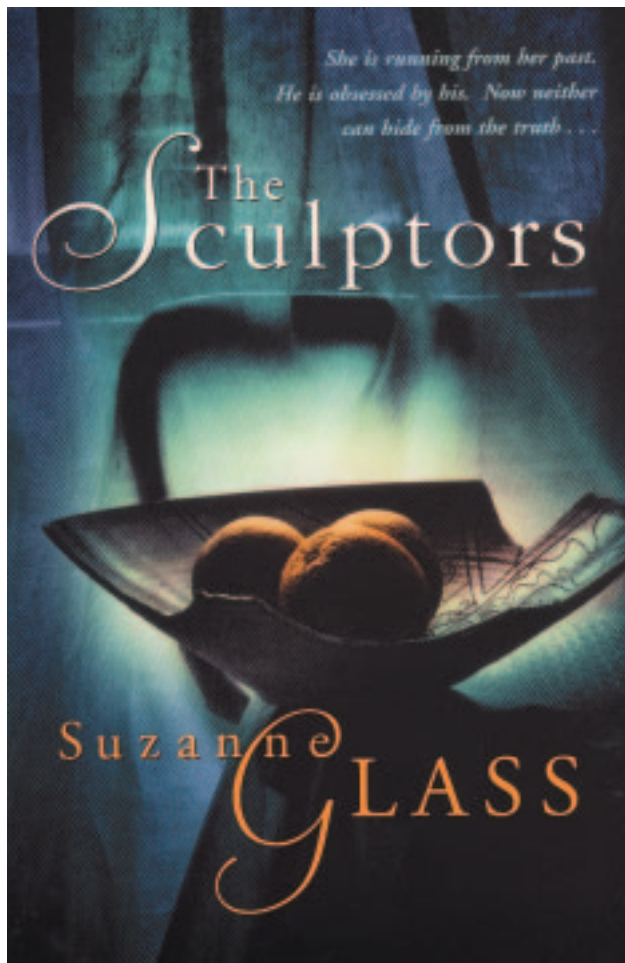
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Book Review

Review by Judy Gilbert of: **The Sculptors by Suzanne Glass**



This is the second publication by Edinburgh born author Suzanne Glass. Her first was 'The Interpreter'. Glass has used her linguist skills to weave in and out of 'heroine' Sarit's multi-cultural experiences. As a child Sarit lives on a Kibbutz and in adulthood, Chicago. Viennese is the language of her father Max, and Egyptian that of her lover the sculptor Ramsi. Glass sprinkles the novel throughout with Hebrew and German, sometimes Arabic, Spanish and French and there is a compelling desire to attempt translation before the author herself has obliged us with the actual meaning.

Clearly the story leans toward the world of art and Glass paints vivid contextual pictures in our mind, but it is not as simplistic as the title seems

to indicate. We are caught up in a many faceted plot which delves into the minds of seriously disturbed people, whose lives have been influenced by the tragedy of others.

Sarit is the child of a holocaust survivor Max, who witnessed the destruction of his family and who loses himself in his art. His small daughter has inherited his artistic talent which he nurtures obsessively. Max though deeply attached to his daughter, is prepared to sacrifice their close relationship if she denies fulfilling what he believes to be her full potential as an artist.

The theme of obsession is reinforced on many occasions. In her effort to escape her father's domination over her future career, Sarit becomes a plastic surgeon; effectively a

sculptor of the living body. Through many twists and turns she becomes involved with a genuine sculptor whose passion is to recreate the mysterious and beautiful face of Nadia over and over again. The sculptor's identity, and that of his subject, are both kept tantalisingly secret so that one itches for the final revelation. And secrecy is yet another theme in this unfolding of events. Sarit is commissioned to carry out surgery which would require the utmost discretion. Her task requires the drastic change of someone's physical identity.

Glass uses time very fluidly in recounting the individual history of events for each character. Occasionally past and present are so

inextricably entwined that passages must be reread to pick up the threads. Non-the-less very clever links are made between ideas to form a never ending circle. Change 'obsession' to 'addiction', then 'addiction' to 'drugs'. The traffic of these is carried out in beautiful ceramic containers. Indirectly, the handling of this business leads to the need for plastic surgery which once again directly involves Ramsi the sculptor. And what becomes of the once child prodigy who suppressed her artistic leanings to become a highly accomplished surgeon?

There is a moving on, and a satisfactory resolution where the ever simmering anger within the obsessed is finally assuaged.

"This talent. Yours to tempt and taint me, to draw me and withdraw from me. This talent of yours that is mine" These are words Sarit found on a crumpled piece of paper beneath a bronze lion under repair. Are they an omen? You are kept guessing until the final chapter.

Sculpting has been used metaphorically to describe how lives can be moulded and remoulded until the truth which lies at the heart of the process emerges. "We are all sculpted, each one of us," writes Glass "malleable in the hands of our first sculptors." The main characters are all strong willed, talented with great earning capacity. But they are un-materialistic and only searching for peace of mind. Although the reader is always aware of underlying struggles, Suzanne Glass offers many thought provoking concepts and the author has not allowed the plot to descend in to a pit of despondency from which there is no return. There is a moving on, and a satisfactory resolution where the ever simmering anger within the obsessed is finally assuaged.

Society Reports

Council of Christians and Jews

The Edinburgh Branch has had 5 formal meetings last session. The first 2, with speakers Judith Tankel, and Bishop Brian Smith, were reported in an earlier edition of the Star. A planned meeting on 20 March involving Rabbi Katanka had to be cancelled.

The remaining 3 meetings in the first part of 2003 were as follows:

16 January: Professor J C O'Neill
Professor O'Neill spoke about Jesus as teacher of the law, drawing on various New Testament and Jewish sources to argue that Jesus was a teacher of Jewish law in line with the tradition of the days. In order to defend his thesis he had to find evidence to argue away the incidences in the New Testament where apparently Jesus contradicted Jewish law. This Professor O'Neill achieved in a very skilled way by drawing on obscure Jewish sources, to show that Jesus was simply advancing a contrary, but nonetheless acceptable interpretation. This was a well attended talk which inspired a great deal of learned discussion in the audience. Sadly, Professor O'Neill has since passed away. He was a noted theologian who received a very full tribute in the Scotsman obituary, but to the CCJ he was a valued supporter and committee member who rarely missed a meeting. We mourn his passing and our condolences go to his wife and family.

20 February: Mrs Paula Cowan, University of Paisley and Scottish Association of Jewish Teachers
Paula Cowan described the challenge of teaching children in the age groups 10 to 12 and 12 to 14 about the Holocaust. She is the leading expert on Holocaust education in Scotland and has been commissioned by the Scottish Executive Justice Department to prepare teaching packs suitable for this age group, which have now been distributed to all Scottish schools. She illustrated her talk with extracts from the videos which she has prepared for inclusion in each of these teaching packs. The video for the

younger age group is of Revd Ernest Levy describing his personal story of Holocaust survival to a group at Calderwood Lodge. Revd Levy was taken from Hungary towards the end of the war and survived several concentration camps thanks to lucky encounters with people who helped him. He tells his story very vividly and without any rancour – indeed with affection for the unlikely helpers. The video for the older age group is of Marian Grant, another Glasgow based survivor, telling her story, intercut with historical information. Mrs Grant was a gifted artist and survived longer than many others in Auschwitz. Because she could draw so well, people helped her in return for her drawings. This included the notorious Dr Mengele who called her in to set out family trees for him in pen and ink. Eventually both Ernest and Marian ended up in Belsen from which they were liberated. The 2 survivor stories speak for themselves but it was particularly fascinating to hear from Paula how she constructed the wider teaching package round each story, so as to make it relevant to children in Scottish schools today.

15 May: AGM followed by Revd Kevin Pearson
At the AGM there was a brief report on the year's meetings and a treasurer's report. The office bearers were all re-elected apart from Mrs Rose Orgel who stood down as co-chair and was replaced by Rabbi Rose, who was unanimously elected. The other co-chair Mr Robert Munro, who chaired the AGM, paid a warm tribute to Rose Orgel for all the hard work she has done over many years to sustain the Edinburgh Branch. Rose stood down as secretary in 2002 after 14 years.

The speaker, Revd Kevin Pearson, the Rector of St Michael and All Saints Episcopal Church, Brougham Place, then gave a talk about his childhood in Sunderland. Father Kevin was brought up in an area regarded as the Golden Triangle, between 2 shuls and in the midst of a large Jewish community. When Father Kevin was

born, it was 1954, the end of rationing, and a time when Anglo-Jewry lived side by side with their Christian neighbours in a confident and relaxed atmosphere. There were 1500 Jewish families in Sunderland, making it a significant community of several thousand Jews that has now dwindled to some 50 individuals. The mayor was Jewish. Several businesses were owned by Jews, and the older Mr Pearson was close friends and associates with many Jewish businessmen who were also his neighbours. Mrs Pearson bought her gowns from a Jewish shop and met up with her Jewish friends at the hairdresser. Mr Pearson owned 3 shops and his biggest panic of the week was on a Friday morning when the wholesaler regularly failed to deliver the Jewish Chronicle in time for him to do the rounds of all his Jewish customers before Shabbos. They had to have their Chronicles before dark, or else. Father Kevin was obviously very nostalgic for his childhood community and friends. A high percentage of his schoolmates were Jewish and on a Friday afternoon, everyone wanted to be Jewish because in winter they could leave early! He was impressed by the confidence of the Jewish community and the way they kept their traditions without apology or embarrassment, inviting non-Jewish neighbours to share in their griefs and joys. He contrasted this with the position he recently observed in present day Bologna, of a shul with armed guards stationed on either side to protect Shabbos worshippers. What he described in Sunderland was a time capsule, that perhaps has not existed or survived in many other cities.

We have already started work on the programme for next year and could I please encourage members of the Jewish community to support the CCJ in 2003-4 so that we can have a real two-way exchange with our enthusiastic Christian friends!

Micheline Brannan - Secretary

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Session 2002-03

Report on the second half session

The opening meeting of the second half of the session was a fascinating account by Professor Philip Schlesinger, Director of the Stirling Media Research Institute, of the work of the German-born writer W G Sebald. Sebald, who had died just about a year before in a car accident, and whose work really started to come to public attention in the 90's, wrote particularly on the theme of exile. He himself had elected to leave Germany to settle in England, in part because he felt that he could not bear the climate of denial in his home town after the events of the Second World War. As a displaced person himself, all his books echo this idea and the damage it does to people who undergo displacement. In his book 'Austerlitz', the story slowly assembles the fractured life of its main character, Jacques Austerlitz, who represents the individual whose life has been damaged and diminished by forced displacement.

Owen Dudley Edwards, an old friend of the Lit, was the next speaker and gave us a talk with the extraordinary title 'Scott, the Jews and the American Civil War'; one naturally wondered what on earth connected these. The talk began with a provocative quotation from Mark Twain with the apparently extraordinary thesis that Scott was responsible for the American Civil War. Preposterous, but then the explanation for this claim emerged and maybe it had an iota of sense in it. Scott was widely read and held in high esteem in mid nineteenth century America. But whereas the northern states of the Union took all the pomp and circumstance in Scott's writing with an ample dose of salt, the southern states fed on the ideas and puffed themselves up with such pretension. To the point that they viewed as a great insult that they should even contemplate ceasing to lord it over their slaves...and in that, lay the seeds of five years of civil war. And where did the Jews fit into all this? Owen Dudley Edwards then fixed particularly on the book Ivanhoe, and stated that the main theme of the book was not chivalry, as is generally portrayed, but persecution, the persecution of the Jews, which runs

like an ugly thread throughout the full duration of the book. And this point was well understood by Harriet Beecher Stowe, who, almost certainly influenced by Ivanhoe, wrote her own book, Uncle Tom's Cabin, on the persecution of the blacks. Her message was well received in the North but not in the South, and thus the story comes full circle. The talk, given without notes and with Owen's characteristically immensely energetic style, was widely regarded as a tour de force.

The penultimate talk of the session was given by our own Dr Ari Kummer. Ari is a native of Austria, who has converted to Judaism, having been in contact with and influenced by many Jewish friends he had during his secondary education at the Lycée in Vienna. He had recently been back in Vienna and gave us an account of the Jews in Austria, starting from their historic origins, mentioning the recent excavation of a 13th century synagogue in Vienna, and tracing their history right up to the present day through their gradual emancipation during the 19th century and the downturn in their fortunes that began with the start of the 20th century. Despite recent unpalatable political events in Austria, his assessment of the present position was remarkably up-beat, revealing to us a lively community growing in numbers and confidence. His presentation not only brought Austrian Jewry up to the 21st

century, but it also brought the Lit there too; Ari used Power-point technology, a real coup.

Our final talk was by Dr Sharman Kadish on synagogue architecture. An excellent talk illustrated with many attractive slides. We had something of a review of synagogues in Great Britain and learnt that their architecture followed no particular style or philosophical tenets; rather, their exteriors at least, largely followed architectural fashion, and indeed the foibles of their often non-Jewish builders. Despite or because of this, there was a substantial stock of interesting buildings, which had served or continue to serve as synagogues. The former constitutes something of an ongoing headache for preservationists; what to do with former synagogues, now out of use, often for demographic reasons, which are important examples of particular architectural styles; communities are frequently in no position to maintain them, and presently there is no policy of how to deal with looking after these buildings.

It is my view that the Lit enjoyed a year of very good talks. Following the AGM, Avery Meiksin takes over as President supported by Lewis Stevens and David Ellison as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. We wish them every success for the Lit in the coming session.

Tony Gilbert (President 2002-2003)



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Obituaries



Ian Brodie 1946– 2003

With his beaming smile and mischievous nature Ian Brodie was a popular and well-loved character in the Edinburgh Jewish community. His contribution to the community was substantial having served on the management committee of the old Communal Hall (along with his wife Norma), the Synagogue Council and the Jewish Burial Society.

As an Edinburgh 'cabbie' for over 30 years Ian was also a familiar face around the taxi-ranks, hotels and railway stations of the City and his great love of Freemasonry brought him into contact with many masonic brethren near and far. All who came into contact with him couldn't fail to be captivated by his charm and sense of fun.

Ian was born in Edinburgh in 1946, the first child of Hannah (Nan) and Morris Brodie. Educated at Melville College he followed in his father's footsteps by entering the family dress-wear hire business, later opening his own shop in Elm Row where he developed an additional tailoring and alteration service. It was when Morris was granted the (then) rare facility of a taxi licence by Edinburgh City Council, that Ian joined his father in the cab business. It wasn't long before Ian himself was also granted his own hackney licence. He always loved his work in the taxi often telling fascinating stories of his passengers.

Ian married Norma Leigh in August

1968 and set up their first home in Marchmont. They had two sons, Simon and Daniel and enjoyed a traditional Jewish household. They adopted an 'open-house' policy often welcoming visitors to the community from all over the world. As a loving and caring father Ian delighted in his children taking pleasure in their achievements. Later, as a proud grandfather, his happiness was fulfilled in the love of his three granddaughters.

Ian grew up in the heart of the Edinburgh Jewish community and always remained a central part of it. His obliging nature and readiness always to lend a hand meant that, when Ian was not serving on any of the community committees, he was often behind the scenes helping out in whatever ways were required.

As soon as he was old enough Ian followed in his family tradition of joining Lodge Solomon. He embraced Freemasonry fully and it quickly became one of his great loves. Ian enjoyed his masonic career eventually becoming one of the central motivating figures in the lodge. He had the honour of serving as Right Worshipful Master of the Lodge for a total of five years; a record matched by only one other person. Ian also served for many years as Honorary Treasurer of Lodge Solomon and was one of the main driving forces behind the annual Ladies Night functions. Ian was recently bestowed the considerable distinction of 'Proxy Master' of a masonic lodge in South Africa; an honour of which he was most proud as it was a country so loved and often visited by himself and Norma. Indeed, Ian had arranged a special visit to the lodge in South Africa later this year.

Ian's love of his fellow man and his desire to help others further manifested itself when he served on the Children's Panel for a few years. There he counselled young offenders and tried to give guidance to the less fortunate youth. For years, Ian had experienced problems with asthma and minor health issues related to overweight. Recently, however, he made a great

and successful bid to reduce weight, losing around seventy-five pounds in 18 months. Ian felt a new man and enjoyed good health again. As part of his healthy lifestyle, he became interested in the sport of scuba diving, a hobby that fascinated him and which he adopted fully as a stimulating pastime. It is heartbreaking therefore, that his love of this sport and his absolute enjoyment of its many facets sadly resulted in such tragic consequences.

Ian Brodie will always be remembered for his effervescent character, love of people and great joy of life.

Ian Brodie was born on 24th January 1946 and died on 10th May 2003.



Dora Roberts (Nee Packter)

1927 - 2003

Dora was born in Edinburgh in 1927 the younger daughter of Wolf and Jeanie Rebecca (Sheine Rivkah) Packter. Jeanie had emigrated from the shtetl of Meshad in the Pale of Settlement of Lithuania in the early 1900s with her parents Dvora May and Michael Segal, her brothers Moshe, Asher and Leibe and sister Esther.

Dora attended Sciennes Primary and Boroughmuir Secondary School where she excelled in all disciplines. After leaving school at sixteen, Dora filled a number of posts as a Personal Assistant in both Edinburgh and London. In 1956 she married Sydney Roberts and settled down in Glasgow where she remained until her death. Dora and Sydney shared almost 47

years together during which time they raised three children who understood the meaning of family and roots to the degree that they still feel a great sense of nostalgia for Edinburgh and have wonderful memories of summers spent at their Bobba Sheine Rivkah's house on Buccleuch Street.

Dora lived a very full Jewish life in Glasgow and was very active with the League of Jewish Woman and WIZO. She had a great love of Jewish community life and particularly enjoyed cultural activities such as public lectures and Yiddish classes. Our family grew up in the South Side of Glasgow where our home was a haven for friends from all the youth groups that Dora so greatly encouraged us to attend. Many actually believed that our house was Hillel House in Glasgow!

Dora partially filled a void in her academic life by attaining a qualification in Secretarial Studies as a mature student and subsequently filled many roles as a PA, one of which was for a Glasgow Rabbi. In a eulogy to Dora delivered by this Rabbi, he

remarked that he would often encourage Dora to spend time with his children affording her the opportunity to share with them pearls of wisdom from the secular world. In many ways, this typified what Dora was about - she could offer great insight and wisdom to those in need.

Arguably Dora's greatest asset was her humour. All those who knew Dora would remember her as always having a joke to tell - when she told a joke, you had to laugh whether it was funny or not - to not laugh was to hear it repeatedly until you did laugh! This was Dora's way of facing the realities of life and no more so than in her courageous battle against innumerable illnesses she suffered for 14 years. Dora faced this period in her life with great dignity, optimism, humour and an indomitable spirit. Although Dora spent most of her life in Glasgow, Edinburgh never ceased to be her spiritual home. Dora would reminisce about her childhood; her strolls in The Meadows, her picnics in the Blackford Hills, her memories of the Shul, her immediate and extended family with all their quirks.

On return visits to Edinburgh, she would become particularly animated and loved visiting old haunts with a particularly morbid fascination for visiting Jewish cemeteries! She was an avid reader of the Edinburgh Star to the extent that she would often sit buried with her head in it at the expense of her hosts! Dora had an incredible sense of family and her in-depth knowledge of complex family relationships was truly remarkable. It delights us to know that she lived to see the Rifkind family reunion held in Edinburgh a few years ago.

Dora will be best remembered for her dignity, courage, humour, empathy to others and for her great sense of duty to her family and to the wider community. She is survived by her husband Sydney, her sons Anthony and Jonathan, her daughter Angela and granddaughter Rachel. May her sweet soul live in everlasting peace.

Anthony & Jonathan Roberts and
Angela Zuckerman (nee Roberts)

Dear Editor

I am writing to express a few thoughts on the fall of the membership of the Edinburgh congregation following articles in the recent edition of the Edinburgh Star. Of course this is a national problem if not a western world concern.

I am not known to many of the Jewish community but I am Jewish, though not religious, I am not a believer but I am proud of my background. I would like to offer a proposal which you may or may not think it is worth considering. First though I would like to make a few comments on the current community and risk their wrath!

The Edinburgh community as I see it is not at all orthodox, they select only the laws of Judaism that suits their lifestyle in this modern world. Many will not have non Kosher food in their house but would eat it outside the

home. There are many who work on the Sabbath and a number who drive to the synagogue. It would not surprise me if some watch television on a Friday night. I have a brother-in-law who is what I consider orthodox, he wears tsitzes and dovans with the tefillin as duty requires.

He respects my views and I respect his. My point is, times have changed and we must move on and that is where my proposal comes in. This and other religions must now come into the 21st century. Arranged marriages for example, were at one time normal but they are now almost a thing of the past.

What I am proposing is not that the synagogue should be liberal but that the community is liberal as I have already indicated. My proposal is that an association could be formed of families with partners who have married out of the faith. They could

be associate members of some sort contributing in a small financial way to the running costs of the community.

All sorts of activities could be arranged for the whole community such as some which already exist and others like picnics, possibly a bridge section, activities for children and many others no doubt. I'd like to think that in such an association all members would be treated as equals.

I understand a lot of these comments will upset many of the community and to them I apologise but I am reasonably confident that many will share my view.

Stan Rose

Coming Events

August 2003

31 Sunday

Community Centre Committee

Arthur Kleinberg bread making demonstration.

Challah-making evening with supper.

September 2003

7 Sunday

Limmud Scotland

'Take Another Step'

Mark your diaries for an exciting day at Limmud Scotland. Already there are over 50 presenters lined up, including Nicholas Winton, the 'British Schindler', columnist Geoffrey Alderman and IT legal expert Richard Susskind.

For a taste of the atmosphere and flavour of Limmud, John Danzig and Scott Chase write below about their experiences at the five-day event last December at Nottingham University.

Last December I went on a journey. I went with my 17 year old son and it was one of the most extraordinary Jewish experiences I have ever had. For five days I entered a voyage of discovery about my Jewishness at Limmud. There was an extraordinary choice of activities with over 300 presenters and 670 sessions. The sessions never presumed any particular level of religious observance. The culture was to listen, to challenge and to ask. I was given

the opportunity of expressing my own Jewish identity. It was okay to challenge... and it was okay to be who you are within groupings of considerable diversity in orthodoxy.

Limmud is a charitable organisation without a denominational or political agenda. It believes that there is an opportunity for every Jew, across the range of beliefs, experience and practices, to contribute to and to gain from the experience.

The one-day event on Sunday 7 September 2003 at the Gilmorehill Centre, University of Glasgow, offers a microcosm of the exciting choice of activities at the five-day event but with all the energy.

Stay updated at: www.limmud.org.

Follow the link to:
www.limmud.org.uk/oneday/Scotland/OneDay/

A bus is being hired to take Edinburgh folk "through" to Glasgow on 7 September (and bring them back).

If you are interested in securing a place on the Learning Bus, then please contact Elaine at:
0131-229-5541 or
elaine.samuel@ed.ac.uk

November 2003

2 Sunday

Community Centre Committee

Israeli Dancing

December 2003

13 Saturday

Community Centre Committee

Winter Ceilidh

Junior Maccabi meets on alternate Sundays from 1pm to 3pm.

For further information, contact Joel Raffel (229 5541) or Samuel Danzig (229 3054).

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact above.

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

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

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



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