

THE EDINBURGH

STAR

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Hashoah

Pesach: Israel, US

Special needs

Resurrection?

The young input

Society/Community

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Contents

The Edinburgh Star

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Cover Picture

Holocaust Memorial: Philadelphia

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Association of Jewish Refugees – Elaine Pomeranski & Philip Mason	2
Alec Rubenstein; a venerable nonagenarian – Ian Shein	4
Around and About/Shein Scene	6
Divrei Torah	
Youth service – Sarah Levy	8
Bat Mitzvot – Erika Budd, Emilie Fauveau	9
The place to spend Pesach – Micheline Brannan	12
Philadelphia Story – Anthony Gilbert	14
Edinburgh through American Eyes – Tali Joan Segal	14
An Edinburgh placement in Politics – Ben Breezy	16
Resurrection or Resuscitation – Sassoon Judah	16
Our Child with Special Needs	
Netanel – Rabbi David & Elisheva Mason	18
Andrew – Jane, Robbie and Isaac Ansell and Janet Mundy	20
Society Reports	
Vivien Andrew – In my fathers footsteps – Philip Mason	22
AJR – Philip Mason, Jonathan Kish	22
EJLS – Steve Engleman, Avery Meiksin, Maurice Naftalin, Elaine Samuel	22
Naomi Alderman – Avery Meiksin	23
Rabbi Mark Solomon – Maurice Naftalin	23
Lodge Solomon – Philip Mason	24
WIZO – Sylvia Donne, Pearl Shein	25
Reviews – John A Cosgrove	26
Obituary	28
German Konditorei – Hannah Holtschneider	29
Announcements	

Thank you

The Edinburgh Star wishes to thank all the recipients of this community magazine for their positive response to our letter in the last edition. You will find a Standing Order form once again, for your convenience. All that needs to be done is to sign it and hand it into your bank.

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From the Editor

The Edinburgh Community was very taken aback and worried when it learned that Rabbi David Rose, a man of many parts, was taken into hospital just before Pesach. In complete character, our very hospitable Rabbi was less concerned about his health and more concerned that he would not have

I was going to stick to light, non-controversial issues this time, but alas, at the eleventh hour am unable to keep my resolution. We all thought that we lived in a democratic country and that at least our press could be fair to another democratic country. It would be understandable if the press would be economical with the truth, if it were crucial to our own safety. But how does it serve our interest to persist in this witch-hunt of Israel? The NUJ have really shown their true colours, and this time the journalists' union has gone too far. I am, of course, talking about the proposed boycott of Israeli goods in response to their 'savage pre-planned attack on Lebanon, and slaughter of civilians in Gaza'. It appears that attack on Israeli civilians is only a consequence of their own recklessness, but attacks on the Palestinians are quite inexcusable and reprehensible, no matter what the provocation. The NUJ conveniently forget the attacks from Gaza immediately following the Israeli pull-out in 2005, turning a blind eye to the continuous appearance of suicide bombers and the failure to release victims of kidnap, pushing negotiations further and further away with extreme and impossible terms. This latest expression of a partisan stance is the last straw for many erstwhile faithful members of the NUJ and many have thankfully voted with their feet.

It only takes one person with an agenda to start the ball rolling and the truth behind a rumour takes second place, whether it is false reportage as in the above, or something which I found myself caught up in. Shortly before the commemoration and remembrance of victims of the Holocaust, I found a round robin email on my desktop. I rarely take a second look at these communications, but this one was difficult to ignore. According to the message, schools would no

longer be teaching children about the Holocaust as it had a potential for causing offence. To whom? A few weeks earlier it had been inferred that Muslims would feel offended for some reason, but we were all satisfied when representatives of this community hotly denied such accusations and investigations showed this to be true. But here it was again. An email with such convincing arguments and evidence that I felt I could not ignore it. I felt torn between breaking my rule and denying my own murdered family. Finally I forwarded the information to 10 people. One person had the sense to find out more about it and sent me irrefutable evidence of this rumour being without foundation. Having originally been told that 40,000 people would eventually be informed of the new educational policy, I was horrified at what I had been a party to and what a dangerous environment we live in. Not only were we helping to victimise innocent people, but also we might just be helping to ignite flames that were never there in the first place.

By constantly accusing people of not acknowledging past atrocities sufficiently, we are desensitising people, with the consequence of doing a disservice to victims of the past and possible victims of the future. In fact a great deal is taught in Holocaust education and done in commemoration.

Although it was really too late to do much about it, I felt duty bound to

so many people at his Seder! Happily he has recovered sufficiently to be amongst us again and wearing the many hats of his numerous involvements, not least that of board member of the Edinburgh Star. We all wish him a complete recovery and continuing good health in the future.

forward the new information, with my own apology, to the 10 original recipients, if only to salve my own conscience. It has certainly cured me of looking at round robins.

This edition highlights some of our own community's small but significant involvement with Holocaust commemorations. We celebrate the longevity of one of our oldest and most respected community members, Alec Rubenstein, and sadly remember a staunch member of the past, Eva Erdelyi, who recently passed away.

We are glad to bring the lightness of holiday recollections of visitors from abroad, and of our own in the other direction. Additionally, our youth feature strongly once again, and this month, two tender pieces on the long overdue subject of 'special needs' are brought to light. Also we include a thought provoking theme about Jesus in which both sensitivity and insensitivity are equally apportioned between Jews and gentiles.

Finally we bring you the raison d'être of this magazine, our community with all its news. A special thank you is expressed for the wonderful response to our letter in the last edition, which, if honoured annually, will mean the continuation of the Edinburgh Star in its present form.

Judy Gilbert

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Next Copy date: Tuesday 31st July

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

Association of Jewish Refugees – Edinburgh Group

Scotland's 2007 National Holocaust Memorial Day Event Kirkcaldy 28th January 2007

Elaine Pomeranski and Philip Mason

Around midday on Sunday 28th January, many members of the AJR Edinburgh Group, some of whom were Holocaust survivors, were transported by mini bus, kindly paid for by the Association of Jewish Refugees, to Kirkcaldy where this year's Scottish National Holocaust Memorial Day Event was held.

We had all been kindly invited by Fife Council to attend the grand finale of what had been an incredible 3-week long Festival of drama, exhibitions, creative workshops and films, all of which had been presented to make young people, schools and the wider community in Scotland more aware of the Holocaust and how an understanding of one of the most tragic events in human history can help us deal with contemporary issues such as racism and discrimination that unfortunately still pervade our society today, more than 60 years since the end of the war. What really touched all our hearts was when we heard that the inspiration for the whole Festival had come from pupils of three Fife High Schools who had visited Auschwitz in November 2005. Their desire to pass on the experiences of their trip to others resulted in the setting up of an action group, the Auschwitz Experience Group, which with support from schools and teachers, Fife Council Services and the Anne Frank Trust UK, led to the development of the 3-week Festival.



Centre: Sitakumari (director of Heartstone)

We all thus looked forward to spending a day experiencing some of the different activities that had been organised for the Festival. From the time we arrived at the Adam Smith College

we were very well looked after. We were met at the door by our hosts, Fife Council, provided with refreshments and given time to peruse two exhibitions, the Anne Frank + You Exhibition and the Testimony Exhibition. The former had only been seen once before in Scotland and featured the voices and experience of young people in Britain today juxtaposed against the voices, hopes and experiences of Anne Frank and others in hiding in Amsterdam at the time of the Holocaust. The latter in contrast, had been developed through funding from the Scottish Executive. It presented photographic images of Auschwitz interspersed with testimonies of Holocaust survivors who had found refuge in Scotland following the war, some of whom had travelled on the AJR mini-bus and were so pleased to see their personal testimonies incorporated into the Testimony Exhibition for the first time.

We then sat down together with others who had received special invitations to listen to Anne Frank's cousin, Bernd 'Buddy' Elias, who recalled the happy times they spent playing together before the outbreak of the war. He remembered Anne as a lively, playful child. As he had lived together with his family in Switzerland he had fortunately survived the war. He recalled how after the war Anne's father, Otto, who had been liberated from Auschwitz in January 1945, recovered Anne's diary which the Nazis had fortunately not removed from the secret annex where the Frank family had hidden, believing it not to be valuable. How wrong that proved. However he felt that his cousin, Anne, had she survived, would have been disappointed with what has happened in the world since 1945. For this reason Buddy Elias now dedicates his life, as President of the Anne Frank Foundation, to supporting international initiatives to promote peace and understanding.

As the next event of the afternoon was at a different venue, we were again well looked after and taken to it by mini-bus. At the Council Chamber in the Town House we witnessed an engrossing and moving theatre production, Dr Korczak's Example, which had been specially created for a young persons' and family audience by Dundee Rep Theatre. Set in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 and based on fact, it portrayed the gripping real-life events surrounding this famous Polish paediatrician's attempt against all odds to run an orphanage for Jewish children on moral and just lines when all the boundaries of decency, tolerance and respect for other human beings had in the world outside broken down. His attempt to maintain justice, tolerance and humanity in the face of totalitarian oppression, however, came to an abrupt ending in the gas chambers of Treblinka. Dr Korczak, in fact, refused the opportunity to save his own life and chose to die with the

children. Nevertheless, his groundbreaking work with children was discovered after his death and adopted by the United Nations as the basis for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For most of us who had travelled together by mini-bus the day to Kirkcaldy finished with a superb reception at which kosher refreshments were supplied by our very kind hosts. We went away so impressed by the youth of Fife who had been the catalyst for all the moving events we had witnessed – events which together sent out the message to all of us, whether young or old, that it is only by fully understanding the past that there is any hope for the future.

A few of the Edinburgh AJR Group did, however, stay on and experienced what they described as perhaps the most moving event they had ever witnessed. The evening began with a huge torchlight procession, which was piped along by a children's pipe band and passed by superb acrobats performing from the trees above. This very moving procession of individuals, families, youth groups and schools wound its way through Kirkcaldy to the closing ceremony at which the young people who had planned all the outstanding events and activities of the 3-week long Festival spoke of their visit to Auschwitz; saying it was something they would never forget for the rest of their lives and how for some it had in fact changed their lives. There followed music and drama from local schools, further tributes and experiences culminating in tearful thanks from Bernd 'Buddy' Elias and a final speech from MSP Rhona Brankin, the new Minister for Communities.

Those who made their way back to Edinburgh after experiencing such a memorable evening wished, like all of us who left earlier, to send out a message to our Fife hosts and the youth of Fife – thanks so much for such a memorable day and for emphasising the importance and need in today's society to show respect for all members of humanity.



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Alec Rubenstein

A venerable nonagenarian

Ian Shein

At a Kiddush given by the community on 10 March in honour of Alec Rubenstein's 90th birthday, Hilary Rifkind, Chair of the Synagogue Board of Management, and Mickey Cowen, Honorary Life President, spoke of Alec's long and tremendous contributions to the life of the community. Alec thanked them for their comments and to all who attended to offer him mazel tov. He thanked his wife Pearl for the great support and guidance she had given him over so many years in various offices and then stood by an old adage of "listen, speak up and shut up". The latter is in truth somewhat alien to Alec's nature and he laughed when I put this to him. His response that "there is no point in agreeing just for the sake of agreeing" sums up this tall, distinguished figure of a man well belying his years.



In June 2001 when he was a mere stripling of 84, I interviewed Alec and Pearl for an article for the "Edinburgh Star" when their full contributions to the community were highlighted. Six years on, I found Alec still very much of an individual perhaps slightly more mellow but retaining strong views on a variety of subjects. With regards to the Edinburgh Jewish Community, he has "high hopes for its future but observed the unfortunate decline in membership and its consequential affect on Shul attendance. It however is still vibrant with willing participants offering so much in time and effort. This can clearly be seen by the new energetic Board of Management". Comments by him several years ago on the viability of our community have some validity today. "There has been a decline in many small provincial Synagogue memberships but I find Edinburgh resilient and has the necessary capacity, cohesion and commitment".

When asked about Reform Jewry, "one could not ignore this, but being a traditionalist, I would wish to see traditional Orthodox services continue in our Synagogue. Perhaps in the future, one might of necessity see some form of relationship develop between the two but one cannot foretell".

He is a most regular attendee, closely following the service with the lifetime of experience, which has imbued him with all aspects of Jewish learning. His background has helped shape his knowledge and appreciation of Jewish ritual. Alec has

been heavily involved in communal affairs for many years and has been Secretary, Treasurer and President of the congregation and until last year Hon. Vice-President. "I enjoyed this position as previous experience in high office, allows you a respectful response if you contribute to the variety of subjects that crop up". Although no longer Hon. Vice-President, Alec has no difficulty in finding and making outlets for his comments, sometimes contrary to majority view. "I don't mind being controversial...anyway I'm known for i,it's expected of me".

Voluntary duties have included Vice-chairman of the Chevra Kadeisha, at times performing sacred services at Piershill Cemetery, notifying members of yahrzeits and providing Memorial Boards in the Synagogue. He was a member of AJEX and the British Legion, the Board of Guardians and chairman of Bnei Brith. He is a prominent Freemason (see article by Philip Mason in this issue).

During the war he served for six years in the army and when stationed in Aberdeen conducted Friday evening services in the small Synagogue. Posted to a Bomb Disposal unit, his duties included training American soldiers on bomb dismantling. He witnessed the devastating German air raids on Clydebank in 1941 when his unit defused a great number of unexploded bombs. Should this not satisfy an unconscious desire for excitement, he dived into a river in Glasgow to save a boy from drowning and was awarded the Royal Humane Society Testimonial Parchment. On demobilisation he went into business with relatives as an upholsterer before branching out on his own.

"I enjoy being able to participate whenever necessary and hope to continue to do so" is Alec's attitude to any given situation. This certainly applies not only to Synagogue services but extends to his secular interests, and no doubt to the game of bridge where he is acknowledged to be a first class player. He finds this to be "excellent relaxation as it keeps me going and allows me to think rationally". I am unsure whether his views in which he expresses himself forcibly and convincingly impinge on the foursome at bridge, but would be surprised were they not to do.

At the mature age of 90, Alec is truly a remarkable man. Not for him armchair lounging and the proverbial cup of cocoa but the more robust life of a man two decades younger. The "Edinburgh Star" wish him many happy returns with all good wishes and look forward to his continued good health and communal involvement for many years to come.

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Around and About

The Shein Scene



4 February

Just a Jewish Minute

A popular radio programme had its title slightly adjusted to make it more topical to the 50 who attended 'Just a Jewish Minute' in the Community Centre on 4 February. The valiant octet who attempted to talk on a given subject for a minute without repetition, hesitation or deviation at the expense of being interrupted by one of their number were Micheline Brannan, Carol Levstein, Elaine Samuel, Susie Kelpie, Jonathan Seckl, Jonny Sperber, Keith Gilroy and Tony Gilbert. The time keeper was Raymond Taylor and Betsy Dorfman the scorer. Subjects included holidays, finance and (inevitably) religion, and the hilarious evening resulted in the winner, Susie Kelpie, being awarded a most suitable, if not entirely original, prize of a small clock to remind her of her victorious minute. A very pleasant and amusing evening, chaired by John Danzig,



ended with an appetising meal and over £440 collected for the Community Centre funds.

It only remains for me to say thank you to these delightful players of the game.

16 March

Sabbath Eve Dinner

A most satisfactory introduction to Sabbath took place on Friday evening 16 March when 60 attended a dinner evening in the Community Centre. The Service in the Synagogue was conducted by David Goldberg in the absence of Rabbi Rose, before the congregation went down stairs to be welcomed by Chairman Hilary Rifkind who thanked everyone for attending what has proved to be a very popular function. A typical and most delightful Sabbath dinner was served by courtesy of the Events Committee. David benched in his inimitable manner, told jokes and thanked the ladies who had done so much to make the evening so entertaining and 'heimesha'. An interested and interesting visitor was Corinne Fauveau, the new Jewish French Consul to the city whose daughter Emilie was due to celebrate her Bat mitzvah at the weekend.

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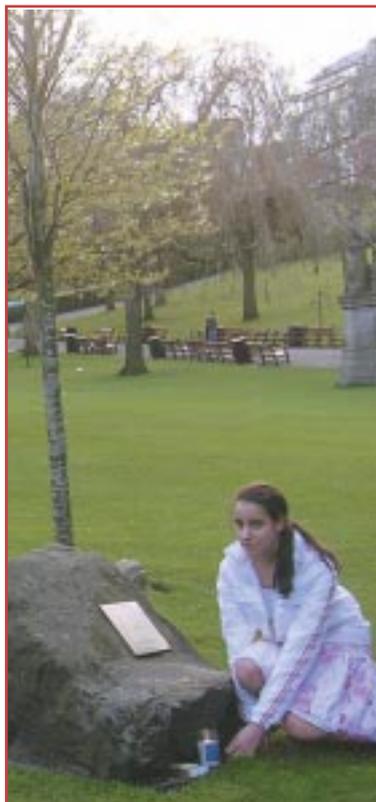
Purim at Edinburgh Shul

On Saturday night Rabbi Rose read the Megillah representing each character with a different headdress. A Seuda took place, followed by a talent show. Turns by a Klezmer duo, a drummer, a family band, joke and storytellers and a performance of the Purim story inspired by Manchester Madrichim and acted by all the children, delighted the congregation. On Sunday morning the end of the reading was enhanced by the ubiquitous fancy dress parade, which was won by a tiny Esther in the youngest group, and a giant Hamentaschen in the older category.



**15 April
Yom HaShoah**

A lovely spring evening enhanced the attractive East Princes Street Gardens Peace Park, which witnessed the annual Yom HaShoah service on 15 April. The vice-chairman of the Board of Management, Raymond Taylor, welcomed Lord Provost Leslie Hinds, Councillors Ewan Aitken and Ricky Henderson and 40 members of the community. He reminded all present that it was 11 years since the City Council had initiated the Memorial Stone and their attendance had been welcome at every service since. Lord Provost Hinds expressed her pleasure at again being able to attend, stating that the occasion must never be forgotten by anyone. A Memorial candle was lit by Katie Neville after which a minute's silence was held as respect for victims of the Holocaust. Rabbi David Rose and Mr. David Goldberg conducted the service reciting psalms, Yizkor, El Malei Rachamim and terminating with Mourners' Kaddish.



**23 April
Yom Ha'Atzmaut**

The annual Yom Ha'Atzmaut service to celebrate the 59th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel took place in the Synagogue on 23 April. Mincha and Maariv were conducted respectively by Arnold Rifkind and John Cosgrove. Rabbi Rose recited the Memorial Prayer for the Israeli Fallen Soldiers who had died in past conflicts and read the opening of Israeli's Declaration of Independence. The Shofar was blown by Raymond Taylor. Thereafter the congregation retired to the Community Centre where, before embarking on an appetising Israeli-style buffet augmented by Israeli salad prepared by Elaine Samuel, they were entertained to the playing of Hatikvah by the versatile cheder orchestra conducted by Michael Taylor. The evening continued with a melodic programme of Israeli songs sung by 'The Juo', two young men from south of the border making their first visit to Edinburgh. Hilary Rifkind, who previously welcomed the audience, offered thanks to The Juo, Elaine, all who attended and those behind the scenes who had helped make the evening so entertaining and successful.



Divrei Torah

Good Shabbos and Welcome

Sarah Levy

Welcome to all the visitors to our youth service and to the youth leaders.

In today's Parsha we hear the instruction:

"You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aaron your brother, for glory and splendour."

As we heard earlier from Jessica, the High Priests had very special requirements for their clothes. They had to wear the ephod, breastplate, robe, tunic, turban, belt, crown and pants. On the breastplate there were 12 stones each representing one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. These clothes must have been very expensive and were similar to those worn by royalty. Throughout the Torah, there are several mentions of special clothes. One example is Joseph's coat. His father and mother gave it to him to single him out and make him look special, but all that happened was that Joseph's brothers became jealous and sold him into slavery. Did the coat have a special purpose? In order for Joseph to be taken to Egypt, he had to antagonise his brothers. If this had not happened, Egypt and Israel would have succumbed to the famine.

Many jobs have a specific dress code, which can show members of the public what that person does. We recognise policemen on the street, or a fireman or a nurse from their clothes and wearing these clothes can affect people's opinion of you. For instance, people would respect a policeman because he was wearing uniform. Also, you would be far more likely to respect someone wearing a smart suit, than someone wearing tracksuit bottoms and a t-shirt.

People very often take their first opinion of someone, from what they are wearing.

Some clothes are symbolically bad.

People can use their clothes to hide behind. A law was enforced in many areas stating that hoods were not to be worn in public places. This law was made because some people were feeling intimidated by the "hoods". But how can you be scared of a person if you know nothing about them? The boy or girl behind the hood could be a perfectly nice and friendly youth. Items such as hoods have been given a bad reputation when they are just normal pieces of clothing.

Some of you might have wondered why Goths wear so much black clothing and wear white makeup. I have found out why from a Goth. This is what she said; "We wear dark clothing and makeup because we want you to see the makeup and be outraged by the clothes and not see the person behind it. We are hiding from the world." Like hoodies, Goths have a scary reputation. However, this particular Goth is a perfectly nice lady who works with my mum and dad. In fact, she used to dress up as Tailor Ted in the bear factory.

"Teenagers become Goths because they've had enough of the world."

Teenagers become Goths because they've had enough of the world. They just want to hide. They don't necessarily mean to scare people; they just don't want to be known. Some teenagers become completely brainwashed by what clothes they have, and how they look. You find that sometimes, a complete girly-girl will start dressing in tomboy clothes, just because everyone else does. Clothes can stop your true personality from shining through, or they can help it too. Even adults become obsessed by how they look. At my school, the 17 and 18 year olds are allowed to wear whatever

"everyone is different and nothing can change that"

they want, within reason. For the first few weeks after they are given this privilege, they wear their fanciest, best clothes, just because they can. But soon enough, they start wearing their normal, everyday clothes; clothes reflecting their personality. Most schools in Britain enforce a school uniform to ensure equality. But surely everyone is different and nothing can change that. Children can alter their hair-style or, more importantly, just act like themselves. If you really believe in yourself, you'll be happy and confident no matter what you're wearing.

At Purim, it is customary to dress up and act out the story of Purim. The idea of wearing costumes and hiding one's identity is a recurrent theme throughout Purim. For example, Esther and all the other candidates to be the King's wife were given a choice of clothing and makeup to wear and then, after being chosen as Queen, Esther hides her Jewish identity.

During Purim we have the chance to dress up and change our identity. A perfectly nice little girl can become Haman (or a princess, or pop star), just by putting on a costume.

This shows that clothes can sometimes help you to become someone else, and allows the chance to become something that in real life, we could never be. For this short time we are not worried about what people are thinking of us, because we are all dressed up as someone else and having fun.

However, clothes can also make us carry out actions that we wouldn't normally do. For instance, a soldier might feel that it is okay to kill because

they have uniform on. They feel that they can hide behind their job and do things that they would never consider doing normally.

As well as making you into a different person, clothes can allow you to increase your confidence. Many people find that wearing a certain outfit, or style of clothes, can make them more confident. Do you feel more confident in your best clothes or your scruffy clothes?

The clothes you wear can also affect your mood. Do you feel more spiritual when you put on your yarmulke and tallit or when you wear white on Yom Kippur?

Just remember, we should use clothes wisely. Wear what you want to wear, but don't become obsessed. Allow your clothes to bring out the best in you, not the worst.

Erika Budd

As I studied to become a Bat Mitzvah, which included reading my Parsha Bo, and learning to recite the 10 Commandments, I noticed that, like my mother's stress levels, recurring themes and topics kept coming up.

Commandments, Exodus and responsibility all seem to be important topics so I decided to look further into what they meant to me.

Parsha Bo describes the exodus of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. Pharaoh started to treat the Israelites cruelly and enslave them as a way of weakening them because he was afraid they were becoming too powerful. The Israelites were forced to build cities and monuments, construct roads, work in the quarries and carry stones.

The suffering of the enslaved Jewish people increased. Then, after 210 years of slavery in Egypt, when Moses was 80 years old and his brother Aaron was 83, they entered the palace of King Pharaoh to deliver a message:

"The G-d of Israel said, 'Let My people go, so that they may serve me.' Pharaoh did not believe in the G-d of the Israelites, and he refused to let the Jewish slaves go free.

When Pharaoh still refused to free the children of Israel, Moses warned him that G-d would punish him and his people with plagues. Each time Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites, G-d brought another plague on the Egyptians. In Bo, three plagues are described – locusts, a blanket of darkness and death of almost all the first born Egyptians and their beasts. After carrying out this last plague, G-d passed through the land of Egypt, but "passed over" Jewish homes. The Jewish nation was born and every Passover, we are 'commanded' to tell the Passover story of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. G-d commanded "And thou shalt tell thy son".

"The Jewish nation was born"

On the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan, the Jewish nation rose together to leave the land of Egypt.

During the Seder, Jews remember the story of the Exodus as if they themselves were going from slavery to freedom. We are commanded to eat matzo, or unleavened bread as a symbol of the speed in which the Jews left Egypt.

The whole idea of remembering the Exodus is so that we can tell our children of the importance of freedom and justice. We are commanded to pass on the story and its lessons from one generation to another. We are reminded that without G-d's tough demands on Pharaoh, we may not have been here today to tell the story of freedom.

The strength of G-d's power in bringing down Pharaoh was Pharaoh's reality check with a Capital R. This case of master and slave completely changed. We are reminded that even with the most powerful army in the world, there is always someone more powerful who can bring the evil power, dictator or even bully to justice. Pharaoh actually said to Moses "who is G-d that I should free this nation?" Pharaoh was on top of the world. Everything, until then had gone his way. He was a success. He was the

leader of the superpower of that time. As far as Pharaoh was concerned, you couldn't be any freer than he was. In the end justice won out, and he was forced to take responsibility for his cruel actions. So, though we may get away with it for now, eventually G-d's reality will win out. We only have to look at dictators in recent history who commit terrible human-rights abuses.

We are reminded of Saddam Hussein who, after years of being a horrible tyrant to his own people, was hanged a couple of weeks ago.

Also today, on National Holocaust Memorial Day, we remember that Hitler had ordered a program of mass extermination of the Jewish people. In 1945 Hitler was a frail and shaken man who had lost touch with reality. As the Russians closed in on Berlin in April of 1945, Hitler killed himself.

We are also reminded of a more recent topical subject. Jade Goody, of Celebrity Big Brother, recently came to light as being a racist and a bully. She made millions of pounds while achieving nothing. She was supposedly funny with her silly but likeable comments. In the end, justice caught up with Jade and now her career probably has come to an end. This just shows that Jade isn't a goody but a baddy. She has now shown to us what she is really like.

"She made millions of pounds while achieving nothing"

Like Pharaoh, Saddam, Hitler and even to a lesser extent, Jade, were all held responsible for what they did and were forced to take responsibility for their actions.

As a 'daughter of the commandment' I am starting my preparation for adult Jewish life as I begin to observe the commandments. I am reminded that as an adult, I am not only responsible for performing the commandments, but for my actions as well.

Ritual laws and sacrifice

Emilie Fauveau

The Book of Vayikra, which we started reading today, is concerned with the ritual laws and sacrifices. The book's emphasis is on purity and holiness. Today we heard about the various sacrifices that were brought to the Temple.

Interestingly, the word "sacrifice" is one of the poorest translations in all of the Torah. In English, a dictionary definition of the word "sacrifice" is to give up" or "lose something," and is often associated with suffering or having to do without. However, the Hebrew word *Korban* means, "that which brings closure". It is a joyful term, because it signifies that there is someone or something that can help us attain our goal.

Great emphasis is placed on the fact that the Kohanim were responsible for the sacrifices once the animals were brought to the Temple and there are detailed explanations as to how and why each sacrifice is made.

Since the times of the *Mishkan* in the desert, the Kohanim were expected to uphold a higher level of sanctity than the rest of the nation. By performing the *avodah*, the sacrificial work in the Temple, they were the people's connection to God. Similarly, they were God's personal "representatives" within the nation, serving as spiritual role models as well as community leaders. In the Parsha Tzav, next week, we read about the specific *korbanot*, or sacrifices, offered upon the inauguration of Aaron and his sons into the Priesthood. Moshe places the blood of the special inaugural sacrifice upon the ear, the thumb, and toe of each Aaron and his sons. What does this signify, and what does it have to do with my becoming a Bat Mitzvah?

Just as Aaron and his sons were installed as the Priests in the Temple during this ceremony, I am becoming a responsible member of this community and of the Jewish People. I am now an adult member of Israel, and have obligations to fulfil. In trying to fulfil them, I must ask myself, is there a message from Aaron's inauguration that I can take into my life? In that ceremony, blood was placed on three body parts.

First, blood was placed on the ear.

Aaron and his family were not necessarily expected to know everything about Jewish law. Rather, their ears were consecrated so they would understand that by listening, they could learn of the traditions and expectations of Judaism upon them. I too must listen to the Rabbi and my family in order to learn about my Jewish heritage.

Next the thumb was anointed.

What sets Man apart from most of the animal kingdom is his opposable thumb. This feature allows us to perform many acts that other creatures cannot. The message here is that we must use our gifts, talents, and skills in such a way that our actions are sanctified.

I too will remember that I have my talent that I have to use in order to improve my life and the life of others.

"the big toe gives us balance when we walk"

And Finally, the big toe.

Like the opposable thumb which makes grasping possible, the big toe gives us balance when we walk.

King Solomon in Proverbs (3:5) says, "in all your ways acknowledge Him". When we walk in the street, God's glory should be visible to us, so that people who see us may say, "there goes a person who is holy and whose actions are sacred; that is someone who is a complete individual. By anointing the toe it is also suggested that we continually move to serve Hashem.

The Hebrew word for the inauguration is "Milu'im", or installation, but the commentaries say that several times it is spelled "mi'lay'im, meaning, "which makes complete".

I too would strive to bring balance between the material and spiritual part of my life.

Though I am not a complete and perfect human being today, I have my whole life ahead of me to strive for greater and nobler goals, the Torah gives me the tools I need to get there.

I will not be like the sacrificial animal being offered with no say in its future and walking without resistance to its fate. By learning about my heritage, and acting in a manner consistent with a person of spirituality, I can become not only a successful Bat Mitzvah, but also a better human being.

I will add a few words in French.

En conclusion, je voudrais ajouter que c'est un grand honneur pour moi de faire ma Bat Mitzvah avec une Paracha d'une telle importance.

En plus de l'expiation et du sacrifice, il y a d'abord l'appel de Dieu à Moïse, appel qui donne le nom à tout le Levitique et à cette Paracha.

Cet appel est considéré par Rachi comme flatteur pour Moïse, en l'appelant par son nom avant de lui adresser la parole, Dieu marque son affection et l'estime qu'il ressent pour lui.

C'est ici que Dieu ordonne à Moïse de désigner aux enfants d'Israël les lois de l'impureté et de la pureté et de les instruire sur le culte des sacrifices.

C'est une Paracha importante pour chacun d'entre nous et je vous remercie tous d'être avec moi, ici, aujourd'hui, et plus particulièrement encore ma famille,

Ma famille et mes amis, vous qui n'avez pas; hésité à venir d'Israël, d'Autriche, et de France pour partager avec moi cette journée tellement importante qui marque une nouvelle étape de ma vie.

Shabbat Shalom

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The Place to spend Pesach

Micheline Brannan

My sister Gillian, brother in law Stuart, their 4 children, my mother and I spent Pesach in the Daniel Hotel at Ein Bokek. I could not believe the transformation of Israel since my last visit 18 years ago. Ein Bokek itself did not then exist. Now taxi drivers take a nauseogenic winding route from Arad down to the Dead Sea and you find yourself in an oasis of hotels, Ein Gedi palms, swimming pools, lawns, bougainvillea, jasmine and hibiscus, shopping malls and restaurants. It has everything, including tourist information, Eged bus terminal, and stations for Magen David Adom and the police. There are about 9 recently built, luxurious hotels along the coast. It is like being in Sochi or Yalta, because the main language on the street, in the shops, and among the hotel workers, is Russian. The Dead Sea could be the Black Sea!

My last experience of a hotel Seder in Israel was dire. No one paid any attention to the Hagaddah but concentrated on demolishing all the food on the table down to the shank bones and the burnt eggs. What a long way they have come! Everyone (more or less) paid attention to the Seder and sang along. The children were marched out conga style to 'cross the Red Sea'. Food at the hotel was so lavish that no one was tempted to devour shank

bones or burnt eggs. The meal when it came included 5 types of fish dish and groaning trenchers of chicken and beef for which no one had any room. That pretty well set the pattern for the whole 9 days.

Our hotel was geared up to providing the most problem-free Pesach, no matter your degree of frumkeit, no matter whether you wanted to keep one day Chag, two or none. Our travel agent's block booking included full board on all festive days, a refreshment room, and vouchers for all sorts of snacks, which were in any case cheap by UK standards, given that Sterling is so strong.

The fresh water swimming pool with ample sunbeds, kept children busy, while adults could relax in the Spa, with its Dead Sea pool, warm pool, hot pool and Jacuzzi, and for modest extra fees could have a mud wrap, or a massage. No need to go down to the horrible (to my mind) Dead Sea beach, (which is in any case receding at a metre a year; you now need a bus to get from Ein Gedi beach to the actual sea).

Danny and Debbie Sinclair were just along the road at the Meridien David Hotel, where Rabbi Sinclair occupied a double bill with the Chief Rabbi, Dr



Jonathan Sacks. Security at Meridien was

fierce but by pre-arrangement I managed to get to a couple of Danny's shiurim and also a talk by the Chief Rabbi and his wife Elaine, to a packed audience, about his everyday life. His everyday life, that is, including annual meetings with Tony Blair, followed every time by Torah study; lunch with Charles and Camilla, and getting to know Gordon. His funniest story was about a visit by Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan to his home, when the Crown Prince insisted on parking at a distance and walking the rest of the way, for exercise, to the Chief Rabbi's house. Upon his departure, the Crown Prince was looking for his security guards but they were nowhere to be found. Therefore the Chief Rabbi had to escort him all the way back to his car which was parked at some distance. What had happened to the guards? Well, during the visit, the Metropolitan Police had found 6 armed Arabs marching up and down outside the Chief Rabbi's house. 'What are you doing here?' asked the Met's finest. 'We are the guards of Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, who is visiting the Chief Rabbi' answered the guards. 'A likely story,' responded the officers of the Met and arrested the lot.

Philadelphia Story

Anthony Gilbert

We are back in Philly seeing our son Paul, now moved into a new flat, where he has generously vacated his bed for 'die Eltern'. There's snow on the ground, but the temperature's rising and the visit has started with a pleasant surprise; queuing at the Benjamin Franklin Institute for (pretty pricey) tickets for the Tutankamun exhibition, the lady in front turns and says, 'Would you like these tickets? We're with a party, but these tickets are left over; please take them or they'll only go to waste.'...and so we did; and that little exchange somehow seemed to characterise a whole host of happy events and good fortune that we experienced whilst in Philly.

A day or two later, with Paul, we had crossed the mile and a half across Centre Town from his flat to explore film possibilities, picked up a brochure at the cinema behind the Bourse and were making our way back on our own while Paul was having his hair styled just so. Having looked at the CDs in FYE (For your enjoyment), we found ourselves outside the Prince Music Theatre, which seems to double up as a cinema and also a venue for live stage performances. It looked interesting, but just like the cinema, the box office onto the street looked very closed, so I gently pushed at the door in the hope of finding more brochures. We went into a rather plush atrium, looked about, and in no time a gentleman sitting to one side, comes



down and asks if he can help. 'We're just visiting, wondering what's on; maybe you have a programme?' 'If you are here in May, we're putting on a production of Hair.' 'Oh, we'll be home long before that. Do you have anything coming on sooner?'

'Well if you come tonight, we have a production of 'Tiny Dancer.' 'Tiny Dancer?' I am sure that the doubt must be written all over my face, 'What's that about?' 'Oh it's very good. It's been written and is performed by someone from Scotland.' 'Scotland? We're from Scotland.' 'Really, isn't that strange. Yes, he's a Jewish lad from Glasgow; it's about his life story'

“is he not descended from the Avrom Greenbaum Players?”

'Jewish?? We're Jewish' 'Gee, that's really strange. I've got to tell him; he'll be tickled pink; wait till I tell Paul!' 'PAUL???? That's the name of our son!' Ray, the gentleman who had come down, said 'Look, this is really amazing. Please come back this evening. I'm sure you will enjoy the show, and afterwards I'll introduce you to Paul. He'll be delighted to meet you.' This seems just too good to miss. So we say yes, we'll come back, canter back to our Paul's flat, bolt a quick supper, and now accompanied by our stylishly trimmed son, hotfoot it back to the theatre. Ray is delighted to see us, gives us complimentary tickets, and up we go into a smallish, matey auditorium. The play is actually billed as a Scottish Jewish musical, written by former Glaswegian Paul Scott Goodman and his wife Miriam Gordon, performed by Paul himself up to the interval, then by Merideth Kaye Clerk who plays Paul's wife. It's a riot. Paul, accompanying himself on guitar describes trying to make it in New York as a would-be writer of plays and songs. He holds body and soul together writing ditties for TV commercials; his major hit, the one for the kosher cat food, lands him a juicy contract...and a quandary; does he sell

his soul to the sordid needs of commerce or does he reject it and live the life of the real, but impoverished artist? Artistry wins, for is he not descended from the Avrom Greenbaum Players?...and down comes the curtain on the first act. In the second act Paul is now replaced by his wife, heavily pregnant with their first child, the Tiny Dancer of the title, because of her athletic performances, even before her birth. But if she's a dancer, so is her mother; the performance is a whirlwind of leaps and bounds to musical accompaniment, as she describes the hell of trying to bring up the now three children while attempting to hold down a writing career and all throughout being pressurised to meet production deadlines. The strain on the marriage is terrible, but at last from afar, Paul lends support, the product deadline is met, and all ends happily. Great applause, and breathlessly we leave the auditorium. Paul with his real and stage wives are on the first floor and we are introduced. It's an amusing little exchange and we find contact through the reference to the Avrom Greenbaum Players; I recall that Samm Hankin of the Players spoke to the Lit in Edinburgh; it must have been at least twenty years ago. 'Ah Samm', says Paul, 'now there was a man, but oy vey, did he have a temper!' And so the meeting ends with good wishes all round and great thanks to Ray without whose delight in this happy set of coincidences, none of this would have happened.

Later that week, we gingerly drive ourselves towards Virginia to meet up with our close ex-Edinburgh friends, Esti and Ron. En route, we have a break in Washington and explore the area adjacent to the Capitol and the White House. The scale of everything is breathtaking. In the limited time available we decide to visit the Holocaust museum, and now having done so, I would urge anyone visiting Washington to do likewise. I wasn't sure what to expect, and indeed, knowing something about that period through an amateur interest in historical matters and also a number of Holocaust commemorative events (which I think are possibly in danger of causing fatigue), I thought it might

make little impact on me. Not so: on the one hand there is the cold, unemotional factual recording of the unfolding of the Holocaust nightmare; but juxtaposed by this are the most poignant photographs... all that life staring out from those images, and all of it gone. We leave the museum very quiet.

Back in Philly from our perambulations, Pesach is just round the corner. Second night is covered: Paul's down'stairs neighbours, a couple a little older than ourselves, whom we have never met, whose fish Paul has been ministering to in their absence, have very kindly invited us all to join them. But what about first night? All that we can muster by way of suitable resources appears to be two kippot. But of course we reckon without the creative genius of Judy. Paul accompanies us to a supermarket which has some kosher le Pesach items, but for all our hunting high and low, we leave seriously light on the essentials: grape juice has to pass for kosher wine, there is no shank bone and the charoset is a brilliant improvisation of apples, grape juice, raisins and crumbled macaroons (recipe available on request!); but practically everything else is there and lo, before long, Judy has created a recognisable Seder table. The service is unconventional; what do you expect without Chagadot? But accompanied by Paul's flatmate, Danny, a very nice lady lawyer, we narrate the story of Passover, and we elaborate the historical background for Danny's benefit. So it may not be a Seder in the usual tradition, but we have made the mitzvah of telling the story, even to the stranger within our gates. And there's a bonus: the charoset is terrific, so much so that a few days later when Danny is back with her family to celebrate Easter, there's a frantic phone call from her to get the recipe just right; charoset for Easter? This has to be new. The following day, we troop down'stairs and have a delightful if somewhat more regular Seder with Paul's neighbours, Enid and David, and some of their family. We all take part in a happy mix of Hebrew and English. Judy and I are intrigued by some curious items scattered about the table; but all is

explained; they represent the plagues. The frog is clear enough, but the ball of cotton wool...oh, it's a hailstone. And they have the rather quaint tradition that whichever plague you find in front

of you, that is the one that you read.

The evening passes very quickly and very agreeably; it is yet another example of the kindness and

hospitality that we have found in Philly, and we hope that one day, we may be able to return some of it.

Edinburgh through American Eyes

Tali Joan Segal

When my brother Ari called me a few months earlier to say he would like



me to help him on a business trip to Scotland, I did not hesitate. Ari directs an international (including kids from the UK) summer camp for children with special needs, Camp Lee Mar, located in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Ari is also the assistant director of the first professionally supervised travel programme for persons with developmental challenges; the Guided Tour, Inc. (which our father founded more than 30 years ago and continues to direct). We were going to Edinburgh to recruit camp and program staff. Ari, as usual, needed to work 24/7, I would have a free day, plus some additional hours, for sightseeing. I planned to make the most of it.

“How I would love to don a barrister’s wig one day!”

My first start, with any trip abroad, is to contact the Jewish community for information. “Leah” at the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities in Glasgow and Dr Nathan Abrams (formerly University of Aberdeen now of the University of Wales) were wonderfully helpful. Dr Abrams pointed me in the direction of a lifelong Edinburgh resident and member of the Jewish community, Sid Caplan, who offered to give me a tour of Edinburgh. I enjoyed a delightful morning with Sid, a tremendously knowledgeable fellow who exudes his love of his country and his city. As I am an attorney, Sid started my expedition at a quite appropriate place, your High Court of Justiciary at Parliament House, so I

could observe some of the workings in the current courthouse.

I was awed by so much, starting with the beautiful stained glass and hammerbeam ceiling in the courthouse. As an American lawyer, I always have been enthralled by your barrister/solicitor/wig-wearing system. Observing the barristers and solicitors pacing the long, ballroom-sized hall as they chatted just added to this fascination. I practice in a system so different from, although based upon, yours. How I would love to don a barrister’s wig one day!

We left the courthouse and walked down a bit of the Royal Mile. I enjoyed learning from Sid about James Mossman, goldsmith to Mary, Queen of Scots, as we stood in front of the John Knox/James Mossman home. A Jewish deli used to be next door to the Knox/Mossman home, and Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother used to go to that shop when it was reincarnated as Ester Henry’s antique shop. Later in the day, on my own, I saw additional references to James Mossman as I toured Edinburgh Castle. What an honour to know that a Jew was among the important, although eventually beheaded, supporters of Mary, Queen of Scots!

We left the Royal Mile and walked through the old Jewish quarter, past the Flodden Wall, past what used to be Jewish-owned stores. The Flodden Wall was to our right, Arthur’s Seat to our left. What an extraordinary venue for a Jewish community. Edinburgh has a history of treating the Jews respectfully. No expulsions, as there were from England. Sid explained that the Scots look upon Jews favorably, referring to them as the “People of the Good Book.” .

As a Jew, a woman and a lawyer, it was exciting to hear that the first woman on Scotland’s High Court, Lady Hazel Cosgrove, was a Jewish woman from the Edinburgh community. As I learned about Edinburgh’s wonderful, close-knit Jewish community, I reflected on its differences from the Jewish community in which I live in America. The Edinburgh Jewish community is an extremely small one, from my American perspective.

It was interesting to learn that the Jewish community of 2007 is much smaller than it was a generation ago. But unlike many other European countries, the decline is not due to extermination or flight related to pogroms or anti-Semitism; in fact, there was an influx of Jews to Scotland before and after the Holocaust. How intriguing to learn that aliyot to Israel are in part responsible for Edinburgh’s dwindling Jewish community. Sid explained that the younger generations also leave for London and other Jewish communities where there is a greater chance of marrying within our faith.

So much I read in current Scottish Jewish community newsletters sounded familiar: teen dialogue, the holidays, Shabbat, social services with a Jewish flavour. I am in a city with many Jews. Philadelphia had a population of about 12,000 Jews by the 1880s; at least one report gives the number of Jews in the metropolitan Philadelphia area now at about 285,000.

Yet there was the foreign: such small numbers at services and community events. We often sit so far back at our suburban Philadelphia congregation’s High Holiday services that we hardly can see the bima, as there generally

are more than 1,000 congregants in front of us.

As I compared communities, my research illustrated for me how easy it is to be Jewish in my own community. Without even venturing into the city of Philadelphia, I have a choice of no less than two dozen good sized congregations just within a 10 mile, or 17 km, radius of my home, most, perhaps all, with vibrant preschools, religious schools, Sisterhoods and Mens' Clubs. There also are Jewish Community Centres and multiple kehillot in the Philadelphia suburbs, and while I have to drive a short distance for a vast selection of kosher butchers, many of my local supermarkets have a plentiful stock of day-to-day kosher staples and frozen meats.

While some children at our Conservative congregation are able to have their Bat or Bar Mitzvah ceremonies solo, many have to share

the bima that day with a classmate. One Reform congregation in our community has so many 12- and 13-year-olds to accommodate that it often has B'nai Mitzvah services in shifts...one at 9 AM, following by one (for one or two children) at 11 AM, preceded by a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service on Friday night.

I sneezed en route to Newington Cemetery. Sid's response: gezuntheit. If I had not felt a kinship up to that point, I certainly did at that moment. Here we were, two different nationalities, two different accents, speaking about Jewish concepts and history. But that one word, gezuntheit, did it for me. I could have been at home, hearing my grandmother, born and bred in the United States to

Russian immigrant parents, saying gezuntheit.

All too soon it was time for me to board the flight taking me out of Edinburgh. There is so much more I would like to experience in Edinburgh, and one day I would love to take part in a Shabbat observance or festive holiday celebration in the community. I am ever so grateful for the time I spent in Edinburgh, for the small inroad I made in my learning about Jewish life in Scotland, and for the kindness of Sid Caplan.

Scotland, a land with a history of clans and tartans, was a comfortable place for me. I may not have a tartan for my clan, but I know my clan, the People of the Good Book, is alive and well, holding up its own, in the land of Scotland.

“But that one word, gezuntheit, did it for me. I could have been at home”

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An Edinburgh placement in politics

Ben Breezy

At the beginning of my academic year last August, I had no idea that I would be studying abroad. Why would I leave my comfortable university in Los Angeles to immerse myself in a foreign culture? One day I received an e-mail from an advisor about study abroad programmes in the United Kingdom, and I thought that it would not hurt to attend and see what other people had to say about study abroad. There were about 15 people there and it seemed like they all wanted to study in Edinburgh. After the meeting I thought I would at least pick up a few applications to look over, but the receptionist at the office said I could only apply to one programme. Maybe the more Jewish thing to do would have been to choose the application for Hebrew University, but I decided to take a chance and pick up the application for the Scottish Parliamentary Internship Programme offered through the University of Edinburgh.

As a student of political science in the University of Southern California, I thought that the internship program would provide me with a unique perspective into the political process of a nascent democracy formed from devolution in Scotland. The programme would give me the opportunity to study abroad while providing me with great practical experience that I could count towards my degree. The application process was rigorous, but by November I found out I was accepted, and by early January I landed in Edinburgh for a four-month stay.

The programme began with an intensive five-week period of taking classes with some of the University of Edinburgh's most renowned professors in politics in order to quickly immerse myself and the 20 other American interns in Scottish and UK Politics, Scottish society and culture. The beginning weeks were tough. I was not used to the weather as a boy born and raised in Los Angeles. The classes were taught in a different

“Gradually I got used to being in Scotland”

style. I was shocked by the drinking culture in Scotland. Gradually, I got used to being in Scotland and soon enough I was assigned to work with a Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP) for a ten-week period.

I was assigned to work for Ken Macintosh (Labour) who represents the constituency of East Renfrewshire. Coincidentally, East Renfrewshire is home to Scotland's largest concentration of Jewish inhabitants. I worked with Ken aiding him in the Parliament in Edinburgh, and occasionally I went to help out in his constituency office in Newton Mearns. However, on March 29, Parliament was officially dissolved ending its second session. The other interns and I then had to focus our time and energy into working on our MSP's election. I was given a project in which I conducted a general opinion poll giving me insights into not only what people thought of my MSP, but what they also thought of the Scottish government. I incorporated my results into an academic paper to submit to my course advisor in order to complete the programme.

I will definitely be sad when my time in Scotland is over. One of the most enjoyable experiences of my time in Scotland was getting to know the Jewish communities in Edinburgh and Glasgow. From attending the student Burns Ball in January to being invited to several people's homes for Shabbat meals, I am very grateful that Edinburgh has such a hospitable Jewish community. If anyone is ever in Los Angeles or thinking of coming, please contact me because I would like to see you in the future.

Resurrection or Resuscitation

Memories initiated, following the screening of Mel Gibson's 'The Passion of Christ'.

Sassoon Judah

I enrolled as a day student in a private school - St Joseph's High, Umerkhadi at the tender age of five. Jesuit priests, trained in Rome, administered the school and all but two of the teachers were Roman Catholic. The Christian oriented school of about 900 also housed a large number of Muslim students and a handful of Jewish ones at any given time. The co-ed School, reputed for its high academic standard, was second to none. 98% passed Matriculation examinations with three or four students often in the first ten, topping the results.

Discipline was paramount in the school precinct; most students came from a non-Christian background, but were required to speak only in English, for that was the medium of instruction. School prefects watched out for rule infringements. Anyone found conversing in any of the numerous languages spoken in India, was fined 4 Annas, (Rupee) anyone caught swearing was fined 8 Annas, and so forth.

All students were required to attend the Monday assembly in the spacious main hall where Reverend Father J. M. D'souza, the school Principal, would speak for about 10 minutes extolling the virtue of being an upright citizen. Because the ten-minute talk always had a moral theme, non-Christian students did not need to seek exemption on religious ground.

“I am not embarrassed to admit that I got to know more about Judaism from my school Principal than from my Cheder teachers”

Salient also, was the ten-minute talk by the Principal from his office by public address system, beaming over loudspeakers in every classroom. Here also, talks were on morality. When he wanted to give emphasis to the subject, he always quoted stories from the Old Testament. I am not embarrassed to

admit that I got to know more about Judaism from my school, Principal than from my Cheder teachers.

I progressed steadily in my educational pursuits. My extra-curricular activities included the Debating Society, Drama Academy and even sports, but I was not involved in many other activities offered by the school not, at least, until I was summoned to the Principal's to find that the Assistant Principal had recommended me to be a school prefect. He said 'In whatever sphere of life your lot may be cast, let me urge you, with all the earnestness at my command, to devote yourself in some measure at least, to the service of your Alma Mater. It is according to the course of human sentiments and feelings that you should ever cherish a deep sense of affectionate gratitude towards the parents who nourished you in your infancy, guided your footsteps in childhood and committed you with the most fervent prayers and benedictions to the protection of providence on your entry into the wide world.' He described a school prefect's duties and the expectations of this entrusted role.

The Principal did not give me any duties that would violate my Jewish sentiments. I was pardoned chores necessitating membership of the school Parish church, but was drafted to act as an usher during the school's Good Friday Service. The school had organised a public meeting for its Parishioners. I was required to assist in whatever was needed.

At 3 pm on the first day of Passover, before accompanying my dad to the Shul. I watched a group of people coming out of the school church. A man dressed in a loincloth wearing a thorn crown on his head with a six-foot cross slung over one shoulder, led the procession. Four men dressed as Roman Sentinels bearing spears and shields pushed and goaded the man, to the delight of a following throng. The procession proceeded through seated parishioners towards the platform, located on the school badminton court, where stood a twenty-foot cross with the Christ figure nailed on it. The procession then disappeared into the church.

All went quiet. The visiting Jesuit priest adjusted the microphone and began his Good Friday sermon. 'What you have witnessed this afternoon is merely a mild reproduction of what happened to our Lord Jesus that fateful day. The Jews refused to recognise Jesus as the Messiah and were instead responsible for his death on the cross at Golgotha. The Jewish people bear the mark of Cain and deserve eternal hellfire for their crime.' He continued his tirade, 'in the design of G-d, Israel had a unique position. It was Israel with whom G-d made his Covenant by the call of Abraham. It was Israel to whom G-d revealed His name and gave His Law of grace. It was Israel to whom He promised the coming of His Messiah. According to the history of Israel, G-d prepared the manger, which, in the fullness of time, he put, the Redeemer of all mankind, Jesus. We, in the Church, received this spiritual heritage from Israel and are in honour bound to render it back in the light of the Cross. We have, therefore, in humble conviction, to proclaim to the Jews, that the Messiah, for whom you pray had come, but you failed to recognise him. Instead you Jews conspired against him. You are guilty of the heinous crime of betrayal and therefore, shall have no peace

in this world. It was the Jewish people who fought against Jesus and accused him of lying and making false claims that he was the son of' G-d. It was the Jews who conspired against our Lord in the sanctity of their Temple and goaded the Roman authorities to crucify him.'

No longer able to take the freely hurled invectives, I asked the senior prefect to excuse me from my duties. Rushing home, wishing to disassociate myself from the barbarous Judaism I had come to love so much, I determined to get to the truth.

“Please explain why the Jewish people failed to recognise the coming of the Messiah in Jesus?”

I found my two sisters, their husbands and children all assembled at our house for the Seder. My dad commenced reading the Haggadah beckoning the youngest to pose the four questions. I stood and asked if I might ask an additional question. 'Please explain why the Jewish people failed to recognise the coming of the Messiah in Jesus?' Though somewhat annoyed, he said, 'Sassoon this is not a relevant question to ask at the Seder table.' and promised to deal with my question at a later time.

According to my dad, the various accounts of Jesus' life, known as the 'gospels' are attributed to the apostles Mark, Matthew and Luke written some 30 years after his alleged death. John's Gospel was written even later around 100 CE. The Gospels were strongly coloured accounts of the life of Jesus. Many theological scholars regard these as fictional.

The wandering nomadic Israelites, around 1000 BCE, formed a single kingdom under David. Measured independence followed the Assyrian and then Roman conquests, but internal strife resulted in the annexation of Judea by the Romans. The proud, 'stiff-necked' Jews, and their belief in their divine election, appeared to challenge and threaten Roman sovereignty. Jews and Judaism were in immediate danger.

By the time of Jesus, many Jews hoped that G-d would send them a Messiah, like David, to re-establish orthodoxy by military means. However, the controversial Jesus represented dissent to orthodoxy. The Israelites felt betrayed by utterances like 'my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves,' his prophesy that 'There shall not be left here one stone upon another', referring to the Holy Temple, and 'Take eat, this is my body, drink, this is my blood'. The chief priests reprimanded Jesus, convicting him of blasphemy. Priests, determined to rid themselves of this troublesome figure, who could provoke dangerous reaction against the Jewish people, sought intervention by governor Pilate and the normally hated Romans hoping to curb Jesus' preaching. Jesus offered neither resistance nor defence. Pilate initially declared the dispute between the priests and Jesus an internal matter but was secretly elated that the priests had delivered to him an enemy threatening the Roman Empire. After the show trial, Jesus was found guilty and sentenced to death by crucifixion on Mount Calvary. The Jewish priests had planned that crucifixion should take

place on Friday as the Romans knew that the eve of Passover was sacred and the Jews would have to get home to prepare for the Sabbath and the Passover. After the crucifixion, the Roman soldiers guarding the site began a night of orgy, intoxicated with wine provided by the Jewish people. Under cover of darkness, Jews moved Jesus to a nearby cave placing a huge boulder at the entrance. It has been carefully researched and concluded that Jesus was taken to a safe location and resuscitated. With his wounds attended he was then helped to a more secure abode. Later, followers of Jesus were surprised to find the cave empty, substantiating early Christian belief in Jesus' physical resurrection from the dead and providing a persuasive argument for belief in Christ and his message. But an empty tomb is not proof of resurrection.

Agonising over my dad 's words, I concluded that the Jesuit priest's sermon, that afternoon, was not entirely accurate. As the school Annual day was fast approaching I wrote and directed a three-act play, 'The Truth' using Jewish and Moslem students for the variety programme.

Our Child with Special Needs Netanel

Rabbi David and Elisheva Mason

When our dear Netanel was born we were told that he had an 'abnormality'. I pushed the nervous paediatric registrar – 'Come on, be straight, what is the problem?' The reply we received was one that we never would have expected. No problems had been revealed in pregnancy ultrasounds, and the birth had gone to plan. But Netanel showed signs of Down's Syndrome – and three agonising days later, the diagnosis was confirmed.

We were left with our dear son, and many questions. Why had this happened to him, to us, at all? It just seemed so cruel that a little child would have to live through so many challenges, with no choice in the matter. 18 months on, we still ask the questions – but we also have a beautiful, bouncy, functioning child who has needs just as any other child does. He has given us so much pleasure, and we continue to remark how we often forget that he even has a disability. We are able to look past it and see our son. We thank God for Netanel, and would not change him for

"Netanel has opened up our eyes to the realities of the world"

Act 1 staged the trial of Jesus with Pontius Pilate sitting in judgement. Act 2 showed Jesus carrying the cross through the streets. The students, teachers and Clergy watched with bated breath. Act 3 witnessed Jesus being resuscitated and cared for. The infuriated clergy were, until then, quite pleased with the play. The Vice Principal rushed to the stage screaming and demanding that the curtains be closed after which the entire cast were summoned to his office and threatened with immediate expulsion unless the brain behind the blasphemous play was revealed. To spare my colleagues I raised my hand. The Vice-Principal was dictating my removal letter, when our Principal walked in and discovered what action was being taken. After discussion with the Vice Principal, Reverend Father D'souza intervened and requested the Vice-Principal to rescind his decision. I was stripped of my prefect status and agreed not to participate in any other school activities. Despite the unpleasant edict I matriculated from the school with distinction.



anything. Netanel has opened up our eyes to the realities of the world. We were brought up in families where we were unaware of disabilities and birth problems. Birth was meant to be according to the textbook. But that is not the world we live in. We are living in a world where greater technical and scientific knowledge means that we can diagnose more congenital and childhood problems and so help a greater number of children live a better

quality of life. We are witnessing more cases of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) and Autistic spectrum. Some criticise this modern tendency to diagnose – in fact it may be the key to the improved health of many children. As an example of how far things have come, the open-heart surgery that Netanel underwent a year ago had a 30% chance of success 30 years ago. Then parents were offered a choice not to operate. A child with

Down's Syndrome and a heart defect such as Netanel had would live until his 20's. Now these operations have a 97% rate of success – and even higher in a specialist hospital such as the Royal Brompton Hospital.

What is Down's Syndrome?

Down's Syndrome was once called Mongoloidism. However in the early 1800s, a gentleman called John Langdon Down investigated this phenomenon and gave his life to the care of those who had what came to be known after him as Down's syndrome. He built a large house for such children in Teddington, which was called Normansfield. Today it houses the offices of the Down's Syndrome Association (<http://www.down's-syndrome.org.uk>), which fundraises and raises awareness around relevant issues.

Down's Syndrome is a medical condition that has its root in our chromosomes, which contain DNA, the genetic material that makes us who we are. Each of us has 23 pairs of chromosomes, including a pair that defines which gender we are. After a female egg is fertilised, cell division occurs and one cell with 23 pairs of chromosomes divides into two cells, each with the same genetic material. But there are a number of errors that can occur in this cell division. One such error is that the 21st chromosome ends up with a third copy. This happens at every single stage of cell division, so that the resulting foetus has cells with a third copy of chromosome 21. This is called Trisomy 21, or Down's Syndrome. With other chromosome errors, often a miscarriage will result. However, as chromosome 21 is rather small, many resulting foetuses survive pregnancy. Down's Syndrome is actually one of the most common chromosomal deficiencies.

What is the result?

As a result of the extra genetic material (we always joke that Netanel has something that not all of us have), a number of potential health problems can occur.

- 40% of children will have heart defects such as holes in the heart.
- Many will have lower immunity to infections
- Muscle tone will be generally lower which means that physiotherapy and speech therapy will be needed.
- A number of children have sleep related disorders

- 80% of children develop a hearing impairment of some sort and many will require sight aids from a young age.
- Children will generally have a learning disability; however this expresses itself in varying degrees.

Where we are lucky

We always say that one providential element of Netanel's birth in 2005 was that in this generation, early intervention has developed incredibly. Netanel from 6 months old already saw a speech therapist, physio, and play therapist. He now also has hydrotherapy and other specialist groups. It is a lot for Elisheva, as for every mother of a special needs child. But we do feel that it is helping us cope with Netanel's needs and we can see him develop quicker. Today, for example, we are being taught to communicate with our son through a special sign language called Makaton, which enables children to communicate even if their speech is delayed. I have even been considering Jewish signs, which could be part of this sign language. There is actually a Cbeebies TV programme on Sundays at 9am based on Makaton sign language.

What is important to realise however, is that children with Down's Syndrome go on to manage most of the achievements of their peers. They can study, learn, be involved in sport, become actors and actresses and be involved in many more such pursuits.

We read in the book of

Psalms:

"How abundant are your works, God, you made them all in wisdom"

There are many children who have special health needs, who need society's help and care. But we are all made in God's wisdom, whatever our needs are.



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Andrew

Jane Ansell

How do I write about Andrew, my son, but a young person in his own right? The early years now are a vague memory. I'm fairly sure they were pretty misty when I lived through them.

Andrew has a number of diagnoses: cutis marmorata telangiectasia congenital, severe learning difficulties, autism, sight impairment to name but a few. The first diagnosis refers to the blood vessels, which for many years we thought to be purely an excess of blood vessels, but as Andrew grew up, the true meaning of this was to be manifold.

Andrew has suffered two strokes, and been paralysed down the left hand side of his body, but miraculously recovered. Suffice it so say, he battles against all sorts of medical complications. It is a testimony to him that he enjoys every single day of his life, struggling against those odds that would have defeated many.

“Andrew has always been a loved and precious member of our family”

Andrew has always been a loved and precious member of our family. So when we came to Edinburgh, 17 years ago, and joined the Edinburgh Jewish Community, it was natural he would be part of it too. As he grew older, no doubt the community began to realise his differences, and that he could not often just "fit in" with everyone else. I wanted Andrew to have a Jewish education; I wanted him to have everything that would increase the quality of his life. Andrew made me more consistent in my Jewish practice. He loves routines: lighting the candles, Shabbat and Yom Tov meals, going to Shul and Cheder just became part of his life. Most of the time, this worked well, not without effort on many people's parts. Sometimes Andrew could not cope with the situation he was in, and was unable like most people to hide it. Life is not perfect; it is full of blips but you deal with them and carry on.

But I want to take this opportunity to explain that young people like Andrew rely on us to tailor-make the environment for them. They need us to make it right. They work as hard as they can, with the resources they have. There isn't an ounce of bad in them. However I also understand that dealing with and embracing differences and challenges is not everybody's cup of tea. For me, Andrew had been the one of the greatest teachers I have had. When he was very young, someone once told me that I need not worry that I knew nothing about special needs, I would learn from my son. In addition to learning from Andrew, he has also redirected and focussed my career into developing and directing Sleep Scotland and more recently Teens+. It was because of my experience with Andrew and my many years of deprived sleep, that I conceived 'Sleep Scotland' –a charity, for families with

children with special needs and severe sleep problems. From this grew a national service of training and developing a sleep counselling service throughout Scotland. More recently, he turned my attention to the huge educational void such young people like Andrew step into on leaving school; a need that has to be addressed, but with a time limit of 2006. We just got there in time. Andrew now daily attends a transitional educational program with 5 other young people where they learn literacy, numeracy, communications, life and sports skills. I hope I can soon add Jewish studies to this curriculum.

When I was asked to write this article. I was keen to try. I hoped it might be an opportunity to tell the community more about Andrew so they would understand him and be more open to others like him. I also want to take the opportunity to thank people for supporting us in all different ways- inviting us for meals, looking out for his 'needs', at kiddushim, reading to him, and in particular to Janet, for teaching him at Cheder. I have asked her if she will write a few lines about the experiences together at Cheder.

Teaching Andrew

Janet Mundy

I taught Andrew at Cheder for several years. Having tried many experiments, I realised that what worked best was a regular programme, with gentle variations. Our morning started in the Cheder assembly, and the other children grew used to my quiet rendition of 'Postman Pat' while they recited the Shema. Once the other children had left, we moved to the 'bride's room', which Christine kindly helped us set up the same way every week, so that there was nothing to disconcert Andrew. There was a lovely Bible jigsaw book -I would read the story, and Andrew and I did the jigsaw together, usually while singing. The best jigsaw/song combination was "Old Man Noah had an ark - ee ay ee ay oh" (much more fun than 'the animals went in two by two', which of course is not strictly accurate anyway). We had various other games and stories for the rest of the morning, which I tried to relate to festivals or Shabbat. Songs were always our way of bonding. If Andrew got upset, a song would usually calm him (and his teacher!). And Andrew. He would join in many songs, in English and Hebrew he would do anything to get me to sing 'I had a little dreidel' once more each Chanukah. He always got a snack at the end of the session, but not until he had recited the correct Brachah, which he did with great enthusiasm when he was hungry!

Teaching Andrew was not an easy experience, but it was often rewarding. Maybe he was not aware of it, but Andrew taught me as much as I taught him - how to engage him, what motivated him, the importance of routine and repetition and the absolute pleasure he experienced from music and books.

The last part of this article has to be given to Andrew's brothers. Robbie and Isaac are wonderful brothers to Andrew. They give him unconditional love and support. They have

never once grumbled about the time I spend with him. I couldn't imagine one growing up without the other. However I will let them say the last few words.

Being Andrew's brother

Robbie

Andrew was born when I was just over a year old. In those eighteen years it has been rare for us to be apart for more than a few days. In the early years we did nearly everything together and developed the kind of relationship that brothers should. As Andrew has grown older it has been an inspiration to watch him learn and progress in spite of his difficulties. The unknowing person on the street has no way of knowing the effort that goes in for his every word and thought.

Lately his general happy attitude has become more prominent by the day. I have the privilege of being the 'good fun brother' giving trips in my car, downloading his favourite tunes on the computer and the like. He has many friends and peers that he loves to spend time with, but you can see that extra bit of comfort when he is with his family. It is great to be part of it.

Isaac

As Andrew was born 5 years before me, I have never known life without him. Andrew hasn't always noticed people who are smaller than him but he has always really noticed me, which is one of the special things about being his brother. Communicating with Andrew is in ways like speaking a foreign language but I seem to have been born speaking it. It's odd for me to write about my brother in this way because we are part of each other's lives and I wouldn't imagine anything else.



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Contact Jane Ansell 0131 651 1392

Society Reports

AJR Edinburgh Group (Association of Jewish Refugees)

Vivien Andersen – In my father's footsteps'

Philip Mason & Jonathan Kish

On Tuesday 20th February we all met up at the home of Vivien Andersen to hear Vivien give a superbly illustrated talk, 'In my father's footsteps', during which she told us about a recent visit she had made to the part of Germany where her father had come from. How you may ask did this all materialise more than 60 years after the end of the War. Well, Vivien began by telling us how she had, together with her brother Michael, been invited, just over a year ago, to attend the opening of a Jewish Museum in Rotenburg, a very picturesque town of medieval half-timbered buildings in Hessen, Germany – not far from Bad Hersfeld where her father had come from.

Over 2-3 generations Vivien's father's family who lived in Bad Hersfeld, exemplified how, despite their best intentions – serving king and country with valour as other 'good Germans' – they were nevertheless viewed as 'noble Israelites' whose aspirations, dedication to and identification with the 'Vaterland' were turned into ashes in the evil lunacy of the Holocaust. Some escaped the horrors of Nazism only because of money and privilege.

A video taken of the Opening Ceremony provided AJR members with an emotional view of the new Jewish Museum – as it had been built on the site where the Jewish Community's mikveh had existed. Besides visiting Bad Hersfeld, just to the south of Rotenburg along the River Fulda, Vivien and Michael also visited the small village of Rhina close by where their grandfather had grown up. Before the war Rhina had contained more Jews than non-Jews. But by 1939 we heard no Jews had remained in Rhina, and further there were none there today although a few surviving Jews from Rhina are known to live in New York.

While in Germany, Vivien took the opportunity, at her request, to speak to young German people about her life and what it had been like to grow up as a child of German refugees in northwest London. Both her father and her mother as well, like most of her family, had been fortunate to leave Germany before the start of the war and make it to the UK safely. She conveyed to the German youth that in spite of the need to leave Germany and escape Nazi persecution, her parents had still brought her up within a very German environment – food was generally German, all books early on were German and all music especially lullabies were sung in German. Vivien stressed to the youth that her parents, like many other German Jews, had been so assimilated into German life before the war that they remained German all their life and could never believe or understand what had happened. To them everything German was wonderful. Vivien thus left the German youth in no doubt that before the war and the onset of Nazi persecution her family had been as loyally German and as well respected in German society as all their families had been – a fact that makes it all so incomprehensible.

After the talk Susanne introduced Eileen Brady as the group's Area Social Worker, albeit part-time who will be pleased to help members with a variety of problems, then wrapped up the meeting by a summary of recent events such as the Chanukah party in Glasgow, the Heartstone and Anna Frank exhibition at the Adam Smith Institute in Kirkcaldy and with reminders of forthcoming events in Edinburgh to which all existing and new members – all precious to AJR – are most welcome.'

Following her excellent talk which kept us all fully engrossed, we were treated to very tasty refreshments prepared by Vivien to whom sincere thanks were conveyed for making it such an interesting afternoon – and one very much to remember.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society



David Mazower, "Dreams of Glory - how the Jewish Workers of Whitechapel built themselves a Yiddish Opera House in 1912."

Steve Engleman

The good-sized audience that turned out for David Mazower's talk on 11th March were well rewarded. Not only did they learn the somewhat amazing story of the Yiddish Opera House, they were also treated to a most fascinating talk on the cultural, social and political environment of the late 19th and early 20th century East End Jewish Community.

The speaker's command of his material and love of his subject was obvious from the outset. His riveting description of the society created by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe from around 1870 onwards was accompanied by a marvellous set of slides. Focusing mainly on the period 1880-1914, a period in which some 100,000 Jews settled in London, Mazower detailed how by 1910 the different Jewish communities to be found in the East End included a large proletariat, some 30 trade unions, various active political groupings, numerous evening classes and walls plastered with posters. He described a rich Yiddish cultural life that was reflected in Yiddish daily

newspapers, pamphlets, books, periodicals and a professional Yiddish theatre that had become the East End's first form of mass entertainment. Mazower traced the development of Yiddish theatre from its roots in Eastern European folk culture. He highlighted the roles played by Yiddish Theatre pioneer Abraham Goldfaden, who began touring through Russia during the 1870's, Jacob P Adler, who first brought professional Jewish theatre to London and Sigmund Feinman, the first of the great "actor-managers." He also described the

range of the repertoire of Yiddish theatre from the more risqué performances that had shockingly included women dressing up as men (and even as Chassidim) to the more serious performances of translations of works by writers such as Chekhov and Shakespeare.

The death of the popular Sigmund Feinman in 1909 provided the momentum for the building of a centre for Yiddish Opera and Drama that was paid for by subscriptions from a cross-section of some 2,000 of the East

End's working class. The "Temple of Art," opened in 1912, and although successful dramas and operas were produced, a combination of unfortunate factors resulted in its closure within 3 months of its opening. I suspect that the very substantial applause that followed the talk was not only for David Mazower's excellent presentation, but also for his efforts in collecting oral histories, as well as artefacts and memorabilia that might otherwise have disappeared from the Jewish East End.

Naomi Alderman (author discusses her novel)

Avery Meiksin

The first speaker of the second half of the season was the writer Naomi Alderman. A young writer whose first novel, *Disobedience*, won this year's prestigious Orange Award for New Writers, Ms Alderman delighted the audience with her vivacious and humorous account of her growing up in the secluded world of London's Orthodox Jewish community, and of the novel it inspired. The initial impetus for the novel, however, was not London, but New York. Working for a law firm in New York City in 2001, she was witness to the horrendous tragedy of 9-11. The following week, the film "Trembling Before G-d" played, about the secret life of gays.

Whether related or not, a few months later several acquaintances of hers "came out," declaring they were gay. The painful stories she heard from within the Jewish

community moved her to tell of their plight in a novel. The setting was her home community of Hendon. Much to the astonishment of the people of Hendon, who couldn't imagine anyone would be in the least bit interested in them, the book was an instant success. The following book tours were much fun, but prompted some strange questions, like "How do you believe being Jewish has affected your personality?"

There was much lively discussion following Ms Alderman's reading from parts of the novel. Ms Alderman is working now on her second novel. This time the theme is not Jewish, but one Jewish character does appear. When asked to compare the New York versus London Jewish communities, she admitted to finding the New York one easier to live in. Jews feel much more comfortable with being visible in America than in Britain, which for the most part has a monolithic culture, unlike the immigrant culture of America. Britain in many ways, Ms Alderman believes, has not yet moved beyond the Empire.

Rabbi Mark Solomon, *The Secret Light: Islamic Influences on Jewish Spirituality*

Maurice Naftalin

This was a landmark evening for the Lit, in which an exceptionally large turnout was rewarded by an exceptionally impressive talk. Rabbi Mark Solomon has a wide and deep knowledge of the historical connections between Islam and Judaism in the Middle Ages, and conveyed it with an enthusiasm that carried the audience to a lost world of intellectual and cultural exchange. He set the scene in the halls of study in mediaeval Baghdad, with a description of the debates between Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian and even sceptic scholars, with their only ground rule being that debaters could appeal only to the exercise of reason and logic, not to their scriptures (from which they would otherwise quote "endlessly"!)

He went on to describe the influence of this intellectual environment, and its later flowering in Spain, on five great Jewish scholars—Saadia Gaon, Bahya ibn Paquda, Judah Halevi, Moses Maimonides, and his son Abraham Maimonides. The foundations that these five men laid in poetry, philosophy, law and the study of Hebrew and of Biblical texts, were in each case laid on still deeper foundations put in place by their Muslim counterparts.

For example, Saadia Gaon's great classic *Sefer Emunot v'Deot* is a "perfect adaptation" of a Mutazilite treatise for Jewish purposes. Similarly, Bahya ibn Paquda's hugely influential book *Duties of the Heart* followed the pattern of a Sufi devotional manual, and even includes sayings from Islamic texts—without attribution, of course, since that would have reduced their credibility! Rabbi Mark traced the influence, through Bahya's work, of Islamic thinking on the Kabbalists, on the Hassidim, and right up to the Mussar movement, which dominated Orthodox Jewish life in nineteenth

century Lithuania. Maimonides too was greatly influenced by the work of mediaeval Muslim philosophers who pioneered the incorporation of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy within monotheistic religion.



Rabbi Mark closed his talk with the observation that these connections, and many more that he described, show the unlimited possibilities for intellectual conversation and spiritual dialogue that exist between Jews and Muslims—if we can only approach the qualities of the scholars of eighth-century Baghdad in their openness and willingness to engage with others on the basis of equality, respect and willingness to engage in rational discourse.

Oron Joffe: Hebrew and Aramaic, a friendly embrace

Elaine Samuel

Davke! Chaval! Stam! Don't they just typify everything you know and love about the Hebrew language? Well ken...but lo...but ken.

Oron Joffe exploded all our inner certainties at the last session of the 'Lit'. Perhaps we always knew that something had 'gone funny' in the Haggada or the Kaddish. Too many 'alephs' and 'final nuns', for a start. What Oron showed us was how Hebrew had absorbed and been absorbed by Aramaic. Those distinctive square letters of the Hebrew alphabet that we diligently teach our children? Aramaic. *Hitpa'el*, the reflexive verb form, essential for taking command over the Hebrew language? Aramaic. *Abba, Ima* – the first words of a Hebrew-speaking child? You've guessed it.

How did this come to pass? Oron led us through a potboiler of a linguistic relationship: friendship, embrace, domination, transformation and redemption. Hebrew, like Phoenician or Ugaritic, was a Canaanite language. Aramaic was a group of languages spoken by our neighbours to the north and east. One thing is known about our captivity in the east: we may have hung up our harps in Babylon and wept when we remembered Zion, but we largely forgot Hebrew. It says so in the Book of Nehemiah!

So what happened following Cyrus's declaration in 539 BCE? Judah was largely repopulated by Aramaic speaking Jews who wrote in a square Aramaic script. Ezra had to teach them Hebrew. Perhaps as a concession, the Aramaic alphabet was adopted. It was easier to learn Hebrew in transliteration! Not surprisingly, the New Hebrew that emerged over subsequent centuries was transformed. Ever wondered why there are two words for 'tree' in Hebrew, *eyts* and *ilan*? Or for 'language' – *safah* and *lashon*? Well, the former are Old Hebrew – the latter are New Hebrew. It's ironic that we use Aramaic, as in *lashon kodesh*, to refer to the pure and unadulterated language that we use in prayer; a language supposedly separate and separated from others picked up on our sojourns.

So what about Modern Hebrew? How did Eliezer ben Yehudah and those other midwives of the re-birth of the Hebrew language go about shaping the language? What was politically correct? How did Aramaic fare? Pretty well, it appears, and despite some opposition. So if, like me, you want to know what happened next in Hebrew and Aramaic's stormy relationship, just attend the AGM and insist on Oron's return.

Lodge Solomon – Monday 19th February 2007

Celebration of Alec Rubenstein's 90th Birthday

Philip Mason

At the start of the year – 16th January 2007 to be precise – we held our Annual Installation Ceremony during which our new Right Worshipful Master and the rest of the Office Bearers were installed. Up to that point, Alec Rubenstein had been both Lodge Secretary plus acting Lodge Treasurer – incredibly coping with both jobs where most would find even one a burden. But at that Installation, I took over as Hon Secretary while Alec moved across to manage the Lodge's finances. However, in his usual efficient manner, Alec had already begun the planning and organisation of Lodge Solomon's meetings over the first half of the year in order to help the new incoming Secretary – me, as it turned out. These plans, Alec conveyed to us all at the first Committee meeting of the new 'regime', just 2 weeks before his special birthday. We all just nodded, making no reference or comment concerning his impending birthday – but behind the scenes plan B had already been put into action. We knew if we revealed exactly what we had in mind to Alec we would have been met with considerable resistance. So we kept it all quiet – we, especially the past two Right Worshipful Masters and I, were already putting together a very different evening totally devoted to the celebration of Alec's 90th Birthday. We first contacted distinguished brethren from Grand Lodge and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Edinburgh and asked them if they wished to take part. Everyone we approached said 'yes' and indicated they were very honoured to be asked. However we still lived in fear and trepidation. We knew with his birthday (18th February 2007) just one day previous to our meeting and secret plans afoot by Alan and Beverley to whisk Pearl and Alec off to somewhere special for the weekend, we wondered what would happen if he didn't make it back in time. However, fortunately, he did make it.

On the Monday evening, not long after the start of the meeting, all was revealed. With near to 100 brethren present from many different Lodges as well as the distinguished brethren we had invited, we revealed to Alec that the entire evening had been arranged in his honour to celebrate his special birthday, to show appreciation for all the immense amount of hard work and dedication he had given to Freemasonry over a 60-year period and to show him the esteem with which he is held by brethren from all over Scotland and at the highest level. For once he was virtually speechless and thankfully sat back and I know thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the evening.

Following the formal part of the evening, everyone sat down to a superb dinner – a dinner completely different to the one he expected. During the evening several gifts were presented to Alec including a specially iced cake, a large bottle of malt whisky and a large bouquet of flowers for Pearl – all piped in by one of the distinguished brothers from Grand Lodge. There then followed several excellent toasts, which so clearly and warmly showed Alec how much he was appreciated by everyone in Scottish Freemasonry. But the evening didn't end there. One of the distinguished invited brethren took Alec home and personally presented Pearl with her bouquet of flowers by which I know she was overwhelmed and rendered speechless.

On reflection, it really was a most remarkable evening, the like of which I know I may never witness again. But perhaps that is only right as it was done for a very special person who has given Freemasonry in Scotland over a 60-year period such exceptional service and dedication. We all very much hope that with continued good health we will continue to see Alec a regular and active member of Lodge Solomon for many, many years to come.

WIZO

Chairmen's Meeting held in London on Tuesday 20th March.

Sylvia Donne (co-chairman with Kate Goodwin)

Most of those attending were from London and surrounding areas but Scotland had two delegates, Deirdre Bernard of Glasgow and me. There was a full agenda and we were introduced to the new Executive Director, Alison Rosen. She took up office earlier in the year and has an accountancy background, previously having been employed in other Jewish charities, so comes to the job with experience.

Andy Epstein discussed Jewish Women's Week and proposed that from this year, 2007, donations will not be outlined for any specific project. In most areas, door-to-door collections are carried out, which is not manageable here in Edinburgh where the community is scattered throughout the city. The Glasgow Groups have found this too difficult to manage and they now send a cheque from their funds without approaching the membership directly. In line with this, Edinburgh Group will now send a cheque in mid May for £500. We are very fortunate that, due to the income from the Nearly New Sale and other donations, the funds are available.

Next year in Israel, World WIZO will be holding its four yearly conference in Tel Aviv from 13th to 19th January. This is a spectacular gathering of around 1000 delegates from all parts of the globe and includes a day tour to projects in the North and South of the country and Jerusalem. The organisation and security arrangements, with so many government officials invited as guests, is a mammoth task but the event has a unique atmosphere and leaves lasting memories

In 2008 we celebrate 60 years of the State of Israel and 90 years since the founding of WIZO. Ruth Sotnick will be co-ordinating events throughout the year and a mission is being planned for March, dates as yet not known. However a group will be going from Edinburgh and if you are interested in getting further details please contact Sylvia Donne. It is intended that every UK group will be allocated their own project, which they can visit, and as Edinburgh had in the past supported 'Dimona', Head Office is being asked

to confirm that we still have this connection.

A DVD was shown of the tour made in January this year by World Chairpersons to the North of Israel. There they saw for themselves the destruction caused by Hezbollah and met many of the residents who were taken out to places of safety by WIZO. Copies will be distributed to local groups in due course. Under the heading of projects, it was most interesting to hear round the table of the activities of other groups and the events, which range from quizzes to pudding evenings!!

In my report I expressed our appreciation for the support of our members and the increasing support from outwith the community, our friends of WIZO. Our next event is the annual brunch on Sunday 27th May at the home of Mr and Mrs Ronnie Goodwin (12.30, tickets £15!) when the Draw will be held for the Special £500 Raffle (Tickets £20 from Kate or Sylvia!) We look forward to seeing lots of faces, old and new!!

WIZO's wicked treat

Pearl Shein

Off we trotted with no idea what we were in for. . . fifteen sweet and innocent gals on a night out at the King's Theatre.

What can I say?' "Hot Flush" was a play with music, a cast of three glamorous ladies, Rula Lenska, Marti Webb and Sheila Ferguson plus one small plump one with whom I instantly bonded. One hilarious scene in which she attempted to squeeze into a tight girdle . . .well that was me. The one and only male participant was hunky and gorgeous. What a time they (and he) had, you couldn't imagine. This was a very funny, risqué, slickly produced, totally uninhibited evening of witty songs and sketches. I discovered that naivety was my middle name!

My seat (and I) rocked dangerously and in harmony with a very good friend sitting behind me whose gales of laughter were quite alarming. Ian said that when he writes a comedy sketch he willingly pays this good friend for her presence in the audience.

Back to the laid-back elegance of the Goodwin residence for a super supper. I chastised myself during the ensuing night for not having had two helpings of Kate's fantastic pudding.

In all quite an experience.

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Reviews

John A Cosgrove

The New Singer

The Authorised Daily Prayer Book (Fourth Edition) Collins

ISBN-10 0 00 720091 9 Standard Edition £15.99

In The Edinburgh Star No 9 in March 1991 I reviewed the Centenary Edition of the Authorised Daily Prayer Book generally known as the Singer's Prayer Book. That gave me special pleasure because the new modern translation was by my late uncle, Rabbi Eli Cashdan, then in his eighties yet displaying the vigour and enthusiasm for his work of a man less than half his age. That edition was quickly adopted by most British and Commonwealth Orthodox Synagogues and the only "rival" to it was the American Art Scroll Siddur which has a nice "feel" to it, but suffers from being too "Americanised" and too right wing Orthodox in the translation and commentaries; and its Eastern European minhag (custom) is slightly different from our United Kingdom (minhag anglia) tradition.

It was clearly to compete with the Art Scroll that the new Fourth Edition was conceived.

The Fourth Edition Singer with New Translation and Commentary by the Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, with its splendid, distinctive, smooth, green hard cover is a pleasure to behold. The pagination is completely different from the last edition, making it a learning experience to find the right page and by the time you have found it the service has moved on! However, this is more than compensated for by a host of innovations undertaken by teams of scholars and advisors under the chairmanship of my old friend, Elkan Levy, who studied for the Rabbinat and chose the legal profession and ended up as President of the United Synagogue. The son of the late Cantor of the New West End Synagogue London, where a century ago Rev Simeon Singer reigned, Levy, a historian of Anglo Jewry, was in a unique position to organise a radical revision of our beloved Siddur.

Commentary

The Chief Rabbi's twenty-three page essay on Understanding Jewish Prayer

explains the construction of many of the prayers and tackles many of the problems that we have with prayer and the prayer book. It is beautifully written, scholarly, yet readable by the layman, and is the sort of essay that merits rereading during those parts of the service when, dare I say it, the concentration lapses. The Essay ends with a four page section of "Keywords" used in prayer where words like "Baruch" and "Amen" are explained.

The commentary must of necessity be brief otherwise the book would become large and unwieldy. There are lots of interesting insights which help us understand the prayers. But alas, there are not enough and you wish there were more. Perhaps the Chief Rabbi could be persuaded to write a separate volume of commentary similar to the Companion volume produced by Singer's son in law, Israel Abrahams, at the beginning of the 20th century?

Innovations

The rubrics or liturgical directions in the prayer book have been greatly expanded and will be a great help to the worshipper who is unfamiliar with the service but wishes to join in. One sign of the times is that the instructions to the "Reader" indicating Chazan or Cantor have been replaced with the word "Leader", reflecting the fact that so many congregations are led by lay people rather than professionals. Another innovation is that the usual places where the leader starts and finishes a prayer are clearly marked, thus making the services easier to follow. From a grammatical point of view, the Hebrew reader will find it easier to distinguish between a vocal sheva and a silent one without having to have a knowledge of Hebrew grammar. The same applies to a person wanting to read the prayers in the Israeli style rather than the older Ashkenazi mode as the kamatz katan (that is the "o" sound as in "fox" which does not change to "fax" in Modern Hebrew) is clearly marked.



I must confess to writing a letter to the Jewish Chronicle in 2002 deploring the Art Scroll Siddur's ballroom dancing instructions i.e. "take three steps back, bow left etc" and these have now been incorporated into the new Singer. I suppose I shall get used to them, eventually!

At the back of the book there is a new list of Psalms for Special Occasions (P 924) which are found in the Siddur and that is useful if you want to find a Psalm suitable for someone who is ill or to give thanks for the birth of a child. This replaces the much more comprehensive "Index to Psalms" found in all the previous editions, but regrettably only 17 of the 63 Psalms found in the prayer book are now listed. Perhaps a way could be found to include all the Psalms in the Siddur in future editions. After all if a Psalm is included in the prayer book, it is there for a purpose. Another innovation is transliteration into English characters of the mourner's kaddish (P 926) and the more challenging rabbinical kaddish.

Translation

There are many instances where the Chief Rabbi has developed the Cashdan translation. One gem is the sentence at the very end of the Grace after Meals which used to read "I have been young and now I am old, yet never have I seen a righteous man forsaken nor his children begging for bread". The new translation is ingenious (P 771): "Once I was young, and now I am old, yet I have never watched a righteous man forsaken"

etc. This warning not to be a mere bystander while other people suffer, says the Chief Rabbi, brings the Grace to a symmetrical close; it began by speaking of God's goodness in feeding the hungry and ends with an injunction for us to do likewise.

"Hear O Israel" has become "Listen, Israel" and "Hear our voice" has become "Listen to our voice". The Adon Olam (p 10) translation ingeniously matches the rhythm and rhyme of the Hebrew. The Anim Zemirot (P 458) brilliantly rhymes almost like the Hebrew. The Yah Ribbon translation rhymes like the original Aramaic, but Cashdan's translation is more faithful and set out more clearly. In my 1991 review, I explained the problems that my uncle had with translating the Ya-aleh Ve-yavo prayer (P 88, centenary edition P 83) said on New Moons and Festivals. The difficulty is that in the Hebrew, after a short introduction, there are no less than eight expressions (technically verbs) all of them so similar as to be synonymous and yet forming an integral part of the cadence and poetry of Hebrew prayer. In English, this sounds repetitive and boring and not what we would regard as poetic. Singer's approach was to translate only the first three expressions, an

approach which leaves the serious student wondering about the translation of the other five. Cashdan solved the problem by ingeniously shifting the phrases, yet translating all eight expressions in their correct order, thus being faithful to the original Hebrew and also reading well in English. The new translation, alas, attempts to replicate the poetry and rhythm of the Hebrew but reads badly in English! The same applies to the translation of the Kaddish (p142) where the new translation starts off almost like Singer's 1890 original.

Omissions

There were several typographical errors in the first edition which have been corrected in the latest 2007 impression. However, there is one sentence which has not been translated in the prayer VaYevarech David (P 54). After "head over all" it should say, "Riches and honour come from You, You rule over all". There is a custom in the Edinburgh Synagogue and many others that when these words are said on weekdays, money is placed in the charity box. At a recent service someone asked me why people were putting money in the box and I pointed to the Hebrew but found no translation! I am sure it will be rectified in the next edition.

Another major omission is that there is no mention or acknowledgement of Cashdan's highly acclaimed, modern translation which must have been the basis of the new translation Equally there is no reference to Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits who edited that Centenary Edition.

Musical Accompaniment

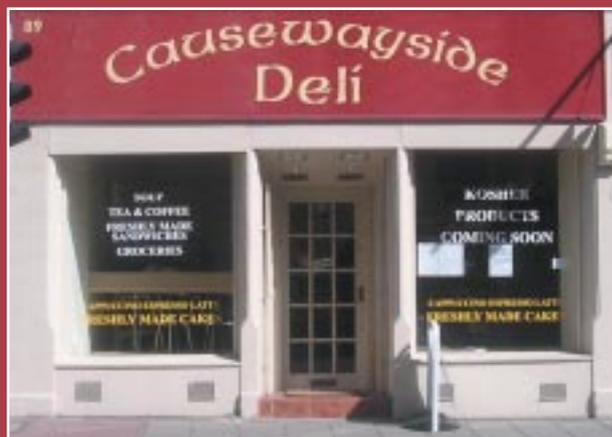
There is a companion CD called "Music for the Jewish Soul" in which the Chief Rabbi explains 14 of the prayers all of them set to music and sung by the splendid Shabbaton Choir and the Neimah Singers. It can be downloaded from the Chief Rabbi's website <http://www.chiefrabbi.org/siddur.html> and can even be loaded on to an ipod or mp3 player.

Conclusion

This is a Siddur which is a pleasure to read and to handle and is, in my opinion, far better than the Art Scroll in every way. It is available in four editions: the Pocket edition for those young people with excellent eyesight; the Standard edition; and for people of my age, the larger print Reader's edition. There is also a Presentation edition the same size as the Reader's edition but with gilt edges.

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Obituary



Eva Erdélyi

1910 – 2007

My mother Eva Erdélyi was born on July 26th 1910 in Leitmeritz (now Litomerice) in Bohemia. She was the eldest of three children of Frederic and Helene Neuburg. Frederic was a successful businessman, and a serious collector of art, particularly antique glass on which he became a noted authority. Helene was a fine classical singer; she also wrote poetry. Growing up in this atmosphere, it was natural for my mother to develop a strong interest in the arts, literature and music; she wrote poetry for most of her life. Family holidays in the Alps helped develop a deep love of nature; and she was a keen swimmer – the youngsters of Leitmeritz spent much of the summer swimming in the Elbe. I remember her at the age of 70, on a camping holiday in the California Mountains, swimming in Yosemite Valley.

Eva was a student when she was diagnosed with TB, and sent to a sanatorium in Davos. There she met a doctor, Wladimir Griffel, to whom she was married after recovering her health. They lived in Vienna, where their first son Peter was born in 1931 (he was tragically killed in a railway accident when he was 18). Eva took a full part in the intellectual life of Vienna, writing and publishing verse, and gaining a Ph.D. in German Literature at Vienna University.

In 1938 the Griffels were fortunate enough to be able to escape from Vienna, though many of their relatives

were lost in the Holocaust. Like so many other refugees, they found a warm welcome in Edinburgh, and made many friends. My father eventually found a post as a doctor in St. Helens, Lancashire, and I was born there in 1940.

During the war my parents' marriage broke down, and my mother married another refugee, the Hungarian mathematician Arthur Erdélyi. They lived in Edinburgh, where Arthur was a University lecturer. He introduced Eva to Jewish religion and practice, which had been almost entirely absent from her upbringing, and they enjoyed Edinburgh life until 1948, when Arthur accepted a chair at the California Institute of Technology.

Arthur and Eva loved the American Southwest, particularly the mountain and desert landscapes, and when I came as a student to California in the early 1960s, I went with them on many wonderful camping trips in the desert. My mother continued to write poetry in both German and English, and for a while she taught modern poetry at the Liberal Arts Centre in Pasadena. In the 1950s they spent a thrilling sabbatical year in Jerusalem.

In 1964 Arthur was invited to head the Edinburgh Mathematics Department, and he and Eva moved back to Edinburgh. They were members of the Salisbury Road synagogue, and Eva was an active member of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society. Arthur died in 1977; Eva stayed in Edinburgh for a while, but in 1987 she made the major decision to emigrate to Israel.

Edinburgh to Tel Aviv is not an easy transition for a woman of 77. But Eva was determined to make a success of it, and with the help of family and friends she adapted extremely well, living independently for many years in a flat in Tel Aviv, enjoying the cultural life of the city, and relishing trips to all parts of Israel as well as holidays in Europe. Even after moving, many years later, to a Beth Avot, she lived a full and active life, leading an English

conversation class, writing articles for the Edinburgh Star and other journals as well as poetry and her memoirs, giving readings of her work, and enjoying walks and outings. Only in the last couple of years did she start to show her age; and even when she no longer had the strength to walk unaided, her mind was as strong and sharp as ever. She died on April 6th 2007, peacefully in her sleep, after less than a month of illness.

She had a full life; she published many articles and two volumes of poetry; she made a journey from a secular upbringing to religion and eventually to Eretz Israel. She was a person of strong character, and great sensitivity and generosity; family and friends were very important to her, and to the end of her life she kept up a correspondence with friends all over the world. Even when she was old and unwell, she hated to complain, and she enjoyed to the full everything that life had to offer, even if it was just the Israeli sun shining on flowers. Her death is an enormous loss to her family and her many friends.

David Griffel

From Sweet Thames Flow Softly

(Published in "Songs
from Mistyland",
Minerva Press 2000)

*On a bridge of gold
Trembles now my boat,
Hear the song unfold
To the final note.*

*Seagulls show the way,
Each will find her nest;
At the end of day
Time will come to rest.*

(Eva Erdélyi,
27 January 1999)

German Konditormeister bakes bread for Jewish Community

Hannah Holtschneider

Edinburgh's Jewish population again has its own supply of kosher bread – and more. When in early 2006 the native Jewish baker shut up shop and retired, Konditormeister Falko Burkert offered to help the community. It took lengthy negotiations, but in February this year things finally came together. Now Falko is baking challah under the supervision of Rabbi David Rose. The production has since been extended to include kosher rye bread and there is talk of making the scrumptious German cake kosher too! Every Thursday challah and rye bread can be purchased from Falkos in Bruntsfield Place. Thus far, relying on word of mouth only, the bread is sold almost as soon as it leaves the oven, finding enthusiasts also among many non-Jewish clients.

Falko arrived in Edinburgh more than nine years ago and has been quick in establishing a basis for his bakery and cake making business. He began work in gourmet restaurants in Edinburgh, but soon opened his own shop producing fabulous cakes in his kitchen. In May 2005 he opened his own stall at the Edinburgh Farmers' Market and already in the same year he won the title 'Stallholder of the Year', a title he secured again in 2006! A year later Falko opened his own shop in the popular Bruntsfield district on the South Side. This year Falko can add a further award to his name, *The Observer Food Monthly Awards 2007 – Best Producer*, while also looking forward to expanding by opening a shop in the picturesque coastal village of Gullane.

www.foodwithlust.com

Thank you

Rabbi Rose wishes to express his sincere thanks to all those who have sent good wishes, cards and gifts, during his recent illness. The Rabbi was extremely touched and greatly appreciative of the concern shown by the whole community over his indisposition.

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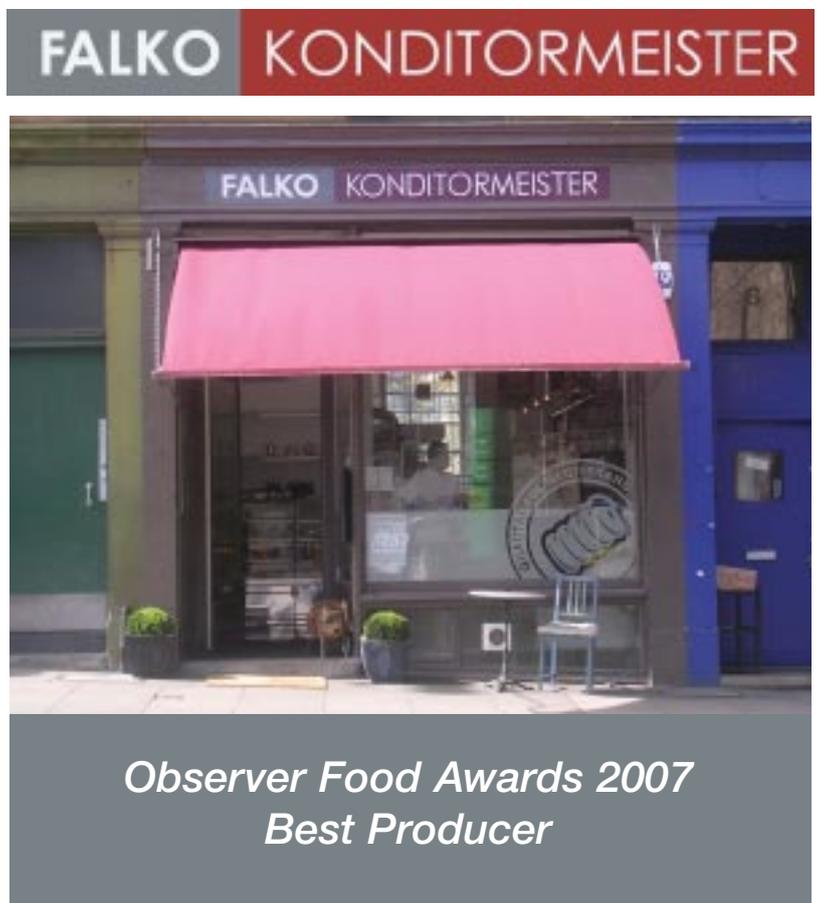
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Announcements

Congratulations



Erika Budd, Bat Mitzvah 27 January.



Michael Taylor, Bar Mitzvah 24 Feb.



Emilie Fauveau Bat Mitzvah 31 March.



Anne and Ronald Goodman on celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary, on 12th February. A champagne party was held at the Ashley Court Nursing Home where Anne has been resident for 2 years.

Alec Rubenstein on celebrating his 90th birthday.

David Mendelssohn on celebrating his 80th birthday.

Thank you

David Mendelssohn would like to express his sincere thanks to family and friends for gifts, cards and good wishes received on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Many thanks also to the E.H.C. for the surprise presentation so much appreciated.

Forthcoming Events

May

23 Wednesday

First Day of Shavuot

27 Sunday

WIZO annual lunch at home of Kate and Ron Goodwin

June

20 Wednesday

Synagogue AGM 8.00 pm

July

3 Tuesday

Fast of Tammuz

24 Tuesday

Fast of Av

August

18 Saturday

Civic Service to commemorate Edinburgh Festival

19 Sunday

Festival open day
12pm – 4.30pm

September

2 Sunday

Coffee morning 10.30am

13 Thursday

First Day Rosh Hashanah

22 Saturday

Yom Kippur

30 Sunday

Musical Social Evening

There are no meetings of Lodge Solomon or the Literary Society during the summer months. These along with dates of future WIZO lunches to be confirmed in the next edition.

Senior Maccabi meet on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Joanna and Ben Seckl.

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.