

MACCABI'S HALL OF FAME, 1945-1967

by Leonard Berger

Highlighted below, are some of Edinburgh Maccabi's greatest sporting achievements. For a small community, the record is really very impressive.



Edinburgh Maccabi Football team at Blackpool in 1959.

After the war, the football team played every Sunday morning in friendly matches. Standards improved when the team started to play in the Senior Sunday League. It also joined the Daily Express Evening League. The opposition was very tough as many of the other teams fielded professional players.

From 1955 onwards, Edinburgh Maccabi also fielded an under-18 team which produced a good stream of players for the senior team. Highlights included playing against other Maccabi teams for the Leslie Luck Cup. Although Glasgow Maccabi had more players to choose from, Edinburgh Maccabi still enjoyed many victories over them. In one particularly successful season, the under-18 team defeated Newcastle and Glasgow, only to lose narrowly to Manchester in the Northern finals.

At table tennis, Maccabi always fielded two teams which played in the Edinburgh & District leagues. On two occasions, the teams were promoted by winning the 2A

championship pennant. The teams also entered the East of Scotland Championships, held at Murrayfield Indoor Arena. There was always great excitement in our own championships – the under-18s competed for the Harold Byer Memorial Trophy and the Seniors for the Ralph Purvin trophy.

A long list of players took part in the league championships: Hymie Abrams, Moss Baker, Jack Cowen, Michael Gold, Bernie Hoare, Alec Levey, Morry Penn and Ellis Schulberg. However, the best trio were undoubtedly Ernie Josephs, Jackie Bierman and Boris Szifris, an ex Polish international player. Over the years, a number of younger players gained their spurs with the under-18s, among them Mickey Cowan, Tony Cowan, Melvynn Myerthall, Mervynn Smith and David Share.

At golf, the Reuben Zack Trophy was played for annually. There were regular day outings to North Berwick, and Gullane.

1956

While at George Heriot's School, Ronnie Hoffenberg became the very first Jewish schoolboy to be chosen to play rugby for Edinburgh schools in their match against Glasgow schools. This was a great honour.

There was also an annual athletics competition, for women and men, in the Queen's Park.

1957

It was a wonderful advertisement for rugby when Edinburgh Maccabi played Glasgow Maccabi. The game was very fast and open with neither side giving way. With Glasgow



Edinburgh Maccabi Rugby fifteen, 1957-58.

having taller and heavier forwards, they had a better supply of the ball at the line outs but this was more than nullified by the hooking of Leonard Berger. Led by John Lipetz, the pack worked hard with Syd Zolte, grafting extra hard! However, Glasgow scored the first try. The Edinburgh back division was immense with David Vinestock at scrum half giving a good supply to Norman Levey. Wingers Louis Gordon and Edwin Hoffenberg tackled hard, with centres David Dean (Man of the Match) and Ronnie Hoffenberg having good penetrating runs. University man, Peter Buntman had a safe pair of hands and helped Edinburgh to win by 11 points to 3. Unfortunately due to injury, Edinburgh lost the replay by 20 points to nil the following season.

1958

Edinburgh Maccabi hosted the Northern Badminton Championships held at 'The Corn Exchange'. Most Maccabi clubs were represented, all the courts were used, and there was a record attendance.

1959

In the under-18 football competition, Michael Adelman played in goal for the North against the South in Manchester. The teams drew 4 all in what was a thrilling

match. In the Senior competition, Tony Cowan, Morris Brown, Reggie Kiman and Jackie Bierman all played for the North. Michael was then chosen to play for Great Britain in the European Maccabi Games in Lyons. Great Britain won the cup by beating Switzerland 3-1 in the final. Jackie Bierman played for Great Britain in the European Maccabi Games held in Denmark in 1959. He won a medal for being on the losing side in the final.

In rugby, Scottish trials were arranged and a Scottish fifteen played a very strong Birmingham fifteen, only to lose by 11 points to 3. Another Scottish fifteen travelled to Birmingham to play against a guest team of Warwickshire players, this time losing 17 points to 3. Despite the scores, the team played well against bigger and much heavier opponents.

Schoolboy Aaron Riffind won a medal at javelin at the National Maccabi Championships at Brighton.

In **badminton**, an Edinburgh team travelled to London by train to take part in the National Championships. Annette Caplan was very narrowly beaten in the finals of the Ladies Singles. In the ladies doubles finals Annette and her partner Judith Rosen were again narrowly beaten. Travelling overnight and going through the various rounds took its toll. However, the Scottish girls certainly held their own and the applause for both Annette and Judith was very well deserved.

1960

When a quartet of **lawn tennis** players travelled down to Manchester to compete in the Northern lawn tennis championships, nobody could have predicted their success. The competitions ran on so late, that the

finals had to be played in Edinburgh. Winning more finals and runners-up medals than anybody else, it was a commendable effort from James Denton, Michael Mench, Shirley and Jackie Braverman.

1962

This was the last year of the Reuben Zack Golf Trophy. The final involved a play-off between Sam latter and Sam Levy.

1963

For two years running Mickey Cowen and Jack Cowen were very narrowly defeated in the final of the McIver Trophy Golf Competition for the Masonic Cup. Although they were very disappointed, they gave wonderful performances and it was no disgrace to lose against some very good golfers with very low handicaps.

Shirley Braverman (see above) was an excellent tennis player who won the East of Scotland singles and the doubles at Craiglockart. For the first time ever, Shirley was awarded the Maccabi Sports Personality of the year.

Although Shirley and Jackie Braverman both took part in the Maccabiah trials in London and it beggars belief that they were not chosen. [Jackie had the last laugh as her two boys subsequently represented South Africa - Craig at cricket and Russell, who also represented Australia in the Maccabiah games in Israel, at hockey].

1964

Judith Rosen was an excellent golfer who won a number of gold trophies in various championships and in the ladies championship at the Maccabiah Games held in Caesaria.

1965

Roy Eprile was picked to play for Edinburgh at snooker on a number of occasions.

1966

After drawing against Hull Maccabi, the football squad defeated them at Newcastle. Then, after drawing at home to Ivri of London, the squad flew down to London, and drew with them again. Edinburgh Maccabi lost on the spin of a coin - in those days there were no penalty shoot outs!! Perhaps if there had been, we might have won.

1967

In football, it was hard to get the better of London clubs - in the National semi-finals, Edinburgh Maccabi lost 3-2 to Marlborough and 2-0 to M.A.L.

In a triangular football contest between Newcastle and Glasgow (both teams played twice, once at home and once away), we were the very first winners of the Sellyn League Cup. This was in addition to winning the Alex Berger football trophy for many years in an annual competition against Newcastle. We also won a treble of a 5-a-side tournament by winning a Northern Maccabi rally at Dunoon, Keswick and Blackpool. The team also drew an 11-a-side match against Blackpool 2 goals all, which was yet another fun weekend.

In its heyday, Edinburgh Maccabi was a very well known club and well respected club. It is important to remember all the sportsmen and sportswomen who represented Edinburgh Maccabi in their respective sports. Like the true spirit of the Olympic games it was not so much winning that mattered, it was taking part.

THE EDINBURGH MACCABI CRICKET CLUB

by Norman Berger

The Club started in 1946 and officially joined the 'Edinburgh Public Parks Association' in 1949, playing in the Meadows. It was an all-Jewish club until the late 1960s, when declining numbers of Jewish players forced the club to become 'open' and it has continued on that basis ever since.

The Parks Association has a membership of 24 clubs but Maccabi

is one of the most prominent teams. The Maccabi captain is Chairman of the Committee, I am Treasurer and the two of us act as Joint Secretaries. The AGM is held in the Communal hall in November.

Since 1891, all the clubs have competed for the Public Parks Trophy. Maccabi have never won the trophy although they did reach the final in 1972 and 1984, losing on both occasions in keenly contested

matches. The club has played against other Maccabi teams from Glasgow, Hull, Newcastle and Sunderland. They now only play mid-week matches at Roseburn, their home venue. The season commences in late April and ends in late August.

Aspiring cricketers of any age would be very welcome and should contact Norman Berger on 664 2938

EDINBURGH MACCABI - THE GLORY YEARS, 1988-1992

by David Kaplan

I had the good fortune of spending my teenage years at the heart of the Jewish community in Edinburgh with provided many opportunities for learning, socialising and having fun. These included the infamous trips to the Glasgow Youth Quiz where we were routinely treated with hostility, no doubt because, more often than not, we either won or, at least, reached the final.



Edinburgh Maccabi Football Team, 1991.

Nicky Cosgrove, due to his deep tactical awareness and his proneness to injury, should be our coach.

All was now set. We arrived at the sports centre to learn that we were playing on a full-size pitch and that the match officials were looking to meet our skipper. Match officials! - we had expected an older Maccabi leader to referee the game, not a referee and two linesmen kitted out in black. This did not bode well.

We had no official strip but instead appeared in various t-shirts and rugby tops. We emerged from the changing room raring to go only to be met by our opponents who were still involved in a warm up session wearing their brand-new sponsored kits. 'Out of our depth' was maybe the understatement of the year.

But now to the game itself. Our team, from what I can remember, lined up as follows:

The educational 'inter-visits' with Glasgow FZY were always entertaining, to say the least. However the one crowning glory for us in Edinburgh was the opportunity to play football against Glasgow. This article records the story of our three games against Glasgow Maccabi. However, it begins with our first match, against a Newcastle 'Select' team.

Geordie Fun!!

This was to be our first ever match representing the good name of Edinburgh Maccabi. None of us on

the bus down to Tyneside had any idea when the last Edinburgh Maccabi team had taken to the soccer field. However, we all agreed that this was probably the first such team in over 50 years which did not include one of the Berger brothers!!

Our vigorous training for such a momentous occasion took place one evening in David Mason's back garden. The reason that it was held there was that they had goal nets and we could always pop in to the Cowens next door to retrieve the ball!

It was decided that night that

in goal – Sion Judah
defence – David Glass, Daniel Brodie, Benji Adler and Jonathan Raab

midfield – Michael Rifkind, David Mason, Richard Rifkind and Jonathan Mason

attack – Timothy van der Velde (guest) and David Kaplan

The game started and, after approximately 30 seconds, David Mason gave away a blatant penalty. It was at this time that we realised that putting the smallest man in our team in goal was not a particularly smart move. They scored and we replaced Sion with another Newcastle guest, Gerald Cawson. At half time we were 3-0 down. We were shattered and, to be honest, just a bit fed up as what we had been led to believe would be an enjoyable afternoon kickabout had become a serious Scotland vs. England confrontation.

The team gathered in a huddle at half time awaiting some wise words from our coach. Unfortunately Nicky had to take care of some urgent off-the-field youth work and was nowhere to be seen. We all decided that whatever happened in the next half, we would try and protect the younger members of the team who were being quite cynically fouled in an attempt to dampen their enthusiasm. The second half went very well for us with a very creditable scoreline at the final whistle of 6-3 to Newcastle, our goals coming courtesy of Tim van der Velde, Sion and myself. The effect of us scoring three goals led to the Newcastle team getting a severe dressing down from their coaching staff – they were detained in the changing room for some 25 minutes after the final whistle!

Talking of coaches, ours did turn up some 5 minutes before the end of the match and asked whether we had reached half time! In spite of everything, the experience whetted our appetite for a match against Glasgow.

Glasgow-Episode One

We set off from Edinburgh not feeling very confident for our first game against Glasgow Maccabi. After all, we had girls in our side and we were pretty sure that their well-oiled machine would be an all-male affair. However as one old player once said, 'football is a funny old game'.

The team was similar to the one that had faced Newcastle Maccabi although a number of new stars like Elliot Cowan, Caroline Rifkind, Wendy Goldberg and the infamous Goldberg twins (Paul and Tony) had been called up. All was set for a fine spectacle at Mochrum Park in Newlands. The wind was howling and the rain was pouring-perfectly for silky attractive soccer!

The game was very hard fought but Glasgow Maccabi were the more composed and organised side. However, even when they took an early lead our heads never went down and we equalised through a well placed shot by Caroline Rifkind. The Glasgow coach was none too pleased at seeing a girl score against his pride and joy.

We held out well into the second half, but two late goals consigned us to a 3-1 defeat. Our honour was intact and the spectators actually clapped us off the field, while barely acknowledging the victors. David Mason was rightfully declared 'man of the match' for his performance in goal.

Home Turf

The much awaited return match between the two city giants took place at the Saughton Enclosure. Glasgow Maccabi had brought through a much more experienced side than had faced us five months earlier. This was our first ever home match and for once we had our own strips, courtesy of Drummond and Co, WS (now Drummond Miller, WS). We had to provide a referee for this auspicious occasion and Ian

Caplan duly came back from Dundee University to don the whistle. Unfortunately due to a mysterious incident he incurred on the way back from the cinema the night before he was carrying an injury!!

Our team lined up as follows

in goal – Elliot Cowan
defence – Benji Adler, Tony Goldberg, David Mason and Edward Schulberg

midfield – Paul Goldberg, Sion Judah, Benji Bowman and Aaron Raffel

attack – David Kaplan and Paul Gilbert

The game was marred by some vicious tackling on Paul Gilbert by several members of the Glasgow team. In fact, two of them had to be hastily substituted or they would have been in danger of being sent off.

The game hinged on two incidents. The first was a missed penalty by the Edinburgh team – Ellis Simpson saving a well struck shot from Benji Adler. The second was a complete miscue by our goalkeeper, Elliot Cowan who let a punt up the field bounce over his head and into the net enabling Glasgow to go in to half-time 3-1 up. The game finished 6-3 to Glasgow with the Edinburgh goals coming from Paul Gilbert, Benji Adler and David Mason.

Edinburgh Strikes Back

Our final game took place on the shale pitch of Glasgow Maccabi. Our team, which was physically stronger than the one that went down 6-3, was determined not to lose this fixture as we had heard that Glasgow Maccabi were becoming very arrogant about the prospect of playing us again.

The game got off to a bad start for us, with a very soft goal conceded in the first few minutes, but we hit back straight away with Paul Gilbert

finishing off a sweeping passing move involving Benji Bowman and Tony Goldberg. Paul Goldberg then crashed a 20-yard shot against the crossbar and it looked as if we may just spring a surprise on our neighbours.

The second half became a very cautious affair and Glasgow soon wore our defence down with two goals coming in very quick succession to leave us 3-1 down with only four minutes to play. However, they were not bargaining on the

skills of Paul Gilbert who tore into the heart of the Glasgow defence twice and scored two cracking goals, to the delight of our travelling supporters.

Extra-time started and naturally enough we lost a silly goal but with only two minutes left of extra-time left, a superb ball across goal by Benji Bowman fell to me and I lashed the ball into the roof of the Glasgow net. The whistle went a minute later and we had held our rivals to a draw. Man of the match

Paul Gilbert had certainly gained his own personal revenge on the Glasgow Maccabi players who had so cruelly forced him out of the match in Edinburgh.

Sadly, at this stage, many of the team were heading out of Scotland for university and to the best of my knowledge this was the last fixture that Edinburgh Maccabi has played. We had great fun and it certainly helped bring an extra dimension to our Jewish activities while we were growing up in Edinburgh.

KNAIDLACH AND CHOPSTICKS IN HONG KONG

by Julia Merrick

Mid-levels, Hong Kong Island is the realm of skyscrapers that tower above narrow, crowded streets. The designer shops lie below; slightly up the hill are Hollywood Road, the home of Chinese antique shops and a little temple. Squeezed in the steep streets above this are small shops and market stalls. As a vestige of the British Empire rather than as a concession to multinational commerce all signs are in English and in Cantonese. Chinese names and British names mix in a multilingual jumble. Most old buildings have been demolished and replaced by high rise and new developments. A garden and the old pathology laboratory, where the cholera bacillus was identified, have miraculously survived. The laboratory is now a Chinese medical museum, but is very much in need of funds.

There is no need to climb the hill if you don't feel like it, an escalator will carry you up to Robinson Road, a few streets above the medical museum. At number seventy you find the home of the Jewish Community. It was founded by two families the Kadouries and the Sassoons, both *Sephardi* (the Ks were from Baghdad) and both wealthy

entrepreneurs. First, the Kadouries bought a plot of land and then the Sassoons bought the adjacent plot. In 1903 the Sassoons funded the building of a synagogue on this splendid site that looks down on the harbour. It was set in a garden with tennis courts and other facilities for the community. By now there were Ashkenazi families living in Hong Kong who joined this community. The trustees who ran the affairs of the synagogue accepted rabbis of all traditions.

One of the most famous Hong Kong Jews was Sir Matthew Nathan, an engineer by profession, builder of Nathan Road (perhaps you have been shopping there), and the Kowloon-Canton Railway which is now a superbly efficient rapid transport line running from Kowloon to China. Nathan was also the only Jewish Governor of Hong Kong. The Kadouries were and still are great philanthropists, aiding the whole community as well as the Jews of Hong Kong. One of their projects was to found a school of farming in the New Territories to help refugees from China. There is almost no farming in Hong Kong now, but Kadourie Farm still exists as a specialist centre for organic

horticulture and as a refuge for endangered species of animals and birds. It is a pleasant place for a picnic in the hills of the New Territories.

By the 1980s the synagogue needed repair and the trustees realised it was situated on an extensive plot of land which had rocketed in value. A clever deal was done with Swire who acquired a 99-year lease on the property. There they built a luxurious tower block and in return, the community has six floors in which they have a large room for functions, several smaller meeting rooms, a kosher grocery store, a meat restaurant, a dairy café, a swimming pool and a library. They also used to have a school on the premises but, although some classes are still held there, the school has had to move to larger premises elsewhere. This school takes children of any religion to the age of 11 or 12 years but all the teachers are orthodox Jews. The beautiful old synagogue, with its mellow, dark wooden panelling and Italian character was nearly demolished but public protest thankfully prevented this and it is still standing, albeit dwarfed by the surrounding towers.