To achieve the kind of 'intensity' of perception he hoped for – that virtually inexplicable, hidden force that is the essence of any great art – he arrived at the highly unusual method of always completing a painting or drawing within a single day. It was a method that had inbuilt terrors for him and his fear of failure was never far away. In time, however, it became clear that he had not really repudiated 'modernism' but rather what he considered the dead ends of modernism and he re-established his reputation as this new kind of 'realist' painter, exhibiting mainly in New York and London.

This brief life only touches on the major aspects of the life of an extraordinary individual. In addition to what he accomplished in his painting, drawing and print-making, there were his highly original art-historical contributions: for example, exhibitions he curated on the work of Poussin and Ingres or his unscripted exposition of the work of Velázquez in a BBC film directed by Patricia Wheatley in 1992, one of the best documentaries about an artist ever made. A posthumous edition of his writings on a variety of art topics which he was working on before he died will be published next year.

I last saw Avigdor in June 2009 in Paris at the celebration of his 80th birthday. At a reception in the Print Room of the Louvre his friends presented him with a Bonnard print, the room where we were gathered specially hung with some of his favourite prints and drawings from the art of the past – works by Chardin and Rembrandt – all part of the 'great tradition' which meant so much to him. We then walked across the Tuileries gardens in a beautiful Parisian summer evening to a dinner party at the flat of the photographer Martine Franck (widow of Cartier-Bresson, one of Avigdor's closest friends) in the Rue de Rivoli. As we walked in the early dusk he said a little, with his usual mixture of reticence and revelation, about the cancer that was attacking him – but he seemed fit enough and as vigorous as ever in conversation. Among our last conversations, sadly, was one the following spring after Anne had phoned me from his hospital bedside. He had decided to stop having any further treatment and was going home. The vigour had gone from his voice – but not his urge to paint. By what must have been an enormous effort of will he summoned the strength to paint a half-length portrait of his daughter Noga in a brilliant blue dress, heavily pregnant with his grandson Vigo. Though simply observed as always, there was doubtless an underlying theme (though he always scorned the literary in art) of binding the past and the future together, rather as his art as a whole could be interpreted as an effort to give permanency to what was fleeting, borne of an awareness of the ever-present possibility of annihilation that he had learned in the camps of Transnistria. The portrait is a towering achievement that shows him painting at this very best, as Titian had done, right at the end of his life. Though now terminally weak, he made the effort not only to tell me how he had painted the portrait – I still hear his weak voice saying, as so many times before, 'Would you like to see it?' – but to photograph it (his usual practice) and send me the image by email. He died on 30 April, the day after his 81st birthday. A few days later, at a Jewish burial service in the Montparnasse cemetery, I said farewell to Avigdor by pouring a little earth on his coffin. It was a cold, grey, blowy day, just like Edinburgh weather! There were many eulogies, including one by Michel Laclotte, a former director of the Louvre and another of his oldest friends. They all recalled a life of extraordinary achievement and we were left to ponder on it.

For myself, I miss him because he was one of the few people with whom I could discuss the practice of painting in any real sense. Coming out of the Wallace collection in London soon afterwards I was desperate to ring him up to discuss Dutch realism, Poussin, Rembrandt, Velázquez, only to realise with infinite sadness that it was no longer possible.

Dr Duncan Thomson was Keeper of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery from 1982 to 1997. He has published a wide range of art matters, including a book on George Jamesone, curated numerous exhibitions – most recently the Sir Henry Raeburn exhibition shown in Edinburgh and London in 1997/8. His book on Arikha, first published by Phaidon in 1994, has been reprinted many times and remains in print.

The Jews of Peru

A historic Diaspora dwindling

Molly Seckl

It is not just Paddington Bear who left Peru seeking education, adventures and a life in the UK. I too was born in Lima, the capital and home to a long-standing, if little documented community of Jews.

When I grew up in Lima, Peru's capital, the Jewish community was busy and prosperous. It had its own amenity and sport campus (Hebraica), a Jewish school (Leon Pinelo), which brought teachers and shlihim all the way from Israel to teach us Hebrew and Jewish History, and at least four synagogues. I do remember occasional bouts of anti-Semitism. These were often linked to the festivals of other religions, notably when one of the synagogues was stoned and all its windows broken during Easter time. But, by and large, we lived a good, community-based, Jewish life alongside a host of other immigrants (Italian, British, French, German, Arabs, etc). In my youth, Jews and Lebanese businessmen worked together. Sadly, much has changed since then. The Jewish community has dwindled from 4,000 to about 2,400. Many of my generation are either in Israel, the USA or Europe (some say that Peruvians have even come to Scotland!). Sadly, Why? Well, the history of the existence of Jews in Peru is a long one. There have been Jews since the Spanish Conquest, in 1532, as Jews who escaped Spain (after the expulsion of 1492) travelled to South America. There are stories that

Molly Seckl

indicate that Jews were even part of the Christopher Columbus 'team' (like Rodrigo de Triana, who was the first to sight land, Maestre Bernal, a physician, and Luis De Torres, the expedition's interpreter).

Jews co-existed in peace with the conquistadores and the local population, but with the advent of the Inquisition in South America many Jews were persecuted and some executed, including an infamous 'auto-da-fe' when a dozen 'New Christians' were burnt at the stake in Lima in 1639. Others more successfully converted to Catholicism ('marranos') merely to escape the Inquisition and persecution. Rather poignantly, in the old building of the Spanish Inquisition in Lima, you can still see clearly written on the walls the 'Shema Israel..'.

Jewish history in Peru reappears around the middle of the 19th century with the arrival in Lima of merchants and engineers from central Europe. By 1870 these largely male Jews formed a community, La Sociedad de Beneficencia Israelita de 1870, which exists to the present day. However, women were scarce, intermarriage therefore common and none of these founder families is represented in the modern Peruvian Jewish community, a salutary lesson for Jewish Diasporas everywhere.

Rejuvenation of the community occurred in the 1910s and 1920s when Jews arrived primarily from Germany and other parts of Europe. Before and after World War I, Jews from Turkey and Syria also came to Lima to escape their Ottoman Empire countries ravaged by war. These again were mainly male, and the poor, scraping a living in Lima and two other of Peru's other larger cities, Trujillo, and Arequipa. They joined the few German Jews who were members of community institutions dating from the 19th century and utilized their own cemetery. By the end of the 1920s Lima had around 400 Jews. My great grandparents arrived in the 1920s; my maternal great grandfather and great grandmother from Ukraine (Kiev), my maternal grandfather from Turkey (Adrianapolis, or Edirne, via France, and the Sorbonne). My grandfather left Turkey at the age of 18 as he was understandably not that keen on serving in the army under Kemal Ataturk. My paternal grandparents came from what was then Romania. During this time other Ashkenazim arrived. Eventually, the Sephardi Jews separated and created their own Synagogue. 1925 saw the creation of the first Zionist movement in Peru ('Organización Sionista del Peru'), and by the end of the 1920s, with the assimilation of the German Jews, the population reached 1,000.

In the 1930s Jews gained some financial security, both from the efforts of the earlier immigrants, who concentrated mainly on textiles and related business, and as immigration of around 500 relatively wealthy Jews from Germany and Austria began in earnest, especially after 1933. The Jewish Beneficial Society of 1870 was re-established and a variety of youth movements instigated (Maccabi, Hashahar, Hashomer and Betar). The community bought buildings for the synagogues. The Peruvian government banned Jewish immigration in 1938. The number of Jews had risen then to about 2,500.

The Community strengthened and many organisations flourished; the cemetery was enlarged; a home for the elderly was established and the Leon Pinelo Jewish School (where I studied) was founded. The various youth organizations integrated into Hanoar Hatzioni and Betar. Three women's groups (Wizo, OSE and Pioneer Women) were organized. During this decade, the relationship between Jewish education and Zionism significantly intensified and by the end of the 1930s, despite the restrictions on immigration, the number of Jews in Peru reached about 4,000 people.

By the 1950s Jewish families were typically financially well off and the Jews in other areas in Peru moved to Lima to become part of the greater community. The Jewish community purchased land and expanded its institutions (The Jewish Beneficial Society of 1870, The Union Israelita, the Israeli embassy, sports club Hebraica, Bikur Holim and Hevre Kadisha). An old age home Afilantis was established and the Adath Israel Synagogue was built. By 1960 Lima's Jewish population exceeded 5,000.

In the 1960s a new generation, born and bred in Peru, assumed key leadership roles and the ties with Israel strengthened. Keren Hayesod had more impact in the community and Aliya to Israel increased. More than 80% of Lima's Jews were connected with the Jewish school and shlihim served as teachers and as the principal. The Hebraica Organization hired a foreign co-ordinator for its activities and three new rabbis were engaged by synagogues. Lima's Jewish population increased and reached 5,500 people.

The military coup of General Velasco Alvarado (1968-1980) marked the beginning of the decline of the Peruvian Jewish Community. He brought socialism to Peru and restricted private property and freedom of the press. Having lived through this period, I can clearly recall that we Jews started living in fear, as did many of the local Peruvians. 'Toque de queda' or martial law was imposed with a curfew after 10pm. This meant a 'shoot to kill' policy by the police. Tanks became a common sight in the streets and there was a lack of basic produce in the markets. At this point, many Jewish people were affected financially due to the 'reforms'. In rapid succession the regime nationalized the banking system, railroads, public utilities, the important fishmeal industry, and Peru's giant copper and iron mines.

All of this contributed to Jewish youth emigrating, especially to Israel and the United States, both to study and work. I myself left Peru in 1979 in order to emigrate to Israel. The beginning of open anti-Semitism, (hidden under the support for Palestinians and the standard anti-Zionist slant) as well as rampant crime and corruption, all led to a higher emigration and the Jewish population declined to some 4,500 people by the end of the decade. This decline continued through the 1980s with the advent of prolific terrorist groups such as the notorious quasi-Maoist 'Shining Path' which controlled large swathes of the country and killed many middle-class (and of course poor) people. Leon Pinelo school which had had 1,014 students at its peak dwindled to a roll of only 540. At the end of the decade, due to intermarriage and emigration, the number of Jews in Peru declined to 3,200. This trend continued in the 1990s as unemployment soared and poverty increased. Jews were no longer mainly emigrating to Israel, perhaps due to Israel's internal conflicts and uncertain economy, but went instead to live in the USA.

On a different note, amongst the elderly population (including my parents, generation), a religious revival began and a Habad rabbi arrived and was welcomed in Lima. The first decade of the new millennium saw four separate communities (each with its own rabbi); the Ashkenazi Orthodox; the Sephardi Orthodox; the Conservatives and the Chabad. By now the Jewish population has declined to around 2,300.

As I visit Lima, both with a sense of belonging to the community and reminiscence, I carry a feeling of sadness for its decline. In late 2005, the rabbi of the largest synagogue expressed concern at the number of anti-Semitic attacks and the rise of neo-Nazi groups that threaten the country's Jews. Compounded with this, there is a new Nationalist movement which avows 'Peru for the Peruvians' and this means indigenous populations only (who naturally have long interbred with a host of incomers from Europe, the Caribbean, Asia and so forth). Nevertheless, even if the Jewish community is dwindling, we have had (and still have) Jewish people in prominent positions, for example, the prime minister and the finance minister during the time of President Fujimori's regime [1990-2000], and the second vice president, David Waisman, in the current government.

Leon Trahtemberg, a historian and principal of the Colegio Leon Pinelo, believes Peruvian Jewry is now "at a crossroads", as the community dwindles, intermarriages increase and emigration continues apace. "We have a broad base of services and they are flourishing," he says, "but without forward-looking leadership, we'll eventually lose them."

Rather amazingly, despite the declining population, Peru still has groups practising Judaism outside Lima, the capital and financial hub. In the Amazonian Jungle, a group of Jews was found in the past few years. They are the descendants of immigrants who made their home in the city of Iquitos, a thriving centre of imported Italian marble with a theatre designed by Gustave Eiffel, during the time of the rubber boom. They were mainly Jews from Morocco, Gibraltar, Malta, England and France who were following their star in search of riches and adventure. As the rubber trade collapsed, a few stayed and clung to their Jewish beliefs.

After the chief rabbi of Lima's largest Ashkenazi synagogue agreed to oversee two large conversions, a number of them made aliya to Israel. The exodus included nearly the entire Levy clan, descended from Joseph Levy, a Moroccan adventurer who put down roots in the jungle in the 19th century.

A different group, The B'nai Moshe, (or "Inca Jews)," are former Christians, who practiced Judaism from the 1950s -- inspired, they said, by the Psalms. They lived mainly in the north of Peru (Trujillo and Piura). They prayed wearing shawls, ate only fruit, vegetables and fish with scales, read from a homemade Torah scroll and were circumcised. They were formally converted in 1980 and made aliya (140 of them) to Israel, where they settled in Elon Moreh, a religious community in the West Bank.

Peru's Jews have a long history, born in adversity of the Inquisition, flourishing during the 20th Century, but now dwindling as fortunes are sought elsewhere. The largely ageing population will have increasing difficulties in sustaining itself. Echoes of the issues for others in the more remote regions of the Diaspora perhaps?

And finally, despite the dietary preference of Paddington, most Peruvians don't like marmalade sandwiches!

Peru covers 1,285,220 km² (496,226 sq mi). It neighbours Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Brazil to the east, Bolivia to the southeast, Chile to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. It has 29 million inhabitants. Peru has the fourth largest area of tropical forest in the world after Brazil, Congo and Indonesia.[53]

Further information:
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/peru.html

The Jews of Peru at the Crossroads – Journal of Jewish Genealogy, The Israel Genealogical Society, June 2002, Vol 16, N3.

Molly Seckl was born and schooled in Lima. She lived in Jerusalem for 5 years studying archaeology at the Hebrew University, and then completed an MSc in London. She moved to Edinburgh in 1987 and now works as a counsellor in the NHS and private practice. She regularly visits her family in Peru who, contrary to popular myth, do not subsist solely on marmalade sandwiches.

Jews of Holland

Samuel Myer Isaacs

The man who dedicated 47 synagogues in the USA

Peter de Haan

Family reunion of descendants

A number of people, including Anthony Gilbert, son of Gilbert Isaacs, were very interested to know about Samuel Isaacs and his family history. On the first weekend of July, 2010, I had the pleasure of hosting nineteen of the descendants of Samuel, who had arrived from the USA, UK and South Africa, to his birth place Leeuwarden. The family were given a reception by the deputy-major, Mr. Zandberg; walked along the Jewish highlights of the town; listened to lectures about the relations between Jews and the local population; the first recorded ancestor, Samuel Isaacs, and his home region, and visiting the house of his childhood. It was a great pleasure and even honour for me as a non-Jew to be the host of such a nice group of descendants of our famous 'son' Samuel Isaacs.

Samuel Isaacs was born in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands in 1804. The city was in those days the fourth largest Jewish community in Holland after Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.
When young Samuel arrived in 1804, he could not have suspected that two centuries later his name would appear on the website of www.famousamericans.net. The information which follows is based on The Forerunners, Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora (1994), by the American professor Robert P. Swierenga and my article in the book Famous Frisians in America.

When Holland was formally annexed by France, the Isaacs family began to think seriously about leaving the country. In addition to the economic situation, the fact that their Orthodox beliefs were diametrically opposed to the enlightened ideas of the French oppressors may also have played a role.

The family left behind hearth and home – as well as their debts – in search of a place of refuge in England.

England as place of refuge

The Isaacs family arrived in Spitalfield, in East London. Father threw himself into his rabbinical duties and instructed his children in the Talmud. It was assuredly no accident that four of his five sons became rabbis. One of them, Samuel's brother David, would later become the chief rabbi of Manchester.

Solomon Hirschell, the chief rabbi, was a well-known figure in London in those days. Ten-year-old Samuel Myer Isaacs soon came under the influence of him. Rabbi Hirschell found Samuel to be a talented, inquisitive young man, who stood out because of his speaking skills. In addition to his schoolwork and the lessons with his father, he also studied Hebrew and Jewish history at the synagogue school.

This period saw a wave of emigration to such countries as Australia, Africa and above all North America. The new synagogue Bnai Jeshurun (Sons of Israel) placed itself under the authority of London and the Rabbi Hirschell. He was bombarded with questions from a 'leaderless' New York congregation. It soon became apparent that the New York synagogue on Elm Street was in need of someone who resided in the city and was endowed with the oratorical gifts necessary to attract and retain a congregation. Although Samuel had no formal rabbinical training, Hirschell saw in this man from Leeuwarden the necessary leadership qualities, and asked him to devote his considerable talents to this pioneering task.

Jewish leadership in New York

Several days after his wedding to Jane Symmons, the 35-year-old Samuel stepped on board the Brig Emery in London to take up his post as cantor and preacher in a world which was totally foreign to him. But he did know that the Bnai Jeshurun synagogue was then the largest Ashkenazi congregation in New York, with a total of 17,000 members.

> "Samuel Isaacs delivered the very first English sermon ever heard in a New York synagogue."

Shortly after his installation, Samuel Isaacs delivered the very first English sermon ever heard in a New York synagogue. Up until then the languages of choice were Hebrew and German. Samuel's sermons were oratorical masterpieces which were rooted in Jewish orthodoxy but also able to withstand the ravages of time. He transformed the Jewish afternoon school associated with his synagogue into a Hebrew-English school which was open on workdays: the New York Talmud Torah and Hebrew Institute. He founded also a Jewish secondary school. He himself taught for many years at this private school, known as the Hebrew High School, which catered for Jewish students of all denominations.

Isaacs decided to preside over a new congregation: Shaaray Tefila on Wooster Street, and later on 44th Street. Samuel's rituals remained conservative (traditional prayers, no mixed choirs, no instrumental music during worship). And yet, from the beginning Shaaray Tefila flourished. No doubt this had a great deal to do with the exceptional personality and eloquence of the minister.

In 1857 Isaacs launched a weekly newspaper, the Jewish Messenger, which proved to be a most effective means of

communication. Not only could he make the most of his talents as a writer, he could also set the tone. Initiatives which followed from these efforts included a Jewish orphanage (1859) and Mount Sinai Hospital (1852). This was the largest American-Jewish hospital in the country, and Isaacs served as its vice-president.

While Samuel Isaacs was imbued with strict Orthodox views on faith and the world, he refrained from pronouncements on genuine political issues. But when the Civil War broke out, he could not help exhorting the readers of the Jewish Messenger to 'Stand by the Flag!'

Contacts with presidents

The social position which Samuel Isaacs had attained was underscored at the funeral of the assassinated president Abraham Lincoln in New York: Isaacs was one of the officially designated clergymen invited to attend the memorial services in Union Square. We know that Samuel Isaacs was also friendly with the 18th president of the United States, General Ulysses S. Grant. If at all possible, the two met whenever the president visited New York. His sons Myer, Isaac and Abram would also serve the Jewish community in New York in a very considerable way.

A Short History of the Jews of Friesland

Peter de Haan

I would like to add some new found facts relating to the birth house of Samuel, the original of which was written with the support of Prof. Swierenga in the book 'Famous Frisians in America'

Leeurwarden, also known as Friesland, had its own culture and by law, its own officially recognised language over the centuries.

In this respect there can be seen a similarity with the Jews: they too had their own identity, languages, (Hebrew and Yiddish) religion, and rules to name but a few. Although I am generalizing, both like to make autonomous choices. Maybe that similarity is the reason that every two years a Yiddish Festival is organised in this town and nowhere else.

The Jews needed their own rules; they were able to survive as a minority but by so doing for many years, they failed to integrate into a society that wished to welcome Jews initially accepted as poor refugees and who would soon bring great trade opportunities. The First Jews from Portugal and Spain went to Amsterdam, the international capital from the beginning of the 16th century. With 10,000 Jews, Amsterdam had the largest Jewish community in Europe, around 1700. Here in the north most Jews came from Germany and Poland in the 17th and 18th century, often from, or via, Emden. Their language was Yiddish, and because they were not allowed to participate in and work for the guilds they had to work in trade, mostly cattle, meat, textile and lotteries. In Leeuwarden there was even a 'Luck Office' that was run by a smart Jew.

Although the Jews had much more freedom here than in other countries, their situation was not always ideal. Here too, people were not without prejudice, but compared to the pogroms in Eastern Europe Jews considered this area a safe heaven. In the French period (1796), when the Isaacs lived in Leeuwarden, Jews were essentially given equal rights and Frisian representatives had unanimously supported that law. Frisians are said to be strong freedom lovers, and they were the first in Holland, and second in the world, to recognise the independence of the USA.

During French rule all citizens had to have a formal surname. Some Jews chose Frisian names. From about 1850 the Jews integrated more and more into society and thence were elected in the council of Leeuwarden. Despite improved civil rights, the Isaacs-family immigrated to London because of the combination of debts, (the English-French wars here caused economic recession) and they might too have believed that they could more easily be Orthodox Jews. The rich merchant Abraham Levi moved to London in 1815 dying a bankrupt in 1843. Samuel Isaacs and his family moved at more or less at the same. It would be interesting to study the relationship between these families in consideration of their shared experiences.

> "The statue erected in their honour must surely be the only one in the world dedicated to a peanut seller!"

Among the Jews in Friesland Samuel Isaacs was no doubt a man who attracted great International recognition. Another is Samuel Coronel who published extensively on improving public health living here from 1867 until 1890. He received the first prize of the Société Internationale d'Économie Sociale in Paris. Yet another, Alexander Cohen, famously became an anarchistic writer and published extensively in France. One positive move during the French period to integrate Jews into society was to move the main market day from Saturday to Friday. Jews could celebrate their Shabbat and also participate in trade at the market. Many Jews were street pedlars. Today the main market day in Leeuwarden is still Friday. Two Jewish pedlars became so famous that there were even statues dedicated to them: one is dedicated to the twin sisters Betje and Roosje Cohen who sold peanuts. Everyone in town knew Roosje who worked for more than 65 years. The statue erected in their honour must surely be the only one in the world dedicated to a peanut seller!

The other statue is erected in the centre of Amsterdam, dedicated to the Leeuwarden born Meyer Linnewiel alias Prof. Kokadorus, a title he said he got honoris

> "Holland also had its fascist political party"

causa from the Amsterdam University; this really famous hawker sold braces ('the best to hang your mother in law' he said...) Once he was invited by the Queen to show his act; it was the only time in his life that he was too nervous to speak a word, nevertheless from that moment he called himself Purveyor to the Royal Household 'Hofleverancier' and was also honoured with a statue.

It was not exceptional at that time for the Jewish community in Leeuwarden to belong to the Orthodox branch. In the 19th century Chief Rabbi Baruch Dusnus was in charge. Jews also had their own clubs; sport, debating, academic and theatre clubs and also a women's club.

Within the Frisian Museum, which is the Netherlands largest regional museum, is the Resistance Museum. Here can be seen a place of remembrance, with the names of the more than 600 Jewish citizens who were expelled from Friesland or murdered.

Holland also had its fascist political party, the NSB. They were less influential in Friesland, than in the north, middle and southwest. It was in Leeurwarden that hundreds of Jewish people were hidden during the war, aided by individual people and organisations that could identify places of hiding. Some of them were interviewed by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education in Los Angeles, erected by Steven Spielberg in response to his film Schindlers List. Friesland was a popular place of shelter because there was sufficient food and relatively low numbers of collaborators or traitors.

The last Chief Rabbi of Friesland was the sociable Abraham Salomon Levisson, who founded the Association of Jewish Academics in Friesland. Before the war he was responsible for the spiritual care of the people in camp Westerbork and because of his personality, was known as Rebbe Simche, (Rabbi Joy). He died in an evacuation train after Bergen-Belsen was liberated. Only 100 of the 700 Jews who lived in Leeuwarden before the war survived returned. The synagogue became too big for the remaining community and now there are only 46 members of the Jewish community living in Leeuwarden.

There are nine Jewish cemeteries In Friesland, the first of which was founded in 1670.

The Leeuwarden Jewish Community

Evelyn van Pinxteren-Nagler

Recently I was asked to write a few words for your paper about the Jews living in Leeuwarden, the main town in the province Friesland, or Fryslan as it is called in the regional language, a 96,000 town in the North-East of the Netherlands. So here are those words....

In 1645 the first registered Jews arrived in Leeuwarden, coming from Emden in North Germany, a town well known in the area due to trade and shipping.

In 1670 the city granted the Jews their own plot of land to lay their dead to rest, a cemetery was created.

Some years later, probably in 1754, 2 private houses in the Sacramentstraat were united to be the first formal house of worship, the first synagogue. By 1805 a larger synagogue was built on that location, designed by Gerrit van der Wielen, that could have 300 men and 200 women. For the Jewish community had grown and grown, becoming the largest one outside of Amsterdam and so big it even had its own rabbi and schools.

> "After the war, only ninety or so former Jewish inhabitants of Leeuwarden were known to have survived"

Alas, soon, at the turn of the century, the community started to become less important with less members, so when the Nazi invasion took place, less than 400 jews inhabited the city. After the war, only ninety or so former Jewish inhabitants of Leeuwarden were known to have survived, far too few to be able to keep the synagogue in proper state and use, so after the reconsecration in 1948 and the celebration commemorating its 150th anniversary in 1955, which 81 members attended, the decision was taken in 1964 to sell the synagogue for 1 ceremonial guilden to the municipality and find a cultural destination for it. It now is a ballroom dancing centre.

The inventory was shipped to Kfar Batya, a children's village in the centre of Israel, the most precious ceremonial objects were donated to the Jewish museum in Amsterdam.

The Jewish community did, however, continue to have services in the house adjoining the synagogue, using the interior of the Gorredijk synagogue . It was inaugurated in 1980 and till this day is the central location for the community, now totalling 41 members. There are services on holidays and every third Shabbat, on Sunday evenings, mishna is studied and meetings and celebrations take place. The present community is a mixture of Jewish families who originate from Leeuwarden, families coming from other parts of the Netherlands, refugees from the former USSR, from Iran and Iraq, Israelis looking for a more stable climate than their beloved country can provide and students from all over Europe who spend a few years in town. So, the services have become a unique mixture of traditional Dutch nigunim, often sung by balakore Jaacov de Leeuwe, ashkenazi, Sephardi and sometimes even Moroccan or Yemenite ones, as the members together put in an effort to let the services

> "prayers are repeated in order to provide a possibility to share each other's traditions!"

continue. On the Holy days, in order to accommodate every person's need, some prayers are repeated in order to provide a possibility to share each other's traditions! Being such a minute community, one strives to support each other, bringing kosher food for all who want to have it from Amsterdam, Antwerp and Paris, whenever a person is able to shop there. The cemetery is cared for, however help is accepted when offered, eg from the 'Dutch foundation for Penance and Reconciliation', who try to make up for the Dutch attitude in the Second World War by restoring Jewish cemeteries all over Holland. The monument for those who perished in that war, was restored in 2001 with the aid of the Netherlands-Israel Association. Celebrations such as on Purim, Yom Haatzmaut and Chanuka are organised by WIZO, so all Jews in the area who care to, can join in and no barriers are created between Orthodox, Conservative or other religious connections.
The regional library includes the "Fuchs collection", a vast collection of Yiddish and Hebrew books, donated by Professor Fuchs to "the area where good people

> "as it may be, the Jewish community in Leeuwarden continues to survive!"

hid a Jewish boy in order to survive the war"...since many come to see that collection, a two-yearly Yiddish festival is now put up by the library together with the municipality, the municipal film theatre, the historical centre and many others. This year for the first time a Limmud will be organised in September.

So, small as it may be, the Jewish community in Leeuwarden continues to survive!

Leeuwarden Shul