

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

June 1997

No. 27

Sivan



The Edinburgh Star
 SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS
 4 SALISBURY ROAD
 EDINBURGH EH16 5AB

Editor:

Michael Adler

Editorial Assistant:

Rachel Razbeau

Editorial Board:

John Cosgrove (*Chairman*)

Mickey Cowen (*Hon. Treasurer*)

Myrna Kaplan

Eve Oppenheim

Elaine Samuel

Ian Shein

Mark Sischy

Advertisements:

Michael Wittenberg

Tel: 0131-668 3331

Typesetting page origination and printing:

Meigle Printers Ltd.,

Tweedbank,

Galashiels, TD1 3RS

Front Cover: The eternal question mark. This turn of the century postcard, taken from Nicholas de Lange's *Atlas of the Jewish World*, encapsulates the uncertainties of Jewish existence. What are the Jews? What should they be in the modern world? Can they survive with their identity unimpaired? If they opt for assimilation will they be accepted? Where, if anywhere, can they live in peace and security? These are questions which have still not been clearly answered.

Typing: Norma MacLeod

The Editorial Board wish to thank the advertisers and the following for their support:

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Miss Dorothe Kaufman

Mrs Rena Lurie

Miss A Pass

Mr and Mrs Speculand

The Board would also like to thank Mr and Mrs Harold Mendelsohn for kindly defraying the cost of sending The Edinburgh Star overseas.

Contents

EDITORIAL	2
COMMUNITY	
The Lowrie Report	3
A Show is Born – Lennie Berger.....	4
Bagpipes in Zion – Rose Kelman	5
Coming Events.....	6
Congratulations and Notices.....	6
Edinburgh Council for Christians and Jews.....	7
PEOPLE	
Betty Franklin: South Side Storey – Ian Shein	8
Star Trek into the Past.....	9
ARTICLES	
The Nature and Function of the Mechitza – Rabbi David Sedley.....	10
The General Election 1997: a Jewish Perspective – Nick Cosgrove... ..	12
Dona Gracia: International Financier, Refugee and Philanthropist – Berl Osborne	14
The Poor Jews Temporary Shelter (Part 2) – Aubrey Newman	19
Memories, Some Sad, Some Glad: the Winter Gardens in Rothsay - Rocky Levey	21
OBITUARIES	
Cissy Caplan, Bertold Hornung, Michael Lurie, Roma Steinberg.....	22
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	
M. S. Cowen, Blanche Mundy	25



**ESTATE AGENTS
& MORTGAGE CONSULTANTS**

SELLING YOUR HOME?

41 FREDERICK STREET
 EDINBURGH, EH2 1EP

- ★ Personal attention from our Directors and Staff.
 - ★ Highly competitive sales fee.
 - ★ Maximum legal fees £285 + VAT + outlays for sale or purchase of any price property.
- We will call and advise on valuation and marketing **WITHOUT CHARGE OR OBLIGATION.**

Tel: **0131 226 6464**

Monday to Friday 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday 1 to 4 p.m.

Editorial

The illustration on the cover poses the question . . . "Have the Jewish people lost their way?" In the last Issue, I wrote about the relations between Jews from different religious traditions and backgrounds in the UK and in Israel and argued that, until and unless the various denominations within the Jewish community start to talk to each other on the basis of mutual tolerance and respect, our future as a single religious community was at serious risk. In this Issue, I want to switch the focus of attention from the religious to the secular.

Thirty years ago, Israel astounded the rest of the world when its army defeated the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian forces in the Six Day War. As a result, Israel virtually tripled in size to include Sinai, Gaza, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. However, the Israeli government was not able to dictate the terms of peace and today, peace and security remain elusive. It is, of course true, that there has been some real progress. The Camp David Agreement led to the return of the Sinai Peninsula, recognition by and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt. More recently, the Oslo Agreement has resulted in the giving up of Gaza and parts of the West Bank, the establishment of a Palestinian Authority and the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Palestinians and with Jordan. However, the progress towards peace with security, which at one time looked so hopeful, came to an abrupt end with the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the rejection of Shimon Peres by the voters and election of Binyamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister. This editorial is not intended as a party political broadcast but his persistent denigration of the Oslo Peace Accords and his seeming reluctance to act in pursuit of peace have been a source of great disappointment, not only to many Israelis but also to Jews in the diaspora and other friends of Israel and the Jewish community throughout the world. There is a widespread feeling that the Israeli government no longer knows where it is going and that it has lost its way.

Here at home, a report due to be published next month by the Institute of Jewish Public Policy Research (JPR) in association with the Joint Israel Appeal and Jewish Continuity gives further grounds for concern. A year ago, **The Edinburgh Star** carried two articles which summarised and commented on the JPR's important survey of the social and political attitudes of British Jews. The new report on the social attitudes of unmarried young Jews in contemporary Britain is based on a sub-sample of 193 young adults aged between 22 and 39. They can be divided into three groups which are roughly equal in size: the "close" group (38 per cent) who have mostly Jewish friends, the "distant" group (32 per cent) who have few or no Jewish friends and the "halfway" group (31 per cent) around half, or less than half, of whose friends are Jewish. I suspect that most young Jews in Edinburgh, indeed most Jews in Edinburgh, fall into this middle group. Overall, over one third of the sample actually favoured intermarriage, 51 per cent found it difficult to find a Jewish partner; and 56 per cent believed that rabbis should be more helpful in welcoming non-Jewish partners. While 86 per cent thought that Jewish survival was important, their attitudes and behaviour are such as to make this increasingly unlikely. Are we in danger of losing our way too?

One indication that we are is reflected in our nostalgia for the past and the difficulties we experience in thinking constructively about the future. This is, sadly, reflected in the pages of **The Edinburgh Star**. Although the Editorial Board is very pleased to carry retrospective articles where these are of sufficient quality and considered to be of interest to our readers, it aims to achieve a balance between past, present and future. But, on this criterion, the journal has not been conspicuously successful. In the current issue, we carry a fascinating article by Berl Osborne on "Dona Gracia", a quite remarkable 16th-century Jewess who made her mark in Lisbon, Antwerp, Venice and Constantinople; Part 2 of Aubrey Newman's very interesting account (continued from the last Issue) of "The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter" in London at the turn of this century; and Rocky Levey's wonderful reminiscences of the Winter Gardens in Rothesay – as well as a profile of Betty Franklin, a stalwart member of the Edinburgh Jewish Community. It is, of course, true that we are an ageing community but there is much truth in the old adage that "you are only as old as you feel". We might well feel younger if we could shift the focus of our attention from the past to the present and the future.

One exception to the emphasis on matters past is the article by Nick Cosgrove on the recent general election. Jews appear to have been no different from the rest of the population in their rejection of the Conservatives and their enthusiasm for "new" Labour. Constituencies with significant numbers of Jewish voters, including Finchley (held for many years by Margaret Thatcher), Hendon, Ilford North, Bury South and Leeds North-East (formerly held by the late Sir Keith Joseph), were all captured by Labour and there are now twice as many Jewish Labour MPs as Jewish Conservative MPs. As Nick Cosgrove points out, it looks as if the Jewish community has "come home" to Labour, the party to which most Jews have traditionally supported. How much this is due to the apparent endorsement of Tony Blair by the Chief Rabbi is unclear but there is clearly much common ground between their "communitarian" ideas and their views about the relationship between the state and civil society. Although it is very much to be hoped that the Jewish community will succeed in capitalising on this common ground and in forging a constructive relationship with the government, there are limits beyond which this probably should not go. Just as the very close relationship between Lord Jakobovitz and Margaret Thatcher was probably not in the long-term interests of those they represented, a similar relationship between Dr Sacks and Tony Blair, if such were to develop, would really be no better. Religion and politics don't mix very well and are best kept separate.

Although the electorate seems to know where it wants to go, or at least where it does not want to go, it is not clear that we can say the same for our own community. In this Issue, we are pleased to carry an article by Rabbi David Sedley in which he explains why, in his view, it was so important to raise the height of the *Mechitza* in the Synagogue. He has a clear sense of where he wants to go but it is by no means clear that all members of the community have the same destination in mind. **The Edinburgh Star** does not wish to undermine the Rabbi's position but, as the journal of the Edinburgh Jewish community, it does wish to encourage free and frank discussion of issues which are clearly of concern to the community and affect its future. In this spirit, comments on and responses to Rabbi Sedley's article would be particularly welcome.

MA

THE LOWRIE REPORT

ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP PLUS A WEE BIT EXTRA

The Friendship Club stole a march on time by holding its Tea Dance on 30th March, when most of us remembered to put our "time-pieces" forward, for it is typical of this Club's happy members that they do not only dwell on the happy times of yesterday, but also enjoy today and look forward with eager anticipation to tomorrow.

Stuart Caplan (the President's son) provided music for dancing and for accompanying the *heimische* vocal talent. Starting his musical career on the accordion when he was only eight before moving on to other instruments, Stuart played at Maccabi dances in the 1960s and, since then, has played all over

Scotland. His two daughters are now 17 and 20 – the older one is already at Strathclyde University and the younger one will be going to university in October.

A somewhat younger lady, Genevieve Littauer, showed us how to do the Highland Fling; our very own "Lover Mann" (Henry) sang of love; while "Globe Trotters" Rose Orgel and David Goldberg were enthusiastically welcomed back on their return from their most recent travels.

As ever, the catering provided by the Friendship Club Ladies Committee was thoroughly enjoyed and the 33 members present voted the Tea Dance a great success.

THE COMMUNAL

SHABBAT LUNCHEON

This lunch, organised by the Future Generations Committee under the Chairmanship of John Danzig, was sponsored by Jewish Continuity and took place on 12th April. After a meal of *gefillte fisch*, vegetarian quiche and a variety of salads, the audience of some 70 people heard a fascinating talk by Andrew Shaw. The title of his talk "Shearer at Old Trafford – a Whole New Way of Looking at *Matza*" was not exactly self-explanatory but any suggestion that he might have wanted to poke fun at the religion of football was strenuously denied by the speaker.

Andrew Shaw, who comes from London, is a student at the *Yeshiva* in Jerusalem of which our own Rabbi is a distinguished alumnus. Now two years into his studies, he has another two years to go when he will probably become a teacher in Jewish Education. He explained that life's experiences need to be reflected on because life's many "hidden miracles" are usually unrecognised at the time of their occurrence. He illustrated this claim by relating some of his experiences in Israel, explaining that, whenever he 'phoned his mother, he seemed to have some amazing adventures to tell her. Accident-prone? Well, not particularly, although he did recall how he fell down the side of a mountain and only survived because he encountered an unexpected protuberance which broke his fall.

David Kaplan, Executive Director of **Jewish Continuity** for Scotland, former Chairman of the Union of Jewish Students and scion of this Community, gave a vote of thanks. It is the hope of all who were present that this will be the first of many *Shabbat* luncheons.

GAMES EVENING

Who said "it's only a game!?" Clearly not those whose cry is "never mind the game, let's get on with the *post mortem*". Nate and Eve Oppenheim, Alex Rubinstein and Sammy Latter, Laurence and Doreen Bowman, Valerie and Bill Simpson, Rosa Massey, Sylvia Baker and Blanche Mundy, among others, were seen to enjoy a friendly game of Bridge, watching one another shuffle, cut, riffle and deal, admiring their opponents clever play and smiling tolerantly at their partners' mistakes.

Willy and Betty Caplan and Rabbi David Sedley found all sorts of interesting word possibilities in a game of Scrabble while another score or so of players had an "intellectual" evening of Rummikub and Trivial Pursuits.

Time was found for the 35 contestants to enjoy a selection of open sandwiches, shortbread, chocolate cookies, tea and coffee before resuming the games. The evening, organised by the Communal Hall Ladies Committee, raised £232.26.

FANCY DRESS COMPETITION

The winner of the Fancy Dress Competition at the Purim Party this year was seven-year-old Lauren Stewart.



Lauren Stewart, seen here dressed up as "The Book of Esther".

A SHOW IS BORN

by Lennie Berger

To produce a musical Jewish comedy like *Carmen Cohen* required three ingredients – a brilliant script, a wonderful cast and a superb pianist and musical arranger. The script was given to me some time ago by the late Rudolph Essex. It was written by Cyril Citron of Thorpe Bay, England to whom we owe many thanks and much gratitude. Last year it was shown to Katie and Ronnie Goodwin who thought it could be performed here. My next port of call was to Norma Brodie who managed to obtain the music of *Carmen*. Only certain parts were required and it proved to be quite difficult to match the Yiddish and the English words. However, George Bizet himself had a similar problem.

At this point, Rose Newman had joined us to sing the role of *Carmen*.



Rose Newman as Carmen Cohen.

After several rehearsals the cast were called. We soon discovered that the music had been written for tenor and soprano voices and that this was far too high for us. Fortunately, Norma was able to transpose it into a lower key for everyone.

The rehearsals were held every Wednesday for almost two hours,



The Cast.

including a tea break. This turned out to be particularly important as it enabled the cast to become a company, and to raise many ideas and suggestions. I had to analyse each line and to give everyone their stage directions. By January the cast wanted two rehearsals a week.

The ladies managed to obtain long dresses, together with necklaces, earrings and castanets. The workers wore waistcoats, the police constabulary carried helmets and batons, and the kosher butcher dressed in suitable attire. The production began to take shape.

The evening arrived at last, and from the moment the music started playing and the cast came down the steps, the audience just looked, gasped and started laughing and clapping. This continued throughout the show and gave everyone a tremendous boost. It was a wonderful performance which was immensely enjoyed by the cast as well as the audience.

Over 100 people attended the dinner after the performance and the sum of £900 was raised for WIZO. Katie Goodwin and the committee did a wonderful job.

The cast was as follows:

<i>Carmen Cohen</i>	Rose Newman
<i>Kosher Butcher</i>	Ian Leifer
<i>Police Constable</i>	Ian Caplan
<i>Police Sergeant</i>	Gershon Mendick
<i>Charge Hand</i>	Judy Gilbert
<i>Chorus</i>	Valerie Simpson Susie Sinclair Rose Orgel Vicky Lowry Tony Gilbert Bill Sinclair
<i>Lady Constable</i>	Christine Burns
<i>Pianist</i>	Norma Brodie
<i>Props</i>	Ian Brodie
<i>Producer</i>	Lennie Berger

Rehearsals for the next musical production will begin after Yom Kipper, when WIZO are planning a "takeover".

With Compliments

from

JOHN and HAZEL

COSGROVE

BAGPIPES IN ZION

by Rose Kelman

The venue: Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv; the occasion: *Burns Nicht* – Israeli style; planning and execution by Harold Sterne.

Dozens of ex-pat Scots celebrated the traditional Burns night in Tel Aviv on 2nd February. The event was an excuse to get together for a reunion and a lively evening out but there clearly is genuine affection among the ex-pat Scots for Burns' poetry and the two elements combined to make the event a very special one. Harold, with the help of the hotel staff and some friends, decorated the tables with tartan serviettes and thistles and the kitchen came up trumps with haggis, neeps and tatties. Everyone agreed that, although the meal was very acceptable, the "genuine article" made by Joe Lurie would have been even better.

The haggis was piped in splendidly by David Beninger, a Dutch Jew who learned his bagpiping skills while he was a student in Canada. Several guests sported the kilt but the full dress kilt was only worn by the manager of the Sheraton, a Scot who was, of

course, entitled to wear his clan kilt and cut a splendid figure. Anne (Chana) Sterne gave the "immortal memory" in her unique, witty style, suggesting that the haggis could be used as a tool to forward the Middle East peace process while Mark Casson (ex-Glasgow) adapted *Tam O'Shanter* in brilliant satirical manner.

Guests came from all corners of the country, from as far away as the Galil and Eilat as well as from more accessible places. Moshe and I came from Jerusalem, as did Rose (Gordon) Elkana and Maurice Dorfman. Stefan Reif and Shuli, who are in Israel on sabbatical, also came – he accompanied the famous Cairo Geniza which is now on display at the Israel Museum and visitors are expected to come from far and wide to see and study it. Natie Gordon, Eva (Dorfman) and Mordechai Amitai, Judy (Segal) Levenberg, Anne (Vinstock) and Harry Herschkorn (who met when he was a medical student in Edinburgh), Brenda (Gordon) Rubin, Edwin Hoffenberg and Doreen, Judith (Rosen) and Larry

Reif, Celia and Lionel Berger (whose cousins Lennie and Norman Berger still live in Edinburgh) were among those who were present.

To enable the participants to enjoy a "wee dram", a coach was laid on to take the guests to and from the event. On the way there, Jack Katzenel, formerly a Glaswegian and now a well-known Israeli journalist, entertained us with lively, if somewhat bawdy, Scottish songs. Then he and Lionel Berger kept everyone in fits of laughter with their jokes and patter – it was a real pleasure. On the way back, the driver lost his compass and seemed to think that a midnight mystery tour was just the ticket. The passengers were not quite so sure and arrived back home very late indeed. However, even that did not detract from the euphoric feeling we all had. Robbie (Rabbi) Burns would surely have been happy that the haggis is appreciated in the Middle East today, and been flattered by the fact that his life and works are still celebrated in traditional style.

Rose Kelman (nee Levinson) was born in Edinburgh and, together with her mother Fanny and her own family, now lives in Rehavia, Jerusalem.

SUPPORT **The Edinburgh Star**

SEND US YOUR LETTERS AND ARTICLES

NEXT COPY DATE:
8th AUGUST 1997

Donations to
The Hon. Treasurer Mickey Cowen, Synagogue Chambers,
4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB.

With Compliments
from
Jess Franklin

205 Stenhouse Street
Cowdenbeath, Fife KY4 9DL

COMING EVENTS

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

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

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Jacqueline Bowman (339 7557) or Howard Nicholsby (317 7563).

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

The Jewish Literary Society and the Council of Christians and Jews do not meet over the summer period. In both cases, their programmes commence after the high holidays.

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30 p.m.

The Mother and Baby Group meets on alternate Sunday mornings at 10.00 a.m.

All meetings are subject to alteration.

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

CONGRATULATIONS

The Editorial Board offers its congratulations to:

Rowan Hendry and her family (rather belatedly) on the occasion of her Bat Mitzvah in the Synagogue on 31 August 1996 which was followed by a special kiddush in celebration.

John Laszlo on receiving the Royal Odonto-Chirurgical Society's Annual Prize. The Prize was awarded to him in the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh at the Society's Annual Dinner in March 1997.

Charles Raab and **Heather Valencia** on their respective elections as President and Secretary of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.

NOTICES

The **Lurie family** would like to thank everyone for all the kind support they received during their recent bereavement. (*An obituary for Michael Lurie appears on page 23 - Ed.*)

Jewish Women's Aid announces that the first Refuge in the UK for Jewish women and their children fleeing from domestic violence has recently been opened. Further information is available from JWA (address: BM JWAI, London WC1N 3XX, telephone: 0171 486 0860, fax: 0171 486 0600).

ב"ה

Philip Cussins House

RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR JEWISH AGED
IN THE NORTH EAST

33/35 Linden Road
Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne NE43 4EY

Telephone:

Office 0191 213 5353 Fax: 0191 213 5354 Residents: 0191 213 5355

CORRECTION

Dr Shari Cohn-Simmen has asked us to make it clear that her recently-awarded PhD was in Psychology and not in Parapsychology as reported in the last Issue. We are pleased to do so.

EDINBURGH COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

How does one teach values in a pluralistic society?

Mrs Jane Clements

15 May 1997

The last meeting of the 1996/97 session on Thursday, 15 May, included the Annual General Meeting. The Reverend John Murrie was in the Chair, the Hon. Treasurer, Dr R W Walker, presented the Accounts and the Hon. Secretary, Mrs Rose Orgel present her annual report. The Committee chose to resign *en bloc* and a new Committee was elected as follows:

Mr John Cosgrove, Rev. Andrew Hill, Dr Ian Leifer, Rev. Stewart Miller, Mr R Munroe, Rev. John Murrie, Dr N A Oppenheim, Rabbi David Sedley and Rev. John Stevenson. Mrs Rose Orgel and Dr R W Walker agreed to continue as Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively.

The business part of the meeting having been completed, Mr Murrie introduced the Guest Speaker, who was to have been Sister Margaret Shepherd, Deputy Director of CCJ, but she was unavoidably prevented from leaving her office, having to deal with an urgent matter in the absence of the Director. Fortunately, Mrs Jane Clements, recently appointed Assistant Education Officer at Head Office, agreed to deputise at very short notice, making copious notes on the train from Kings Cross to Edinburgh which enabled her to give a most interesting and stimulating talk on teaching values in a pluralistic society. This she was well qualified to do as a former teacher with an M.A. in Hebrew and Religious Studies from London University.

It is impossible for me to do justice to this talk in the time and space available and the scope of her talk can best be appreciated from some of the questions she raised. These included: What is the true meaning of "moral" behaviour? Does religious teaching in schools help to ensure this, or is a secure and happy home atmosphere more effective? Do all religious groups have the same sense of values? Should the commandment not to kill always be observed or is it sometimes

necessary to use force to defend the weak and persecuted?

It is commonplace for writers on education to refer to the "principles, fundamental convictions, ideals or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or as points of reference in decision making or the evaluation of beliefs or actions which are closely connected to personal integrity and personal identity". However, it may be better to allow children to speak for themselves. The following "Children's Charter" was drawn up by pupils in a school for 11-18 year olds - "Children should not be beaten up, children should not be looked upon as lesser human beings, children should have a secure home, children should be fed properly, children should be taught to defend themselves, children should not be discriminated against when applying for a job, children should be let out for a time, children should be heard and believed and not be kept away from friends their parents disapprove of". All very reasonable and valid suggestions, although some of us parents might disagree with the last one.

Early in her talk, the speaker quoted from a recent speech made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey: "Values and morals do not grow on trees or fall like manna from heaven, or just look after themselves. On the contrary, they are always vulnerable to the darker side of human nature such as selfishness, greed, self-deception, vanity, lust and cowardice. Virtues need hard work, careful nurture and a continuous process of modelling, discussion, appropriation and internalisation across the generations."

This is an excellent guide, although it is difficult to achieve. For people of any religion (or none) a "moral" way of life might perhaps be attained by following the standard set by Benjamin Franklin who said 'The noblest question in the world is what good can we do in it? Morality does not start in government (welcome though that might be). It starts with the individual.

A lively discussion followed and everyone who was present felt a debt of gratitude to the speaker for giving her audience so much on which to ponder.

The Book of Job

**Reverend Professor J C L Gibson,
20 March 1997**

Professor Gibson graduated in Arts and Divinity from Glasgow University in 1962 and spent most of his career in the Faculty of Divinity at Edinburgh University from where he recently retired from his post as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies. Among his many literary achievements, he has published a volume on the Book of Job, on which subject he is an acknowledged authority.

In my attempt to follow his vast and erudite flow of scholarship, I was reminded of several of Shakespeare's plays which have been described as being "full of quotations". To illustrate his argument, Professor Gibson quoted from Lamentations, Judges, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Psalms.

The Book of Job deals with the problem of how and whether the suffering of the innocent can be reconciled with God's justice. Job was a man of exemplary virtue, who suffered impoverishment, bereavement and sickness. His problems are explored in a series of poetic dialogues between himself and his "comforters". One can only be amazed at his patient acceptance of all the sorrows and ill-fortune which befell him.

The impression left on me was that the Book of Job illustrates the Rabbinic doctrine that a man is obligated to praise God for the evil that befalls him as well as the good. However, though the wicked might appear to prosper, justice eventually prevails and God was perhaps only testing Job by inflicting on him such sorrows and deprivations. We are told at the end of Chapter 42 that the Lord blessed the later years of Job's life more than his earlier years, that he "lived an hundred and forty years" and died being old and "full of days".

Blanche Mundy

BETTY FRANKLIN : SOUTH SIDE STORY

by Ian Shein

A Zeppelin attack on Edinburgh during the First World War – on 19 July 1915 – coincided with the arrival of the local Jewish community's latest member. It was the latter which made more impact and perhaps more noise. Betty Franklin first saw the light of day in the South Side, a predominantly Jewish area where Yiddish and Scots blended harmoniously with the rich aromas of *heimesh* cooking and baking from the tenements and shops which characterised the Old Town. Her father had emigrated from Lithuania in 1908, married a native of Leeds and, with Betty and younger sibling Sonny, settled in Montague Street from whence he worked as a traveller in and around the city. Betty commenced her education at Preston Street Primary School, completing this at James Clark Secondary. At the age of 15, she started work as an assistant at the Jewish grocery shop of Klyne in Richmond Street, becoming well known for her efficiency and expertise. She worked there for several years, during which time she received what she described as a surprise invitation to tea from "society" ladies Mrs Harry Lindey, Mrs Louis Cohen and Mrs Reuben Cohen. Her curiosity at the invitation was abated when she was asked to perform a good deed by the organisers of the Ladies Benevolent Society. This entailed a weekly delivery of groceries to the poor of the community. Betty agreed, this duty being undertaken for four years, a precursor of her many charitable acts of later years.

Klyne's closed down and the stock was purchased by Sammy Cowan, who had a similar business in the Pleasance. At Mr Cowan's request, Betty worked for him until 1950. The Jewish community had meanwhile grown, if moderately, and a Ladies Committee was formed for the purpose of raising funds to maintain a Community Centre in Salisbury Road opposite the present Synagogue. Prior to that, premises in Duncan Street belonging to Lodge Solomon had been used for various communal functions. Included on this committee were Mrs Rose Cowen, Mrs Freda Riffkin, Miss

Mary Davidson and Betty. The Centre proved to be a popular if somewhat cramped and inadequate venue for very many activities, some of which – even to this day – still provoke considerable feelings of nostalgia. The building was ultimately sold to a developer and converted into sheltered accommodation.

Betty's employment continued in high priestly circles. She moved from Cowan to Levey when she managed the wholesale carpet and textile



Betty Franklin and Arthur Kleinberg.

warehouse of Sam Levey next to the Adelphi Hotel in Cockburn Street off the Royal Mile. 22 years later, she took over from Mr Levey when he retired, remaining in the business for a further seven years until the lease expired.

During the preceding 40 years Betty and her family had resided in Sydney Terrace after leaving the South Side. Her mother died in 1953, Sonny in 1975 and her father, whom she nursed so untiringly during a long illness, in 1980. The following year Betty returned to her roots and to a flat near the Pleasance which had seen great change since her childhood. Few Jewish families lived there and the close-knit enveloping warmth and atmosphere so redolent of pre-war years were nothing more than fond and distant memories. However, one baker shop remained, practically

overlooking her flat. It was not long before master baker supremo Arthur Kleinberg, well aware of Betty's business acumen, asked a favour of her as one of his shop assistants had taken ill. She agreed to help out for one week. Two and a half years later she was still selling Kleinberg's Kosher cakes and *choloh* until he retired. Therein was the commencement of a close and affectionate friendship.

Betty describes her retirement as pleasant and content if not wholly relaxing. She describes her hobbies as "Shul activities" and fund raising for the Community Centre. As such, she pioneered numerous shop and boot sales, cajoling friends to man stalls within cold cheerless shops and even more cold cheerless outdoor markets, with attendant rain, snow, wind and admittedly some sun, selling goods which once graced the homes of Marchmont, Morningside and Murrayfield. Over the years, much fortified by her smoked salmon sandwiches, her hardy little band of helpers have raised very welcome sums of money. In the past, Betty served on the Committee of the Friendship Club, chaired by Dinah Bindman, and of WIZO, chaired by May Stoller. Currently her main contribution has been to the Luncheon Club where on Thursday mornings she can be found frying fish for her discerning gourmets. She has no idea how many tons of fish she has fried over the years but discounts the rumour that she is responsible for the European Union fish quota. She also denies retiring from the communal kitchen but is pleased to delegate and welcome new cooks to the fore.

Her other pleasures are the holidays she has with Arthur and other good friends. She talks enthusiastically about her "circle" and relishes the friendships which her hospitality and generosity bring her. Her home is a haven of affection and warmth. As a member of the old school, Betty clearly graduated with first-class honours. Her name is synonymous with all that is kindness and caring within the Edinburgh Jewish community.

STAR TREK INTO THE PAST

Precisely what were this group of men up to? Some of them are more easily recognisable than others but how many of them can you name, what were they doing and when and where was the photograph taken? Because readers who feature in the photograph are clearly in an advantageous position, they are debarred from entering this competition and from assisting anyone else to do so.



And precisely what were this group of elegantly attired men and women celebrating? Again some are more easily recognisable than others but how many can you name and when and where was this photograph taken? The same prohibition described above applies here too.



The group photograph in the last issue of the magazine is of members of the Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion. The occasion was Armistice Day in either 1946 or 1947 and the men were entering Piershill Cemetery to attend an Armistice Day Service. Leading the group is George Magrill. On the extreme right is Jack Hammond and on the left is Henry Mann. Barely discernable behind the left shoulder of the standard bearer (whose identity remains a mystery) is Philip Lurie. Joe Lurie was also amongst the marchers but cannot be seen.

The solitary soldier on horseback is of Dr. Sam Lipetz, a much-loved GP and very well-known and member of the Community. It was taken during the First World War.

Readers who possess further snap-shots which may be suitable for publication in a future issue of the magazine are invited to contact Ian Shein (332 2324).

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE MECHITZA

by Rabbi David Sedley

At a Special General Meeting, the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation recently voted to raise the height of the existing *Mechitza*, the divider which separates the women's section of the Synagogue from the men's section. This measure was in order to ensure that the Synagogue design conforms to the requirements of *Halacha* (Jewish Law). The *Mechitza* has subsequently been rebuilt to incorporate this new design and I therefore thought it appropriate to write an article explaining the laws and requirements of a *Mechitza*.

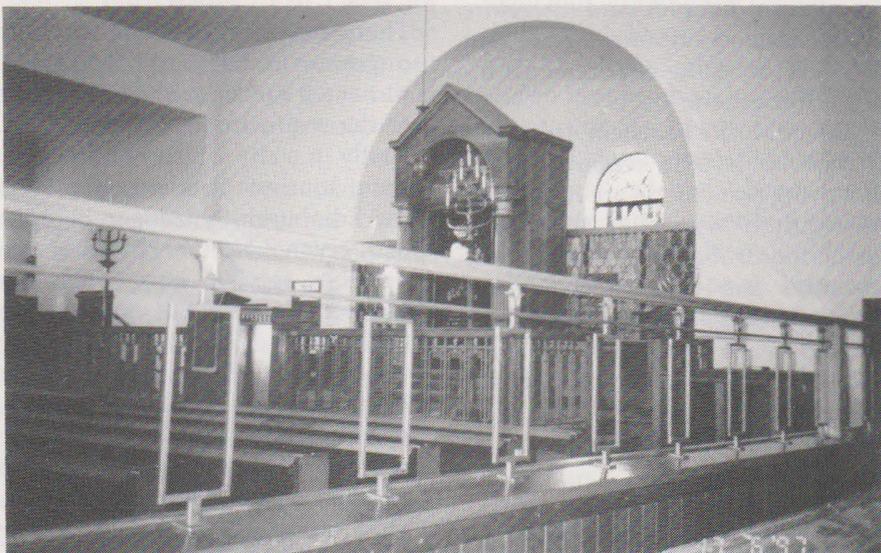
Biblical and Talmudic sources for the *Mechitza*

The earliest Biblical reference to a separation between men and women is in the Book of Zacharia.¹ Zacharia describes in a prophetic vision a funeral that will occur in Messianic times in which men and women will be mourning but separated from each other. The Talmud² quotes two opinions as to whose funeral this is. One opinion is that it is a eulogy for the Messiah, and the other that it is a eulogy for the *Yetzer HaRa* (evil inclination). We may conclude from this that if a separation is required at a time of mourning, it is certainly required at other times when we celebrate and are happy. And if this separation is

required at a time when there will no longer be any *Yetzer HaRa*, then it is certainly needed nowadays when we do have a *Yetzer HaRa*.

The earliest record of a physical separation that was built between

explicitly by the Rambam.⁵ "The women's courtyard was surrounded by a balcony . . . in order that men and women should not be mixed together". Though it is not polite for men to stare at women (or vice



The raised *Mechitza* in the Shul

men and women is in the Mishna.³ During the intermediate days of Succoth, there was an annual *Simchat Beit HaSho'eva* (water libation ceremony) and men and women would pack into the Temple courtyard to see the greatest of the Rabbis dancing and singing, rejoicing in the daily miracles that G-d performs in the world. The separation is described in the Talmud.⁴ Originally they would simply make the men stand outside the Temple and the women inside, but this led to intermingling. Then they tried switching it so that the men were on the inside and the women outside but this likewise led to mingling and frivolity and they were forced to build a gallery and seat the women above and the men below.

The purpose and function of the *Mechitza*

The main function of a *Mechitza* is not so that men and women should not be able to see each other, but rather in order that they not "mingle" together. This is stated

versal) that is not the reason for the separation.

The purpose of the *Mechitza* is to prevent *Kalut Rosh*, literally translated as light-headedness. However we find a more accurate definition of *Kalut Rosh* elsewhere in the Talmud:⁶ "One may not act with *Kalut Rosh* in a Synagogue. One may not eat or drink there, nor put on make-up, nor take a walk there, nor enter to avoid the elements, nor to say a eulogy." These are all everyday activities. The Synagogue is designed to provide an environment where we can escape from the mundane and focus on G-d. We therefore put on our best clothes before praying, we alternate between sitting and standing, and we face Jerusalem. The majority of the prayers are in Hebrew, and the dominating presence in the Synagogue is the *Aron HaKodesh* (Holy Ark). A Synagogue is not meant to be an extension of one's home, but purely a place of worship and all household activities are therefore forbidden. Thus women and men sit apart to show that

With Compliments
from
Mark
and
Judith Sischy

prayer is not a "family occasion" like a birthday, or a Sunday dinner, but an opportunity to communicate with the Creator.

The separation mentioned in the Talmud is specifically in connection with the *Simchat Beit HaSho'eva* in the Temple. However the Synagogue is a Mikdash Me'at (miniature Temple) and therefore later Halachic authorities state that we have the same requirements for a *Mechitza* there.⁷

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein⁸ rules that a *Mechitza* is only required if the following two criteria are fulfilled. It is required whenever there is a gathering of men and women (this excludes the case of a woman praying alone – for example Chana prayed in the presence of the High Priest Eli without a *Mechitza*), and is required when the gathering is an occasion of sanctity, such as *davening*.

Technical requirements of the *Mechitza*

Since the purpose of the *Mechitza* is to make a separation between men and women and avoid *Kalut Rosh*, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein⁹ rules that it is sufficient to have a *Mechitza* which reaches to shoulder height. He quotes the Talmud¹⁰ that shoulder height is 3 *Amos* (approximately 5½ feet). However nowadays women's shoulders are lower and a *Mechitza* that is only 5 feet high is not invalid. As for the permitted gap between the upright bars at the top of a *Mechitza*, we find that a gap of up to 3 *tefachim* (about 14 inches) is small enough to be

considered a "solid" wall. However, any *Mechitza* which does not conform to these minimal *Halachic* requirements is not considered a real separation, and therefore it is as if there is no *Mechitza* there at all.

The importance and relevance of the *Mechitza*, and its role in modern society

There are several reasons why it is important for Edinburgh Synagogue to have a *Mechitza* which conforms to the requirements of the *Halacha*. Firstly in a city which relies heavily upon tourism, it is important that the Edinburgh Synagogue be open to everyone. No branch of Judaism prohibits services in a synagogue with a *Mechitza* but mainstream Orthodox Judaism prohibits praying without one. Therefore, even if not for ourselves, it is important to ensure that the Synagogue conforms with the requirements of *Halacha*. Furthermore, we are attempting to combat a falling membership by trying to attract new families to come to live in our city. It is therefore important to encourage newcomers and make them feel comfortable in the Synagogue.

Even more importantly, in an age of eroding moral values and ethical uncertainties, it is vital that the Synagogue should remain committed to the requirements of *Halacha*. Many people, particularly young members of the community, are searching for meaning in life. If they perceive Judaism as merely a collection of rituals, devoid of purpose, they will turn elsewhere to find what they seek. They may

either become involved in other religions or cults, or give up the search for meaning through escapism. Even if our children do not see all of the laws practised in the home, they must know that Judaism does hold absolute standards. The Synagogue should be a place where it is clear that the *Halacha* takes precedence over any other considerations.

We should therefore be pleased that the Synagogue now conforms to the guidelines set down by the Court of the Chief Rabbi and the London *Beit Din*. As the Synagogue accepts the authority of the Chief Rabbi in religious matters he must be our final *Halachic* arbiters and he has recently written to us confirming that our new *Mechitza* now conforms to the requirements of *Halacha*.

¹ XII; 11-12
² Palestinian Talmud, Succa 5; 1
³ Succa 5; 2
⁴ Palestinian Talmud, *op. cit.*
⁵ Mishna Torah, Laws of the Temple, 5; 9. Also Laws of Lulav, 7; 12
⁶ Megilla 28a
⁷ Chasam Sofer's glosses to *Shulchan Aruch*; *Choshen Mishpat* 190
⁸ *Igros Moshe*; *Orach Chaim* vol 1, 41
⁹ *ibid.*
¹⁰ Shabbat 92a

Rabbi David Sedley is Minister of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

SUPPORT
The Edinburgh Star
 SEND US YOUR LETTERS AND ARTICLES
NEXT COPY DATE:
8th AUGUST 1997
Donations to
 The Hon. Treasurer Mickey Cowen, Synagogue Chambers,
 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB.

BBC Radio Scotland
"THOUGHT FOR THE DAY"
by John Cosgrove
 Approx. 7.25 a.m. Tuesdays
 8th, 15th, 22nd and
 29th July 1997

THE GENERAL ELECTION 1997

A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

by Nick Cosgrove

The 1997 General Election has been a watershed in many spheres and nowhere more so than in the Jewish community. There are now more Jewish Labour MPs than Jewish Conservative MP's, although this is not really surprising given the scale of Labour's victory. Malcolm Rifkind, Sir Ivan Lawrence, David Sumberg, Irvine Patnick and Philip Oppenheim are among the Jewish Conservative MP's who lost their seats in Labour's landslide victory.

The retreat of Greville Janner as an MP is a great blow to the Jewish community. He succeeded his father, Barnett Janner, as Labour MP for one of the Leicester seats, became President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and fought tirelessly for Jewish causes during his 27 years in Parliament. Many good friends of Israel have also left Parliament. Labour Friends of Israel Chairman Norman Hogg retired and Sir Tim Sainsbury, Chairman of Conservative Friends of Israel, also left the House.

THE CAMPAIGN

Jewish issues did not really surface during the campaign, reflecting an absence of controversial issues at present. *Shechita* has been such an issue in the past but was not raised on this occasion.

Despite the shrinking size of the Jewish community, both parties took out full-page advertisements in *The Jewish Chronicle*. The Conservative advert took the form of an open letter from Sir Tim Sainsbury to the Jewish community pointing out how well-disposed towards the Jewish community the Conservative Party had been. In the Labour advert, community celebrities such as "sitcom" star Maureen Lipman and leading lawyer Anthony Julius explained why they would be voting Labour on May 1. These advertisements also appeared in the

Manchester Jewish Telegraph where the leading candidates for the "Jewish" seat of Bury South (Ivan Lewis for Labour and David Sumberg for the Conservatives) both also took out full-page adverts, each of them calling on support from the Jewish community.

Public meetings were held across the country with candidates facing questions from Jewish constituents. Labour Friends of Israel organised a meeting in Leeds where Labour's Middle East spokesman Derek Fatchett spoke with Fabian Hamilton, who went on to win the heavily Jewish populated seat of Leeds North-East (once held by Sir Keith Joseph) for Labour.

THE PARTIES

In contrast with the former Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson's warmth towards Israel, the Labour Party became a difficult place for Jews in the early 1980s when anti-Zionist motions became a regular feature of the Party's Annual Conference. This, combined with the close friendship between the Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits and the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, persuaded many Jews that the Conservative Party was a better place for them. This has been acknowledged on more than one occasion by Tony Blair but there is now considerable evidence that the Jewish community has "come home" to Labour.

Eldred Tabachnik, the current President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, is a leading QC who practises in the same chambers as Lord Irvine, the new Lord Chancellor. This is, of course, 11 King's Bench Walk, the practice where the young Cherie Booth and Tony Blair first met.

Tony Blair has many Jewish friends. Perhaps foremost amongs them is the record company chief, Michael Levy, the former Chairman of *Jewish Care* who is also his tennis

partner, who has become a close confidant. Levy has been instrumental in bringing the Labour Party and the business community together. In fact, several prominent Jewish businessmen, including Alan Sugar and Sir Trevor Chinn, gave their backing to Tony Blair who has not only visited Israel since becoming Party leader but is also a member of Labour Friends of Israel.

One of his campaign team was Jon Mendlesohn, a former chair of the Union of Jewish Students and a well respected figure at Westminster.

NEW INTAKE

There are a number of new MP's worth watching. Ivan Lewis, the new member for Bury South, has just resigned as Chief Executive of the Manchester Jewish Social Services in order to sit in Parliament. Over in Liverpool, Louise Ellman, newly elected for Liverpool Riverside, actually lived in Israel for a period of time and is a former member of *Habonim*.

Britain has its first ever black Jewish MP in the person of Oona King, new MP for Bethnal Green and Bow. She has a black father and a Jewish mother and looks likely to be a champion of anti-racism in the new Parliament.

In Scotland, while there are now no Jewish MP's, Jim Murphy, the new Labour member for Eastwood, is well known to the Jewish community for fighting anti-semitism on campus when he was President of the National Union of Students. He recently visited Israel and has become an active member of the Labour Friends of Israel. Other notable friends of the Jewish community include Stephen Twigg, who achieved fame for defeating Michael Portillo in Enfield Southgate. Lorna Fitzsimons, Rochdale's new MP, is also very highly regarded and is a strong ally of the Jewish community.

Happily quite a few of our "enemies" have left Parliament. Both Sir Cyril Townsend (Conservative) and Andrew Faulds (Labour) retired at the General Election. Leaving Party politics aside, this is a source of some satisfaction. However, the defeat of the Conservative, John Marshall, who lost his Finchley and Golders Green seat, is equally a matter of considerable regret. He had served as Chairman of the Britain-Israel Parliamentary group and was not afraid to defy his party whip if it meant standing up for Israel and the Jewish community. His commitment was genuine - he regularly holidayed in Israel and was very well known for his support of the Community.

**HOW WILL THE
LABOUR GOVERNMENT
BE ON
JEWISH ISSUES?**

Unlike the previous Cabinet, in which Jews were very well represented, the new Cabinet contains no Jews. However, past experience suggests that this is not necessarily of great significance for the Jewish community. The Jewish community can, I believe, feel confident while the Foreign Office team is headed by Robin Cook, who made a very successful visit to Israel during the last Parliament and has recently pledged to convene an international conference, hosted by the United Kingdom, on the issue of "Nazi Gold" which should lead to justice being done on this important issue. Moreover, Derek Fatchett, the new Minister of State with responsibility for the Middle East, has visited Israel with the Labour Friends of Israel and has a deep understanding of the complex issues involved.

However, it would be unrealistic to suggest that life under Labour will be significantly better for the Jewish community. What is true is that the Labour Party is now a party that has come home to the Jewish community and that the Jewish community has spent a long time preparing for a Labour government.

Tony Blair has stated publicly that he admires the values of the Jewish community and the Labour Party in the UK watched with pride and envy as a Labour government in Israel delivered not only a peace deal but also a healthy booming economy.

On one issue, the election may make a difference to the Jewish community. Just before the general election a Labour MP, Mike Gapes, introduced a bill in Parliament amending the 1986 Public Order Act to make denial of the Holocaust an offence. This bill was opposed by the Conservatives but

backed by Labour and the new government is committed to making racial harassment and racially motivated behaviour into criminal offences.

So as we move forward towards the millennium, I believe we have solid grounds for optimism not only that the sensitivities of the Jewish community will be taken into consideration but also that our community will be able to play an important role in shaping our country's destiny.

Nick Cosgrove is Director of Labour Friends of Israel.

Political
SOCIAL
spiritual
Cultural
PERSONAL
INTELLECTUAL
Sporting
ECONOMIC

Every Friday, the JC covers every aspect of Jewish life, with news, features, listings, renowned columnists and an irreverent 'Impressions' lifestyle section.

So ask your newsagent to reserve a copy or
Tel: 0171 415 1500 Fax: 0171 242 1376
for details of postal subscription rates.

Don't miss a week of your life. **JC** JewishChronicle

DONA GRACIA

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIER, REFUGEE AND PHILANTHROPIST

by Berl Osborne

In this issue, we publish a fascinating account of the life and times of Dona Gracia, a truly remarkable woman whose character and achievements deserve to be more widely known. In the next Issue, this will be followed by an account of the role she played in what has come to be known as the Ancona Boycott which illustrates her true mettle particularly well.

It was high summer in the year 1492 and the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry was going through its death throes. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had issued the Edict of Expulsion. Two of their most illustrious Jewish advisers, Rabbi Don Isaac Abrabanel and Rabbi Abraham Semir, who had raised the money for the battle to complete the Christian reconquest of Spain, men to whom the royal couple were deeply indebted, appealed to the King and Queen to revoke the Edict. They offered the enormous sum of 30,000 Golden Ducats in compensation, but to no avail.

It is recounted that Ferdinand was on the point of yielding, when Grand Inquisitor Torquemada strode into the room, his eyes ablaze with anger. He held a crucifix aloft and pointed to the figure of Jesus on it. He shouted at the royal couple "Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver, and now you would abandon him for 30,000 pieces of gold!" He laid the crucifix down before them and said "Well here he is; take him and sell him".

The offer of Abrabanel and Semir was rejected and so, not for the first time in Jewish history nor, alas, the last, a weary exodus of Jews began. A group of 100,000 of them trudged westwards into Portugal where there appeared to be a safe haven, and where King Manuel the Fortunate welcomed their talents and experience.

Among those who joined this exodus was the family of Don Joseph el Naci, a tax collector in the Kingdom of Castile. It was from this family that Dona Gracia the heroine (and heroine she turned out to be)

of our story was descended. She was known to the outside world as Beatrice de Luna but in the privacy of her home she was called Gracia (the equivalent of the Hebrew Hannah) Naci. She was beautiful and talented, with remarkable force of character, and a dedication and resourcefulness that were to make her one of the most outstanding Jewesses in our history.

In 1528, at the age of 18, she married the grandson of the Crown Rabbi of Aragon, Abraham Benveniste, who had been a financial adviser to the King (it is remarkable how many of the great Spanish Rabbis were financial advisers to Royal and Noble households). This family also migrated into Portugal in 1492. Gracia's husband's name was Semeh Benveniste but he changed it to Francisco Mendes and, with his brother Diogo Mendes, established a Banking House which prospered hugely. They were assisted by the fact that, in 1597, Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to India round the Cape of Good Hope. This meant that exports from the Far East landed in Portugal rather than in Venice via the much more difficult land route. Thus did the Mendes brothers amass wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. However, King Manuel's tolerance of the practice of Judaism in his realm was short-lived, and in 1496 all Jews were barred from Portugal. But, as we have seen, Manuel valued the Jews for their talents and expertise and so he conceived the idea of using every cruel coercion to convert them to Christianity. He thus simultaneously served God and Mammon by saving

their immortal souls, and at the same time benefitting the country by absorbing their skills and abilities.

Under this coercion, both families underwent conversion, becoming *Marranos* (or to use their official name, New Christians). They made an outward display of apostasy, but in their hearts they remained loyal to their Judaism. They led double lives, manifesting their Christian attachment as prominently as they could, and their Jewish allegiance as quietly as possible. Thus they made a public display of occasional attendance at Mass and Confession, but took care to ensure that the sound of the *Shofar* was muted (*Tekiah Katanah* rather than *Tekiah Gedolah*) and that the light of the Shabbat candles was hidden.

Beatrice's marriage to Francisco was short-lived because, after eight years, he died leaving her with an infant daughter who was baptised as Brianda but privately called Reyna. He also left her with the administration of what had now become a vast fortune and enterprise, which she was to share with her brother-in-law, Diogo Mendes.

Life became increasingly hazardous for the New Christians in Portugal and in 1536 the Pope ordered the establishment in the Kingdom of the Holy Office of the Inquisition on the Spanish model. How were the *Marranos* to escape its clutches? It was forbidden for them to transfer land to a non-Christian because it was assumed (correctly, of course) that they would at once abandon Christianity and wholeheartedly return to Judaism.

The Ottoman Empire was their ultimate goal. There the Jews would

be welcomed with open arms by the Sultan who, almost unable to believe his good fortune at having these talented people pour into his land, said of King Ferdinand "How can you call him Ferdinand the Wise – he who has impoverished his own dominions to enrich mine?" But the road from the tyranny of the Inquisition to the relative freedom of Constantinople and Salonika had to be taken in stages. Beatrice's first target was to move to Antwerp where her brother-in-law Diogo had already established a thriving branch of the bank. On her move she was accompanied by her sister and her daughter. They broke their journey in England where there was a branch of the firm.

Officially, Jews were banned from England at this time but a small, quiet, secretive colony of Portugese *Marranos* was tolerated. King Henry VIII, who was on the throne, knew which side his bread was buttered on, and he deemed it expedient to keep on good terms with the Jewish banking fraternity. The trio arrived in Antwerp in 1536 to join an already thriving New Christian colony which was rich not only commercially but also in learning and culture. They were highly respected by monarchy and government, and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V promised that

they would not be molested on grounds of religion. This is an example of the old and familiar tale of Jews being made welcome when it was commercially and politically expedient to do so. The Mendes family were intensely loyal to their Judaism, but even in the comparatively liberal city of Antwerp, they had to be circumspect in their behaviour. However, if their *tefilah* was muted their *zedakah* was manifest and beautiful. Their sojourn in Flanders increased their wealth enormously, but their generosity to their fellow refugees from the Inquisition was prodigious.

For the majority of the refugees the ultimate goal was Turkey. But this involved a long journey, out of Flanders, over the Alps into Italy and thus to the Balkans and Turkey. At every stage of this journey the refugees could find friends to assist and counsel them, to direct them to safe houses and safe crossings of frontiers, and to help them transmit their capital from one country to another. An elaborate and complex organisation of agents was established, the nerve centre was Antwerp and the brains behind the enterprise were those of Diogo Mendes and his amazing sister-in-law Beatrice.

But life was perilous for them and their prosperity aroused envy amongst the Old Christians. A trumped-up charge of heresy against Diogo led to him being carted off to prison in Brussels. He was released, thanks to the intervention of some of the crowned heads of Europe (including Henry VIII of England) whose finances were thrown into turmoil by the imprisonment of their principal banker. Six years after Beatrice's arrival in Antwerp, Diogo died, leaving all powers of administration of the business to her and none whatever to his widow, who was in fact Beatrice's sister, also called Brianda. Thus did Beatrice at the age of 32 begin to preside over the destinies of one of the greatest fortunes and most prestigious businesses in Europe.

She was on intimate terms with the magnificent court of the Queen Regent in Brussels. This intimacy was, however, a mixed blessing and led to a situation that made her position in Flanders, which was always difficult, quite untenable. The focus of her problem was her daughter Brianda. The girl was young, beautiful and, moreover, the heiress to a mouth-watering dowry. The Emperor himself had his eye on this young and wealthy beauty as a suitable match for one of his favourites, a commissary general, long past the prime of youth, by the name of Don Francesco Daragan. Don Francesco, drooling in anticipation of the beauty and fortune that appeared about to fall into his lap, pressed his claim with the damsel, her mother and the Emperor himself, to whom he promised a loan of a quarter of a million ducats out of his wife's coffers if the marriage took place. (In *Ashkenazi* circles this is known as "*shadchanas gelt*".) The Emperor sent a letter to his sister, the Queen Regent Mary, urging her to speak to Beatrice on the suitor's behalf and promised her a quarter share of the loot!

Mary knew that Beatrice was a tough customer to deal with, and put off as long as possible what she anticipated would be a tricky encounter. There must have been laughter in heaven as the angels looked down on this delicious spectacle. Here we have Her Majesty Mary, ex-Queen of Hungary, Queen Regent of the Netherlands, sister and deputy of the Holy Roman Emperor, in fear and trepidation at the prospect of an awkward encounter with the young but formidable Jewish business woman. However, the crunch eventually came and Queen Regent Mary confronted Beatrice with the proposal that Don Francesco should have the hand of Brianda.

Beatrice's response was predictable. She was aghast at the prospect of her daughter "marrying out" and becoming a true apostate. This she could not state openly. But what she could and did say was that she had

CHIQUÉ

LEADING LADIES' FASHION HOUSE

Select from:

*Basler, Jobis, Lucia, Frank Usher,
Mansfield, Weill, Lucien Daville*

23 JEFFREY STREET
EDINBURGH EH1 1DR

Telephone:
0131 557 3044

no intention of allowing her daughter to become the wife of an elderly wastrel. She told the Queen "I would rather see my daughter dead". However, she realised that her position in Antwerp would become increasingly precarious and that she could not indefinitely hold out against the Emperor and the Court. Accompanied by her sister, her daughter and her sister's daughter, and taking with them such of their treasure as they could, they set out for Venice in 1544. Their departure caused consternation in the Royal family, particularly for the Emperor who had been rubbing his hands in anticipation of the quarter of a million ducats from Brianda's *nadan* which now appeared to be slipping away from his grasp.

An embargo was placed on the Mendes property that remained under the control of the Emperor and it was left to her nephew Joao Miguez to negotiate a settlement. The negotiations were long, tortuous and undignified, but in the end, the sisters were still able to take to Venice a fortune large enough to enable them to enjoy life to the full in the dream city of the lagoon.

As well as being a philanthropist and astute business woman, Beatrice enjoyed a colourful and splendid social life. The glorious public pageants were spectacles, the glittering parties held in extravagant palaces, the magnificently dressed ladies and gentlemen all combined to make Venice a wonderful city to live in, and Beatrice and her family enjoyed *la dolce vita* to the full. Beatrice and her sister Brianda lived together but Brianda resented her elder sister's authority. By the wills of both Francesco and Diogo, Beatrice controlled the entire Mendes empire. This was a constant source of irritation to Brianda who thought she was entitled to a half share in the family property but this was refused and a bitter quarrel between the two sisters ensued.

It is scarcely credible what people will do for money – brother will betray brother for money, son will betray father for money and, in this instance, sister betrayed sister for

money. Brianda, consumed with envy and spite, quite shamelessly denounced her own sister before the courts as a Judaiser, who had come to Venice only to settle her affairs, after which she intended to go to Turkey with all her property and wealth, and there declare herself openly as a Jewess which would, of course, have been a manifest loss to the Republic of Venice and to Christianity. The results of this betrayal were catastrophic – an embargo was placed on all the family property, Beatrice was placed under arrest and the two girls, her daughter and her niece, were placed in a nunnery. However, Brianda got her come-uppance – who lives by treachery dies by treachery, and Brianda herself was later denounced as a Judaiser by one of the Christians whom she employed in her intrigue and who was disappointed at the amount he was paid for his services.

Once again the family were involved in legal proceedings in which the whole of the family property down to the last farthing was at stake. These proceedings were brought ostensibly on the grounds of heresy, but in reality as the result of sheer greed and the hope of confiscation (this hope of confiscation was, in fact, one of the principal incentives to Inquisition proceedings). The family again won through, by dint of gifts, bribery,

pleadings and expensive certificates of unimpeachable religious orthodoxy, purchased from the Church.

As a result of this calamity Beatrice's desire to get to Turkey was heightened. In Turkey she had a friend at court in the person of the Sultan's physician, Moses Haman, who persuaded the Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, of the great advantage that would accrue to the Ottoman Empire through the immigration of this extraordinarily talented and affluent family, and the transfer of their widespread business interests to the Golden Horn. The Sultan used the enormous power and influence of the then rampant Ottoman Empire to secure the release of Beatrice and the girls. But she did not immediately go to Turkey, staying for about two years in the city of Ferrara just south of Venice where the Duke offered Beatrice and her family, as well as his other Jewish citizens, liberty to live as Jews and to conduct themselves according to the rites of Jewish tradition.

Into this haven Beatrice came in 1550. She cast aside the identity of Dona Beatrice Mendes and became and remained Dona Gracia Naci. She was no longer a New Christian or a *Marrano*. She was now a loyal, intensely proud Jewess who proclaimed her faith and heritage to all who would hear her. She

We wish all success to The Edinburgh Star
from

Goodwin's Antiques Ltd
Antique Jewellery,
Porcelain, Silver
Insurance and Probate Valuators

15 and 16 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh EH2 4QW

Telephone 0131 225 4717

also at

106-108 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 3JF

Telephone 0131 220 1230

Business hours: 9.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Saturday: 9.30 a.m.-5.00 p.m.

ultimately escaped (and "escape" is an appropriate word) the Christian world in August 1552 and made her entry into Constantinople (once again "entry" is an appropriate word) about nine months later.

Her arrival in Constantinople amounted to a state entry. Four triumphal chariots surrounded by an escort of forty armed men bore the ladies of the party into the city. The Jews of Constantinople swarmed excitedly around the procession as it entered. They were aware of the identity of the newcomers and of what Dona Gracia had done for her people. She was accorded a welcome as enthusiastic as that which might be accorded to a *Chasidic Rebbe* by his followers. True to form, Dona Gracia, in gratitude for her happy escape and safe arrival, distributed thousands of ducats to the poor and to communal charities.

When the forces of Mohammed the Conqueror entered and took Constantinople and Turkey, they were realistic enough to appreciate that, as a matter of practical politics, they would have to work with Jewish and Christian infidels. The Jews were favoured because they offered no threat, and with them there could be no question of conditional allegiance. They were treated with appropriate respect. The Haham Bashi, the Chief Rabbi, was given a seat on the Imperial Divan next only to the Mufti and with precedence over the Greek Patriarch – this had never before happened in history. The talents of the Jews found a soil in which they could flourish, and they came in their thousands from Western

Europe to settle in all the principal cities of the Empire.

The Jews were the physicians, the goldsmiths, the financiers, the printers, the metal workers. By introducing the technical processes of the manufacture of firearms, gunpowder and cannon, they were responsible for the ascendancy of the Ottoman Army and thus its Empire, which spread westwards even to the gates of Vienna itself. To be sure they did not enjoy absolute equality with the Moslems – as unbelievers they were regarded (along with Christians) as second class citizens and were compelled to pay extra-heavy taxation. But within these limits they were able to lead reasonable commercial, social and religious lives.

Dona Gracia immediately formed close ties with the Sultan, and for the next quarter of a century the family played an important role in the affairs of state. From her regal mansion, she dispensed charity on a munificent scale. A German banker, seeing the extent of her largesse, could hardly believe what he saw and is reputed to have said "Something must be wrong – she must have cheated somewhere". She did not adopt oriental customs but reproduced on the banks of the Bosphorus the lifestyle and domestic manners of a patrician family in Lisbon, Antwerp or Venice. Don and Senora were used as titles of respect and Spanish or Portuguese spoken in private. She was kept in constant touch with the Iberian peninsula by the unending stream of refugees from the fires of the Inquisition who came to Turkey, often under Gracia's auspices, to

seek shelter. Commercially she carved out an enormous international trade in wool, grain and textiles – on so vast a scale that she had her own ships to carry the goods. It was said that she even built these ships.

In 1554 she was joined in Constantinople by her nephew, Joas Miguez, who formally adopted Judaism and married his cousin, Gracia's daughter. He took the name of Joseph Naci, became a real power in the land and was eventually created Duke of Naxos. But however great a figure he cut in the public eye, enjoying the public dignities and playing the nobleman, when it came to doing good or taking positive action, it was Dona Gracia who provided the backing, the inspiration and the driving force which he sometimes lacked – she called the shots.

The year after her arrival in Constantinople Dona Gracia fulfilled the dying wish of her husband and had his remains exhumed from the churchyard in Lisbon where they had been buried and taken to be laid finally to rest outside Jerusalem in the valley of Jehosaphet. This was an early manifestation of the intense Zionist

BBC Radio Scotland

"THOUGHT FOR THE DAY"

by John Cosgrove

Approx. 7.25 a.m. Tuesdays

8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th July 1997

**USER
FRIENDLY**

**Personal
Computer
Services**

Tel: 0131 331 4253
Fax: 0131 319 1991

E-Mail: 100332.1657@compuserve.com

COMPUTER TRAINING
CONSULTANCY
COMPUTER SYSTEMS
NETWORKING – SUPPORT
MACRO & TEMPLATE
INTERNET SERVICES

For further details or brochure
please telephone

**23 Forth Terrace
Dalmeny, South Queensferry
West Lothian EH30 9JT**

tendencies that the family were later to manifest so amply.

From her splendid residence overlooking the Bosphoros she all but dominated Jewish life in the Turkish Empire for over a dozen years – the only woman to play such a role in the history of the diaspora. She was known by her co-religionists throughout Turkey as La Senora or, in Hebrew, *Hageveret*, i.e. as the Lady. Her great and memorable work was the continuing rescue of the still harried *Marranos* of Spain and Portugal.

In the words of the Poet and Hazan of the Salonica Synagogue, Saadia Lungo "She stood at the roadside in the Tent of Abraham to receive the groaning wayfarers who return to the service of their Creator, so tired and weary that every knee would have faltered but for this great House of Naci which was appointed from Heaven to have mercy upon them."

At that time, it was a common hazard for Jews to be captured into slavery by the Knights of Malta but she would open her purse to collaborate in the great *mitzvah* of *Pidyon Shevuim*, the redemption of slaves. Throughout her life, in spite of, or perhaps because of, having been brought up outside the mainstream pole of Judaism, she displayed an exceptional veneration for Rabbis and Rabbinic scholarship.

Her generosity manifested itself in the establishment of *Yeshivot* and Synagogues both in Constantinople and elsewhere. In Constantinople she lavishly endowed a place of worship that became known as the "Synagogue of La Senora" (it is tempting to ask whether she was obliged to sit behind a *mechitzah*). This led to something of a *machloikes* of the type with which we are not unfamiliar today. It was customary in those times for members to be forbidden to attach themselves to, or even to attend a service, in any synagogue other than the one to which they originally belonged. Out of deference to La Senora, the Constantinople communities decided to suspend this rule. However, this led to a serious drift

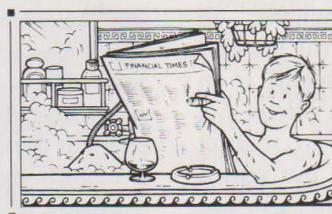
away from the Synagogue of the Spanish Exiles, perhaps the oldest Synagogue in the town. The drift was so serious that the *Mahamad*, the elders of the Old Synagogue, passed a new regulation forbidding its members to attend any synagogue other than their own, under pain of excommunication no less! Eventually the dispute went to a *Din Torah* which found in favour of La Senora.

Dona Gracia established Synagogues elsewhere in Turkey, notably in Salonica, where she was responsible for the building of a Synagogue that was called *Livyat Hen* – the Chaplet of Grace – an allusion to her own name. The first Rabbi of this Synagogue was Moses Almosnino who stipulated that all

members must attend services on Monday and Thursday for *Kriat Hatorah* as well as on *Shabbat*. He also laid down that no quarrel between members should be allowed to continue for more than two days without being submitted to arbitration. This Synagogue remained in use until 1917 when a great fire devastated the city.

Synagogues, yeshivot, hospitals, schools, scholars all over the Ottoman Empire – she lavishly supported them all. And she used her enormous influence with the powerful Ottoman rulers to help her fellow Jews outside Turkey, notably in Italy, in the same way as she helped her fellow Jews in Turkey itself.

BATHTIME TALES NO 1



Nigel stags a bull

It had been a long day. The money market was up but Nigel's mood was anything but. He closed the bathroom door and turned the tap, noticing the satisfying touch of antique gold plated fittings. He lay back, the water gently lapping round the beautiful porcelain bath. It felt like a very expensive haven, designed with utmost style and taste. Life looked better already. And to think Nirvana could be gained just by visiting Scotland's premier bathroom specialist. Upwardly mobile? Right now Nigel felt wonderfully horizontal – and with his complete suite costing a mere trifle who could question his watertight business position?

Prices from £20,000 to under £400



27-29 Forbes Road (Off Bruntsfield Place) Edinburgh. Tel (0131) 228 6385.
Open: Mon-Sat 9-5.30. Sun 11-5

THE POOR JEWS' TEMPORARY SHELTER

(Part 2)

by Aubrey Newman

This is the second part of a two-part article based on Professor Newman's talk to the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society on 8th December 1996. The first part appeared in the last Issue.

[The focus of Professor Newman's work is the movement of millions of Jews out of Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the very beginning of the twentieth century. This is a particularly important period of modern Jewish history since it made all the difference between the survival and the non-survival of Jews because, if they had not moved out of Eastern Europe when they did they would not only have been there during the holocaust but the communities which developed in America, South Africa, Australia and South America would never have existed.

In Part 1, Professor Newman used the records of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter to describe the circumstances leading up to its opening in 1896 and the destinations of those who passed through it in its early years. In Part 2, he examines the work of the Shelter first in the period up to 1914, when the pattern of migration changed, and then in more recent times. Ed.]

By the early years of this century, the Shelter had become an important part of a migration process in which people were moving out from Eastern Europe and going on elsewhere, in particular (in the case of the Shelter) to South Africa. This became even more important after the Aliens' Act of 1905, which aimed to restrict immigration into Britain but which allowed shipping companies to use Britain as an area for transmigration. The shipping companies had to guarantee that transmigrants would leave the country within a certain period of time. I have found a letter-book containing letters from the Shelter to the Cunard Shipping Company, to the Royal Mail Company (sending travellers to South America), and to the Arran Line (going to Canada), inviting them to use the services of the Shelter, stating that the Shelter would meet passengers at the docks, feed them, water them, shelter them, look after them, see them transported to their ships for onward passage as, the letters claim, it had been doing to the satisfaction of the Union Castle Line for the previous 15 years. That seems to show quite conclusively what the Shelter had been doing, looking after people coming through London, and that this is one reason why the Shelter continued operating right through the period

up to 1914 at a time when similar institutions elsewhere did not continue. However this still does not answer all our questions. Above all, why people should have wanted to go to South Africa when it was so much easier to go to America? The journey to America was shorter, it was cheaper, and there were fewer obvious dangers.

Everybody of course has a theory, and one of the most prominent is the association theory, often called the "Uncle Hymie" theory. "Uncle Hymie" goes to South Africa, makes money, and writes back favourably to his family who go off and join him. Or neighbours hear that Uncle Hymie has gone off and done well, and so they go off and join him. However, I am not happy with the "Uncle Hymie" theory. The fact is that many of the Jews who went off to South Africa were very far indeed from becoming wealthy. In the year that the migration of Lithuanian Jews through the Shelter reached a peak, reports began to come in from Southern Africa about the numbers of poor Jews who were arriving there and joining the large numbers of foreigners who were already there. There had been a Jewish community in Johannesburg since about 1880, and the Jews had got on very well with the authorities in Johannesburg, and in particular with Paul Kruger, the President. But in 1895/96 there were complaints

about the large number of new Jewish arrivals – Poles and Russians. These new arrivals were largely at the very bottom of the economic ladder. These are the persons who ran the illegal drinking dens. These are the persons who ran the brothels. These are the persons who ran the so-called "kaffireateries". This was not a debased form of cafeteria but the place where "Kaffirs" ate, and the people who ran them, the "kaffireaterieniks" were at the beck and call of their "Kaffir" customers. There were complaints about the behaviour of these Jews, and a new word was coined to describe them – they were known as "Peruvians". "Peruvians" were members of the criminal classes, distrusted and despised. The word "Peruvian" seems to have been derived from the body to which many of them belonged, the *Paylischer und Russischer Verein* – the Polish and Russian Union. In a novel by John Buchan I recently found a mention by somebody who is described in the text as a "Peruvian schmooz" and a little footnote by the editor saying "He means a Polish peddler". So I am not at all certain about the welcome which those who had already arrived would have given the newcomers and the problem of motivation for the move still remains unresolved.

New problems arose all the time. I referred earlier to eighteen volumes

of Registers. Thirteen are, as it were, main volumes while the other five are "supplementary" volumes covering dates already covered in the main series. We have finished virtually all the main series, and the latest group of students therefore turned to what were thought to be duplicate volumes. However, we discovered that whereas, in the main volumes for the month of July 1902, some 300 names are recorded going through the Shelter, in the supplementary register some 1,300 people are recorded for that same month. As far as can be seen at present, all the 300 from the main volume are listed in the supplementary register, but 1,000 more names are listed, and we have to ask why are these thousand new names are not in the main Shelter registers. We cannot as yet be certain, and much more work needs to be done, but what can be stated is that the Shelter was actively engaged in meeting people at the docks and checking where they were going, and that these extra names may merely be part of that checking process. The Shelter was certainly much more than an agency which merely helped to send people on to other places. It was an important part of Jewish welfare in London. One of the great evils as far as Jews coming to London were concerned was white slavery – prostitution, and above all international prostitution. In South America, there were large numbers of brothels staffed mainly by Eastern European Jewish girls. There were brothels in Southern Africa, similarly staffed. The trade was eventually put down, largely through international action by a number of Jewish communities, and the Shelter clearly played a part in helping to "rescue" the girls who passed through London. It also checked up that all those who arrived had genuine addresses to go to and were not going to end up on the streets, as a danger to them-selves and possibly creating a scandal for the existing Anglo-Jewish population.

Right through the period up to the First World War, the Shelter played a vital part in trying to bring Jews into some sort of reasonable relationship with the communities around them. Yes, they wanted to try and push them through to wherever they were going. No, they did not particularly want them to stay in London unless they felt they absolutely had to, but if they did have to, the Shelter realised that its task was that of helping them with the tasks of acclimatisation and Anglicisation. You see this in terms of the people who supported the Shelter, the people who gave the money to the Shelter, the big names who gave £1,000 a year and the small names who gave their ten shillings and sixpence a year as subscriptions to the Shelter. The Jews were doing things to help Jews. Jews were caring about Jews. It was another illustration of the fact that when the chips are down the only people you can hope to rely on are the people in your own community. The Shelter, I think, shows that. Not that all those responsible for the day-to-day management of the Shelter were of the highest quality. Three of the Superintendents had to be prosecuted for embezzlement, but nonetheless, broadly speaking the Shelter was representative of the Anglo-Jewish community in general, and the London Jewish community in particular, which decided that they had to help the tens of thousands of migrants who passed through the capital each year. They had to make sure that these migrants could not be used as an excuse for saying "let's get rid of all the Jews because these Jews are not up to very much". It may have been pure self-defence, but the fact remains that it worked. One of the most successful outcomes was the way in which the Shelter helped to create a Jewish community in South Africa.

The work of the Shelter continued in this form until August 1914, when the pattern of migration suddenly changed. There were no longer large numbers of Jews leaving Russia, passing through Germany

and coming through Britain, because Germany was at war both with Russia and with Britain. New sorts of people began to appear, such as Belgian refugees who came as a result of the German attack on Belgium. In the 1920s and 30s other sorts of refugees appear, such as Jews from Germany. And that remains true today. Whenever there has been a disaster facing Jews in Europe the Shelter has been there, busy at work helping to alleviate the pains of migration such as those experienced by Jews from Egypt in the 1950s, Jews from Iraq in the 1960s, and Jews from Serbia, Bosnia and Montenegro in the 1990s. And it has continued its social work with the domestic Anglo-Jewish community, so that it is still very active in terms of amelioration of the problems of many in the London Jewish community.

All this work on the Shelter started off because the History Department at the University of Leicester wanted a database for the students to work on. It's an interesting example of how you start doing work for one reason and you have no idea where it's going to get you. You have no idea what sort of picture is going to emerge – you don't even know if a picture is going to emerge. One feature that has emerged is the picture of how a portion of Lithuania ended up in South Africa. The image of Johannesburg as "*Kovno on the Veldt*" is one which I must confess I find both amusing and impressive. Amusing because it is difficult to imagine two places as different as these two and impressive because it demonstrates the resilience of the *Litvack* and his ability to get on anywhere. But of course we would say that, because many of us are *Litvacks*.

Professor Aubrey Newman has taught in the History Department at Leicester University since 1959 where he is now Emeritus Professor of History and Honorary Associate Director of Leicester University's Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies. Amongst other interests, he is currently working on a study of the migration of Jews from Lithuania and on the activities of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter.

MEMORIES; SOME SAD, SOME GLAD – THE WINTER GARDENS, ROTHESAY

by Rocky Levey

I read in the papers the other day that the Winter Gardens in Rothesay was being turned into a cinema. The news took me back to the time when I was a teenager (I am 91 now), when the Winter Gardens showed only live entertainment.

I was one of eleven children and my father died at the age of 43. There were no such things as widows' allowances or child benefit then, and we were in a sorry state. My two elder sisters were already married or about to get married, and this left my sister Lily (age 17) and me (age 15) as the breadwinners in the family. But it would have been of little use had we gone out to get a job since we could not have earned enough between us to support the seven younger children, our mother, and ourselves. After much consultation between the two of us, we came to the conclusion that only a family business could feed us all.

So we started going to the Glasgow warehouses and, after a great deal of talking, we managed to get credit from some of the wholesalers. Then off we went to the little seaside places on the Clyde: Rothesay, Dunoon, Saltcoats, and others. At first I just talked to housewives and told them we could deliver such things as sheets and clothing for a shilling a week. My sister Lily was a great and wonderful talker and, with her lovely smile, she could sell anything. She was the brains and I was her right hand.

We made some progress and we went each week to different seaside places, though Rothesay was our main port of call. Our business kept creeping up and up, but I was such a poor sailor and so sick on the ships as we made our way from one town to the next that my mother thought it would be nice to rent a place in Rothesay during the summer months. This way we could do our business and the rest of the family could have a holiday at the same time.

Looking back on it, we must have been a laughable crowd as we carried all our baggage to and from the dockside. My mother was very orthodox and had packed all her pots, pans and china, so that each of us was heavily loaded. But we had such fun on the ships and the summers were wonderful for all of us. The younger boys eventually found summer jobs on the small boats in Rothesay, my mother found friends to chat with, and Lily and I went about our business which continued to prosper. When the younger ones eventually took over, they had a car to get around in and did not have to carry heavy suitcases with the whole week's orders through the slush and wintry weather.

We would go to the Winter Gardens and I would sometimes sneak in with my baby sister who is now a grandmother. I remember Charlie Kemble singing on stage and making up songs about the audience, and he once sang a song about my little sister with her blonde curls and

lovely face. They were happy days as we grew financially more secure. A younger sister was even able to take piano lessons and a younger brother to learn the violin.

Lily died at the early age of 37, and we moved back to Glasgow towards the end of World War Two. Because school transfers were never sent out for the youngest children, I had to stay at home to look after them. I did not have a full education and was very upset at this. But when I married and had two children, we emigrated to California and I became a drama teacher. And now, in the winter of my life, I remember the Winter Gardens in Rothesay and the summers we all spent there. Memories – some glad and some sad.

The Edinburgh Star would be pleased to publish reminiscences from other readers. Anyone who would like to submit an article based on their own childhood experiences is invited to contact the Editor.

PERSONALISED
TABLE NAPKINS

FOR ALL
OCCASIONS

Choice of Logo

plus Choice of Colour

PLEASE CONTACT

K-Plan Logos

Telephone/Fax
0141 639 5084

CISSY CAPLAN

24.3.1912 – 8.4.1997

On Tuesday, 8th April 1997 my aunt, Cissy Caplan died quite suddenly at St. Raphael's Nursing Home in Edinburgh. She was the youngest and last surviving member of the family of twelve children of Kate and Abraham Vinestock and, with her passing, many memories of a large and close family of aunts, uncles and cousins came flooding back.

Cissy was born in 1912 and married Morris Caplan, a jeweller and watch-maker from Glasgow in 1934. At first, they lived in Glasgow but, shortly before the war, they moved to Edinburgh. After the war, Morris ran a successful jeweller's shop in Broughton Street and, after



Cissy Caplan with her grandson Charles (aged 5)

his untimely death in 1975, Cissy took over the business until she retired in the mid-1980s.

A lady with many interests and talents, she was not only an accomplished pianist but, with her devoted sister Eva, was a regular attendee at concerts, ballet and opera. She was also a keen and enthusiastic golfer, tennis-player and swimmer and, until a few years ago, she enjoyed our weekly visits to Warrender Baths. An avid reader, her favourite authors Dickens and Scott were her constant delight and her choice of reading matter provided an interesting insight into her wide and eclectic interests.

Cissy and Eva, the two youngest members of the family, were inseparable. Together with their daughters, they were evacuated to a large house in the Borders and spent the early years of the war together. Later on, they lived in a large divided villa in Esselmont Road and many of their children's contemporaries will remember the parties held there by Annette, Cissy's only daughter, and Katie, Judith and Rachael, Eva's younger daughters. As a niece of an older generation, I recall many joyous Sunday teas and musical get-togethers at Cissy's bungalow in Baileyfield Terrace.

After Cissy's death, I learned that she had been a member of the WRVS at the Royal Infirmary for 10 years, dispensing tea and sympathy to patients throughout the hospital. It was typical of this quiet, modest lady that she never once alluded to her work as a volunteer. Her only daughter Annette, now sadly widowed, lives in California with her grandson, of whom she was inordinately proud. A lady of great dignity, independence and humour, she will be remembered by those of us who knew her with great affection.

Joyce Cram

BERTOLD HORNUNG

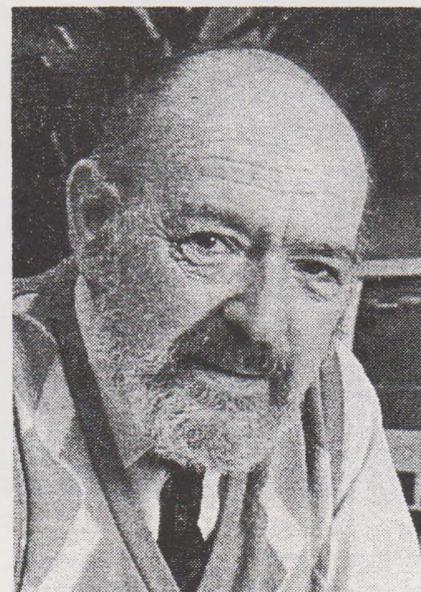
25.3.1925 – 20.3.1997

*Ah, freedom is a noble thing,
Freedom makes man to have liking
Freedom all solace to man gives,
He lives at ease that freely lives,
A noble heart may have none ease,
Nor ellis nocht that may it please,
If freedom fail; for see liking,
is yearnit o'er all other thing.*

(Barbour – "The Bruce")

Berty Hornung struggled for freedom throughout his life: in his early days against the horrors of Nazi Germany; in mid-life against the tyranny of Soviet-imposed communism; and, most recently, against the illnesses which threatened and sometimes dimmed, but never, until the end, extinguished the spirit of the man.

Many characteristics made Berty exceptional: his intelligence, his insatiable curiosity, his humour, his enormously wide range of knowledge; but the two very special attributes which particularly marked him out were his tolerance



and his ability to turn negatives to advantage. It would be all too understandable for a victim of the concentration camps in the Second World War to harbour undying hatred towards the Germans. Instead of that, both Berty and his wife, Hana, exhibited a tolerance and breadth of vision which was truly remarkable. They continued to respond to the positives of German culture and to downplay the traumas which they had experienced. While Berty was willing to include stories of his wartime life in conversation, it was always with a positive purpose and never to seek sympathy or to complain of past treatment.

That tolerance extended more widely. Where many from Berty's background could be expected to be anxious about, if not hostile towards Scottish nationalism, Berty's understanding of the underdog made him appreciate the well-springs of the political currents in his adopted home. He was, however, a man of the wider world – between them, Berty and Hana must have cousins in most parts of the globe – whose intellectual breadth of vision

engendered a lively interest in many cultures. Of Bertý, if could be asked:

*Where is the true man's fatherland,
Is it where he by chance is born?
Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
In such scant borders to be spanned?
O, yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven, wide and free!*

(Lowell – "The Fatherland")

If his tolerance made him an especially attractive companion with whom to share one's own views and opinions, his other ability could have provided the archetype for the management phrase "accentuate the positive". He turned his time in the concentration camp to good account by learning carpentry – a skill to which he returned in later, more leisured years with considerable skill. Exiled for political incorrectness to Magyar-speaking Eastern Slovakia, he added Magyar to his already long list of languages in weeks, in order to be able to communicate with his colleagues. Latterly, although disabled through ill-health from being as active as he should have liked, he turned to writing poetry for his beloved grandchildren. It is typical of the way that he was able to reach out to the young that the children in my wife's class in Newcastle, with whom she had shared Bertý's poems, were deeply saddened by news of his death.

The same zest and inspiration which was manifest in these various activities came across in conversation with Bertý. Whatever the occasion – a dinner party, a country walk, an exhibition viewing – Bertý's contribution left one feeling better for having participated. The longer the contact, the more one wished it would go on and time never seemed to be long enough to discuss all the topics which bubbled to the surface. Seriousness and laughter combined to get the adrenalin going. No-one who knew Bertý needed the stimulus of drugs or the benefits of a

health cure – his company was sufficient.

Bertý was of the race of David and Dryden, writing of David's son, Absolom, could have been writing of Bertý also in commenting:

*Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
In him alone 'twas natural to please.*

(Dryden – "Absolom and Achitophel")

The deepest sympathies of all who knew him must go to Hana, Vera, Lucy and their children, but we who knew him were privileged to do so and can count ourselves fortunate to have had our lives enlightened and enriched by this wonderful man.

Ian R. M. Mowat

*(Several fulsome tributes to Bertý Hornung appeared in the national press, most notably in **The Scotsman** and **The Independent**. Although they, and the obituary by Ian Mowat (an old friend of Bertý's and Hana's who has recently returned to Edinburgh on his appointment as Librarian of Edinburgh University, which appears above) all paint a picture of a true renaissance man, they are all, in one sense, incomplete in that none of them refer the importance which Bertý, as a secular Jew, attached to his Jewish identity. In his later years, he regularly attended meetings of the Jewish Literary Society and was a frequent contributor to **The Edinburgh Star**. The first article of his (on the Jewish Quarter of Prague) to appear in print can be found in **Issue No. 6**. This was followed by articles on the roles played by two Scottish architects (Sir Patrick Geddes and Sir Frank Mears) in designing the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (**Issue No. 14**); on growing up under Nazi rule in Ostrava and Prague (**Issue No. 17**); and, most recently, reviewing the Festival Exhibition "From London" held at the Gallery of Modern Art (**Issue No. 22**) in 1995. They are Bertý's legacy to the Edinburgh Jewish community and we are extremely fortunate to have this record of a quite remarkable man. Everyone who encountered him, in person or in print, will have been the*

richer for having done so – wise, scholarly, warm, humorous, interested in and engaged with the world around him – Ed.)

MICHAEL LURIE

14.3.1921 – 30.4.1997

Michael Lurie was born in Edinburgh in 1921, the youngest of the five children of Abraham and



Anna Lurie. He was only 11 years old when his mother passed away, but many readers remember with warmth and affection his late father Zeidi Lurie, who was held in great esteem by the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Although he spent the last 50 years in Thailand, he was an Edinburgh lad through and through. He went from Sciennes Primary School to Boroughmuir High School and, when the Second World War came, he joined the army and served in the Middle East and in Italy. In 1947, he went to Bangkok and the following year married my mother's sister Rena. My parents made regular visits to Thailand and they made regular visits to Edinburgh and, as a result, have many friends over here. Michael loved being with people and was very good company. He was an excellent after-dinner speaker and was irritatingly good at solving crossword puzzles.

In Thailand, he was a prime mover in the Masonic Lodge, attaining the position of District Grand Master. He was very proud of his religious heritage and played an active role in the Jewish Community in Bangkok.

Rena and Michael's house had an open door for family and friends from Edinburgh, Glasgow and indeed from all over the world, and there are countless testimonies to the hospitality which visitors received from Michael and Rena.

Michael leaves behind his loving and caring wife and companion, Rena; his two children and their families – Marc, Riet, Ronnie and Yardena who live in Israel and Lisa, Zvi and their new baby Schlomo in New York; his brothers Joshua and Philip; his sister-in-law Sheva; his nephews and nieces; his family in Bangkok and his friends from around the world. He will be sorely missed by all those who knew him.

*Michael S. Lurie
Ipswich.*

ROMA STEINBERG
21.1.1908 – 15.2.1997



Roma Likierman was born in Lodz in Poland. She was the second youngest in a family of seven. She was very able at school, well read, and learned to play the piano.

Her parents died when she was in her 20s and she travelled with her sister Julia and her sister's husband, the artist, Arthur Szyk who illustrated the Israeli Declaration of Independence and many books, including the *Haggadah*. Her father had had a picture framing business and another sister married a landscape artist. The family were not well off but seem to have been comfortable. Both my parents' families were assimilated and did not speak Yiddish.

In the mid-1930s, my mother went to live with her father's brother and his family in Bucharest. I believe that this was a happy time. However, in 1937, her uncle "saw the writing on the wall" – and brought his textile manufacturing business and most of his family to Britain. They lived in Lancashire during the war and stayed on until the 1960s. My mother was treated as a daughter of the house, helping her aunt, her cousin and her cousin's small child and working as an auxiliary nurse at the local hospital. She learned English, went to literature classes and made many friends.

She met my father, Joseph Steinberg, through mutual friends in 1944. After a short time in the Polish Air Force, he was held as a prisoner of war in Russia and during this time his first wife and his child died. When Russia joined the Allies, he travelled to Britain via the Middle East and South Africa. My parents were married in 1945 and my mother was enormously supportive in helping my father to rebuild his life. I was born in 1946 and she took me out to South Africa in a basket on the Flying Boat, to join him. He was an engineer and had taken a job in Johannesburg where we lived for 9 years.

In 1956 we moved to Salisbury, now Harare, where my mother started to play the piano again. She took lessons and after doing exams with students 30 years her junior, she started teaching. She was a born teacher and enjoyed this limited independence enormously. My father played a great deal of bridge

and my mother also became a skilled bridge player.

Following my father's retirement, they moved back to England, settling in Wembley. Three of her sisters had settled in America after the war. Her brother lived in Poland until the late 1960s when he moved to Holland. My father's second brother lived in Brazil. However, most of the other members of their immediate and extended families died in the Holocaust.

After my father's death in 1979 my mother came to live in Edinburgh. As she had done several times before, she quickly established herself in a new environment. Duddingston Village is a small community and she soon knew more people than we did, and started to teach the young couples to play bridge. She loved being of help and enjoyed the time she spent with her grandchildren, Caroline and Hugo. She was just around the corner and a constant presence in their lives when Malcolm and I were otherwise occupied.

At the age of 84, after a bad fall, she became increasingly frail and came to live with us as a full member of our household. This worked very well until a year before her death, when she went to live in the Drummond Grange Nursing Home. She was well cared for but was fearful about becoming more dependent. Although her short term memory failed her, she retained her intellectual acuity until the end. She died in her sleep which is what she most wanted.

My mother appeared to have a gift for making friends and was a very good listener. She was enormously discreet and tactful, but could also be most acerbic in her observations of those who were pretentious and vain. Her mild manner hid a core of steel. She was easy to underestimate as she was naturally fearful of change and new situations. However, she adapted very successfully to the many new environments she encountered in her lifetime.

Edith Rifkind

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

Emergency Appeal

I would like to advise your readers that all the headstones that were damaged by vandalism in September 1996 have now been repaired.

The work was completed speedily and this was, in no small way, due to the generosity of those who responded to the appeal for financial help.

As Convenor of this Appeal, you have my grateful thanks as well as those of the Honorary Officers of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Yours sincerely

M S Cowen, JP
Appeal Convenor
58 Fountainhall Road
Edinburgh EH9 2LP

Dear Sir

The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter

Professor Newman's article in the February issue of *The Edinburgh Star* deals with the early years around the turn of the century, but an even more urgent need arose owing to Nazi persecution of the Jews before the Second World War.

My late father-in-law, Abraham Mundy, was Secretary of the Shelter for over fifty years, during which time he helped many refugees from Europe for which, among other tributes, he received a medal from the King of the Belgians. On April 6th 1897 he married Betsy Rachel Maccoby, a daughter of the *Kamenitzer Maggid*, whom my grand-daughter, Rowan Hendry, chose as the subject of her *Bat Mitzvah* project last August. (A transcript of the address she gave in the Synagogue appears in the last Issue - *Ed.*)

On his appointment my father-in-law was given five days' holiday for his honeymoon, after which he resumed his duties. He and my mother-in-law subsequently had five sons and seven daughters.

Soon after my own marriage in 1947, a reception was held to mark my father-in-law's retirement. He was presented with a large inscribed silver salver which came down to my husband and me after his death, at the age of seventy-eight, in 1950.

Yours sincerely

Blanche Mundy
54 Homeroyal House
Chalmers Crescent

A CENTURY OF SERVICE

The letters "JNF" are a household acronym in Jewish communities worldwide. The Jewish National Fund has been integrally involved for nearly 100 years in developing the land, and for the last 50 years, the State of Israel.

In the United Kingdom, JNF Charitable Trust was established with charitable status in 1939. Some nine years later, in the year in which the State of Israel was founded, the Trust established a unique separate subsidiary, KKL Executor and Trustee Company Limited. KKL is the acronym taken from the Israeli organisation, Keren Kayemeth Leisrael which is the Hebrew equivalent of the Jewish National Fund.

KKL Executor and Trustee Company Limited is well known for its Charity Account Plan allowing individuals and companies to increase charitable giving by an amount equivalent to the tax deducted on income which KKL reclaim on their behalf.

A less well known but equally important function of KKL is its role as a Jewish trust corporation. This confers the unique ability to prepare and engross wills and to administer estates through its executorship service. Since 1952 KKL has administered many hundreds, if not thousands of estates, satisfying the will of testators whose wish is to ensure the prompt and efficient administration of their estates for the benefit of its beneficiaries.

Naturally, JNF Charitable Trust has featured prominently amongst the charity beneficiaries, often receiving substantial legacies from generous benefactors towards many and varied JNF projects in Israel. Where JNF Charitable Trust features as a beneficiary KKL will waive its usual charges, thereby saving many thousands of pounds in legal costs to an average estate and enhancing the value of assets available to beneficiaries. KKL are also in a position to offer advice through its inhouse professional advisers on inheritance tax planning; in many cases, inheritance tax can be avoided entirely through a combination of charitable giving and proper advice and drafting for the benefit of exempt and non-exempt beneficiaries. JNF Charitable Trust is also different in other respects. We can arrange for legacies to memorialise ones name in perpetuity locally or in Israel in designated projects such as water resources, education, land reclamation, afforestation and more. We are also uniquely equipped where necessary to provide important personal services such as arranging care or saying annual kaddish.

If you feel that the services provided by us are of benefit then do feel free to contact Harvey Bratt, Director/Manager, KKL Executor & Trustee Company Limited, Bequests Division, in the strictest confidence and without obligation, on Freephone 0800 901333 or by post to us at 58/70 Edgware Way, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 8GQ.

