

THE EDINBURGH

# STAR

No. 58  
September 2007  
Tishrei 5768

אבינו מלכנו.....



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



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## The Edinburgh Star

Synagogue Chambers  
4 Salisbury Road  
Edinburgh EH16 5AB

## Cover Picture

Life in the balance

Balance kindly loaned  
by Val & Bill Simpson

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Meigle Printers Ltd  
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# From the Editor

Ours is a close knit community and the durability of this is so very evident in our continuing desire to take an interest in all that is going on, to be of support to each other when it is needed, and to mourn when nothing else can be done.

Though all bereavements are a distressing reminder of our own imortality, the community was shocked and saddened at the passing of one of our most respected adherents to religious traditions. In this edition Sas Judah is remembered by his friend of long ago, Rabbi A Copeland, who was a regular visitor to the family when they lived in Glasgow. In the next edition Sas Judah's son, Saul, will write about some lesser known and fascinating insights into his father's life. We read also of the passing of a young woman, known to many of the more established in our community, Suzi Gold, who regrettably died at the early age of 47.

But a measure of the indomitable nature of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation can be recognised in the number of accounts that followed an exceptional event that took place at the beginning of what we may laughably call Summer. Past members of our Shul, affectionately known as ex-pats, decided to commemorate their attendance at Cheder, and the lasting friendships they subsequently

made 40 years ago. Although some of the same memories have clearly imprinted themselves indelibly on different minds, I have decided not to attempt to avoid the obvious repetition, in order to maintain the authenticity and atmosphere. They are a delightful little collection of reminiscences, which recognise both the continuity and the change in the community environment.

Not wishing to omit the very important commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the building of the Shul, a very short report has been included here, but the logistics of its birth and subsequent development will be more comprehensively reported in the next edition of the Star.

Space has once again been allocated to Yom Teruah greetings and the ever-popular Festival Fun. Where would we all be without 'tradition'?

On a more serious note we cannot forget the trials and tribulations that Israel has constantly to endure. Rabbi Rose will offer his own thoughts in his Rosh Hashanah address, regarding the risk, earlier on in the year, of Israeli academe being boycotted. As more and more influential people have expressed their distaste for the proposal put forward by a small fanatical minority, the immediate danger that such action would have presented appears to have diminished

in severity, but still the guard cannot be completely lowered.

In June the Edinburgh Hebrew Community were most fortunate to have the privilege of hosting the wonderful Anne Frank exhibition. When the official organisers realised that they had left too little time to secure a more conventional venue, they appealed to the community, who were naturally delighted and honoured to oblige, and the exhibition was set up in the Marian Oppenheim Hall for a fortnight. We are pleased to be able to bring you a report concerning the event.

The Star has never shied away from the eclectic nature of its articles and the two slightly dissonant members of the collection are firstly the interesting new slant to the well-known Dreyfus Case and a 'bible' story, as it has never been heard before! I am sure this much-welcomed masterpiece of unusual humour in 'and it came to pass....' will delight you as much as it did me.

It is now only left for the members of the Board and me to wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year. Shanah Tova

Judy Gilbert

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**Next Copy date: 20th November 2007**

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THE EDINBURGH



# Rosh Hashanah Message

Rabbi David Rose

A Land which the Lord your God enquires after; continually the eyes of the Lord are on it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year'. Rashi makes two comments on this verse. One is that even though G-d is interested in all lands, their fate is determined through the Land of Israel. Also, commenting on the end of the verse, he says that G-d decides at the beginning of the year, Rosh Hashanah, what will be the fate of the land throughout the year. This verse and its commentary are especially relevant to us this year. We have witnessed an unprecedented attack on Israel by organisations in this country. Calls for boycotts of Israel in Britain have reached such a level that it is possible to say, that in world Jewish opinion, Britain has become the most anti-Israel, if not anti-Semitic, country in Europe. It is doubly troubling, if not totally surprising, that some of the leaders of this campaign claim themselves to be Jewish. The fact that most of them only become

Jewish in order to attack Israel just shows the depth of their depravity. In such a situation we approach Rosh Hashanah, the day on which, according to the verse quoted above, the fate of Israel is decided. The verse also teaches us that this decision affects all of us. The fate of Israel is the fate of the world, what happens in the Middle East has the capacity to impact on all of our lives. In this situation the Machzor calls us to three things: Prayer, Penitence and Charity.

Starting from the last: charity. If others attack Israel, we must support it; if some boycott, many more must buy. We must also engage in Teshuvah. We should look at our actions and how they impact on the situation. Is the state of present problems perhaps due to the fact that we have taken our eye off the ball? Have we disengaged from organisations that we should have been involved with; has our silence allowed the Jewish position to be undermined by those pseudo-Jews

who claim to speak in our name? Have we educated our children to love Israel and know the true story behind what is going on there? All this needs to be examined and corrected. Lastly, we must pray. We should remember that even when human strength fails, G-d can succeed. Indeed, the success of Zionism is one of the most improbable, yet amazing, stories of human history. As G-d decides the fate of our people and our land, on Rosh Hashanah, we must ask in the language of the prayer book, 'Give joy to Your people and rejoicing to Your land. Cause unrighteousness to shut its mouth and the kingdom of arrogance to disappear from the earth'. Never have these words been more appropriate and may they be fulfilled for all of us this coming year.

**A Happy and Peaceful  
New Year**

**Rabbi David Rose**

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# ... after 40 years

Sidney Caplan

The forty years reunion of our ex-pats took place on the weekend of 22nd – 24th June 2007. They had all left Edinburgh over forty years ago, mainly to Israel but also to London, Oxford and Switzerland. Those who made the journey were:



Mervin Warner and his wife Yona, Edwin and Doreen Hoffenberg, Sonia (née Levinson) and Aaron Cohen, Barry and Ruth Fluss, and Harold Sterne from Israel. Esther (née Wiseman) and her husband Brian Levy, Phyllis (née Stoller), Martin Roseberg and Francis (née Hallside) Gordon, Alick Glass from London, Henry Myerhoff from Switzerland, and Rosalind (née Adelman) and Barry Landy from Cambridge.

Hilary Rifkind and her willing band of helpers made a traditional Friday Night dinner in the Community Centre followed by 'benching' and the usual traditional songs.

## Reunion of 'the Crowd'; Cheder friends of nearly seven decades.

Ros Landy

June 2007 saw the reunion of Edinburgh Cheder friends of the 1940's who had scattered to Israel and England. The format of the reunion was outings/tiyulim and a Shabbat in the Edinburgh Shul, our old stamping ground. Our group did a large part of the davening and all the leining.

In our Edinburgh childhood we were the 'Crowd' and have remained so for over six decades despite geographic distance. Of those in Israel one lives in Chashmona'im; one in Kfar Haroeh; and two in Haifa. The one in England lives in Cambridge. By astounding good luck the spouses all get on well too and that means that we are now a ten-some.

Since in this calendar year we all reach the canonical age, it was decided to have a reunion in Edinburgh, the town of our childhood, where we went to Cheder and where we were educated. Cheder by the way, was five days a week!

On Saturday in Shul, Edwin Hoffenberg 'davened' for part of the service leading members down memory lane with the old Edinburgh tunes that we all remembered from our childhood and teenage years.

Hilary welcomed everyone at the Kiddush and then we went through to lunch which was excellent, and consisted of Scottish salmon, new potatoes and salad followed by desert. After 'benching' we began to reminisce about the first Cheder picnic to Stow. Though hard to believe it required ten double-decker buses to transport everyone, but of course there were over seventy children in the Cheder and adults came too.

Among many other pranks we got up to in our youth, we recalled specifically the time when Edwin had been left in the Duncan Street School and locked up after we all went home. We remembered with nostalgia that in our early teenage years

we all cycled to North Berwick, Dunbar and Peebles for Sunday afternoon picnics, and sporting events. Of course the traffic in those days was much less and roads a lot safer.

During Yom Tovs and High Festivals, over twelve hundred congregants gathered in our beautiful Shul and the children had to sit on seats from the Succah in the aisles. In view of the large numbers, the community was naturally big enough to have a football and cricket team made up of congregants. There were also three Table Tennis teams playing in the Edinburgh and District Leagues and winning regularly.

The afternoon ended with Sonia reciting a very poignant poem recalling our childhood, after which she tested our memories on the former Community. The reunion ended with a 'Seudah', and the traditional Scottish farewell, 'Haste Ye Back' was proffered.

It gave as much joy to the Edinburgh Community to welcome our Ex-pats back to their roots, as it did for them to come back.

We came to Edinburgh for our reunion and saw a lot of places together on outings. We enjoyed a wonderful Shabbat in the Shul we remember from our childhood, although the Shul building has been modified and has lost its original ladies' gallery. The Shul originally had men downstairs and a ladies' gallery upstairs. This modification makes a single-floor Shul with a ceiling over the ground floor, which now serves as the communal centre. Some of us sat in the seats of our parents and although we ourselves are almost venerable (only in age!), we could, in our minds, people the building with characters of our past such as the two Gabboyim, who sat in the box in black suits and top hats; Abel Phillips and Reuben Cohen.

Shabbat services were conducted Friday evening by Rabbi Rose and Shabbat Shacharit by a B'nei Akiva Madrich; leining by Barry Landy and Mussaf by Edwin Hoffenberg.

Friday evening dinner was followed by a Dvar Torah from Mervyn Warner. Kiddush followed Mussaf on Shabbat, with everyone mingling in the communal area. Many of the locals were there and either recognised us or reintroduced themselves. It was truly wonderful.

Then came lunch and more shmoozing. Victor Lunzer, a visitor from Israel, gave a Dvar Torah; Sonia Levinson Cohen did a Trivia quiz after which people had free time for walks or the conventional 'Shabbos Shloff'.

In the evening of almost the longest day in the year, we were again regaled with wonderful food at Seudah Shelishit catered by Hilary Rifkind, who received praises all round. There was more catching up with friends old and new and some extra faces appeared which changed the pattern of the socializing.

The total picture was one of pleasure at being together in a wonderfully warm ambience with the bonus of a great set of menus to please every taste. We have now all returned home and have retained a happy glow. Thank you, Hilary and Edinburgh, for facilitating it all!

## Looking back...

Sonia Cohen, (daughter of Fanny and the late Simmy Levinson)

Early in the year 2007 my friends and I started discussing our 70th birthdays. All of our little crowd, four living in Israel and the fifth in Cambridge, were born in 1937. We grew up in Edinburgh and have been close friends for more than 60 years. Edinburgh holds a special place in our hearts and our memories, and its Jewish community played an important part in shaping all our lives. It seemed entirely natural to celebrate our birthdays by spending a few days together in the place 'where it all began.'

So it was that in June this year I paid a truly memorable visit to Edinburgh together with my husband Aaron Cohen. Rosalind (née Adelman) and Barry Landy. Edwin and Doreen Hoffenberg. Barry and Ruth Fuss and Mervyn and Yonah Warner. Shabbat was the high point of our stay. We met a great many old friends in Shul that Shabbat, some still living in Edinburgh, others living elsewhere who came specially to be part of the event. Between 35- 40 people sat down together to eat the magnificent Shabbat meals catered by Hilary Rifkind and her helpers. Altogether without Hilary and Arnold Rifkind, the Shabbat wouldn't have happened. We are very grateful for all their help. It was a Shabbat of reminiscences for telling stories and sharing a host of memories from the 40's and 50's when we were all growing up.

Those were the days when we went to Cheder five times a week, first in Sciennes School, and then in Duncan Street School. Our crowd was particularly mischievous. Sometimes we played "hooky" from

Cheder and went to the Meadows to play football. On one occasion we hid in the toilets till everyone left and stayed in the school to play. When we left, an upstairs window got left open and was discovered by the police. Our parents were not too pleased about that.

In Cheder we sat on Old 'Ruby's' (Rev. Rubenstein) knee and he pinched our cheeks as he taught us our Aleph Bes; on Simchas Torah he danced a kazatzk on the succah table. While in Shul, Abel Phillips and Reuben Cohen tried to preserve the decorum when the 'hakofas' got too exuberant. On Chanukah, after lighting candles, the children were given Chanukah gelt and a tangerine wrapped in silver paper. On Purim there were fancy dress parties. Yom Kippur was memorable for the 'fug' in the Shul. The Shul was so crowded and the air so hot and heavy that it hit you like a wall if you went out for some fresh air and came back in again

"Mincha would be 'up a tree'"

For our crowd, Shabbat was the focus of our lives. We were regular Shul-goers and enjoyed the davening. Chazan Zucker had a great voice but not a perfect accent. The boys fell about laughing every time he announced Mincha would be 'up a tree' (half past three.) In the afternoon we met at Salisbury corner at 3 o'clock and went for long walks to the Park or the Blackfords. The practice continued till we all left Edinburgh.

On Sundays, we sometimes went for outings. We used to meet at Forsyth's Corner at ten, and travel to Peebles, Balerno and Flotterston, where we'd hike in the hills. One memorable Chol Hamoed Pesach, we left our packs at the top of the hill while we went down to play football.

A sudden rainfall caught us unawares and turned all the matzo into a soggy mush. At other times, we cycled down the coast to Gullane and Port Seton, or sailed on the ferry over to Fife. For many years, the community's social activities took place at 5 Duncan Street. There were meetings of Maccabi, the Literary Society, Habonim, the various Zionist groups and the Lodge Solomon. Then the large, old house opposite the Shul was purchased by the community for use as a communal hall. For us the house's heyday was before the renovations began. We used to climb through a back window and play hide and seek in its dusty, dark corners.

The Edinburgh Jewish community was always very Zionist, working hard for WIZO, JNF and the JPA. Parents encouraged their kids to go to the Zionist youth movements. We went to Habonim every Sunday, attended inter-meetings in Glasgow, and went to summer camps. Later, some teenagers, including our crowd, left to join the frumer Bnei Akiva movement when it was established by Zeiig (Asher) Kaufman.

In the mid 1940's Rabbi Doctor Salis Daiches passed away and after a while was replaced by Rabbi Isaac Cohen. Once a year, when the community had its annual outing, the Rabbi would exchange his black hat for a sporty peaked cap and join in the races and the fun. Rabbi Cohen was an important figure in the lives of our crowd. We were regular Yom Tov visitors in his home and in his succa. For myself, I owe the Rabbi a personal debt of gratitude. He continued to teach me long after we had all graduated from Cheder. As a result I was able to do 'O' level Hebrew and win the HJ Levitt prize of a trip to Israel, though I must admit that I was the only contestant.

# Out of the cold: a student in Edinburgh

Ruth (Lowenthal) Fluss

1956....I arrived in Edinburgh at Waverley station on a cold, dark, damp, drizzly October afternoon. I had come from London to study at the University, imagining Scotland would be a romantic place and inspired by reading Robert Louis Stevenson, Rob Roy, Young Lochinvar and so on. On that afternoon, it did not seem to be so attractive.

The taxi driver who was transporting me and rather a large quantity of luggage to the Suffolk Road Women's Hostel, kindly pointed out the sights of interest along the way, the Castle, the Mound, and so on, but a) I could scarcely see anything through the mist and b) I could hardly understand a word he said. So my acquaintance with the beautiful buildings of Edinburgh was destined to wait.

At the hostel we 'freshmen' were greeted warmly with fine cups of tea and fruit cake, a good Edinburgh welcome, and no 'you'll have had your tea', and the cold started to fade into the past.

The first Shabbat I walked to Shul, again in a drizzle, I noticed a gentleman ahead with a little boy who I guessed were heading in the same direction, and on enquiry I introduced myself to the late Simmy Levinson, accompanied by 9 year old Victor. I entered the ladies' gallery and at once a young girl came up to me and said " I'm Sonia Levinson. Are you a new student? Come and sit with me.". This was the beginning of a friendship that has lasted to this day, over 50 years. The Levinsons became my 'home-from-home', but I found the community to be warm and hospitable to all newcomers. Subsequent invitations and meetings led me to kind of join the 'gang of five'...Edwin Hoffenberg, Barry Fluss, Mervyn Warner, Rosalind Adelman....and we have remained friends as well over all these years.

Rabbi Cohen and his late wife Fanny took a particular interest in the young people of student age and would invite a group of us on a Friday night or Shabbat afternoon for a cup of tea and an always-interesting discussion.

At the end of my first year, becoming a little tired of a vegetarian diet of hard-boiled eggs, baked beans, and tinned sardines, I spoke to Mrs. Cohen in the hope that she would find me a kosher family who would take me in as a lodger. She approached Mrs Fluss who had a large flat. Mr. Fluss was abroad a lot on business, Kleile her daughter had just made Aliya, Sev was studying in the USA, David was on Bnei Akiva Hachshara (Thaxted), and Barry was away a lot with his father. I knew the house, as I had been invited there previously, and thus began a happy 2 years' stay.

Edinburgh proved to be a very happy place for me, the gracious and imposing buildings, the mysterious alleyways round the High Street, the beautiful greenery of Arthur's Seat and Blackford Hill, and the relatively easy life of the Arts student which apparently comprised drinking lots of coffee in the Common Room, generally with Sonia, and solving the problems of the world.

I was active in the Jewish Students Society. In my second year I was elected Zionist Officer and thus was put in charge of organizing an Israel Exhibition to celebrate its 10th Anniversary. The committee was a great help, as was my father (Colibri Lighters), and the Israel Embassy, but the greatest credit went to Marks & Spencer who had recently set up a Princes Street branch. They sent around their handymen who built the stands and gave it a professional appearance. The Exhibition was a great success, lasted 3 days, was written about in the local press, and I think was a credit to the Jewish Community.

The 3-years sped by; I planned my Aliya, which I made almost parallel to that of Sonia, who arranged her marriage to Aron Cohen whilst I was still in Edinburgh. Two weeks after my graduation, I was on a ship bound for Haifa to start a new life. Of course my connection with Edinburgh did not cease as I corresponded with Barry, who turned up a year later for a holiday with his rucksack on his back. He did not return to Edinburgh, we got engaged and

were married in 1961 in Jerusalem in the King David Hotel, overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem, then another world.

Two years ago Sonia decided that in 2007, when we friends would all be 70, we would celebrate with the 5 couples having a holiday in Edinburgh and visiting our old haunts. No one at the time took it really seriously, but Sonia to her credit persisted, and suddenly we were all making arrangements. Edwin, through his rather widespread family, contacted the Community, and thanks to them, and especially Hilary, we had a most memorable Shabbat. Barry organized the outings (Thirlestane Castle and Falkirk), Rosalind and Mervyn provided transport, and so on.

- Sitting in Shul, musing, I was thinking
- a) The last time I heard Edwin davening in Edinburgh was at a Student Shabbat, 48 years ago when he and Maurice Dorfman conducted the service.
  - b) We are now a lot older in age than our parents were at that distant time, and yet we thought of them as 'old' then. Wow!

I am now sitting in hot sunny Israel and looking at our photos of Edinburgh then and now, and I feel an enormous satisfaction ....though I must admit I do sometimes long for that delightful damp

“I do sometimes long for that delightful damp and drizzly weather!”

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from  
Jessie Franklin

and people that we saw on our recent trip, and has many wonderful stories of her own to tell. She and my late father were both born in Edinburgh. They were married on 14th September 1932; the first couple to be married in the new shut three days after it was opened.

Mum sends her love to all who remember her, and joins us m wishing you all the very best for the celebrations of 75 years of the Shul this September. BeHatzlachah Rabba Vekol tuv. LeHitraot BeKarov May we all meet again soon.

## Two worlds

Barry Fluss, Haifa

This book, authored by David Daiches, describes Edinburgh and its Jewish content before WW2, and provides fascinating reading of the culture gaps in those far-off days. This period was ending just as "we" 70 year olds were beginning ours. The Edinburgh community has had many worlds...

I wish to go back from here and look and write a few comments on Edinburgh Jewry since it peaked in numbers in the late 40's. My parents arrived in Edinburgh just prior to the war, in July 1939, and my father volunteered shortly thereafter and joined the British army where he served for 5 years. The Community was receptive to us, but we belonged to the world of "Foreign Jews" to be distinguished from the Edinburgh Jews; I use the title Edinburgh Jews as those who were related to other local families, in Scotland known as Clans. We knew specifically about the Rifkind-Hoffenberg-Dorfman clan, the Levinson-Nathan-Leigh clan, Kaufman-Caplan, the Cowans, and I guess there were others about which I to this day know little...the Hallsides, Bergers, Levy...who was related to whom was then vitally important.

We foreigners were the 'one-offs' clan, with no local relatives, and thus we produced our own, Fluss, Meyerhoff, Greenberg, and of course others, mainly those who arrived just before and during the war. We spoke foreign languages, German, Yiddish and of course Swedish (in my family at least)

The clans also provided a background to shopping obligations...who went to Lurie, who to Hoffenberg, who to Pass, although

it is true to say that all had to shop at Rosen's for groceries, and neutral ground was to be found at Kleinbergs and Bialiks, the well-known bakers who made the best challa and beigels in the country.

Cheder was open shop for all....here the clan distinction was expressed by who attended 4 times a week, who sometimes, who only on Sunday. No class or clan distinctions except for who came to learn and who came to play, who was forced to attend and who came out of free will (perhaps one or two maximum) The Reverend Rubinstein presided over all of us with 'knips and knaps' in order to impress us with the importance of learning.

We had the worlds of the Shabbat-Shul goers, a minority, the Chagim Shul-goers (a few more) and ultimately the Yom-Kippur goers, especially when it fell on a Shabbat, when the Shul was full (the Double-shul) and packed with all the clan variations., when the Chazanim Zucker and Rafalowitz would give all they had, and Rabbis Daiches and Cohen would let fly.

By the time we reached the ripe old-age to attend Habonim and/or Bnei Akiva days and/or Maccabi, new worlds were opened, those who went, and those who did not attend, the "frummers" and the 'not-so-frummers' .....new clans were established. By the time one completed this period, and one was looking at careers, studies, girlfriends and matrimony, one entered into the ultimate stage of the clan...who would remain in Edinburgh and who would leave, who would go to Israel, and who did not go.

And this June month in 2007 we are looking at ourselves, our affection for the past of Edinburgh and our determination to stay in Israel, our clannishness in our new world where we try to meet each other at any excuse, where we make our children and grandchildren laugh at our idiosyncrasies which include our affection to Edinburgh and to its Hebrew Congregation.

Our worlds continue, we meet, we chat, we share history, and who knows that one day the worlds will merge when Edinburgh comes to Israel.

With warm wishes to the Community and many thanks for your kind reception.

A measure of the affection and respect for the Rabbi could be seen last year when he had a 90th birthday party in Jerusalem. A surprising number of ex Edinburghers who now live in Israel attended it. Rabbi Cohen amazed us all with his vivid recollections of our parents and grandparents. Sadly, Mrs. Cohen passed away a few months later, and at the time of writing this article I understand the Rabbi is not in good health. We wish him a Refuah Shlemah.

When speaking to Hilary about the preparations she made for our Shabbat, I began to realise just how difficult it is today to shop, cook and cater kosher in Edinburgh. In our day, there were three Jewish butchers, three bakers and a grocer. There are a great many fine bakers in Israel, but none that can compete with Kleinberg's challah or Bialeck's blackbread and beigles. Did anyone else call that little strip on top of the challa 'ting'?

As I sat in Shul that Shabbat I looked around me and saw the friendly ghosts of the past in every corner. It is impossible to mention them all. I saw my own family the Levinsons, Nathans and Leighs, the Rifkinds, the Gordons, the Rubensteins and the Dorfmans, Dr Adler, Abel Phillips and Ruben Cohen on their seats to the left of the Oren Kodesh, the Caplans, the Flusses, the Hoffenbergs and the Kaufmans , Rabbi Cohen. Rev Rafalowitz, Chazan Zucker, Rev Brysh and Rev Groundland to name just some of the colourful personalities that populated the scenes of my youth. I feel very blessed to have grown up in such a community, and in such a beautiful city. A glow of warmth surrounds my memories, and surrounds me now too as I think of our wonderful Shabbat in Edinburgh in June of this year. I am full of admiration for a small community that manages to publish a magazine with regularity, hold a lunch club for senior members based on voluntary help, organise regular activities for adults and children and cater wonderful kosher meals for guests. For such a tiny community I think you are truly amazing. You are fortunate too in your enthusiastic Rabbi who clearly cares deeply about your people. We wish you all well. May you go from strength to strength. Mum and Dad made aliyah 11 years ago. Sadly Dad passed away a few years later. Although I, my brother Victor, sister Rose (Kelman) and mother have all made our lives in Israel, we never forget Edinburgh. Mum, who is now 91, remembers all the places

# 'Anne Frank + You' Exhibition

Ian Shein

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation was proud to be invited by the City of Edinburgh Council to host the 'Anne Frank + You' exhibition in the Synagogue complex during the month of June. This was part of the Council's 'Making Connections-Celebrating Diversity' project for children and young people across the city, focusing on identity and the diversity of culture.

This new multi-media exhibition highlighted the Holocaust and more recent genocides and contemporary issues such as democracy, dictatorship, racism, wearing of religious symbols and bullying.

The official launch took place on 6 June in the Synagogue itself when Councillor Marilyn MacLaren, Education Convener, welcomed a large audience, which included MSPs, Civic dignitaries, school children and members of the community. She was proud to be able



to say that the foundation was created 17 years ago in Britain and had 'finally arrived here in Edinburgh'. Commenting on the importance of bringing the exhibition to as many places as possible, she said 'All these lovely young people here today, will carry these thoughts through to the future'. She felt that we would be fulfilling the hopes of a young girl who wrote 'I want to go on living even after my death'. Councillor MacLaren then introduced Gillian Walnes, Chief Executive of the Anne Frank Trust, who spoke of the 60th anniversary of the publication of the Diary and the thoughts and aspirations of Anne.

Sir Tom Farmer CBE, recalled his school days; the opportunities offered him and the impact of early experience. He recalled his earlier life as a 'Kwik Fit Fitter' and the fact that his mother had always had hopes that at least one of her children would be a priest. Though this was not to be, he felt that 'standing here inside the Synagogue must be the next best thing'. He projected his overall optimism, his belief in young people and the hopes expressed within the Diary. Emphasising that the future is not what will be, but what we make it to be, he urged young people not to miss out on rectifying social wrongdoing.

There then followed a most moving address by Rev. Ernest Levy OBE, a survivor of Auschwitz concentration camp, who likened Anne Frank to a symbol of innocent suffering who opened the eyes of the world. Rev. Levy recalled the horrors of the Nazi regime and of his own terrible ordeal as a Jew at that time. He said that the important lesson to be learnt from the Holocaust was that the horrors didn't happen overnight. The creeping acceptance came from very gradual change, which at first became commonplace and then acceptable. He urged the youth of today always to remember and to carry the message that

people should not wait to take a stand until it is too late.

A short harrowing film showed death, destruction and genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Beatha Uwazaninka-Smith, a survivor of the Rwanda genocide, spoke to the audience of her and her family's experiences in that country and the emotions and feelings that have left their mark so deeply. She recalled that she was 14 at the time, and was unaware that she was even a Tutsi. She simply could not understand why she was very gradually becoming the target of cruel remarks using the label, Tutsi, as a derogatory term. She told the audience that 'History was being taught to create anger amongst the young people and in much the same way as occurred in 1936, we were losing our freedom so gradually that it became quite normal'. She told us that when she asked of the Muslim man, who saved her from certain death, why he should have done so, he answered 'If you save a single life, you save the world' exemplifying the Jewish mitzvah not to ignore wrong doings.

Hauwa Ibrahim, a lawyer in the Nigerian Muslim Human Rights Association, began by inviting the audience to stand for 30 seconds in remembrance of the Holocaust of both the Jews and the people of Rwanda. She then spoke about her background and disclosed that she escaped being stoned to death for having a child out of wedlock only because of the faith she had in her own ability to speak out and defend herself. She urged people 'Tell yourself "I can do it I can give hope to the hopeless".' She asked that Anne Frank never be forgotten. Human dignity and warmth and the wish for freedom for everyone was her message. We can make a difference and shape the world with encouragement and belief in the future.

Councillor MacLaren in thanking the speakers for a memorable day stated that while we could not change the past, we could affect tomorrow with the hope and confidence of today's young people. She was appreciative of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation for the facilities in presenting the exhibition and to the Anne Frank Trust. Thereafter the audience made their way to the Community Centre where the exhibits were displayed.

This was open to schools and members of the public from 6 until 17 June. It portrayed pictures of Anne Frank, her family and her hiding place in Amsterdam. Her Diary testified



to her fear of being discovered by the Nazis and where she was betrayed in 1944. Videos of "Who's Jewish", discussion between youth on relationships and posters on responsibilities featured prominently besides photographs of Anne and her Diary. She wrote 'why can't people live together peacefully; why all this destruction; oh why are people so crazy?' Videos also showed genocide in Cambodia, East Timor, Sudan and Iraq and left one with a deep sense of shame and despair.



An atmosphere of unreality yet stark knowledge that it did happen and could happen pervaded the exhibition. School children showed a great deal of interest. The comments book perhaps indicated the depth of feeling. 'Really bad what people did'; 'Our problems today seem insignificant'; 'People should think about what happened to others'; 'We shouldn't be racist'; 'Very moving'.

The exhibition attracted visits from many schools totalling in excess of 700 pupils and 300 adults on the two open days. Following training from the Anne Frank trust, members of the community of all ages, including our youth, proudly and willingly acted as guides over the ten day period.

## What's Going On?! Just ask a Tribe Campus Ambassador

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Bristol	Joel Braunold	bristol@tribeuk.com
Cambridge	TBC	cambridge@tribeuk.com
Leeds	Royi Gutkin	leeds@tribeuk.com
London	Joel Kutner Emma Nelken	london@tribeuk.com
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Nottingham	Jessica Baron	nottingham@tribeuk.com
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# Around and About The Shein Scene



others, she thanked Bill Simpson for his work as Junior Warden, a task given up for personal reasons, see letters on page 30, and expressed the community's shock and sadness at the sudden death of Senior Warden Sas Judah. Mrs. Rifkind gave a resume of events during the year, which had been highlighted in the Annual Report previously distributed to members. She commented fully on the diversity of activities, which had occurred within the community, which emphasised its vibrancy and commitment. In presenting the balance sheet, the Hon. Treasurer, Laurence Bowman, went over the finances and explained that new legislation required that funds be presented in a different format. Although a deficit was shown, basically the results were not so discouraging and overall assets were good. Inevitably, due to the community's size, revenue will decrease, but no change in seat rent was envisaged at the moment. The chairman thanked Mr. Bowman for his presentation and work in preparing the legal requirements of the balance sheet.

In the absence of Mr. John Cosgrove, chairman of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, and Mr. Edward Green, representative to the Board of Deputies, Mrs. Rifkind read out their reports and congratulated them on maintaining such good links with the appropriate bodies. The following were elected to the Board of Management; Chairman, Mrs. Hilary Rifkind; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Laurence Bowman; Messrs. John Danzig; Anthony Gilbert; David Goldberg; Steven Hyams; Gershon Mendick; David Neville; Arnold Rifkind; Raymond Taylor; Mrs. Anita Mendelsohn; Mrs. Jackie Taylor. Dr. Philip Mason and Mr. Morris Kaplan were respectively elected Senior and Junior Warden. Messrs. John Cosgrove, Malcolm Cowan and Philip Mason re-elected Hon. Vice-Presidents. Mr. Steven Hyams, chair of the Community Centre Committee, gave a short but encouraging résumé of the year's past activities. Mr. Raymond Taylor, in proposing a vote of thanks to the chair, praised Hilary Rifkind for the tremendous work so successfully undertaken by her during the past year.

## 6 May

A holiday weekend somewhat reduced the numbers attending a coffee morning in the community centre but the 35 who were there undoubtedly enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with the latest gossip over coffee and a delightful variety of sandwich and cake. A stall manned (perhaps not the appropriate word in the circumstances) by attractive duo Amanda Hyams and Issy Kelpie dispensed books and plants at reasonable prices whilst an innovative raffle for mouth watering cakes, organised by David Ellison aided by Betsy Dorfman, was a magnet for discerning gamblers. A pleasant chatty morning passed too quickly.



Lag B'Omer games

## 18th August

A full report of the Celebration of the 75th anniversary of the inauguration of our Shul can be found on page 21. The birth of the Shul will be focussed on in our next edition of the Edinburgh Star.

## 20 June

Hilary Rifkind, Board of Management chairman, welcomed the 50 members who attended the AGM of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. She was most appreciative of the support of the Board during a busy year in office and of the sterling work undertaken by the members. Amongst



Footnote: Kenneth Collins of Glasgow has taken over from John Cosgrove as chairman of Scottish Council of Jewish communities. Edward Green is continuing as our representative for Board of Deputies.



## 24th June

Cheder prize giving and buffet  
Following a rather late night at the Rabbi's house for a Shabbaton, and knowing that the children would not be able to drag themselves to Shul at the crack of dawn (10.15 is the crack of dawn in a teenager's vocabulary) the Cheder students were allowed to make a later appearance than usual. A delightful little film produced by the oldest class, under the directorship of Janet Mundy, and showing each child giving a short account of their family roots, preceded the actual prize giving with prizes dispensed by Lesley Danzig. The very professional newsletters produced by Elaine Levy's class were on display and Morris Kaplan rewarded attendees at his family service in the usual way. Instead of the customary picnic, a nourishing buffet was set out in the Shul hall, orchestrated by June Budd, and Bnei Akiva Youth took control of the fun activities thereafter. It was fortuitous that the event took place indoors, as the weather continued to perform in the way to which we have lately become accustomed. The Rabbi very generously treated the oldest class to post prize ice-skating, which rounded off the day very nicely.

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# ..and it came to pass...

Micheline Brannan

Micheline Brannan retired from being 'a habitué of the Government of Scotland for nearly 31 years' and it is our privilege now, to be allowed to enjoy her leaving speech. After thanking her boss, Robert, for his kind words, and her colleagues for their good wishes this is what she delivered...



*'Most people here have probably heard of the book of Esther. But much less well known is the apocryphal book of Hadassah, which I happened to come across when packing up our rather large and obscure library before our planned house move on 12 July. It's written in a strange mixture of Gaelic and Aramaic. I've shortened it a bit, but tried to keep the flavour of the language.'*

"And it came to pass, in the days of the mighty wars, that the little people journeyed to the west. For the little people were sore oppressed. And it came to pass that the little people found peace in the Land of the Scots. Now there came a woman of these little people to the Fair Green Place and her name was Chaya and she was betrothed unto Israel, and they were both exceptionally short. And they lived among the people of the land.

And the man knew his wife Chaya, and she conceived and gave birth. And the child, Hadassah, was exceptionally short among the girls of the land. Of the game of the ball and stick she could not learn. Neither could she achieve anything with the raquet nor run could she, nor paint nor play on an instrument. But in the matter of gaining knowledge she was not too bad. And it came to pass that Hadassah grew in wisdom and travelled in the

kingdom to the great college of the south, upon the river crossing of the cattle.

Now in those days, the Queen of the land sought servants among those who could sing a song of Degrees. And lo, a great competition was held. And Hadassah had read the ancient books, of the Snowy Prophet of the Corridors of Power, and even had she heard the tales of the Men from the Ministry on the Home Service. And Hadassah yearned to become a servant of the Queen. But of Yes Minister had she not yet tasted, for that came later.

And it came to pass that Hadassah found favour in the eyes of the wise men of the land, even the wise men of Alencon Link, at the town of Basingstoke. And the wise men (and women) said, 'Arise and go now, Hadassah, to Old Admiralty Building, where we shall test thee.'

And they tested Hadassah, and also they tested John, Aldridge by name. In the same group were they tested and they both passed the test. And behold, the wise men said to the Queen, 'We have tested many, and we have found many wanting. But two there are, who will do for the Scottish Office, Hadassah and John by name.' And the Queen was satisfied, and she sent Hadassah and John to serve her in the land of the Scots.

Now Hadassah served her Queen for 30 years. And her job was the proposing of laws and the explanation of laws and the defence of laws before the Opposition. And she did serve the Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, famed for the drinking of cocoa after debate.

And Hadassah devised the law of the release of the captives, according to the words of Lord Kincaig. And the release of the captives had found favour in the

eyes of the Assembly of the 635. And in the latter days of the reign of the Major, the Lord Forsyth had sought to end the release of the captives, for they were wicked in his sight. And it was the law of the captives of the year 1993 and was not popular in the eyes of the 'hang them and flog them' brigade. But in the reign of the Lord Donald, the law of the captives was saved and remains the law of the Scots to this day. And it is the law of Hadassah, her finest hour. And it is hated by the blue and the red soothsayers and is doomed. Or perhaps not but we shall see. For the captives are many, and the places to put them few.

And in the time of Hadassah also were the Scottish Law Commission great in the land. And there arose a great Parliament of the Scots. And the Parliament devoured Bills, even the Bills of the Scottish Law Commission.

And so order was brought to the laws of the adults damaged in the wits, and of the husband and the wife and the bidey and their children. And there ended the burdens of the superior upon his vassal and his servitude was no more, except if registered by the appointed day. And the Queen saw the laws and she saw that they were good and she passed them all. And the hearts of the people of Scotland rejoiced.

And Hadassah too rejoiced and the scribes of the law with her, for they had done well in the eyes of their Queen.

Now the 30 years were a wondrous time in the land. The tribe of the machines grew great and powerful. At first there were giants dwelling in the House of Saughton and no-one could pass their way. But the giants were vanquished by machines both small and cunning, even the tribes

of the desktop and the laptop and the palm top. And the new machines were like fruit, blackberries, and they contained juicy messages, but taste and smell had they none. And the blackberries thrived in the pockets of men and the handbags of women and those who had not a blackberry were reviled.

And of the mobile phone let me only say, that it was like the blackberry only smaller, and was glued to the ear of all the servants of the Queen or nearly all, when walking by the way, when rising up and when lying down. For it was not possible for a man or woman to live without the mobile phone, and the hooded folk did steal them and amass many phones for the sake of the brown resin and the white powder of doom. And they did commit antisocial behaviour.

Now in the latter days, the servant John Aldridge departed to run railway holidays to the far places of the earth, and also many other good and true servants with him, the servant Alan, he of Fraser, and Andrew, he of Rushworth, to name but two. And Hadassah grew old, and many were waiting at the gate, for it was the lean time, the time of the flat running costs.

**"she has been assessed from above and below and all round about, yeah even the 360 degree"**

And the time came for Hadassah to say 'Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the third election of this great Parliament and the power has passed from the Lord Jack to the Lord Alexander, even the Lord Alexander of the fishy people, the Salmond and the Sturgeon, who have waxed great in this land. And thy servant Hadassah is exhausted from all this law-making and has no energy for any more. For she has been constantly changing to deliver, and she has taken stock and she has studied the big picture and she has been assessed from above and below and all round about, yeah even the 360 degree, and has done her best to be open, helpful, expert and effective. And she has learned to work the ERDM and the FOI and the MCS and the PQ system and the SEAS

and the Easebuy that grow like the grass which flourishes on her back green and is never cut down. But now she has had enough and needs a rest.'

And the wise woman Thea of Teale spoke unto the rulers of the PBIG and said, 'Yeah verily it is time to let Hadassah depart, for she has done many things but others are younger and may do yet more and may do it better and it is now their turn. So let her have silver pieces and an index linked pension and let her be off and tend to the sick of her family and minister to their progeny'.

Now before she left, Hadassah prophesied, and she spoke unto Robert, her master, and she said:

"Thou oh Robert are great among men and have done great things and shall do more great things. Thou shalt do justice and love righteousness and increase thy family and many shall look up to thee. And more men shall sit at thy table for now that Hadassah is gone, Ken known as Thomson shall replace her and thou shalt have one more man and one less woman at thy table and thou shalt like that well. And thou shalt bring many blessings upon the Queen's servants in Scotland, yea even the servants of the Lord Alexander. For thou shalt bring them E-HR and sort out the mess that is HR and many shall thank thee and rejoice."

And Hadassah prophesied unto her fellow servants and said, "Work hard for the Lord Alexander of the fishy folk, as you did for the Lords Donald, Henry and Jack

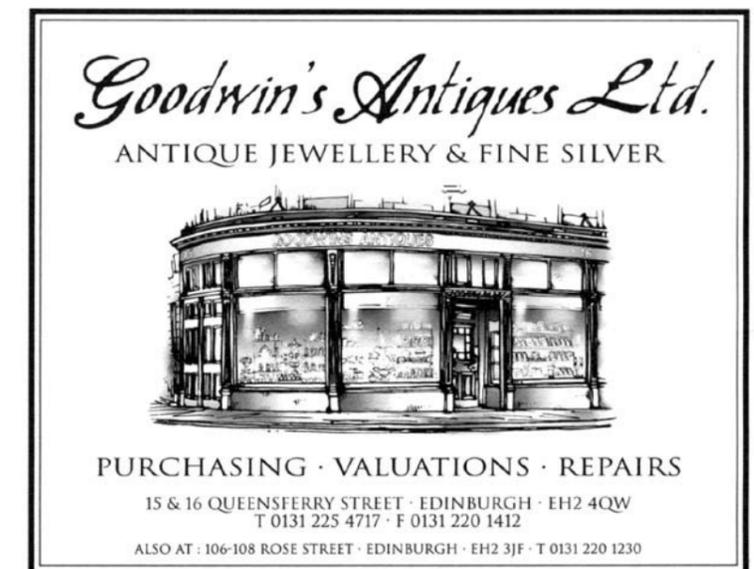
before him. And make good laws and engage with stakeholders and love and cherish your staff and do good in the land which Devolution has given you for an inheritance. And enjoy all the blessings of being a civil servant in the Scottish Executive for it has been a wonderful career for 30 years and nothing else I could have done would have matched it."

And finally, Hadassah prophesied to the women of her bosom, yeah the women of her office without whom the place would have fallen apart. And she said unto Fay Meharry, whose price is above rubies, "Many women have done valiantly, but thou hast exceeded them all." And she spoke to Susan and to Gerry and to Claire, saying thank you – even four are not enough to keep me on order but you have tried. And also to the woman of the other place, by the sea, she said, "Thou Myra, also had a good go at sorting me out and art a woman of worth."

**"And so, Hadassah did depart and no-one knew what became of her"**

And so, Hadassah did depart and no-one knew what became of her. Perhaps she joined the nameless suppliants, even those who seek public appointments, for many are called but few are chosen. And perhaps she did not."

Well that is the apocryphal book. Make of it what you will.



# Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

Betty Abrahams  
26 Terrars Croft  
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Samuel and Ruth

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6 The Crosspath  
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Wynnewood PA, USA

Rosalyn, Bernard and Iain Jackson

# Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast

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and Jacqueline Kahn  
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Stanmore, Middlesex

Myrna and Morris Kaplan  
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Edinburgh

Mrs Rose Orgel

Clarice and Berl Osborne  
56/2 Spylaw Road  
Edinburgh

Maurice, Dinah  
and Samantha Penn  
47 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh

Cassie, Jonty, Lily and Jack Karro  
Melbourne, Australia

Lilian Kessly (nee Dorfman)  
and family, 27 Plantation Street  
Menora, Western Australia

Isobel King,  
Melrose

Gillian and Charles Raab and family

Stanley, Elaine, Aaron and  
Joel Raffel  
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Freda Riffkin

Arthur and Alex Kleinberg  
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Saul and Joshua Korn  
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Martin and Laura, 14  
Leighton  
Avenue, Pinner, Harrow

Sheila &  
Alfred Yarrow  
9/4 Nof Harim  
Jerusalem, Israel

Syd and  
Paula Zoltie

# The Dreyfus Case and its Unsung Hero, Lt Colonel Picquart

David Gonshaw

- I. The repercussions of the Dreyfus case caused a diplomatic incident with Germany, which could have led to war.
- II. The affair nearly brought down the third republic.
- III. The affair caused the state and church to separate in 1905.
- IV. The Dreyfus affair went on for nearly twelve years.

Alfred Dreyfus was a captain in the French army. He had been an officer for twelve years. Dreyfus was accused of high treason in October 1894, and was sent to Devil's Island in French Guyana, where he spent almost five years. Devil's Island can only be described as a "living hell hole". It took two years for Captain Dreyfus to regain his health from the ordeal.

Before Captain Dreyfus was sent to Devil's Island, he had been seconded to the War Office, and looked forward to rapid promotion. He was accused of giving military secrets to the German military attaché, Colonel Max Von Schwartzkoppen. A torn list of information was found in the waste paper basket in the German attaché's office by an Alsatian cleaning lady (Madame Bestian), who was employed by the French army counter intelligence department.

Colonel Sandherr, head of the Counter Intelligence Service, pieced the torn list together. The writing on the list was compared with other officers who worked in the War Office. Colonel Sandherr thought that the writing on the list seemed to be similar to that of Captain Dreyfus. Sandherr was known to be an anti-Semite, so he put the blame on Dreyfus, the only Jewish officer in the War Office, even though the evidence was very slim. Writing experts could not agree if it was Dreyfus's writing. Captain Dreyfus was convicted illegally; the army had to have a "scapegoat". It was a ludicrous and tragic situation for Dreyfus. The irony being, that Dreyfus was a wealthy man and had no reason to sell secrets to a foreign power.

At a much later date Colonel Sandherr became ill; his position as head of the Counter Intelligence was taken over by Lt Colonel Picquart. Picquart started looking through the papers concerning the Dreyfus case. He came to the conclusion

that Captain Dreyfus was innocent of the crime. Picquart consulted his superior officer and told him that Dreyfus was innocent. The general told Picquart that it didn't matter that Dreyfus was innocent: the matter was closed as far as the army was concerned. Lt Colonel Picquart replied, "General I will not take this secret to the grave with me, it's abominable". Picquart was posted far away to North Africa, his superiors hoping to keep him quiet, but at a later stage Picquart let the information be known. Picquart was thrown out of the army for his action.

The actual culprit, who passed information to the German attaché, was Major Walsin Esterhazy. He was court marshalled at the time but was exonerated. Much later Esterhazy fled to England, where he later admitted to writing the list that was found in the German attaché's office. Esterhazy received a pension, which is believed to have come from the French army. He died in England in 1923 having never participated in the war.

Another officer in the intelligence service, Major J Henry, wrote a false letter (faux Henry) making it seem that Dreyfus was a traitor. This officer was only concerned with the reputation of the army. This forged letter eventually became known to the court. When this happened, Henry (now a Lt Col) committed suicide.

With the help of Lt Col Picquart, Emile Zola, Bernard Lazare, Mathiea Dreyfus, Senator Schevver-Kestener and Theodore Herzl, the French government was forced to bring back Captain Dreyfus from Devil's Island. The army chose Rennes for the trial, an army garrison-town far from Paris. The army hierarchy wanted to make sure that there was not too much publicity about the case. Dreyfus still ill and in a confused state of mind at this juncture, could not give clear answers to questions and was only partially exonerated at the trial.

Dreyfus was finally pardoned by the French President in 1906. Dreyfus was reinstated as a major in the army in 1906 and went on reserve in 1907. He became a Lt Col in the Great War, with a command on the western front, and Lt Col Dreyfus died in 1935. It is important to understand

and should be stressed that Alfred Dreyfus was a much-assimilated French man, a stoical aloof man who only wanted to be a soldier. His attitude in this respect did nothing to help his case.

France in the 1890's was assumed to be a cultured, sophisticated and liberal country. The consequences of the Dreyfus case do not bear this out. And it should be remembered that Alfred Dreyfus' granddaughter was sent by the Vichy regime in 1941 to a Nazi concentration camp. The French army high command finally decided to posthumously pardon Lt Col Alfred Dreyfus in 1995.

Theodore Herzl, who was a reporter at the time of the Dreyfus trial, was so shocked by the miscarriage of justice that he came to the conclusion that Jews could not successfully assimilate into a gentile society. After the case, Herzl advocated that Jews should find their own land. This led to Theodore Herzl leading the Zionist congress in Basle in Switzerland in 1897.

Emile Zola's open letter to the French President Felix Faure did much to publicise the case. Zola died in 1901 under strange circumstances believed to be from carbon monoxide poisoning through a blocked chimney in his home. Major Dreyfus was present at the ceremony removing Emile Zola's ashes to the Pantheon in 1908, when he was wounded in the arm by a gunshot from Lois Gregor, a disgruntled journalist, in an assassination attempt.

My report is based on the unsung hero of the case, who in my opinion has received very little recognition for the great deed he did. Lt, Col. Marie Goegs Picquart put his career on the line for Captain Dreyfus. It is very difficult to visualize how the case would have ended without his intervention. Picquart was reinstated into the army in 1906 and went on to become a general; unfortunately he died in a riding accident in 1914. "Who is truly honourable? He who honours others."

**References:** Chapman, G, The Dreyfus Trials (1972). Dreyfus Affair – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. New York Times, October 24 2006

# Annual festival and Civic Service, and Our Synagogue 75 years on

Ian Shein

A most interesting, colourful, double-event took place in the Synagogue on 18 August. The Annual Service celebrating the Edinburgh International Festival coincided with the 75th Anniversary of the opening of the Synagogue in Salisbury Road. A large congregation of members and visitors greeted the arrival of the Lord Provost, the Rt. Hon. George Grubb, the Lady Provost, City Councillors, High Constables, Nigel Griffiths MP, Mike Pringle MSP and representatives of Lothian and Borders Police. They were preceded by officials carrying the City Mace and Sword. In his sermon, Rabbi Rose commented on the vision of those responsible for the unification of the Jewish community under one Synagogue and the unification of world peace and

harmony heralding the International Festival.

At the Kiddush after the Service, Mrs. Hilary Rifkind, chair of the Board of Management, warmly welcomed the civic dignitaries and expressed delight at their attendance, commenting on the close affinity which exists between the community and city. In reply the Lord Provost spoke of his pleasure at being present in the Synagogue and of the Jewish families with whom he had associated in early years.

140 attended the 75th Anniversary lunch, which was chaired so ably by Mr. Mickey Cowen. The toast to the community was in the excellent hands of Councillor

Eric Milligan, certainly no stranger to the Synagogue. He mentioned prominent Jewish people of the past who had contributed so much to the present in so many ways. World respected politician, Edinburgh-born Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP, replied in a most instructive and humorous manner, reiterating the close relationships and friendships which have always existed within the city. He commented on the dignitaries who officiated at the opening of the Synagogue 75 years ago.

Mrs. Anita Mendelssohn proposed a warm vote of thanks, winding up what must surely be a milestone in the annals of Edinburgh Jewry.

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# Society Reports

## Association of Jewish Refugees

Wednesday 2nd May 2007

Lilian Bell – ‘Heller Scraps’

Philip Mason

Although the vast majority of members had never met Lilian Bell, all, bar-none, were considerably stirred by the heart-rendering tale related to us by a lady whose family had fled Austria to Scotland in 1938 and who had as a consequence lived the past 60 years in Edinburgh. The absolutely fascinating story that unfolded during the afternoon meeting at Irene and Philip Mason's home followed Lilian's family fleeing Vienna in 1938, through the very difficult times she and her family experienced in the 1940's, 50's and 60's to the present day when we heard about Lilian's researches about her family and her increasing interest in 'Heller Scraps'. These so well known beautiful 'scraps' that so many young children, especially girls use to collect across Europe were produced by the Heller Printing Factory in Vienna – a factory owned by Lilian's family but which was so sadly taken away from them in 1938. In recent years, Lilian has built up her own collection of Heller scraps plus copies of a rich array of illustrations, which were once printed as scraps. It was clear throughout her talk that Lilian Bell, or should I say Lilian Heller, was so very proud of her family background – a family which had, through the 'scraps' they produced, given so many young children untold happiness.

Wednesday 27th June 2007

Scotland and Newcastle Annual Get-Together

At the end of June, nearly 40 members of the Scottish and Newcastle groups of the Association of Jewish Refugees met up for their annual get-together, as they have done for several years in the past, at the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation's Community Centre. There was an attractive programme of discussion groups, lunch, guest speakers, musical entertainment and the promise of

adequate time for members to renew old acquaintances and make new ones.

Following a warm welcome including coffee/tea and biscuits, the 40 members who had made it to the meeting then listened to all the latest news from AJR via Marcia Goodman, the head of AJR Social Services. Michael Newman, the AJR Head of Media and Public Relations, provided a lot of information and advice especially about AJR's Social Service programme (especially the range of funds available to AJR members) and the latest news with respect to restitution claims and compensation payments.

Members then divided into two Discussion Groups, one on Legacy, ('Passing on reminiscences to children and grandchildren before they are lost'), the other on Education ('The state of Holocaust Education today'). The session on Legacy raised many interesting points. Many members, especially 2nd generation survivors, immediately questioned whether it was right to hand on such difficult personal reminiscences from the Holocaust to children and grandchildren at a young age – they felt from personal experience that children/grandchildren could be too young to handle such disturbing thoughts and memories. Children/grandchildren should only be told about their parents' legacy when much older – perhaps at a time when they themselves would begin to ask questions. It was thus strongly felt that part of a parent's responsibility, would be when to choose the correct time to pass on what they had gone through, and experienced during the Holocaust. Several 2nd generation survivors revealed that they now 'carried a lot of baggage' as a result of learning at too young an age all that their parents and family had gone through. It was therefore suggested that Holocaust survivors should write down their thoughts and memories for children and eventually grandchildren to read at leisure when much older and at a time when they would be better able to handle what they were

reading. However, some survivors from the Holocaust revealed that many, often because it was so difficult, left it too late to impart their memories to their children and passed away before handing down any legacy.

The session on Holocaust education was lead by Paul Tyack who was directly involved with the Anne Frank Exhibition, and chaired by Marcia. Paul began by posing the rhetorical question 'Why teach about the Holocaust?' to which the answer was threefold. 'It didn't occur suddenly; it was not an accident, being of legal and official choice; to protect our democracy'. This too was the recurring theme of the Anne Frank exhibition hosted by the Edinburgh Jewish Community only a week before in the very same venue. The group learned that Holocaust education was compulsory in England but not in Scotland. The Rabbi surmised that the reason might be that in Scotland there was a different emphasis placed on subjects that were not examinable. An interesting exchange took place when Paul posed the question 'Is the role of Hollywood production useful?' Most of the company were of the opinion that it glamorised the event and made it all seem like fiction but on the other hand, it did bring the subject to people's attention.

Paul related a personal story, which exemplified how important Holocaust education was, and how it could encourage people to appreciate the richness of living in a multi-cultural society. He said that he had been erecting the Anne Frank exhibition with the help of an Afro-Caribbean youth who had some problems when the boy declared that he didn't like Jews. When asked if he liked Jurassic Park he replied yes. The same question about ET and whether he knew of Einstein elicited the same answer. When enlightened about the film producers, and the father of the 'theory of relativity', the boy conceded 'I didn't really know any more about Jews, than that they killed Christ'.

One lady told how she, and many others like her, had been instructed to suppress her feelings and not to dwell on the past as it might adversely affect her in later life. Indeed, it was this very advice that was detrimental to her. She felt that everybody should be encouraged to tell, teach, and be taught.

At the end of the two sessions, both of which could have carried on for a lot longer, all present agreed that such open discussions were excellent, as they enabled members to talk openly and share their personal experiences.

Following an hour of intense discussion, everyone looked forward to lunch – a superb fresh salmon lunch which had been kindly prepared by one of the AJR members attending, Irene Mason. Batteries having been recharged, everyone settled down in the afternoon to presentations by 2 speakers – the first from Paul Tyack the Head of Fund Raising and Development for the Anne Frank Trust. We heard Paul in his usual easy-going and stimulating manner bring alive the new Exhibition of the Anne Frank Trust – 'Anne Frank + You'. Members learned that this exhibition was not just a historical account of Anne Frank and her family, but contained a lot, lot more. Above all its main aim was to speak out across the generations and through the experiences of Anne Frank, recorded in her extraordinary diary and to put them in the context of British teenage life today. In this perhaps rather unconventional way it has set out to deal with modern-day issues in British society such as racism and hatred, which still exist more than 60 years after the end of the war. Clearly this approach has worked; members learned that during the past year the Exhibition had been seen all over the UK by around 100,000 people. Nevertheless Paul concluded that they still needed to get their material out to more young people and that they were now looking at the development of small exhibits for distribution to schools throughout the UK including Scotland.

Following Paul Tyack's excellent presentation, the final session of the afternoon turned its attention to the new Scottish Holocaust Exhibition, 'Testimony', which had been especially sent for display at the AJR get-together by Heartstone, a Scottish non-profit organization devoted to challenging prejudice, xenophobia and intolerance. We heard from its Director,

Sita Kumari that, with the aid of funding from the Scottish Executive, Heartstone had designed a photo-documentary Exhibition which contained not just photographs covering Auschwitz-Birkenau and other Holocaust locations, but also moving, poignant testimonies from more than 40 people, former refugees and survivors of the Holocaust who came to or were now living in Scotland. It was also learned that the Exhibition was likely to be permanently housed at a site in East Renfrew. However, Sita Kumari indicated that besides a permanent exhibition, travelling satellite exhibitions were also now available to people in other parts of Scotland, especially schools, youth groups and local communities. In addition, Heartstone had plans to produce CDs of their exhibits; clearly exciting times. Everyone was pleased to hear that this so important resource was now reaching out to an increasingly large audience across Scotland.

The day ended with a session of excellent musical entertainment by Gica Loening. There followed a welcome cup of tea which ensured members went away happy and contented after what had been a very stimulating day, brimming full of interesting sessions and presentation.

## WIZO

25 July: Ladies' Special Luncheon

Pearl Shein

When Anita and Esther Mendelssohn were in Eilat, they learned of a unique school

for Ethiopian children, a project funded by WIZO, and were so impressed by what they heard that they were determined to help in some way. Subsequently Anita and Esther jointly organised a fabulous luncheon party on 25 July to which 33 ladies eagerly headed; and weren't we happy to have done so. A brilliant summer day did not quite materialise but the intermittent sunshine bathed Esther's glorious garden and we feasted our eyes on its beauty. The lunch was delicious.... and we all felt truly elegant.... (Yes!)...and most important, garnered £650 towards the school funds. Anita and Sylvia Donne both spoke movingly on the developments of the school whilst Sylvia took the opportunity of mentioning a WIZO trip to Israel next March. So thank you Anita and Esther and all the willing WIZO girls who helped make a really super event.

27 May

Ian Shein

27 May did not herald the beginning of summer. However a wet, windy Sunday did not detract from the 60 who attended the 40th annual WIZO lunch fund raiser at the home of Kate and Ronnie Goodwin. Although the intention was to utilise the attractive garden, this was deemed unsuitable for brollies and overcoats and the gathering spread comfortably over the elegant rooms of the house. Appetising tit-bits were handed around before the buffet lunch which maintained its high standard of culinary excellence and which brought together a happy contented company. The one prize raffle was won by Maryla Green. The highly commendable sum of £1,140 was raised for the funds.

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# Never mind the quality – feel the quantity! The Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2007

by Lord Julian Goodman

Imagine my excitement in June, to find that my Fringe Programme had arrived in Shul as expected, but for a change, no-one had opened my mail and pinched my programme as is usually the case! I sat down with a cup of strong, sweet tea to recover from the initial shock, and once composed, I gave the brochure a cursory glance. After a few pages, I looked suspiciously at the back to see if I was reading a publication from The Chief Rabbi's Office, or at the very least for a hechsher! In previous editions, seeking out the Jewish content had become more of a treasure hunt each year, with many shows discovered by serendipity more than scrutiny. This year however, there was a cornucopia of Klezmer, Comedy and Theatre to choose from. The JMI (Jewish Music Institute) alone had brought up 17 different shows, and there was plenty more besides to choose from! Knowing that I'd never see them all, I filled my fountain pen and set forth on a voyage of discovery.



Stenclmusic

My first stop was at The C Venue where the JMI seemed to be presenting most of their shows. The first show I saw was **Stenclmusic** at C SoCo. This was a combination of stories, music and images describing a journey through the Jewish History of Brick Lane, and the Jewish Community of London's East End. It was inspired by the Yiddish Poet Avrom Stencl, and the recorded memories of members of the community. **Neyire Ashworth** was the talented clarinettist performing the original score by Rachel Stott, in between acting all the parts of the timeline's tale, from immigrant tailor to Kosher baker and both child and mother in this fascinating history of real life in the East End. There were photographs through the ages and the voices of people reminiscing adding to the atmosphere of this piece. Some poems recited in Yiddish were translated for those without the benefit of Momeh Loshen,

and the music drew on many different styles from Klezmer to Chazzonos. One of the fascinating aspects was the insight into the institutionalised racism that these different generations all battled with, yet the impact they all still managed to have on general society, from music to unions and even the introduction of bagels. My mouth was watering as the baker described the Tzibbeleh Platzels and Razzerrannerbroit I haven't tasted since my childhood, along with the Cholents placed in the ovens over Shabbos. Yet I was equally moved by the description by an elderly woman of the deprivation she and her seven sisters endured just to afford the 6d each of her two brothers needed each week for Cheder, which was not an option for the girls, and also the 1936 Mosley riots in Stepney. This was a spirited performance of great charm and wit and a fine start to The Fringe.

The next show at C SoCo was **Gimpel The Fool** performed by **Howard Rypp**. Written by I. B. Singer and translated from the Yiddish by Saul Bellow, the story traces the life of a young baker, who, constantly tricked by the other villagers, is convinced that the local "Lady Of Negotiable Affection" is in fact a virgin, and, after being tricked into marriage, he naïvely believes that the many children she gives birth to are his own. It is the story of a gullible man, who despite constantly being ridiculed and betrayed, clings to his belief in G-d and human goodness. It is this belief that enables him to cope with life's trials and tribulations, and while

one might pity him for the humiliation he receives, one can't help speculating on how lucky he is to see the world through his eyes, full of wonderment and belief that everything is indeed possible in this world. **Rypp** gave a captivating performance, which was like looking through a window into life in a Shtetl, with all the atmosphere one would expect.

Next was a trip to The Pleasance Dome to see **The Solomon Sisters**. This show was billed as "Yiddish vaudeville, comedy and glitz. Cabaret from the golden age of New York's Yiddish theatre", so I was rather looking forward to this. On reflection it was more Golders Green Hippodrome than Radio City Hall, but that's no bad thing in my book! The music provided the New York element with a wonderful Klezmer band playing as we entered the venue. We were greeted by the character of Eileen Schwartzberg OBE welcoming one and all to this "KlezmerFest". She enquired about the demography of the



The Solomon Sisiters

audience "Are you Jewish? – I see. Not Yet!"

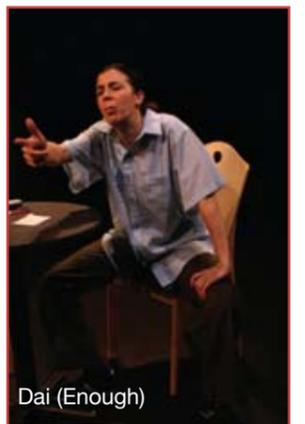
By the end of the performance it turned out to be very accurate. While this particular night had attracted some well travelled Yidden, as well as few locals, everybody enjoyed the comedy sketches and the Yiddish songs alike whether they knew or understood them or not! There were plenty of familiar songs to sing along to such as, Chassene, Sheyn Vi Di Levone and Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen, and that was just to start off with. My favourite characters and sketches were, first of all, the North West London Fashion Show, where everybody came on wearing exactly the same frumme outfit of blouse, modest skirt and the same sheitel, (including a rather hirsute member of the band)! Secondly, the character of Sandra Jaffa, a convert to Judaism, who shared her experiences of conversion and philosophical attitude towards Judaism with the audience, especially her difficulties in blending in with other Jews, explained:

"I'm naturally reticent and I don't really argue much or give opinions. I'm not very good at jumping queues either, but I AM getting better at interrupting people and learning how to speak before I've even been asked a question!"

The evening drew to a close with more Barry Sisters style songs and, the highlight for me, all the audience were offered pickles from a jar before finishing off with an English jazzy version of Dayeinu! The two sisters were indeed talented singers, dancers, musicians and comedienne, and the whole audience, including the Nisht Frum Inzerer, left with a smile on their faces and humming some Yiddish classics.

It was over at The Pleasance Courtyard that I saw **Dai (Enough)**. Set in a Tel Aviv café moments before a suicide bombing, this one-woman show captures Israeli society, its observers, and critics. Written and performed by **Iris Bahr**, this was a powerful and moving piece of Theatre that had the audience gripped from start to finish. **Bahr** plays all the victims in the café moments before a suicide bomber strikes. As the first victim is killed to the sound effect of an explosion, mid-sentence, the shock waves round the audience is palpable and one could cut the atmosphere with a knife. Remarkably enough, although one is then expecting the explosion during every subsequent monologue, each time it comes, one is so captivated by the individual's story that it still comes as a tremendous shock each time. The characters were all varied, from a Syrian TV reporter reporting the "other side" under sufferance for "balance", a Puerto Rican movie star pretending to be Israeli so she can get the part in a movie about Suicide Bombings, through a Kibbutznik whose son is about to join an elite army unit after his other son was wounded by a sniper; an ex-pat Israeli woman from Manhattan just visiting her sick mother; a dati woman with her seven children in tow pontificating on political and historical facts; a German man who's been "stalking" his Israeli ex-boyfriend culminating in this meeting, a Russian prostitute remarking on how times have changed in Russia as people are now paying to get documents to say they are Jewish when they're not; an American born Army sergeant volunteer who has recently found her late mother's relatives assumed dead in the Holocaust; a girl selling Ecstasy For Peace on behalf of her brother and his Amsterdam connexions using the terrorist

tunnels for their covert activities and to get Palestinians to the "party", and finally to a Palestinian Professor of Statistics at Ramalah University, waiting for her son Yousef to arrive, to join her for coffee amongst normal Israelis she queues for hours every week just like she does to get through the checkpoint, just to enjoy a bit of normality with her coffee.



Dai (Enough)

Each story was fascinating insight into a cross-section of Israeli Society, but wonderfully portrayed by this extremely talented woman, whose voice, accent, face and demeanour changed for each character. The tales were moving and funny, happy and sad, but above all mesmerising and fascinating. An intriguing twist right at the end beautifully connected the start of the play with its climax. So often in this country, everything to do with Israel is clouded by how our press decides to report the news, and the way it seems to take sides over each issue, redefining terrorism as militancy to suit how it wants the general public to perceive the news. It was so refreshing just to concentrate on the victims for a change, and how the life of everyday people is affected by terrorism. The audience was drained by the end of the performance, but gave **Bahr** the ovation she so rightly deserved.

Last year I went to see **Lynn Ruth Miller** as she reminisced about growing up with her Bobba. To my delight this year, she was performing three different shows at Club West, which is quite impressive for anyone, let alone a septuagenarian! At The Three Sisters, **An Audience With Lynn Ruth Miller** was more delightful anecdotes of her childhood and adolescence in America. This was equally as charming and witty as last year's show, with more of her eccentric family and friends making an appearance and imparting wisdom in that particular way that only Yidden can do! However, this year I saw a different side to **Lynn Ruth Miller** and this was at The Grosvenor Hilton. Here she had two shows on, **Absolute Comedy Chaos** and **Ballooney Tunes! Comedy Chaos** had her performing stand-up comedy with other invited guests, but **Ballooney Tunes** was my favourite! In this show, she played an 82 year old stripper practising her latest routine for the audience of a retirement home on us. She parodied song

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after song, flirted with the audience much to their delight, flinging certain items of unterheizen of the brassière variety, along with sheitels, incontinence pads and medication depending on the song being performed. They ranged from “A Bulge On The Hips May Be Quite Continental, But Spandex Is A Girl’s Best Friend” and “After You’ve Gone, There’ll Be No Munching – After You’ve Gone, It’s Soup For Luncheon” and one of my favourites, “Tell Me Once, And Tell Me Twice, And Tell Me Once Again, My Hearing’s Almost Gone”! There were songs about cannabis, Viagra and balding to name but a few, and the audience (of varying ages I hasten to add) just lapped them all up. The show was over all too soon, but we all joined in for a rousing chorus of “The Older I Am, The Better I Get”, which in **Lynn Ruth Miller’s** case is all too true! I believe she offered to perform for The Luncheon Club but never heard back from anybody. If she comes back next year, they’d be meshuggeh to miss another opportunity!

Another late night was to be had at The Lot. This is where the Edinburgh

based **Yiddish Song Project** delighted audiences with their own style of Klezmer and Yiddish Songs. Comprising of **Stephanie Brickman** on vocals, **Phil Alexander** on piano and accordion and **Jo Nicholson** on clarinet, this was their Fringe Debut, and was warmly received by the audience. They may not have had the bass and percussion of the more “swing”, like Klezmer bands on offer in The Fringe this year, but their intimate style was perfect for the venue they were in. Starting with “Di Grine Kuzine” they performed the Benny Goodman version as well as the traditional one. This was followed by “Luftloshn”, based on a poem by Ellen Galford about learning Yiddish on a flight over The Atlantic, and the music written by Brickman & Alexander, worked very well with the poem. They had also written a more traditional styled piece, “Di Fidroyz” based on a poem by Avraham Sutzkever, and using the “Aseh Imanu” motif from “Avinu Malkeinu” as a theme throughout. As “Rhozhinkes Mit Mandlen” was announced, there was an audible sigh of gratification from the audience, as there was for most of the well known

pieces, but the wonderful thing about the Yiddish Song Project is the new Yiddish songs being written too. There were a couple of Clarinet and Accordion duets, and as I listened to “Pappirosen” being played, I did rather miss the lyrics being sung, but I put this omission down to the current smoking ban! A Yiddish version of “Making Whoopee” with words by The Barry Sisters was one of the highlights as was the big finish with “Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen”. The performance was totally engaging, with plenty of humour and a lovely rapport with the audience. This may have been their first appearance at The Fringe, but I certainly hope it’s the first of many.

This isn’t all that was on at The Festival Fringe this year, and as usual, it is only the best of what I saw. It was remarkable to see so much on offer, and a good sign that I was disappointed at not being able to see all that I wanted. Long may this selection of such diversity continue. My five Mogen Dovid’s this year has to go to **Dai (Enough)**, as it was simply the very best show I have seen for some time!

# Reviews

**What do Zionists Believe?’**  
by **Colin Shindler**  
Janet Mundy

This book is part of a series called “What do We Believe”, we including Astrologers, Greens, Christians and Jews, amongst many others. I suspect that Dr Shindler’s task was the hardest of any of the authors; the term Zionism means so many different things to so many people that it is difficult to define who is a Zionist, far less what constitutes their beliefs. It is clear though, that Dr Shindler has given a lot of thought to this thorny subject, and he makes an admirable effort to clarify a highly complex subject, while perhaps never quite answering the question.

The first chapter indeed addresses the question “Who is a Zionist?”, suggesting that today’s definition is driven by those who oppose Zionism in the light of the “tortuous” Israel-Palestine conflict. It is seen as synonymous with Israeli occupation and is blamed for the exodus of Arabs from Palestine in 1948. Where once at least a branch of Zionism was identified as Socialist by Jews and non-Jews alike, now those on the non-Jewish Left tend to regard themselves as anti-Zionist, and the Peace Now movement in Israel is not characterised as Zionist at all. As Dr Shindler points out, there have always been many varieties of Zionism, of all political and religious persuasions, often taking ideas from their environment, from the Enlightenment in the 18th century to communism and, more surprisingly, fascism in the 20th. Zionism was not always even identified with Israel – other countries throughout the world were picked out as possible Jewish homelands, or “Zions”. However, probably the strongest influence on modern Zionism were the nationalist movements in Europe in the 19th century – as Jews became outsiders in the countries where they had settled for centuries, the concept of themselves as a nation began to emerge. And, of course, the Holocaust concentrated Jews’ minds – as Dr Shindler drily comments, “The Allies might have won the war, but the Jews certainly lost it”. As Hitler did not differentiate

between religious and assimilated Jews, capitalist or socialist Jews etc, “all Jews automatically became survivors”. With the end of the war and the creation of the State of Israel, a Zionist could be defined as someone who intended to move to Israel imminently or at some stage in the future; today it is more likely to mean a Jew with a “broad identification with Israel” – Jews who are anti-Zionist or non-Zionist are in the minority.

After this introductory chapter, Dr Shindler looks at the history of Zionism and its development in Europe. He describes the effect of the French Revolution and the development of the Jewish Enlightenment, or Haskalah, as wealthy Jews sent their sons away to study abroad to escape the strictures of Eastern European anti-Semitism. These young men returned with a secular as well as a Jewish education, and schooled in the disciplines of rationalism as well as Torah and Talmud. Ahad Ha’am was one of this generation and became “the progenitor of spiritual Zionism”. Chaim Nachman Bialik, the Hebrew national poet, was one of his followers. A further development, in Berlin, was the reintroduction of Hebrew as a living language, seen by Moses Mendelssohn and his followers as superior to Yiddish. Dr Shindler relates the different experiences of Jews in Eastern and Western Europe, both subject to different forms of anti-Semitism. In Eastern Europe, the pogroms in the late 19th century led to many Jews believing that Zionism was a route to rebuilding self-respect and breaking away from their European past towards a future in the Land of Israel. For the more affluent Jews in Western Europe, the rise in nationalism led to increased anti-Semitism and restrictions on their behaviour that they had to confront. Theodore Herzl was a completely assimilated Jew, with little knowledge of his cultural and religious background, whose first solution to these strictures was to recommend mass conversion to Christianity before turning to Zionism and his major work *The Jewish State*.

In the next chapter, Dr Shindler describes what he calls “a plethora of Zionisms”,



from Herzl’s General Zionism, to Marxist Zionism, Religious Zionism, Labour Zionism (including David Ben-Gurion) and Revisionist Zionism, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky, who died in 1940 before he could control the activities of another breakaway group, the Irgun, with their militaristic view of Zionism led, of course, by Menachem Begin. He describes the role that these Zionist movements played in the creation of the State of Israel, and it is to his great credit that he provides a relatively clear route through the factions and fragmentation to answer the question of the chapter “What Did Zionism Teach?”.

Chapter 4 investigates the question “What is Zionism Today?” and the relationship between Zionism’s origins and its current position in the world. Dr Shindler points out that “While there was definitely a love affair between the Jews and the Left which reached its apogee in the fight against fascism, there has been an increasing antagonism between them since 1967”. Jews today, particularly the Peace movement, feel abandoned by the non-Jewish Left, although Dr Shindler illustrates examples from history where Judaism and leftist politics have sat uncomfortably, going back to the French Revolution, “when the Jews were almost incidental”. More recently, the European left’s opposition to anti-Semitism in the 20th century is not, Dr Shindler contends, equivalent to philosemitism, and “the rise of Palestinian nationalism after 1967 fitted much more readily into [the New Left’s] world view”. He also discusses the support of Israel by the Christian Right in the United States and its implications for

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the relationship between Israel and the rest of the world.

The last chapter tries to answer the most difficult conundrum – “What To Next?” . As in previous chapters, Dr Shindler looks to history for possible solutions, particularly the parallel rise in Zionism

and Arab nationalism in the 20th century, “a tragedy” in the author’s eyes. He discusses whether Zionism and the “two-state solution” are mutually exclusive, before concluding that they can co-exist, ending the book on a hopeful note. I have tried to give a taste of Dr Shindler’s erudite book, which makes a largely

successful attempt to simplify a very complex subject. If, as I said at the beginning, he does not completely answer the question “What Do Zionists Believe?”, he demonstrates throughout the book why there cannot be one definitive answer to that question.

## Theatre review

### The End of Everything Ever

Judy Gilbert

This production was part of the Children's Festival, by the Company NIE (England/ Germany/Czech Republic/ Poland/Belgium/Norway). Co-produced with the Junction in Cambridge and sponsored by 'Imaginate'.



The story tells of a six-year-old girl preparing to join the Kindertransport to leave her country, and the love of her close family, for the comparative safety of England. She is constantly with her only companion, a small soft toy puppy called Milos. We observe the gathering panic of her father, the poignant devastation of her mother and the small comic moments that occur even in the midst of tragedy. I found particularly moving, the moment when Agata’s parents were trying to show her the minutiae of the clothes they had packed for every eventuality. The earnestness with which they attached so much importance to such sheer banality made me realise the rising panic my own grandparents must have experienced as they prepared to send their own children, my parents, away with such little understanding of the adult world.

I found it uncanny the way the play had even captured, very subtly, the way in which the English are so reluctant to learn other languages. The comical but arrogant attempt to correct a native German speaker of the way in which those words should be pronounced was breathtaking, and the laughing response of the audience clearly illustrated that they recognised themselves in this stereotypical deficiency.

This was an innovative strategy to bring the realities of the youngest victims of the Nazi regime, to the understanding of schoolchildren. One might ask the question 'was this an attempt to promote theatre to young people, or an exercise in educating them about the Holocaust?'

The answer is both. The Schools had obviously been teaching

holocaust subjects and had done their best to prime the children well, but when asked if they understood what the play covered, one primary six child from Bruntsfield Primary School said she thought Agata had to move to London because of the bombs. Others found both humour and disgust when Agata filled her mouth with sour cake, offered by her well meaning foster aunt and uncle, only to desperately seek a place to get rid of the growing bulge in her mouth, which turned out to be under the carpet; they found, also, humour in Agata eating her label, the only means of her identity, but perhaps they missed the point. Did they realise that she had nothing else to eat. As a gasp of disbelief and revulsion went up when this small child wet herself in public, could they empathise? Could they forgive her? I hope so. They felt the sadness of Agata's return to Berlin only to discover that her entire family had been wiped out, but could they understand the true persecution leading up to these events? Genuine victims felt they could not.

Ten people from the Kindertransport, and members of Glasgow AJR, had been invited by the Traverse Theatre to attend a reception before seeing the play. Questioning them later, revealed that in their opinion much of the reality was overlooked and in no way was the production, in its present form, able to address the seriousness of the catastrophe. One gentleman would like to have seen the restrictions on Jew's lives which led up to Kristallnacht. He was not sure that the lighthearted, almost slapstick humour was appropriate to the seriousness of the subject. Though not wanting to criticise the purpose or even the skill of the artists, and that there was much to commend it, he felt that the production lacked gravitas, that the behaviour of the father was unbelievable and the humour detracted from historical reality.

This was a brave attempt at a very difficult subject for the unusual youth of the audience. It can only be commended for this, and the professionalism with which it was executed.



## Obituaries

### Suzi Gold

1959 – 4th April 2007



Suzi Gold was the youngest of the Been family, daughter of Clarice and Joe, sister to Melanie, Martin and Carol. Sadly Suzi died on 4 April 2007 at the age of 47 after a heroic battle against cancer. Many friends in Edinburgh and far beyond will have fond memories of the Been family and of Suzi who went to school in Edinburgh and was married to Alan in 1988 in the Shul in Salisbury Road. Memories of her wedding are bathed in sunshine and in happiness. Alan and Suzi lived in London where they had two children, Matthew and Hollie. Suzi was very special and her premature death is a great loss to all her family and friends, as movingly described in the tribute below, given by her brother Martin at the funeral service in London.

Judy Sichy

In life people can be divided into takers and givers. Without doubt Suzi was a giver. She would go out of her way to help anyone in need. It was just in her nature to want to help others. Perhaps that's one of the reasons she had so many friends. Not the only reason by any means, as I came to realise that the people Suzi was friendly with were generally very special. Suzi knew people from all walks of life, she valued her friendships and I know that this feeling was reciprocated. She was able to advise on a surprising range of topics – and if she didn't know something she always knew someone who did and they in turn would always be eager to help because of Suzi.

Suzi always saw the best in people. This was not naiveté, more the gift of seeing the positives and understanding the negatives.

But of even more importance to Suzi than her friends was her family. She was lucky to come from a close and caring family and to have had our parents who deeply instilled the values of respect for others, justice and truth and provided a caring and loving environment. Suzi lived by

these values and she instilled them into her own family. She put huge efforts into encouraging and supporting Matthew and Hollie in a wide range of activities, musical, academic, sporting and religious to name just a few. That support and encouragements has paid off and will continue to do so in years to come.

Suzi fought her illness all the way and in an extra-ordinary way. It was humbling for me to realise that despite having been a doctor for nearly 30 years, Suzi was still able to teach me so much. She was prepared to consider all avenues but looked at each critically. She wanted to be involved in decisions about her treatment and showed tremendous strength of character through all the trials she had to face especially over the last two years.

All of us will miss Suzi terribly but we are grateful for her life, the happiness she had and was able to give to others. We will never forget you Suzi and our love for you will not fade.

Martin Been

### Sassoon Judah

3rd October 1932 – 27th May 2007



When I asked a number of people if they would like to attend a shiur - a discussion group to learn Torah - most had good reasons why they were just too busy. Mr Judah's immediate reaction was, 'Rabbi, would you like to come to my house and learn some Torah with me, and with my family?' This arrangement continued as long as we were both in Glasgow. Learning Torah is the indispensable life-blood of Jewish continuity.

The Judah's, I soon realised, were a special people. The Jews, who originated in the Sephardic lands, including India, came with a purity of heart and a sincere approach to Judaism.

Sephardic Jews who came to Western Europe faced a culture shock amongst Ashkenazi communities who had different priorities. So many accepted the 'new' norms on the assumption that one could not swim against the tide. Sas was driven by sincerity and personal

integrity. Although it meant initial difficulties and adjustments at work, Sas put in maximum efforts to ensure that he could keep the Sabbath in all its splendour. Indeed one reason why he accepted a transfer to Edinburgh was because it made Sabbath Observance easier to arrange. The Judahs were swimming successfully against the tide. He taught me insights into rich Sephardic traditions, going back over a thousand years.

In Glasgow, Sas applied his talents - he was an Executive with a shipping Company and a born Manager - to help the Community. As an Executive member of Queens Park Synagogue, holding 'high office', he quietly went about seeing everything was done correctly. He himself attended very regularly, weekdays included. In Edinburgh, at a period when the Shul was 'between Rabbis', I received a phone call from him.

"Rabbi, I am speaking at the Sabbath services. Can you give me some information... He researched his talks in the books available to him. He did what he could to strengthen the Edinburgh Community.

This is not a fitting obituary; we have been apart too many years. Saul will write in more detail, perhaps in the next issue. I feel tears in my eyes. Words are inadequate, totally inadequate. Sas was a good friend and a good Jew. I cannot recall a bad word from him about anyone. I want to tear up these few words, because they cannot express the language of the heart.

Each one of us comes to this world to fulfil a specific task, which no one else can do. Sas was placed in his specific environment to contribute what only he could - and I feel that he did, in his own unique way. But still words fail me to express what I feel. Let it be printed anyway... as a stopgap only.

To Mrs Judah, to Sion and Sarah whom I once knew well, and to Saul and any other family members — my heart goes out to you. Dear 'children', your late father was a man of true Jewish integrity and your Sephardic tradition is one of purity of feeling. Seek it out. Emulate his ways. Now I am writing in tears. Yet I have not succeeded in saying anything.

Rabbi A Copeland

# Dear Editor

I would like to give my sincere thanks to all those kind people who sent messages of condolence and gave me support following the passing of my dear husband, Sas. I greatly appreciate all those whose thoughts were with me.

Sinora Judah

## Ex-pats weekend

I would like to extend my warmest wishes and heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in helping to make the Weekend a tremendous Success, for which I have superb memories. It was so special to see the people who meant so much to me throughout my childhood and to turn back the clock and, literally, pick up where we left off. Oh, the memories!

The terrible weather did not mar the sparkle of the Weekend. To me, the Shul still has a very special feeling about it and will always hold a special place in my heart.

Once again, thank you for your most wonderful hospitality and Brian joins me in sending you all good wishes for a happy and peaceful year.

Esther Levy (née Weisman)

On behalf of the committee of the Scottish Friends of Alyn, I should like to thank all those who have responded so generously to our appeal. Additionally, I should also like to thank everyone who marked the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries and other happy events by making a donation to Alyn.

This year sufficient funds have been raised for:

- An examination bed for the outpatient clinic
- A Fowler hydraulic bed for the in-patient active rehabilitation unit
- Two bathroom stretchers for use in the hydrotherapy unit
- One large tilt stretcher for the older and taller patients

I trust that you will feel that your contribution has been wisely spent to aid the rehabilitation of our children in Alyn Hospital. I hope that the New Year will bring real peace to Israel and happiness to all our friends and donors.

Clarice Osborne (Chairman – Scottish Friends of Alyn)

In the Financial Statement and Report of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation for the year 2006/7, it was stated that I had resigned from the position of Junior Warden due to personal reasons. This was not the case; I resigned on a matter of principle concerning the authority of the Chief Rabbi.

Yours sincerely, Bill Simpson

# The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Kenneth Collins (Acting Chair)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland, from Aberdeen to Glasgow, and all the scattered rural Jews in the Highlands and Islands. It is supported by all of Scotland's synagogues, the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, the Board of Deputies, and several communal trust funds. The Council aims to speak to government, churches, unions, the media, etc with a single voice on behalf of the whole community and has democratic structures in place to ensure wide consultation.

Obviously the most significant recent political event is the replacement of Jack McConnell's Labour administration by an SNP team led by Alex Salmond. Fortunately our strategy for the past eight years has been to recognise that sometimes the Opposition can be more help than the Government – after all, it's their job to ask awkward questions! So we remain on excellent terms with the leadership of all the political parties, and now find some of our best friends holding the reigns of power – and the dispossessed former Ministers looking for awkward questions to ask! In the two months since the election, our Director, Ephraim Borowski, and Public Affairs Officer, Leah Granat, have already had several informal meetings with new Ministers and are currently arranging a visit by the First Minister to the Community.

That aside, perhaps SCoJeC's most significant recent activity has been opposing proposals to exempt works of art loaned from abroad from court action while in the UK, even if they can be shown to have been stolen by the Nazis. As a result of our representations, the Scottish Parliament unanimously took the view that this would be wrong, and we were recently invited to brief the new Minister who is pursuing the matter with UK Ministers.

SCoJeC tries to respond to all consultations that would impact on the Jewish community. In the last year these have included charity law, the next census, water rates for shuls, adoption and fostering, and race equality. Before we respond we consult all interested parties in the communities, as well as our own Council, which represents all the formal communities and includes co-optees with a wide range of communal and professional experience.

In addition to the Scottish Parliament and Executive, SCoJeC monitors various organisations on a weekly, or, in some cases, even daily, basis. One of these is the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) which has been 'tidying up' the Scottish Charity Register. To this end OSCR issued a series of lists of charities that it intended to remove from the Register after the charities failed to respond to all attempts to contact them. SCoJeC identified a number of communal charities on these lists, and as a result, at least ten active communal charities have been able to retain charitable status.

SCoJeC also continues to act as an umbrella body to facilitate Disclosure applications for communal organisations. A separate Disclosure is required by law for every post in which a person works with children or vulnerable adults, but SCoJeC has obtained approval for a system in which the Community counts as a single body so that a single Disclosure enables an individual to work with any communal organisation under our umbrella. The law is currently being updated; the Protection of Vulnerable

Groups Act was passed earlier this year, and SCoJeC is a member the Scottish Executive's consultative group which advises on the development of associated secondary legislation.

SCoJeC also provides support to the smaller Scottish Jewish communities, and has recently received funding from the Scottish Executive and Clore Duffield Foundation to expand that work. This will enable SCoJeC to find out more about Jewish people living in rural and often isolated areas of the country, and if possible to help them participate in communal activities, and to arrange events in rural areas. We also publish a newsletter, Four Corners, to enable the small communities to share information and to find out what's happening elsewhere in the Scottish Jewish community.

SCoJeC also works closely with other communities through the Inter-Faith Council and Bemis (the ethnic minority umbrella organisation). For example, we produce a weekly bulletin of information of interest to ethnic minority communities, and briefing papers on topical political issues such as the election and the new Parliament and Executive. These are produced in partnership with Bemis and are supported by the Scottish Executive, and are widely consulted: we have been told by the Board of Deputies and the CST that MEMO is the first thing they look at in the morning, and by civil servants that they find information more effectively through MEMO than through their internal networks.

To read any of SCoJeC's publications, and to keep up-to-date with SCoJeC activities see [www.j-scot.org.uk](http://www.j-scot.org.uk). To contact the Council, e-mail [j-scot@j-scot.org.uk](mailto:j-scot@j-scot.org.uk), or phone Leah Granat on 0141 638 6411 or 07887 488 100.

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# Announcements

## Congratulations



**David Brannan** on receiving a first class degree in politics, from Manchester University.



**David Goldberg** on birth of **Maya**, his sixth great grand child.



**Marcia & Lennie Berger** on birth of their second granddaughter, **Hannah Lucy**.



**Sylvia and Gerald Glass** on becoming Great Grandparents for the first time to baby **Madyson**.

# Forthcoming Events

## October

5 Friday

Simchat Torah

10 Wednesday

WIZO

Ladies lunch

15 Monday

7.30pm Lodge Solomon

21 Sunday

EJLS

8.00pm Rabbi Professor Marc Saperstein – Literature in Jewish Sermons

28 Sunday

CCC

7.30pm Community Centre Quiz evening

21 Wednesday

WIZO

Ladies Lunch

25 Sunday

EJLS

8.00pm Tamar Yellin – The Genizah at the house of Shefer

## December

2 Sunday

EJLS

8.00pm

Professor Tim Lim – Literary Artistry of the Book of Ruth

5 Wednesday

1st day Chanukah

8 Saturday

CCC

7.30pm Chanukah Social/ Dinner

9 Sunday

3.00pm Cheder Chanukah party

12 Wednesday

WIZO

Ladies Lunch

17 Monday

7.00pm Lodge Solomon

Senior Maccabi meet on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact James Hyams and Maurice Griffin.

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

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

## November

4 Sunday

EJLS

8.00pm Professor Sam Cohn – The Black Death and the burning of the Jews

10 Saturday

WIZO

Theatre & Supper

11 Sunday

3.30pm Armistice Day service

19 Monday

7.00pm Lodge Solomon

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