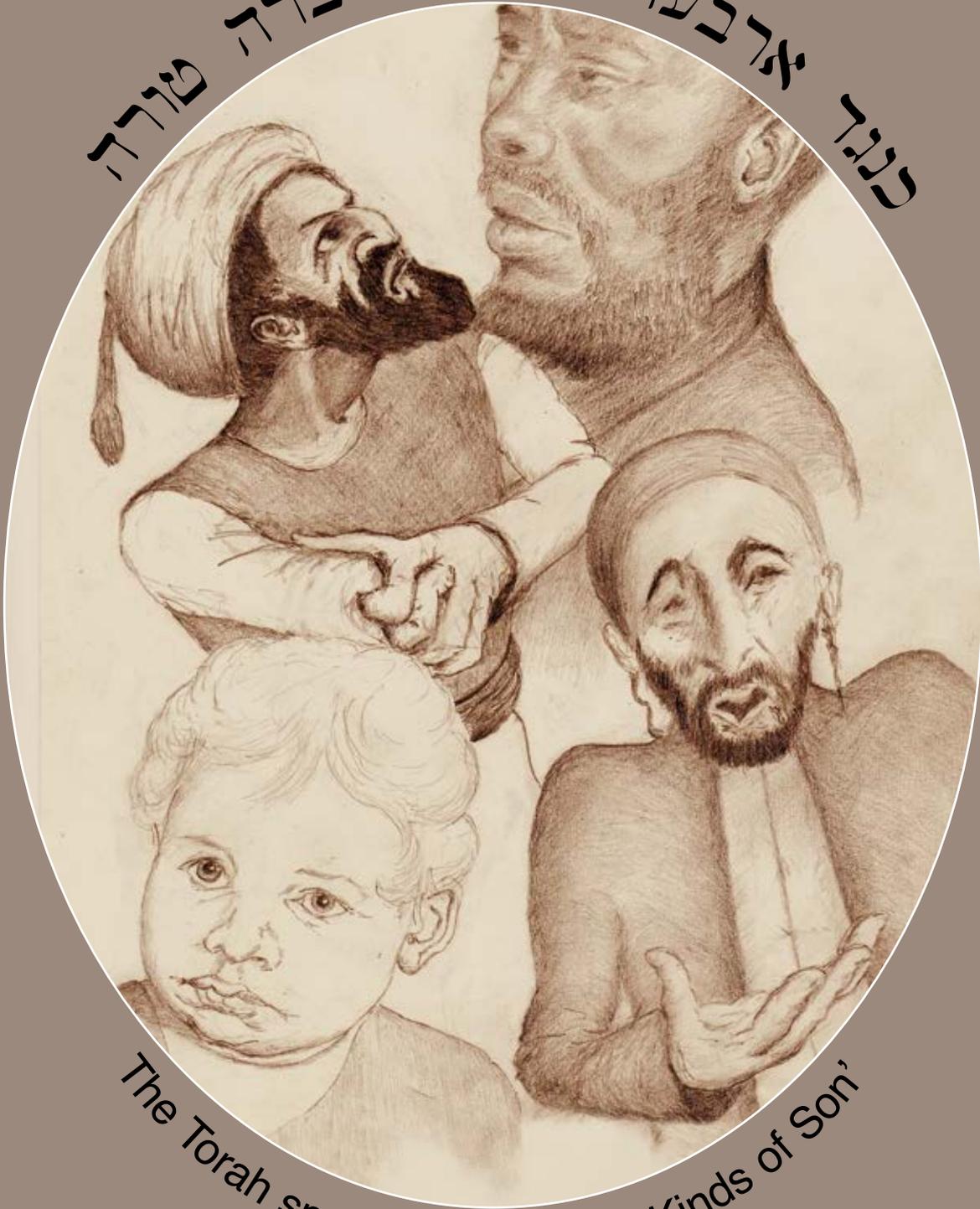


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כנגד ארבעה בנתיים דברה שורה



The Torah speaks about 'Four Kinds of Son'

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Edinburgh Star

Synagogue Chambers, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB

Cover Picture

The Four Sons
by Anthony Gilbert

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From the Editor

The burning issue of the moment is 'What will become of the small communities such as our own with their dwindling Shul membership?' It is true that there are still many people who are Jewish and who do not necessarily belong to or attend a Shul regularly if at all. So why should the actual buildings matter? A Jew is a Jew is a Jew, Shul or no Shul.

It clearly does matter. The Shul is a place of worship, education and social contact; it is a place of identity. Come along to any Yom Kippur service and you will wonder where all those people have come from. Jewish identity runs deeply through our veins no matter how strictly or loosely we interpret our own brand. We need a centre of focus and we need to recognise that united we stand and divided we fall.

How have other communities addressed this ever growing problem?

Liverpool, among others, where there has been a considerable drop in the Jewish population of Shul membership, has had to face this very issue, and finally decided to adapt one existing building to accommodate several communities.

This is not an innovative idea but one that is momentous in that it must have taken a great deal of thought, discussion about logistics, viability and courage.

Does the amalgamation of Jewish communities with different points of focus, risk compromising the integrity of traditional values or could it serve to increase numbers, with the consequential guarantee of continuity, without which there might possibly be no community, traditional or otherwise? What will our way forward be? It is a question that we may soon have to seriously consider.

The authorities have been increasing their interest in religious

issues but from a secular standpoint. 'The Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community' published an article on 31st March 2000 asking 'How is the Jewish community regarded by the targets of representation — as a religious or an ethnic group?' Ten years on, and with the approach of the elections should this same question be asked?

Despite the introspective beginnings of this editorial it must be said that the shrinking numbers are not reflected in this edition. Nor is the enthusiasm of our compact community dampened. No one should feel that their contribution would not be appreciated. Sarah Lurie initiated the encouraging poster seen on the back cover with some very inviting ideas to interest everyone. The Cheder has a steady number of pupils, enthusiastic teachers, and past pupils willing to lend a hand as well as writing the occasional report; see 'Edinburgh's Jewish Youth go travelling'.

We bring the exotic, 'The bearded ones' by Elaine Samuel; part iii of the exciting memoirs of Halina Moss; a pastiche by Micheline Brannan to reflect the front cover and the comfortable regular features reporting community activities by Iain Shein. 'Around and About' has been extended to include a few reports 'Around the Fringes'.

The Board would like to thank our readers for their continuing support and wish you all a happy and kosher Pesach.

Judy Gilbert

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Pesach Message

Rabbi David Rose

On Seder night we are commanded to mention, and optimally eat, three different things: Pesach, Matza and Maror.

Each refers to a different part of the Pesach story. Pesach, the Passover sacrifice, reminds us that G-d spared us when He punished the Egyptians. Matza reminds us that we had faith in G-d and left Egypt with hardly any provisions, and Maror, the bitter herb, recalls the suffering of slavery. We are required to eat all three at the Seder, reminding us of every aspect of the story. We are not allowed to engage in historical amnesia, emphasising our

role over G-d's or vice versa. Neither are we allowed to forget or see through rose tinted glasses the experience of slavery, something engaged in later on by the generation of the Exodus itself. Rather we must confront our past as it is, in order to move into the future.

Yet Hillel goes further. He requires that we not only consume each of these dishes but that we eat them together. We must take G-d's care for us, our faith in Him and the bitter memories of persecution, and join them in one sandwich. For Hillel, it is not enough to simply recall history accurately. We must also understand historical events as a whole with meaning behind them. All these factors came

together to create the experience which was the Exodus and we must ourselves experience them together. Persecution and redemption, faith and providence, are two sides of the same coin that makes up the rich tapestry of life. Hillel teaches us a way of looking at the world that enables us to integrate joy and sadness, good times and bad, into a coherent whole and make sense of them. This ability has always been one of the great strengths of the Jewish people and an important lesson to reflect on this Pesach.

A Happy and Kosher Pesach
Rabbi David Rose

Society Reports

Antony Lerman – The End of Anti-Semitism?

Sunday 8th November

Maurice Naftalin

The 5770 season of the Lit was opened by Tony Lerman with a highly topical talk entitled "The End of Anti-Semitism?". The talk examined what is understood by "anti-Semitism" today, and how much meaning the term now retains, with the goal of a better understanding of how we can measure anti-Semitism and what to do about it.

"New" anti-Semitism is defined by attitudes to Israel. Currently the most widely used characterisation of anti-Semitism is the "Working Definition" produced in 2005 by the EUMC (the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia). This includes under manifestations of anti-Semitism:

denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g. by claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour:

applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;

drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis;

holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.



On the first three of these points, Tony proposed that we can regard such arguments as wrong, and even offensive to Israel and its sympathisers, without accepting that they concern attitudes to Jews. The last point, on the other hand, is made difficult to oppose by the fact that it is tacitly agreed to by both Jewish Diaspora leadership and Israeli politicians whenever they emphasise the identity of interest between Diaspora communities and the Israeli state.

As a practical example of the confusion that the new anti-Semitism causes, Tony discussed attitudes towards Michal Kaminski, who is chairman of the European Conservative and Reformists group and whose political past includes membership of a neo-Nazi party. In August 2009, Stephen Pollard, editor of the Jewish Chronicle, wrote that "Far from being an anti-Semite, Mr Kaminski is about as pro-Israeli an MEP as exists." For him (and for many in Britain's Jewish leadership), Kaminski's support

for Israel's policies outweigh his opposition to an apology for the Jedwabne atrocity, in which 300 Jewish people were burnt alive.

Tony's conclusion was that the idea of "new" anti-Semitism tends to delegitimise criticism of Israel's policies, by attaching the "worst accusation" to it. The result is to demonise the critics and to poison debate both within and outside the Jewish community.

Eyal Poleg – The Maccabees from Heroes to Martyrs and Back Again.

Sunday 13th December

Rabbi David Rose



The Maccabees have always been controversial figures in Jewish history and so it was with interest that we gathered on Hanukah to hear Dr Poleg's talk. In an erudite sweep he explained to us the differing perceptions and attitudes to the Maccabees from pre-Talmudic times through the Middle Ages until the rise of Modern Zionism. We saw how the heroic status of the Maccabees, disliked by the Rabbis, was transformed in the Middle Ages to an emphasis on the martyrdom of Hannah and her sons, and how this played out in both Synagogue and Church. Especially fascinating was how both Christians and Jews, in ways both similar and different, related the story to the Crusader massacres of Jews in their own time. Well worth coming out on a cold Hanukah's evening.

Sir Jeremy Beecham The Forgotten Issue – The Arab Minority in Israel

Sunday 10th January 2010

Michael Adler



Jeremy Beecham has had a very distinguished career in local government, having been Leader of Newcastle City Council from 1977-1994, Chairman of the 'Association of Metropolitan Authorities' from 1991-1997 and of the Local Government Association from 1997-2006, and Chairman of the Labour Party in 2005-2006. However, in addressing the opening meeting of the second half of the Literary Society's programme on 10th January, he asked to be introduced as Vice Chairman of the New Israel Fund (NIF), an organisation with branches in several countries, which seeks to promote social justice and equality for all Israelis and believes that Israel must provide equal treatment of its Arab minority if it is to live up to the ideals of its founders and make peace with its neighbours,

In line with the aims of the New Israel Fund, Jeremy Beecham chose to talk about the Arab Minority in Israel, whose plight he described as a 'forgotten issue'. Supporters and critics of Israel are only too aware of, and have no difficulty in taking sides on, the situation in the West Bank and in Gaza. However, the position of Israeli Arabs – or Palestinian Israelis as some prefer

to be called – is much less frequently the focus of attention and, as a result, people know much less about it. Many visitors to Israel are not really aware of Israeli Arabs because, with a few exceptions, such as Jaffa and East Jerusalem, they live in towns and villages that are, unofficially at least, 'off limits' and do not encounter them.

Jeremy Beecham explained that Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948 granted 'complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex' and that, although Israel's 1.37 million Arab minority pay taxes, speak Hebrew and are represented in the Knesset, they experience discrimination in many areas of life, routine violations of their legal rights and a very unequal allocation of resources. Thus, for example, discrimination in employment is endemic, there are enormous differences in educational spending per head, although Israeli Arabs constitute 20 per cent of the population, they only own 3 per cent of the land and are rarely given permits to expand their housing, and only receive 4 per cent of the development budget. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that many Israeli Arabs see their situation as a cruel paradox: compared to Palestinians outside Israel, they are much better off but, compared to Jewish citizens in Israel, they are much worse off. Where does this leave them? Although most Jewish Israelis regard Israeli Arabs with suspicion, seeing them as 'fifth columnists' who have little allegiance to the State of Israel, the overwhelming majority wish to remain Israeli citizens.

As Jeremy Beecham admitted at the end of his sobering talk, it is often easier to diagnose a problem than to find a solution to it. He had become aware of the problem through taking part in numerous meetings with local government representatives in Israel. Unfortunately, the Israeli political system does not seem to have given the Israeli Arabs and their representatives in the Knesset much political leverage. In these circumstances, he placed his hopes in small-scale initiatives which aim to bring members of the Jewish and Arab communities together and increase mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Since the problem can only be solved within Israel, the role of Jews in the Diaspora is a very limited one and, in Jeremy Beecham's view, consists in supporting organisations like the New Israel Fund and initiatives like Windows for Peace, which will be sending another delegation to Edinburgh in the summer.

Jeremy Beecham's talk provoked a really good discussion and it was clear that most of the audience agreed with his analysis. Welcome though this was, it does raise the possibility that he was preaching to the converted. It is reported that some people chose not to come to the meeting on the grounds that Jews should not criticise the State of Israel and that they are somehow being 'disloyal' if they do so. This is a shame because Jeremy Beecham is a really good friend of Israel, and they are the ones who would have benefited most from listening to it.

Dr David Kaufman -‘Yidn, shreibt un fershreibt’ - A History of the History of the Holocaust

Sunday 24th January 2010

Stephanie Brickman



The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society was fortunate enough to be able to secure a talk by Dr David Kaufman, a historian from the University of Stirling on a day that was the nearest possible date to Holocaust Memorial day and was entitled “Yidn, shreibt un fershreibt: A History of the History of the Holocaust”.

Dr Kaufman went through a variety of Holocaust theories touching on fifteen different topics and presented the current state of debate on historical writing about the Holocaust. The event was attended by some 40 people.

The numerous questions that followed were indicative of the interest of the subject and the clear way in which this unusual slant on Holocaust issues was delivered.

Bill Shackman – Kabblistic Aspects of the Pesach Story

Sunday 7th February

Rabbi David Rose

Kabbalah is one of the most publically well known aspects of Judaism while being one of the least understood. Bill's talk was thus eagerly anticipated, and we were not to be disappointed. Living up to the title but providing far more, Bill used a passage on the Exodus and the Seder in order to explain to us the inner workings and much of the history of Kabbalah. In a brilliant exposé, complete with helpful diagrams, he took us through the development of Kabbalah and its methodology, using the passages he had chosen as illustrations of his points. Without oversimplifying a complex topic, he managed to elucidate difficult concepts in layman's language, leaving us all wiser and more fascinated than when we began. We look forward to the next instalment.

Claudia Nocentini – Natalia Ginzburg and the Construction of Identity’

Sunday 21st February 2010

Micheline Brannan



It was a rare treat for the Lit to have a classic ‘Lit’ talk in which an expert scholar discusses a famous writer, based on huge knowledge and research of the writer's life and work. This was such an occasion.

Claudia Nocentini is Senior Lecturer in Italian at the University of Edinburgh. Her research area is twentieth-century literature, with a particular focus on Italo Calvino and his role in post-war Italian culture. She has published also on Natalia Ginzburg, Gianni Celati, and Laura Pariani. She is currently writing 'Home-Made: Natalia Ginzburg and the Paradox of Simplicity'.

Natalia Ginzburg was a novelist, playwright, translator, editor, essayist, journalist and pamphleteer. Her books are well-known in Italy but her historical and literary significance is only now being recognised. Ginzburg was born in 1916 and died in 1991. Her family name was Levi. Her Jewish father was a prestigious scientist and her mother was Catholic. She was brought up and moved in a privileged milieu of scientists, scholars and literary figures. She married twice; had five children (one of whom has become Italy's most famous living historian, Carlo Ginzburg). She worked since the 1940s for the publishing house, Einaudi, as an editor. She lived in different regions in Italy; was persecuted as a Jew during the war and became a Catholic after it; took up, and later renounced, membership of the Communist party and became a Member of Parliament. Her first husband, Leone Ginzburg, perished at the hands of the Nazis, encouraging her in his last letter to keep writing. She did so, and produced numerous novels, plays, articles and pamphlets. Her more autobiographical work has a Jewish background and much of the discussion at the meeting focused on trying to tease out how much being Jewish meant to this important 20th century figure. For the audience, the abiding memory of the evening is of Claudia's inspired translation of one of Ginzburg's rare poems, reproduced by kind permission in this edition of the Star.

The meeting was chaired by Elaine Samuel and the vote of thanks was given by Micheline Brannan

We cannot know

We cannot know. No one has said.

Perhaps there's nothing there other than a worn out bedspring,
Four chairs with tattered straw seats and an old slipper,
Gnawed at by mice. There's a chance that God is a mouse
And that he runs away to hide as soon as we get there.
And there's the chance that he's the old, worn-out and nibbled
Slipper. We cannot know.

Perhaps God is afraid of us and will run away, and for ages
We'll need to call him and call him with the sweetest of names
To make him come back. From a distant spot
In the room he will stare at us, motionless.

Perhaps God is small like a speck of dust,
And we'll be able to see him only through the microscope,
Tiny blue shadow on the slide, minute
Black wing lost in the night of the microscope,
With us standing up, speechless, in suspense, looking.
Perhaps God is as big as the sea and he froths and thunders.
Perhaps God is cold like winter wind,
Perhaps he howls and rumbles like a deafening noise,
And we'll have to put our hand to cover our ears,
With our blood running cold, trembling, crouching on the ground,
We cannot know what God is like. And of all the things
We would like to know, it is the only really essential one.

Perhaps God is boring, boring like the rain,
 And that heaven of his is deadly boredom.
 Perhaps God has dark glasses, a silk scarf
 and two Pomeranian dogs on a lead. Perhaps he wears spats,
 sits in a corner and does not utter a word.
 Perhaps she has dyed hair, a transistor radio,
 And tans her legs on the roof of a skyscraper.
 We cannot know. No one knows anything.
 Perhaps just as we get there, he sends to the shop
 for bread and salami and a bottle of wine.

Perhaps God is boring, boring like the rain
 And that heaven of his is the same old music,
 A fluttering of veils, of feathers, of clouds,
 A smell of cut lilies, a boredom of death,
 And a half word here and there to pass the time.
 Perhaps God is two, a married couple
 Overcome by sleep at the table of a pub.

Perhaps God has no time. He'll tell us to go away
 And come back later. We'll take a walk;
 We'll sit on a bench counting trains passing by,
 Ants, birds, ships. From that high window,
 God will appear looking at the night and the street.

We cannot know. No one knows.
 There's also a chance that God is hungry and we have to feed him,
 Perhaps he is dying of hunger, is cold and shivers with fever,
 Under a dirty blanket, riddled with bugs,
 And we'll have to run looking for milk and firewood,
 And ring up a doctor, and who knows if quickly
 We will find a phone, and a token and the number,
 In the crowded night, who knows if we'll have enough money.

(1965, 1975, 1983, 1997 & Natalia Ginzburg, *Non possiamo saperlo*, Einaudi 2001. Translation by Claudia Nocentini)

Interview with Merav Gardi Kisilevitz

Janet Mundy



Anyone with a young child or grandchild in Edinburgh Cheder will be aware of the many talents of Merav Gardi Kisilevitz, who teaches the younger children, often surrounded by coloured card, glitter, various forms of Hebrew lettering or rolling pins and flour in the shul kitchen!

I have been working beside her in the cheder for the past couple of years, and have come to like and admire her enormously, but I realised that I knew very little about her background. Interviewing her for The Star has been an excellent opportunity to put that to rights, and to introduce the whole community to Merav and her family.

Merav was born and raised in a house built by her parents in Ein Kerem, translated as “Spring of the Vineyard”, a small village near Jerusalem surrounded by olive and almond trees. Although it is now regarded as a neighbourhood of Jerusalem, it has retained its own character. It is revered by Christians as the birthplace of John the Baptist, and therefore full of churches and monasteries. However, it is better known to Jews as the location of the Hadassah Medical Centre and its Marc Chagall stained glass windows. Ein Kerem is in an area of great natural beauty, which has attracted many artists to live there over the years, and is full of art galleries, cafés and restaurants. Merav describes it as having a “good mix” of people from different backgrounds, which also includes many Jewish refugees from Yemen and Morocco who settled there in the 1950s.

Until recently Merav thought she was a 9th generation Israeli. However, when the 1922 census was published recently, she discovered that her paternal grandfather was born in Russia and not Israel. Her mother's family moved from Eastern Europe to Minnesota at the turn of the 20th Century (“where the train ticket took them”). Merav's mother's uncle was a famous mohel in Minnesota, where his most famous “client” was Robert Allen Zimmerman, known to us as Bob Dylan!

Merav herself is one of five sisters, known to their father as hamesh brachot, or five blessings! Two of her sisters live in the United States, and the other two are still in Israel.

Merav studied biology at university and then worked in a laboratory. However, her true vocation was revealed to her when she started tutoring children from underprivileged areas in Jerusalem for a charity for children from difficult homes. After three years, she realised that teaching was what she loved, giving very young children “the push” that they needed, especially those who received no stimulation at home. She worked with the same children for several years and was able to make a real difference to their lives.

She went on to do a teaching diploma in special education. In Israel, this means working with children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, who are usually of normal intelligence. She worked with children within the regular school system, teaching in Herzlia in learning support, but was also able to work with children without any disability but who came from disadvantaged backgrounds.

After a couple of years, Merav realised she would like to set up an after school club, so that once again she could work with the same children for several years, and give them “the push”. She would need money to set this up, so returned to studying and became a computer programmer.

She met her husband Einan while in the army. Einan is a high energy physicist, specialising in theoretical particle physics. His work takes him all over the world, albeit always working with the same small scientific community. His grandparents came from Germany, and he has German and Israeli citizenship, as do the couple's three children.

Marrying Einan has meant a great deal of travel, as he has taken up a series of post-doctoral contracts. Up till now, this has taken them to Paris for two years, then Geneva for another two years, followed by 15 months in Regensburg, Germany and four years in Cambridge, before coming to Edinburgh in August 2007. Each of their children was born in a different place. Son Omri, now nine, was born in Geneva and was three when his sister Lotem was born in Cambridge, who was three when their little sister Shlomit was born in Edinburgh. As Merav puts it, they always move then have a baby. She says, "I have

been gathering a lot of information for a book on the playgrounds of Europe!" She finds it amazing how different each place is, the contrasts between Cambridge and Edinburgh being as great as those between Paris and a little town in Bavaria. Merav's impressive command of English makes it easy to forget that it is not her first language. However, her facility with different tongues is not unlimited. She says that she used to speak Arabic, but lost the ability once she learned French in Paris.

Wherever Merav goes, she always looks up the Jewish community in advance in order to make contact as soon as possible and to build a base, and I'm sure she means it when she says that Edinburgh has been the most welcoming – "everyone was so happy to see us. The Jewish community is an incredibly important part of our lives and our decision to try to stay here. We never wanted to leave Israel and wanted our children to grow up there,

and it is important for them to have an alternative to their family, which Edinburgh provides." She is keen to emphasise that the non-Jewish community has been friendly and welcoming as well. Her two older children go to South Morningside Primary School and have made a lot of friends. The family have a good support group and get a lot of happiness from their life in Scotland.

I was surprised to learn from Merav that our Shul is large compared to that of her childhood – a small Yemenite synagogue comprising one room for the men, with the women outside. Her involvement with our tight-knit community has been as enriching for us as she says it has been for her family. She has been able to fulfil her dream of building long-term relationships with the children she teaches, and they clearly flourish under her benevolent guidance. Like her, we hope that the Gardi family are able to stay in Edinburgh for a long time.

Memoirs of Halina Moss Part iii

In this extract from Halina Moss's memoirs, edited by her daughter Micheline Brannan, she covers life in the internment camp on the Upper Dvina, and Halina's journey with her mother to Bashkiria, where they spent the remainder of WW2.

Autumn of 1940 came, first golden-red, then brown, then grey and sodden. Berries and mushrooms were no longer available. Mother managed to feed both of us on soups made with the vegetables she earned with sewing, and with occasional food parcels.

As soon as we settled in Zharovaya all the deportees began to write frantic begging letters to their lucky relatives, who, having opted for Soviet citizenship, remained in the comparative normality of Eastern Poland (ie. Western Ukraine and Byelorussia). Mother's sisters, Szprinza (Saba) and Feigele (Fela) and her brother, Moshe, had fled Warsaw, leaving their parents behind, but by the time they reached Grodno they decided that the life of refugees was not for them. They found partners. They settled down. Times were such that people wanted the security of togetherness. And so all three were busy weaving their own cosy nests in the eye of the storm. They had no idea how precarious and short the peace was going to be and all in due course perished.

Sprinza sent us parcels containing rice, semolina, pearl barley, a bottle of oil, a piece of soap—all treasures of value. Some in the settlement received more frequent contributions. Others—

nothing at all. The most frequent recipients were the strictly observant Jews, who received parcels from fellow orthodox Jews, still living in Byelorussia, trying to earn merit, and help others earn merit, by assisting them to maintain kashrut.

The family of the shokhet Tsiviak had made several preparations in the autumn. Mr Tsiviak found a few large stones and secreted them under his bed.

"Why are you doing that?" "So that I shall be able to kosher our pots and pans when Passover comes."

"Are you crazy? We'll be away from here long before that"

"That's what you think. But when Passover is here and so are you, and the snow is still deep underfoot, where will you find koshering stones then?"

Indeed, in 1941, Tsiviak and his stoical, self-denying family, managed to celebrate a kosher Passover, aided by the stones he had stashed away before the snow fell, and by parcels. Peas were normally forbidden to Ashkenazi Jews at Passover, but the Eastern European Rabbis had granted some dispensations on grounds of necessity and several pious Jewish families received parcels with various Passover products, including dried peas.

But peas require thorough and attentive examination before being consumed. Any peas that have little holes in them have to be discarded. Otherwise, one may inadvertently eat a non-kosher creature hiding inside. Mr Tsviak made his examination and a small handful of doubtful peas was thrown on the snow outside the barracks.

Now our barracks consisted of two halves with a porch between, separating the Jewish detainees from the Christians. Normally, the two halves had little communication, but lived in benign tolerance of each other. The handful of peas on the snow seemed to arouse a feeling of painful resentment: "OK, you cannot eat this. But you know, we are starving the same as you. Could you not have given the discarded peas to us instead of throwing them away in this nonchalant manner into the snow?" The Jews were ashamed and contrite.

The summer of 1941 brought new political developments. Despite the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact, despite "Stalin's Glorious Peace Policy", the Germans crossed the border of Russia and attacked it. The invasion proceeded at an enormous pace. My mother's concern was that her two sisters and her brother were engulfed by the invasion in Grodno. Everyone feared that the avalanche might reach as far as us. The radio changed its tone very rapidly. England and France, from being "Western Warmongers" became "our allies" who were resisting the Nazis valiantly.

The commandant and his henchmen eased up their attitude to the detainees. The new freedom started with permission to travel beyond the 5 km radius and to be visited by outsiders (which allowed my mother to increase the number of her dress-making customers).

In due course we were allowed the option to leave the settlement. We needed tickets, permits to travel, a minimum of money. The commandant said that he would apply for the documents on our behalf and provide what was needed. But, where to go? "Where it would be warm and plenty of food; and where the Germans, in their rapid advance, would not reach too soon", The choice was limited, as the Germans were occupying more and more of Ukraine, Belarus, the Crimea and other desirable areas. There remained Central Asia: Alma Ata, Bukhara, Tashkent, Semipalatinsk, etc.

The commandant's office had an enormous map of the huge Soviet Union on its wall. There, invited by the commandant family by family, the deportees randomly selected a destination. The commandant noted it down and applied on their behalf. They then had to wait for permits and other documents and for transport by horse and cart to the big river, where they would embark on a river boat on the first stage of their journey. My mother and I knew where we were going. My aunt Rosa had been in constant touch with us and we knew that she and her boys were evacuated to a place called Mikhailovka in the district of Sterlitamak, in the region of Ufa, which was in the Autonomous Republic of Bashkiriya. We looked it up on the commandant's map. Its situation was in the extreme east of the European part of the USSR, near the southern edge of the Ural Mountains.

When our papers arrived and our turn came to leave Zharovaya it was well into October 1941. We reached the river bank of the mighty Northern Dvina and, after several hours, the steamer arrived. We boarded it to sail down to Kotlas and the railway station. Mother had some money and we felt quite civilised when she bought some greasy pasta in the "buffet" for our lunch. Nothing could have tasted better than this generous repast.

However when we reached Kirov, where we had to change trains, we began to experience the real privations and vicissitudes of wartime travelling in the USSR. At every change passengers had to validate their tickets and this meant joining one of the queues that trailed like loose plaits from various windows. Mother settled me on a bench and surrounded me with all our luggage to wait for her. I kept surveying our bundles, boxes and suitcases with anxious eyes, worrying that I might fall asleep and some of it, or even all, would be stolen. I became aware of a woman who had joined me on my bench. She started interrogating me as to my name and our destination. I answered with reluctance and very briefly. Finally, she made a half-statement, half-question: "You are Jewish, aren't you?" I admitted that I was. "I thought so" said she, "I can always tell. Well, so am I. I am travelling alone, so I'll be able to help you." The queues were breaking up when mother returned with a piece of bread and a bottle of milk. "At least, I managed to get something to eat. Here take the bread and take a swig of milk. I could not get to the head of the queue. I'll have to start again tomorrow." She glanced at the woman who was sitting somewhat apart from me. She moved further away, so as to give room for my mother to sit down.

We all began to settle down to spend the night on the bench, among many others waiting for trains, some of whom boarded during the night in a chaos of arrivals and departures. My mother made a nest for me on the luggage and I fell asleep listening to the murmured conversation between my mother and the woman, whose name turned out to be Raya. One piece of advice she gave was to borrow a baby, so as to get priority in the queue.

In the morning, mother took advantage of Raya's advice and negotiated the loan of a toddler to carry in her arms as she queued up again to have our tickets validated. "A woman with a child" went a murmur in the crowd near the ticket office and my mother eventually pushed her way to the window. Shortly, she was seen emerging from the mellée which was the queue, evidently having succeeded in her goal. The toddler was returned to its watchful mother. My own mum and Raya then discussed the timetable of the train to Chelyabinsk, where we were to change trains again for Ufa. Raya was also going to Chelyabinsk, as it happened. She had little luggage, so she would help mother when our train came.

When the train arrived the panic started. Mother grabbed as many pieces of luggage as she could. Raya took hold of two of the bulkiest items, the ones where mother had packed the bed linen and such household equipment as we still possessed. Mother pushed me on towards the high step of the entrance to a carriage, while Raya shouted "I'll be in the next one". All three of us worked our way as fast as we could manage. Mother helped me onto the step and started propelling me up and into

the interior, at the same time passing our bags to willing and not so willing hands. She herself hung on to the door handles. Gradually, all the hangers-on managed to penetrate the carriage. There was no question of seats. They were all taken, as it happens, by young medical graduates, men and women, who said they were going to join their army units at the front. Again, mother arranged our luggage so that we could sit on it. She settled me down and said that she would go up the train to locate Raya. I was very nervous of letting her go despite her assurances that she would be back soon. Her assurance turned out to be true. She could not move along the carriages because of the extreme crowding. "Never mind, we'll find her when we get off at Chelyabinsk. "

On this journey, at one point we were thrown off the train by a zealous conductress, because mother could not find our documents, but we were rescued from being left stranded somewhere in the snowy Russian wilderness by helpful passengers who hauled us back onto the train at the last moment. After this episode I became very ill and passed much of the journey in a delirium, being nursed by my mother on a bit of seat that compassionate fellow passengers had cleared for me. The medical graduates wanted to help but had no paediatric experience.

We travelled several days and, at long last, arrived at the station where we had to change trains. The station was Chelyabinsk. To get there we had to cross the Urals, since this town is in Asia proper, hence in Siberia, and now we got off the train with all our bundles.

I was still very weak after my illness. Mother left me with the luggage and went to look for Raya, who had a large proportion of our possessions. Between Kirov and Chelyabinsk mother had tried several times and failed to contact her.

Mother ran along the length of the train, calling the woman's name. She searched the station, which was not very big. There was no sign or trace of our erstwhile helper. Mother had to admit to herself that there was no chance of retrieving our possessions, which consisted mostly of our bed linen. For the next four years we slept on undressed pillows and naked quilts.

Changing trains at Chelyabinsk turned out to be simple and soon we had boarded. Mother arranged me a 'bed' of bundles and a shawl at the end of our carriage and went to sit inside.

I became aware of a thin, tall, blond man standing at the open carriage window, smoking. With his face away from me he spoke. He asked me my name. I answered without guile. He told me his. I could not understand why he was giving me this information. He vouchsafed me more: where he was going, why and so on. I had no idea what to do with these facts. I kept silent, since I did not know how to respond.

Suddenly, he turned away from the window and came closer. He knelt beside me. My heart began to beat. It beat in alarm. I had no idea how to handle the situation. He looked into my face. My only rational reaction was that his face did not seem to me to be handsome. He asked "How old are you?" I answered in a thin voice: "Twelve". His face expressed horror then disappointment. He went back to the stance at the window. Then he asked:

"How old do you think I am?"

"I don't know" my voice still sounded somewhat stifled.

"Well, I am nineteen".

This information did not surprise me and did not evoke any emotion. I was too young for a flirtation. Despite my appearance I was well developed for twelve.

In due course we arrived in Ufa and changed trains for our ultimate destination, the railway town of Sterlitamak. My mother had kept in touch with my auntie Rosa, who was now living as an evacuee in a village some 20km from that town. Letters had been passing between them since our deportation. Now auntie knew that we had arrived and mother knew that we were to wait at the station until collected. All I remember was anticipating with excitement and curiosity meeting my two cousins, George (Zhorik) and Ferdinand (Ferdik) Zhorik was my age (four months older) and Ferdik was just six years of age. At last, two days after our arrival, my auntie Rosa, accompanied by her children, rolled into the waiting room of the station. She was small in every sense, short, thin, but well wrapped up. It was cold outside. The two sisters fell into each other's embraces. The hugs and kisses lasted a long time.

Intrepid Jewish Explorer on the Island of the Bearded Ones

Elaine Samuel

I might have been forgiven for not taking my pencil and A4 ruled pad with me. After all, this was a family celebration of our joint retirement and 'research' was not uppermost in my mind.

Stanley and the 'boys' might also have been forgiven for thinking that, unlike most

family holidays, they could avoid being dragged around in search of fragments of some 17th century pottery attributed to the local Chevrah Kadisha or the remains of a 200 CE mikvah ... just this once. For were we not going to the playground of such luminaries as Michael Winner and Prince Harry, to the white sands where the turtles frolic to the distant echoes of Harry Belafonte? And did we not visit Barbados

on some 'reading week' jaunt from Toronto some 30 years ago, when ne'er a single item of Jewish memorabilia was found by the Intrepid Jewish Explorer.

And yet here it was, in all of the tourist brochures – an active synagogue – under the protection of the Barbados National Trust, promoted as the oldest synagogue in the Americas and advertised as one of

the Seven Wonders of Barbados. It even had a name: Nidhe Israel – the 'Scattered of Israel.' This had to be a mistake – if not worse. More likely, it was a ruse by the Bajan Tourist Office to entice New York's snowbirds to migrate a little further south than is their custom over the hard winter.

But the urge to investigate was irresistible, the findings were exhilarating and the story is instructive. The oldest synagogue in the western hemisphere had indeed risen from the ashes. It is difficult to decide what is more intriguing: the founding of the Jewish community in Barbados or its restoration. Both show us how history confounds all prediction: "Men trakht un got lakht".

It was the Portuguese who were responsible for the island's present name. They sighted land in 1536 and called it Los Barbados, the 'bearded ones', reportedly because of the fig trees with their long, hanging, aerial roots. I am not about to suggest that this was a case of mistaken identity. If it was, we Jews would have been none too pleased to see the Portuguese sailing in, because we spent most of the 16th and 17th century trying to get as far away from them as possible. Indeed, Spanish and Portuguese Jews sailed to Brazil in the 1620s and 1630s from Amsterdam as part of the Dutch campaigns to capture Brazil and its lucrative sugar industry from the Portuguese, and Jewish settlement in Brazil went hand in hand with Dutch success. And so Jews settled in what then became Dutch Brazil and in Recife, in particular, where they were successful in developing the tobacco and sugar industries.

All went well until 1654, when Portugal re-conquered Brazil. Fearing the introduction of the Inquisition, the Jews of Recife either returned to Holland or sought refuge in Dutch, French or English colonies in the Caribbean. One group, on their way back to Holland, heard that negotiations were taking place between Oliver Cromwell and Manasseh Ben Israel for the "re-settlement" of Jews in England – and applied for and secured permission in one of its colonies, Barbados. (The British were responsible for the loss of Los). In fact, public worship for Jews was permitted in Barbados in 1654, three years ahead of London. And so it was that the

Jews of Barbados were named Mendes, da Costa, Gomez, Dias and de Mercado – right up until the 1920s. You can see these names clearly in the cemetery, which lies by the side of the synagogue.

Jews brought all their knowledge and software experience of the sugar industry in Brazil to Barbados: how best to grow the sugar cane; how best to power the industry (by windmills); how to trade it; and how to convert it into liquid gold (rum). The country prospered on the back of this, as did its Jews. So, for example, the synagogue, which was probably built in 1661 or earlier, was destroyed by a hurricane in 1831 and re-built in 1833 at great expense. A wonderful account of the new synagogue's dedication appears in the Barbados Globe of 1 April 1833, rich in description of the ceremony and of the synagogue's design and dimensions. But just as quickly as Jews rose on the back of sugar, so did they fall. A decline in sugar prices and of sugar production in Barbados led to the emigration of most of its Jewish community. Only 17 Jews were left by 1900 and, by 1929, the synagogue, which could accommodate more than 300 persons, was sold by the last remaining Jew, a Mr. Baeza, for conversion into offices. He received 500 British pounds, which he then donated in total to Bevis Marks in London. In 1992, the building was compulsorily acquired by the government, which planned to demolish it and erect a new Supreme Court building. The end was nigh for Nidhe Israel!

So how is it that we walked into a jewel of a synagogue, a miniature Bevis Marks, a synagogue just perfect in every way, only a few weeks ago? There's also a small but beautifully designed and curated museum by its side, which was opened just two years ago and housed in the former Bet Hamedrash. The synagogue and museum are right in the centre of Bridgetown, down a small road named Synagogue Lane. They are surrounded by over 1000 gravestones, which are mostly laid out flat in the Sephardi tradition. And standing upright, interspersed among them, are stones, engraved with the names of those who came from Lublin and Rumania in the 1930s, and their descendants. Parenthetically, I've never seen a synagogue surrounded by its cemetery before. The museum and cemetery are open 5 days per week, and the synagogue

is also open for a regular Friday night Oneq Shabbat.

Two men may be credited with bringing the synagogue back to life: Henry and Paul Altman, the son and grandson of Polish immigrants. They realised their vision with energy, persistence, research and not a little financial backing. But how did they know how to restore the synagogue and how could they re-create it out of almost nothing? After all, it was closed long before the Altman family arrived in Barbados. And this is where the people of Barbados played their part. It just happened that a local historian, a non-Jew, by the name of E.M. Shilstone, offered Mr. Baeza money for the synagogue. He wanted to restore it as a monument dedicated to those who had done so much for the island by developing the sugar industry. The synagogue, so he believed, was part and parcel of the Barbadian heritage. But he could not offer Mr. Baeza enough. So before the contents of the synagogue were dispersed, he did the only thing he could afford in order to keep the memory of Jewish settlement in Barbados alive. He took masses of photos – of every ornament and from every angle. Once the government was persuaded of the Altman plan to restore the synagogue, the hunt was on to find what had been in it. And for the most part, the Altmans were successful. For example, they found the 'Ten Commandments', which had formerly hung over the aron kodesh, now hanging over the swimming pool in the former residence of an ex-governor of Barbados. What is most heart-warming is that, for the most part, the people of Barbados were willing to part with what was found on their property. And what could not be found, such as the bimah and reader's table, were reproduced in the finest mahogany by local artisans. But I haven't even begun to tell you about the cemetery. It's all to be found by Google. Better still, go there!

In March 2008, the original rabbi's house was unearthed by a team of archaeologists from the University of the West Indies. Latest news: they have just unearthed what might be the oldest mikvah in the Americas. Hey Stanley... I've just gotta go back and see!

It's the thought that counts

Daniel Gilbert

Daniel Gilbert sends some irreverent Barmitzvah musings from Vancouver; it doesn't really matter from where or when, this year last year or two decades ago, it's the same the world over

If you took a stroll round the streets of Vancouver today, you would know that this was no normal day. Yes indeed, at Purim, Jews go a bit mad with alcohol and other larking about but today, Canada just beat America at hockey to win gold medal in the winter Olympics on their home turf in Vancouver! The icing on the cake is that they broke their own record for the gold medal haul in doing so! Did anyone mention Haman?

RRRRRRRRraaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!

So yes, Purim is a big event but it has been somewhat overshadowed here by Canadian sport history in the making. You don't often see mild-mannered west-coasters celebrating like that... which brings me in a roundabout way to something I was thinking about recently: Bar mitzvahs; these are also a pretty big deal right? At the Jewish school where I work, I witness first hand the big build up and excitement that grade 7 boys and girls go through in the lead up to this big event. Like the Olympics, representatives from all round the world visit for a couple of weeks and celebrate by giving the soon to be man/woman their own gold haul.

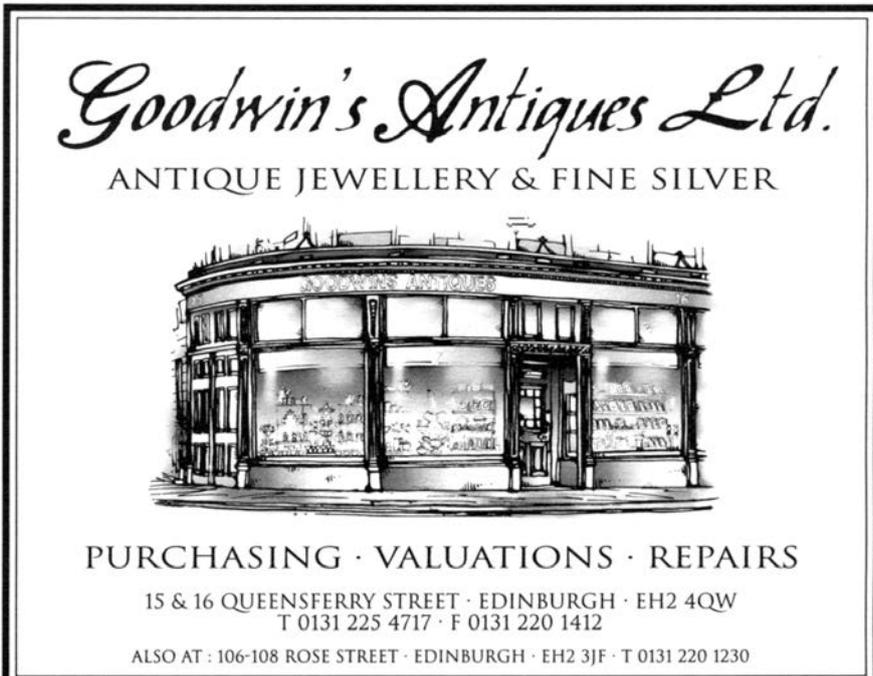
It is this haul that I've been interested in of late; when I was bar mitzvah, I thought I did pretty well. I got more cash than I'd ever had before, a bicycle, some nice binoculars, a Shaeffer pen, an unabridged Oxford dictionary and some other stuff that I don't remember. It is the other stuff I don't remember that concerns me. What was this other stuff because I'm sure there was plenty of it? Why don't I remember it? What happened to it all?

Well, working at the school, I think I've got it worked out. I always ask the kids what they get for their bar mitzvahs and of course I

want to know how many errors they made when they read their portions (I remember the tradition amongst my peers when I did my bar mitzvah was to let the man know as soon as they stepped off the bimah how many bloopers they'd made. Then you could congratulate them if you felt so inclined). Well it seems that Nintendo Wiis are the flavour of the year (if they didn't get them for chanukristmas already) as are numerous other games consoles, electronica and items with colour displays,

gigabyte storage capacities and multimedia capability. I believe I just aged 20 years in the last sentence. I also know in my few years of wisdom that such items are incredibly desirable for a good few months until the next generation of widgets with more capacity, higher resolution and slightly nicer curves come out. And then they get shelved or punted in the car booty for a fraction of their original worth and oh, was that a barmitzvah present...never mind.

So I have a feeling that those gifts that I don't remember either broke quickly or befell the same fate described above. This leads me on to the gifts that I do remember and have retained. The binoculars are large, clunky and solid but still accompany me on trips. The Shaeffer pen is a tacky gold pin-striped but beautifully crafted item. It therefore lives in my desk where I occasionally open the box and admire it. I can't stand the way it writes so I use a cheapo Parker instead. The dictionary is used to the point of destruction, even though the rude words got thumbled first (who says you become a man at 13?), with increasing maturity, the rest of the dictionary became worn out but best of all, my trusty bicycle which has been abused, crashed, neglected only to rise from the ashes to be beaten up, scratched and thrashed again is still in everyday service and accompanies me to work everyday. There isn't much of the original bike left after its numerous rebuilds and frequent abuse but the essence of a good bar mitzvah gift lives on. Now I have been thinking about retiring poor old Reg (every good vehicle needs a name) from service as its age is really beginning to tell and parts are not so plentiful any more but I think that over 22 years of daily service is a good innings for any present.



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I'll get off now and watch Vancouver and Canada celebrate the night away, the blasting horns seem to have subsided now but the pubs are filling up and tomorrow's cycle to work should provide an interesting opportunity to glance at the human wreckage doing their daily commute!

Around and About

The Shein Scene

COFFEE MORNING

The ever popular community centre coffee morning took place on 6 September when over 50 from the young to the not so young turned up for the pre Yomtov gossip and bargain hunt among the cake raffle, plants and books. The cosy atmosphere contributed to a pleasant morning and a relaxation from daily pressures. Joyce Sperber welcomed everyone and thanked the ever willing band of helpers for their effort.

SHALOM'S KIDDUSH

On 5 September a delighted congregation welcomed Rabbi Shalom Shapira to the Shabbat Service in the Synagogue. Rabbi Shapira was the Minister in Edinburgh from 1988 to 1995 when he and his late wife Rochelle returned to their native Israel. The Rabbi took the Musaf Service and thereafter hosted the Kiddush in the Community Centre to celebrate his 80th birthday. At the latter he was warmly welcomed by Anita Mendelssohn who introduced him not only as a Rabbi but as a friend. She wished him the community's best wishes on his birthday and recalled the happy years he and Rochelle spent in our midst. In reply Rabbi Shapira commented on his life within the Edinburgh community and how strongly he retained such warm and affectionate memories of it.

SPECIAL KIDDUSH

On 12 September a farewell Kiddush was held after the Shabbas Service to bid a fond adieu to Irene and Philip Mason who were leaving Edinburgh to join family in London. Hilary Rifkind paid a very warm tribute to Irene and Philip and voiced the thoughts of all present when she said how very much they would be missed in the community. She commented on the tremendous contribution both had made during their years in Edinburgh. Philip's emotional reply emphasised their own feelings at leaving their home of thirty seven years and how much of a wrench for them. (See article entitled "Au revoir to Irene and Philip Mason" by Edward Green in the previous edition of "Edinburgh Star" dated September 2009).

WIZO SOCIAL

25 people enjoyed a first class meal at the home of Katie and Ronnie Goodwin on 7 November before which Katie had given a brief but informative resumé of 90 years of WIZO and the invaluable aid given by that organisation to Jews and Arabs in Israel. She introduced the guest speaker, John Cairney, who described himself as a writer, actor, painter and raconteur. It was as the latter that he addressed the assembly with a most entertaining, witty and enjoyable talk which ranged from his early days in the theatre to his role of Rabbie Burns during many years stay in New Zealand. To the attentive audience, it appeared that an elder Bard had materialised in front of them.

ARMISTICE SERVICE



Rabbi Rose led the congregation during the Service in the Synagogue on 8 November. On this occasion there were two notable omissions; no choir and no bugler, the latter being indisposed. They were however amply compensated by the inclusion of young members of the community. Michael Taylor read a poem "Anthem for Doomed Youth" by Wilfred Owen whilst Freddie Green recited an "Obituary to Salamo Arouch", a Greek boxer who had survived Auchswitz. Two sisters, Clare and Sarah Levy respectively read "In Flanders Field" by John McRae and "We shall keep the Faith" by Moina Michael.

Lennie Berger, who had earlier laid a wreath in the form of a Magen Dovid at the Cenotaph at the City Chambers, David Gonshaw and Ronnie Goodman were involved in carrying the banners of AJEX

and the Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion within the Synagogue. After the Service, the congregation enjoyed the afternoon tea in the Community Centre. Hilary Rifkind welcomed all and thanked those who had helped throughout.

CHANUKAH DINNER



Lesley Danzig welcomed over 100 who attended this ever popular

event in the warmth and comfort of the Community Centre during a wintry 12 December. The appetising meal was preceded by Rabbi Rose lighting the two candles of Chanukah. The evening entertainment was provided by Ian McIntosh who demonstrated his versatility in song, comedy and magic. His routine was warmly appreciated by the audience including the children who provided willing audience participation. Shrinking from Ian's roving eye did not prevent his chosen "volunteers" moving to the stage to take part in his humorous repertoire. Thanks were extended by Joyce Sperber to all who had helped and attended.

CHANUKAH LUNCH

Lord Provost George Grubb and his wife were the special guests at the Chanukah Lunch attended by over 40 people in the Community Centre on 15 December. After an excellent lunch, Norman Berger introduced the Lord Provost and his wife and stated that 69 years ago, making many grapple with mental arithmetic, he

was at Gillespie Primary School with the Lord Provost and their friendship had remained until the present day. He voiced everyone's pleasure that with such a busy schedule the Lord Provost and his wife had found time to honour us with their presence this afternoon. Replying, the Lord Provost expressed his and his wife's delight at being able to do so. He then gave a most interesting résumé of his previous year in office, the duties of a Lord Provost and the distinguished visitors he has had the pleasure of greeting to the city. He hoped still to be in office when the city's controversial tramway system was in operation. Rabbi Rose commented on the Lord Provost's busy civic life and the fact that he would be in Australia with the Edinburgh Tattoo early next year. A hearty vote of thanks to Avril Berger and her helpers was given by Joyce Cram.

PURIM FANCY DRESS PARADE



Competitors of the Purim fancy dress parade, with Dorothy taking the first prize as 'Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz'. (directly beneath the clock in blue gingham)

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER

After the Friday evening Service on 12 February Hilary Rifkind welcomed the large number to a Sabbath evening dinner in the Community Centre. A most appetising meal was followed by singing and dawning led by Rabbi Rose. The event coincided with Scotland Limmud Day and Limmud presenter, Maureen Kendler, Head of Educational Programming at the London School of Jewish Studies, addressed the congregation. The following morning after the morning Service another member of Limmud, Daniel Reisel, a junior faculty member at the London School, spoke at the Kiddush which was hosted by Limmud.

Sam Latter

Edward Green



A request by the Manager at the care home to inform a contact at the Evening News of a well-known fellow resident's upcoming century led me to add at the end 'that another resident would be soon be celebrating his 106th birthday'. Little did I know that this was to unleash a media frenzy!

Sam's Latter's birthday on the 4th January 2010 brought him to the fore as Scotland's oldest man and Britain's oldest Jewish man. Articles appeared in the Glasgow Herald, the Daily Mail, the Daily Express, the Edinburgh Evening News, the Jewish Chronicle and the Jewish Telegraph.

But what was to prove the most exciting was that Sam was shown being interviewed on BBC News Scotland twice that evening and was heard extensively on BBC Radio. And how impressive he was, with his wonderfully warm and modest nature. He could easily have been mistaken for a man twenty years younger, smart in his blue blazer and tie as he recalled the stories from his youth as a professional footballer with the now defunct Glasgow team Third Lanark. He talked of his childhood in Glasgow and his marriage to Flora Strachan (which took place at the Graham Street Synagogue) and touched on his business life here in Edinburgh.

He chuckled telling the interviewer of his brother joining the Gordon Highlanders so he could wear the kilt, after their father, a tailor, had refused to make one for his son as the material required was sufficient for three suits!

Sam is special for so many reasons. First by virtue of his impressive age. This brings him much mention. But

that on its own does not make him the really outstanding man he is. What is exceptional is that his age has not dimmed his very active interest in all around him.

Sam not only likes to keep up with news of the family and the community as a whole but he remembers to ask after someone if he knows they have been unwell. His concern will extend to others in the residential home and he is often to be found asking for attention for those he feels in need.

Sam also still reads avidly – the sport pages and murder/mysteries get his top attention, and he enjoys good music and drama. He will discuss the day's news and keeps abreast of world affairs. Sam's genuine pleasure in people and still keen sense of humour ensures he remains a magnet to visitors, many of which originally came to Strachan House to visit their own parents, and after their passing have continued to visit to see him.

He loves to hear a good story and enjoys a good laugh, a true Latter trait, and is even better at regaling his visitors and carers with a 'bon mot' or a funny anecdote.

Sam's birthday was truly a celebration. He put his longevity down to luck! But we are indeed the lucky ones. For Sam Latter confirms to us all, that one can live to a good age and still retain the joie de vivre, the interest in and concern for others, and the love and admiration of those around us.

Around the Fringes

Stephanie Brickman

MENORAH LIGHTING



A giant 20 ft chanukiah was lit in Edinburgh's St Andrew Square on



Thursday 17th December. The event, attended by some 100 people, was organised by Chabad Lubavitch's Edinburgh representatives Rabbi and Mrs Weinman.

Antique and jewellery expert, and member of the Board of Deputies, Edward Green was raised up in a cherry picker to light the Chanukiah using a cook's blow torch, however the snowy weather conditions were against him. Help was at hand from a magician and fire juggler who had been hired to entertain children at the occasion, who lent Mr Green one of his fire juggling batons.

Rabbi Mendy Hecht who was visiting from Chabad Prospect Heights, USA, delivered the Chanukah message. Lord Julian Goodman read the blessings and led the singing of Maoz Tzur. Ms. Linnett, a representative of the American Embassy was present. Voice and guitar entertainment was provided by members of Edinburgh's J-Soc and doughnuts and drink completed a pleasant interesting if truly winter evening.

New Chaplain



Jewish Chaplaincy has appointed a new Chaplaincy Couple for the Northern Region, despite fears there would be

difficulty funding the post.

Garry and Suzanne Wayland, both originally from Essex, will take up the post in September this year. Both have first class honours degrees and extensive experience of Jewish youth work.

Speaking of his appointment, Rabbi Wayland said "We're thrilled to have got the job and we're looking forward to working with the students and also the wider communities. The student community is very vibrant with great potential for growth and also encouraging future leadership. It's an age group we feel connected to as recent graduates ourselves."

A panel comprising student leaders and members of Jewish Chaplaincy made the appointment, following extensive interviews and visits to all the Universities within the post's remit.

The geographical remit remains unchanged, including the whole of Scotland and Newcastle upon Tyne. The couple will support Jewish student life and represent Jewish students to the University authorities.

The couple, who have a two year old son, will be based in Giffnock in Glasgow but are expected to spend two Shabbatot out of four in other communities.

Hayden Krasner, Northern Region Jewish Student Committee President, said that the students were delighted with the appointment after a difficult academic year on campus. "They are a lovely couple," he said. "They are very enthusiastic and get on with all the students regardless of their levels of observance."

Nicola Livingston, Chair of Northern Region Chaplaincy, said it had been a struggle to secure the funding for the post and the funding situation was still strained.

"A lot of hard work went into finding the funding but thankfully some supporters came forward to bridge the gap," she explained.

There was a further blow to funding on Thursday 11 June when a Northern Region fundraising event in London had

to be cancelled because of a transport strike. The event was to be held in a Scottish Pub with the first chaplain Mike Rosen. It was hoped the event would raise more than £2,500.

Soul Train

The Israeli cultural outreach organisation Soul Train has completed an 11 stop tour of Scotland, supported by Scojec, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, in which they performed for more than 350 people. Dubbed the "Kosher Ceilidh" tour, the events, featuring music, dancing and stories, reached out to small communities in far flung places such as Ayrshire, Isle of Skye and Lochgilphead.

The two musicians David Weinreb and Danny Dor-El also entertained students in St Andrews as well as visiting established Jewish institutions such as the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Cheder and Calderwood Lodge School in Glasgow.

Soul Train was established by Yeshivat Bnei Akiva Kfar Haroeh in 1999 to answer the needs of small and outlying Jewish communities outside of Israel. In the course of its ten-year existence it has reached out to some 50 small communities around the world with its Jewish and Israeli Enrichment Programs. The Kosher Ceilidh tour was the organisation's first visit to the UK.

Scojec's Ephraim Borowski was full of praise for the tour. Describing the band's performance for a group of 25 in Portree on the Isle of Skye he said: "The small group of Jews on Skye didn't know of each other's existence but by the time we left they were talking about a communal seder. Organising the Kosher Ceilidh tour by Soul Train took a huge amount of work by a lot of people, but it was very rewarding to see people, who have never before expressed their Jewishness in a tangible way, make the connection and begin to participate."

Danny Dor-El, singer, drummer and story teller, said he was impressed by the warmth of the welcome shown to them. He said: "People want to connect to us, they were proud of their culture and hungry for Jewish music. We come from the Jewish centre of energy and they want that energy."

Judy Gilbert

Community Rambling



Although the Rambling Club has been in existence for a number of years, (actually I have photos dating back to 2006) it has certainly been pretty sporadic latterly. There has, however, been a revival responding to a heartfelt plea from Carol Levstein to inject new life into the activity.



The first meeting, to discuss future walks and dates, was kindly held in the home of Carol and Tom but not before carrying out the first of our future ramblings around the beautiful estate that is just up the road from their house.

It was a crisp and sunny afternoon and although the snow had all but disappeared from most of Edinburgh, Penicuik was still hiding under a luxurious veil of white. I have to say that not all of the fourteen intrepid walkers were fully prepared for this surprise and various items of clothing were distributed to those in need.



Tom was armed with a large 'two-seater' sledge and we set off up the road, through the woods and towards the estate where we crunched our way round the otherwise silent and awe-inspiring landscape.

Walking in crocodile formation over the slippery farm vehicle tracks, we chatted non-stop, carefully studying the ground in order not to risk getting wet feet from the deceptively safe patches of ice that gave way occasionally at the edges of the burn. (bitter experience!)

We arrived at the designated and apparently ideal sledging opportunity where Tom gave advice, based on his superior knowledge, about setting off down the scary slope. 'Pillion hang on to the side rope, leader sit cross-legged holding the front rope, head for the right side of the tree and stop before the lake!' No one said anything about the difficulty of steering in a straight line and the high probability of turning 180 degrees.



Tom was stationed halfway down the hill with his camera and I headed straight for the tree....panic. Betsy shouted helpful advice at the rear,.... 'lean to the right!..... more!!.... more.....!!!'

We were saved by the aforesaid proclivity of the sledge to turn round and, amidst screams and laughter, stopped short of the water.

It was Anthony and Judy Sischy's turn, with Judy insisting on sitting at the rear. Judy's decision not to head the team was short-lived since, quarter of the way down, Anthony's ability to steer proved even less effective than mine. The duo shot down the best part of the hill with Judy leading....backwards!! And the evidence is all down on record.

We could hardly stand for laughing. Tom demonstrated how it should be done, lying head first on his stomach.

We pulled ourselves together and set off, back towards relative sanity and our starting point. On the way we passed the ruin of Penicuik House owned by the Maxwell family and that burnt out over a hundred years ago.

A walk that should have taken one hour in ideal conditions took two in the somewhat more challenging ones. It was wonderful, and exhilarating. We can't wait for future walks, all different in their nature and hopefully providing something for everyone. If you are interested in taking part, look out for the details which will be given before each excursion.



Braid Hills Sunday 21st February

- **Sunday 4th April**
Floteston (matza ramble)

Contact Betsy Dorfman for further details.

The Four Sons?

A Story for younger people to read over Pesach

Micheline Brannan

We took a house in Israel for Pesach. Luckily my parents could afford a large house – there are five of us and two of them. We children actually got a room each.

My brother Haim was already in Israel, studying at a Yeshiva in Jerusalem during his gap year. My brother Richie, age seventeen, had no time for all that. He tried very hard to get Mum and Dad to leave him behind but they insisted he came. I am the next – Ruthie if you want to know. I had turned twelve in January and for the last time I was allowed to sing Anim Zemirot from the Bimah and give my sermon from in front of the Ark.

So what about my other brothers? After a long gap my parents had started a second family. There was Tommy age four and the baby, who we all called Baby and who was one and a half. He was cute but annoying. He knew he was the baby and just wanted to stay that way as long as possible. I wished he had been a girl, but there you are.

The house was in a quiet suburb of Tel Aviv, set in a beautiful garden with clay sculptures and an Aeolian harp that sang eerily in the wind. The owner was artistic. The house was full of his paintings and models. Batik hangings festooned the walls, and toiles draped the windows.

Nothing prepared me for the heat in Tel Aviv. We didn't need fleeces or jumpers, although we had packed them. Mother started frantically preparing the house for Pesach as soon as we arrived. She soaked the glass plates and dipped the cutlery in boiling water. She shopped in the nearby Supersol until she dropped.

She told father to take us out and let her get on with things. He took us on the Eged bus to the beach. We walked along the prom all the way to Jaffa and back, with Tommy having to be carried half the way and Baby in his buggy. We helped the younger children play on the playground equipment dotted along the route. Another day we walked along the bank of the Yarkon river where there were rowers racing, just like on the river at home. Everywhere we went there were plenty of toilets. Dad said it was because Jewish bladders are not as strong as Goyische ones.

At last it was the day of the Seder. Haim arrived in the morning after having the Siyyum for the fast of the first born at his Yeshiva. Immediately we saw he had changed. He had a beard like a man, and a knitted kippah perched on his head. He wore an open necked white shirt and had a small prayer book tucked into his shirt pocket.

Mother was completely overwhelmed to see him. She cried, but when she tried to kiss him, he backed off. She understood and let him alone. I didn't even try to kiss him. I could see my brother

had come under a holy influence which excluded females. Richie didn't even come down to welcome Haim. He was in his room listening to something on his Ipod. Tommy was very excited but tried to act cool. "Haim, have you brought me anything?" he asked. "Yes," answered Chaim, "here are two bocherim for you. This is Shem, and this is his Chavrusa, Ever." He handed Tommy two dolls dressed in Chasidic dress. They had ringlets at their ears and furry hats on their heads.

After serving some cold meat and potato salad for our lunch, Mother mopped her sweaty forehead and said that she was sending Dad out for some last minute shopping and could Haim look after us for a bit. Haim said, "I want to learn. What about Richie?" but Mum made a face which told a story in itself.

Haim took us upstairs and there was a smell of cigarette smoke coming from Richie's room. Haim barged in and said, "You're disgusting, Rich, put that out!" Rich was looking at a magazine but as soon as he saw us at the door, he tried to hide it under his arms. "And what's that you're looking at, Rich?" demanded Haim. Rich said, "Get out of my room."

"Ruthie, take Tommy and Baby to your room," ordered Haim. I shoved the little kids out of the door but I couldn't stop myself from lurking at the opening to listen.

"So, Hymie," said Rich, in a sneering tone, "What's made you the big boss now? And did you lose your shaver?"

"What's made you such a lowlife?" exclaimed Haim with a disgusted look on his face. There's so much to do to prepare for the Seder and you're not helping, just poisoning your body and mind up here and giving the kids a bad example."

"So what are you doing that's so great?" drawled Richie. He was determined not to be intimidated by Haim. He had always been in his shadow when Haim was at home, but now that his brother was gone, he was getting more of his own way. He was out a lot, even on Friday nights.

Haim ignored the question and left Rich to get on with whatever he had been doing. Seeing us still on the landing, he said, "Come on into my room. Let's build a yeshiva."

I couldn't think what he meant. But when we went inside his room I saw that it already had benches round the walls and the bed was a fold away kind which also turned into a bench. The shelves were covered in books. It reminded me of the bet hamidrash at our shul at home.

"What's a yeshiva?" asked Tommy. "It's where I learn. We're going to put in a Mechitza so that Ruthie can sit behind it. Then we're going to learn Torah."

Haim immediately got busy with his plan. He pulled one of the toilets away from the window and made a sort of tent. He told me to sit behind it. Then he sat Tommy up on one of the benches with Baby beside him and said, "Right, Tommy, you are learning and Baby is your Chavrusah. Here are Shem and Ever. They are another pair of bocherim. I am the teacher.

Baby said, "Bah, bah", and wriggled right off the bench. He was not too good at landing and began to cry. Haim picked him up, comforted him a bit and pushed him behind the curtain with me.

"Right Tommy, you, Shem and Ever are the bocherim. I'm going to tell you about Yetziat Mitzraim."

Haim began the long story about how Moses went to Pharaoh to ask for the Jews to be freed. I was fascinated. Haim had learned lots of new interesting facts at Yeshiva and he put them in. For example, I didn't know that the women packed tambourines when they left Egypt, expecting there to be a miracle, but Moses only started singing once the miracle of the Red Sea had actually happened. So the women were smarter than the men and had

more faith. There you are.

Unfortunately I couldn't hear much because Baby was being so annoying and I had to keep stilling him. Soon Tommy started asking Haim questions about the plagues and Haim explained them all. For some reason I started to think about Richie and how he was missing all this. I put down Baby and went to Richie's room. He wasn't there. I knocked on the door of the bathroom. I felt frightened. What if he had gone out on his own, cross that Haim was back and stealing all the attention.

I went downstairs, and heard voices.

In the kitchen, Mum was rolling out kneidlech, and Richie was sitting at the table – peeling potatoes. I couldn't believe my eyes. My brother, with his long hair dangling over his eyes, was peeling potatoes into a large bowl. He and mum were talking in low voices, I couldn't hear what about.

My heart leapt. Perhaps the Seder would not be too bad after all.

Bat Mitzvah Dvar Torah

Clare Levy

Good Shabbos.....

There are several themes that come up in today's Torah reading.



The one that I am most interested in and I think applies to me is what the Tree of 'Knowledge of Good and Evil' represents? Is it really a tree with Fruit that will give you knowledge or is it a symbol?

Hashem created man and gave him many gifts in the Garden of Eden, but in giving him the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil he also gave man Freedom, the greatest gift there is.

We can define freedom as being free to be able to do whatever we want, just as long as we do not harm another person or interfere with their freedom, and this would suggest that to be truly free there should be no borders or limitations.

However, in this world there have to be rules (or a moral code) that tells us what behaviour is right or wrong even if it is just based on whether or not someone will be harmed.

Does this mean that in order to live in freedom we cannot really be free? We have the 10 commandments which I have just sung and which many religions follow to give us our basic moral code, but the Jewish people also have the 613 Mitzvot, which tell us exactly how to live our lives every minute of the day. These rules tell us what we can eat, when we pray, how we dress, even how we act towards our family, our friends and our teachers.

So - are we really free? Back in biblical times, did Moses free the Israelites from slavery just to give them another life of limitations?

Moses freed the Israelites from slavery and Hashem gave them the 613 Mitzvot as a code BUT he also gave them the choice. Once they reached the Promised Land they had a choice to follow the Mitzvot or not. No one made them keep the Mitzvot, just as today we have a choice as to whether we keep the Mitzvot. However, by choosing to keep the laws, not only did they get their freedom, they also chose spiritual freedom.

I wonder – do observant Jews feel held back by following the laws or do they feel free? Last winter and this summer

I attended Bnei Akiva camp – where we stuck to all the Mitzvot and spent the two weeks, praying like orthodox Jews pray – 3 times a day, benching after every meal, sticking to a strong dress code and following to the laws of Kashrut.

But I did not feel trapped by these rules because it was my choice to live this way.

I have to make choices now: shall I play Hockey on Saturday mornings or shall I come to Shul? Shall I go to a sleepover on Saturday night or come to Cheder fresh on Sunday morning? Shall I go to a disco on Friday night or shall I celebrate Shabbat with my family? When my teacher gives out non-kosher sweets do I take them and break kashrut or do I say no and feel left out? When my friends go out to a non-kosher restaurant do I go and eat the food or go and not eat anything.

My friends are free to choose their clothes, their food, their weekend activities, so am I reducing my freedom by choosing a life towards Judaism or am I increasing my spiritual freedom, where my actions have meaning in another way.

Will my friends and teachers realise that by making choices such as these, I am making commitments to another way of life?

It was seen that those prisoners in the Concentration camps who chose to follow as much as possible their religious laws survived better than those who did not.

They managed to avoid becoming controlled by their awful environment because they were able to make a choice in their minds. They could choose how to respond - they had spiritual freedom and this could not be taken away from them. I too have the choice to follow a religious path. Hopefully this will give me more than making unimportant choices about my food and my clothes.

However, with freedom comes responsibility for your actions. Adam and Eve discovered their freedom when they chose to take the fruit, but they also discovered fear. They did not accept responsibility for their actions and blamed something else (the snake) for the crime. They had to learn though that if you

have knowledge of laws and you break them, you have to accept the guilt and punishment. In Adam and Eve's case they are exiled from Eden, Eve suffers the pain of having a baby and Adam has to work all his life. Only a free person can understand a moral law and only a free person can break the law. Adam and Eve broke the law by eating the fruit, but it was their choice to do this. Even when I choose to follow the Mitzvot, I am still free to choose.

But does following strictly to the Mitzvot take away responsibility? Jonathan Sachs says, "Freedom for the strong man means slavery for the weak and freedom for the rich means misery for the poor." He is saying that with freedom come limitations in the form of responsibility and rules. For every action I take as a free person, I must look to see if someone else or will I myself be affected by my choice.

With freedom we are allowed to make decisions for ourselves and choose our own path in life. We can make choices based on our knowledge of the past and our experiences in the present. We can look at alternatives for our behaviour and make choices for ourselves.

There is one more important thing that we can learn from today's reading. Although Adam and Eve were told that they would die if they ate the fruit, in fact they did not. Hashem punished them but He did not kill them. We see from this that it is possible to recover from our mistakes and move on to improve our lives.

So today, as we begin the Torah cycle, and I start my path into adulthood, I will begin to use the freedom I have been given and apply it to a life with Torah.

Shabbat Shalom.

Edinburgh's Jewish Youth go Travelling

The Edinburgh Jewish community may be small, but it has a vibrant teenage community. The local Maccabi youth club meets weekly in members' homes, and our young people regularly meet other young Jews at camps in the UK and abroad. Here, some of them write about their experiences of these camps.

Isaac Ansell Forsyth

I went on the Maccabi GB Israel Tour 2009 for almost a month last summer. We stayed in various locations (hostels, Bedouin tents and the desert) across Israel.

There were a few of us from Edinburgh and the rest from England including people from London, Essex and Leeds. The best things were, of course, meeting so many people and making friends who I still keep in touch with, and also the desert experience. This was when we all did a programme in the desert, slept there under the stars and then hiked back to the coach in the morning.

The most important thing I learned at the camp is that you can get on with pretty much anyone if you want to. If anyone else is thinking about this camp, I say – go on it, speak to as many people as you can, enjoy it and keep in touch with your friends.

Benjamin Griffin

The last Jewish camp or weekend trip I attended was a leadership weekend, organised by Maccabi and Streetwise (leadership and personal protection aspects respectively). It was the first of two weekends this year in a 3 year programme leading towards the acquisition of the Advanced Leadership award. These skills will hopefully be useful for running a Junior Maccabi organisation for the cheder if wanted and will help to

keep all the misbehaving youths in order at our teenage, self run, Senior Maccabi!

The event took place in Derby, in a grand old boarding school which I believe is the one place in Britain which turned out to be a green oasis in the wonderfully disruptive yet beautiful blanket of snow. Most of the people were from London with a few from Leeds and the odd Edinburghian thrown into the mix.

The best thing about it was being able to meet new people, rekindle past friendships and meet all the participants from my month long tour of Israel that I participated in during the summer. The worst thing about it was the relative shortage of food, quite a serious concern for young growing boys, as we were merely offered two bowls of chicken soup on Friday night as a starter. Luckily, due to the cunning skills taught to me via the course and by my leaders, I was able to persuade the "lunch ladies" and other participants to offer me their "rations" willingly.

The most important things I learned at the camp were how to run fun and educational Jewish programmes, organise weekends away, and valuable self defence lessons that may help in any sticky situations I get into. I would definitely recommend this camp to others as it provided one with unequalled skills and opportunities.

Clare Levy

I went to Bnei Akiva summer camp (Aleph) at St Johns on the Hill School (on the English/Wales border) for 2 weeks. People came from all over England (and me from Scotland). The best thing about the camp was that I met lots of nice Jewish people of my age. I had a brilliant time and loved all of it. The theme of the camp was Avot (our Forefathers and Mothers). We went on Tiyul which was a long walk. Because we were P7 we got to stay in a boarding school and everyone else had to camp. There was lots of singing and art and craft.

There wasn't anything bad about the camp at all, I even liked the food. The worst thing was coming home and leaving all my new friends but we keep in touch.

I learned lots of history and how important ruach is (spirit). We prayed three times a day and Shabbat is absolutely amazing at camp. I have learned so many of the prayers.

I would definitely recommend this camp. Aleph is the camp for the youngest children anywhere (P7) and it is small so you can meet new people. I didn't know anyone when I first went to a BA camp but I made friends very quickly.

I have also been to two BA winter camps which were great as well but summer was my favourite.

Sarah Levy

I went to Bnei Akiva Bet Chalutzi Camp at Bergen op Zoom in Holland for two weeks. Most people were from London and Manchester, although there were a few from Leeds and Birmingham, and me from Edinburgh. I stayed the night with one of my friends in London the day before we went to Holland because we had to get the Eurostar from St Pancras very early. All the people were amazing, and the activities were really good fun as well. There was really good Ruach (atmosphere) and everyone was so nice. I would probably say that the best moment was just after we visited Anne Frank's House in Amsterdam. We were sitting below her house in a Town Square

eating our lunch, and some of the Madrichim thought that we ought to say Memorial Prayers for Anne Frank and the others who perished in the Holocaust. As we were saying these, about 50 Israeli tourists joined in. A few Jewish American families joined in as well, and it turned into some sort of crazy Jewish street party with lots of dancing and singing. I thought it was horrifying that when Anne Frank was alive, you could be killed for just being Jewish, but now we could be very openly Jewish in public, right outside her house!

I learnt a lot about the history of the State of Israel, and also about the Holocaust. Of course, my knowledge of prayers and Judaism was increased as well, and I participated in a lot of interesting debates on current affairs and how they related to Judaism.

I would recommend this camp - all Bnei Akiva camps are great, and Bet Chalutzi is no exception! While it may seem daunting to be the only Scottish person attending a camp, everyone is so nice and welcoming. The friends I made at Bet Chalutzi (and the Winter Camp I attended previously) are amazing, and I can't wait to see them again!

Katie Neville and Sarah-Beth Neville

Sarah-Beth and I have attended Noam Masorti Camps for 3 years (including a trip to Paris) and last year went on Noam Israel Tour, so we have been going on Noam for 4 years now. Camps last for 2 weeks and the Israel tour was 4 weeks. The other people were all from London.

I've learnt so much from the camp and tour, but one thing that is probably most prominent is that the more you put into something, the more you will get out. I would definitely recommend this camp to others. Noam is a great organisation and you don't need to be Masorti to be part of it. Whatever organisation you choose, the camp and Israel Tour are amazing experiences which give you great opportunities to do new things and meet great people.

Forthcoming Events

March

29 Monday

First Seder

30 Tuesday

1st day Pesach

April

12 Monday

Yom Hashoah

20 Tuesday

Yom Haatzmaut

26 Monday

Lodge Solomon 7.00pm

May

9 Sunday

Coffee Morning

Lit AGM 7.30pm

12 Wednesday

Yom Yerushalaim

19 Wednesday

Shavuot

July

20 Tuesday

Tisha B'Av

September

9 Thursday

1st day Rosh Hashanah

There are no meetings of Lodge Solomon or the Literary Society during summer months.

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information contact Sarah-Beth Neville and Katie Neville.

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday (meat) and Thursday (fish) 12.30pm. New volunteer helpers always welcome.

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

Amendment (last edition)
The engagement announcement should have read...Avigal Sperber to Mikael Pommert

A Challah Mitzvah

Sarah Lurie

On a dark Wednesday afternoon in January, en route home from work, my mobile rang. It was Rabbi Rose, asking if I would do the oven lighting mitzvah and light Falko's oven the following evening. Rabbi Rose (and others who would take his oven-lighting place) was needed for a minyan, and I was the 'chosen one'.

Edinburgh's community gets its challah from Falko's Bakery in Bruntsfield, although Falko's baking premises is in the quiet East Lothian town of Gullane. Every Thursday evening, Rabbi Rose (or someone else of his choosing) travels down the A1, lights the oven, makes the blessing and ensures kosher challah is ready for sale the following morning.

This particular week was to mark the end of a kosher challah crisis in Edinburgh, as Falko's had been closed for a 3 week festive break. I felt a tremendous responsibility to agree to Rabbi Rose's request, and rearranged my Thursday commitments to ensure I got that oven lit.

With careful rabbinical instructions, I set off on my journey to Gullane. I arrived to be greeted by two delightful young German bakers, and entered a most spotlessly clean, spacious and beautiful kitchen. As the dough was being kneaded, I was shown the ovens. With the rabbi's instructions clear in my head (and on a slip of paper), I asked if the ovens had been 'burnt out'. Being ever so careful to get this 'right', I checked that the oven was on and hot, and pushed the steam button. With a loud swishing sound, hot steam could be heard filling the hot oven. Then, as instructed I turned it off and on again, and washed my hands. Then I fulfilled the Mitzvah:



1. When the dough was ready to be shaped into loaves, I had to say the following blessing: Baruch Ata Hashem Elo-haynu Melech HaOlam Asher Kidishanu B'Mitzvotav V'Tziyvanu L'Hafrish Challah Min Ha Issa. (Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate Challah from the dough).
2. Immediately after saying the blessing, I had to pinch off a piece of dough, approximately the size of an olive or one ounce, and say: harai zeh challah (this is challah).
3. The piece of challah separated from the dough was then thrown into the oven, to be burned so that it is no longer usable.

My task completed, I said good night to the bakers and drove home to Edinburgh. On Shabbat morning, mingling in the kiddish, I asked Rabbi Rose how his Friday night challahs had been... to which he replied, "Oh, I didn't need challah this week, I had enough in my freezer"!

Reviews

The Book of Genesis Illustrated by R. Crumb

Janet Mundy

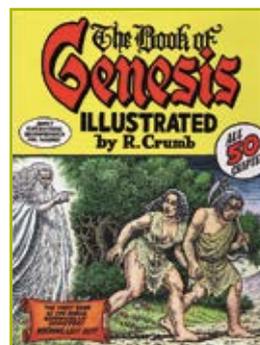
Robert Crumb is an illustrator and artist, most famous for his comic strip Fritz the Cat and his graphic representations of voluptuous women and anti-establishment men. He came to prominence in the era of San Francisco hippydom – for example, he illustrated a Grateful Dead album cover. There is a lot of sexual content in his cartoons and comic strips, as there is in Genesis, so perhaps he is a less inappropriate illustrator than he may at first seem.

Crumb starts with a page of introduction, commencing grandly with "I, R Crumb, the illustrator of this book, have, to the best of my ability, faithfully reproduced every word of the original text...". He goes on to explain the sources of the translation used, including the King James Version and also a modern translation by Robert Alter, a biblical scholar and professor at the University of California, Berkeley (no mention of Soncino or Hertz!). Later in the introduction, Crumb admits that "I... do not believe the Bible is 'The Word of God'. I believe it is the words of men." but claims that "I approached this as a

straight illustration job, with no intention to ridicule or make visual jokes". Given Crumb's rebellious reputation, I was surprised to find that this last claim was

largely true, and it seems that Crumb treated the project as a commission, to illustrate what he saw was in the text, and not to sensationalise or embellish to any great extent. Interestingly, a friend of mine who is a fan of Crumb's work and not particularly concerned with Biblical accuracy, criticised this aspect of the book, that Crumb reined in the natural

excesses for which he is apparently famous. The interpretive element is probably more in his choice of translation,



based upon several sources, as he states, but also on his background research, where he discovered parallels between Genesis and stories from other Middle-Eastern cultures. As well as occasional comments within the text itself explaining the literal translation of a word or phrase, Crumb includes a Commentary at the end of the book explaining the thinking behind some of his interpretations of the text. There are certainly sexually explicit graphics, but always justifiable in the context of the text, for example in the story of Tamar outwitting Judah. He clearly relishes representing sexuality, for example stating of Adam and Eve that “they were not ashamed” is shown to be something of an understatement. Illustrations of all sorts of wickedness are illustrated with a relish reminiscent of Hogarth or Bosch (such as the depravity that caused G-d to bring the flood to the earth or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah).

Dividing the text by illustration, rather than by verse, makes it easier to focus on particular points and makes it more difficult to skip over difficult or boring passages. Lists of “begetting” are often given the same prominence as murder, adultery and family disputes and long forgotten characters are illustrated and brought to life.

Crumb pays great respect to the text, translating Hebrew words where he feels that this will contribute to our understanding. He also has fun with language, using speech bubbles in different languages for the Tower of Babel and when Joseph speaks to his brothers in Egyptian hieroglyphics. And there are other examples of humour, quite often black, such as the looks on the faces of the men of Shechem when told they are all to be circumcised.

The illustrations can also show great humanity. For example, he draws a beautiful, compassionate illustration of Sarah with the quotation “Sarai was barren. She had no child” looking left out when others are rejoicing in the birth of a new baby contrasting with her happiness when as an old woman she finally takes Isaac to her breast (one of many characters whose ageing is subtly represented). Likewise, Jacob and Rachel’s love for each other is tenderly

portrayed. He also shows the emotion in brothers reuniting – Esau and Jacob, Joseph and Benjamin. Sometimes the illustrations make Crumb’s interpretation clear, for example in the story of Dinah and Shechem, where the pictures place more emphasis on “he spoke to the young woman’s heart” than “he laid her and defiled her”.

Reading Genesis in graphic form brings the stories to life. He usefully provides a map at the beginning, something I’ve often yearned for when following the Parshah in my Chumash! We get a sense of our forebears’ day to day lives – hunting, washing, eating, fighting and celebrating. We see how they dress and where they live. We can relate them to our own lives – for example, the elderly Abraham looks like a traditional Yiddisher tradesman, negotiating with G-d over the number of innocent men in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Robert Crumb is not a Jew, nor a believer, but he treats Genesis with respect, having worked on the project for five years. This is definitely not a book for children, but adults will look at the old stories in new ways. I enjoyed following each weekly Parshah in the book, and it gave me fresh insight into sections of the Torah that I thought I knew well. I am sure that Hebrew scholars will question some of the translations and perhaps object to some of the illustrations but, as Crumb says himself in his introduction, “I know that you can’t please everybody”.

Flora & Fauna by Sylvia Flowers

Judy Gilbert

The author grew up in Glasgow, has strong connections to Edinburgh and lives with her family in Israel. Her desire to live there mirrors the same Zionist aspirations of her great grandmother Ziporah, after whom she was given her Hebrew name, meaning little bird.

Sylvia draws you into her family upbringing with speed, ease and a turn of phrase that often makes you smile. The anecdote about the cherished First World War shell brought a lump to my throat and was the beginning of an autobiography I

knew I would enjoy.

Sylvia’s vivid and nostalgic description of living in Kelvinside conjures up images of a bygone age.

She comes over though as a quiet but determined woman who would not be thwarted by the old fashioned values in times that did not rate education of girls too highly.

Sylvia’s desire to fulfil her potential as a student was sadly denied until she was married and had a growing family to complicate matters, after which she more than made up for the omission.

Despite her chaotic journey from childhood to adulthood, Sylvia’s life was always filled with people and warmth. Sylvia Flowers became resourceful and adaptable to different situations very much in response to her father moving back and forth between Glasgow and Edinburgh for business, and her experience in a number of boarding schools at home and abroad during the War. She could have been cowed by some of her encounters, and by the lack of sensitivity with which some people treated girls in particular, and Jews in general. Her mother was of the old school that appeared to be more concerned with the way girls should look and how they should behave, than with their intellectual potential. Her positive outlook and her independent nature, however, assured the first of her ambitions to make ultimate aliyah.

She speaks of the kindness of strangers and their sometimes comical tolerance of Jews held within endemic prejudice.

Sylvia came from a very unassuming background but her remarkable resourcefulness and her marriage to a man that matched her spirit of adventure brought her into contact with highly prominent people. Sylvia comes over as a complicated mixture of modesty and self belief and her compact autobiography is filled with interesting anecdote.

The book has been self-published and therefore can only be bought through Sylvia herself. There are the inevitable typos that cannot easily be avoided by this method but the book is interesting and deserves to be read more widely.





Happy
PASSOVER



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and the children of tomorrow*

Obituaries

Norman Cram

26th July 1926 died 9th January 2010

Hilary West, daughter

Norman was born in York Place in Edinburgh to Mary and Sam Cram and was the youngest of five children. The family then moved to Corstorphine.



He was educated at George Watson's school. He went on to study dentistry but didn't complete the degree, as he had to go in to work with his father in 'Dayanite' where they produced top class furniture.

Norman had two further careers the last being his favourite and most successful. At the age of 49 he started working with Abbey Life where he became manager of the Edinburgh branch. During his years with Abbey Life, he and Joyce enjoyed many of their best holidays abroad through various conferences. Norman was very involved in the Jewish community in Edinburgh; he sat on the Shul Council; he was master of Lodge Solomon and was involved with the Edinburgh Jewish Dramatic Society. In 1969 Norman had the idea of putting on a show during the Edinburgh fringe festival. The show was "Steppes to the Negev!" starring the late Harry Hankin (a member of the Edinburgh community) and the (now famous) Tom Conti! It ran to packed houses for a week (excl. Friday of course) in our old communal hall opposite the Shul.

Norman had a few hobbies from playing golf most Sunday mornings in Longniddry, to playing bridge and kalooki and when he took early retirement, dad took up painting which he enjoyed thoroughly.

When Graham and I married 31 years ago, Graham looked on Norman more as a friend than as a father-in-law. They had a wonderful relationship and with the grandchildren, we were a warm and close family.

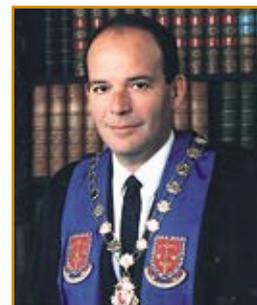
Norman took much pleasure in watching his grandchildren, Martin and Laura grow up into fine young adults. When they were younger Martin and Laura spent many holidays up in Edinburgh on their own and they have many happy memories to think about.

Dad first took ill eleven years ago and gradually over the years his health deteriorated. We were all very pleased and proud that in July 2006, dad was able to come to Shul to celebrate his 80th birthday with the family, friends and community. Even over the last 2 years when dad's health got worse, he still wanted to know what was going on in the Edinburgh and Pinner communities. His quest for knowledge and gossip did not stop.

I know that as a family we will all miss dad, but what was mentioned to us several times was that Norman was a mensch and a stalwart member of the Edinburgh community.

Mark Sischy A Memorable Friend

Geoffrey Lindey



I well remember the first appearance of the Sischy family in my life. The rather sedate existence of my parents and myself was given a shake by the arrival of the dynamic Ben, Claire, Mark, David and Ingrid when they moved into the house at the corner of Glenorchy Terrace and Brights Crescent across the road from us. They were exotic, interesting, cultured and exciting, not at all the norm for Newington in 1961.

Mark must have been 16 when his family migrated from South Africa to Edinburgh. His family had been settled in Johannesburg but they, particularly Claire his mother, would not passively accept the monstrosity that was apartheid and she was very active in the resistance to it. After a tip-off that her freedom and safety were in jeopardy, the family rapidly left South Africa and 3 years later the family of Joe and Clarice Been made the same move for the same reasons. Clarice and Mark's father, Ben, were siblings and the families were very close.

Mark went to George Watson's and then studied law at Edinburgh University where his charm, intellect and political liberalism won him many lifelong friends including Malcolm Rifkind, Brian Abrams and myself. In 1967, Mark's parents and siblings moved to Rochester, New York and Mark moved in with his machatonim, the Beens, before launching himself into the rigours of independent student accommodation. Throughout this time Mark was involved with the Anti-Apartheid Movement, edited the Student newspaper and was a member of the President's Committee of the Students' Union. He was always surrounded by friends.

In 1969 Mark married Judith Lewis from Newcastle and shortly thereafter they moved to Canada, coincidentally not far from the Sischy home in upstate New York. After working there for a couple of years for Goodyear, Mark and Judy returned to Edinburgh where Jenny and Debbie were born. Mark became an apprentice at Allan McDougall where he forged professional links and, as always with Mark, close bonds of friendship with many young lawyers who went on to positions of eminence in the profession. Of course, Mark achieved his own professional success and was appointed a partner at Allan, McDougall and then a Sheriff in Glasgow in 1990. After his retirement as a Sheriff, Mark became a Chairman of Employment Tribunals - a role which, as ever, he fulfilled with excellence and panache.

Everything Mark did professionally and socially was graced by his love of life and fun. His wit and charm were beacons of light for his friends and family. Sadly the death of Jenny was an event from which he never recovered despite the support that he and his family received from everyone who loved them.

Latterly Mark moved to London. There he planned to become an arbitrator but time and illness did not permit it.

Mark was a good friend and a delightful man.

Golf Report

Sid Zoltie – Chairman of the Edinburgh Hebrew Golf Society

Two records were broken at the annual Shul Golf Tournament at the nine hole Princes Golf Course at Braid Hills.

Blue skies, and the balls running like a baby's nose, were conducive to some low scoring golf which was achieved by Brian Caine who won the Reuben Zack Trophy with a record net score of 28!

The team event for the Maccabi Cup was won by Brian Caine, Philip Oppenheim and Sid Zoltie, and the Orange Bowl Event was won by Lennie Berger to whom we are grateful for organising the outing.

We were happy to welcome to Lionel Freedman and his wife Beth to the tournament. Lionel is originally from London and is a prominent figure in the world of East Lothian golf. He is the current club captain at Craigiellaw Golf Club and the driving force behind the Festival of the World Hickory Open Golf Championship that attracts teams from the USA, Sweden and the Home Countries.

Oh! I nearly forgot the other record. We spent more time in the coffee shop than on the golf course!



Thank you

I would like to thank...

Family and friends who have visited Norman and supported us both through his years of illness, and for all the kind letters and phone calls of condolence.

Joyce Cram

Many thanks...

To all members of the community who contributed with their usual generosity to this year's appeals for Jewish Child's Day. We have received the acknowledgment (right) with a certificate from Daniel Burger, the executive director, for our donation.

Eve Oppenheim

Eve has been the hard working and unstinting Edinburgh representative for the Jewish Child's Day Charity for 30 years.

JG

Dear Eve

I was delighted to receive your cheque and vouchers for £1,740. This is really quite an outstanding achievement considering both the size of the community and the economic climate.

On behalf of all of us at JCD, thank you once again for your continued support and dedication.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Daniel

Daniel Burger
Executive Director

With thanks to
the Edinburgh Jewish
Community

JCD
for their dedicated and
long-standing support of
the work of JCD

Signed *Daniel Burger*
Executive Director

February 2010

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Congratulations to...

Vicky Gruneberg on the occasion of her 95th birthday.



Paul Gilbert and Leah Selkowitz on the occasion of their marriage on September 13th 2009.



Clare Levy on the occasion of her Bat Mitzvah on 17th October 2009



Sandra and Sidney Caplan on the birth of their latest grandchild, Olivia Leah, on 12th September 2009, to Ian and Rachel Caplan, and the Barmitzvah of Andrew and Kathy's son, Benjamin, on 26th September.



Samuel Latter who was the centre of attention on his birthday on 4th January. At 106, Mr Latter is believed to be the oldest man in Scotland and the oldest Jewish man in the UK.

Some interesting facts...

Born in Glasgow, son of a tailor from Riga (now in Latvia), by the late 1920s Mr Latter was a professional footballer playing for the 3rd Lanark Team. His parents were not keen on his chosen profession as his mother felt it was too rough and matches were often on Shabbes.

"I was playing against Aberdeen and my face was cut," he reminisced. "When I got home my mother said enough was enough and threw my boots on the fire."

Fortunately he was able to save the boots and continue playing football for a living. However, when he married Flora Strachan, an Edinburgh girl, and settled in Edinburgh in 1931, he changed direction and ran a series of businesses, including a sweet shop and a car tyre and battery business.

He served in the Royal Airforce at Drem near Edinburgh during the war as an officer training fighter pilots.

Mr Latter received a telegram from the Queen and celebrated his birthday with

nieces, nephews and his many friends at the residential home in Edinburgh where he has lived since 2000.

He claims to have only one regret in 106 years. "When I had the tyre and battery business," he explains. "I could have bought into a new business with one of my customers – Wee Tommy Farmer – but I wanted to stay on my own."

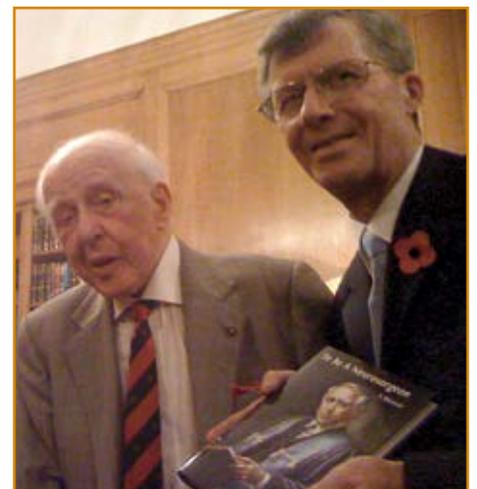
Wee Tommy Farmer is of course none other than Sir Tom Farmer, millionaire head of the Kwik Fit Empire.

When asked for the secret of his longevity he says simply: "Luck!"

Fellow Glaswegian May Mendelsohn, now living in Cardiff, is believed to be the oldest Jew in the UK. Born in 1902, she is two years older than Mr Latter and will be 108 in February.

Belle Caplan nee Belle Davidson on her 100th birthday. She was born in Glasgow and married Dr. Henry Caplan on her birthday in 1934. Belle and Henry then lived in Edinburgh for the next 50 years. Belle's daughter, Vivian Nahmias flew from Tel Aviv with her son Brian to Renfrewshire to celebrate Belle's special day.

Phillip Harris on the publication of his book 'Memoirs of a Neurosurgeon' and receiving a golfing award. Phillip and Sheelah have also just celebrated their 60th anniversary



Your Community Needs YOU !



- Prepare Succah Roof at Succot
- Join the Shabbat Meet-&-Greet Rota
- Fill the Mikvah
- Manage the Shul website
- Give lifts to Shul functions
- Help with Kiddush
- Assist the Lit
- Help with the Lunch Club
- Take photos for the Star Magazine

- Learn new skills
- Gain self-confidence
- Discover your strengths & talents
- Gain work experience
- Explore career options
- Meet new people
- Do a mitzvah

- Shop or cook for Shul events
- Visit Shul members
- Polish the silver breastplates & bells for the Sifrei Torah
- Arrange flowers for Shavuot
- Look After the Shul Computers
- Sell tickets for Wizo events
- Assist the Chevra Kadisha
- and many more areas where your time & skills would be an asset!

Whether you choose to give one hour a week, or a day each month... your community needs you! We have many volunteering opportunities to fit perfectly with your interests and skills.

So you choose what you would like to do including one off ad hoc help.

Perhaps you have a specific skill to offer or there is something you would specifically like to do.

If so please e-mail **Sara Lurie**: volunteer@ehcong.com with your contact details, or simply reply to one of Jackie's weekly e-mails and Sara will get in touch to discuss what volunteering activities may be best suited for you!

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