

THE EDINBURGH

STAR

No.73
September 2014
Tishrei 5775



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY

Edinburgh Jewish Community Contacts

EDINBURGH HEBREW CONGREGATION **www.ehcong.com**

Rabbi David Rose

0131 281 5886

david.rose39@talktalk.net

Chairman

Raymond Taylor

01324 612126

ray.taylor1@blueyonder.co.uk

Treasurer

Hilary Rifkind

0131 447 7386

h.rifkind@blueyonder.co.uk

Secretary

Jackie Taylor

01324 612126

ray.taylor1@blueyonder.co.uk

Shul Events and Ladies Guild

Hilary Rifkind

0131 447 7386

h.rifkind@blueyonder.co.uk

Kiddushim

Hilary Rifkind

0131 447 7386

h.rifkind@blueyonder.co.uk

Education Convenor

Raymond Taylor

01324 612126

ray.taylor1@blueyonder.co.uk

Community Centre Diary / Hire

Lesley Danzig

0131 229 3054

Lesley_danzig@yahoo.co.uk

Welfare

Micheline Brannan

0131 447 0818

michelinehbrannan@msn.com

Luncheon Club

Avril Berger

0131 664 2938

Avril.berger@btinternet.com

Edinburgh Jewish Burial Friendly Society

Sylvia Donne

0131 447 2947

j.s.donne@o2.co.uk

Board of Deputies

Edward Green

0131 337 1681

edwardmgreen@me.com

SUKKAT SHALOM EDINBURGH LIBERAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

Rabbi Mark Solomon

07766141315

marksolomon@btinternet.com

Chair

Norman Crane

0131 552 5732

chair@eljic.org

Treasurer

Gillian Raab

0131 226 6234

treasurer@eljic.org

Website

www.eljic.org

Community phone

0131 777 8024

OTHER JEWISH OR JOINT ORGANISATIONS

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Secretary

Anthony Gilbert

0131 667 4266

A.Gilbert@ed.ac.uk

Lodge Solomon

Sidney Caplan

0131 661 3035

sidthefootman@blueyonder.co.uk

Association of Jewish Refugees

Francoise Robertson

0131 337 3406

mobile 07816 055824

frannylouise@aol.com

Edinburgh WIZO

Kate Goodwin

0131 668 2113

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)

(reaches out to Jews living in Scotland no matter what their affiliation)

Director, SCoJeC

Ephraim Borowski

222 Fenwick Road, Glasgow G46 6UE

0141 638 6411

scojec@scojec.org

www.scojec.org

Yiddish Classes

Heather Valencia

01786 850647

valencia@deepstone.eclipse.co.uk

Edinburgh Board of Guardians

Morris Kaplan

0131 339 8201

morris.kaplan@blueyonder.co.uk

The Edinburgh Star

Synagogue Chambers, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB

Cover Design

by Judy Gilbert – EHC WW1 Memorial in Piershill Cemetery

Editor

Micheline Brannan

Assistant Editors

Judy Gilbert and Sue Fyvel

Treasurer

Sylvia Donne

Webmaster

Jo Capek

Editorial Board

Michael Adler
Jo Capek
Joyce Capek
Sidney Caplan
Sylvia Donne
Sue Fyvel
Judy Gilbert
Claudette Hudes
Ann Lurie
Janet Mundy
Rabbi David Rose

Proof readers for '73

Joyce Capek
Edward Green
Janet Mundy
Hilary Rifkind

Design – Debbie Bennett

Artwork – Helen McFeely

Printing

Meigle Printers Ltd
Tweedbank Galashiels TD1 3RS

Contents

Editorial	5
Rosh Hashanah Message – Rabbi David Rose	5
Chief Rabbi's Rosh Hashanah Message	6
First World War Centenary	8
Edinburgh's War – Harvey Kaplan	8
For King and Country? – Edward Green	10
Holocaust Education Trust Reception at Scottish Parliament – Edward Green	14
Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue – Janet Mundy	15
Whisky Tasting, Courtesy of Rabbi Rose	16
EHC's Yom Ha'atzmaut – Micheline Brannan	16
Lag B'omer Extravaganza! Sunday 18 May – Micheline Brannan	17
Ernest Levy: A Life In Music – Micheline Brannan	18
The Chief Rabbi's visit to Edinburgh – Micheline Brannan	20
Pre-Shavuot Coffee Morning – Lesley Danzig	22
SCoJeC Creative Writing Day – Janet Mundy	23
Celebrating 125 Years of the Edinburgh 'Lit' – Charles Raab	24
Yom Teruah	26
Festival – Lord Julian Goodman	30
Book Festival – Michael Adler	34
The Book Club – Micheline Brannan	38
Sukkat Shalom, the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community – Claudette Hudes	40
Prof. Stefan Reif Honorary Degree Ceremony at Haifa University – Ros Landy	42
Save a Child's Heart – Sarah Levy	43
Cheder Prize Giving – Elaine Levy	44
Dorothy Sherratt's D'Var Torah	46
Amir Shapira's Barmitzvah – Judy Sischy	48
The Jewish Revolt and the Destruction of the Temple – Amir Shapira	50
Mazel Tov and welcome back Shalom – Judy Gilbert	52
Obituary: Yehudith Shapira – John Cosgrove	52
Book Review: Simon Schama The Story of the Jews – Jo Capek	53
Mazal Tov	55
How could we miss you Stella? – Edward Green	55
STOP PRESS	55
Forthcoming Events	

Thank you

The Edinburgh Star would like to express its appreciation to all those who support the magazine with their continued subscriptions, and all those who make donations over and above this.

.....
If you'd like to become a patron, please contact Sylvia Donne (Treasurer) for further details.
.....

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

All pieces are accepted for publication at the absolute discretion of the Editor. The Editor has the right to make such amendments to any piece chosen for publication as may in her absolute discretion be required in the Editorial interests of this publication and to avoid exposing this publication or its staff to any criminal or civil liability or otherwise to avoid bringing this publication or its staff into disrepute.

Copyright subsists in this publication and in its typeset. No part of the publication may be reproduced by any means, including electronic, without the express written consent of The Edinburgh Star and without an acknowledgment of such consent, when given, being clearly printed together with an identification of The Edinburgh Star as being the source of such material.

The views expressed in The Edinburgh Star are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of The Edinburgh Star, its staff or publishers.

We would like to ask our readers to support the people who have kindly agreed to advertise in The Edinburgh Star, in return for the support that they themselves give us.

Farewell message from Sidney Caplan

Sadly we are losing Sidney Caplan as Treasurer after 18 years. He will be a hard act to follow. Sidney writes:

As I step down as Treasurer after eighteen years and hand over to Sylvia Donne I would like to thank all the editors I worked with for their support, all the advertisers and patrons who returned my requests for payment promptly and all you readers who always helped with my appeals and your notes of encouragement.

I know Sylvia will do a great job helping the Star to go from strength to strength.

I will always be happy to assist in any way I can as "The Star" remains a focal point for the Edinburgh Community.

Sidney Caplan

Scottish friends of Alyn

Clarice Osborne writes:

On behalf of the Scottish Friends of Alyn, I should like to thank all those who responded so generously to our recent Appeal to help the children in this hospital. In addition I should also like to thank everyone who marked the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries and other happy events by making a donation to Alyn. It is much appreciated.

With best wishes for a Happy and Peaceful New Year to our friends in Israel and to us all.

Clarice Osborne Chair – Scottish Friends of Alyn

Thank you

Anita Mendelssohn would like to thank her dear family, Rabbi Rose and good friends for their very kind support during her recent illness. This has been so much appreciated by her and David.

Patrons

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Sukkat Shalom

Mr John & Lady Hazel Cosgrove

Mr & Mrs Mickey Cowen

Mr & Mrs Alick Glass

Mr & Mrs Edward Green

Mr & Mrs A. E. Kornberg

The Alma & Leslie Wolfson Charitable Trust

IF YOU WANT ADDITIONAL COPIES A £3 DONATION IS EXPECTED IN ADVANCE PER COPY (INCLUDING UK POSTAGE). PLEASE CONTACT THE TREASURER (CONTACT DETAILS BELOW) TO DISCUSS YOUR REQUIREMENTS AND HOW TO SEND YOUR DONATION.

IF YOU WISH TO STOP RECEIVING THE STAR PLEASE CONTACT THE TREASURER TO BE TAKEN OFF OUR LIST.

SYLVIA DONNE on **0131 447 2947** or j.s.donne@o2.co.uk

THE EDINBURGH

STAR

Support The Edinburgh Star

Send us your letters and articles

Next Copy date: End of February 2015

Contact Editor on:

michelinehbrannan@msn.com or **0131 447 0818**

The Editor, The Edinburgh Star, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB

Editorial

Star 73 has been put together against the depressing background of Israel's attempts to demolish Gaza's terrorist infrastructure. This offensive to secure Israel's interior from random daily rocket attacks has aroused obsessional interest and passionate feelings throughout the world and has spilled over to Scotland. Protesting voices have been clamouring in our institutions and on the streets.

One of the media commentators has said that the conflict in Gaza has to be seen against the background of a failed Arab Spring and the general turmoil left by the West's adventures in Iraq. Deaths, injuries and displacement of ordinary people resulting from these wars run to millions and there is no end in sight.

Our forebears 100 years ago witnessed how the assassination of an obscure (to them) Austrian aristocrat in Sarajevo sparked off 4 years of death and destruction in Europe and parts of Asia. They thought this was the War to end all wars, but they were wrong because World War 2 came only 21 years later with all the horrors of the Holocaust. There have been many wars since then, and, with conflict still raging in the Ukraine, for example, Europe is not exempt.



This is a sombre time for the Jewish people but we must try to be positive. In this issue of the Star, we continue to celebrate the vibrant Jewish life that exists in Edinburgh, but, remembering the past, we have an extended feature commemorating the impact of World War 1 on British Jewry and on our own community. Our Festival round-up is tinged with sadness that Israeli performers could not be made as welcome as the organisers would have wished. Within our own community, we applaud the achievements of our young people, who are the Jewish community of the future, and we wish each other a good and sweet New Year through the pages of Yom Teruah.

We hope and pray that 5775 will be a better year for the World, for Israel and for Jewish people everywhere.

With best wishes to all readers for a Shanah Tovah UMetukah.

Micheline Brannan

Rosh Hashanah Message

At the end of the confession we say during the High Holy day period we add an extra line which is very interesting.

We say before G-d that 'You are justified in everything that has happened to us because you acted faithfully but we behaved badly'. This sentence can have several meanings but one that appeals to me in particular. After confessing our sins we admit the greatest sin of all, we have not learnt from our mistakes. Because of what we have done wrong in the past various bad things have happened to us. Using these occurrences G-d has tried to show us the error of our ways, but we have not understood the lesson. After what has been a very difficult summer for the Jewish people and for us in Scotland and following the decision we will make on the 18th September, whatever that will be, we need to learn lessons. We cannot simply carry on as if nothing has happened in the last few

months, pretending that things can go on the way they were. We have to take to heart the fact that the world has changed and act accordingly. Everyone will have a different opinion what lessons should be learned and actions taken, but only by learning those lessons can we ensure a better year ahead and a more secure future. This Yom Kippur when we end our confession we should intend that this time we really will learn the lesson G-d is trying to teach us.

A Happy New Year
Rabbi David Rose



Office of The CHIEF RABBI

 **chiefrabbi**

 **chiefrabbimirvis**

 **chiefrabbimirvis**

chiefrabbi.org

CHIEF RABBI'S ROSH HASHANA MESSAGE 5775 • 2014

In our prayers for the High Holy Days we say *Simcha le'artzecha vesasson le'irecha* – Give joy to the land and elation to the city of Jerusalem. Following a traumatic and difficult summer it is our fervent hope and prayer that the New Year ushers in peace and security for Israel and the entire region.

Aspiration for happiness is central to our Jewish psyche. We are encouraged to celebrate what we have in a key passage in the Book of Genesis, which we will begin to read on Simchat Torah.

The Talmud (*Chulin* 139a) asks a surprising question: where can Haman be found in the Torah? Surely nowhere! The answer is mystifying: he appears in the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden.

We read: "*Hamin ha'etz...*" With these words, God confronted Adam and asked whether he had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. The Hebrew *Hamin* has the identical spelling to *Haman*. On this basis the Talmud declares "This is where Haman can be found in the Torah".

As we often find in our sources, a creative interpretation of the Hebrew language is the vehicle for an insightful teaching – in this case about inner peace and happiness. The entire Persian nation paid homage to Haman. Only one person, Mordechai, refused to bow down to him. Instead of being content with what he had, Haman fumed and obsessed about the one thing he lacked – Mordechai's submission.

The Torah provides us with a guide to all situations that confront us in life. In asking where we find a phenomenon like Haman in the Torah, the Talmud answers by identifying him with the precedent of Eden. Instead of being happy with their bountiful blessings, Adam and Eve were miserable about being

forbidden the fruit of one single tree. This destructive dissatisfaction led them to lose their paradise.

A year ago, as I took up office, I called on you to 'Come with me' on a journey. During my first year in office, I have enjoyed immensely the privilege of visiting the majority of our communities in the UK. I have been deeply impressed with what I have seen. Our congregations boast spiritual and lay leaders of the highest calibre. Many dedicated and selfless men and women give contributions of inestimable value to their synagogues through their deep and unwavering commitment. We are blessed with warm and hospitable synagogues that stage beautiful services and provide a welcoming home for wonderful people, some of whom might otherwise be forgotten.

Unlike Haman, we recognize and rejoice in our many achievements and take pride in the work of our hands.

While feeling gratified and fulfilled we should not, however, be complacent. There is far more that we can and should be doing to breathe new, fresh and exciting life into our synagogues and community centres. With this in mind, I look forward to being your active partner on this journey, in our quest to build on our attainments to date in order to achieve even greater success in the years to come.

Valerie and I extend our warmest wishes to you all for a happy, joyous, healthy, peaceful and successful New Year.



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis



Assisted by



Yad Vashem

Remember the Past...

In January 2015, the 70 Days for 70 Years project will begin worldwide, engaging hundreds of thousands of Jews in an uplifting educational and memorial programme.

Participants will receive a copy of a specially published book of 70 inspirational essays written by internationally renowned educators, historians and scholars - to be read, one a day. In addition, each participant will receive a memorial card giving the details of one victim of the Holocaust who they will learn in memory of (information provided by Yad Vashem).

During these 70 Days and beyond there will be a variety of events and activities to further engage and empower participants both within communities and online. These will include launch events, visits to the camps, speaker tours, social media groups to name but a few.

Our dream is for every Jewish community worldwide to take part in this project, for every victim to be remembered and for every participant to strengthen their own Jewish knowledge and identity and build the future.

...Build the Future

For you or your community to be involved, please be in touch with the 70 for 70 team.

E info@70for70.com
T +44 (0)20 8343 6289
W www.70for70.com



**70 Days
for 70 Years**

Registered Charity No. 242552

Remember the past to build the future

First World War Centenary

The Star marks the Centenary of its outbreak

One hundred years sounds like a long time and yet it was only in 2009 that the last British surviving combatant passed away.

The sight of veterans such as Harry Patch appearing in public on Remembrance Sunday reminded everyone that the First World War is living history, and even today there are a few people alive over the age of 100 who remember it as such. It captures the imagination of writers and dramatists like no other historical period. History and fiction document the suffering and pain of millions. The War changed our society and that of all Europe. It demolished the Ottoman Empire and paved the way for the Russian Revolution. The relatively recent medium of film was

available to capture contemporary events, with the result that we can see the events unfold jerkily in real life, and recreations can be very vivid, natural and convincing.

This earth-shattering conflict inevitably had an impact on the Jewish people. The Edinburgh Jewish Community was by no means exempt and our forebears suffered a disproportionate impact. Of those conscripted from our community there was 11% casualties, a very high number. We are grateful to Harvey Kaplan, Edward Green, Berl Osborne and Norman and Lennie Berger for contributing to this feature, which commemorates the impact of WW1 on Edinburgh and on the Jewish world.

Edinburgh's War

Harvey Kaplan



WW1 – Jewish servicemen outside Graham Street synagogue 1917

The photograph says it all. It is Pesach in 1917, three years into the most horrendous international conflict that the world had ever seen.

Over fifty young Jewish men and boys are posing in front of the Succah at Graham Street synagogue. Some of them would have been immigrants from Eastern Europe, or the children of immigrants, yet many of them are wearing kilts, or the caps of Scottish regiments. They are all loyal Scots now. Many of them are grinning – do they know of the carnage and squalid conditions that might lie ahead for them in the trenches across the Channel?

On 10 December 1915, the Jewish Chronicle reported that:
'A great recruiting meeting will be held in the Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, next Sunday at half past three, under the auspices of the

5th Royal Scots, in conjunction with the Jewish Representative Council. Lord Scott Dickson will preside.... The band of the 5th Royal Scots will also be in attendance. It is desired that a large representation of the Jewish community should be present.'

As elsewhere around the country, young Jews stepped forward to serve their country and Roll of Honour plaques at Piershill Cemetery and the Edinburgh Synagogue list 19 Jewish men who gave their lives.



WW1 memorial, Piershill Cemetery

A project is underway to record Edinburgh's experience in the First World War. Edinburgh's War is a joint venture between the Centre for the Study of the Two World Wars at Edinburgh University, City of Edinburgh Libraries and First World War community history groups. A virtual history archive will go live in October, coinciding with a launch exhibition at the University. An approach was made through ScoJec to obtain information about Edinburgh Jews in the First World War and, as a result, the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre has been working with Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation to bring together suitable material. Some of the material will be placed on the project website. Contributions have come from the Archives Centre collection, while Hilary Rifkind gathered reminiscences and photographs from members of the Edinburgh community. All the material will be added to the Archives Centre collection of war experiences and some of it will be displayed in the Centre's information folder on Jews in the First World War.

Joyce Cram told us how her father, Henry Vinestock of the Royal Scots Regiment, was wounded in France in 1917 and taken to a German hospital where he stayed for two years. He had 19 operations on his legs. He was told that if he had gone to a British hospital, his right leg would have been amputated, as the bone was so badly shattered. He came back to Eden Hall, which was an Army hospital in Musselburgh, from where he was discharged in 1919.



L to R, Robert, Henry & Benjamin Vinestock

Lennie Berger's father, Alex Berger, was called up to fight and, as Signaller Private Berger (no. 221), was sent to Palestine to join the 38th Royal Fusiliers.

'It was a very important job as only three battalions were left to hold on to the Suez Canal (like at El Alamein in the Second World War). Battalions 38, 39 and 40 were all Jewish soldiers and the army felt they could work well together. The War Office was delighted with their achievement. Their cap badge was a menorah. My dad was the last Jewish serving soldier in the First World War.'



Alex Berger – extreme left

The Jewish Chronicle of 6 August 1915 reported on the boys of the Nathan family:

A Patriotic Family

Lance-Corporal A L Nathan, who was recently wounded and is now in the 15th General Hospital, France, first did service in the 5th Royal Scots (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles) and then in the London Scottish. When war broke out, he immediately put aside a lucrative appointment and enlisted as a private in the 5th Seaforth Highlanders. He has a brother in the RGA and another lieutenant in the 17th Royal Scots (Service). He also has twelve cousins serving. An uncle is Quartermaster Maurice Nathan. He is the third member of this patriotic family to be wounded.'

Mrs Cissie Eppel of Vancouver sent letters written by her brother-in-law, Private Bennie Eppel of Edinburgh, who served in the Royal Scots 29th Division in Egypt and France. Twenty year old Bennie was writing to his parents, Isaac and Rosa Eppel of West Preston Street. On 8 March 1916, he writes to thank his mother for the watch and Postal Order for 15 shillings which he had received:

'...the watch is in good condition, except that the glass was broken...'

Life was tough for Bennie:

'...the heat today is worse than ever...the flies and mosquitoes ...bite like anything.'

His kit bag had been stolen, including his tzitzit and tefillin, but he promised to try to obtain replacements in Alexandria.

He had also had a spell in hospital, where he was visited by 'a rov from Palestine.'



Louis Price



Louis Price's regiment

However, Bennie was seeing the world:

'I was at a place called Luxor, about 18 hours' journey by the train from here. It is on the Nile and is full of nothing else but old temples. We visited the Temple of Thebes and saw some wonderful sights there...'

Lilian Dorfman's uncle, Louis Price, was given a particularly dangerous job on the Western Front. He was to take a field telephone and go out to where the British were dropping shells, pinpoint where they were landing and phone back to confirm if they were hitting the target. He realised he wouldn't survive this and he could see all his friends being killed.

When he got leave prior to taking on the new job, he decided not to go back and deserted to Southern Ireland until after the war. A few years after the war, there was an amnesty.

He found his World War I gas mask useful in later years for when he chopped horseradish for Passover.

As in other cities, the community rallied round its servicemen:

'The Edinburgh Ladies' Lodge, Order Achei Brith & Shield of Abraham, will give a Chanukah entertainment and tea on Sunday the 16th inst. at their Hall, 78 Potterrow, from 2 till 6, to all naval, military and wounded Jewish men stationed in or near Edinburgh. The Secretary, Miss Beatrice Harris, 15 Hope Park Terrace, will be glad to hear from those who think that they will be able to attend.'

(Jewish Chronicle, 7 December 1917)

Harvey Kaplan is director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre at Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow (www.sjac.org.uk)

This article first appeared in ES65 in September 2010.



Jewish Memorial, Altdamm, Pommern, Germany

For King and Country?

The Jewish Experience of the First World War

Edward Green

The exhibit, *Jewish Experience of the First World War*, shown at the Jewish Museum in Camden Town, London, in collaboration with the Jewish Military Museum in Hendon, was a good historical representation of the story of how over 40,000 Jewish men and, surprisingly, women, at that time followed the call to arms to defend their country.

Many who had recently arrived in this country following persecution in Eastern Europe felt bound to their newly-adopted country and were not slow in coming forward in volunteering to join the British forces. Later, others were conscripted to fight. These men were naturalised citizens of Great Britain. But for those who had not yet gone through the process, as with many Jews of German extraction, they were interned, some of them in Alexandra Palace, as they were still considered the enemy!

The poems of Siegfried Sassoon are known to many of us, either from schooldays or seeing them recited in films where he and other war poets were depicted. Maybe not as well-known, but equally well regarded, is the poetry of Isaac Rosenberg, a strong critic of the war who nevertheless served and wrote poems and other writings and drew pictures from the front; he was sadly killed in action in 1918. His most famous poem *Break of Day in the Trenches* is quoted in the exhibition and recited on tape and tells of the two poppies he picked, one for his friend and one he placed behind his ear. Then there followed



Lieutenant Frank Alexander de Pass VC, 1914



Chaplain's address

mayhem and his friend died a moment later! The Museum held lectures during the exhibition bringing to life how Rosenberg's experience of serving on the Western Front shaped his life, his death and his poetry.

From original letters we learnt that the serving men were even sent matzos and kosher wine for Pesach. The Jewish chaplain, the Reverend Michael Adler held services at the front with his Torah and mobile Ark, which he transported in his car; at times he received and answered 30 letters a day, working tirelessly to support the men spiritually and mentally often in the most horrible conditions and repeatedly under enemy fire.

Tephillin were commonly laid and the exhibition also tells the story of one soldier, Marcus Segal, who, wishing to maintain his religious life, built his own Sukkah while serving in the trenches. Some of his more than 160 letters to his parents up to the time of his death in 1917 were digitally detailed in the exhibition that had over 140 exhibits.

The exhibition also highlighted the five Jewish soldiers who received the Victoria Cross, an outstanding number from such a small community. The medal and

uniform of Frank de Pass, the first Jewish soldier to win the VC, was on show. All five recipients are due to be honoured this year in their home towns with special paving stones laid in their names to mark the centenary of the start of the war. During May, Colonel Martin Newman DL, Chairman of the Jewish Committee for HM Forces together with Padre (Rabbi) Reuben Livingstone, the Principal Jewish Chaplain to HM Forces, as part of the exhibition, spoke at the museum of what it is like to be religious in the armed forces, outlining conflicts between religious and military ideals and core values and detailing the challenges and experiences of those who observed their faith then and those of present day observers within the Forces.

The following month, there was a lecture given on *Art of the First World War*, speaking of the impact of the War on art and music at the time and the Jewish composers, artists and performers, and how their important work from this period has continued to influence our understanding of life during the war. Also coinciding with the exhibition, the Jewish Museum hosted the first two days of an international conference on the Jewish experience of World War I, convened by the University of Sussex.

ALL ABOUT to the memory of The Jewish Soldiers

We were shown some of the soldiers' supplies, including disinfectant soap, costing two old pence (under one pence today), foot powder, anti-parasitic powder, soldiers' needles and an Oxo cube, Typhoo tea, beef meals and a pork and bean dish. We were told that a Colonel Patterson petitioned to get a better deal for soldiers and this included kosher food for the Jewish soldiers.

The first of three Judean battalions was made up of conscripts, mainly tailors, from the East End of London, the major Jewish immigrant area from that time, and was known as "Schneider's Regiment". This was in reality part of the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. Some of the names of these men are familiar to us, since they played a major role later in history. I cite David Ben Gurion, the artist Jacob Epstein, and Joseph Trumpeldor, the Zionist activist. It was interesting to read the diary entries and letters sent home by some of these men to their loved



Marcus Segal

ones and, like Marcus Segal, always in the beautiful and expressive handwriting that all children were taught in those days.

The war affected everyone, not just those on the front-line. The exhibition also explored life for Jews on the home front, including the textile boom in the Jewish East End of London, where the majority of soldiers' uniforms were made. Jewish schools and boys' clubs,

including the Jewish Lads Brigade, played an active role in the war, providing soldiers for battle and recording the achievements and casualties among old boys.

The curators of this exhibition had chosen to make it as personal as possible so that we could all identify with the stories they had chosen to tell. To represent the women who went to war they featured Florence Oppenheimer, known to many later as Florence Greenberg, the author who wrote the seminal *Kosher Cookery*



Enlistment poster



On February 2, 1918, the 38th Battalion of Royal Fusiliers, their bayonets gleaming in the winter sun, marched through the city of London and Whitechapel, a purely Jewish unit.

book that many of our mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers relied on. She was a trained nurse and was stationed on a hospital ship in the Mediterranean, caring for the wounded from Gallipoli, later serving in Egypt and Palestine.

Impressively, and not forgotten in the exhibition, were the many Jews who had not left their homeland and were still in Eastern Europe, finding themselves fighting for another country. Some 100,000 Jews from Germany, and some 300,000 from Austria-Hungary, were signed up to fight for their country, with the result that Jews were fighting Jews! The irony of that situation will not escape any of us, especially as their efforts would count for nothing in the face of the powerful Nazi persecution that was soon to come.

The final section of the exhibition explored the legacy of the war in the Jewish community. A need for public remembrance and commemoration led to public memorials and ultimately the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX) and their Annual Remembrance Ceremony at the Cenotaph. Also on display was the British Jewry Book of Honour which lists names of Jews who served and was compiled in part to counter the claims of anti-Semites who railed against Jews as 'shirkers' who had not played their part in the war.

The exhibition was cleverly put together and there was indeed something for everyone. Sadly the exhibition finished on August 14th, well before the publication of this issue of the Star, but that should not deter the esteemed Star readership from visiting the most impressive Jewish Museum and indeed the Jewish Military Museum with their wonderful core displays and ever-changing exhibits.



Jewish World Recruitment poster. Courtesy of the British Library



Poet and painter Isaac Rosenberg. Courtesy of the Isaac Rosenberg Literary Estate

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk

Nearest tube station Camden Town, a three minutes' walk.
Opening Hours Sunday – Thursday 10.00am – 5.00pm,
Friday 10.00am – 2.00pm. Telephone: 020 7284 7384

www.ajex.org.uk

Jewish Military Museum
Shield House, Harmony Way, London NW4 2BZ
Opening Hours by appointment. Telephone: 020 8201 5656

Norman and Lennie Berger's father Alex served in the Jewish Legion in WW1. The family have kindly provided these pictures to be reproduced in the Star.



The solo picture is of Alex Berger and the book cover features him at the right of the front rank of soldiers.



My Father - **Louis Ostrovsky** - fought in the Russo-Japanese war 1904-1905. In 1910 he came to Edinburgh with his wife to settle here. At the start of the First World War in 1914 he was called up and told he had the option to return to Russia to fight with the Russian army or join the British army. Not surprisingly he opted for the British army. He was sent to the Sherwood Foresters regiment in Sunderland to the Quartermaster's store - there as a tailor he proved very useful. After his discharge at the end of the war, he applied for British nationality, reckoning that if he was good enough to be in the British army, he was good enough to be a British citizen. His application was granted.

Berl Osborne

The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre would welcome further stories, documents, photographs, medals and memorabilia regarding Scottish Jews in the First World War. The Archives Centre will be holding a First World War centenary event at Maccabi Centre in Giffnock, Glasgow on Sunday 16 November 2014. Further details from info@sjac.org.uk



NES HARIM

FIELD AND FOREST EDUCATION CENTRE

HOSTING CHILDREN FROM THE NEGEV



In response to the situation in the Negev where residents often face an almost unbearable level of security, related anxiety and stress, we will host groups of children whose families are regularly under missile attack from Gaza at the JNF KKL Nes Harim Field and Forest Educational Centre in the Jerusalem Hills.



The children are chosen in co-operation with local community workers in an effort to reach those most in need of respite and those unable to organise or finance such activities by themselves.



The children will spend several nights at the centre and participate in numerous educational and social activities including tours of Jerusalem, visit sites of interest and a forest orienteering programme.

This will give them relief from the tension and fear that often dominate their lives.

A Break from the Missiles



**JNF KKL Scotland is an independent Committee within the worldwide
JNF KKL Family raising funds in Scotland exclusively for JNF KKL Projects in Israel**

Holocaust Education Trust Reception at Scottish Parliament – 24 April

Edward Green

In the early evening of Thursday 24th April, The Holocaust Education Trust (HET) held a reception at the Scottish Parliament. This event, which is now in its third year, was held to promote awareness of the Holocaust Education Trust's important work especially within schools throughout the United Kingdom. The event specifically recognises the important contribution made by the Trust's Youth Ambassadors.

There was a good showing of Members of the Scottish Parliament with the event being hosted by Ken Macintosh MSP. Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, spoke about his own experience of visiting the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau with the Trust and the impact it had on him. During his speech, he also confirmed the Scottish Government's most welcome commitment to funding the "Lessons from Auschwitz" project

in Scotland. Karen Pollock MBE, the Chief Executive of The Holocaust Education Trust, also spoke most movingly and impressively.

The HET would welcome any readers of The Star who may have an interest in their work and who would like to be included in next year's event in Holyrood. Please contact the writer if you wish an introduction to be effected.



L to R: Edward Green, Janis Milligan, Ephraim Borowski, Cllr Eric Milligan, Karen Pollock MBE, Maryla Green, Ken MacIntosh MSP



L to R: Jonathan Kish, Philip Oppenheim, Rosie Oppenheim and Steven Gruneberg



Michael Adler and Elaine Samuel



L to R: Steven Hyams, Jackie Taylor, Raymond Taylor, Eve Oppenheim and Susan Hyams

Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue – presentation by Lena Posner-Körösi 11 May 2014

Janet Mundy

For its fourth meeting, the Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue went international, and was delighted to welcome Lena Posner-Körösi, President of the Stockholm Jewish Community and the Official Council of Jewish Communities in Sweden.



Lena Posner-Körösi

While her title may sound formidable, Lena herself is most definitely not – rather an engaging and very approachable personality with a very positive attitude towards life. Feedback from the large audience present was in agreement that she was “inspirational” and we are optimistic that she will indeed inspire us to find a way forward for the Edinburgh Jewish community.

Lena started her talk by revealing that this was her first visit to Scotland (hopefully not her last) and that most Swedish Jews are descended from Holocaust survivors – her father came to Sweden on their equivalent of the Kindertransport. There are about 20,000 Jews in Sweden, mainly in Stockholm but there are also communities in Gothenburg and Malmö. Lena estimates that only around half the total are affiliated. She described the Stockholm Jewish Community as being “like a smaller municipality” offering facilities for all ages from birth to old age, and indeed it is run by an executive made up of three “parties”, holding elections every 3 years.

There are three synagogues, one large Conservative and two smaller Orthodox. Many of the 4,200 members of the Stockholm Jewish Community never set foot in a synagogue, but there are many other organisations and events to engage them. Stockholm is particularly proud of its summer youth camp, which has been running for over 100 years, but Lena says there are cultural and social events virtually every day for all ages and tastes. Young people in particular do not identify with Israel or the Holocaust and most are not religious. Lena feels strongly that it is the responsibility of Jewish leaders to listen to young people’s ideas of how Judaism will remain relevant, starting that “we can be facilitators for young people to create their own smorgasbord”.

Lena confirmed that Jews are well integrated into Swedish society, being one of five national minorities recognised by the state, with rights but also obligations. Like the UK, Jews there face challenges of assimilation and anti-Semitism. Lena addressed both those issues with her typically positive attitude of turning challenges into opportunities. For example, her response to a particular problem of intermarriage was to apply for a licence to officiate at Jewish weddings, and she has held 34 since 2006. Her interest is in the non-Jewish partner, and why they wish to become part of the Jewish community. Her inclusiveness extends to looking at ways to allow Jewish same-sex marriages without requiring rabbis to compromise their principles.

Sweden apparently faces similar problems to Scotland in regard to anti-Semitism. Lena’s attitude is that it is society’s problem, not Judaism’s, and that, while it is obviously an issue, we should be finding ways to spend our money on education, not security. Lifelong education, for Lena, is the key to successful Jewish communities.

Following Lena’s presentation, the audience questions came thick and fast. There was a lot of interest in the practicalities of how the Stockholm Jewish Community operates. Lena responded that physically, the community comprises

the Great Synagogue (Conservative) with the Jewish Community building next door with a hall, meeting rooms and offices for staff and volunteers, including the rabbis. The building that housed the Jewish school and an Orthodox shul has recently been sold, with a new school being constructed, and the shul currently being housed in the community building. There is another small Orthodox shul. Regarding membership fees, Lena astonished the audience by revealing that in Sweden the tax authorities provide information on the earnings of individuals, so that the community can charge 1.2% of gross income for membership. Joining a particular synagogue costs extra, although they are also funded centrally, and all staff are employed by the entire community, including the rabbis. The “government” of 8 members sets the community budget and decides on priorities, accommodating all kinds of needs (that “smorgasbord” concept again!).

Lena had visited the synagogue building in Salisbury Road before coming to the meeting, which she described as “a great place for all sorts of activities” with beautiful facilities which we should all have access to. For her, a community centre is “the air I breathe” and is not only for her but for her children, grandchildren and so on. She presented the Dialogue with a small gift for our “united community building”.

In thanking Lena, Professor Joe Goldblatt drew strands from her talk, and also from the previous presentations given by Jesmond Blumenfeld and Clive Lawton. He presented Lena with a book of Robert Burns poetry. Like Lena, he recognised the internal and external challenges but stated that it’s good to talk these through and create “a new smorgasbord” so that we do not merely survive but thrive.

Since Lena’s visit, the Dialogue has formed a steering group, which has been meeting over the summer to consider next steps. Further information will be available as soon as possible.

WHISKY TASTING, COURTESY OF RABBI ROSE

At the Dialogue event on 11 May Michael Temkin announced the start of special events for younger members of the community.

The Star has been told that these events were launched with a whisky tasting at Rabbi Rose's house, Rabbi Rose being a well-known whisky aficionado. The Star has received a picture of the young people enjoying this event, hopefully to be the start of many. It was a great success, to judge by the happy smiles (or was that the whisky?).



Happy smiles at the Scotch Whisky tasting event

EHC'S YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Micheline Brannan

On Monday 5 May, the annual Yom HaZikaron Service was held at EHC, followed by an Israeli buffet at the home of Rabbi Rose to start our Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration.

I was able to take a number of pictures of this event. The following day, Tuesday 6 May, there was a family celebration at EHC with games and a buffet, mainly aimed at families with children. Sadly I was not able to attend this event owing to work commitments but I have heard good reports. Hilary Rifkind prepared a wonderful Israeli themed buffet, while the Israeli mums ran activities for those who attended.



At the Yom HaZikaron Service – men's section



At the Yom HaZikaron Service – ladies' section



Guests enjoy an Israeli buffet at Rabbi Rose's home



Rabbi Rose addresses the guests on Yom HaAtzmaut



Elaine Levy on welcome duty



The fire show with 3 volunteers holding torches



Peter Bennett teaches grand-daughter Jay to take aim



Ronen with Noah, and Jonathan Adler

LAG B'OMER EXTRAVAGANZA! SUNDAY 18 MAY

Micheline Brannan

SCoJeC, Enjoy and EHC joined together, with the financial support of Forestry Commission Scotland and the Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust, to hold a Lag B'Omer Extravaganza at Vogrie Country Park, Gorebridge, Midlothian – a first for the Jewish Community in Scotland.

Coaches were supplied from Edinburgh and Glasgow with a nominal charge. Picnics were provided on the coaches and a kosher barbecue was served at the site once everyone had enjoyed the varied activities on offer. One highlight was the making of bows which were then used for an archery competition with varied degrees of success for the participants and infinite patience by their Forestry Commission trainers. The fire juggler was also a star attraction with his patter, audience involvement and feats of courage throwing his fiery torches about (don't try this at home). Many thanks and congratulations go to everyone involved in a wonderful day. Without being invidious, the Star would like to single out Carol Levstein for liaising with everyone on behalf of the Edinburgh contingent and Fiona Frank of SCoJeC for masterminding the event.



Adam Wadler, Philip Wadler, Catherine Lyons and Leora Wadler



Hannah and Noah



Einan Gardi, Arnold Rifkind, Hilary Rifkind, Rabbi Rose and Peter Bennett



Gidona Henderson with twins



Jonny Danzig and Benjamin Griffin

Kazia of Forestry Commission made this sign - knowing no Hebrew



At the Rhododendron – Michael Temkin, Janet Mundy, Rabbi David Rose, Tina Atad-Leppanan, Eli Atad and Jo Kish



Making dream catchers



Ernest Levy: A Life In Music

EDINBURGH CENTRAL LIBRARY THURSDAY 29 MAY 2014

"If you want peace, you have to declare a war on revenge."

Micheline Brannan

With these words the late Revd Ernest Levy z"l summed up the lessons of his horrendous wartime experiences under the Nazis.



Lesley Danzig and Gillian Raab

When the Jews of Bratislava fled to the border in the face of Nazi-sanctioned antisemitism, his family were permitted to cross into Hungary because his father was Hungarian. The family lived in Budapest until the Nazi invasion of 1944, following which they were rounded up, and Ernest spent the rest of the War in 6 different concentration camps, finally being liberated more dead than alive in Belsen. His dream of becoming an opera singer was thwarted as a result of his sufferings, which robbed him of the stamina, but he was able to train as a cantor, while at the same time qualifying as a civil engineer. He eventually made his way to Glasgow with Kathy, his wife, another survivor, where the couple lived for many years with their children Judith and Robert. Ernest is best known to the Jewish Community for his life in music as the Cantor of Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue. He was also well-known to the wider world as an indefatigable witness to the Holocaust, writing two books about his experiences, and making countless speeches and



Librarian Bronwen Brown speaking, with Mike Wade in the background



Maurice Naftalin

presentations to Jewish and non-Jewish audiences. When the first ever national Holocaust Memorial Day was held in 2001, it was Ernest Levy's story that formed the basis of the educational package issued to all primary schools in Scotland.

In 2010 the Levy family donated an archive of books, videos, CDs, DVDs, manuscript music and Hebrew text to Edinburgh City Libraries, and this is now held as one of the Central Library's special collections. They have constructed a travelling exhibition which is available for loan – a fitting tribute to an historic witness and radiant personality that we in Scotland were privileged to have among us for many years.

Librarian Bronwen Brown introduced the exhibition and the event, the main purpose of which was to pay tribute to Ernest through words and music. The Glasgow Jewish Singers conducted by Eddie Binnie, with pianist Michael Barnett (a former choirboy trained by Ernest at GNHC), sang a varied programme of liturgical music including Ernest's own compositions, highlights of Chazanut and more popular treatments. The obvious enjoyment of conductor and singers added to the audience's pleasure, and Eddie Binnie had the mixed non-Jewish and Jewish audience joining in a rousing Adon Olam to finish the programme.

The speaker was journalist Mike Wade, who only met Ernest for 3 hours, when the latter was already ill in hospital and nearing death. This was a life-changing 3 hours for Mike Wade. Ernest, with little regard for his own needs, shared many reminiscences. One story was how he had picked up a sardine tin, discarded by a camp guard after his meal, and on finding a little oil left in the tin, and some string lying around, he had improvised a Chanukah lamp and lit it secretly in the dormitory at night, leading his fellow inmates in the singing of Maoz Tsur. Ernest had once spoken at Canonmills Baptist Church in Edinburgh. On that occasion he had brought out a sardine tin



The Glasgow Jewish Singers



Eddie Binnie conducts the Glasgow Jewish Singers

and some string, and showed them how he had lit the lamp. He then sang Maoz Tsur and remarked that Jesus himself may have heard this hymn when Chanukah was celebrated in the Temple. This was an example of how he forged a relationship with his audiences.



Pianist Michael Barnett, with the Exhibition in the background

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Bronwen Brown. The choir mingled with the audience and the Edinburgh attendees were delighted to chat with Dr Ian Leifer, whose voice is as sweet and as strong as when he regularly davened before the Amud here in Edinburgh. It was a moving and enthralling occasion and we are grateful to the Central Library for holding the event as part of their Reads Series.



Susan and Steven Hyams

Please contact the Music Library to view the archive and to borrow the travelling exhibition on the life of Ernest Levy – Tel 0131 242 8050 central.music.library@edinburgh.gov.uk

WIZO REBUILDING SHATTERED LIVES

**Please give generously
to our New Year Appeal**

wizouk.org/donate
020 7319 9169
scotland@wizouk.org

"My name is Orli and I live in Sderot on a Kibbutz near the border. The last few weeks have been very scary for me. I've spent so much time in the shelter instead of playing outside with my friends. My daddy is in the army, my mummy is so sad. I'm very frightened."



I enclose a Cheque/Charity Voucher for £_____ made payable to WIZOUK
Please charge my Credit Card

☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard ☐ AMEX ☐ CAF Charity Card

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry Date / Security Code

Signature _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Please tick if you require a receipt by email ☐ post ☐

Title _____ Forename _____ Surname _____
Address _____
Postcode _____ Tel No _____
Email _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Please tick

☐ If you are a UK tax payer please tick the box to make every £1 you give worth £1.25 to WIZOUK. I want WIZOUK to treat all donations I have made in the last 4 years and all future donations that I will make from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I have paid or will pay sufficient tax (income/capital gains) to cover the tax that WIZOUK and all charities that I donate to will reclaim for each relevant year. I will inform you should my tax situation alter or if my name or address details change.

☐ No, I am not a UK tax payer. This information will ensure we avoid sending you letters requesting that you complete a Gift Aid Declaration

Please complete this form and return to:
Mrs L Freedman 158 Ayr Road, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 6EET: 020 7319 9169 E: scotland@wizouk.org

RH2014 Scot

WIZOUK Registered Charity No: 1125012 Registered Company No: 6634748 Registered Office: WIZOUK Charles House 308-310 Finchley Road NW3 5JJ

The Chief Rabbi's visit to Edinburgh on 10th June 2014

The Chief Rabbi at the Scottish Parliament

Micheline Brannan

As the official website states:

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis is the 11th Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. He is only the 11th Chief Rabbi to take office since the office was introduced in 1704. Chief Rabbi Mirvis was installed on 1 September 2013 in an historic ceremony attended by HRH The Prince of Wales, the first time that a member of the Royal Family has attended a service for the Installation of a Chief Rabbi.

Rabbi Mirvis has made clear his intention to visit the 137 congregations of his broad parish and in his first 9 months has made good progress. This included

2 visits to Scotland, in May to address the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and to meet the Glasgow Jewish Community, and in June, to address the Scottish Parliament and to meet the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

I have been privileged to hear the Chief Rabbi speak on 3 separate occasions and each time his speech was quite different and original, with lots of humour, all delivered fluently and without any notes. (He does use notes on more formal occasions such as when delivering the Scottish Parliament's Time for Reflection or when speaking to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.) His warmth, his genuine interest in other people and his love of Yiddishkeit radiate around him, whatever company he is in. Each of his visits has been packed with engagements, but he showed no signs of flagging and no loss of enthusiasm however many speeches he made, tricky questions he answered and chats he had to have. His response to questions was always diplomatic, without being evasive. This is a truly exceptional religious leader and we are lucky to have him.

Rabbi Mirvis's lunchtime meeting at the Scottish Parliament was organised by SCoJeC and formally hosted by Ken Macintosh MSP. The invitees included representatives of a wide range of different faiths, as well as all-party representation from within the Parliament, a senior police representative, members of SCoJeC and EHC. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev John Chalmers, also attended.



Ken McIntosh MSP introduces the Chief Rabbi

This signalled the new respect between the Kirk and the Jewish Community that has followed Rabbi Mirvis's address to the General Assembly in May where he made quite clear that there is no compromising on the Jewish Community's support for Israel. This has been an important step in healing the rift caused by the 2013 report "The Inheritance of Abraham? A report on the 'promised land' ", which questioned the Jewish right to the Land.



The Chief Rabbi (centre) with the Moderator of the General Assembly (left) and Ken McIntosh MSP (right)

After a light lunch provided at the Parliament by SCoJeC and catered by Mark's Deli, Rabbi Mirvis addressed the gathering. He focused on the Ten Commandments, the giving of which was celebrated the previous week on Shavuot. He explained that the first 5 are between man and G-d, while the second 5 are between man and man. However commandment 5, to honour your father and mother, is a bridging commandment because it concerns the relationship between man and G-d and man and man. This shows that how we treat our fellow humans is as important in Judaism as our belief in G-d and indeed it is part of our duty to G-d to behave properly to our fellows. In Genesis Chapter 5 verse 1 the Torah states that G-d created man in his image and this means all mankind, not just Jewish people.



Chief Rabbi with Alec Salmond

The rest of the meeting was devoted to wide-ranging questions. The recent murder of 4 people in the Jewish Museum in Belgium was discussed – what should our response be? The

Chief Rabbi stressed the importance of education in challenging racism and prejudice of all sorts. The Moderator asked how to combat aggressive atheism. The Chief Rabbi commented on the trend to push religion out of the public square, for example the banning of wearing religious symbols. He thought that this had gone too far, and felt it reflected the image of religion as a source of restrictions, whereas it should be a source of joy and happiness.

In response to a question about Israel and Palestine, the Chief Rabbi told how he had taken a delegation of 50 Rabbis to Israel to meet with the Israeli Government, the heads of all the political

parties and representatives of the Palestinian Authority. The organisation "Break the Impasse" (consisting of 300 Israeli and West Bank businessmen campaigning for the 2 state solution) had organised a dinner for the group. At each table there was one Israeli and one Palestinian business leader. An initiative such as this showed there was some hope that the old stereotypes were breaking down and there were people on each side ready to reach out for peace. Sister Isabel Smyth asked about the joint prayers organised by the Pope and attended by President Peres and President Mahmoud Abbas in Rome. The Chief Rabbi agreed with the enormous symbolic value of this meeting and said that it had been reinforced by Cardinal Vincent Nichols inviting the Israeli Ambassador, Daniel Taub and the London representative of the Palestinian Authority, Manuel Hassassian, to joint prayers at the Archbishop's house in Westminster.

Closing the discussion session (and responding to a question from Paul Spicker of the Dundee Jewish Community) the Chief Rabbi said encouraging words about SCoJeC's project of reaching out to smaller communities all over Scotland. When approaching the challenges faced by small communities as

ambassadors of Judaism, he recommended education as the way forward. The resources of the internet mean that today we do not need to have the knowledge in our own heads – a virtual tour of a synagogue, mosque or temple should be possible to provide in any community. And warmth and friendship will go a long way. At a recent interfaith encounter, Shavuot cheesecake was the real ice-breaker.

The Chief Rabbi then went on to lead Time for Reflection in the Parliament chamber. The full text of his remarks can be found on:

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14v_chief_rabbi/chief_rabbi.html

or

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9235&mode=html#iob_83265

After leading Time for Reflection, the Chief Rabbi proceeded to meet all the Party Leaders in the Scottish Parliament, including the First Minister.

Chief Rabbi praises Edinburgh Jewish Community



Dinner in the Sukkah before EHC meeting

The Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, completed his busy day of engagements in Edinburgh by addressing Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. He explained that the Sages have given five different answers to the question 'What is the most important verse in the Torah?' and their answers point to five pillars upon which Jewish life depends. These are: spreading the love of G-d, loving our fellow human beings, within and outwith the Jewish community, regular observance of the mitzvot, with total commitment, and

Jewish education for all age groups, which has become so much easier with all the resources of the internet at our disposal.

The Chief Rabbi showed no fatigue after a full day of engagements and his warmth and enthusiasm were compelling, as he praised the Edinburgh Jewish Community for living out the values he had outlined, which can be challenging for a small community. He said that he has visited the majority of his 137 congregations in



Mickey Cowen JP gives the vote of thanks to the Chief Rabbi at EHC

the course of his first nine months in office and will aspire to visit all of them in the near future, and to return a second and third time.

The meeting ended with the presentation of a book about Edinburgh by the Chair of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation's Board of Management, Raymond Taylor, and a vote of thanks by Hon Life Vice President, Mickey Cowen JP.



The Chief Rabbi speaks to EHC



Raymond Taylor's presentation to the Chief Rabbi on behalf of EHC



A packed audience for the Chief Rabbi's address to EHC members

PRE-SHAVUOT COFFEE MORNING

Lesley Danzig

The pre Shavuot Coffee Morning was a great success with a fiercely competitive cake auction combined with a chance to sit and chat with friends over coffee and sandwiches.

Cheesecakes this year came in a variety of guises from chocolate cheesecake brownies, marble chocolate cheesecake to German baked cheesecake and pineapple cheesecake. This is to say nothing of the other delicious offerings.

38 people attended, accompanied by toddlers and babies. Just over £330 was made for much-needed funds for the Hall. Thanks to all who baked, sent donations in absentia, helped to set up, serve and clear up afterwards. A big thank you to everyone who came. We hope you enjoyed the morning and look forward to seeing you and your friends at the next coffee morning in September.



Sigal Finlay with son Leo



L to R Rabbi Rose, Howard Kahn, Edward Green with one of the Henderson twins and Jonathan Kish



Gershon Mendick and David Ellison man the bookstall



The cakes that were up for auction



Carol Levstein and husband, Tom Griffin



L to R Hannah Cohn-Simmen, Judy Gilbert, and Shari Cohn-Simmen



Gidona Henderson chats to Sharon Wiener-Ogilvie

SCoJeC Creative Writing Day

Janet Mundy

Inspired by SCoJeC's creative writing day, to share experiences of immigration as part of Scottish Refugee Week, I decided to record my impressions in haikus.



Strudel welcome

*Creative writing day.
Three authors, keen audience
All eager to learn.*

*Greeted with strudel,
Serenaded with klezmer,
Tour of synagogue.*

*Introduce each other.
Evacuees and students
Hear many stories*

*Poetry with Tracy.
Non-fiction? Consult Ellen.
David for fiction.*



Synagogue tour



Fiona Frank and musicians

*Show, don't tell, we're told.
So "Scotland's a library"
To African eyes.*

*Fiona serves lunch.
Bagels, salmon and pastries –
A Jewish welcome.*

*Afternoon. New groups.
Mine explores work and senses.
Touch – keyboards. Sound –
phones.*

*Come together to
Exchange impressions of day,
Hear authors reading.*



Fiona and tutors



Some of the participants

*My experience?
Joy at seeing visitors
Enjoy our building.*

Celebrating 125 Years of the Edinburgh 'Lit'

Charles Raab

The 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society ('The Lit') was celebrated in great style in March with a symposium entitled *Enlightening Jews?*. More than 100 people enjoyed a full day of lectures, discussions, audiovisual displays, and reflection on a wide variety of topics and themes.

Preceded a few days earlier by a highly illuminating lecture on the current Israeli-Palestinian situation given by the journalist Jonathan Freedland, the symposium followed the Lit's tradition, offering literary, philosophical, historical, current affairs, musical and culinary presentations by an impressive list of visiting and local speakers, as well as panelists who discussed Being Jewish in the 21st Century. There was plenty to debate, think about, and take away for further investigation and enjoyment, and there was a display of Tony Gilbert's imaginative posters relating to Lit talks in previous years. The culmination of the day was a special showing of Diana Groó's film, *Regina*, the moving story of the

world's first female Rabbi, after which its producer Georg Weisz led a discussion about the making and significance of the film.

Those who attended the anniversary symposium left with a sense that the venerable Lit remains a vibrant Edinburgh institution, with an appeal beyond its borders, that will continue to mount annual programmes of fascinating talks and events far into the future.



Hannah Holtschneider (R) introduces the day



Andrew Barker



Maurice Naftalin introduces Jonathan Freedland



Jonathan Freedland's audience



Heather Valencia's session on Avraham Sutzkever



Bernard Jackson



Jonathan Freedland speaks at New College



Bernard Jackson in class



Mia Spiro in class



Michael Goldfarb



Ian Gamse's session



Rabbi Natan Levy makes a point in the panel discussion, with (L to R), Rabbi David Rose, Rabbi Mark Solomon and Gillian Raab (in the chair)



Colin Shindler



Rabbi Natan Levy with Fiona Brodie (L) and Rabbi Mark Solomon (R)



Rabbi Natan Levy's session



Rabbi Norman Solomon

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

Frank and Jackie Abramson
25 Moss Close
Pinner, Middlesex

Jonathan and Susie Adler
Samuel and Ruth

Michael Adler and Sue Fyvel

Ena Amitai
8b Nitza Boulevard
Netanya, Israel

Joe and Margaret Aronson
15 Arden Street
Edinburgh

James and Sally Barker
(nee Cowen) Samuel and Sadie
London

Clarice Been
80 Willifield Way
London

Shirley and Peter Bennett

Barbara and Leslie Bennie

Avril and Norman Berger
3 Kirk Park
Edinburgh

Lennie and Marcia Berger
Flat 25, Southview Gardens
Schools Hill, Cheadle

Allen and Anna Bloom (nee Brown)
450 Hounslow Avenue
Toronto, Canada

Doreen and Laurence Bowman,
16 Dunsmore Way
Bushey

Micheline, Duncan, David, Shrutee
and Ananya Brannan
31/3 Rattray Grove, Edinburgh

Douglas and Rosalind Brodie
25 Park Crescent
Elstree, Herts

Norma Brodie and family
Flat 3, 4c Mayfield Gardens
Edinburgh

Angela and James Brydon

Christine and Dave Burns

Jo and Joyce Capek (nee Stoller)
and family

Andrew and Kathy Caplan,
Benjamin, James and Zoe

Ian and Rachel Caplan,
Olivia and Daniel

Sandra and Sidney Caplan

Shari, Martin and Hannah
Cohn-Simmen

Kenneth and Irene Collins
Israel

John and Hazel Cosgrove
4, Avenue Mansions
Finchley Road, Hampstead

Nick and Caroline Cosgrove,
Juliette, James and Charlotte
3 Hollyview Close, London

Evelyn and Jack Cowan
Newton Mearns
Glasgow

Andrea and Malcolm Cowan
49/5 Mortonhall Road
Edinburgh

Elliot, Caroline, Danielle
and Olivia Cowan
31 Harrowes Meade, Edgware

Carole and Mickey Cowen
58 Fountainhall Road
Edinburgh

Joyce Cram

Lesley, John, Samuel,
Benjamin and Jonathan Danzig
7 East Castle Road, Edinburgh

Sylvia and John Donne

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

Betsy Dorfman

Dov (Bertie) and Elizabeth Dorfman
19/32 Shlomo Hamelech
Netanya, Israel

Maurice and Sara Dorfman,
Jerusalem, Israel

Fay, Max and Rodney Dorfman

Rachel and Bernard Dorfman
and family

Norman Dorfman

David Ellison
1/10 East Parkside
Edinburgh

Eli, Tiina, Boaz, Hannah and Leo

David, Gillian, Richard and
Jonathan Field

Barry and Ruth Fluss
Haifa
Israel

Ruth and David Fluss
49 Parkside Drive
Edgware

Sev Fluss, Nadia, Joel
and Karin and family
Geneva, Switzerland

Martin, Tammy, Jude, Karen and
Jonathan Fransman
41 Morningside Park, Edinburgh

Caroline and Lennie Freedman

Adam and Marla Gamoran
1755 York Avenue
New York, USA

Einan and Merav Gardi
Omri, Lotem and Shlomit

Judy and Anthony Gilbert
and family

Arnold and June Glass

Lord Julian Goodman
Newington
Edinburgh

Kate and Ronny Goodwin
2 Mayfield Gardens
Edinburgh

Edward and Gillian Gordon
55 Rodney Road
West Bridgford, Nottingham

Frances Gordon
14 Woodcock Dell Ave
Kenton, Middlesex

Gerald Gordon

Maryla and Edward Green
and Freddie

Rebekah Gronowski

Rev Dr George and
Mrs Elizabeth Grubb, 10 Wellhead
Close, South Queensferry

Stephen Gruneberg

Gidona and Robert Henderson,
Kerr and Oren

Irene and David Hyams
and Gary

Susan and Steven Hyams,
James and Amanda

Rosalyn and Bernard Jackson

Howard, Valerie
and Jacqueline Kahn
27 Blinkbonny Road, Edinburgh

David, Sheryl and Cameron Kaplan

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

Cassie, Jonty, Lily and Jack Karro
Melbourne, Australia

Lilian Kessly (nee Dorfman)
27 Plantation Street
Mervona, Western Australia

Isobel King
Melrose

Jonathan Kish

Abby, Joel, Deborah,
Saul, Joshua and Eliora Korn
Ra'anana, Israel

Ian and Joan Leifer
and family

Kleile (nee Fluss) Lerner
21 Massada Street
Ramat Gan, Israel

Anita Levinson and family
3 Ross Road,
Edinburgh

Carol, Tom, Maurice and
Benjamin,

Emma and Bert Levy
34 Ruthven Avenue
Glasgow

Elaine Levy, Eddy Maher,
Sarah and Clare

Brian and Esther Levy
(nee Weisman) 195 Stanmore Hill
Stanmore, Middlesex

David, Elaine, Daniel and Michael
Litman, Flat 2, Heron's Court
Shenley Hill, Radlett

T.R. Lowrie
11 Greenhill Place
Edinburgh

Sara Lurie and Matthew Shaps

Sharon and Mike Lurie
Kate and Debra
10 Torr Lane, Plymouth

Sheva and Ann Lurie
26 South Lauder Road
Edinburgh

Irene and Philip Mason
and family

Rosa and Clara Massie
Flat 12 Homecairn House
2 Goldenacre Terrace, Edinburgh

David and Anita Mendelssohn
23 Braid Hills Road
Edinburgh

Harold and Esther Mendelssohn

Roy, Meaghan and Archie
Mendelssohn
Melbourne, Australia

Gershon Mendick

Janet, Rowan,
Grant and Martin

Michele, David, Sarah-Beth and
Katie Neville

Geoffrey & Lorna Nicholsby and
family, Dundonald, Achnacreabeag,
North Connel, by Oban

Eve Oppenheim and family
10 Ravelston Dykes
Edinburgh.

Fay and Harold Ordman
187 Springwell Road
Hounslow, Middlesex

Clarice and Berl Osborne
56/2 Spylaw Road
Edinburgh

Charles and Gillian Raab
and family

Greta and Jack Rabinowitz
Toronto, Canada

Stanley, Elaine, Aaron and Joel
Raffel and Elsa, 31 Leamington
Terrace, Edinburgh

Hilary and Arnold Rifkind and
Richard

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו

Michael and Sharon Rifkind
Eli, Natan, Avigayil and Maytal
Teaneck NJ, USA

Malcolm and Edith Rifkind and
family

Francoise Robertson

Rabbi David Rose

Phyllis Rosenberg (nee Stoller)
27 Hillside Gardens
Edgware, Middlesex

Alec and Pearl Rubenstein
16 Hillpark Crescent
Edinburgh

Nat and Ena Rubinstein
Manchester

Brenda and Julius Rubin
Netanya
Israel

Jonathan, Molly, Ben and Joanna
Seckl

Juliet Segal
Glasgow

Rabbi Shalom Shapira
Ra'anana, Israel

Pearl and Ian Shein
37/4 Orchard Brae Avenue
Edinburgh

Vivienne Shreir (nee Goldberg)

Valerie and Bill Simpson
3 Hallhead Road
Edinburgh

Adrian,Belita, Craig, Dean and
Emily Simons

Rabbi Professor Danny and Debbie
Sinclair, Noam, Yonatan and Orit
and the Bermans, Jerusalem, Israel

Judy Sischy
and family

Rachael Skop

Carolyn and Mervyn Smith
43 Shirley Avenue
Cheam, Surrey

Joyce and Jonny Sperber
Avigal, Mikael and Adina

Charles and Vivienne Simenoff
Prestwich, Manchester

Jackie, Raymond, Lawrence
and Michael Taylor

Carole Weinberg
6 Lyntonvale Avenue
Gatley, Cheadle, Manchester

Hilary, Graham, Martin and Laura
West Pinner, Harrow

Madeleine Whiteson
28 Mayfields
Wembley Park, London

Wiener-Sherratt family

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

Syd and Paula Zoltie

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2014

Lord Julian Goodman

Well I have to admit that this year's Festival Fringe opened amid a fair bit of controversy. With the Gaza conflict topping the headlines every day, once again Israeli shows were the targets of protestors and bullies, telling people what they could and couldn't see, listen to or support.

This caused mayhem for other shows and performers, forcing venues to cancel the Israeli shows, rather than effectively police the protests or uphold the law against illegal boycotts. However, it was comforting to read that most of the performers affected by the disruptions were totally against the demonstrations and the forced censorship of the Israeli shows, which was totally against the ethics of the Arts and the spirit of the Festival and Fringe, much to the shame of the city. However despite this unpleasant start, there were still plenty of shows of Jewish and Israeli interest to see, and I feel I must make special mention of Jay Events, and individual members of the community who shared their information through them, to inform people of a considerable number of shows of Jewish interest in the Fringe. I have been suggesting this approach to various people with the said information for many years, and it was lovely to see this happen this year through the goodwill of a few people using their own initiative. I'm sure it was of great assistance to many more people, in helping them to choose what to go and see from such a huge programme of events. This review is just the best of what I was lucky to find!

The first show I went to see was **Making Light** with **Naomi Paul** at *The Space @ Surgeons Hall*. It was great to see this performer returning to the Fringe. Her show was jam-packed with her usual mix of Jewish family history, socially awkward situations and political satire, presented in anecdotal form, humorous songs and wonderful deadpan delivery. There was a welcome familiarity to some of the material, and plenty of new jokes and

stories to entertain the regular fans. The balance was just right, and it was a lovely way to start the Fringe.



Steve Jameson aka Sol Bernstein

The next show was another welcome return after far too long an absence. **Sol Bernstein: Still Standing** at *Just The Tonic at The Tron*. "After 25 years of semi-retirement, playing the nursing homes of Great Britain, Sol Bernstein is back where he belongs, performing in nightclubs to drunks." **Steve Jameson** brought his wonderful portrayal of an alteh kakkeh, yiddisher stand-up comedian back to Edinburgh, to the delight of all his audience. He took us on a tour of his life, through immigration, the Borscht Belt, the 2nd World War and his show-biz connexions. There were loads of extra Jewish jokes thrown in for good measure, and the time just flew by for his audience. It's true that his material is a bit schmutzedik, but I've always found that the most ribald comedy is much more acceptable to everybody if the punchlines are in Yiddish! He had a total cross-section of society watching him, of varying ages, nationalities and other attributes, and not a single person was offended. They were all totally tickled by this foul mouthed old kvetch, who had them eating out of the palm of his hand, even more so when he had them in his sights. Once again, the man voted Jewish Comedian of the Year (by Hamas), had me geshraying with laughter, along with everybody else!



Lizzie Roper

I followed this show with a bit of drama at the *Gilded Balloon*. **Julie Birchill: Absolute Cult** was a one woman show, performed brilliantly by **Lizzie Roper**. This was a story of the down-on-her-luck columnist being offered silly money to appear on *Celebrity Big Brother*. On arrival home from a holiday, Julie Birchill, vodka bottle in hand, flops onto her Israeli flag decorated sofa, and wades through her voicemail messages weighing up her options, while recounting to the audience her battles with editors, public opinion, her conversion to Judaism and learning Hebrew, relationships and marriage, all with brutal honesty about her drinking and drug taking. Although quite serious, it was choc-full of deliciously dark humour, and totally engaging. Lizzie's characterization was spot on, and it had me fully captivated until the final reveal of whether or not she'd accept the offer.



Yisrorel Campbell – Circumcise Me

My next show was also at the *Gilded Balloon*, in the very same venue.

Circumcise Me was an extraordinary story by **Yisroel Campbell**, about his Irish, Italian, Catholic, American upbringing, his battle with alcoholism, and his three, yes *three*, conversions to Judaism! This was a fascinating tale about him growing up in America, totally abusing alcohol as a youngster, leading to a car accident, but a very interesting epiphany. His first conversion was to Reform Judaism. The 1958 book, *Exodus* by Leon Uris led him to Israel. The various stages of his life lead him on to Conservative Judaism, and finally Orthodox Judaism. This led to having THREE brisses! Enough to make anyone's eyes water! Not only was it an incredible story, told by a man schvitzing on stage dressed in Chassidic garb, but it was told with such warmth and humour, and a deep passion for Yiddishkeit and Israel. His experiences of loss in the terrorist suicide bombings, along with his other life experiences, I think will have given many Nisht fun Unzerer viewers a greater understanding of Jewish and Israeli life than they'd have got from just knowing other Jewish people, and the beauty of it was that this was a very funny show, but with a really heart-warming story behind it.



Lynn Ruth Miller – Not Dead Yet

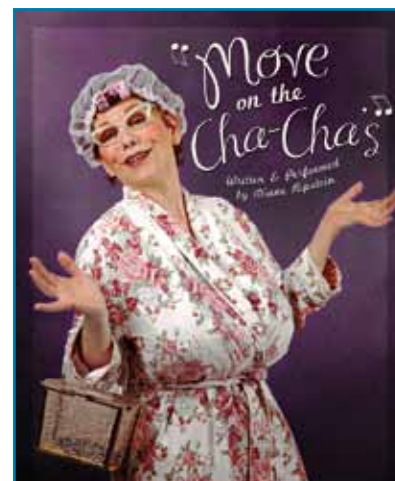
Another welcome return was **Lynn Ruth Miller – Not Dead Yet** at the C Nova. As per usual, Lynn Ruth was doing several shows a day, including her Burlesque performances, but *Not Dead Yet* was a return to her anecdotal, song enhanced, road trip through the 80 years of her life so far. Although similar to the first show I saw her perform here many years ago, this one was a more enhanced production with a resident pianist to accompany her, and many more stories about growing up with her family, her school experiences, the difference between her mother's cooking and her bobbe's haimishe fayre to name

but a few of the topics. We learned more about her father, her adolescence, her near fatal car accidents and her brief, but doomed marriage, but most interestingly, the experiences that ultimately shaped her life. There was plenty of Yiddish humour, but in contrast to her other comedy shows, it was a bittersweet, '*rozhinkes mit mandlen*' performance, full of the special charm and warmth of her early story telling shows, and was a joy to listen to, and watch.



Over in the Free Fringe, another old favourite was appearing at *Heroes @ Bob & Miss Behave's Bookshop*. **Miss Behave's Game Show** was an irreverent romp through the various game shows that are such a mainstay of the broadcasting schedules and the games prevalent on every smart communications device. Aided by her glamorous, hirsute, yet undeniably camp assistant Harriet (Harry), Miss Behave split the audience into two groups, iPhone & other smartphone users, and pitted them against each other through various different games, using either speedy responses on their mobile phones, or quick fire responses to the questions. The cheap cardboard sets were a perfect offset to the sparkly Miss Behave, and the very silly games allowed her clever humour to engage the whole audience in an hour of joyful mayhem.

My next show was **Move On the Cha-Cha's** at the *Space @ Surgeons Hall*. **Diane Ripstein** presented her one-woman show as a dance and physical theatre performance, but it was much more than that. This was the story of her life through dance and music, presented by the larger



Diane Ripstein

than life character of The Bubbe, (thanks to some very quick changes), and setting the scene to the strains of *Bei Mir Bist du Schoen*, Diane took us on another '*rozhinkes mit mandlen*' style road trip through her many experiences. Growing up in Montreal and moving to America, we met her various family members, experienced her parents' romance and 50 years of marriage, Diane's passion for dance starting at ballet school as a young girl, developing through bop and salsa, and her relationships through the years. We experienced her mother's failing health after being widowed, and Diane's own sad loss of her partner, however, it was her parents' joy of dance that she inherited, that kept this a heart-warming and humorous tale of growing old gracefully but with a zest for life, and enjoying what the rhythm of life has to offer.



Mush and Me

Over at the *Underbelly @ Cowgate*, I saw **Mush and Me**. This was a new piece of drama, exploring what happens when a Muslim man and a Jewish woman, who meet at work, reluctantly fall in love. A lawyer in training, her work at the telesales company is only temporary, but is thrown together with her new colleague because of reorganisation in

the office. At first there is some animosity between the two characters as they battle for sales over the telephone in their office. The woman, wanting to leave early on Fridays to make it home to her parents in time for Shabbos, strikes a deal for being covered in exchange for her lunch of homemade hummous. Through the playing of audio interviews, we are given greater insights into the two characters, and their struggles with family disapproval. We see their relationship falteringly develop as Gabrielle's father becomes ill with cancer, and she needs more support. Mush's character has an interestingly complex background, being on the verge of following his cousin into a life of crime, before rediscovering Islam and attempting to become a better person. As their relationship is carried out in total secrecy, it is Mush who pushes for more honesty and a desire to tell their families. This leads to a confrontation which forces Gabrielle to confide in her comatose father. It is at the shivah house that she finally invites Mush in for a cup of tea to meet her family. There were a few stereotypical North London Jewish moments, which I find never feel familiar to Jewish people from the provinces, but that aside, the story was very engaging and brilliantly performed.

The next show I saw was an absolute gem. **Jess Robinson: Mighty Voice** was on at the *Pleasance Dome*. The star of BBC1's *Dead Ringers* and *Impressions Show* brought her own Cabaret Show to the Fringe, and accompanied by Kirsty Newton, did not disappoint. The show opened with Jess singing "Feeling Good" from



Jess Robinson

the back of the venue as she made her way onto the stage, and boy, she certainly did have a mighty voice! For the next hour we were treated to Hollywood stars and pop icons singing some great songs, but with a twist here and there. There were two giant wheels, one with celebrities' faces, and another with songs. Thanks to this random generator we had the likes of Davina McCall singing *Wonderwall*

and Sonia from *EastEnders* singing *Poker Face*. We learned how she got her mimicry from her mother, who, despite being Jewish, played the organ for Baptist Church. She introduced Jess to musicals, but only let her watch the first half of *The Sound of Music* as a child, as she thought the Nazis would be too upsetting. She performed the whole of this musical in under two minutes, a Kate Bush concert in under three minutes, and Wagner's *Ring Cycle* in under one second! She taught a male member of the audience how to impersonate Liza Minnelli, much to the delight and amusement of everyone else, and gave a star-studded show full of very clever wit and humour. The finale started off with Shirley Bassey in a spangly dress singing *I Am What I Am*, but then became a mammoth performance of over 25 superstars, including Marilyn Monroe, Miss Piggy, Lady Gaga, Judy Garland, Edith Piaf, Billie Holiday, Lesley Garrett, Dolly Parton, Barbra Streisand, Liza Minnelli and, Jess's mum! This was followed by a much deserved standing ovation from the audience. Another offering from the Free Fringe was the Israeli improvisation group



Lamabati

Lamabati in *Outrageous Courageous and Highly Contagious* at *The Phoenix*.

This small troupe was crammed into a tiny basement on Broughton Street along with the audience, and grilling the audience for short biographies, produced a routine based on Eduardo from Milan, a 16-year-old High School exchange student in Edinburgh, whose favourite thing about the city was Poundland. The story they came up with was very surreal, but remarkably funny, including Eduardo learning to make pizzas, robots from the Czech Republic costing a pound, a wandering Scottish/English accent in Edinburgh Castle and a barn owl that kept turning up from nowhere. Other routines based on the submitted desires of the audience included a flea market where a priceless treasure was discovered, a ventriloquist act with a member of the

audience, a puppet trades union and, thanks to yours truly, a trip to Israel in an airship. There were other quick fire joke routines, and this talented troupe's very speedy responses, including the musical soundtracks they provided, caused much hilarity and mirth.

My final show of this year's Fringe was **Alex Edelman: Millennial** at the *Pleasance Courtyard*. Finding this show was a last minute piece of serendipity, and I'm so glad I did. This New York based young comedian was playing to



Alex Edelman

packed venue and this was one of the extra shows that had been put on. He was discussing the role of his "millennial" generation in the world today, and in doing so gave some really rich descriptions of his family life, education and his political volunteering. He was very self-assured and personable, and like many Jewish comics, his self-deprecating humour was absolutely spot on. His one-liners always hit the mark, and he had excellent comic timing. Being an orthodox Jew played a big part in his material, but he had plenty of edgy substance to back it up with. He covered quite a wide range of issues, but skilfully drew them all together in the whole package. Some of the items were gloriously surreal, like his showing how liberal a society Israel is with a true headline from their press, "British Jew Marries Israeli Dolphin"! His anecdotal stories about having a fight with a cup cake shop over a glass of water, and his witnessing of a relationship break-up in Starbucks were a sheer delight. This was his first solo show in Edinburgh, and he deservedly won the Best Newcomer Award at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Despite the ominous tensions at the start of the Fringe, this was a good year for both choice and atmosphere. There was plenty to see, both new and old, and even the *weel kent* faces had plenty of new things to tempt us with. This year though, my five mogen dovids are awarded to **Jess Robinson: Mighty Voice**. Her show simply overflowed with talent, and scored eleven out of ten on the feel good factor!

VALUATIONS · REPAIRS · PURCHASING · WATCHES

GOODWIN'S

FINE JEWELLERY AND SILVER

15-16 QUEENSFERRY STREET
0131 225 4717



106-108 ROSE STREET
0131 220 1230



EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

in association with theguardian

Book Festival

Michael Adler writes: Although there were, undoubtedly, many events at this year's Book Festival that would have been of interest to readers of *The Edinburgh Star*, there were fewer than usual in which the speaker and/or the topic were of specifically Jewish interest. However, the four, very contrasting events reviewed below, are exceptions to this generalisation.

SIMON GARFIELD on 'A LOVE LETTER TO LETTERS', 9TH AUGUST

reviewed by Janet Mundy

There is perhaps very little specifically Jewish about Simon Garfield's last in an 'accidental trilogy' of books lamenting cultural icons we are losing in a digital age. The two previous books – on typefaces and maps – have been followed up by a wonderful book exploring the last 2,000 years of letter writing in a book entitled *To the Letter*. However, there is much of interest to a Jewish audience in this book by an author whose original family name was Garfunkel, and his presentation about the book at the Book Festival this year was a delight. He started with a short public information film about the importance of addressing envelopes clearly, presumably made in the 1950s and starring Terry Thomas as a postman, and showed another clip at the end of his presentation from the recent film 'Her' where Joaquin Phoenix's character dictates a letter to his computer then prints it out in imperfect 'handwriting'. These demonstrate how much has changed in the last half-century, and his book laments these changes, where biographers and historians, as well as individuals, will no longer have the rich source of written correspondence to help understand personalities and relationships. As someone who has recently waded through decades of family letters following two bereavements, I can only agree that email, texts and social media will never be able to replace the impact of a handwritten letter inside a postmarked envelope.

The subtitle of *To the Letter* is a 'Curious History of Correspondence' and Garfield's talk gave numerous examples of the craft and its range. He contrasted early examples of correspondence 2,000 years ago found in Vindolanda, Northumberland in the 1970s with the beautifully crafted letters of Ted Hughes in the late 20th century – both feature birthday invitations despite the huge gulf of time and culture. He also spoke about discovering Val Walker, a magician who was as famous as Houdini in his day, but is now virtually unknown.

Garfield successfully bid for his letters in an auction and discovered that, amongst other claims to fame, Walker invented the 'sawing a woman in half' illusion.

Many of the letter writers featured were famous, including Leonard Woolf (the degeneration of his handwriting in letters to Vita Sackville-West reflecting his anguish when his wife Virginia disappeared and was subsequently discovered to have killed herself) and the Queen Mother, who signed off a letter of condolence during World War II with the delightful phrase 'tinkety tonk old friend, and down with the Nazis'. However, Simon Garfield revealed that he is a trustee of the Mass Observation Archive at Sussex University of letters written before, during and immediately after World War II. On discovering one particular set of love letters between Christopher Barker and his future wife Bessie Moore, he decided to intersperse the chapters of his book with some of their letters. Realising that many readers were skipping these, he has decided to publish their correspondence separately as 'My dear Bessie – A Love Story in Letters'. Reading their letters in the book after his talk, I realised that what is most significant about these letters is their relevance to families and friends far into the future. While Garfield recognised that 'I am raging against the dying of the light', and that the use of technology is increasingly replacing the writing and delivery of letters, he regretted the loss to personal, biographical and historical archives that will never be filled by emails, texts and tweets.

Of course, no book about letters would be complete without mention of 84 Charing Cross Road – New Yorker Helene Hanff's correspondence with the staff at Marks and Co Booksellers in London. Although not mentioned in his Book Festival presentation, I hope that readers of *The Edinburgh Star* will be encouraged by its inclusion on page 437 of *To the Letter* to read from the beginning of the book.

To the Letter is published in paperback by Canongate and costs £9.99.

LINDA GRANT on 'THE SWINGING 70s', MONDAY 11TH AUGUST

reviewed by Anja Amsell

There is a strong element of autobiography in Linda Grant's new work *Upstairs at the Party*. It is her fifth novel and covers some of the themes and concerns that have occurred throughout her previous work.

Linda Grant is an Orange fiction prize winner and has been Booker Prize short listed. Although her talk at the Edinburgh Book Festival was primarily an exploration of her book it covered in some depth the issues of redbrick university life in the seventies, drawing thus heavily on her own experiences; the author did not deny this, stating that this question arises with the publication of each of her novels, but she differentiates in that it was not so much in the detail as 'in the sense of self' that all her fiction contained largish elements of her own experiences.

The central character comes from Jewish immigrant stock – as did Linda Grant's own grandparents, arriving from Poland in 1904 and working within the clothing industry. How people are affected and formed sartorially is a recurring theme in her work ('The Thoughtful Dresser' and 'The Clothes on their Backs' are two earlier works). Again a Grant subject, that the clothes people wear send out messages, and help to characterise them.

The novel concerns a group of British women students, the central character Adele being Jewish, who come to the 'new' very concrete University of York in the 1970s – this period coincides wholly with the author's university years. They came there 'motivated by the idea of changing the world, in a very flabby way' with all the intensity of youth and an ambience of the time where anything goes. And eventually all the people who the book is about, either burn out or sell out.

On returning, forty years later Adele looks back, as at a lost era, aiming to establish how and why we become what we are and the past falls into place; the fact that no one had gone to university with a clear idea of any career, there was a remarkable lack of pastoral care and it all a ferment of politics – this dominated by the men 'where girls were all called Sarah and seldom spoke' and sexual freedom. Justin Cartwright has written that the novel 'captures the absurdity of the time' and indeed this is where Linda Grant's strengths lie. There have been so many novels written on the tertiary education coming of age theme (another example is Frederick Raphael's 'Glittering Prizes'). It was a period blazing with hope, yet on returning Adele says 'my era was a

myth... it was so marginal and childish almost nothing we started came to anything'. The Utopian vision that fired Adele's peer group has been replaced by the current financial machine that the university has become.

Linda Grant is an enormously appealing writer. Her humour antennae capture and convey the spirit of the age in marvellous dialogue and observation and gentle cynicism: she writes wonderfully about sexual experience and inexperience, issues of gender equality in a non-didactic way, recognising the strengths of her mother's generation, which those entering higher education in the seventies initially mocked and rejected. This was the age when the magazine 'Spare Rib' had just been founded, so the theme of feminism □ and female friendships □ features strongly. At her talk, she left the audience with the thought 'Could we have done better?' Looking back, that's a fairly universal piece of self-examination.

Linda Grant always draws on themes that have great topicality. An earlier work 'When I Lived in Modern Times' touches on Israel/Palestine issues. This latest work is immensely readable and explodes any myth of nostalgia and youthful dreams.

Definitely to be recommended, with the caveat that it will have a greater appeal to women for whom the principal themes resonate fiercely.

Upstairs at the Party is published in hardback by Virago at £14.99 and is available as an e-book for £7.99



IRVING FINKEL on 'THE OLDEST MYTH IN THE BOOK', 21ST AUGUST

reviewed by Charles Raab

Hundreds queued (mostly two-by-two) in a downpour to hear Dr. Irving Finkel talk about his book, *The Ark before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood* at the Edinburgh Book Festival. In an interview with former Bishop Richard Holloway, Finkel – the British Museum's Assistant Keeper of Ancient Mesopotamian script, languages and cultures in the Middle East Department – held forth on his recent discovery of a cuneiform tablet containing a 60-line account of the Flood that resembled the familiar story of Noah's Ark that we know from Genesis.

Finkel recounted the episode of the tablet's surfacing and informed his packed audience about the history of flooding in ancient Babylon, the Flood narrative in the cultural and religious history of Mesopotamia and Judaea. He provided details of how the Ark was supposed to be constructed. From the start, he revealed himself as a master of stand-up comedy magically transported to Charlotte Square from the Comedy Fringe. He looked the part, with a Biblical, flowing white beard larger than Billy Connolly's, and a three-piece pinstriped suit. His perfect timing and quick wit had the audience in stitches as he embellished his stories with quips that enlivened the serious scholarship that his book exemplifies. His decoding of the story of the Flood involves fascinating speculation about the way the c.1800 BCE precursor narrative – and there were many Flood stories in ancient Mesopotamia – eventually found its way into the transformed version, filling a hole in the Genesis narrative.

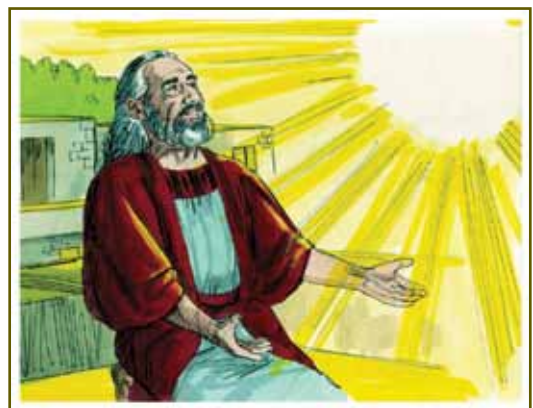
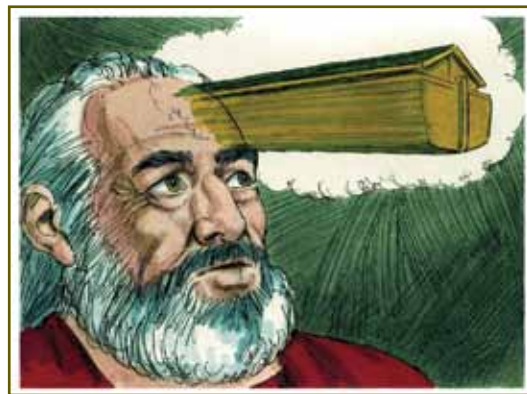
Finkel took us through this, revealing and musing about the relationship between the refugee monotheistic Judean intelligentsia and the polytheistic Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar II (cue the beginning of the Book of Daniel). He talked about the Babylonian school curriculum (the British Museum has tablets on this) and possible maths lessons for calculating the material requirements of an Ark, and about the Tower of Babel; he remarked that cuneiform writing resembled marks left by walking chickens. He speculated about why God would have ordered a flood (because people were too noisy? because noisiness signified overpopulation? as punishment for sin?). We learned and laughed heartily about how the tablet came to the British Museum and into his hands, and about how Finkel's publisher told him to go away and write a readable book instead of a 'highfalutin' piece of academic prose. He described the Gilgamesh Epic's block-of-flats Ark and the tablet's round coracle version – the size of half a football pitch – and how much rope and bitumen would have been required to make it flood-worthy. All these and many more fascinating aspects of practical marine engineering, Flood narratives, and the psychological and mythical context of the ancient Middle East are explained at length in *The Ark before Noah*. The irrepressible and hilarious Finkel compressed all this and more into a fascinating hour, gently kept in order by the equally humorous Holloway, and responded seriously to serious questions from the audience. When we left the Charlotte Square tent, the sun was shining, although the pigeons bore no olive branches.

But what are we to believe about the iconic story of Noah? In *Porgy and Bess*, the librettist Ira Gershwin has Sportin' Life singing:

'It ain't necessarily so
It ain't necessarily so
The things that you're liable
To read in the Bible
They ain't necessarily so.'

Read Finkel; then discuss.

The Ark before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood is published by Hodder and Stoughton and is available from Amazon for £17.00 (hardcover) or £7.49 (paperback). It is also available as a kindle for £25.00.



Images: Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing

DAVID BEZMOZGIS [AND YOUNG HA-KIM]
on 'I BETRAYED YOU BETRAYED HIM',
22ND AUGUST

reviewed by Elaine Samuel



David Bezmozgis

It seemed not so long ago that there was no one to succeed that brilliant generation of Jewish North American writers – Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Norman Mailer, Mordechai Richler. And then along came another five, six or even seven.... all at once. Among them was David Bezmozgis, who was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1973 but emigrated with his parents in 1980 to Toronto, where he now lives. His collection of short stories, *Natasha and Other Stories* (2004), took the publishing world by storm, both here and in North America. It was shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award and was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. In 2010 he was selected by the New Yorker as one of its '20 under 40' – the twenty most promising fiction writers under the age of forty – on the basis of a single publication. The following year, his first novel, *The Free World* (2011), was shortlisted for the Giller Prize and was also a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. And this year, Bezmozgis was at the Edinburgh Book Festival to speak about his third book, *The Betrayers*, which has only just been published. You may have already seen some of the reviews that are beginning to make their way into the major newspapers.

Bezmozgis shared the stage at the Book Festival with a Korean author, Young-ha Kim. He characterised himself as primarily a story teller. The stories he wished to tell could be conveyed by the written word or by film. One suspected that he was drawn to the written word partly by the difficulty of funding film. He likened his first film, *LA Mohel*, which he had made as a post-graduate film student at the University of Southern California, to *LA Confidential* – 'only funnier and much bloodier'. And he was drawn to the novel rather than the short story, in which he had excelled, as much by the pressure of publishers as by the joy of writing long form. As he remarked: "Stories dictate their own form – and so does the publishing industry". For he confessed that he was not a "natural born novel writer". Unlike Young-ha Kim, who brings out a novel every year, Bezmozgis writes slowly and with some hesitation, or so he claimed. And he finds it more difficult to recapture times past, albeit ones that he might have himself experienced, than to deal with contemporaneous events that he has not experienced.

For those who have read his first two books, hearing this was a revelation. For reading *Natasha and Other Stories* and *The Free World*, there is no sense of a struggle. No barrier appears between the story and the storyteller. It is as if no medium intervenes between them, to distort or discomfort. The flow is natural and brilliantly executed. In *Natasha*, one is transported to a decade in Bezmozgis's childhood and adolescence, to North Toronto of the 1980s and to the life of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union as they desperately try to make a living and a future for their children. And in *The Free World*, we are together with those same immigrants a little earlier in their travels – in Rome and in transit – as they make their way to Israel or 'drop out' by manoeuvring their way to the US, Canada and Australia. So 'naturally' does Bezmozgis write that one is hardly aware of an author's voice in the background. This is strange, because his work does not read like mere 'observation' or 'testimony'. It is packed with humour, irony, sensitivity and compassion. – in short, with the marks of authorial craftsmanship.

So what story does Bezmozgis want to tell in his new book *The Betrayers*? Ostensibly, (and there are no 'spoilers' in the next few lines), the story is about an Israeli politician of Russian background, Baruch Kotler, who resigns from the Government rather than agreeing to its decision to withdraw from some West Bank settlements. For his refusal to betray his own principles and come to heel, his relationship with a woman many years his junior is 'outed' by his former political allies, and his betrayal of his own wife and family is made public. He escapes with his mistress to the Crimea, to Yalta, where he had spent many happy summers as a child, only to meet up with the man who had betrayed him many years earlier by denouncing him to the KGB. Unlike Kotler, this Jew had remained in Russia and lived now in Yalta where he received monthly payments from a Jewish aid organisation for making up a minyan in Simferopol to keep Jewish traditions in Russia alive.

If this is the storyline, Bezmozgis told us that his real interest is in how far people will go in refusing to give up their principles. He asks why some people adhere to their principles at any cost. Are there – or should there be – limits to a principled stand? When, for example, can a principled stand transform itself into stubborn obstinacy that serves no end? And who is the principled man? Indeed, who is it that stands accused of betrayal in this story? In setting up this conundrum of moral ambivalence, Bezmozgis walks in the shadow of the larger context in which the story is set: Russia, Russian Jewry, Israel and its neighbours. Where that walk takes us, I am yet to find out. But on the basis of his previous writing and his talk at the Edinburgh Book Festival, I have no hesitation in recommending that we all take the walk.

The Betrayers was published in paperback by Viking/Penguin Books in August 2014 and costs £12.99.

The Book Club

Micheline Brannan

The Edinburgh Jewish Bookclub brings together members of EHC, Sukkat Shalom and the unaffiliated to read books of Jewish interest. It meets on the first Monday of each month in people's homes. It has no formal constitution or membership structure. You get on the list for the Evite and you say 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe'. Usually books are chosen 3 or 4 months in advance and people try to read them before they attend. However sometimes there is a play-reading and parts are allocated on the night. This is where the gentle direction of our experienced amateur stage producer, Betsy Dorfman, comes in useful.



Betsy Dorfman, Janet Mundy and Sue Lieberman

For the last two years I have not been able to attend, as full time nursing and other commitments made it vanishingly unlikely I would ever be free on a Monday evening. This has been a matter of regret, especially when I have actually read the book and wanted to discuss it.

However in June I went part-time and this was in time for the irresistible invitation to participate in a play-reading of Steven Berkoff's 2004 play 'Sit and Shiver' – a comedy of manners about a London Jewish family mourning the death of their patriarch. The playwright has unashamedly drawn on his own family background to portray the somewhat earthy characters who gather to sit on boxes at the home of daughter Debby and her husband Lionel for the Shiva of Debby's father. They are not very learned. There are no prayers and massive amounts of food are constantly being offered round. The title comes from Steven Berkoff thinking as a child that 'sitting shiva' meant to 'sit and shiver' because you feel cold from the loss of the loved one and this idea is mentioned in the script.

The first part of the play is hilariously scatological as the older characters compare ailments and frequency of toilet

attendance during the night. They are entirely at home with each other and unselfconscious. The atmosphere subtly changes with the arrival of son/grandson Mike, a struggling actor, and his non-Jewish fiancée, Sylvia. Now the family come under outside observation and they start to feel a bit embarrassed at letting their hair down so much in front of a stranger but they can't stop themselves. They soon get used to Sylvia and she becomes an ally when an unexpected mourner – a Mrs Green – arrives and drops a bombshell.



Elaine Samuel, Susie Kelpie and Molly Seckl

The characters are generally good-hearted and trying their best for each other, especially Debby's brother Sam, now blind, who has lived in New York and who is full of historical, literary and philosophical reflections. He tries to distract the relatives from their immediate woes and although he is the one most entitled to complain about his lot he never does so. Most of the others are too busy offering each other tea, coffee, fishcakes, blintzes and salmon to pay any attention to his wise words.

By contrast, Debby is full of self-pity and self-delusion. Insofar as the play has a serious point it is about the puncturing of her self-delusion and the contrast



Nancy Lynner and Judy Sischy

with Sam who is the guardian of honesty and truth. Which of them is really blind, the play seems to ask. Yet the ultimate message is about the strength of the Jewish family and tradition, and the ability of the Jewish family to homologate outsiders such as Sylvia, and to survive a major challenge, such as that posed by Mrs Green, relatively unscathed.

We had a lovely evening reading the play, with many laughs. We were grateful to Wendy and Norman Crane for hosting the event and for providing refreshments that more than matched the goodies described in the script.



Wendy and Norman Crane

AT CAMP SIMCHA, WE CAN
ONLY DREAM OF CURING A
CHILD'S SICKNESS...



24/7 Support
Hospital Transport
Sibling Support
Family Retreats
Respite Care
Home Support
Volunteers
Art Therapy

At Camp Simcha we aim to improve the quality of life for Jewish children throughout the UK with cancer or any other form of life threatening condition.

If you know of a family that could benefit from our support, please contact Neville Goldschneider in the strictest confidence

...BUT WE CAN
MAKE THE HURT GO AWAY

Help us make tomorrow's treat more important than today's treatment

camp simcha
supporting families with serious childhood illness

Camp Simcha, The House,
12 Queens Road, London NW4 2TH
t. 020 8202 9297 - London
t. 0161 341 0589 - Manchester
e. office@campsimcha.org.uk
www.campsimcha.org.uk



Charity Reg: 1044685

Sukkat Shalom, the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Claudette Hudes

The following articles are excerpts from the Lulav, Sukkat Shalom's monthly newsletter. For the complete articles or anything else you would like to know about our community, please go to our website www.eljc.org

NEWS

Now We Are Ten

We are looking forward to celebrating the tenth anniversary of our existence as a community on the weekend of 12th–14th September 2014. The main event will be a special Tenth Anniversary Morning Service, and we are also looking forward to our Tenth Anniversary Ceilidh.

The development of the Sukkat Shalom Portable Ark

Our portable ark will be crafted this summer: funding awarded by the NLPS Trust

Lauren Fox says:

The aspiration to have a proper ark of our own has been expressed by many of us, and was recently proposed in earnest by architect and designer Rebecca Wober, and taken forward by Lauren Fox, sculptor, and furniture maker. The NLPS Trust for Progressive Judaism makes grants that further the cause of Progressive Judaism, and has given us a sufficient award to commit to this project, though we will also need to raise some funding ourselves.

The idea to commission the creation of a portable ark has come from a few different directions. It will be a lovely way to mark the tenth anniversary of our community and of our Torah Scroll later on this year, and also to celebrate the growth of the community over the past decade. It feels appropriate to mark these developments with the symbolism of creating a protective and semi-permanent home for our Scroll, a meaningful expansion on the key ritual and symbolic possessions of the community that we already treasure

Our ark begins to take shape

The working group convened recently in the comfortable surroundings of the Cameo bar. Katy Bromberg has now joined the group, and has been nominated by Lauren Fox to be the professional coordinator for the project. We are fortunate in having so many professional designers in our midst. Rebecca Wober, who got the project going, is an architect. Lauren, who coordinated our funding application to the NLPS Trust and is designing the panels of the ark, is a sculptor, and Katy, who describes herself as a colour junkie, is a maker who works in embroidered text.

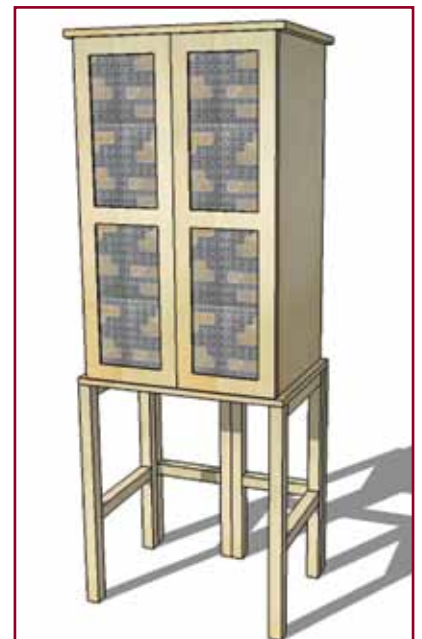


Our Ark, in the making Katy Bromberg

The portable ark project is underway! The project includes an ark, ner tamid, Torah mantle and bimah cloth and we hope to unveil them in the autumn to coincide with the tenth birthday celebrations and High Holy Days.

We are working with James Wright and David Buchanan-Dunlop from Sorell (www.sorell.co.uk), an Edinburgh-based furniture company to design and build an ark that we can use in a variety of venues but also has elements that can be incorporated into a building of our own at a later date.

In addition to James and David's expertise, Lauren Fox and I have led community activities to help design decorative panels for the ark and the Torah mantle.



The draft design from Sorell echoes the pattern in our breastplate.

Cheder Party

The cheder year finished with the biggest cheder party yet!



WELCOMES AND MAZEL TOVS



Welcome to Stewart Zollinger

At the Shabbat morning service on 24 May, we welcomed Stewart at his admission to Judaism ceremony and into formal membership of our community. Stewart's family celebrated with him in the form of abundant and glorious cakes. The bakers are shown here as kiddush was being prepared.



Welcome to the Shanko family

Welcome to new members (right to left) Desta (Des), Roman (Rome), and Theodros, and all good wishes for their move to a new house.

Des's older son is an anthropologist in Canada. He and Rome have three daughters, Judith, Josephine, and Georgina, and a son, Theodros, in Edinburgh. It's a small world; Judith went to school with Jenni Underwood, and Theodros is at Gillespie's, in the same year as Adam and Leora Wadler.

Des reports that the family is delighted to feel at home in our community.

Mazel Tov!
to Helen
Zollinger
(née
Sherbourne)
and Stewart
Zollinger



Mazel tov to Nancy Lynner and Joe Goldblatt on becoming Citizens and Subjects



Please check the July Newsletter on our website www.eljc.org for the article on their experiences on becoming citizens and subjects.

Professor Stefan Reif Honorary Degree Ceremony at Haifa University

Ros Landy

Professor Stefan Reif, an illustrious son of Edinburgh and later a resident academic of Cambridge University, received a doctorate *Honoris Causa* at Haifa University on Tuesday May 25th, 2014.

Stefan has degrees from London University, Glasgow and Cambridge. He has followed a distinguished academic career and has spent more than three decades putting a collection of Hebrew and Arabic fragments found in the Cairo Geniza into usable, logical form.

A Geniza is a place for storing old/unwanted Hebrew documents. In the Ben Ezra Shul in Fostat (Old Cairo) any unwanted or damaged holy writings were posted through an opening in the top of a wall into an empty room. Since Egypt has an extremely dry climate these manuscripts were preserved in remarkably good condition. Even more amazing is the fact that the people of that Shul threw all discarded Hebrew writings, holy or not, into that room, resulting in a treasure trove of not only old holy books but also glimpses into Mediaeval life. This was a collection simply waiting to be discovered. In the late 19th century the vast majority of these manuscripts were rescued from Cairo by Solomon Schechter and taken to Cambridge. When Stefan Reif came to Cambridge in 1973 a number of important manuscripts had been looked at by a process of 'cherry picking' but almost the entire collection had not been touched and was still sitting in the boxes in which they had been transferred from Cairo some 80 years earlier.



The presentation on the big screen



L to R: Rosalind Adelman Landy, Sharon Reif Elkin (sister of Stefan), Stefan, Edwin Hoffenberg, Harold Stern and Barry Fluss

Stefan was aided for many years by his wife Shulie, who passed away some years ago. He raised money for visiting scholars to come to the University Library in Cambridge, to examine fragments of texts and to attempt to identify these pieces of abandoned paper.

When Stefan arrived in Cambridge there was a collection of nearly 200,000 fragments in chests and no order at all. There were several things that needed to be done, of which the most urgent was conservation. The pieces of paper had survived in the dry atmosphere of Cairo but the papers were often curled and damaged. It needs expertise to un-curl such material. There are in the University Library and elsewhere, experts in conservation. While this process was undertaken and went on for a long time, there was a contemporaneous, systematic cataloguing of the fragments. Decisions were also made as to how to package the fragments in order to avoid further deterioration. Finally the catalogue and the fragments were digitized and made available to scholars all over the world. Nowadays one can find and study the fragments online.

That tells us the monumental work that Stefan and his late wife (with the help of visiting academics) did over the years.

The ceremony for the Honorary Degree was done with verve. There were speeches by the chairman of the Board of Governors, Prof. Alfred Tauber, Amos Shapira, the President of the University, and the Dean, David Farragi. The speeches were interspersed with a completely professional presentation of musical interludes by David D'or and Sania Kroitor and films with the explanation of names and activities of the people receiving their honorary degrees. The whole evening was orchestrated to a high level of professionalism and was a pleasure to attend.

Stefan was in a group of eight recipients, amongst whom were Topol and Mr Frederik Willem de Klerk, South Africa. The latter gave the response of behalf of the recipients.

Save a Child's Heart

Sarah Levy

In June this year I spent two weeks volunteering with Save a Child's Heart (SACH), an Israeli humanitarian organisation, whose aim is to improve the quality of paediatric cardiac care for children from developing countries and to create centres of competence in these countries.

Thanks to generous donations from across the world, SACH are able to bring children from birth to age 18 to Israel from countries lacking adequate paediatric cardiac care so that they are able to receive life-saving operations and treatment. Half of these children are from Gaza and West Bank, Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East, with the rest from Africa, South America, China, Russia and Eastern Europe.

During my time at SACH, I lived in the Children's Home in Holon alongside the children, their mothers (in the case of the children under age 5), the other volunteers and interns, and the nurses and doctors from all across the globe who receive training in Israel in order to improve paediatric healthcare in their home countries. The children live in the house before their open heart surgery and/or catheterisation when they are undergoing a barrage of investigations and tests and also after their procedures until they are fit and healthy enough to travel back home. As they stay in Israel for around 3 months on average (but sometimes as long as a year), it is important that they are kept entertained. I spent each day playing with the children and engaging them in educational and fun activities including arts and crafts, English and Maths lessons, music and games. Despite the fact that the 30 children spoke a variety of different languages and only a couple of them had any real understanding of English, it was surprisingly easy to communicate with them through facial expressions, tone of voice and the handful of words that were used by everyone in the House ("clean-up" in English, "kula" meaning "food" in Swahili, "kulala" meaning "sleep" in Swahili and "balagan" meaning "mess" or "chaos" in Hebrew which was used frequently every time the children misbehaved or made a mess).

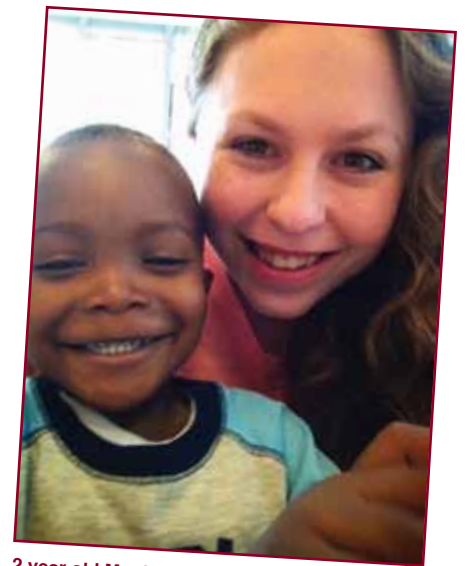
It was incredible to see the almost immediate transformation the children underwent after receiving surgery. Those who were waiting were clearly in pain, tired easily and were unable to play around very much. In stark contrast, the post-op children were constantly laughing, running around, climbing on the furniture, fighting over toys and generally being mischievous. These are children who, without SACH, would have undoubtedly become increasingly sick with little hope for the future.

It was amazing to say goodbye to the children who went home during my time at SACH. In a flurry of Swahili songs, traditional African party foods, dancing, prayers and hugs, these children (some accompanied by their relieved mothers) were able to fly back to their families having received the gift of a healthy life.

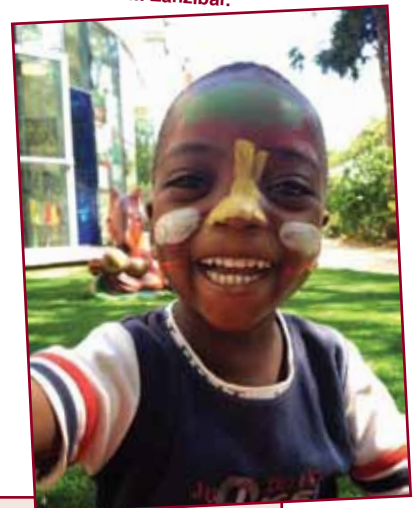
Without donations, this phenomenal organisation would not have saved the 3300 children it has today. Donations can be made online at www.saveachildsheart.org in order to further the work of SACH and save more young lives.



Group photo from left to right: Caritas, Abdi, Rutalamila, George, Fabian, Ezekiel, Rabia and Hayat from Tanzania and Ethiopia at the Leaving Party for some of the children going home.



2 year old Munhir from Zanzibar.



4 year old Dismas from Tanzania

London based Walter Felman, UK fundraiser for SACH, was delighted to hear of Sarah Levy's volunteerism with SACH. He told the Star about Wisam, a one and a half year old Yazidi baby who underwent a successful open heart surgery at Wolfson in early August. The Yazidi child is attended by his father who is constantly worried about his wife and four other children who are in North Iraq. A baby from Gaza also arrived by ambulance on 19 August even amid all the conflict. When she arrived it was understood that her condition was much worse than expected and the doctors worked very hard in the first few days to stabilize her condition to allow open heart surgery to take place. The baby girl was successfully operated on August 26.

She is currently in the pediatric Intensive care of Wolfson Medical Center and the doctors are pleased with her recovery. Another baby from Gaza underwent life-saving surgery at the beginning of September.

In addition SACH runs a weekly free cardiology weekly clinic for Palestinian children and in the first week of September they were expecting eight children from Gaza to come for examinations and treatments.

If any reader would like further information from Walter Felman contact him on walterfelman@aol.com

Cheder Prize Giving

Elaine Levy

Prize giving 24 Sivan 5774 started with a address by the Education Convenor and Prize Presenter Lesley Danzig. She reviewed a very busy year for the Cheder children commenting on the successful Chanukah children's choir, Pesach event and Cheder in Shul activities.

Following a few words by Rabbi Rose, each class gave a presentation.

Class 1 (Shlomit, Jack and Nixie) recited the Shema in English and Aiddie presented their Shabbat project complete with a demonstration table showing all their art and craft activities.



Lotem, Sapphi and Dorothy



Jack, Clare, Nixie and Shlomit

Class 2 (Ruth Sapphie and Lotem) presented a Chanukah play they had written. They took the audience back in time to meet Judah the Maccabee and find a missing Dreidle belonging to Rabbi Rose. They were ably assisted by Hannah.

Class 3 (Connor, Reuben, Sam and Dorothy) demonstrated their knowledge of the 39 Melachot by acting out charades and inviting the guests to guess the charade and say whether the activity was permitted or not on Shabbat.

Finally **Class 4** presented a PowerPoint summary of their project on Soviet Jewry which comprised an in depth look at the development of Soviet Jewry and interviews with two members of the congregation.



Rabbi Rose and Connor

The children were presented with their prizes by Rabbi Rose and Lesley Danzig. Special prizes were awarded to Leo (Toddler of the Year), Hannah (for all her help with the younger classes) and Best Pupil cup was awarded to Dana Gakamsky.

Prize giving ended with a speech by the Chairman of the Board, Raymond Taylor, and presentation of flowers to Mrs Danzig by Leo.

Following prize giving the annual Cheder picnic took place in the Meadows with an amazing array of food prepared by the parents.



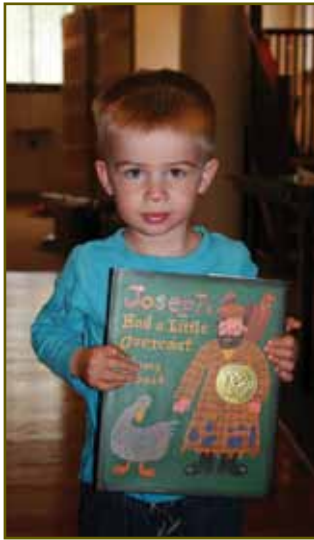
Lotem and Jack



Leo presenting bouquet to Lesley Danzig



Raymond Taylor, Rabbi Rose and Lesley Danzig



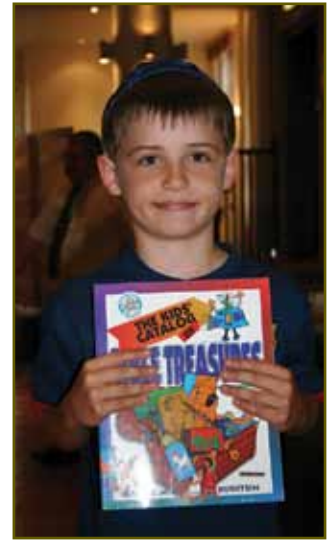
Leo Finlay



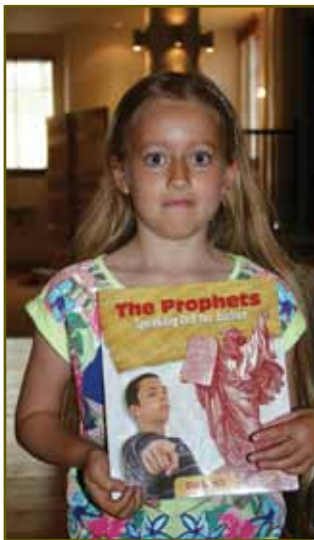
Nixie Dismore



Shlomit Gardi



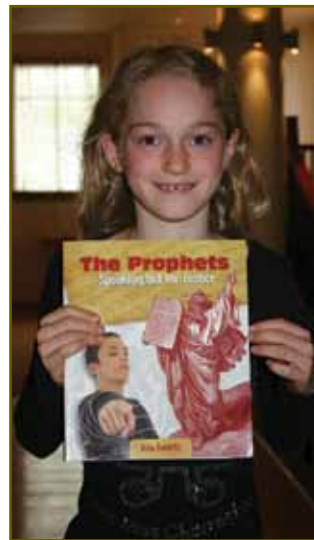
Addie Finlay



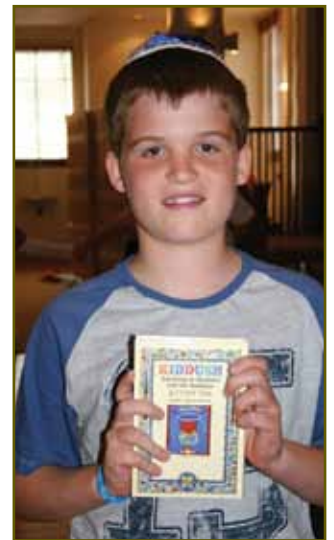
Sapphi Ogilvie



Lotem Gardi



Ruth Adler



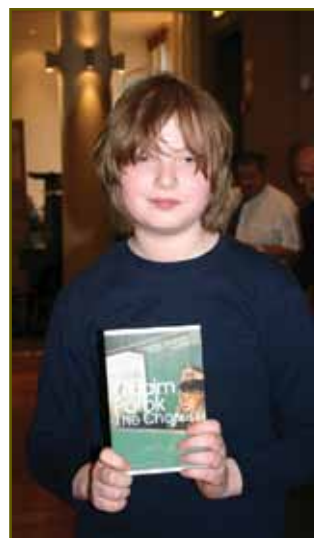
Connor Finlay



Reuben Ogilvie



Dana Gakamsky



Omri Gardi



Hannah Cohn-Simmen

Dorothy Sherratt's D'Var Torah

7th June 2014

Shabbat Shalom. Today's Parshah is Beha'alotcha and is in Numbers. At the start of the Parshah, Hashem tells Moses how to do various things. He tells Moses how to make the Menorah. Then he tells Moses how to teach the Levites how to help in the service.

Instructions are given on how to make the Passover sacrifice and how to make and use trumpets. The children of Israel were following a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They did not know their route or how long they would have to rest before continuing their trek to Canaan. The children of Israel were complaining about Hashem so Hashem set fire around the edge of the camp. The children of Israel complained about the Manna, they wanted the same meat, fish, fruit and vegetables as they used to have in Egypt. Moses was unhappy because he could not cope with the complaining. So Hashem told Moses to gather 70 elders to help him. And Hashem brought over large quantities of quail and left them by the camp for a month. Some of the children of Israel were very greedy and ate a lot. The people who were complaining got a plague from Hashem. Miriam and Aaron spoke badly of Moses so the Lord punished them. When the Lord left, Miriam had leprosy and was shut out of the camp for 7 days. Aaron and Moses were very upset by this. Aaron begged forgiveness of Moses so then Moses prayed to Hashem and when she came back in she was cured.

Why were the children of Israel complaining?

They had been in the desert a year and the children of Israel were getting more impatient and restless to get to the Holy Land. They were following a cloud and when following the cloud they had no knowledge on how they were getting to Canaan. Sometimes they stopped and rested for days but sometimes they didn't rest at all. They were starting to worry about the future and to get scared of the unknown. They were having to trust completely in Hashem and didn't feel comfortable with that. Nowadays people protest when they get impatient of what the ruler or country is doing. The



Mazal Tov to Dorothy Sherratt on her Bat Mitzvah on 7 June 2014

protesters get impatient about how slow moving everything is and not knowing where things are going, just as the children of Israel did. Maybe they were just trying to make Hashem hear their worries but used complaining as a way of expressing this. It is quite a lot to expect from people who were used to being slaves, having the same pattern every day, and were now in a new situation. It could be said that they should have been taught to keep their focus on getting to Canaan but can that even be taught? Their punishment, a ring of fire around the camp, was more of a warning punishment than anything else. Hashem wanted them to learn from their mistakes and not do this again.

Why did the children of Israel want to return to Egypt?

The children of Israel were complaining about the Manna and the lack of meat. They wanted to return to Egypt so Hashem provided a large quantity of quail from over the sea and the people who were complaining most got plague and died. They were only remembering the good bits about Egypt and losing sight of what they had gained from leaving

Egypt. Some commentators point out that some of the tribes had some meat but not enough to eat at every meal. Maybe they were using the food as an excuse to complain in general as before, again because they felt blind and did not know how long it would take to get to Canaan. They were not in control of their destiny. The complainers didn't just eat one or two quails, they ate over 70 quails and this was how they got a disease. Many diseases nowadays are caused by eating too much. This story is also telling us that greed is bad.

Why was Miriam punished so harshly?

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, and Miriam was punished by Hashem with leprosy. It may seem kind of harsh to give Miriam the life-changing disease leprosy especially after how amazing she was in Egypt. She enabled Moses to be born and to survive. She was a leader of all the women and children. Miriam was guilty of speaking badly about Moses, which is a very bad sin because words cannot be taken back. Just like if you drop a stack of papers in the wind, you can never retrieve

them all. In the same way, the words cannot be taken back but will always be remembered. We don't know exactly what Miriam said but she slandered Moses. Some say that Miriam didn't think that Moses was treating his wife fairly and others say that she was jealous that he was the only one that spoke to Hashem directly. But the exact details are not that important because she should not have slandered him.

It is very important in Judaism not to slander or speak badly of someone. We can tell this because Miriam's story was repeated later in Deuteronomy as a prohibition against slander. This is known as Lashon Hara in Hebrew and it is a serious sin in Judaism.

So then why does it seem that Aaron was not punished at all? He was guilty for listening to slander and accepting it. Rabbi Akiva thought Aaron also got given leprosy but, as his role was less prominent, his illness lasted a shorter amount of time. He got this from the quote, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them." Others (including me) think that Aaron's punishment was feeling upset and guilty for Miriam's pain.

Moses has shown he was very forgiving by praying for Miriam's recovery despite

her slandering him. He is rewarded by Miriam, his sister, being returned healthy to the camp. This shows that forgiveness is always rewarding.

So what do we learn from this?

We learn from the Israelites' mistakes in all Parshiot and this one is no exception. The children of Israel started complaining because they were worried and did not know when they would next get to rest. They were taking out their worry on Moses and Hashem. Later, they started to complain about not having meat. Again, they were taking out their worry about life in general on Moses and Hashem. From this, we learn not to take your worry out on other people or influence other people and make them worried as well. Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses. Miriam was given leprosy and Aaron was also punished in a more discreet method. Here we learn to not say hurtful things about other people that we will regret. Also here we see Moses forgiving Miriam and Aaron without looking back. Moses was rewarded with his sister being returned well to the camp.

To conclude, I learned various things while studying for my Bat Mitzvah. The Ten Commandments (which I chanted earlier this morning) are a great guide on

how to live life. Also, in this Parshah the children of Israel lose focus. This shows us how easy it is to lose sight of our aims in life. Even Miriam, who is a very noble leader, lost focus and faith in Moses.

During this Parshah, Moses suffers the consequences for the children of Israel's frustrations but he doesn't deserve it. It is easy to do the same as the children of Israel did. In my family we often get annoyed at our dog Maxwell for various things but he is deaf so doesn't understand when we try to tell him off. Instead we take it out on each other. This is something to learn from so that we don't suffer the consequences of our dog being cheeky.

Preparing this D'var Torah has helped me to understand the meaning behind the Ten Commandments and the other words of wisdom from the Torah. I would like to be like Miriam and become a leader in the community. I have already started by taking on responsibilities within my school and I hope to develop this further. With help from the Rabbi, my teachers, my parents, grandparents, family, friends and the rest of the Jewish community, I hope to develop my understanding of the Torah further and to stay focused on my goals, which will help me to live in a better way.

THE HARVEST GARDEN

Est 1983



Turning every occasion into something special

Flowers and gifts delivered 7 days

FLORIST & CHOCOLATIER
Fruit & Gift Hampers
Corporate Events

Buy online
www.flowersbuydelivery.co.uk
www.theharvestgarden.co.uk
Email: sales@theharvestgarden.co.uk
Tel: 0131 447 1788
58-60 Morningside Road Edinburgh EH10 4BZ (Opp Churchill Theatre)

Amir Shapira's Barmitzvah

26 April 2014

Judy Sischy

I must confess to feeling a trifle anxious as I approached the Chabad house of worship, as this was a new experience for me. Although a member of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and a welcome visitor to Sukkat Shalom in Edinburgh, I had not attended Rabbi Pinny's shul before. However, I was looking forward to this as a special occasion, as it was Rabbi Shalom Shapira's grandson's barmitzvah. Being a long-standing admirer of Shalom and a family friend of Marina, David and Amir, I was delighted to be included in the celebrations.

The service took place in the front room of the Rabbi's home which was divided by a mechitza through or round which the few women present could observe and take part in the proceedings. My anxiety was unfounded as the proceedings were relatively informal and we were all made welcome. We were invited for 11.00am at which point we began with morning shacharit, moving swiftly through the different yet familiar siddur to the reading of the Torah. The two rabbis conducted the service, Rabbi Shapira leading the singing with great gusto, familiar harmonies from the EHC choir filtering through.

The barmitzvah boy, Amir, proudly held the Torah as he walked round the congregation, even beyond the mechitza, returning to the bimah to be embraced by the two rabbis in a spontaneous outburst of song and dance. The congregation sang along and threw candies to celebrate Amir's entry into manhood. There was a tangible sense of joy and community that shone through the service.

Rabbi Pinny gave a short, interesting address to Amir, congratulating him on this important occasion in his life, praising his intellect and the discussions they had enjoyed during the past few months of instruction. The Rabbi explained how the soul of a man was born with his brit and matured at his barmitzvah, at which point he was considered to have left childhood and entered adulthood. He referred to the three parts of Chabad – ch/b/d – as wisdom, understanding and knowledge, only coming together fully at the time of one's barmitzvah.



Amir with mother Marina on left and grandfather Rabbi Shapira on right



Amir Shapira, with Rabbi Pinny Weinman on left and Rabbi Shalom Shapira on right

We were treated to kiddush and a delicious lunch, which included gefilte fish, kugel and cholent provided by Rabbi Pinny's wife, Gitty, when we mingled and enjoyed the sense of family occasion. Rabbi Shapira warmly thanked Rabbi Pinny and explained that he felt a special affinity to Chabad as his father had founded the first Chabad yeshiva in Jerusalem in the 1920s. Rabbi Shapira said that for him, this was a happy and emotional occasion, returning to his family and old friends in Edinburgh, representing as he was, Amir's father, who was not able to come from Israel. He expressed his pride in Amir, hoping that he would continue his Jewish studies with Rabbi Pinny on a regular basis. Rabbi Shapira looked as young as ever in his 85th year and his vocal chords were in even better form. He was looking forward to the following Shabbat when he was planning a special birthday kiddush with the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Marina paid a wonderful and moving tribute to Amir. She recalled when the family first came to the UK, living in Oxford, when Amir was a baby and David a young boy, with three languages in the family home – Hebrew, English and Russian. She felt that the boys had a rich family background and was looking forward to seeing Amir flourish in whatever field he chose to follow.

It was a moving, happy and special occasion, concluding with some Israeli songs led by Rabbi Shapira.

CST and our Jewish life

CST is the Community Security Trust, a charity that provides security for Jewish communities throughout Britain. CST is also there, 24-hours a day, for those of us who are unfortunate enough to suffer, or witness, antisemitism.

We want our communities to lead their Jewish lives with safety and confidence, and invite you to join us.

CST draws upon a proud tradition of British Jewish self-defence, in which British Jews come together to play their part in defending their community. Before and after World War Two, the threats came from far right sources. Today, those threats remain, but they have been joined by more modern forces, including jihadist terrorism, such as that by Al-Qaeda and others.

It is CST's job to ensure that British Jews are protected from these hatreds and extremisms, but this requires a real partnership between CST, local communities and synagogues, and the Police.

We are extremely fortunate that this partnership is in place and our local representatives and the community have long worked closely together.

It is teamwork and we want everyone to be in the partnership. Please contact our local CST representative and ask what part you can play in supporting our local security teams.

We need to share responsibility, together. This means understanding why we do security and cooperating with our local teams. CST can only be as strong as the communities we serve.

PLEASE PLAY YOUR PART BY:

- reporting information to us
- joining our local teams
- helping to fund our work

Sharing responsibility also means keeping a healthy sense of perspective. Physical and political threats do exist, but that should not stop any of us from appreciating and celebrating the overall excellence of Jewish life in Britain today.

We thank you all for playing your part.

REPORT ANTISEMITISM & SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

CST is a charity that protects British Jews from antisemitism and related threats.

Please report any antisemitic or suspicious activity to the Police and CST.



Edinburgh 0800 032 8461
Northern Regional Office 0161 792 6666

 CST_UK  Community Security Trust

www.thecst.org.uk

Community Security Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1042391) and Scotland (SC042391).

The Jewish Revolt and the Destruction of the Temple

by Amir Shapira – a Barmitzvah project

This project discusses the first Jewish revolt against the Romans, which was the biggest hit to the Roman Empire from a revolting province which lasted from 66-73 AD.

This project will be also discussing why the Romans and the Jewish people were at war to begin with and why the Romans destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem. Most of the research was done online but I also used information from National Geographic documentaries, which are based on historical materials and are a reliable source of information.

History of the first rebellion in Judea

Since the Jewish kingdom was conquered by the Roman Empire in 63 AD, Judea was ruled by Roman procurators, who were mainly in charge of collecting and delivering an annual tax to the Empire. Whatever the procurators raised beyond the number assigned, they could keep. Also they often imposed confiscatory taxes. Not surprisingly, Jewish people were very angry with this. What equally infuriated the Judeans was that Rome took over the appointment of the High Priest.

Rule of Roman procurators, unfair tax system and Roman interference with the High Priest appointment become the main reasons for the revolt.

The first Jewish revolt against the Romans started three years after the Romans conquered Judea. In the autumn of 66 AD the Jews combined their forces in a revolt and expelled the Romans from Jerusalem. The war went on for 7 years. It was a long series of clashes in which small groups of Jews offered random resistance to the Romans.

Romans responded with severe countermeasures. One month after the revolt started the general Vespasian of the Roman army was called back after being an exile to Greece for falling asleep during one of the Emperor (Nero's) poetry readings. He was called back because he was one of the best generals in Rome at this time, and the Romans saw that the Jews were very powerful and they were difficult to stop and Rome needed a good general.

The reason it was so important to the Romans to stop the revolt in Judea was that this revolt was the biggest blow to the Roman Empire from a rebellion. The Romans had to crush the rebels, because they were scared that the whole Roman empire would fall as a result of the domino effect caused by the Jewish revolt with other provinces of the Empire possibly also starting to revolt against them. The Romans' plan was to pick apart all the Jewish settlements and leave only Jerusalem, which was the strongest city and was built like a fortress.



The Arch of Titus, Rome

It was in 73AD when Jerusalem finally fell and the great Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. The Jewish revolt was crushed, which also brought an end to the last Jewish Kingdom.

In what follows I will explain how these events fell into place.

Revolt in Jotapata

One of the main cities the Romans laid siege to was Jotapata (The ancient town of Yodfat is located about 22 km southeast of Acre).

The evidence of this is coming from writings of Josephus Flavius who was a historian who documented everything that happened during the first Jewish revolt.

The real name of Josephus Flavius was Joseph ben Matitiah and he used to be the general who was leading the revolt in Yodfat. He was the one who predicted the exact length of the siege of Yotfat, 47 days.

It was only on the 47th day when the Romans finally won. For the previous 46 days the Jews won all attempts of the Romans trying to breach the walls of Jotopata. On the last day it was a sneak attack planned by Titus on the Jewish



rebels, which took them by surprise, when at night Titus's soldiers climbed over the walls of Jotapata. The final act of the rebels was when the remaining Jewish soldiers hid down a well. When the Romans found them the rebels to avoid captivity preferred to die and all of them decided to kill each other.

The general Josephus (Ben Matitiah) was the one who picked one in every three men to kill the man next to him, until only Josephus himself was left. He survived and was taken by the Romans. He then joined the Romans and by doing so saved Jotapata from being destroyed by the Romans. Josephus came to the side of the Romans because he believed that Jews had no hope of winning against the Romans. He told Titus (son of Vespasian) that he could persuade Jews to surrender in hope to save their lives. Josephus was the one who told Vespasian that he would become the next Roman Emperor and by this Josephus gained the trust of the future Emperor and became a Roman official historian of Jewish wars.

The Siege of Jerusalem

The siege of Jerusalem happened around 2 years later after the fall of Jotapata. Jewish rebels came to Jerusalem from all over Judea because their cities were taken by the Romans. Hanan ben Hanan was their leader. However he wanted to make a peace treaty with the Romans and get some kind of independence from them because he knew the Jews would never win in the end. For this reason he was killed by the rebels.

After he was killed, Hanan Ben Hanan's followers and those who killed him fought amongst each other for two years until uniting against the Romans, who were then coming to take control of Jerusalem and crush the rebel factions.

During this time Vespasian had become Emperor, after Nero was overthrown by the Republic of Rome. Many other Roman generals tried to take the throne but in the end Rome



turned to Vespasian for order, once again following the prediction of Josephus saying Vespasian would become an Emperor.

Vespasian's son Titus was sent once more to try and bring down the walls of Jerusalem. There were three walls: the first took 15 days to fall, the next another 8 days, and at the last wall the Romans stopped as it was almost impenetrable being about 15 feet deep.

The Romans took apart trees from a 15 miles radius and used them to build siege ladders, but the Jews built a tunnel under the wall toward the ladder and blew it up with timber destroying it and killing many Roman soldiers and once again securing the safety of Jerusalem.

The Romans' plan was to build a wall around Jerusalem and starve the rebels out with no supplies coming in. The wall was 1.5 miles long and was built very fast and was a great feat of Roman engineering.

In the end it was the Jews' own design which destroyed their wall: the tunnel they had built had collapsed leaving the Romans to freely enter through, and destroy the rest of Jerusalem all apart

from the temple. The Temple was ordered not to be destroyed by Titus, because Josephus Flavious had persuaded Titus to spare the Temple and give it as a present to his father Vespasian. However Titus's soldiers became wild and were out of control burning and killing everyone. Thus the Temple was also destroyed in the soldiers' rage.



An artist's depiction of the siege of Jerusalem

Over 1.1 million Jews were killed, more than half of the population in Judea, with Romans taking all survivors of the Jewish rebellion and selling them into slavery. This concluded in the destruction of the Temple and the end of the main Jewish rebellion. Small pockets of rebellion continued to exist but eventually the Jewish revolt was crushed in 73 AD.

After the crush of the first Jewish revolt

The Jewish revolt had a huge impact on the rest of the Roman Empire. Other people knew now that if they would rebel the same thing happened in Judea



Modern excavations in Jerusalem from the Period of the destruction of the Temple

would happen to them, the revolt would be crushed and all the survivors would be taken as slaves, and this was also one of the reasons it was so important to the Romans to rush the revolt to send a message throughout the Empire.

Impact of the crushing of the Jewish revolt on the Jewish nation

The Jewish revolt and its crushing by the Romans had huge and tragic consequences for the Jewish nation.

This had put an end to the last Jewish Kingdom. The crushing of the Jewish revolt and the destruction of the Temple started the Jewish exile which lasted for almost 1900 years, until in 1948 the modern State of Israel was established.



On the left: artist's depiction of the destruction of the Temple

On the right: the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem



Mazel Tov and welcome back Shalom

Judy Gilbert

Summer had arrived and was heralded earlier on in the year with our Shabbat services taking place, once again, upstairs in the big Shul.

Not looking a day older than when he presented himself five years ago, Shalom Shapira, our past and much-loved Rabbi, arrived in Shul to read the Haftarah and take Mussaf to a most appreciative and welcoming congregation. His familiar style, with outstretched arms, invited us all to sing along with him, bringing a smile to everyone's face as he chanted '...and let us say amen' in his inimitable way.

Downstairs, Anita gave a warm welcoming speech before we were treated to a splendid Kiddish sponsored by Shalom,

and organised by Hilary and her team, to celebrate his eighty-fifth birthday and to mark the recent occasion of his youngest grandson's Barmitzvah. Shalom always felt that he had a need to share his 'naches' as well as 'tzoras' with his friends. He always felt that in Edinburgh he was amongst friends. The visit was tinged with anxiety for his dear wife, Yehudith, who was very ill and who sadly passed away shortly after his return to Israel. His stoicism, that he should grace us at all with his presence at this time, was much appreciated.

Shalom spoke sincerely of his close association with the Edinburgh Community and promised to return five years on for his ninetieth birthday, something to which we all look forward.

Obituary

Yehudith Shapira

John Cosgrove

Yehudith Shapira was the wife of Rabbi Shalom Shapira for the last 11 years. He married Yehudith two years after his first wife Rachel z"l passed away.

Yehudit (Pollak) Shapira, who passed away on 12th June 2014, was a descendant of the Chatam Sofer (1762-1839) who was one of the greatest authorities on Jewish Law and a huge opponent of the newly emerging Reform movement in Europe.

Her father was a high-ranking officer in the British Police in Palestine under the Mandate, regularly referred to in the media as "Officer Sofer". On the establishment of the State of Israel, he became a high ranking officer in the Israeli Police force, responsible for the security of the whole Jerusalem District.

Yehudith was born in Jerusalem in 1937, the youngest of five children. She was educated at the Alliance Israélite Universelle School for Girls in Jerusalem and performed her military service in the cultural branch of the IDF organising cultural, entertainment and study courses for the soldiers. After army service, she graduated in law at the Hebrew University

in Jerusalem and went on to become a legal consultant for the Israeli government at the Welfare Ministry in Jerusalem.

In 1960, she married Josef Pollak of the well known textile business POLGAT and moved to Tel Aviv. Polgat was based in Kiryat Gat and became the largest textile, clothing and knitwear company in Israel, supplying Marks and Spencer for many years. She became involved in the family business as well as working in the Welfare Ministry in Tel Aviv and bringing up three children in a strictly Orthodox way of life and managed to see 11 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren, the latest being born just before she died.

Shalom met Yehudith in 2002, two years after Rachel passed away and seven years after her husband died. They were married in Herzliya in 2003 and, although Shalom lived in Jerusalem and Yehudith in Tel Aviv, they decided to set up home in Ra'anana. Both families became united and their home became a meeting place for all their children and grandchildren.

They had a happy life together and made many trips abroad, particularly to Germany, where Shalom conducted Pesach and High Holyday services. They visited Edinburgh in 2005 and Yehudith made friends with many of Shalom's old friends and congregants, some of whom she met again in Israel when they came on holiday.

She used to organise educational tours to various parts of Israel for her friends and Hazel and I were privileged to join



Shalom and Yehudith on some of these trips and were impressed by her in-depth knowledge of the history and geography of the Holy Land.

In her last years, she suffered many health problems and was in and out of hospital. Shalom and her family were absolutely devoted to her and treated her like a queen doing everything possible to make her comfortable.

The last time I saw her was on Erev Yom Ha-atzmaut earlier this year when I called at the Shapira's home in Ra'anana to take Shalom to a Choral service. Although clearly very ill, she had made what must have been a huge effort to look elegant and smart as she was going to join her family in Tel Aviv for the Yom Tov and although she must have known that she was dying, she didn't want to spoil the party. Her English was so good that she could make jokes in English and yet behind the humour there was a very thoughtful and serious person.

We wish Shalom chayim aruchim long life. May her dear soul rest in peace.

BOOK REVIEW

Simon Schama The Story of the Jews

Finding the Words 1,000 BCE–1,492 CE

Jo Capek

Several months after finishing this book, which is the first of a 2-part study, I still find myself with more questions than when I first began reading it. Yes, it is a superb piece of research by a consummate wordsmith. Yes, this research has then formed the basis for an exceptionally lucid analysis.

Yes, I admire that an academic of Schama's standing is happy to wear his heart on his sleeve so openly. Yes, this lengthy work, which could have been unbearably dry, is laced with humour and light touches throughout.

Since I am so impressed by much of this erudite magnum opus, acknowledge my ignorance of its subject matter and thus have zero qualification to make valid historical criticism of it, why have I still so many misgivings? Perhaps it is this very lack of knowledge which has spawned my less than whole-hearted acclaim. Twenty-first century Jews hail from all walks of life, range in devotion from the infinitesimal to the absolute and follow from zero to complete observance. If Simon Schama missed that segment into which I fall then I fear many others will have similar doubts about differing aspects of this work. And if a significant body of Jews hold doubts then non-Jews will have little interest in it unless they are political or theological students.

As a catalogue of prolonged peregrinations around Europe and the Middle East, of anti-Semitism, the reliance of despots upon the Jews' ability to access funds and the interminable study of irrelevant minutiae in texts that are scarcely worthy of such effort, this is a book without peer. However these are matters which hold little if any interest for me. My questions were the following, and unfortunately for my satisfaction with this book, they were either not addressed at all or barely touched upon. How did a monotheistic religion emerge in a region of fundamentally polytheistic religions?

Why is the character or personality of this omnipotent being so frequently petty, jealous or downright vindictive whilst other religions created more empathic deities for themselves?

How did this minority concept then spread through one particular group?

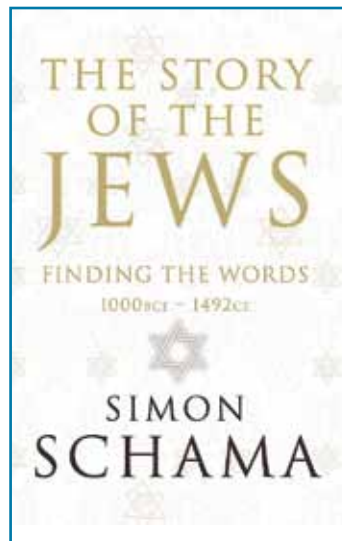
Why did such apparently barbaric practices as circumcision emerge alongside forward-thinking hygienic practices regarding food and health?

How did one minority (the priestly caste) within this belief acquire such authority over a multitude of rituals surrounding the religion?

I am not surprised Schama has avoided these topics. He has obviously trawled through vast quantities of source material but evidently there is none to be had from before a time when clearly identifiable Jews were already settled in Egypt. This community in Elephantine was well established and thus answers to my questions must lie further back in time, to an epoch from which no papyri have survived. Being the

thorough-going professional historian, Schama quite properly refuses to speculate where no sources exist and thus leaves a great void just where the most important parts, the very beginnings of the story, are to be found.

Despite my disappointment that the formative period has not been covered by this book, the depth and detail is a vast improvement on the somewhat populist TV series upon which this and the forthcoming second volume are based. In summary I rate it a flawed masterpiece – or should that be a masterful letdown?



MARK'S DELI

172 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6XF
0141 638 8947

.....
FREE deliveries to Edinburgh every fortnight
.....

**Fresh breads, fresh meats, cheeses
and many more kosher delights.**

**An exclusive range of tasty, freshly made kosher deli food
from Simcha Catering, including cooked roast chickens,
chopped fried fish, chopped boiled fish, latkes,
potato kugel, lockshen kugel, chollent,
coleslaw and strudel.**

NOW OPEN



www.marksdeli.co.uk

Mazal Tov to **Hilary** and **Arnold Rifkind** on the occasion of the Barmitzvah of their grandson Eli, son of Michael and Sharon Rifkind. The Barmitzvah took place in Teaneck, New Jersey on Shabbat Hagadol, 12th April 2014.



Eli with his parents, Michael and Sharon, April 2014



Eli with his siblings, Natan, Avigayil and Maytal in Jerusalem, August 2014

How could we miss you Stella?

Edward Green

Absent from the last edition of the Star's article on the wonderful cooks of the Luncheon Club was the ever effervescent and fun **Stella McLeod** (née Bierman), wife of the current Master of Lodge Solomon, Norman. Always willing to do her bit when back from her home in Spain, Stella is a much valued and popular member of the team.



STOP PRESS

On the first night of Chanukah, Tuesday 16th December, there will be a candle lighting held at the Scottish Parliament.



Kindly presented by Charles Rifkind in memory of his father and other family, and organised by Morris Kaplan and Edward Green, the newly created Chanukiah will reside permanently in Holyrood with an annual candle lighting agreed. Further details to follow.

On the third night of Chanukah, Thursday 18th December, there will be candle lighting in the City Chambers. The Lord Provost has graciously accepted a gift of a Chanukiah to the City of Edinburgh given by Maryla and Edward Green who will also sponsor a reception there after the lighting. The Lord Provost wishes to welcome all Jews living in Edinburgh whether affiliated to a formal community or not to this event and invitations will be issued by his office.

Please email Helen.Johnston@edinburgh.gov.uk or telephone 0131 529 3191 if you wish to attend.



Clark Bros. FISH MERCHANTS

FRESH SUPPLIES DAILY

OUR OWN CURING A SPECIALITY

ORDERS DELIVERED – PROMPT SERVICE

FINEST QUALITY AT THE KEENEST PRICES

THE HARBOUR, MUSSELBURGH TEL. 0131 665 6181

Forthcoming Events



Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Shabbat morning services take place every week at 10.00am in the Synagogue at 4 Salisbury Road. Friday night services take place at times announced on the website www.ehcong.com

There will be a **Friday Night Dinner** on **Friday 24 October** – further details to be announced.

Community Centre Committee events take place in the Marian Oppenheim Hall, Jewish Community Centre, 4 Salisbury Road.

Israeli Dancing with Shosh Greenberg

Sunday 14th September

Coffee Morning Sunday 21st September

Film Night Sunday 26th October

Quiz Night Sunday 23rd November

Chanukah Dinner Saturday 20th December

Burns Night Celebration Sunday 25th January 2015

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday (meat) and Thursday (fish) at 12.30. New volunteers and/or helpers always welcome. Any Jewish person of 60 or older is welcome to join.

Contact Avril Berger t: 0131 664 2938

email: avril.berger@btinternet.com

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Unless otherwise specified, all meetings take place in the Marian Oppenheim Hall, 4 Salisbury Road, at 8pm on Sunday evenings.

2014

Sunday 2nd November

Clive Lawton: What should we think about Israel?

Sunday 9th November

David Lehmann: Marriage in the Ultra-Orthodox community

Sunday 30th November

Judah Passow: Scots Jews – Identity, Belonging and the Future (a photographic exhibition)

Sunday 21st December

Chanukah event: 'This reminds me of.....' Food and memories

2015

Sunday 11th January

Film night: Regina (about the first female Reform Rabbi in Germany)

Sunday 1st February

Professor Jonathan Seckl: On Epigenetics and Transgenerational Trauma

Sunday 22nd February

Charlotte Mendelsohn: On her novel 'Almost English'

Sunday 8th March

David J Simons: On his latest novel 'The Land Agent'

Sunday 29th March

Andrew Ranicki: On his father Marcel Reich-Ranicki: an illustrated talk

For further details see website: www.ejls.org

WIZO Events

Wednesday 22nd October

Bridge and lunch in Marian Oppenheim Hall. Contact Kate Goodwin on 0131 668 2113 for details.

16th/17th November

Nearly New Sale in Pollokshields Burgh Halls. Glasgow. Sylvia Donne will collect by arrangement. Contact: 0131 447 2947 (after Yom Tovim please) to donate Ladies and Gents clothing in good condition, hats, bags and shoes.

Dates of Jewish Festivals

2014

Erev Rosh Hashanah Wednesday 24 September

Rosh Hashanah Thursday 25 September and Friday 26 September

Kol Nidrei night Friday 03 October

Yom Kippur Shabbat 04 October

Erev Succoth Wednesday 08 October

Succoth Thursday 09 October to Wednesday 15 October

Shemini Atzeret Thursday 16 October

Simchat Torah Friday 17 October

Chanukah 1st candle Tuesday 16 December

2015

Tu B'Shvat Wednesday 04 February

Purim Megillah is read on the evening of 04 March and the morning of 05 March

Pesach 1st Seder is on the evening of Friday 03 April

Sukkat Shalom

Services

Erev Shabbat service will be on the **SECOND** Friday (7 pm) of each calendar month. Shabbat morning services are on the Saturday (11am) after the **FOURTH** Friday. These services take place in:

Columcille Centre, 2 Newbattle Terrace.

Kabbalat Shabbat Services (6.15pm) will be on the **FIRST** and **THIRD** Fridays. These services take place at: Marchmont St Giles, 2a Kilgraston Road.

We also have a Tea and Talmud group – to coincide with Rabbi Mark Solomon's visits, in members' homes, and a Philosophy Discussion Group.

For further information go to our website and follow the link to the diary:

www.eljc.org