

THE EDINBURGH

STAR

No.62
March 2009
Nisan 5769



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE EDINBURGH JEWISH COMMUNITY



Contents

The Edinburgh Star

Synagogue Chambers, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB

Cover Picture

Pesach Semeach by Judy Gilbert

Editor

Judy Gilbert

Editorial Board

Sidney Caplan (Treasurer)

Phillip Harris

Janet Mundy

Eve Oppenheim

Rabbi David Rose

Philip Mason

Anne Lurie

Micheline Brannan

Design

Debbie Bennett

Artwork

Helen McFeely

Printing

Meigle Colour Printers Ltd

Tweedbank Galashiels TD1 3RS

Pesach Message – Rabbi David Rose	4
An Edinburgh Milestone – Harvey L Kaplan	5
Memoirs of Halina Moss 1939 to 1945 – Micheline Brannan	7
Visa to Freedom 1939 thanks to a Pregnancy Test – Liselotte Adler-Kastner	9
Israel Elections – Jack Coutts	12
Remarks... Mark Kirk – Richard A Goldberg	13
Around & About	14
Interview with Judy Sischy by Eve Oppenheim – Anthony Gilbert	16
A Professional Tribute to the late Honourable Lord Caplan – Lady Hazel Cosgrove	18
Society Reports	18
WIZO	
Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society	18
Reviews	22
The Little Trees Are Weeping – David Mendelsohn	
Hannah Frank A Glasgow Artist	
and Footsteps on the Sands of Time – Janet Mundy	
The Light Jewish Cookbook – Janet Mundy	23
Stand Up To Hatred – Philip Mason	24
Why does Faith Survive? – Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks	25
Obituaries	26
Who's who?	29
Announcements	

Mrs Jessie Pickering Franklin died in February 2008. She was a staunch supporter of the Edinburgh Jewish Community in a number of ways. The board would like to acknowledge that Mrs Jessie Pickering Franklin left a most generous bequest to the Edinburgh Star for which we are most grateful.

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.

Please note that the minimum donation for receiving a year's supply of the Edinburgh Star is £20. We are dependent on this support and most grateful to those who respond.

If you would like to become a patron, please contact Sidney Caplan (Treasurer) for further details.

We are very grateful to the following Patrons who donate a minimum of £100.

PATRONS

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation,
Lady H & Mr J Cosgrove,
Mr & Mrs E Green,
Dr E Oppenheim,
Rabbi D Rose,
Mrs J Sischy,
Mr & Mrs P Harris.

The Board would also like to thank Mr & Mrs Harold Mendelsohn 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.

From the Editor

It is not possible to ignore the Israel/Palestine conflict that took place some months ago. Israel makes every effort to keep the agreed cease-fire despite the ever-present provocation.

Sadly, and now it seems almost inevitably, Israel continues to be criticised no matter what she does. In their recent sit down demonstration, Edinburgh University students suggested the boycotting of goods they 'believe' enable the conflict or occupation. Their belief that Eden Springs, the company particularly in their focus, takes the water for the product from Israel is founded on sheer ignorance. The concern was taken over by the Swiss company Danone. Eden Springs UK uses UK sources. In this age of falling over oneself to be seen as politically correct and to give students their much sought-after voice, the University has decided not to penalise the students for their demonstration while at the same time giving advice on how best to influence policies that will affect Israel. They have further condoned the student's behaviour by agreeing to fund five one-year masters degrees for students from Gaza. Similar offers have already been made in several other parts of the world; in the meanwhile visiting Israeli and also Jewish students feel distinctly threatened by such actions; will universities show any similar understanding to students who find themselves at the receiving end of such campaigns? Who will come out in sympathy with the innocent Israeli students?

The Israeli election has come and gone and we have first hand insights about both what it was like to be in the midst of the conflict and also the run up to the election; despite the time lag in 'Star' reportage, in view of the importance of both these topics, we felt that they had to be included.

We acknowledge a number of anniversaries and memorial commemorations that have taken place between the last issue and this. One hundred years have passed since first the Edinburgh Students Union was conceived and there is an archival record given by Harvey Kaplan to add nostalgia to this edition.

Kristallnacht, seventy years on, was much in focus at the end of last year. Ever mindful, we have married up the period of time in which this terrible episode took place with our international contributions. Micheline Brannan describes her mother's autobiography (Halina Moss) and presents a gripping story of escape from Poland to Russia at this time. Her story will be continued in the next edition. This is followed by Liesel Kastner who gives an equally fascinating biographical account, of her parents, and describes what life was like for them in Vienna from 1939 onwards.

Our community has much to be proud of. A number of people have made great contributions in the public sector and one who has made exceptional contribution

and Judy has recently been nominated for, and will soon be awarded, an OBE for services to Education and to the Voluntary Sector. She clearly demonstrates that there are better ways to deal with conflicts than boycotts, via the organisation 'Windows for Peace' which brings together Israeli and Palestinian children of all faiths.

Judy is by nature a very modest person, so we were fortunate that she agreed to be interviewed by Eve Oppenheim and Anthony Gilbert, and to tell us something about her background and what influences guided her towards a life of public service. Judy's success is one that, we as a community, can all take pride in.

Sadly we have had to include four obituaries. But even so, we can observe how interesting our community is. They include a legal luminary, an artist, a dearly loved, missed and highly involved community member, and a Zionist and aspiring actress.

Pesach is a time to remember that the Jews, despite all the hardships, were given the opportunity for a brighter future. We have tried to reflect this in our popular Reviews, views and community news, which I trust will add colour and optimism in this particularly highly illustrated edition.

The Edinburgh Star Board wishes you all a happy and kosher Pesach.

Judy Gilbert

Support The Edinburgh Star



Send us your letters and articles
Next Copy date: Early August 2009 (Dependant on finances following this edition.)

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

Pesach Message

Rabbi David Rose

As we again approach the days of Pesach, we should reflect on its meaning for us. Beyond all the preparations, hard work and shopping, the family meal and special food, does Pesach have a specific message for us this year?

It has not been an easy winter. We have experienced the greatest rise in anti-Semitism in a generation or more, and Jews everywhere are feeling more insecure. What understanding of our own situation can we take from the timeless story of the Exodus? An important point to remember is that the phenomena we face today are not new. The war of words against Israel and Jews is as old as Pharaoh. He understood that if he wanted to persecute the Jews, he first needed to denigrate and demonise them. The Rabbis in the Haggadah thus understood the statement that the Egyptians 'did evil to us' as meaning that we were made to seem evil in their eyes. Knowing this, however, means we can do something about it. We know the danger of such propaganda, but we also have the ability to counteract it.

This brings us to the second lesson of the Exodus: we are not alone. Because of the loud voices and violent action of our enemies, it is easy to think that we are isolated. Yet if we look at the Egyptian persecution we see that many Egyptians did not agree with Pharaoh's policy. They protected Jewish children and willingly gave the Jews presents when they left. Indeed, some even went so far as to join them. What was true then, is true today. We have many friends and more potential allies. We need to make more use of them.



The most important lesson of Pesach for today is that this will also pass and redemption is assured. For the Jews in Egypt it must have seemed that G-d had forgotten them. Yet nothing was further from the truth. G-d was waiting for the Egyptians to condemn themselves so He could justly punish them and redeem Israel. So it is today. Behind the scenes G-d is allowing our enemies to further unravel the rope that will hang them. Let them show everyone, that, despite the Holocaust, they still have learnt nothing and come out with the same old lies and canards. Let them be fully condemned in the eyes of G-d and man, in order, as in Egypt, for Israel to be saved and her enemies destroyed. As it was then, so it will be today. We need merely to do our bit, be patient and wait for the salvation of G-d. As an Israeli saying puts it: 'we survived Pharaoh; we'll survive also this'.

Happy and Kosher Pesach
Rabbi David Rose

An Edinburgh Milestone

100 Years of Edinburgh Jewish Student Society, 1909-2009

Harvey L Kaplan



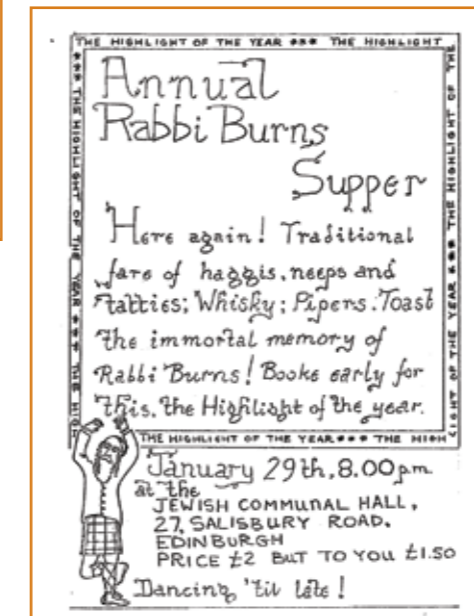
The year was 1909 – a hundred years ago. King Edward VII was on the throne and Herbert Asquith was the Prime Minister. Rev Jacob Furst led the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation at its synagogue in Graham Street, assisted by Chazan Jacob Mendel Teitleman. There were also other shuls in town – the 'Blecheneh Shul' in Dalry, the 'Greener Shul' in Richmond Street and the 'Bolshie Shul' in South Clerk Street. Scotland's oldest Jewish community was thriving, with nearly 2,000 Jews in the city.

'On the evening of Saturday 9 January, a group of Jewish students in the city came together to form an Edinburgh University Jewish Society. Mr H Levy was elected President and Hon. Secretary, with Mr M Teitleman as treasurer.'

Thus was created the first Jewish student society in Scotland, now perhaps one of the oldest in Europe. This

year, Edinburgh's Jewish students are celebrating their centenary year in a world far removed from that of 1909.

Jewish students had studied in Edinburgh as early as the 18th century, including Solomon de Leon who studied medicine in the 1780s, Heyman Lion in the 1790s and Louis Ashenheim in the 1830s.ⁱⁱ However there is no record of any organised Jewish activity in the city.



Burns Supper flyer, 1979

The new society involved a number of students from local Jewish families from the outset:

'A meeting of the University Jewish Society was held last Saturday evening in the Livingstone Halls, Mr MC Turiansky, Vice-President, in the chair. Mr Cohen read a paper on policy. Messrs Mendlessohn, M Levy, Balkin, Eban, Teitelman, Wedeclefsky, Rifkind and Golgut took part in the discussion. Mr Cohen was thanked on the motion of Mr Rifkind.'

The first meetings were held in members' homes and later in the Achei Brith hall. There were dances and even an EUJS Male Choir! Later, the society affiliated to the university SRC and meetings were

held on campus. Early speakers included Dr Chaim Weitzmann, Dr Max Nordau, Chief Rabbi Hertz and Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches. Money was raised for charity and books were collected for the library of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Many of the early members were foreign students, often from South Africa and an early complaint was that local students were often not joining the society. Another complaint in the 1920s was that lectures were held on Saturdays, despite Jewish students' protests, meaning that EUJS members could not attend synagogue. However, if one of the members was saying kaddish, the society arranged to hold minyanim on weekdays.

Rabbi Daiches acted as Hon. President of the society and extended hospitality to Jewish students. He also arranged for community hospitality on festivals such as Pesach.

In the 1920s, the society had a strong sense of camaraderie:

'Members of the EUJS, ours is a glorious tradition! Let us be loyal to it. Today we are all together. Tomorrow we will again be scattered to the four corners of the earth. Let the EUJS be the bond of eternal union between us all – the bond of David and Jonathan.'



Politics played a big part in the programme. On 2 December 1922, there was a debate 'that the Jews of today are incapable of self-government' . The

minutes of the society record that at a meeting in August 1940 on 'The Problem of Palestine', Miss E Ginsburg presented the case from the Arab as well as from the Jewish point of view, 'which provoked much heated discussion among the audience...'

In the 1930s, intermeetings were held with Glasgow students:

'The University Jewish Societies of Glasgow and Edinburgh took part in an interdebate at the Glasgow Progressive Synagogue on Sunday afternoon. The subject of debate was 'that the progress of the species decides the sacrifice of the individual'.^v

Joint meetings were also held with Christian students:



'...Under the auspices of the Edinburgh University Jewish Society and the Students' Christian Movement, a symposium on 'the fight against anti-semitism' was held last week in the Pollock Memorial Halls, Edinburgh University. The two principal speakers were the Rev Dr David McDougall of the Church of Scotland and Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches...'^{vi}

Dr Elinor Corfam remembered the involvement of refugee students:

'I was secretary of the society from some time from 1940. Due to the disruption



of our lives by the war, the number of students was very small, but we were reinforced by a group of extremely distinguished physicians, surgeons and scholars who had fled from Europe to Edinburgh. They, of course, elevated the intellectual level of the meetings.'

Berl and Clarice Osborne (née Oppenheim) were also involved in the 1940s. Berl (né Ostrovsky) studied medicine at the university during the war and was chairman of the society in 1944-45, whilst Clarice (Oppenheim) studied pharmacy at Heriott Watt College 1945-1950. Clarice remembers socials in her parents' home at 16 Dalrymple Crescent, meetings in the synagogue succah and the first Israeli students in the city. Members in the 1940s included Harold Ordman, Hazel Rubin (Greenstone), Vivienne Shrier (Goldberg), Emma Levy (Wolf), Joyce Davidson (Dorfman), Sheila Gore (Levinson) and Zelig Kaufman.

In the 1950s, there were many American students in town. The Jewish Chronicle reported that the maiden voyage of the Mauritania included a party of 85 American Jewish medical students going home on vacation from their studies at Edinburgh University. 'They were a very jolly crowd and gained the admiration of all for their courtesy and sportsmanship...'^{vii}

Jewish students have always been welcomed by the local community, often using the communal hall for meetings and events.

'Edinburgh University Students have

begun conducting Sabbath morning services for children at the Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. The services were inaugurated by the minister, Rabbi Dr J Weinberg.'^{viii}

From the early 1970s onwards, up to the present day, the highlight of the Jewish student year has been the Edinburgh Burns Supper (now the Burns Ball), attracting participants from around the country. This year's Burns Ball marked the society's centenary and, in addition, a group of former members was set up on Facebook, entitled 'I wish Mazal Tov to Edinburgh J-Soc 1909-2009 - 100 Years Young'. There are over 70 members of this group and they are posting memories and photographs of Edinburgh Jewish student life over the years.

Here's to the next hundred years of Edinburgh Jewish Students' Society!

Harvey Kaplan is director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow – www.sjac.org.uk, which has recently opened a new permanent exhibition, "A New Life in Scotland."

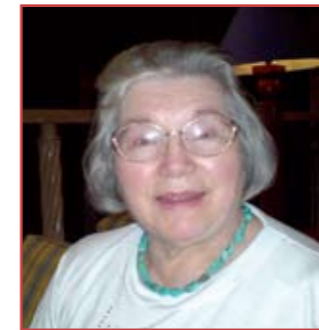
- i Jewish Chronicle, 15 January 1909
- ii Kenneth Collins: Go and Learn – the International Story of Jews and Medicine in Scotland, Aberdeen, 1988, pp 163,167, 172
- iii Jewish Chronicle: 4 February 1910
- iv EUJS Magazine, 7 March 1923
- v Jewish Chronicle: 24 February 1939
- vi Jewish Chronicle: 21 July 1939
- vii Jewish Chronicle: 17 October 1952
- viii Jewish Chronicle: 1 December 1961

Memoirs of Halina Moss 1939 to 1945

Extract one – my mother goes back to Poland to 'fetch her things'

Micheline Brannan

My mother Halina Moss (née Lewiner) celebrated her 80th birthday on 15 January 2009. Her family owed their survival to their decision to join the refugee trail from Poland to Russia at the outbreak of War.



An irony of my mother's story is that my grandmother had taken her to Glasgow for a stay of several months just prior to the outbreak of war. Despite knowing war was imminent, the pair returned via Paris, where my grandmother, an accomplished dressmaker, gathered ideas and material for bringing haute couture to her town. This was not to be, as the War broke out a few weeks after their return. My mother's memoirs start with the landing of 4 stray bombs on her native town Otwock.

The first extract I have selected relates to when the family were lodging in Bialystok, hoping to get to Vilna.

"Meanwhile, it became obvious that material goods and supplies were becoming scarcer all the time. My father began trading in watches, using his contacts and Russian language, acquired when he had been deported during Tsarist times. But my mother, as usual, did not trust father's ability to support us. She preferred to rely on her own skills as a dressmaker. She began regretting that she hadn't brought her sewing machine and other dressmaking equipment with us.

She now remembered all those young men and women who travelled in the opposite direction to ours when we were fleeing the Germans and how they explained that they were "going for their things" while the border was still "soft". They had told us that, in their opinion, the border would stay "soft" for many weeks yet.

Mother now decided that she too would "go for her things". She contacted a group of young people who kept traversing the border regularly and soon she was on her way. By the third week of mother's absence I began to miss her very much and to daydream about her return.

After three weeks, the front doorbell rang. Someone went to open the door and a thin woman came in. She wore a black coat and a green woollen pointed bonnet. Her cheeks were sunken and sagging. She stared straight ahead with unsmiling green eyes. It took me about fifteen seconds of scrutinising this unfamiliar figure and then I screamed, "Mummy!", and flung myself into her arms.

Before she left, three weeks previously, she had been my familiar pre-war mummy: plumply rounded, with a full, smiling face, fashionably – well, nearly fashionably – dressed in brightly coloured clothes. Now she was so different! Another thing that struck me about her arrival was that she carried nothing with her, except a handbag, but hadn't she gone to "fetch her things"? Her story came out in bits over a long period after her return.

Mother's journey to Warsaw had been uneventful. She had visited her parents and other family members who had not joined the refugee trail (all perished except for cousin Szymon, who made it to New York). From Warsaw mother went to our former home in Otwock (by narrow gauge train). There she managed to join a group who hired a lorry into which she packed her sewing machine, some other dressmaking equipment, some bed linen and kitchen equipment. Then they set out for the East.

In Lublin the lorry driver could not refill his tank. Fuel was not available and he was forced to refuse to go any further.

My mother hired two peasant carts with drivers, had her luggage reloaded and found that some of it could not fit onto the carts. She found a family who were prepared to store some of her less essential goods. She continued her journey but soon one of the carts broke down owing to the late autumn weather turning the tracks to rivers of mud. The luggage had to be reloaded onto one cart. Again, mother discarded less essential items and left them with a peasant family. Both parties understood that the day when she returned to collect them was unlikely to arrive.

She took with her the bed linen, the sewing machine, and also her British ball gowns, shoes, some lengths of French silk and a fox fur. The latter items she hoped to sell to some Russian high officers' wives or to someone on the stage.

The cart driver brought her to the home of a man with the reputation of being a guide across the border over to the Soviet side. The border was the river Bug and it was necessary to row across it in a boat. The man had contacts with boatmen and knew the ways of the German border guards.

It now transpired that the border, far from being "soft", had hardened up considerably. The refugees were constantly harassed by the German border patrols, and if they made it across, the refugees who stumbled into a Soviet patrol were sent back to the German side.

The guide kept taking groups of people across but each time mother asked whether she could be included, she was told that on this occasion the conditions were not suitable. The guide kept asking for extra money and mother was worried that soon she would run out. She now understood that the people whom the

guide was taking across were smugglers who were using this confused and murky time to make a quick fortune. So these were the jolly young people who were going for “their things”. She now repented her impetuosity and that she imagined that at forty five years of age she could achieve alone what these youngsters in their twenties did in organised groups.

She slept on a hay mattress, plagued by fleas, by a nervous itch she developed and by her desperate thoughts.

One night the guide and his son took my mother down to the river to await the boatman. Suddenly, there was the roar of a German patrol. The two guides scrambled up the steep bank of slippery clay, leaving mother behind. They were like a pair of spidery monkeys, even though they were hampered by the bulk of my mother’s luggage.

My mother was caught in the beams of the patrol’s torches. The Germans surrounded her and marched her off to headquarters. There they made her strip to her underwear, searched her thoroughly, untied her bundle, took out an alarm clock and a pair of tailor’s shears, pushed her into a small cubicle and locked the door. Mother slumped on the floor, shivering with cold and frustration. After a while, she began to wonder what lay in store for her. She prepared herself for a quick death by a shooting squad against the nearest wall. However, just before dawn a German soldier opened the door, threw her clothes and her bundle at her and told her to go. The bundle was now lighter. Mother concluded that by getting rid of her the soldiers felt that they could keep the meagre loot and no questions asked.

My mother knew nobody in that village except the guide. She plodded back to his house. He received her somewhat defiantly, but she had no strength to reproach him for his desertion.

That evening, as she was preparing to lie down to sleep on her hay-bed among all the other tenants of the out-house, a man approached her. She had seen him before, among the prospective crossers of the border, together with the guide and his son. His name was Kazik. She had distrusted him, judging his character solely by his cunning and brutal appearance. Now he told her that he was sorry for her, that he knew of the cowardly betrayal she had suffered, that he had heard of the child she had on the other side and that if she paid him a sum of money named by him he would get her across the river the first moonless night there was. Mother did not know whether to believe the man. However, she decided that she had no alternative but to take the gamble.

Two days later the night was as dark as the bottom of a disused pit. A fine drizzle came down and seemed to be determined to go on forever. Kazik whispered to her, “Tonight,” as he passed by. Mother once again repacked her possessions. With a heavy heart she abandoned her sewing machine and most of the bed linen. She now stuffed everything she could into one rucksack that she could carry herself.

It was near midnight when Kazik appeared again, and told her to come. As soon as they were outside, Kazik demanded his payment. Mother silently handed over the money, expecting

to be abandoned at any moment. But Kazik did not run. He escorted her to the water’s edge, peeled off some of her notes to pay the boatman, and they clambered down the bank to board. Soon she was sitting in the little boat with other passengers also carrying rucksacks, being rowed across. The boatman somehow avoided the torches of the German border patrols, but once across the Bug, the challenge of evading the Soviet border guards remained. Silence was essential.

The passengers jumped onto the bank. A twig snapped. Suddenly, lights shone, dogs yapped, voices shouted, “Stoy, kto idyot?” The other three, having understood none of this, yielded immediately to instinct and took to their heels. Mother, who knew Russian, halted in response to the order just long enough to make escape impossible. She remained rooted to the spot in horror. The thought that she might be sent back across the border was just too much for her. She felt her knees giving way. She slumped in a faint.

She came to almost immediately. Two broad Russian faces looked down at her. She began, “U menya rebyonok...” She kept telling them that she had a child in Bialystok and she had to go to it. It was ill and alone and would they let her go. They looked at each other, then lifted her up to her feet, turned her in the direction of the road and told her to go. Mother could hardly believe her luck. Stopping at a wayside cottage, where a kind woman offered her black bread and water, she discovered she had 20 km to walk to the railway.

As she walked, the weather changed and now a fine drizzle was coming down from a leaden sky. Mother’s clothes dampened and the rucksack felt heavier than ever. Passing workers ignored her, but towards the end of the afternoon two men overtook her. They asked her where she was going. She explained. The older man then said, “There is still a long way to go. Why not let us take you. Our village, ***, is just across this wood. We can borrow a cart off my son-in-law and take you to the station. Let my son carry your rucksack.” They exchanged glances, as my mother later recalled. My mother, gratefully, slipped the straps of the rucksack off her shoulders and the son hoisted it on his back. “I am Michal and he is Stefek” said the old man.

They motioned mother to follow and plunged into the woods. Mother followed obediently. The going was hard; her progress was impeded by exposed roots, loose dry branches, marshy patches and the lack of any visible path. The two men began to leave her behind. She was reduced to call after them to slow down. To her astonishment, they increased their pace and soon they disappeared from sight, concealed by tree trunks and the falling dusk. She shouted “Michal! Stefek!” but only the echo now replied. She now knew that she had been robbed. She headed generally back the way they had come, trying to keep as straight as she could. It was now dark and she feared wolves and bears.

All of a sudden she came across a shallow ditch and beyond it she saw the road, and distant lights. Forcing herself to reach these lights, despite extreme fatigue, she eventually arrived at the outskirts of a shtetl. A woman holding a child by its hand passed by and my mother thought that she discerned the face of a Jewess. She addressed the woman in Yiddish: “How do I get

to the station?” and received a reply in the same tongue:

“It is not far from here. But you look exhausted. Are you ill? Come to my house, have a rest and a bite to eat.”

Mother followed the young woman gratefully and soon she was sitting on a bench in a small, overheated room. She found herself treated to plentiful hot, sweet tea. Every muscle and bone in her body was aching. She poured out the story of her adventures of the last few days. The woman listened with compassion. She confirmed that a village called *** did exist and advised mother to make a formal complaint at the newly established Russian Militia (police) about her robbery. She also informed mother that there was a train to Bialystok the following day.

The following morning she took her farewell of her kind hosts,

Visa to Freedom 1939 thanks to a Pregnancy Test *a Sketch of the Lives of my Parents in Pre-War Vienna*

Liselotte Adler-Kastner

My parents, Dr Ernst Adler and Dr Regina Kapeller-Adler arrived in Edinburgh 70 years ago in February 1939, having left their elderly parents and most of their closest relatives, their home, friends, colleagues and native language back in Vienna.

Their feelings on arriving in the Scottish Capital must have been a mixture of enormous relief and indebtedness, weighing against dire foreboding regarding the fate of their family and great uncertainty as to their own future, having - virtually penniless - to start a new life and rebuild their destroyed professional careers in a totally strange country. My father was conversant with classical Hebrew, French and Latin, my mother with French, Latin and some Greek, but neither had any knowledge of English, apart from that hastily gleaned in a crash course before leaving Vienna. Little did my father suspect that some years later he would additionally have to acquire a smattering of Yiddish in order to understand the medical complaints of some of his elderly patients amongst the Jewish community! My parents had been stripped of everything – their medical positions, self-

confidence and savings £2.10s per person was the permitted limit of currency to be taken out of Austria, roughly equivalent then to a junior secretary’s weekly salary). However, they considered themselves fortunate to be alive and free, together with me, their four-year old only child, in the welcoming environment of Scotland.

Ernst Adler was born on March 11th 1899 in Vienna. He represented the third generation of doctors in his family, who had combined their professional skills with profound Hebrew scholarship. His father, having studied law at the German University of Prague, held the highest executive position in the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (Jewish Community) of Vienna between 1917 and 1931, when roughly 10% of the Viennese population was Jewish (201,000 at its zenith in 1923). Ernst’s Barmitzvah took place in the largest strictly-orthodox synagogue in Vienna, the Schiffschul, but to avoid causing any offence to his father’s friend, Oberrabbiner Moritz Güdemann, Ernst took the Mincha service in the main Vienna synagogue, the Stadttempel, which was the domain of the Chief Rabbi (and, incidentally, the only synagogue in Vienna to survive the Kristallnacht in November 1938). My father studied medicine in Vienna with great distinction and then spent many years in specialist

the Sorkins, and went to the township’s office of the Militia to make her formal complaint. The officer on duty issued her with a certificate stating that she had lost all her possessions by theft and requesting the railway to carry her to Bialystok. No one asked her for the certificate; neither did anyone request to see her ticket when she joined the overcrowded train for Bialystok. Travellers hung from doors like bunches of grapes. The train set out without any attempt to make the situation safer for travellers. The lack of any luggage whatsoever was an advantage, as it enabled mother to penetrate fairly easily into the interior of a carriage and even, after a while, to obtain a seat.

Amazingly thieves were apprehended and my mother was later summoned to the police station to claim her possessions.

To be continued in the next edition...

children. Once, when Ernst Adler was visiting a patient, a neighbour begged him to examine her young boy, who was immediately operated on hospital, my father having diagnosed acute appendicitis. Fortunately, the boy made a good recovery and the family remained grateful patients until 1938 – he was Norbert Brainin, who became first violinist of the famous Amadeus Quartet! There was a joyful reunion of doctor and former patient when the Amadeus Quartet played for the first time at the Edinburgh Festival in 1951.

Regina Kapeller was born on June 28th 1900 in Stanislau, Galicia. She was descended from the distinguished Sadagora rabbinic family. Her father was shipping agent for both the Canadian Pacific, and Royal Mail Lines, based mainly in Bucharest; he had served in the Austrian army in the 1st World War. My mother excelled at Gymnasium (Grammar School) in Vienna and then overcame her parents' initial resistance to her entering Vienna University to study chemistry. After graduating as PhD in 1923 she was appointed to the Medical Chemistry Department of Vienna University, becoming Assistent (lecturer) in 1926, a rare distinction for a woman. She was a passionate teacher and produced a prodigious output of research on a variety of topics.

“Her discovery of a chemical pregnancy test in 1933/4, which was simple and economical to use”

Her discovery of a chemical pregnancy test in 1933/4, which was simple and economical to use and detected pregnancy at a much earlier stage than the standard biological methods of the time, laid the foundation for her subsequent international scientific reputation and, most importantly, proved life-saving for us after the Anschluss. However, despite the fact that her famous chief, Professor Otto von Fürth, said that 6 men would have become Dozent (Reader) with Regina Kapeller-Adler's published work,

he advised against her applying, due to the double handicap of being female and Jewish. Indeed, in 1933 solely three women had achieved the status of Dozent in the Vienna Medical Faculty, whereby only one was Jewish. The result of this discriminatory ruling was that my mother lost the paid position of 'Assistent', which was limited to 6 years' tenure (and had been exceptionally extended to 8 years in her case). Nonetheless, she continued research and teaching in the department, without remuneration, until 1938 and, moreover, commenced studying medicine after I was born in 1934, because her



voice, my father was an accomplished violinist, playing in the excellent Viennese *Ärztorchester* (Doctors' Orchestra) and chamber music groups - his brother-in-law was a gifted pianist. My parents frequently played tennis and my mother collected quite a few trophies. My father was probably the better player, although not a match for his cousin, who secured emigration to Sweden after the Anschluss because he had previously partnered the tennis-addicted Swedish King Gustav V at an Austrian resort! My parents were both keen skiers and frequently took the train on Sundays to the nearest mountains, by the Semmering, where they climbed up, carrying their skis, for an hour or two - no lifts in those days! – followed by an exhilarating, long descent to the valley. My father returned from every summer holiday, spent exploring Europe by train, with numerous photographs, which he developed and printed himself. On Shabbat my father attended alternately one of the numerous nearby synagogues, followed by family get-togethers; on festivals my parents joined my grandparents at the *Schiffschul* services.

“German Nazis entered Austria next day, to the jubilation of hundreds of thousands of ecstatic Viennese citizens”

This lifestyle of satisfying hard work and pleasant recreation came to an abrupt halt on March 11th 1938, my father's 39th birthday, when

Chancellor Schuschnigg gave his historic farewell speech and the German Nazis entered Austria next day, to the jubilation of hundreds of thousands of ecstatic Viennese citizens. Had my parents overlooked the dire warning signals emanating from Germany? I doubt it, but apart from the naïvely optimistic, general belief before the Anschluss that Austria would choose independence from Germany, it must have been daunting to contemplate voluntarily giving up a “safe” professional life and, especially, leaving elderly parents behind. Moreover, which country in the world wanted an influx of Jews? None did, unless the immigrants

research was increasingly medically-orientated. This incredible workload, was further augmented in 1936 by her appointment as director of the clinical laboratory of a private hospital.

My parents led a fulfilled life in Vienna. They lived in the very “Jewish” Second District, near the Prater (of “Third Man” fame) and my father consulted from home. Apart from entertaining many friends, they visited exhibitions and relished their treasured Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra subscription concerts (and others), the opera and theatre. In addition to possessing a fine baritone

had substantial financial means to set up businesses providing jobs in areas of great unemployment, as happened, for example, in South Wales.

The tribulations suffered by German Jews increased gradually between 1933 and 1938. By contrast, the decrees against Austrian Jews struck instantly after the Anschluss and advanced with malignant rapidity. My parents were both summarily dismissed and my father then worked as a doctor for the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (Jews were not allowed to receive medical care from an Aryan doctor and vice versa). Since 1933 Britain had allowed entrance to a steady trickle of German Jewish doctors, who often re-qualified with the Scottish Triple Qualification, but suddenly, after March 1938, thousands of Viennese doctors desperately searched for positions abroad. The British Government had initially agreed to admit 500 Austrian doctors, but under pressure from the Medical Practitioners' Union - afraid of competition from doctors trained at the renowned Viennese Medical School - the number was decimated to 50. Meanwhile, Professor Fürth wrote wonderful letters of recommendation on my mother's behalf to his contacts in all corners of the world, but to no avail.

The Jewish population was subjected to increasing humiliation, to which my mother responded with characteristic courage. Perhaps defiance was facilitated by her striking good looks and Aryan appearance. When some Nazis demanded entrance to confiscate typewriters, my mother convincingly denied ownership of one and placated the intruders with some writing materials; hence, her ancient typewriter came to Edinburgh and was used to prepare all her scientific papers throughout her career! Jews were permitted to shop only in Jewish shops, Aryans exclusively in Aryan shops. Once, some Nazis stormed into the Jewish shop where my mother was buying food and seized her, thinking that she was an Aryan. The punishment for this “crime” was to place the “offender” for hours in the shop window with a huge notice round her neck stating “Ich habe beim Saujuden eingekauft” (“I bought

merchandise from a Jewish pig”). It took a lot of persuasion for my mother to convince the Nazis that she was, indeed, Jewish and where else could she shop! A sterner challenge arose on Yom Kippur 1938, when my mother and her sister were stopped whilst walking back from the synagogue, then forced to proceed to the Nazi headquarters and ordered to wash the floor. Unintimidated, my mother demanded some polish to perfect her task and proceeded to achieve such a treacherous surface that a passing official slipped and fell, whereupon both women were instantly dismissed. Somehow, my



mother coped, often gaining the respect of Nazi colleagues. She continued scientific work until summer 1938, but was refused permission (like all Jews) to sit her final medical exams. My beloved nanny, Tilde, who had looked after me since I was a baby, had to be sent away, heart-broken, because Jews could no longer employ Aryans.

The Kristallnacht 9/10th November 1938 initiated a further sinister deterioration in situation for Jews and was disastrous for my father, who had been arbitrarily arrested by the Gestapo that morning. After 4 days of sardine-

like incarceration, brutal mishandling and life-threatening humiliation by SS officers, the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* fortunately secured his release as one of their doctors; my father, broken by this experience, later commented on the stoicism of ultraorthodox Jews who had been subjected to aggravated mockery and brutality. The next morning all of his unfortunate fellow prisoners were transported to Dachau, probably never to return. Leaving Vienna now became a matter of life or death.

The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning had been formed in 1933 by some very distinguished, enlightened British academics to try and obtain positions for dismissed German Jewish refugees at British universities and other institutions. In 1938 Austrian, then later Czech academics were added to their list. This remarkable Society rescued altogether about 1000 scientists and scholars, my mother miraculously being amongst them, because the Professor of Genetics at Edinburgh University, F.A.E. Crew, who had established the first - and at that time only - Pregnancy Diagnosis Laboratory in Britain, offered my mother a workplace in his department, due to his interest in her pregnancy test and related research. The second miracle was that my father was chosen as one of the 50 Austrian doctors permitted to practise in Britain after re-qualification. The final hurdle for my parents, apart from the race to conquer horrendous red tape, was to find a British guarantor. They knew nobody, but fortunately Napoleon and Henrietta Ryder, daughter of Haham Moses Gaster, showed interest in my parents' story and graciously offered to vouch for us, although total strangers. This generous act of trust, accepted with deepest gratitude, allowed us finally to board the train from Vienna in January 1939 and cross the Channel - which had protected Britain from conquest for centuries - to safety.

Israel Elections

Jack Couatts

On October 26, 2008, newly elected "Kadima" Chair Tzipi Livni informed President Shimon Peres that she did not succeed in forming a coalition government. Peres decided to call for general elections to the Knesset.



Little did Livni know at that time that the election campaign would be marred by two major events: a world economical crisis and "Operation Cast Lead" in Gaza.

Israeli lawmakers are voted in according to the proportional representation system where the 120 Knesset seats are assigned in proportion to each party's percentage of the total national vote. However, the minimum required for a party to win a Knesset seat is 2% of the total votes cast. The Parties agendas were mainly focusing on economic and security issues. On the heels of a war and the average national gross salary falling to below 7790 shekels (1298 Pounds) a month, there was an unexpectedly high turn out. 65% of the population of the 5,278,985 eligible voters took to the ballot box resulting in 12 parties out of 34 runners passing the 2% threshold in order to enter the Knesset with each receiving between 3 and 28 seats.

Knesset elections are based on a vote for a party rather than for individuals, and the many political parties that competed for these elections to the Knesset reflected a wide range of outlooks and beliefs. By definition, in every election there is a winner, a loser and a number of runners up. In Israel the definitions of these positions are not always as straightforward as one might expect.

Knesset seats are assigned in proportion to each party's percentage of the total national vote. A party's surplus votes, which are insufficient for an additional seat, are redistributed among the various parties according to their proportional size resulting from the elections, or as agreed between parties prior to the election.

The number and order of members entering the new Knesset for each party corresponds to its list of candidates as presented for election. There are no by-elections in Israel. Should an MK resign or pass away in the course of the Knesset term, the next person on that party's list automatically replaces him/her.

All citizens aged 18 or older on Election Day are eligible to vote. Election Day is a holiday in order to enable all to participate. Soldiers on active duty vote in special polling stations in their units. Special arrangements were also made for prison inmates to vote, as well as for those confined to hospital, with 194 of the 9,263 voting stations set in hospitals and 56 in prisons.

Israeli law does not provide for absentee ballots, and voting takes place only on Israeli soil. The sole exceptions are Israeli citizens

serving on Israeli ships and in Israeli embassies and consulates abroad.

February 10, 2009, Election Day:

The clear loser in these elections was the "Labour Party" lead by Ehud Barak, disintegrating to only 13 seats and becoming Israel's fourth biggest party, a long way from the days of continuous labour rule in Israel from Ben-Gurion's day at the establishment of the state until 1977.

This election's winner is surely "Yisrael Beiteinu" and its leader, Avigdor Lieberman, a Russian immigrant, who has brought his party to be Israel's third biggest Party, within 10 years. A word of caution is needed though, because third and fourth positions in Israeli politics is very fluid and only time will tell if this party is here to stay or not. In the meantime this position grants Lieberman enough power to negotiate a senior position in the next government if he plays his political cards right.

The runners up then, surprisingly, are Israel's biggest parties; "Likud" lead by Benjamin Netanyahu and "Kadima" led by Tzipi Livni. Receiving 27 and 28 seats respectively, both are claiming victory. This is explained by, "Kadima" winning the most seats but "Likud" having the most likely chances of forming a government. Although unlikely, there is the slight possibility that they will both agree on a rotating government each taking the premiership for 2 years.

The real losers though are the Israel people. They never really get a government that they voted for due to the ultra-democratic system of proportional representation mixed with the mentioned low 2% threshold resulting in a wide spread of political parties entering the Knesset. In their post election speeches Barak, Netanyahu and Livni all expressed their concern for the crippling election system in Israel and vowed to act towards changing this before the next General Election, which on average takes place every two years here. It would be my guess that if they succeed in changing the system, the Scottish system or one similar, using a mixture of the plurality (first-past-the-post) and proportional representation systems will be adopted although my preference would be a full blown British first-past-the-post version where once and for all a party will be able to gain a majority and carry out its policies without all the undemocratic wheeling and dealing that goes on with coalitions.

Whoever the task is assigned to, be it Livni or Netanyahu, will have a period of 28 days to form a government. The President may extend the term by an additional period of time, not exceeding 14 days. If this period (up to 42 days) has passed and the designated Knesset member has not succeeded in forming a government, the President may then assign the task of forming a government to another Knesset member. This Knesset member has a period of 28 days for the fulfilment of the task.

If a government still has not been formed, an absolute majority of Knesset members (61) has the option of applying in writing to the President, asking him to assign the task to a particular Knesset member. Such a precedent has yet to occur.

Jack Couatts was born in Edinburgh and later moved to Glasgow where he was a printer until he moved to Israel in his retirement

Remarks... Mark Kirk

Richard A Goldberg

The following message was sent during the not so distant events between Israel and Gaza. Though things have moved on since then, this will one day become an important source for the archives.

As you may have seen on TV or read in the newspaper, Congressman Kirk returned on January 6th, from three weeks of active military service in southern Afghanistan – the first Representative-reservist to deploy to an imminent danger zone since 1942. Upon his return, Congressman Kirk issued the following statement in support of Israel's actions to root out the Hamas terror infrastructure in Gaza.

Remarks by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) Israel Solidarity Rally – Washington, D.C. January 7, 2009.

'As we gather here today, thousands of brave young men and women of the Israel Defence Forces are putting their lives on the line to preserve democracy and defeat a radical ideology of terror and destruction.

Some will not come home – parents will never see their children again – sons and daughters will grow up without a mother or father. As a Navy combat veteran – just returned from the front lines of the Global War on Terror – my thoughts and prayers remain with those who would make the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom, liberty and peace.

No democracy wants a war – any government beholden to its people has a natural inclination toward diplomacy and reconciliation. Just a few hours ago, the Israeli government reiterated its support for a ceasefire if Hamas stops firing rockets and the international community stops the flow of arms into Gaza. The Hamas response was loud and clear – there will be no permanent ceasefire until Israel is destroyed.

When terrorists bent on your annihilation target your citizens day in and day out – a democracy must have a bottom line.

Let us be clear. Hamas – now a wholly owned subsidiary of the Government of Iran – is a designated terrorist organization responsible for the murders of at least 26 American citizens -- some of them teenagers, children and infants. There can be no moral equivalency between a terrorist organization that targets civilians and a democratically elected government that acts to defend them.

The State of Israel is a democracy - and its right to defend itself against terrorism is unequivocal.

For eight years, Israeli civilians endured thousands of Hamas terror rockets - targeting schools, hospitals and family homes. A generation of Israeli children were raised in terror - their second home a bomb shelter, the sound of an air raid just a daily routine.

As Americans, this fight should be deeply personal. If you live in Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, California, North Carolina, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, or Florida, then Americans from your State have been murdered by Hamas terrorists. We remember 3-month-old Shmuel Taubenfeld and 3-year-old Tehilla Nathanson. We remember David and Nava Applebaum, killed just before Nava's wedding. We remember the victims and we remember their Hamas murderers.

Now, after years of patience – after gestures of peace and reconciliation – after compromising over and over again – the democratically elected Government of Israel is doing what any other democracy in the world would do: fighting back.


The current operation by Israel is working. Hamas turned to Egypt for help – denied. Jordan – denied. Arab states have a message for Iranian agents in the region – get out now. Hamas' own Iranian-backed supporters – Hezbollah – sit impotent, too far to help.

There is a clear path to a ceasefire for Hamas – stop the rockets, renounce terror and recognize the State of Israel. Until then, Hamas remains a terrorist organization that purposefully murders civilians – and it should be treated as such.

Democracies are strongest when they stick together. That is why you came here today – to deliver a strong message to the sons and daughters of Israel: the great democracy across the ocean stands by your side.'

Richard A Goldberg, grandson of David Goldberg, lives both in Chicago and Washington. He is the Senior Appropriations Associate in America (Press Officer) and is a sub-lieutenant in the American Navy in the Intelligence Corps.

Goodwin's Antiques Ltd.
ANTIQUE JEWELLERY & FINE SILVER



PURCHASING · VALUATIONS · REPAIRS
15 & 16 QUEENSFERRY STREET · EDINBURGH · EH2 4QW
T 0131 225 4717 · F 0131 220 1412
ALSO AT : 106-108 ROSE STREET · EDINBURGH · EH2 3JF · T 0131 220 1230

Around and About

The Shein Scene

Coffee Morning

The Community Centre Committee organised another successful pre-Yomtov coffee morning on 21 September when over 50 turned up to savour the delights of gossip, books, bargains, plants and the inevitable members' home baking. An innovative idea was a DVD made by several of the post Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah youth of the community which recorded interviews of their elders who had been resident in the city for many years. The DVD highlighted their nostalgia in growing up in the then predominantly Jewish sector of Edinburgh's South Side and how life had changed out of all recognition over the past few decades. Joyce Sperber welcomed and thanked all who came, including the willing band of helpers for all their efforts.

Friday Night Dinner

On 26 September, after the Friday evening Service in the Synagogue, Hilary Rifkind welcomed a large number to the Community Centre to participate in another Shabbas evening dinner. Among those present were field workers from the Jewish Chaplaincy Centre in Glasgow. A very pleasant evening followed with a most appetising meal, singing and dawning led by Rabbi Rose.

Quiz



The annual quiz organised by Arnold Rifkind and Betsy Dorfman took place on 26 October. Included amongst the 65 who attended was a team of eight from Glasgow who travelled east to participate in the event and somehow had the chutzpah to upstage their hosts by winning. They rubbed in their success by stating that "we are the 'B' team; next time we will send in the 'A' team." The supper which followed added to the most enjoyable atmosphere which prevailed throughout the whole evening amidst comments of "we'll show them next time". Whether this emanated from the Edinburgh or the Glasgow contingent is unknown.

Armistice Service

On the morning of 9 November, Armistice Sunday, Lenny Berger attended the City Chambers where, at the Cenotaph, he laid a wreath in the shape of a Magen Dovid. In the afternoon, Rabbi Rose conducted the Annual Remembrance Service in the

Synagogue to commemorate the members of the Congregation who gave their lives in the two World Wars and the Sinai Campaign. The Service as usual was enhanced by the choir under the leadership of David Mendelssohn and the poignant playing of the Last Post and Reveille by British Legion bugler Archie Swan. Alec Kleinberg and Lenny Berger carried the banners of AJEX and the Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion.

Remembrance Sunday

Rose Orgel

The 9th November 1938 is a date that David Goldberg, then only 14 years old, will always remember, - Kristallnacht- the night when the Nazis created a Pogrom, destroying Synagogues and Jewish owned shops, and also killing many Jews.

This year Kristallnacht was commemorated in St. Andrews and St Georges Church, Edinburgh, where David recounted some of his experiences of that fateful evening. He read a portion from Isaiah in Hebrew; Pastor Michael Mehl followed with an English version.

David then recited the prayer, El Mol Rachamim, (in memory of those who perished) with such emotion that it greatly affected even non-Jews in the congregation. The excellent Church Choir, sang the Hebrew melody, El Haderech.

Pastor Mehl and Mrs. Hannelore Gormley from the German-speaking Congregation also took part in the service, as did the Minister of the Church Rev. R Russell and the outreach minister Rev. Dorothy Anderson.

Following this most impressive and tasteful service, tea and biscuits were served where David could answer the many questions posed by a great number of interested people.

Kristallnacht

To mark the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of Kristallnacht, a service was held and young members of the community participated for the first time. Freddie Green recited a poem of his own composition entitled "The Poppy" ending with the ever emotive "we will remember them". Jessica Spencer read of the horrors of Kristallnacht and its aftermath. A poem "Homesick", written by a child in a concentration camp, was read by Sarah Levy. Her sister Clare chose a poem entitled "In Flanders Field" by John McRae. David Goldberg recited the Memorial Prayer for the Holocaust victims.

After the Service, tea was served in the Community Centre where Hilary Rifkind, Chair of the Congregation, welcomed all and thanked those who had participated and helped with the organisation. She emphasised the significance of the occasion, the anniversary of Kristallnacht and the 90 years since the Armistice

of 1918. John Danzig reminded everyone of the Synagogues and Jewish buildings which had been destroyed in Germany during Kristallnacht and how his father like so many more had his life so tragically disrupted by such events.

Luncheon Club

A larger than usual turn out at the pre Chanukah Luncheon Club on 16 December was delighted to welcome Edinburgh's Lord and Lady Provost. Norman Berger took great pleasure in introducing the distinguished guests due to his long association with the Lord Provost dating back to boyhood days and their continuing friendship. After an excellent lunch for the forty members, the Right Honourable Lord Provost George Grubb spoke of his delight at attending with his wife. He commented on the many varied duties of his office, and the pleasure of meeting so many people. He thanked the Luncheon Club for inviting him and his wife and stated that in the darkness of winter, it was so wonderful to be shortly celebrating a Festival of Light. Rabbi Rose was warm in his praise for the Lord Provost and the Edinburgh City Council for all the support given to the Jewish community. He also thanked the helpers under Avril Berger for the work undertaken to make the afternoon such a success. Norman Berger echoed everyone's thoughts when he said he would look forward to seeing the Lord and Lady Provost at next years Chanukah Luncheon Club.

Chanukah Dinner

A very warm happy atmosphere was experienced as one entered the Community Centre on 20 December for the annual Chanukah dinner. Committee member Lesley Danzig welcomed the 90 diners and wished Mazeltov to Rose Orgel, Irene Mason and Norman Dorfman who were celebrating their birthdays. After dinner, which ended with traditional doughnuts, Hilary Rifkind, deputising for Community Committee Secretary Joyce Sperber who unfortunately was unwell, introduced the entertainment, the Danzig Jazz Trio. Ben Danzig was most disappointed that he was unable to attend as a strained arm prevented his playing the guitar. Music by Jewish composers, including Gershwin and Bernstein, were played by Sean Pentland on the bass, Tom Gibbs on piano and Sam Danzig on the saxophone. Vocalist Jess Abrams even managed to introduce some Chanukah lyrics into her numbers and concluded the evening with the ever popular "Over the Rainbow". Hilary extended thanks to all who attended and especially to the willing band of helpers.

Chanukah in St Andrew Square Edinburgh

Joyce & Jonny Sperber

Over 200 people gathered in the redesigned and newly landscaped St Andrew Square Garden in Edinburgh for the first ever public Chanukah lighting in Edinburgh. It was held on the last night of Chanukah and so the tall, metallic and modern styled chanukiah, made and flown in from New York, looked very impressive. All nine oil filled lanterns produced a warm glow over the Edinburgh skyline.



Organised under the auspices of Chabad by Rabbi Pinny and Mrs Gitty Weinman, the event was dedicated as a memorial to Rabbi Gabriel & Mrs Rivka Holtzberg from the Chabad House, Mumbai who were tragically murdered in the recent terrorist attacks there. A fitting video about their lives was played at the end.

Rabbi Weinman and Rabbi David Rose, Edinburgh's community rabbi, both spoke about the meaning of Chanukah. The specially invited guest, former Lord Provost, Councillor Eric Milligan, spoke eloquently of the concept of a festival of light during the dark winter months, which is common to so many other faiths. This was given poignancy by the surrounding trees bathed in Christmas lights. The blessings over the lighting of the candles were led by Mr David Goldberg, after which there was a musical accompaniment to Maoz Tsur. The scaling of the ladder in the windy conditions to place all nine lanterns proved to be an event in itself. Dr Josh Brickman and Mr Yanky Hecht performed this with great athleticism. We even had our own minor miracle during the lighting. After the Shamash and then the first couple of lanterns were lit, the taper used began to die down and looked to have become extinguished. Rabbi Weinman's hand went to his pocket as though to bring out a lighter or matches. However, he held back for a moment, as if he had some inside information. A few seconds later the taper glowed again by itself and was used to complete the job of lighting the remaining lanterns. Nothing was said. Did anyone else even notice?

And then of course we ate, doughnuts and latkes, traditional Chanukah fare, provided by Gitty with music playing in the background. The Chanukah lighting is intended to be an annual event with The City of Edinburgh Council granting the use of the site as a permanent reusable base for the Chanukah.

Tu B'Shevat

On Sunday 8th February, the Cheder children got down on their hands and knees to paint a large mural of the bare branches of a tree. Handprints were then attached to produce an innovative and colourful poster in celebration of this happy occasion, the 'birthday of trees'. The appropriate Seder was led by Rabbi Rose, which was accompanied by the requisite bonanza of fruits and consumed with relish. The event was organised by Elaine Levy and the teenagers.



250th Anniversary Burns Supper Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre

Sunday 25th January 2009

90 diners were seated and the Chairman for the evening, David Neville, promised everyone a night of fine words, sweet music, satisfying food and good company. Without further ado Burns night proceeded in true traditional style with the Haggis being ably piped in by Bob Tait and then addressed with tremendous verve by a long-standing friend of the Community, Fred Lowrie. After Fred had recited the Selkirk Grace, everyone tucked in to the superb 'bill o'fare'. A contented company sat back to hear Dennis Seatter's excellent Toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns, a person born into poverty and ill-health but nevertheless always concerned for others and with a deep empathy for those around him, especially the lassies. After a musical interlude of Burns' songs, sung by Ruth Cohen, accompanied by Mike Gill, we were treated to two superb toasts - the 'Toast tae the Lassies' from Howard Kahn followed by the, Reply tae the Laddies' from Valerie Kahn. Both Howard and Valerie emphasized how egalitarian Burns was and perhaps

more importantly how he always treated the lassies socially and intellectually as equals; well ahead of his time. After a final musical interlude from Ruth and Mike, Joyce Sperber thanked all those who had helped to make the evening such a special one - one Robert Burns would have equally enjoyed.



Bob Tait Dennis Seatter Fred Lowrie Harold Abrahams



Howard Kahn Ruth Cohen & Mike Gill Valerie Kahn

Interview with Judy Sischy by Eve Oppenheim

Anthony Gilbert

Judy has recently achieved distinction by being awarded the OBE for her services to education and the voluntary sector. To discover more about her being so honoured, we interviewed Judy at her home.



We were delighted to visit Judy in her recently acquired flat, where she is able to relax amid treasured possessions and much loved plants whilst admiring the fine view of Arthur's Seat from her upstairs window. Eve then commenced to ask Judy about her background, her life at home and work, and some of the major influences in her life.

Judy grew up in Heaton, part of Newcastle, where her father, who trained in Edinburgh, was a GP; her mother had worked as a nurse in Dundee until she married and moved south, first to Yorkshire and then to Newcastle where the family settled. Judy was the first of three children and grew up in a close family with her younger brother and sister. She was very conscious of growing up in a doctor's home...it meant irregular meal times and, worse still, having to keep the phone free.

Unlike most Jewish girls in the area, who

attended a Catholic school, Judy attended a small Church of England girls' school in Newcastle, where she became head-girl. At that point she recalled the time when the Headmistress suggested that she should meet the Bishop in his capacity as the Chair of Governors. She remembered him asking her about the participation of Jewish girls in the School Assembly, to which the young Judy assured him that this was acceptable provided that the service was confined to the Old Testament, and it seems that this young advice was heeded. Perhaps it was then that her interest in inter-faith began....

The school encouraged her and she won a scholarship to Bristol University. Beforehand, she had had an interview at Somerville Oxford, which she thought rather gloomy, and then went on to an interview at Bristol, which seemed very attractive. At the Bristol interview, she was given quite a grilling, in particular, why

did she want to travel all that way from Newcastle?'... so the scholarship came as a very pleasant surprise. Between school and University she had a gap year. After the years of school education, she was clear that she wanted a taste of 'real life'; she worked for M&S and recalls the thrill of getting her first pay packet in her hand. Despite the tangible reality of the pay packet, she realised that she was very favoured compared with most of her work mates through the opportunities that would be open to her via higher education, an appreciation that has remained with her throughout her working life. After M&S, she worked in the City Library and then for three months as an au pair in Paris. With the gap year behind her, she proceeded to Bristol, where she read languages: French and German. She loved it there. The degree course included a year abroad at Bordeaux, which was delightful and relaxed.

Asked about influences at this time in her life, she recalled friendships and her parents emphasising the value of education, and Judy clearly echoed this when she said that education was something that 'could never be taken away from you'. Other facets of life, material possessions, can vanish with frightening rapidity, but education remains; how true this was when one looked at the progress, from their humble beginnings, of Jewish immigrants to Scotland, like her own family.

After graduation Judy went to Toronto with her husband Mark. She had won a fellowship and did postgraduate work there for a year followed by a year's teaching in an inner city comprehensive; this was 'tough'; it meant dealing with difficult children and no less with difficult parents. They returned to Scotland where Mark joined a law firm and Judy worked teaching French and German. They had their two daughters, Debbie and Jenny. Because both parents were working, they employed a nanny to look after the girls during the day, a lovely lady who remains a close friend even now.

Various childhood illnesses introduced the family to the start of an association with the Sick Children's Hospital, which has continued to be a major part of Judy's life. She was later invited to become a non-executive director and, despite the responsibilities of such a position and the time it would consume, she was keen to accept. More recently, she has re-engaged with the Sick Kids in preparation of their move to a new hospital next to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

Judy left teaching, looking for work 'beyond the classroom'. She worked for many years with the Merchant Company, which deals with much of the organisation of private schooling in Edinburgh, and rose to become its Deputy Secretary, responsible for education and for welfare, mainly for the elderly.

Her work at the Merchant Company led directly to her founding the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS). She had become acutely aware that there was duplication of effort in much of the administrative work being carried out by the private schools throughout Scotland and that there was a need for a centralised advisory body. So after consultation with Scottish private schools and the organisations they dealt with, the SCIS was born. It now caters for some 32 thousand pupils, constitutes the seventh largest council role in Scotland and is represented on a whole range of bodies providing advice on education to central government. Judy stills works for SCIS, travelling widely throughout Scotland. She says she feels privileged to do such a job, to be involved in national debates and to be able to meet new, interesting people every day.

With her organisational skills becoming more widely known, she was asked by the Rotary Club if she would join them; initially she declined, but, pressed further, she eventually agreed. She was rather amused to discover later that she was one of the first three women ever to be admitted... after much earnest debate in the dusty corridors of the Rotary Club. But she must have had taken something of a broom to that dust as she became President ten years after her admission. She remains with the Rotary, but it plays a smaller role in her life now. As President she had been very pleased to be permitted to select the charities to which the Rotary would direct its support, and she had chosen ones focusing on children: Richmond's Hope in Craigmillar; the Big Project for disaffected youth, based in Broomhouse; and the Roundabout project for children of different faiths in Leith.

Asked whether being Jewish had affected her attitude to the various facets of life, Judy replied that it was 'a huge strand of identity'. It had been a large factor in her schooling, but less so at university where she encountered fewer Jewish people, though she did associate with the small Jewish community in Bristol. She had had Jewish friends whilst in Bordeaux who had come mainly from North Africa. In her present work, it is not a major factor, but it is always there in the background, particularly when dealing with such matters as equal rights, discrimination, gender or disability issues, identifying with being part of a minority (being Jewish and a woman).

Most recently, Judy has become associated with the organisation Windows for Peace. She was introduced to this by her close Newcastle friend, Brenda Beecham, who showed her letters written to one another by young Palestinians and Israelis. Inspired by this, they visited the Windows HQ in Israel, and while there, Judy found herself listening to a conversation about arranging a summer school in Italy where they received financial support. Enthused by what she had seen and heard, she spontaneously intervened to offer hospitality for a Windows group to come to Edinburgh. The group would comprise 15 young people: 5 Jewish Israelis; 5 Palestinian Israelis and 5 Palestinians from occupied territories. On return to the UK, she and

Brenda then threw themselves into raising the £35K needed for the visit. This was difficult but all sorts of organisations and individuals supported the visit, which took place last summer and which is described in the last issue of the Star. Judy was clearly excited about the visit and said that feedback had been very positive, and though it had brought only 15 young people here, the ripples stemming from the visit had spread far and wide.

Judy's contribution to public life has been recognised in the award of an OBE. Did she know about it beforehand? Not a thing! An envelope arrived one December morning with 'Her Majesty' printed in green on the front, probably just a change of tax code...what a surprise when she opened it. No idea of who nominated her; natural curiosity has meant that she has asked a few folk, but all deny, so it's a puzzle, but a very nice one. The award can be made either here in Edinburgh or at Buckingham Palace, but given the special nature of the occasion a trip to London seems right.

Was there anything else to mention? A couple of other matters sprang to mind. On her own initiative she had brought to Scotland a scholar from Soweto. She had been with a delegation visiting South Africa that met a number of distinguished people. When the meeting closed there was discussion as to how to follow it up. In the usual way of these things, most did nothing, but not Judy; she brought over Thulani who spent several months at Loretto School and was completely amazed by what he saw; afterwards he continued his studies at university in South Africa and he is now a pastor doing much good work.

When asked about The Star, she recalls encouraging and supporting Rabbi Shalom Shapira's efforts to set up the publication and she later became chair of the Board. She feels that the Star plays a major role in our community. Her years in all sorts of organisational capacities have taught her that communication is vital, and this is precisely what the Star does; it informs our own community about itself, but just as importantly, it is also our shop window to a wider world, and beyond our four walls, there is a wide appreciation for what the community achieves.

A Professional Tribute to the late Honourable Lord Caplan

Lady Hazel Cosgrove



Philip Caplan studied law at Glasgow University and began his legal career as a solicitor in Glasgow.

He was called to the Scottish Bar in 1957 and enjoyed a successful and varied practice as an advocate. In 1979 he was appointed a sheriff of Lothians and Borders at Edinburgh and was subsequently Sheriff Principal of North Strathclyde, a post in which his judicial reputation was firmly established. In 1989 his exceptional abilities were recognised when he became the first sheriff in modern times to become a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland. Between then and his retirement in 2000 he served that office with distinction and the quality of his contribution was recognised when he was promoted to the Appeal Court and became a member of the First Division of the Inner House of the Court of Session. Following his retirement he continued to sit at the invitation of the court until he reached the statutory retirement age of 75.

Throughout his career on the bench, Philip was highly respected and warmly regarded by his colleagues and all those who appeared before him, both in the civil and the criminal courts for his legal acumen, keen intellect, good judgement and sound common sense. He was wise and humane and was unfailingly courteous and considerate. He was universally admired and respected throughout the profession in Scotland. His contribution

over many years to the work of the Scottish Association for the Study of Offending was recognised when he was made a Life Patron of the Association.

Philip presided over one of Scotland's most celebrated civil litigations, the damages action arising out of the Piper Alpha oilrig disaster in the North Sea in which 167 people lost their lives. The case lasted for three and a half years (then a record in Scottish legal history). The judgement ran to almost 1500 pages and dealt not only with difficult and technical factual issues but also with many important and novel points of law. The oil companies were ordered to pay more than £100 million in damages and the judgement was upheld on appeal. I well remember how his colleagues admired Philip for the fortitude, patience and dedication with which he approached the mammoth task of listening to and then summarising the 13 million words of evidence.

By coincidence, I was appointed sheriff at Edinburgh to fill the vacancy created when Philip became a Sheriff Principal. In 1996 I became a Senator and will never forget Philip's kindness and support in what was, for the first female judge, an undoubtedly challenging environment. Philip was my mentor and role model, and I benefited hugely from his wisdom and guidance. He set high standards as a conscientious judge whose carefully considered judgements were delivered promptly, and were rarely disturbed on appeal.

Although not a practising Jew, Philip was proud of his Jewish roots and was a loyal supporter and friend of Israel. His outstanding contribution to the legal profession brought credit to the Jewish community in Scotland. Sadly, there are now no Jewish Senators in Scotland, and moreover, none in prospect. But the name of The Honourable Lord Caplan will forever be a proud element in the history of Scotland's Jews.

Society Reports

British WIZO Quiz Evening

On Saturday 31st January, two Edinburgh WIZO teams joined 168 teams throughout the country to compete in the quiz. The event was conducted within a system of high-technology. The teams assemble in volunteer's homes. A quiz pack is received from London. Each team opens their pack at 8.00 precisely and has to be completed by 10.30 and answers emailed directly to London head Office.

All 168 are contacted by 11pm with their results. Sylvia and John Donne hosted one team and Carol and Tom Griffin, the other. Halfway through the evening, supper was served while the teams relaxed and gathered their strength.

Our two Edinburgh teams came joint 89th place and all agreed that that they had had a most enjoyable and testing evening.

£345 was made towards the target. We all mean to work hard to improve this year's result for next year's quiz.

Kate Goodwin

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Susannah Heschel – Aryan Theology Sunday 9 November 2008

Professor Susannah Heschel combines grace, charm and erudition and we are lucky to have her back in Edinburgh for a short Sabbatical. She holds the Eli Black Chair in Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, in the United States, and is an expert on German-Jewish history. Her topic, on which she has just published a book, 'The Aryan Jesus: Christians and the Bible in Nazi Germany' (published by Princeton University Press), was selected to fit with the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht on 9 November 1938.

As is well known, Nazism grew in the

fertile soil of German anti-Semitism. In her talk, Professor Heschel drew on the history of the Lutheran church to illustrate just how far 'theologians' were prepared to pervert their subject in order to conform to growing Nazi party expectations. This history is not widely known, as only Lutheran pastors who had opposed Hitler felt motivated after WW 2 to write their memoirs. The others went through the motions of being deNazified, and, while probably not giving up their prejudices, stopped publicising them.

There was a long lead up to Kristallnacht, from the election of the Nazi party in 1933, which saw the start of legislation depriving Jews of their rights. However Kristallnacht backfired on the Nazi party to some extent as it was the first incidence of widespread open street violence and it clashed with the party presenting itself as bringing social order to Germany. Therefore Hitler decided that thereafter the war against the Jews should be pursued through propaganda, legislation and social engineering and not by street violence.

This suited certain theologians within Lutheran church. They wanted to de-Judaise Christianity. The notion of the betrayer, the Judas, was to them, the notion of the evil within each one of us, which they equated to the 'Jew' inside. Getting rid of the real Jews was symbolically equivalent to getting rid of those foul elements from German society.

This led to efforts to remove the Old Testament from the Christian Bible, to eliminate mention of Jesus's Jewish descent from the New Testament and to Aryanise Jesus. The Lutheran Church founded an Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life. This Institute issued various statements 'refuting' Christ's Jewish origins. It was argued that Galilee was not a Jewish area, that Jesus was born in a different Bethlehem which was actually in the Galilee, that his father was a Roman soldier, and that when he went to Jerusalem he was rejected by Jews because he was not one of them. In 1943 the Institute went further, trying to reject St Paul from the New Testament because he had proclaimed himself to be Jewish in origin. The response from the Bishop of Mecklenburg, a staunch Nazi, actually stated that for 1500 years the church had

been duped by a stinking Jew – Paul.

The content of this lecture was quite shocking even to an audience hardened to tales of German antisemitism, as it showed just how far a Christian denomination was prepared to go to advocate for the murderous, racist tyranny that was Nazism. We might have expected to hear of appeasement, churchmen keeping their heads down and making all sorts of compromises, but the brazen use of 'theology' to support Nazism was a very unpleasant revelation. Susannah Heschel hinted that this history is not much studied and that she is treading new ground and studying original documents that many would rather were forgotten or suppressed.

There was a lively discussion session after the talk. The vote of thanks was given by Micheline Brannan, the Treasurer. The meeting was expertly chaired by Rabbi David Rose.

Micheline Brannan

Stem Cell Research Debate 30th November 2009

Stem cell research is among the most promising and controversial technological breakthroughs of our time. It was therefore not surprising to see a 'Lit' meeting which set out to discuss the ethical issues of stem cell research attracting a lot of attention. The scene was so ably set by Dr Josh Brickman, Group Leader at Edinburgh University's Institute of Stem Cell Research. We heard how the whole area had attracted a lot of hype. However the issue was not with adult stem cells but embryonic stem cells. Josh Brickman started with a biological insight into what stem cells were, how they were formed and what the implications were for the future. Many members' minds were put at rest when they heard that while embryonic stem cells had been isolated in the past from other sources, including aborted foetuses it was now the norm for most embryonic stem cells to come from recently fertilized embryos – often referred to as 'pre-embryos'. This was exciting news as we then heard from Josh Brickman that while most adult stem cells don't have the potential to develop into other types of human tissue, embryonic stem cells do – and are thus seen as a

virtual panacea for many of man's ills. In fact the development of pluripotent stem cells now gives us the real possibility in the future of customized cell therapy. But what ethical issues do such developments raise.



We heard from Rabbi David Rose of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation that as far as Jewish Law was concerned one of the overarching principles was the mandate to heal through the development of effective cures. Nevertheless, Rabbi Rose then went on to indicate that some religious authorities felt that in vitro fertilization of embryos and their use in stem cell research was covered by the prohibition of abortion – and hence should not be allowed. However, the parameters determining the permissibility of abortion within 'halacha' are subtle and complex. As a consequence we heard that many authorities felt that the use of pre-embryos for stem cell research should be allowed – at least early on after fertilization and well before 40 days after gestation – as these sources suggest that a foetus prior to forty days gestation is not considered to be an actual person with a potential for life. Presenting the Christian view on human embryology, Dr Murdo MacDonald of the Church of Scotland's Society, Religion and Technology project recognized that wide differences of view also existed within the Church – especially on the moral status of the embryo and the acceptability of embryo research on stem cells. The most conservative view stemmed from the Roman Catholic Church, which felt that the embryo should be protected from the point of conception – and hence research on embryos was not acceptable. In contrast, the mainstream Church of Scotland view was that some research on embryos should be allowed – within a tightly subscribed set of guidelines. However the growing Christian view was that what was now needed was an examination of all the issues and

the drawing up of an ethical framework, which identified a set of guidelines, which enabled the whole Church to move forward together.

Philip Mason

Margaret Brearley – Nazism and Nature: Some Roots of the Holocaust
1 February 2009



Following Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January, the Lit was delighted to welcome Dr Margaret Brearley to address us on some aspects of the ideology that made Nazism possible in the 20th Century. Dr Brearley is an academic by background, who lectured at Birmingham University in the German Department for many years. In Birmingham she lectured at the Centre for Judaism and Jewish Christian Relations, and was a research fellow in the Institute of Jewish Affairs. She is now an honorary fellow of University College, London. She is a strong supporter of Israel, and chairs the Daphna Branch of WIZO, as well as regularly attending Muswell Hill Synagogue, whose Rabbi David Mason is the son of Philip and Irene Mason, of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Dr Brearley gave an erudite talk on how the Nazis used the writings of certain 19th century thinkers to support their doctrines, particularly theorists who advocated instinct over rationality and closeness to nature over Judaeo-Christian morality. These writings supported the antisemitism of Nazism. They gave a foundation for the mysticism and ritual that helped to promote the Nazi ideology, and encouraged Germans to discard ordinary ideas of right and wrong.

There was a lively discussion session after the talk. The vote of thanks was given by Rabbi David Rose. The meeting

was chaired by Micheline Brannan, the Treasurer.

Given that the next day was the start of the February snow that afflicted the country for another 10 days we are very grateful to Dr Brearley for braving the journey to the north, and particularly the return journey on a Monday when London was snow and ice-bound.

The talk that was delivered to EJLS was taken from a chapter in Margaret Brearley's book 'The Holocaust and Nature', edited by Didier Pollefeyt, published 2009, either by Eerdmanns or University of Washington Press.

Micheline Brannan

Concert performed by Caritas Strings (George Watson's College)
22 February 2009



A number of EHC members are members of the Colinton Amateur Orchestra, which counts itself fortunate to have as its present conductor, Hector Scott, head of Strings at Watson's and a highly accomplished violinist. Hector also conducts the Watson's string orchestra, a talented group of young string players, sometimes augmented by some outside players, playing under the name of Caritas Strings. Having heard the quality of their music-making, we approached Hector last summer to see if they would be interested to mount a concert for the Lit, and Hector, in his customary style, agreed with enthusiasm.

On the evening of the concert, as the players were just giving their pieces the final polish, the Chair for the Evening, Secretary Tony Gilbert, was rather alarmed to see the orchestra conducted by someone, who certainly was not Hector, while Hector himself was manfully contributing to the viola section; this was not at all the scene according to the Chair's carefully scripted notes. Enquiries revealed that the viola section could

be found in Geneva, visiting the CERN underground particle accelerator (how could that possibly come before the Lit?) as a result of which, Hector was adding weight to the violas, while the conducting was taken on by Watson's Director of Music, David Elliott.



After a now somewhat improvised introduction by the Chair, Caritas treated the near-capacity audience, augmented by the Caritas support team and also visitors to Edinburgh participating in the Middle East Festival of Spirituality, to a fine and varied programme of music, with David Elliott introducing and describing the pieces as the evening evolved. Jewish music was represented by an early work by Mendelssohn and a movement from the Swiss Composer, Ernest Bloch's Prayer for Jewish Life, the solo cello played movingly by Fergus Todd. The orchestra then played a movement from the popular Mozart Serenade K.136. In addition to works by the whole orchestra, a quartet comprising Polly Bartlett, Ruairidh Holwill and Ashwini Arvind on violins with William Brown on viola played the first movement of Mazas' Symphonette, which was followed by Karel Sodomka's delightful Sonatina op. 8 for 3 violins played by Megan Bruce, Christina Arthur and Faith Waddell. Fergus Todd returned later with Anna Gorzkowska as the cellists in the first movement of the Vivaldi Concerto in G minor for two cellos. The performance came to a close with comparatively local pieces by the Scottish composer, Edward McGuire, the final piece being Broderick's Bodhran, dramatically piped in by Valerie Cronshaw before the whole orchestra joined in to bring the music to an exciting finale.

Gifts were given to Hector and to the Caritas Strings to express our gratitude for a fine evening of accomplished music making.

Anthony Gilbert



Continually Supporting Israel

JNF KKL SCOTLAND
222 Fenwick Road
Giffnock
Glasgow G46 6UE

Tel: 0141-577 8232
Fax: 0141-577 8233

Email: info@jnfkklsotland.co.uk

Reviews

MUSIC CD

The Little Trees Are Weeping by Carl Nelkin

David Mendelsohn

The Edinburgh Jewish community was privileged to enjoy so much of Carl Nelkin's liturgical music, which he performed during last year's Yom Kippur Service.

As a choirboy, Mr Nelkin sang at the Adelaide Road Synagogue in Dublin and was taken under the wing of Chazan Yitzchat Halpert. Aged 14, he became a full time Baal Koreh and later the Second Reader. Due to the indisposition of the former, he was appointed full time Chazan. From the early 1980s he served in this post, deputising during the high Holidays in various synagogues in America, Britain and Ireland. He also recorded and broadcast for KTA, the Irish broadcasting Authority. In 1993 his first album, entitled "Irish heart", consisting of a miscellany of Jewish soul and popular Irish and Jewish songs, was released. Currently he gives concerts of Irish, Jewish and classical music, but conducts Synagogue Services purely on a part time basis due to his full time occupation as an aviation lawyer.

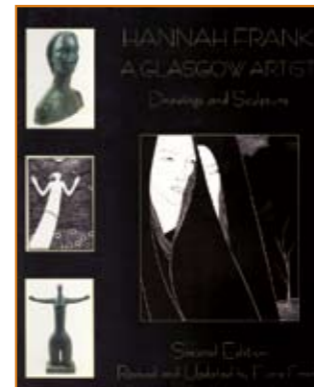
Although keenly interested in music, I am certainly no seasoned expert on musical reviews and whenever inserting a new CD in the player, I am left wondering what quality voice I am about to hear. However this particular Carl Nelkin CD, evocatively entitled "The Little Trees Are Weeping", fulfilled all that I had hoped for, as the themes and contrasts of happy and sad songs are expressed in a beautifully accomplished manner. His voice has an excellent range of versatility that moves easily from the lower baritone voice to the higher tenor registry in a controlled and enjoyable manner.

The fourteen songs on the CD are sung in Yiddish, the vibrancy of which adds a new dimension to the music. English translations and the composers' names are available on the sleeve of the CD. The moods, tempos and expressions of the words are clearly heard in each song and thus allows us to recognise and appreciate that Carl Nelkin is a very accomplished musician. Without the necessity of describing each song in detail, suffice to say that they are sung beautifully by a baritone/tenor voice, that is a pleasure to listen to. I am quite sure that the composers of these imaginative and descriptive songs would be delighted to know that they are being sung and interpreted in a manner that expresses their own particular musical feelings and thoughts.

The Carl Nelkin website is www.irishjewiskmusic.com.

David Mendelsohn has been the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Choir Master for the last 40 years.

BOOKS



Hannah Frank: A Glasgow Artist 2nd Edition, revised and updated by Fiona Frank and Hannah Frank

Janet Mundy

When I was asked to review these two books on the work of artist and sculptor Hannah Frank, she had recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Sadly, Hannah Frank died on 18th December 2008 (an obituary can be found elsewhere in this edition). Those readers who attended the talk that her niece Fiona Frank gave to the Lit a few months ago will remember the DVD shown of an interview with Hannah on the eve of her centenary – still lively and bursting with wit.

Hannah Frank: A Glasgow Artist, first published in 1988 and revised and updated by Fiona Frank in 2004, is as complete a record as was available at the time of Hannah's work, starting with the earliest black and white drawings from 1925 onwards to sculptures produced in the 1990s. The drawings are displayed in date order. The earliest works were drawn in the era of Art Nouveau and Aubrey Beardsley. The decorative nature of her drawings is indicated by the fact that she often illustrated poems, not only famous works such as the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" and Keats' "Isabella and the Pot of Basil", but also her own poetry, written under the pseudonym of Al Aaraaf. Working with poems also enabled her to experiment with calligraphy styles. This links Hannah Frank in with another important British tradition of artist/poets such as Blake and Rossetti. The decorative nature of her work also lent itself to wood engraving, at which Hannah became sufficiently skilled to win the James McBey prize for woodcuts while studying part-time at Glasgow School of Art, and there is a short section of her wood engravings toward the end of the book.



Footsteps on the Sands of Time – a 100th Birthday Gallimaufry edited by Fiona Frank and Judith Coyle



Showing the drawings in chronological order enables the reader to witness the progression of her work, and the various themes she explored at different stages in her life. In the 1930s, she turned to Biblical themes – including Job and the Song of Songs, the latter once again giving her the opportunity to explore her love of words and poetry through her art. The 1940s may have been a dark period in Jewish history, but it was clearly an optimistic time in Hannah's life (she married in 1939) and her themes are more personal – showing young women, flowers and birds. Interestingly, some of her last drawings in the early 1950s show intertwined heads, similar to the intertwined bodies of many of her later sculptures. Once she started to sculpt in 1952, it seems she stopped drawing. She then worked in many different media – plaster, terracotta, bronze – and experimented with different figurative styles. She was working throughout the second half of the 20th century, at an exciting time for British sculpture, when Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth and her own tutor, Benno Schotz, were active, and her work both reflects and contributes towards the vibrancy of the era. It is obviously difficult in a two-dimensional medium to get a real sense of the quality of her sculpture – I hope we have an opportunity one day to see the originals.

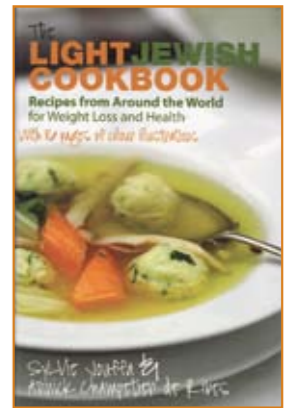
At the end of the book, there are some more personal works – sketches of herself and her family, works commissioned by the Glasgow Jewish community and other organisations that she was involved with and, most fascinating of all, samples from her illustrated diary – designed for her eyes only and one can imagine her looking back over the pages with wry amusement.

As fascinating as this volume is, I regretted a lack of biographical detail – there were so many questions I would like to have had answered. This is addressed to some extent in the second book, published as part of her 100th birthday celebrations and showing some of the works that were only discovered after the first book was published. It is interesting to learn, for example, that she received numerous rejection letters from publishers for her illustrated version of "Isabella and the Pot of Basil". We also learn that she studied Latin, English and French at Glasgow University, reflecting and enhancing her love of words and language demonstrated in her illustrative work. This volume is, indeed, a "Gallimaufry", defined as a "ragbag" or "hotchpotch", and a suitable accompaniment to the earlier book. It includes more family sketches and self-portraits, including a delightful watercolour of the backyard of her family home painted in 1926 when she was 18 and copies of pastel drawings she made as exercises at Glasgow School of Art – the originals were in vibrant colours, very different from her usual black and white work, and it is a shame that the reproductions in the book give no indication of this unusual element. The whole of Keats' poem "Isabella and the Pot of Basil" is reproduced, interspersed with her illustrations, thus placing them in context, as she surely would have wished (published at last!). The biographical section at the end makes it all the more clear that Hannah Frank was driven to draw and sculpt by her own innate creativity, not by any wish to be famous or successful. She did receive some recognition in her lifetime, but generally appeared to be content as wife of Lionel and an active member of the Glasgow Jewish community. It was her niece, Fiona, who had an ambition for her to become more widely recognised, and we are very grateful to her for all her efforts.

The Light Jewish Cookbook by Sylvie Jouffa & Annick Champetier de Ribes

Janet Mundy

It sounded too good to be true – The Light Jewish Cookbook for weight loss and health! Everyone knows that the classic Ashkenazi diet is a disaster for waistlines and cholesterol but this book, written by a French woman of Polish Jewish descent, along with the dietician who helped her lose weight, claims "We hope to help you lose weight and stay slim by cooking dishes, both classic and rare, and above all by eating good Jewish food without gaining an ounce."



The book's introduction, by the author, Sylvie Jouffa, tells of her family background, surviving in France during the war, but hearing first hand horrific stories of those less fortunate. She learned about food from her grandmother, who spoke only Yiddish while Sylvie spoke French, "and we understood each other perfectly". However, she hid her religion during her childhood and only started to cook herself and gather recipes for Jewish cookbooks after her grandmother's death.

The second chapter describes Sylvie's experience of following a diet formulated by her co-author (who describes her techniques in tedious detail at the end of the book). It was obviously successful for Sylvie, who found "at sixty, I succeeded in going back to the weight I had been at 20". She had to keep a record of what she ate every day, count calories, learn about equivalents for each food group (e.g. calories, "10g fat = 1 glass (100 ml) wine = 40g bread etc." and which foods can be eaten freely, which should be limited and which avoided altogether. She worked with Annick Champetier de Ribes regularly and still receives advice from her on a monthly basis. This relationship led to them working together to produce the current book.

So far, so good. Misgivings start to arise during the chapter on Kashrut, where Sylvie's lack of knowledge of Judaism (and lack of research to compensate) comes to the fore. I grimaced at the description of Passover as "Jewish Easter", then later in the same paragraph she confuses Succoth with Shavuot, describing it as "Pentecost" where we eat "dishes involving milk and honey"! The rules of Kashrut are described relatively accurately, although I was surprised to learn that, on the subject of mixing milk and meat, "The French Consistory (the Jewish authority set up by Napoleon and recognised by the Minister of the Interior) advises rinsing your mouth if you have eaten a piece of cheese quiche and are about to attack a meat drumstick".

So what of the recipes? Each includes the number of servings, prep time, cooking time and the number of calories per person – good idea, but the symbols representing cooking and prep time are often confused, rendering them almost useless. Recommended accompaniments and nutrition tips are also

given. There is a short separate section of photographs in the middle of the book, rather than mouth-wateringly close to the recipes themselves (I would expect something better from a cookbook costing £18!).

Still, I had an excellent opportunity to test the effectiveness of the recipes over the eight days of Chanukah while I was in a rented apartment in Perthshire. My friend who was accompanying me even brought along an alternative cookbook – “Ingredients for a Jewish Life” by Tammy Russell, with a foreword by Elaine Sacks, wife of the Chief Rabbi. So I decided to try one recipe a day (I’m afraid without following the calorie guidelines for the rest of the day – after all, I was on holiday!).

Day 1 – Egg and Mushroom Pâté – a very simple to follow veggie equivalent to chopped liver - delicious. The other book’s recipe includes peas and garlic, but it tasted fine without!

Day 2 – Latkes (of course!). Once again, a simple recipe, using flour (the other book suggests matzah meal – I suppose it depends what you have left over from Pesach). Its suggestion for wringing liquid out of the grated potatoes through a sieve was not effective, so I went back to my usual method, using a dish towel. However, shallow frying instead of deep was effective and they tasted good, without using too much Chanukah oil!

Day 3 – our plans to try out a fish recipe were thwarted by our inability to source fish in Dunkeld – the local deli usually takes order for delivery on a Friday, but not over this particular week, when our Christian neighbours are celebrating some festival! We had wanted to try “Cochin Cod”, a fish curry to be served with rice, which the recipe assures us is 350 calories per person, fresh cod being “a non-fatty fish providing B group vitamins as well as iodine and phosphorus”. Many of the other fish recipes were for fish less widely available in the UK, such as carp and pike – an example of the problems created when translating a cookery book from another culture without editing it for the local market.

Day 4 – we tried spinach with chickpeas, a simple and tasty recipe. However, the recipe required the use of dried chickpeas, soaked overnight, skinned (no one ever tries skinning chickpeas more than once in their lives!) then cooked for an hour. Surely it would have been worth mentioning that tinned chickpeas could be used instead, meaning that the dish could be prepared and cooked in a few minutes!

Day 5 – I’m afraid we cheated. Although there were lots of very interesting looking desserts in the Light Jewish Cookbook, we lost our hearts (in more senses than one!) to the bread and butter pudding recipe in “Ingredients for a Jewish Life” with no calorie counters included! However, I was tempted by the cheesecake recipe using fromage frais and low-fat cream cheese and Philadelphia cheese, but it didn’t seem to have any sort of biscuit base, and I’m not sure what the size of a serving is to limit the calories to 160 per person! The pear and apple compote sounded a more realistic proposition to anyone seriously trying to lose weight, at 70 calories per serving.

Day 6 – I adapted the Carrot Velouté recipe, using ingredients we had available and without blending, mainly so that we could also include knaidlach. I don’t really need a recipe for the latter, but the one in the book corresponded closely to what I have been doing for several decades. The ingredients included 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, which was never mentioned in the recipe itself (thus reducing the calorie count?).

Day 7 – not being a meat eater, I was unable to experiment with any of the meat recipes. Once again, the availability of some of the meats mentioned could be an issue in the UK (kosher goat, anyone?). However, there was a variety of recipes from different countries, some primarily Ashkenazi (cholent, blintzes and kreplach) and others more Mediterranean/Sephardi in origin, for example Msoki (Pesach Lamb from Tunisia), chicken pastilla from Morocco and spicy Cochin chicken. I was amused to find that the beef with spinach recipe from Algeria included a tin of chick peas, rather than dried (see day 4 above).

Day 8 – we had to leave the apartment shortly after breakfast, so we were delighted to find we could use up two of the fridge leftovers by making smoked salmon with eggs, as the author tells us “contrary to popular belief, smoked salmon is suitable for a weight-loss diet”. Hurray!

There are some good basic recipes in this book, with useful information on nutritional values. The Sephardi recipes are more inventive, but it is also more likely that some of the ingredients will be difficult to source in the UK. This lack of local editing, and what seem to be numerous niggling errors, let the book down badly. Personally, I would be loath to pay £18 for a recipe book with few illustrations and peppered with mistakes. Use your usual recipe books (or look at the sumptuous Ingredients for a Jewish Life) and substitute fromage frais for cheese or cream, and other low-calorie alternatives. Or just eat less!

Stand Up To Hatred

St Thomas of Aquin’s RC High School. 26th January 2009

Philip Mason

A very moving musical introduction from the Celter Schmelter Quartet set just the appropriate mood for **The City of Edinburgh’s Holocaust Memorial Day** Civic Commemoration in the magnificent

buildings of St Thomas of Aquin’s School. There then followed an evening of music, art, photography and story telling – all directed towards the evening’s central focus of standing up to hatred. This the

Lord Provost, Councillor George Grubb stressed was unfortunately still with us – and hence a major challenge for today’s society. In fact the Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council, Councillor Jenny Dawe reported that 1236



Avraham Soetendorp

hate crimes had been recorded by the Lothian and Borders Police within the past 9 months alone. Following stirring poetry readings and a ‘Song of Defiance’ from the Loud and Proud Choir, we then heard personal testimonies from two senior pupils of St Thomas of Aquin’s who had in September 2008 visited Auschwitz. Both fully described all the emotions they had felt as they passed through the ruined gas

chambers and saw the piles of spectacles and mounds of human hair from the 1.5 million who had perished in Auschwitz – Birkenau. This was then followed by a powerful keynote presentation by Rabbi Avraham Soetendorp who was born during the war, in the Netherlands in May 1943 and had only survived by being passed around in a suitcase. His hope for the future was for one Earth community

of different peoples reaching out together and striving for a new responsible beginning. The very intense and dramatic evening finished with all present including a large number of our own community coming forward and lighting a candle. There just remained a very sincere ‘thank you’ to everyone who took part from the President of the Edinburgh Interfaith Association, Professor Frank Whaling.

Why does faith survive?

University of Edinburgh – Gifford Lectures 2008

17th November 2008 – Playfair Library
Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

Philip Mason

In mid-November 2008, against the marvellous backdrop of the University of Edinburgh’s Playfair Library, the Chief Rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, delivered one of the 2008 Gifford Lectures - lectures aimed at contributing to the advancement of philosophical and theological thought. And that the Chief Rabbi achieved through his selected topic – ‘Why does Faith Survive’? We heard the Chief Rabbi declare his firm belief that religion would survive and make a positive contribution to the 21st century – even though we are now living in an increasingly secular and materialistic world. He developed his ideas to a riveted audience.

A start at understanding the impact faith has on society and why its survival is so important could, he declared, be gauged from an awareness of the brain’s functions. The left side of the brain we now know is analytical, linear and logical whereas the right side of the brain is holistic and good at handling personal relationships. The latter thus plays a big part in emotional intelligence. It was thus not surprising to learn from the Chief Rabbi that the Ancient Greeks gave not only to the world its first science and philosophy - two supremely left-brain activities – but also the world’s first full alphabet with vowels, written from left to right and as a result another left brain controlled activity. In contrast at the same time, the Children of Israel spoke Hebrew with its very different alphabet, without vowels and read as we know from right to left – a clear right brain activity. Thus, we can now see why the world of Ancient Israel adopted its integrative vision of monotheism. The Hebrew Bible, with its emphasis on personal relationships – the love of G-d, neighbour and stranger – was right-brain work. And so in ancient times we saw very different civilizations arise with different modes of thought and mentality – one typically analytical and always taking things apart and the other good at handling personal relationships and hence orientated towards putting things back together.

How is this relevant to today? In past centuries, religious wars have led to a decline of religion. At the same time, according to the Chief Rabbi, our lives have become increasingly dominated

by two institutions: politics and economics; the logic of power and the logic of wealth. But what then happens to a global society when religion wanes? Relationships break down; marriage grows weak; families become fragile and communities atrophy. The result is that people feel vulnerable and alone. If they turn those feelings outward, the result is often anger turning to violence. If they turn them inward, the result is depression, stress related syndromes, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse. Either way, there is spiritual poverty in the midst of material affluence. What then is the way forward? In today’s market-led world, we are all aware that man’s interest is centred on the contract whereas in the Bible, man’s relationship with G-d is exemplified by the covenant. In fact the word ‘covenant’ is a key word of Tanach where it occurs more than 250 times. A covenant is so very different from a contract. In a covenant, two or more individuals, each respecting the dignity and integrity of the other, come together in a bond of love and trust, to share their interests, sometimes even to share their lives, by pledging their faithfulness to one another, to do together what neither can achieve alone. With a contract all too often only one person gains – why – because it encompasses the logic of competition; but with a covenant all gain – as it encompasses the logic of co-operation. The problem with previous civilizations as we see today is the desire to dominate both politically and economically. However, the human mind is the product of both of the brain’s hemispheres. A broken connection between the two results in personality dysfunction. We need both: the analytical left brain that allows us to take things apart to see how they work, and the integrative right brain that puts things together to see what they mean. This is why religion has to survive. The two great institutions of that world, the state and the market, are not capable of creating that sense of community or society in which the best of human values can be found. However religion can only do this if it avoids the great conflicts of the past. This it needs to do as faith is as important now as it always has been to ensuring society survives and does not become increasingly fragmented. It is thus true faith with its respect for all and sense of mutual loyalty that needs to always be present to pick up the pieces and put things back together. At the end of the day, nevertheless, it is probable that science needs religion and religion needs science; just like the twin hemispheres of the brain. Only then, perhaps, will we see a society of which we will be truly proud.

What was certain, however, at the end of the Chief Rabbi’s enlightening presentation was how proud we were of him. And so perhaps was everyone present that evening in the Playfair Library – as the well-deserved rapturous applause that followed the vote of thanks continued for some considerable time.

Obituaries

Lord Philip Caplan

24th February 1929 – 7th November 2008



Philip was born in Glasgow from parents whose families came from Poland and Russia at the time of the nineteenth century pogroms, yet the one time he felt very Scottish was when he went to Israel, which he did several times. This reaction amused and intrigued him as his Jewishness, though not Orthodox, was very much part of his identity. He was well-read and well-informed about Jewish history and culture and greatly enjoyed the intellectual debate and disputatious enquiry he saw as quintessentially Jewish. He was also committed to being in Scotland. This caused him little conflict except when occasion might have demanded the wearing of a kilt, when after much soul-searching he found, as ever, a brilliant compromise in tartan trews in the Glasgow tartan- the link between the Caplans and any clan being rather hard to establish.

His family history was of great importance to him and it gave him pride in how they had established successful lives in Scotland. This reflected for him the endurance and tenacity of the Jewish people as well as their adaptability in the face of change.

When not engaged in the law he was a passionate photographer, observing and interpreting the world around him through colour and form, even mastering digital photography. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. When his health deteriorated his images became even more full of life and colour as the world slipped away from him. Music was

also a mainstay of his life, relayed loudly while he was working, eagerly listened to in opera houses, at concerts and recitals, and sometimes played on his beloved Steinway. He followed football like his father and found his attendance at Hearts matches a delight and sometimes a challenge.

My husband introduced me to a culture that, with a Jewish father, I was part of. It was a fascinating and ever changing journey, our life together enriched by his enthusiasm and curiosity. He was a loving father to his four children, and though a man of moral seriousness he had a delightful sense of humour and fun, which permeated all his relationships. He was a unique and special individual who is sadly missed but gratefully remembered by all who knew and loved him.

Joyce Caplan

Hannah Frank

23 August 1908 – 18 December 2008



Hannah Frank was born in 1908, the oldest of four children, to Charles and Miriam Frank. Charles had come to Glasgow in 1905 from Lithuania. Miriam's parents, John and Rebecca Lipetz (nee Chesarkie), had come to Edinburgh at the end of the 1800s, but moved to Glasgow in the early 1900s where they kept a kosher oil shop in Hospital Street in the Gorbals.

Hannah's father, Charles, opened a camera shop in the Saltmarket, Glasgow, which became one of Glasgow's best known camera retail outlets. The family lived at first in the Gorbals – Abbotsford

Place and South Portland Street, opposite the synagogue. When Hannah was 11 they moved to Dixon Avenue in the Govanhill area of Glasgow, where she lived until she married.

Hannah attended Abbotsford School, Strathbungo School, and Albert Road Academy. She studied English and Latin at Glasgow University and then went to Jordanhill Teacher Training College. She became a primary school teacher until her marriage, to Lionel Levy, olov ha shalom, in 1939. When she married she and Lionel moved to First Avenue in Netherlee, where they lived for 64 years till they moved to Westacres Care Home in Newton Mearns, Glasgow, in late 2001. Lionel died in 2003 and Hannah remained in Westacres up to her death on 18 December. She celebrated her 100th birthday last August with many friends and family. On the day of her birthday she was visited by the local MSP, Jim Macintosh, and her MP, Jim Murphy, then Minister for Europe, and by Miriam Margolyes, the actress, long an admirer of Hannah's work.

She lived a Jewish life, attending services first at South Portland Street and then Queen's Park Synagogues. She was a founder member of the Glasgow Friends of the Hebrew University, and she and Lionel were among the first members of the Glasgow Jewish community to visit Israel after independence in 1948. As a young woman she had a wide circle of Jewish friends, studied Hebrew at Glasgow Talmud Torah, and was an active member of Glasgow Zionist Literary Society and Glasgow University Student Society. It was on a Glasgow University Jewish Student Ramble that she met Lionel, a meeting that led to their long and happy marriage.

But it is as an artist and sculptor that Hannah Frank made her name. After a slow start, she gained top marks for art at school, and after being noticed by her father's friend, John Quinton Pringle, the Royal Academician, she began to attend evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art. She won the James McBey prize for woodcuts and the Evening Students' Prize for her drawing 'Sorcery': the prize was one guinea, with which

she purchased a poetry book that took pride of place on her bookshelves. Her striking black and white drawings, with a hint of Aubrey Beardsley and resonant of the Glasgow girls Jessie King and Margaret MacDonald, were published in the Glasgow University Magazine and exhibited in the Royal Glasgow Institute, Royal Scottish Academy and Royal Academy. As a young 21 year old student, very unusually, she had a solo exhibition in the McLellan Galleries in Sauchiehall Street, which was acclaimed in the Glasgow and the Jewish press of the time.



Hannah turned to sculpture in the 1950s, after a 25 year drawing career, and produced two or three sculptures a year right up to the 1990s. Andy Scott, the Glasgow sculptor who spoke at her centenary exhibition at Glasgow University in August 2008, said that Hannah Frank 'raised the bar for younger artists with her perfectly formed sculptures.'

Her work was shown by her brother, Arthur Frank, in the 1960s, in his camera shops in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and prints were made at the time to satisfy the demand for them from all over the world. Interest in her work then went quiet, but in the five years before her death, Hannah Frank has enjoyed resurgence, with her drawings and sculpture touring Scotland, England and America, and with press, TV and radio appearances. She was very proud of the effort that her niece Fiona had put into making her name known. She was modest and quiet in many ways, but she knew her own worth, saying in an interview for BBC radio: "I always knew I was going to be a good artist: if they tell me that, it's only what I knew before." She has certainly been recognised latterly.

To coincide with her 100th birthday, the St Mungo's Mirrorball group of Glasgow poets awarded her a Lifetime Achievement award in the form of a specially commissioned poem by Glasgow-born David Kinloch, "The Mocking Fairy", about her favourite drawing. A reception was held in her honour at the Scottish Parliament in September last year, at which Linda Fabiani, Minister for Culture, spoke of her awe at this artist's work. An international symposium on Art, Religion and Identity was held to mark her centenary; and the day before she died – too late for her to know – a letter was sent to her from Glasgow University offering her an Honorary Doctorate.

Peter Trowles of the Glasgow School of Art said recently about her: "As one of the School's most illustrious and successful female artists ever, her work will feature alongside that of her mentor, Benno Schotz, as a record of Glasgow's important contribution to 20th century sculpture."

Hannah Frank was a poet as well as an artist, and was very much influenced by romantic poetry. One of her drawings, which hung on many Glasgow and Edinburgh students' walls in the 1960s after her brother Arthur exhibited her work at the Edinburgh Festival, was an illustration of a Walt Whitman poem:

*"Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate around the world,
Serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate death."*

In Hannah's case it arrived later than most.

Hannah Levy (Hannah Frank), Glasgow artist and sculptor. Born 23 August 1908, died 18 December 2008. The funeral was held on 21st December, 2008 at Cathcart Jewish Cemetery, Glasgow. Stone setting and memorial service: 10.30 a.m., Sunday 26th July 2008, at Cathcart Jewish Cemetery. See <http://www.hannahfrank.org.uk> for more information about Hannah Frank's life and work including press tributes.

Fiona Frank

Victoria Monina Lowrie

1st September 1929
– 21st December 2008



Who was Vicky? What was she?

Vicky loved languages, brought up in a Sephardi Ladino speaking home, she also studied and spoke Castilian Spanish, appropriately enough, as her paternal forbears had, before fleeing to Salonika in 1492, lived in Castile.

Her Ladino speaking maternal origins came from Halç, better known as Istanbul's Golden Horn. She spoke good French and could get by in German and Italian and she declared that she had never learned so much Yiddish as in Edinburgh. Scots (Lallans) she loved as she did the poetry of Robert Burns. Burns night was her great pleasure particularly the Selkirk Grace and the Address to the Haggis given by her favourite brother-in-law.

The most casual glance at the walls in number 11 will confirm that Vicky also had a love of visual arts. That she also believed in supporting homegrown contemporary talent is also evident from the wall devoted to the work of a well-known artist and member of the community.

Knowing her friendly easy-going manner, it would be quite wrong to be misled into thinking her as shy and eternally amiable

for there were matters which could, in the WWI sense, cause her to go 'over the top': defamation of Scotland or Israel, cruelty to children, old people, or animals were sure to rouse her fury. She was always ready to stand up and be counted; in the Ridley Road as a young girl, she chased off a gang of boys attacking her very much younger brother, and in later life she picketed the Usher Hall in aid of Russian Jewry.

Vicky kept a traditional Jewish home and joined in community and religious life, and was happy mixing with all adherents, irrespective of their level of commitment.

Her charity list was long and grew every year and while there were supposed to be parameters in that they had to be Jewish, Scottish, Israeli, for children, the old, animal welfare, these were very elastic and expanded to take in any that had succored in any way anybody that she knew. Her (various) festive card lists stretched almost to infinity.

Her circle of friends was wide and ever-expanding, to illustrate: the staff at both Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and Astley Ainslie said that they had never seen such numbers and variety of visitors, or so many repeat visits. She drew great strength from Rabbi Rose's visits and was very comforted by visits of her many friends inwith and outwith the community, and would have been most touched by the very kind and generous special kiddush made in her memory. There were also innumerable 'phone calls and letters from many countries and almost all continents.

Boundaries in friendships did not exist for Vicky, whether you were an old 'matelot' from somebody's Royal Navy days (and who kindly joined the minyan at her London memorial service, as did her oldest and closest friend from school and Blitz days) a Rabbi, a Serbian Orthodox professor of linguistics, a university director of jurisprudence, a Romanian Orthodox author, a retired primary school head or a retired psychiatric nursing sister, you were treated similarly and no tradesmen ever was in number 11 who was not shown hospitality. Her ability to cross boundaries is probably best shown by the following: A Presbyterian cousin-in-law has included her in his prayers somewhere between his late

beloved sister and Rangers F.C and his old regiment, The Royal Scots, while an old Fleet Street Glasgow friend, Celtic F.C. and the HLI asked if a mass might be said for Vicky. Maybe those appointing negotiators in the Middle East were looking in the wrong place; anybody who can get the same respect from Edinburgh and Glasgow would find the Middle East problem a doddle to solve.

If this sounds frivolous, then all that can be said is, remember her sense of humour and perhaps the last word on this will be with the medical staff at the Astley Ainslie. It should be here remembered that Vicky thought that everybody involved in her care, paramedics, ERI, and Astley Ainslie staff were superb.

One afternoon, late in Vicky's stay at Astley Ainslie, the duty staff could be found dissolving into laughter, for it seems that while they were trying to keep Vicky awake to give her exercises, she wanted to sleep, until finally she very shortly and succinctly, in five pithy words, enquired of the ward sister as to her continued presence and its not being removed forthwith from Vicky's proximity. The manner and phrasing in which this request was made, reduced the entire team to helpless laughter; as the ward sister said, 'From other patients this would have brought a sharp reprimand, but from Victoria! None of us could do anything for about ten minutes, we were so helpless with laughter!'

Humorous, funny, direct and ever-ready to fight her corner.

That was Vicky.

Fanny Levinson (néé Nathan) 1912 – 2008

Who was Fanny Levinson, that quiet, dignified little lady? To us she was, above all, our beloved Mum – caring, devoted, patient and encouraging. As kids, we probably took it all for granted. Later, we grew to appreciate her quiet strength, her kindness, her ability to navigate through life coping with its difficulties with a gentle smile and no fuss. But Fanny Levinson was more than a mum – much more.

Fanny Levinson was a person who

spread goodwill wherever she went, not consciously, but just by being who she was. She never fought with people, or spoke unkindly of them. She was totally unselfish, enormously tolerant of others and of human weakness. She was always there, quietly offering help and support in her unobtrusive way. It was typical of her and Dad that during the Second World War they took in Marietta, a 16-year-old refugee girl, to live with them. She stayed a year till an aunt was discovered in England, but for years Mum continued to send her birthday presents.

Fanny's caring attitude is reflected in the feelings she inspired in others. Friends and relatives of all ages, from Israel and abroad, found time to visit her in Netanya, often going to a lot of trouble to do so. She loved talking to them and reminiscing about the old days in Edinburgh.

Like Simmy, our Dad, Fanny was a fervent Zionist. She worked for WIZO for years. She not only encouraged her children to go to Zionist youth movements, but also supported the wish of all three to live in Israel. Never did she breathe a word of criticism or complaint that they were denying her and Dad the "nachas" of children or grandchildren nearby.

In September 1932, Fanny and Simmy Levinson, our parents, were married – the first wedding in the new Shul. They lived in Edinburgh till they made aliyah about 12 years ago. By that time, Dad wasn't well and Mum bravely made the decision for both of them. She never regretted it. She was happy with the care Dad got in his last years, and delighted to be near the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. In her middle nineties, in wheelchair and special transportation, she traveled the country to be at family weddings, having first sent me out to buy her "something to wear."

Not that Mum was vain about her appearance, but she liked to look neat and trim. The one thing she did like were good hats – probably a consequence of working as a milliner in Darlings when she left school at 16.

Mum was born in Edinburgh, the youngest child in an Orthodox, Zionist family. She loved to talk about her family, her friends and the various "characters" in her childhood. She told us about visiting

grandparents, her mother's homemade mead and the mischievous things she did. She once scratched her name on the wall leading down to the Queen's (then King's) Park. (I looked for the wall when visiting Edinburgh a couple of years ago, but I think it has gone).

Fanny Levinson, our Mum, had amazingly go-ahead ideas for a girl who married young and came from quite an old-fashioned home. She wanted to be an actress, but that was unacceptable. She settled for acting (very well) in the Jewish Dramatic Society - despite her husband's disapproval. As a Mum, she was fun. She made great birthday parties and whisked us off for outings to Portobello. Once, she followed us secretly to Cheder to make sure the rough boys weren't hitting us. When she saw from the distance that Rose was bashing a boy whose head was under her arm, she went home and never said a word.

Mum believed in teaching kids to be independent. When we went to camp or

summer school we organized our own gear, packed and made travel bookings etc on our own. When I was 16, she let me go to Hachshara, a mini kibbutz in Essex, for eight months.. When I asked her how she agreed to such a bold step (in those days), she said " You can't encourage a child to be independent, and to believe in Zionism, and then object if they become Zionists – and behave independently."

"Years ahead of his time, Zeide, Fanny's father, taught her the importance of eating fresh vegetables when they were available, and of getting fresh air and exercise. In the coldest weather she would send us out for a "brisk walk" to warm up. We were all very healthy kids."

Years ahead of his time, Zeide, Fanny's father, taught her the importance of eating fresh vegetables when they were available, and of getting fresh air and exercise. In the coldest weather she would send us out for a "brisk walk" to warm up. We were all very healthy kids.

For the last seven years of her life Mum was paralysed, though her mind remained clear till almost the end. She never complained, not because she was a martyr but because she had this wonderful capacity for seeing the half full glass and not the half empty one. When her condition deteriorated, she grew weary and I know she was not sorry to shed this mortal coil. She was unafraid. She is where she wants to be, of that I am sure. We loved her dearly and she will be greatly missed.

Sonia Cohen on behalf of Rose Kelman, Sonia and Victor – Israel



TRIBE KIDS SUMMER SCHEMES

tribe KIDS
YOUNG UNITED SYNAGOGUE



£125
per week
£95 per part week
PLUS
10 and 11 year olds
Adventure Week
£200

Monday to Friday
9.30am to 3.30pm

Week 1: 20 - 24 July 2009
Week 2: 27 - 31 July 2009
Week 3: 3 - 7 August 2009

t: 020 8343 5656
e: summer@tribeuk.com
www.tribeuk.com



TRIBE TEENS ADVENTURE CAMPS

FOR YEAR 7 TO YEAR 10

27 July - 10 August 2009

tribe TEENS
YOUNG UNITED SYNAGOGUE



£699
or **£649**
if you book with
3 friends

t: 020 8343 5656
e: summer@tribeuk.com
www.tribeuk.com



Tribe is part of the United Synagogue. Registered charity number 242552.

Piershill Cemetery

Mickey Cowen has supplied the following photographs to demonstrate how successfully the restoration of the Piershill Cemetery has been.



Before



After

Golf

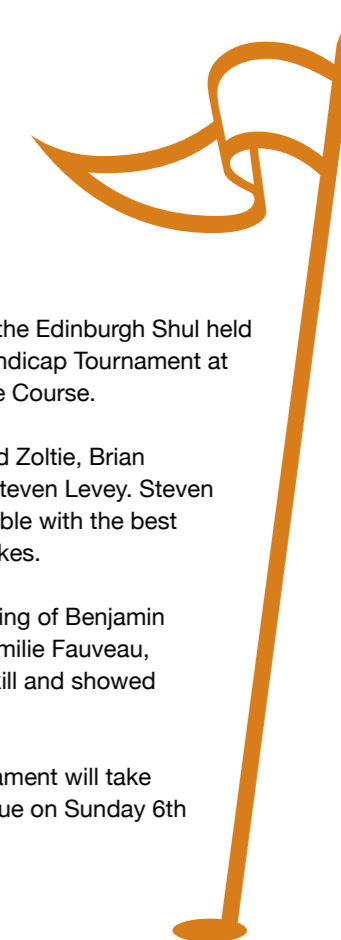
Despite the bad weather, the Edinburgh Shul held a very successful Golf Handicap Tournament at the Braids Princess 9 Hole Course.

The winning team was Syd Zoltie, Brian Caine, John Danzig and Steven Levey. Steven also scored a notable double with the best individual score of 39 strokes.

The teenage team consisting of Benjamin Griffin, Isaac Ansell and Emilie Fauveau, played with remarkable skill and showed promise for the future.

The next Handicap Tournament will take place at the the same venue on Sunday 6th September 2009.

Leonard Berger



Announcement

Following our request for renewal donations in the last edition of the Edinburgh Star, a number of people were uncertain about the amount to give which might have been the reason for the poor response.

We are asking for a minimum donation of £20, which will cover a year's worth of publications.

Many thanks once again to all those people who continue to support the publication.

We would welcome comments on any of the articles you have read, or if you would like to submit an article that you feel would be of interest to our readers, please put pen to paper or preferably send a typed version or email to: judyemmi.gilbert@gmail.com

Please note that inclusion will be at the discretion of the Editorial Board and articles may be subject to editing.

You can send 'snailmail' to:

Judy Gilbert (The Editor)
Edinburgh Star
Edinburgh Synagogue Chambers,
4 Salisbury Rd,
EH16 5AB

Answers to: 'Do you remember...?' from last edition:

Front row left to right: John Lipetz, Manuel Lyons, Morris Dorfman, ??, Harold Isenberg, Bernard Dorfman, Clarice Osborne, Elma Rifkind, Beryl Nathan

Back row left to right: Manuel Levitt, Norman Berger, Edward Gordon, Zev Fluss, Louis Gordon, Mervyn Warner



Congratulations

We are delighted to learn that **Judith Sischy**, Director of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, has been made an OBE in the New Year's Honours list, for services to Education and to the Voluntary Sector. We send her our sincere congratulations.



At the Scottish Health Awards, **Anne Lurie** and her team received the Therapists' Award for setting up social communications groups in the Lothians for children with Asperger's Syndrome.



Congratulations to grandparents **Doreen** and **Laurence Bowman** on the birth of **Ryan** (top) and **Rachel**.



Pearl and **Ian Shein** have become Great Grandparents to Mai born in Manchester on 7th February 2009.



Congratulations to grandparents **Judy** and **Tony Gilbert** on the arrival of their new grandchildren **Sienna Miriam Gilbert** (left) born 26th February and **Alasdair Donald Isaac Gilbert** (right) born 27th February.



Forthcoming Events

April

5 Sunday

Literary Society Joachim Hemmerle:
Yiddish puppet theatre 'Hak Bak!'.
(tea) 7.00 for 7.30pm

9 Thursday

First Day Pesach

20 Monday

Lodge Solomon 7.00pm

May

17 Sunday

Harvey Kaplan will give a presentation
on Archives and Edinburgh Jews 100
years ago.

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

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday
evenings in members' homes. For further
information contact James Hyams or
Maurice Griffin.

The Luncheon Club meet every Tuesday
and Thursday at 12.30pm

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