Israel - Where Now?  
- Rabbi David Rose

Ukraine - Kenneth Collins

MPH - Maurice Naftalin

Festival Fun - Julian Goodman

David Daiches - Jenni Calder

Views & Reviews
From the Editor

What could be more tragic than to build up your hopes and dreams of a better future for your children and then to have them cruelly dashed? But cruelty did not feature in the way soldiers, overcome with emotion themselves, had to carry out their heartbreaking task. Despite the terrible possibility that lives might be lost, or that IDF rebellion could unravel the only democracy in the Middle East, it never happened. Rather, Israelis expressed their frustrations in a battle of orange and blue. Disengagement took place in a remarkably short space of time affording a greater chance for the wound to heal and for the desert to continue to flower under the responsibility of Mahmoud Abbas, more so than ever possible under Yasser Arafat. You may not agree with Ariel Sharon or even like the fact that he has reneged on his original policy to encourage settlement in sensitive areas after 1967, but it takes great courage to do what he has done, like a parent who is willing to risk temporary hatred of his child in order to avoid an even deeper pain. Rabbi Rose explores this highly emotive topic in ‘The knitted kippah unravels’.

It appears that in the last three months settling the world and its problems has been uppermost in the news, and it can only be to the credit of ordinary people, that they truly believe that they can persuade the powers that be. And how much more powerful can you get than the combination of eight of the most influential countries in the world coming together? Some might feel, however, that the millions of pounds spent managing this highly commendable show of solidarity, might have been better spent on the people for whom ‘Make Poverty History’ was intended. Read how MPH impressed Maurice Naftalin.

As ever thanks go to all our contributors. As Peter observed before I took over; you start off with nothing and then suddenly you find you have difficulty trying to fit it all in. I am thankful for that!

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Cover Picture
Fresh start for the orange and blue

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50th Star celebrations and who were not mentioned by name. Thanks to you all.

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

Please acknowledge the circulation officer for acceptance of the Editor. This letter is the last to seek such amendments to any previous publication. From this issue forward, no such letters will be required in the editorial columns of this publication and to avoid exposing the publication or its staff to any criminal or civil liability or otherwise to avoid bringing the publication or its staff into disrepute.

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No issue would be same without a comprehensive update of community events. Ian Shein covers those that have been and those we have yet to enjoy.

We are most sad to see the passing of a remarkable man. Jenni Calder remembers her father, David Datches, and allows us a privileged insight, unique to the Star.

Regrettably we say farewell to Lindsay Levy whose contribution to the Board has been greatly appreciated. She will be sadly missed.

As ever thanks go to all our contributors. As Peter observed before I took over; you start off with nothing and then suddenly you find you have difficulty trying to fit it all in. I am thankful for that!

It is only left for me now, on behalf of the Editorial Board, to say to all our very supportive readers, L’Shanah Tova and may you be inscribed for a happy and peaceful New Year.

Judy Gilbert
We again approach Rosh Hashanah and the beginning of a new year. The forty days between the beginning of Elul and Yom Kippur are called in Jewish tradition, ‘Days of Mercy’. During these days G-d is especially close to us and, hopefully, we to Him. It was during these forty days that Moses again ascended Mt Sinai to receive the Second Tablets; symbolising the reconciliation between G-d and Israel after the sin of the Golden Calf. It is interesting, therefore, that these days are also ones of introspection and self-criticism.

Indeed, they are the essential ingredients of the reconciliation and forgiveness experienced during this period. It appears that the closer the relationship, between G-d and Israel the more it must be based on the ability to be honest and even critical of the other. Without that honesty and introspection, no change is possible. Without our ability to examine ourselves truthfully and openly we can never restore our relationship with G-d.

As the central mitzvah of Yom Kippur. It is the essential ingredient in having a decent relationship with those around us and G-d. As we look at the often-disturbing events of the last year and contemplate the future, this is possibly the most important lesson we can learn. Whether as a community, a people or a nation, only by an honest appraisal of ourselves and G-d. As we look at the often-disturbing events of the last year and contemplate the future; this is possibly the most important lesson we can learn. Whether as a community, a people or a nation, only by an honest appraisal of ourselves and the world around us, can we hope to make things better. Without the ability to understand ourselves and our relationship with G-d. As we look at the often-disturbing events of the last year and contemplate the future.

We must practice justice at all times, whether it be for our profit or for the poor. Not seriously contemplating the future will not make it go away. One of the great strengths of the Jewish people has always been its ability to be critical of itself. Other communities seem to have more problems in achieving this. We can all see the consequences of this failure. We should therefore learn the lessons and not follow the same path. Whether in our own community, British Jewry as a whole or in Israel, a fundamental reappraisal of ourselves is in order. We need to ask ourselves the very questions that are central to the liturgy of these holy days. Where are we, and are we satisfied with that? Can we carry on in the way we have or do we need to change? How can we best change and ensure a better future? These are the challenges of the hour and there is no better time of the year to start answering them. Drawing on a long history of self-appraisal and the introspective nature of these days, we can seriously and honestly look at ourselves and begin the process of change. In doing so we cannot even ensure our own salvation but even be a light to others. Let us rise to the challenge that we all may merit to see a better world in the years ahead.

A Happy and Peaceful New Year
Rabbi David Rose
it would take very little resource, relatively speaking, to make a
Daring and ambitious, unrealistic? Hardly so in material terms:
So, how right were my first impressions of that slogan?
pennies a day for sweated labour.
the highest degree of charity is setting a poor man up in business
continue in some form that can preserve the hard-won
end in December! Similarly the MPH Jewish Coalition will
carrying it on past 2005. Unfortunately the need for it will not
millions. Our leaders need to know that we understand
as they seem, actually make decisions that mean life or death
Organisation meets in December. By now we are informed
extreme poverty and disease by 2015. Their future hangs in
hoped for. But despite all that, I believe that the plain demand
for global justice has taken root in people's minds.
Looking forward: where will the campaign go next? By the
time you read this, the Millennium Development Goals Summit
will already have passed. The Millennium Goals, agreed in
2000 by every member of the United Nations, would end
extreme poverty and disease by 2015. Their future hangs in
the balance as the new US ambassador to the UN begins to
exert his influence. After the Summit, the World Trade
Organisation meets in December. By now we are informed
each other that these meetings, remote and uninteresting
as they seem, actually make decisions that mean life or death
to millions. Our leaders need to know that we understand
this, and we expect results.
Because of the success of MPH, there is discussion of
continuing it past 2005. Unfortunately the need for it will not
end in December! Similarly the MPH Jewish Coalition will
continue in some form that can preserve the hard-won
organisational gains of the campaign and carry it forward on
issues of special interest to Jews—for instance Trade Justice,
where our tradition is very strong: as Maimonides said, the
highest degree of charity is setting a poor man up in business
so that he is no longer dependent on outside help. We need
to look at our own practice too: as consumers, there is a lot
we can do to favour trade that pays a fair price instead of
pennies a day for sweated labour.
So, how right were my first impressions of that slogan?
Daring and ambitious, unrealistic? Hardly so in material terms:
it would take very little resource, relatively speaking, to make a
huge impact on the the problem of world poverty. What is
daring and ambitious is to imagine finding the political will to
do it. Worth working for? Actually, as Jews we don't have
any choice: the Talmud tells us, "Whoever is able to protest
against the transgressions of the entire world and does not do
so is held responsible for the transgressions of the entire
world."
But will we succeed? I don't know the answer to that, but I
do know that it's the wrong question to ask:
He [Rabbi Tzvi Tzvi] used to say: it is not your duty to finish the
work, but neither are you free to abandon it." (Pirkei Avot, Ch 2)

Three Generations involved in Making Poverty History
Janet Mundy

Remember the David Daiches book
"Between Two Worlds"? That summed up my problem on the day of the Make
Poverty History march. I spent the
whole day torn between politics and
religion. I started with friends who are
loosely affiliated to the Green Party.
However, when it became obvious that
there was going to be a very long wait
to march, I gave up on my idea of
marching twice (which now seems ridiculous) and rushed off to meet up
with the group who were marching from the shul. Apparently, I missed
them by moments, and never caught up with them. By the time I got back
to the Meadows there were so many
queues and so many people that it was impossible to find anyone.
So I was delighted to bump into Elaine Samuel, and we agreed to give up on the idea
of marching, this being late in the day, and
we listened to Baaba Masi, one of the few African artists appearing.
Everything and everyone came
together later at the Faith Zone to hear
Clive Lawton lead a large and
enthusiastic group of Jews and non-
Jews in singing. Edinburgh Hebrew
Congregation supplied refreshments,
which helped a visiting Rabbi to hand
round the impromptu choir. Despite
a lack of amplification (this being
Shabbat), Clive's wonderful voice still
carried to the back of the tent.
Hinei ma tov u ma nayim shevet achim
garn yachad, indeed.
In the meantime, my daughter, far
wiser than I, decided to go the political
route (in more ways than one) and
queued up for nearly 3 hours to march
with her civil service union. Good on
her!

The MPH weekend
the logistics for the EHC
Hilary Ritkind

‘... there could be 200 Jewish people
coming to Edinburgh for the MPH
March and we have to feed them!!’
I had just been given the news that
the EHC had been asked by the Make
Poverty History Jewish Coalition to
host Shabbat meals for this event.
How was the Shul Events Committee
going to cope?
On Friday night we wanted to provide
a traditional Shabbat Dinner following
the Kabbalat Shabbat services held
by EHC and Sukkat Shalom; on
Saturday, following the morning
services, there would be a substantial
Kiddush for everyone going to walk
to the Meadows for 2pm; and in the
evening a Seudah between Minchah
and Maariv.

All UN member states pledge that they will, by 2015:

- halve the number of people living on less than $1 a day
- halve the number of people who don't have clean drinking water
- provide a full course of primary school to every boy and girl
- reduce by two thirds the number of children dying before the
  age of five
- reduce by three-quarters the number of women who die in
giving birth

We’re a very small group, should we
cater ourselves?’. ‘Holiday time -
probably not many people around
to help’. ‘Lots of vegetarians - need
alternatives’ - - ‘Be sensible - order
the main food for the dinner and
Kiddush from Simcha Catering in
Glasgow’. This we arranged to do; careful
cooking was made; a booking form
was published on the Liberal
Community’s web site - we were
committed!

The weekend arrived - yes, there had
been urgent emails with last-minute
requests for hospitality, the checking
of numerous ‘to-do’ lists, the marathon
shopping expeditions, the collection
taking place and the young lady from
the caterer’s food from Glasgow and
the in-house food preparation.

Sixty-five people came to Friday
Night dinner, liberals and orthodox
eating and singing together in a
wonderful atmosphere of unity and
community. This ruach extended to
the Meadows where forty people
joined to bring Shabbat to a close.
It had been a truly memorable
Shabbat.
The Knitted Kippah Unravels?

Rabbi David Rose

Traumatised children and weeping adults. Acid poured on soldiers and people wearing tefilin dragged from their homes. The images come from? Why were these images left unmoved. Our emotions were probably the whole gamut: from sympathy to anger; resignation to relief. Yet we must ask ourselves, where did these images come from? Why were adults tearing their garments and children their hearts? Why the emotion; from where the passion? To answer the question we must realise that the disengagement from Gaza has provoked first and foremost an existential crisis in one of the most important and influential movements in Jewish history; Religious Zionism. It is an important question for all of us. Not only because many of our young Rabbis, educators and youth leaders in this country, including myself, count themselves as members of this movement, but because the disengagement from Religious Zionism is vital for the future of Israel. So what is Religious Zionism, how did it get to where it is today, and where do we go from here?

“The desire of the Jewish people to return Jewish sovereignty to the Land of Israel is a basic part of Jewish belief.”

In some ways all Zionism is religious. The desire of the Jewish people to return Jewish sovereignty to the Land of Israel is a basic part of Jewish belief. Yet the modern Zionist movement that put that belief into practice was mainly secular movement rising out of the Haskalah or Jewish enlightenment. Mostly secular movement which created and put that belief into practice was a part of the Jewish belief. The desire of the Jewish people to return Jewish sovereignty to the Land of Israel is a basic part of Jewish belief. In some ways all Zionism is religious. The Six Day War of June 1967 inspired the rebirth of religious youth. Many in Israel, not only the religious, had never really accepted the partition of the country in 1948. The heart of the ancient Jewish homeland; Bethelhheim, Shechem, Hebron had been denied to Jews, now they were ours again. Led by the ideology of Tz’vi Yehudah Kook, son of the renowned first Chief Rabbi, Religious Zionist youth saw the opportunity of taking the Zionist mantle from the secular left. They too would settle the Land, creating Jewish settlements in inhospitable terrain just as the Labour movement had a generation before. They would be the new vanguard of Zionism and thus make a place for themselves at the forefront rather than at the sidelines of Israeli society. This rebellion, for that is in effect what it was, profoundly changed the whole Religious Zionist movement. The National Religious Party went from being a dovish voice in a Labour cabinet in 1967, to being the most hawkish part of a Likud cabinet in 1987. Religious Zionism has built its identity, is not an impossibility, Religious Zionism finds itself in a deep crisis. A whole generation has grown up whose religious, political and national identity has been inextricably linked with the settlement project of the West Bank and Gaza. Their very religious faith, national credentials and even Jewish identity has been based on a Messianic-Zionist vision of the Greater Land of Israel. Now that this vision is being dismantled, we should not be surprised at the scenes we see on our television screens. We should not be shocked at the use of Holocaust imagery by youth for whom their whole identity as Jews is being undermined. We should not be astonished to see soldiers grappling with tefilin-clad men whose very religious foundations are being shaken. We should not be amazed at the passion of people for whom not only their home, but the very ethos of their existence is being destroyed. The disengagement from the territories captured by Israel in 1967 has undermined the very foundation on which Religious Zionism has been built for the last thirty years. It has destroyed the basis of their self-esteem and identity within Israeli society. It is indeed a catastrophe unparalleled in the century-old history of the movement. The question remains whether Religious Zionism can survive this disaster and reconstruct a different identity and why this is important for the future of Israel and the Jewish people.

What they achieved in the West Bank and Gaza they can replicate in the Galilee and the Negev.

It is clear that, whatever the final borders of the State of Israel, the vision of a Greater Israel on which Religious Zionism has built its identity, is not feasible in the foreseeable future. What sort of future therefore remains for this movement? Firstly, I would argue, one of settlement. Large areas of pre-1967 Israel which may be one of the most densely populated areas of the world but the coastal plane of Israel is even more crowded. The State of Israel has a pressing strategic and environmental need to disperse its population. The highly motivated National Religious are the perfect group to be at the vanguard of this change. What they achieved in the West Bank and Gaza they can replicate in the Galilee and the Negev. Indeed the process has already begun. Communities, even of a left-wing persuasion, have thrown open their doors to evacuees from Gaza; even building synagogues where none existed before. They understand the tremendous potential of this hard working, idealistic and enthusiastic group of people and how they can be their saviour. Indeed, one aging moshav, whose future looked bleak, will have from this autumn a hundred new children to fill its school and give new hope for the future. There is no doubt that the National-Religious community has a vital role to play in this regard.

But it has an even more important and pressing task. Religious Zionism was always seen as a bridge between secularism and messianism; the new process of settlements in inhospitable terrain just as the Labour movement had a generation before. They would be the new vanguard of Zionism and thus make a place for themselves at the forefront rather than at the sidelines of Israeli society. This rebellion, for that is in effect what it was, profoundly changed the whole Religious Zionist movement. The National Religious Party went from being a dovish voice in a Labour cabinet in 1967, to being the most hawkish part of a Likud cabinet in 1987. Religious Zionism has built its identity, is not an impossibility, Religious Zionism finds itself in a deep crisis. A whole generation has grown up whose religious, political and national identity has been inextricably linked with the settlement project of the West Bank and Gaza. Their very religious faith, national credentials and even Jewish identity has been based on a Messianic-Zionist vision of the Greater Land of Israel. Now that this vision is being dismantled, we should not be surprised at the scenes we see on our television screens. We should not be shocked at the use of Holocaust imagery by youth for whom their whole identity as Jews is being undermined. We should not be astonished to see soldiers grappling with tefilin-clad men whose very religious foundations are being shaken. We should not be amazed at the passion of people for whom not only their home, but the very ethos of their existence is being destroyed. The disengagement from the territories captured by Israel in 1967 has undermined the very foundation on which Religious Zionism has been built for the last thirty years. It has destroyed the basis of their self-esteem and identity within Israeli society. It is indeed a catastrophe unparalleled in the century-old history of the movement. The question remains whether Religious Zionism can survive this disaster and reconstruct a different identity and why this is important for the future of Israel and the Jewish people.

For us all.
Kovshevata: A Visit to the Ukraine

Kenneth Collins

From my earliest years the village name Kovshevata carried a special fascination. It was over there, in ‘der heim’, the ancestral Jewish heartland in the Pale of Settlement, backward and poverty stricken, but certainly possessed of a special charm. My grandfather occasionally referred to the village of his birth, but we all knew it was very different from the one round about us. We were also grateful to him for leaving it behind to seek safer pastures, firstly in London at the end of the nineteenth century before settling in Glasgow in 1912.

For many years visiting the Ukraine seemed hardly practical. It would have been possible though difficult enough to get to Kiev, and Babiv – the ravine where the Jews were murdered by the Nazis – seemed at the city’s edge where so many of the city’s Jewish community were murdered during the Nazi occupation. To travel the sixty miles south of Kiev to the village of my grandfather’s birth would have been simply off limits. The trip had to wait for the fall of communism and the slow and hesitant opening up of the Ukraine to western tourism.

My grandfather referred to his village as Kovshevata in the Yiddish pronunciation. There had been about 600 Jews there when he left but there was to be a steady decline in the local Jewish rural population. While he was leaving for London, his brother Zalman set up in business in Nikolaev, while his brother Zev settled in Novomirgorod. While he was doing this the village of Kovshevata did not have its own Jewish cemetery and the burial grounds at Tarasha, about 5 miles beyond Kovshevata, had been destroyed during the War. The few remains from pre-war times did not survive the Soviet regime. We decided to visit the Jewish cemetery in Boguslav instead. This was situated at the edge of the town overlooking a wooded valley. The cemetery itself was a ramshackle. Headstones at all angles, some with inscriptions that could hardly be read through weathering and age. Some from the Soviet era were inscribed in what only resembled Hebrew characters illustrating the tenacity which bound the local community to their cemetery. There was nothing there that we could identify.

A few miles later we entered Kovshevata. It was just as I had pictured it. The countryside was truly beautiful. Graceful hills and valleys, lakes and streams were spread out before us. The onion-domed Orthodox Church sat at the top of the hill and was being lovingly restored. Our guide spoke briefly to the workmen. No, the Jewish cemetery had not been restored. After the war the burial there was a Jewish monument we should visit. We drove along the paved road past horses and carts and off into an area of simple farm houses. The original houses of Tsarist times had gone during the communist era to be replaced by standard white-washed buildings with corrugated roofs. I took a picture from the spot I remember seeing in a photograph of the village from the 1930s. Unfortunately, now when I got back home and compared the pictures I realised that I had got the domes of the church the wrong way round so I had been standing at the other side of the village!

The town square, like hundreds of others, boasted a Soviet tank, mounted on a display plinth as a memorial to the sacrifices of the ‘Great Patriotic War’ against the Nazis. At a brief stop we headed south once more stopping next at Boguslav, just a few miles from our destination. Boguslav is a medium size market town which in pre-war days had a lively and literary Jewish community. In earlier years there were Jewish printing presses and Hebrew schools but very little Jewish remains today.

The information we had was that Kovshevata did not have its own Jewish cemetery and the burial grounds at Tarasha, about 5 miles beyond Kovshevata, had been destroyed during the War. The few remains from pre-war times did not survive the Soviet regime. We decided to visit the Jewish cemetery in Boguslav instead. This was situated at the edge of the town overlooking a wooded valley. The cemetery itself was a ramshackle. Headstones at all angles, some with inscriptions that could hardly be read through weathering and age. Some from the Soviet era were inscribed in what only resembled Hebrew characters illustrating the tenacity which bound the local community to their cemetery. There was nothing there that we could identify.

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We stopped briefly for some further directions at a farmhouse surrounded by mulberry trees. A woman was drawing water from the well and she gave us some to drink. We followed the dirt track till the car could travel no further.

We set off on foot, past barefoot children, well aware that the village was very different from the Scotland round about us. We were also grateful to him for leaving it behind to seek safer pastures, firstly in London at the end of the nineteenth century before settling in Glasgow in 1912.

We had left out Kiev just a couple of days before leaving for the Ukraine to visit the Brodsky Shul, named after the wealthy sugar magnate who had built it in the 1890s and admired not just its beauty but the restoration of the Jewish activities going on within it. A lunch club, educational programmes – it was a hive of activity and we were happy to sit at a pavement table outside the kosher snack bar. There we reflected on the transformation of Jewish life for the 60,000 community that remained after the major wave of aliyah of the early 1990s and other migrations – to America and also to Moscow. The shul building had been consecrated by the then chief rabbi of the 1920s and converted into a puppet theatre but had been returned to the Jewish community and had become the centre of local Chabad activity.

The signs of the zodiac round the gallery had the survival of the Russian fascists and communism and finally rebirth and aliyah in the modern period. At the back of the building a small exhibition with about 20 students was functioning and I joined them for mincha. We had also visited the matzah factory. We were told that it was functioning through all the communist years and that the Jews who had registered in large numbers to buy their matzah even in the darkest times. It certainly looked very ancient, but we were assured that it still worked efficiently and to the strictest religious requirements. The mikvah had also been restored and kosher foodstuffs were available from a small shop. At the side of the shul were several containers loaded with foodstuffs brought from Israel and America to feed the local Jewish poor.

Our trip to the Ukraine proved to be a highly emotional experience. While there is much to celebrate in the newly emergent Jewish life, especially in Kiev, the country has destroyed Jewish communities by the hundreds. Much good work is being done by organisations like the Joint, World Jewish Relief, the Jewish Agency for Israel and Chabad, but it is likely that the Jewish population will continue to leave for Israel and other destinations.

The Ukrainians welcome Jewish visitors, some from the Soviet era and we certainly recommend the experience.
Commemorating the Holocaust in Berlin

REFLECTIONS ON THE MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED Jews of Europe

K. Hannah Holtschneider

And yet, Scotland’s Jewish population also took in Jewish refugees from the continent, and relatives of Scottish Jews in Europe became victims of the Holocaust. Many European cities have established their own Holocaust memorials, often in reference to the local Jewish population which was affected by Nazi persecution and murder. This is the case particularly on the continent, but Britain has a national Holocaust exhibition in the Imperial War Museum opened in 2000 – even before that, private initiatives established memorials such as the one in Hyde Park, London, and the Beth Shalom museum in Nottinghamshire. Scotland does not have its own na nationally-established Holocaust memorial, but one may speculate that this is only a matter of time. For what reasons are these memorials erected, and what could we, as Jews, expect of a Scottish memorial? From the gamut of local and national initiatives of museums, memorials, days and ceremonies, let me pick out one, controversial effort, opened to the public in May this year, The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. As Jews living in Europe today, what does this memorial tell us about Jews in Europe and the memory of their persecution and murder?

In between the Brandenburg Gate and the Sony Centre at Potsdamer Platz, built onto the waste land formerly leading up to the east side of the Berlin Wall, lies Germany’s newly opened national Holocaust memorial. A gestation period of more than a decade, cluttered with many public rows about its appropriateness and necessity, and in particular about its design, finally, for better or worse, resulted in a memorial and an information centre. The memorial is a ‘forest of steles’ of different height, built on a sloping, uneven cobblestone surface: 2,711 pillars of concrete, ranging in height from floor level to 4.5 meters, arranged in rows on an area of 19,000 square metres. Walking through this field, one is meant to reflect on the murder of Jews during the Holocaust, a deliberately disorienting experience in which visitors are left alone with their thoughts and imagination. No commentary is offered, no visual or audio aid is given, individual contemplation is sought, the aisles between the steles being too narrow to accommodate more than one person. The memorial is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a week, one only needs to step off the pavement and into the forest of steles.

Attached to this is an information centre which allows visitors to access narratives about the Holocaust. Descending below the memorial, one finds a variety of textual and visual information on offer, ranging from historical narrative to points for contemplation. A timeline introduces the visitor to the development of what came to be known as the Holocaust. Thereafter narratives of and about the victims take the lead. One can read reproductions of letters and postcards of victims sent from various locations in Nazi-occupied Europe to their families and friends, or diary entries of people held in ghettos and camps. Panels with photographs and short texts illustrate the context of life for Jewish families across Europe, noting the fates of individual family members during and after the Holocaust. Here one encounters Ashkenazim and Sephardim, religious and secular, politically-active and culturally-engaged, Jews of all ages and walks of life. I am impressed by the exhibition in the documentation centre which, though not without its flaws, addresses the experiences of victims of the Holocaust through their own voices and perspectives. It is an exhibition that unabashedly does not see the need to produce lots of artefacts, or to present the process of persecution and murder as envisaged and carried out by the perpetrators. There are no original documents, no prominent images of perpetrators, no biographies of Nazis. This one can find in other Holocaust exhibitions around the world, and also nearby in Berlin at the exhibition Topography of Terror, still temporarily mounted in the place where once the headquarters of the secret police, the Gestapo, stood. In the documentation centre, the victims are people with dignity and expectations and hopes for their lives, which were interrupted and destroyed.

Outside, in (and on) the field of steles, couples pose for each other while taking photographs. Children and teenagers jump from pillar to pillar, or play hide and seek between the steles. Even adults cannot resist the temptation to join in such activities. ‘Codes of conduct’ have been mounted on all sides of the memorial in direct response to such irreverent behaviour. The lower pillars are great places to sit on, congregate, talk a break or eat one’s lunch. Naturally, reverential silence and hushed voices need not be the only appropriate way to commemorate. Conventions of remembrance are also there to be broken and reinvented in order to make sense to generations fortunate enough not to have experienced such brutality and violence. Thus a memorial can – and maybe should – break our assumptions of how we should behave when commemorating. Being built by non-Jews, with a mainly non-Jewish audience in mind, the memorial is supposed to offer non-Jews, in particular in Germany, possibilities for reflecting on what they lost through the murder of Jews in Europe. It is a memorial for the society which succeeded Nazi Germany. As a memorial it is supposed to disorientate, and in the information centre it seeks to remember the Jewish victims of a previous generation of Germans to a society in which relatively few Jews remain (now c. 120,000). This is a difficult task. One might be outraged about ‘stele jumpers’, couples posing for photos, or people playing hide-and-seek. Alternatively, one may ask whether and how these activities can be forms of Holocaust remembrance, which remains topical in German public discourse.

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Commemoration of the Holocaust is a topic regularly addressed in Jewish circles: there are annual Yom HaShoah ceremonies in Israel and the Diaspora, Jewish contributions to the recently instated British Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January (the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz camps by the Red Army), the establishment of Holocaust memorials and museums, and thoughts about one’s own family history in relation to the years 1933-45. In some ways Scotland may seem an odd place in which to talk about commemoration of the Holocaust, remote as it may seem from the parts of Europe where the Holocaust was perpetrated.
The dream of a number of 19th and early 20th century Zionist jurists that the legal system of the Jewish State would be based upon the halakhah did not come to pass for both practical and ideological reasons. However, the study of halakhah from the perspective of modern legal analysis (Mishpat Ivri) did become a popular and dynamic field of study for academic jurists, and courses in Mishpat Ivri are taught at all Israeli Law Schools. Furthermore, the selective application of halakhic rules and principles by the secular Courts to a diverse range of legal problems has always been a feature of Israeli jurisprudence, and two cases illustrating this trend will be described below.

The Foundations of Law Act, 5740-1980, also provided Mishpat Ivri with an official legal basis: “Where a court finds that a question requiring a decision cannot be answered by reference to the enactment or a judicial precedent or by way of analogy, it shall decide the same in the light of the principles of freedom, justice, equity, and peace of the heritage of Israel.”

A striking illustration of the role played by Mishpat Ivri in secular Israeli law is the case of Moshe Cohen v State of Israel Cr. A 9 1/80, PD.35 (3) 281, in which a husband was found guilty of raping his wife on the basis of the halakhic prohibitions governing marital intercourse. At the time of the trial, the relevant section of the 5737-1977 Penal Code governing rape provided that a charge of rape could only be brought if the act of intercourse was an “illegal” one. This term reflected the common law doctrine that a husband may be divorced; she is certainly not compelled to give her body to him. Indeed, the use of force is specifically forbidden in the context of marital sex (Maimonides, Laws of Marriage 15:17). The Supreme Court in rejecting the appeal held that the extrapolation from the realm of halakhic prohibitions to that of rape in the criminal law was perfectly legitimate, and the guilty verdict of the first instance court was upheld. It is noteworthy that only in 1991 did the House of Lords finally abolish the ancient and pernicious doctrine that a husband could not be charged with raping his wife.

In the Cohen case, the application of Mishpat Ivri resulted in an unimpeachably liberal result, to the satisfaction of halakhists and secular democrats alike. The result in Kurtam v State of Israel C.A. 480/85, PD. 40 (3) 637 however, whilst not necessarily an illiberal one, would probably not be acceptable across the entire spectrum of contemporary liberal thought. In this case, the appellant, a suspected drug dealer, was operated on by a police surgeon against his express wishes, and two packages of pure heroin were removed from his stomach. The ostensible justification for the actions of the surgeon was the need to save the drug dealer’s life. Upon his recovery, he was charged with drug dealing, and the packages of drugs removed from his stomach were entered in evidence against him. His defence was that the evidence was inadmissible since he had refused to consent to the operation, and it had, therefore, been obtained by illegal means. Non-consensual life-saving medical procedures are incompatible with the right to privacy in Israeli law, and the general principles of patient autonomy. The Supreme Court ruled that the heroin was admissible evidence, and Beiski J. cited Mishpat Ivri in support of the Court’s ruling. According to the halakah, a sick person is under an obligation to accept life-saving medical treatment, and if he refuses it, coercion may be applied as in the case of any refusal to perform a positive halakhic precept (R. Jacob Emden, Mor Ukeziah, Orah Hayyim no. 329). This obligation is predicated upon the principle that bodies are owned by God, and Divine property may not be destroyed at will. Citing the Foundations of Law Act mentioned above, Beiski J. ruled that the drugs were admissible evidence since, under Jewish law, “the patient’s wishes are of no account... and his lack of consent is irrelevant”.

In a later Supreme Court decision, Elon J. clarified the issue of mandatory medical treatment in the halakah, and pointed out that the patient’s wishes certainly do possess normative weight, especially in the case of a terminally ill patient who is likely to suffer greatly as a result of any attempt to force life-sustaining treatment upon him (Yael Sheffer v State of Israel C.A. 560/88, P.D. 48 (1) 87). The prosecution in the Cohen case argued that the word “illegal” should be understood, not in the light of the Common law, but in accordance with Jewish law, since Moshe Cohen was an Israeli Jew and, as such, was bound by the halakah in relation to matters of personal status. Biblical law grants a wife a right to sexual gratification from her husband (Exodus 21: 10) but not vice versa. The halakah provides that a wife who refuses to have sex with her husband may be divorced; she is certainly not compelled to give her body to him. Indeed, the use of force is specifically forbidden in the context of marital sex (Maimonides, Laws of Marriage 15:17). The Supreme Court in rejecting the appeal held that the extrapolation from the realm of halakhic prohibitions to that of rape in the criminal law was perfectly legitimate, and the guilty verdict of the first instance court was upheld. It is noteworthy that only in 1991 did the House of Lords finally abolish the ancient and pernicious doctrine that a husband could not be charged with raping his wife.

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My first port of call this year was to The Assembly Rooms to but, when we allocate our time to viewing performances, our chests swell glass of water! Yes, the world’s biggest Arts Festival is in town, and boy, is anybody with a pulse with a rainforest’s worth of flyers, and a lot of hostelries suddenly require one to take out a second mortgage to pay for a half a million plus visitors to her debut in the Jewish daughter of comedian Richard Pryor, was making her opening line was a definite Yiddishe ruach to the whole performance, her opening line being “Shalom to the Mishpuche” and she threw away lines such as “If Jewish guilt doesn’t kill you - a depressed Jewish woman WILL!” Despite having the sniftles and being a bit hezedik, she ended with a charming rendition of “Is he doing the encore?” asked one bright spark in the audience, and that more or less set the tone for the show. It was a very interactive comedy show, not once did Lederer sit on the chair provided on the stage, but sat amongst the audience banches at the front, almost conducting a debate.

When the Brooklyn-based comedian met the fabled Nazi documentary Lani Reifenstein, he realised he was now only two degrees of separation from Adolf Hitler. Later, a chance encounter with the doctor who’d ministered to Hermann Goering during the Nuremberg Trials, found Andrew wearing Goering’s watch and ring. It reminded him of the time he’d worn a tuxedo that had been owned by the late Mel Blanc to an animation awards ceremony in Los Angeles. Another voice artist was complaining that he’d done many voices in Warner Bros. cartoons but that Blanc, who did Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck among others, had hogged all the credit. Andrew told him, “You’re still around to complain but all that’s here of Mel is his suit, which I’m wearing. You’ve won.” Likewise, the architect of the Jews’ terrorist now in Black in Jewish company, and the Jewish in Black company and being militant activist, the difficulties in being Black in Jewish company, and the Jewish in Black company and being with her father’s addictions and subsequent suicide attempts. The show as a whole wasn’t quite as hilarious as had been implied in the promotions; however it was extremely heart-warming and her mimicry was excellent. Her impersonations of her father, her Jewish grandmother and Black great grandmother were quite brilliant and worth seeing alone. There was a definite Yiddishe ruach to the whole performance, her opening line being “Shalom to the Mishpuche” and she threw away lines such as “If Jewish guilt doesn’t kill you - a depressed Jewish woman WILL!” Despite having the sniftles and being a bit hezedik, she ended with a charming rendition of “Is he doing the encore?” asked one bright spark in the audience, and that more or less set the tone for the show. It was a very interactive comedy show, not once did Lederer sit on the chair provided on the stage, but sat amongst the audience banches at the front, almost conducting a debate.

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G show on Channel 4 and HBO. The play was a lighthearted romp of a love story set during the Black Death. The Monk, played by Mathilde, appeared on stage, singing in a falsetto voice and whistling a very amusing introduction to the tale. He falls in love with Mathilde, played by Stephen Thomson, serving to the villain of the piece, George of Ponsonby, played by Jamie Glassman. The play was a very funny spoof of period tales and old-fashioned melodramas, almost as Panto in parts and full of wonderfully hammy acting at times. It was full of double entendres, and quite a few single ones as well! George of Ponsonby’s evil sneer EVERY time he left the stage was a favourite with the audience, as was Mathilde’s naïve responses to nearly every situation.

The dances were ridiculous, as were the sex-scenes and many of the situations, but I mean this as a great treat to see Kit and The Widow team and the chaos that ensues, charmingly explained his “prolonging” adolescence during some of the pieces. I had been equally carried by the more melancholy themes as I had by the upbeat themes. The whole evening was an immense success and greatly appreciated by a varied audience.

All in all there had been plenty of Jewish content in this year’s Fringe. Not all of it covered here. Some that had been advertised, only made passing reference to any form of Yiddishkeit, others made no mention at all in their information and I found them purely by accident. Some of it was good, and some not so good, which is how it should be. This was just a sample of the best that was on offer.

Moishe’s Bagel was full of atmosphere and held the audience all the way. At the Gala Launch, I was intrigued by Balagan. Everyone seemed to be making quite a balagan about Balagan and their Gypsy style performance of Klezmer sounding music. So off I went to The Assembly & St. George’s West to see what it was all about. Balagan was essentially a collection of Eastern European circus acts, nicely put together with jazzy and atmospheric sets and music. Traditional contortionists, clowns, juggling etcetera and I was quite impressed. There wasn’t much Klezmer until the end when they marched round the audience playing Chossen, Kolleh Mazeloff, but that was it really.

As circuses go, I much preferred La Clique - Un Spectacle Sensuel at the Spiegeltent. This was much more circus-like with the audience sitting in a circle around the stage. We were all welcomed in at the door by all sorts of circus characters. It was much more fun too, blade swallowers & clown Miss Behave, doing paper cutting tricks to a jazzy rendition of Bel Mir Bast Du Shoen, then swallowing the scissors. Trapeze artists, roller skaters, belly dancers, torch-song performers, a brilliant pianist changing her clothes while still playing, a very revealing handkerchief trick performed by Ursula Martinez (who also appeared in her own show at The Assembly Rooms), and the acrobatic feats of the very talented Caesar Twins (also appearing in their own sell out show at The Assembly Rooms). This was billed under comedy, and quite rightly so too. It was tremendous fun, and it was just like being a kid again (except for the bit with the naked lady - as I don’t remember THAT from Chipperfield’s Circus or The Blackpool Tower). Chairs were cleared away, a dance floor, emerged and the mellow music of Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald were played. A perfect way to end the evening!

My perquisite show was at the Stage by Stage Edinburgh Academy, where I went to see Kit and The Widow and Dillie Keane in Tom Foolery - The Songs of Tom Lehrer. It was quite a treat to see Kit and The Widow team up with Dillie Keane (of Fascinating Aida fame) for this showcase of Tom Lehrer’s best loved songs. They gave him a fine introduction as the greatest Jewish American creative genius in 200 years, and gave detailed and informative insights into his work. They explained his “prolonging” adolescence - “He is 78, but prefers to think of it as 26, (degrees Centigrade)!”. Furthermore, his quote got everybody in the right frame of mind to appreciate the rest of the show - “If, after hearing my songs, just one human being is inspired to say something nasty to a friend, or perhaps to strike a loved one, it will all have been worthwhile”.

The second half opened with the Hunting Song, prompting Kit to appear in Hunting Pink. This started an amusing debate. “My grandfather rode out with Siegfried Sassoon!”

“I’m sure they both had a lovely time, but this is a song about hunting in the USA!”

There were other great lines as well - “Life is like a sewer. What you get out of it depends entirely on what you put into it!”

and much more loved songs; including The Wiener Schnitzel Waltz, The Masochism Tango. However my favourite was The Irish Ballad, a hilarious song about a girl killing off her family one by one, with a spirited and lively spoof of the Riverdance jig in each chorus. The show was brought to a close with a celebration of the end of the world by intercontinental ballistic missiles in We’ll All Go Together, however the audience gave such tumultuous applause, that for the first time in their run we were treated to TWO encores of the fabulous Vatican Rag! I think that was rather my fault though, yelling like a banshee from the back tier!

The final show was Moishe’s Bagel at The Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh. This was a 5 piece Klezmer/Folk band based in Edinburgh and Glasgow, led from the piano by the yiddishie bit of the ensemble, Phil Alexander, with Peter Garnett on the Accordion, Greg Lawson on the Violin and Mandolin, Mario Caribe on Bass and Guy Nicolson on Percussion. They specialised in Klezmer music and Balkan Folk music with a wee smattering of tunes from all over Europe, describing themselves as a bit Jewish, but not too much. They opened with a Freilach (a frenzied dance), starting off with traditional Jewish melodies, building into a jazzy middle section and setting back to the traditional feel for the close. This first piece was about 12 minutes long but most of their pieces averaged about 10 minutes, giving them plenty of time to explore each piece’s possibilities. They played several Freilachs over the evening, Folk songs from The Balkans, France, some with a Spanish style, but all of them still retained a Jewish feel to them. The second half opened with the piano playing the rich theme from the Erev Shabbos melody Sholom Aleichem, then joined by the violin, and gradually all the rest joining in to a crescendo as the piece moved post chuppa wedding themes. There was a piece set in the 1920s Chicago, with gunshots, police chases in hot pursuit and the chaos that ensues, charmingly titled Flying By Jewish Radar! To be honest, I personally feel that to be proper Klezmer there has to be at least a clarinet, it was the wind instruments that lifted this show (to music of the end), but Moishe’s Bagel was full of extremely talented musicians and plenty of raunch, with Phil Alexander positively bouncing up and down on his piano stool, yet the ‘nosh from iznerer’ musicians were just as passionate, with the violinist, Greg Lawson looking almost possessed during some of the pieces. I had been equally carried by the more melancholy themes as I had by the upbeat themes. The whole evening was an immense success and greatly appreciated by a varied audience.

All in all there had been plenty of Jewish content in this year’s Fringe. Not all of it covered here. Some that had been advertised, only made passing reference to any form of Yiddishkeit, others made no mention at all in their information and I found them purely by accident. Some of it was good, and some not so good, which is how it should be. This was just a sample of the best that was on offer.
Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast

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

Yom HaShoah
The annual Yom HaShoah took place in the attractive surroundings of Princes Street Gardens Peace Park on 5 May. The weather was pleasantly dry as the President, Dr. Philip Mason, welcomed the Lord Provost Lesley Hinds, civic dignitaries and members of the community to the short ceremony. Rabbi David Rose represented the service and Lord Provost Hinds expressed her pleasure at being invited to attend. She commented on the strong rapport, which existed between the Jewish community and the city. Dr. Mason reminded the audience that it was exactly ten years since the City Council initiated the Memorial plaque commemorating the liberation by British forces of Bergen Belsen and which had been unveiled nearby. David Goldberg, a victim of the Holocaust, lit the Synagogue choir, which greatly

Shabbat Service
Another very successful Shabbat evening service took place on 3 June when more than 60 members of the community attended the service and the subsequent dinner organised by the Shul events committee under the convenership of Hilary Rilkfnd. A familiar popular guest was Rabbi Rubin who, with his wife and children, had travelled from Glasgow. The following morning he gave Rabbi Rose a respite by delivering the sermon. At the Kiddush the President extended a community escorted welcome to the Rubin family and all other visitors.

WIZO Lunch
The Goodwin residence was again the popular venue for the annual WIZO lunch on 12 June. The summation, ever unpredictable, hid behind threatening clouds and intermittent rain, drove the 70 guests from the garden into the house on occasions, but literally failed to dampen their spirits or enjoyment. Six prominent ladies from Glasgow WIZO made the journey from West to East renewing contact with friends and participating in the pleasurable afternoon. Over £800 was realised for WIZO funds.

Cheder Prize giving and Picnic
On Sunday 19 June, Myrna Kaplan distributed prizes marking the end of the Cheder year. Chalah covers were handed out for regular attendance to Moriss Kaplan’s ever-popular family service. Isaac Anisfeld-Forsyth was awarded the ‘cup for effort’ and Jacqueline Kehn received the ‘girls Chanukia’ donated by Sylvia Donne. Murcuses Griffin collected a certificate confirming a future trip to Israel and Rabbi Rose awarded ‘The Rabbi’s prize’ in memory of his grandmother Freda Buetow, to James Hyams. A buffet picnic prepared by parents was consumed in the Shul yard, followed by teachers, parents and children, ambling, to the foot of Holyrood Park, for sports as good weather held despite adverse forecasts. Children disappeared and reappeared from beneath the colourful parachute, which

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Around and About

The Shein Scene

Yom Ha’atzmaut
On 11 May a service was held in the Synagogue to celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut. David Mendelsohn led the Synagogue choir, which greatly enhanced the proceedings. Rabbi Rose recited the Memorial Prayer for Israeli Fallen Soldiers and read the opening of Israel’s Declaration of Independence. The service concluded with Bill Simpson blowing the Shofar and the singing of Adon Alam and Hatikvah by the choir and congregation.

Afterwards the congregation moved downstairs to the community centre to be greeted with an appetising buffet of

Dr. Steven Hyams, Co-Chairman, gave a resimué of the activities of the Community Centre Committee. He thanked all, who had helped in the many and varied functions held within and on behalf of the Centre.

Lunch Club Outing
On 28 July members cooks joined members of the lunch club on a trip “doon the watter”, which in Edinburgh parlance, meant they met, in the shape of the River Almond, Embarkation at Ratho proceeded smoothly, and no sooner was the anchor raised on the barge, than an excellent tea was served. This and non-stop chatter from the contented group catching up on the latest gossip compensated somewhat for the disappointing weather.

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Church was led by the late Pope John Paul II who described declaration. During the last 18 of those years, the Catholic persecution of the Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism. This was a historic breakthrough after a long and sad history. Roman Catholic attitude to the Jews over the years since the early days as a bishop. He described the developments in the closed world to him but over the years he gradually got to know what went on there and developed a closeness to the Jewish community, having spoken at the synagogue in his early days as a bishop. He described the developments in the Roman Catholic attitude to the Jews over the years since the 2nd Vatican Council which condemned every form of persecution of the Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism. This was a historic breakthrough after a long and sad history. Now we have reached the 40th anniversary of that historic declaration. During the last 18 of those years, the Catholic Church was led by the late Pope John Paul II who described Jews as ‘dearly beloved brothers, older brothers’. In March 2000 Pope John Paul cemented this relationship with his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the Cardinal could not forget him standing at the Western Wall praying a prayer in the wall and his visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial. Referring to the unforgettable honor of the Holocaust, the Cardinal moved on to consider where the dialogue is going now. He said that the relationship must be future oriented and that the World needs the common witness of Jews and Christians who have the Mundamental to teach the World their shared values – such as the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being, rejection of immorality and idolatry, standing up for justice and peace, and family life, and testifying to the sanctity of G-d’s name in an ever more secular World. He recognised the work of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, which links Christian churches, and also the Scottish Interfaith Council, but he felt that the bond between Jews and Christians was special. Concluding, he called for an intensified dialogue which needed to discover its very existential and religious depth, and said that our ethical and spiritual common heritage requires a common stance on political issues such as human rights. In furtherance of this Pope Benedict XVI had already signalled his commitment to continuing the approach of Pope John Paul II to the Jewish people.

The meeting was chaired by Rabbi David Rose in the absence of the Chair Mr Robert Munro. Best wishes to Mr Munro for a speedy recovery from illness were recorded. There were numerous questions from the floor and this was a highly successful, as well as a moving and significant occasion for our sharing of faith. The vote of thanks was given on this occasion by Mr Michael Brannan.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society - A Musical Evening with the ‘Shalom Ensemble’
Bill Simpson
On Wednesday 24th August, in the Marian Oppenheim Hall, we were treated to a talk by Madeline White. She was a very knowledgeable and engaging speaker, and the audience was captivated by her presentation. The talk was titled ‘Jewish Music in Scotland’ and covered a wide range of topics, from the history of Jewish music in Scotland to the current state of the field.

The meeting was organized by the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society and was well attended. The Society has been hosting events like this one for many years, and they are always a success. The attendees were a mix of Jewish and non-Jewish citizens, and the atmosphere was warm and welcoming.

The talk was followed by a musical performance by the Shalom Ensemble, which featured a variety of Jewish composers. The music ranged from duos, trios and quartets to full orchestral pieces, and the ensemble was comprised of some of the best musicians in the country.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.

Dunfermline honours its last Jewish minister
Ian Shenn
On 29 June, for the first time in 60 years, a Jewish ceremony was held in the town of Dunfermline. The local council headed by Provost John Simpson honoured the former tiny community by naming a street on the site of the old Synagogue after its minister, Reverend Morris Segal. The area had been redeveloped into a mixture of housing estate and community centre and it was decided by the council to commemorate the old Jewish presence. Local councillors, representatives of the Council of Scotland Jewish Communities, the Scottish Jewish Archive Centre, and visitors from out of town including members of the Jewish Hebrew Congregation, headed by Rabbi David Rose witnessed the unveiling of the plaque at Segal Place by Philip Segal, son of the minister.

On Wednesday 24th August, in the town hall, Depute Provost Andrew Paterson emphasised the multicultural tradition of the Kingdom of Fife. The earliest mention of Jews in Dunfermline is in the census of 1881. Isidore Lyons, a jeweller from Poland, is shown residing in the town whilst two travellers of Russian extraction called Crondon and Rubens lodged nearby. The actual community was not founded until 1908 and ultimately consisted of a dozen or so families. Segal succeeded Reverend Balanow (father of the minister of Netherlee and Clarkston congregation in Glasgow) in the mid 1920s. The Synagogue was a small seafier religious meetinghouse either by Seventh Day Adventists or Jehovah’s Witnesses. The children were taught in Cheder and kosher meat was obtained from a special deal (within the Dunfermline Co-operative Society. In the 1930s there existed a Lady Zionist Group.

Answers to Star Trek Issue 51
Cousins picture taken at the wedding of Toby & Bella Cohen. Edinburgh 1933:

- Back Row LEFT TO RIGHT: Boris Caspi, Joe Goldberg, Berl Cohen, Anne Pittkin, Abe Pittkin, Rose Rikitik Jack Rikitik, Zelda Baker, David Rikitik, Joseph Rikitik, Elyk Rikitik, Ellis Wolfe

- Middle Row LEFT TO RIGHT: Mitchi Moran (Dorfman), Annie Cohen, Leah Rikitik, Beaze Rikitik, Esther Rikitik, Jeanne Wolfe, Kate Pittkin, Rebecca Sless

- Front Row LEFT TO RIGHT: Esther Covit, Rae Lurie, Rose Nathan, Rachel Sless, Millie Nathan, Becky Goldberg

Families included the Slessars, Brodskys, Millers and Bersteinas. A few Jewish families resided in nearby Folkestone, and they formed a close-knit community. In 1941 the community consisted of seven families, and they all managed to save Jewish traditions.

Mr. Philip Segal commented that his father, being a very modest man, would have been astonished and delighted at the ceremony. Reverend Segal and family moved to Dundee in 1944 when the Dunfermline Synagogue closed. Here he very soon established himself within the slightly larger community of about thirty families. His appealing sheer humanity would often pervade his thoughts and it was a delight to be in his company listening to his wise counsel. He combined sheer humanity with great insight, making for close lasting relationships with Jewish and non-Jewish citizens who knew him as the “Rabbi of Dundee”. He died in 1975 leaving a wonderful legacy of a man who inspired all within and outwith the Scottish Diaspora.

The only other occasion when a street in Scotland was named after a Jewish minister was in Edinburgh several years ago when Daiches Brae was named after Rabbi Sais Daiches, everend Segal was a brother to Mrs. Pakker of a well-known Edinburgh family and great-uncle to Jonathan Roberts, a member of the Edinburgh community.

(Acknowledgements are due Mr. Harvey Kaplan for permission to use part of his article recently printed in the Jewish Telegraph)
A most memorable, nostalgic and touching gathering was held at Ticho House Jerusalem on 14th June to celebrate the 90th birthday of Rabbi Isaac Cohen. About 40 ex-‘Avid Reikins’ travelled from all over Israel, from Tsfat in the north to kibbutz Sde Boker in the south, to celebrate together this remarkable occasion. Both Rabbi and Mrs Cohen were immediately turned out - just as we all remember them in their Edinburgh days. It was hard to believe we were celebrating a 90th birthday. Rose Gordon, who had played a large part in the organization of the party, ushered us all into an attractive corner of the outdoor restaurant and we all had a chance to renew old acquaintances until the arrival of Rabbi and Mrs Cohen, who greeted each guest personally. Rabbi Cohen showed a memorable memory for each one of us and welcomed us warmly. Before the meal Professor Zelik Kaufman set the tone by giving us a thoughtful davar Torah. During the meal a number of guests mentioned the hospitality and guidance they were shown at the home of Rabbi and Mrs Cohen. Mention was made more than once of Mrs Cohen’s cooking and also her impressive hats. But the emphasis was on the love of Yiddishkeit Rabbi Cohen instilled in his congregation. The evening was informal but ably chaired by Professor Stefan Reif. At the end of the meal, Rabbi Cohen treated us to an inspiring sermon. Everyone there felt the vibes of affection and respect. It was an evening never to be forgotten.

Golda Friedler, Nee Greenstone.

Honouring Rav Isaac Cohen

Some forty former Edinburgh folk and their spouses met on 14 June 2005 in the Anna Ticho restaurant, Jerusalem, to celebrate the 90th birthday of Rav Isaac Cohen. In the Jewish calendar it was Isru Hag Shavuot for people living in Israel; 2nd day Isru Hag Shavuot for people living in Golah.

Rav Cohen was the spiritual leader of the Community from 1947 to 1957. The gathering in the restaurant was presided over by Prof. Stefan Reif. Credit is due to Shoshanah (Rose) Elkana (née Gordon) and Nathan Gordon for the meticulous organization of the function. During the course of the meal Asher Selig Kaufman was asked to speak and below is an almost verbatim account of his Devar Torah.

‘When I look around, there are here more eloquent speakers than I could ever be. Nevertheless, I am told that I am the senior of the Edinburgh-born. So I am honoured to be given the opportunity of delivering Devar Torah on the occasion of Rav Cohen having passed his 90th birthday.’
First of all Isaac, I am going to remind you of a sermon that you gave in Edinburgh about the second day of Yom Tov. The reason for keeping the second day is no longer valid, except for Rosh Hashanah. It would seem that you were worried about how to explain to people why the second day should still be kept.

After a long discussion, you came up with the idea that on the first day, one has not overcome the transition from the weekday atmosphere. A second day is needed to enjoy the Yom Tov. At the time, I am not sure that I was convinced by this argument.

Today, I have somewhat changed my mind for people in the Golah. For what reason? By comparing with life in Israel. Here, in a Jewish country, one is aware of a Yom Tov, even weeks ahead. One of my gym classes is on Sunday morning. And so on Sunday a week ago, we were informed that there would be no class Erev Shavuot. Shortly afterwards, I heard one of the ladies of the class referring to the Giving of the Torah on Shavuot. And so this brings me to the raison d’être of my speaking.

Would it surprise you that in the original tradition of Erez Yisrael, there is no mention of the association of the Giving of the Torah with Shavuot?

Let us turn to the Mishnah1, that great depository of law and custom redacted about 200 CE. In tractate Megillah the Torah reading for Shavuot is the portion beginning Deuteronomy 16:9 “You shall count off seven weeks”. There is no mention of the portion alluded to the Ten Commandments. This is confirmed by the minor tractate Soferim2. Such a Torah reading befits an agricultural festival, the time of the first fruits in Israel.

My son Shmuel said to me: Why don’t you look at the Amidah (standing prayer) as given in the ancient rite of Erez Yisrael? In our Siddur we have “Season of the Giving of our Torah”. So I turned to the Cairo Genizah, of which Stefan here is the director of the Cambridge Collection. In the rite of Erez Yisrael, there is no mention of the Giving of the Torah in the Amidah3.

This is not the end of the story. In the Tosefta, a later compilation of laws and customs than the Mishnah, we have the following about the Torah reading: On Shavuot, Deuteronomy 16, as in the Mishnah. But there is an addition - and some say (in another version, others say), the portion of the Giving of the Torah should be read4. This is supported by the Jerusalem Talmud, as might be expected.

The Babylonian Talmud is more explicit. On Shavuot, Deuteronomy 16, as in the Mishnah. Others say, the portion of the Giving of the Torah: This appears to be a repetition of the Tosefta statement. But then it adds: today, now that there are two days of Yom Tov, we read both portions, but in the reverse order. That is, on the first day, Giving of the Torah (also in Erez Yisrael) on the second day, for the Golah, Deuteronomy 16, and this is the practice even to this very day. The Babylonian Talmud, as in the majority of cases, won the day, much to my regret.

What can one learn from all this? It may be that in ancient times there was already a tradition that the date of the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai coincided with that of Shavuot. For the people living here in Erez Yisrael, Shavuot was a harvest festival - the wheat harvest and first fruits. No particular significance was attached to the coincidence of the Giving of the Torah.

However, in the Golah, in Babylon, conditions were quite different. The people were divorced from the land. They had to cling to something. And so the Giving of the Torah was placed first in the public reading from the Torah.

For me, this is a good example of the mutability of halakhah (Jewish law). Conditions, social and otherwise, change in the course of time, and so laws have to be adapted accordingly.

Procedure at the gathering was very democratic. The opportunity was given to everyone present to speak. Many did so, especially those who were in their teens when Rav Cohen was in Edinburgh. They were very appreciative of his spiritual guidance, aided by his wife Fanny.

References
1. Mishnah Megillah 3.5.
2. Soferim 17.6.
4. Tosefta Megillah 3.5.
A concert to remember

Berl Osborne

On the 15th August I attended a remarkable concert in the Usher Hall that will live long in my memory. It was remarkable both for the music and for the sense of occasion.

A hall that was packed to the rafters stood to applaud and welcome the players as soon as they walked on to the stage and before they had played a note, how come?

Well, the international Maestro Daniel Barenboim, assisted by his friend the late Edward Said a distinguished Arab journalist, assembled the orchestra. The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra is made up of young musicians from both Israel and the Arab world. The only qualifications are a willingness to talk one to the other, and an acceptance that there can be no military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Barenboim is ever mindful of the fact that Jews and Arabs lived together quite harmoniously for six centuries during the golden age of Spanish Jewry.

This lesson was not lost on me when I realised that I too have “to see things from the other point of view” – Barenboim’s, the orchestra’s and music. Taken on its own merits, I came to appreciate that the overture is an exquisite piece of music, performed with a combination of sensitivity and zest by this extraordinary grouping of young people, who will not allow personal and political differences to get in the way of the music they love.

Thus this concert had a socio-political as well as a musical significance.

I found the music thrilling and inspiring; the centrepiece was a blaring account of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.

There have been adverse comments by some music critics about Barenboim’s control of the orchestra, but for me the evening was totally absorbing. But then, although I am a music lover, I am not a trained musician. The sum total of my musical accomplishment is an ability to belt out a tune in the Synagogue choir, which I can just as well sing as nobody is too fastidious about my always sticking to the correct key; my singing is “can bello rather than ‘bel canto’.

The finale of the evening was the un-programmed Prelude and Liebestodt from Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde. This inclusion was surely a statement of faith by Barenboim. As Geoff Brown wrote in the Times ‘May the harmony continue’ – and so say all of us.

Reviews

West, East… and Andalucia

Janet Mundy

It is impossible to discuss the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra without reference to Middle Eastern Politics. The orchestra was formed in 1999, the brainchild of Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said, to bring together young musicians from Israel, Palestine and other Arab countries.

However, most of the audience, and certainly the orchestra and conductor, gathered on Monday 15th August at the Usher Hall to listen to the music, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival which came into being, like the modern state of Israel, in 1948.

The programme commenced with Carl Maria Von Weber’s overture to his opera Abu Hassan, appropriately based on one of the tales in “One Thousand and One Nights”. Enthusiastically performed by the large, youthful orchestra, it nevertheless was more redolent of 19th century Europe than Arabian rights.

This brief opening was followed by a swift reorganisation of the orchestra to allow the four soloists to take centre stage for Mozart’s Sinfonia concertante for oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. During this performance, the relationship between Barenboim and his protégés began to come through. The interpretation was very much the conductor’s, both lyrical and passionate, especially in the second movement, the Adagio. However, the soloists’ individual performances and the interplay of the instruments were superb and Barenboim was happy to stop conducting at one point to enable the four musicians to perform as a quartet, setting their own tempo, a reflection of the mutual respect between the leader and his ensemble.

The second half of the programme was a performance of Beethoven’s Symphony No 5 in C Minor. No matter how many times one hears the familiar four note motif at the commencement of the symphony, it never ceases to thrill, especially under the command of such an assured conductor in a live performance with young performers commencing their musical careers.

Thoughts of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip that day and all the impenetrability of the Middle Eastern conflict disappeared as the harmonies washed over the audience in a way that the political world sadly cannot match.

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The orthodox Jews impose on the directed above all at his fellow Jews: religion, and in this his attacks were also “spoke out” against the rigid same, as is the case in Galicia, then I speak out against their oppression of the Ukrainians and Poles by the nationalities of the region—Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, Germans and Jews—and his sympathies clearly lie with the oppressed groups, in particular the Ukrainian peasants and shetel Jews. He insisted that he was free from racial prejudice and that his attacks on particular nationalities were because they oppressed others: “I spoke out against the oppression of the Ukrainians and Poles by the Russians, but where the Poles do the same, as is the case in Galicia, then I speak out against their oppression of the Ukrainians, Jews and Germans.”

He also “spoke out” against the rigid attitudes and practices of orthodox religion, and in this his attacks were directed above all at the Jews: “I stand up for the Jews because they are enslaved, but I attack the slavery the orthodox Jews impose on the Jewish members of their faith.”

Franzos’s family came from Spanish Jews who fled the Inquisition to Holland and later settled in Lorraine. Around 1770 his great-grandfather established a factory for one of his sons in East Galicia. This was the time when the Austrian administration insisted on all Jews having “proper” surnames, so that “Franzos” became his grandfather’s name, from his French background, even though he regarded himself as German.

Franzos’s father was a highly respected doctor in Czortkow (Ukrainian Chortkiv). He regarded himself as German, a term which at the time had mainly linguistic and cultural meaning, there being no state called “Germany.” He was steeped in the humanistic ideals of the German Enlightenment as expressed by Kant, Lessing and, especially, Schiller. This brought certain isolation: for the Poles and Ukrainians he was German, for the Germans a Jew and for the Jews a renegade, a deutsch. In the first half of the nineteenth century, liberalism and nationalization went hand in hand, and Franzos’s father was one of the first Jews to join the student fraternity whose ideal was a German nation state with a liberal constitution. It is ironic that by the time Franzos, who shared his father’s ideals, went to university, the German student fraternities had “dejustified” themselves.

Karl Emil Franzos was born in 1848. His father died when he was ten and his mother moved to Czernowitz (Chemnitz). The first languages he spoke were Ukrainian and Polish, learnt from his nurse; his first school was attached to the local Dominican abbey, where the teaching was in Latin and Polish; in Czernowitz he attended the German Gymnasium, graduating with honours in 1867. By now the family was in reduced circumstances and he supported himself by giving lessons, later, as a student, from his writing.

He would have liked to study classical philology with the aim of becoming a teacher, but no scholarship was forthcoming. Jews were not eligible for teaching posts, and even though he was non-religious, he refused to convert to advance his career. An additional reason for the refusal of a scholarship was that he did not attempt to conceal his liberal outlook, having, for example, tried to organise a celebration for the liberal poet, Ferdinand Freiligrath.

He studied law, that being a longer course. When he graduated, he found himself in a similar situation: he did not want to become an advocate, and a position as judge was closed to him as a Jew. Having had a number of pieces published while he was a student, he went into journalism and worked for newspapers and magazines for the rest of his life, at first in Vienna, after 1886 in Berlin. The move was caused as much by the greater opportunities for publishing there as by his “Germanic” tendencies. Indeed, the increasing virulence of anti-Semitism in Germany meant that later on he had difficulty placing pieces, which were felt to be too pro-Jewish—which was often another way of saying “not sufficiently anti-Jewish.” Today Franzos is best known as the man who saved Georg Büchner’s works from oblivion, editing them from the already fading manuscripts (which is why Woyzeck first appeared as Wozzeck, giving that title to Alban Berg’s opera). He died in 1904.

Galicia was the most backward, the poorest province of the Habsburg Empire, so that Franzos saw his promotion of Germanisation as part of an attempt to improve conditions there politically and economically as well as culturally and socially. Jews made up some 12% of the population, the largest proportion of any province; two-thirds of the Empire’s Jews lived in Galicia. Besides being mostly poor, the ashkenazi Jews were strict, conservative Hasidim, shuffling themselves off as far as possible from their Christian neighbours, who responded in kind. Poor orthodox Jews from the east were a not uncommon sight in Vienna and were probably regarded with even greater hostility by many of the westernised Jews of the city than by the Christian population.

The rigidity with which the eastern Jewish communities shut themselves off from outside influences is the theme of Franzos’s most ambitious work, Der Pojaz, completed in 1893, but not published until after his death in 1905.

The hero, Sender Glatsche, is the son of a shoemaker, a vacant, but is brought up by a poor washerwoman as her own child. His talent for mimicry becomes evident at an early age and brings him the name of the ‘pojaz’ (payts: clown). He works as a carter and one evening in Czernowitz he happens to go to the German theatre. It is an event that transforms his life. He is determined to become a “proper” actor. Encouraged by the theatre director, an assimilated Jew himself (probably based on the famous German-Jewish actor Dawison), he decides to learn German. He has to do this in secret; in the Jewish community only those for whose work it is absolutely essential were permitted to learn German; if he were discovered he would be excluded. He bribes the janitor of the local monastery (with schnapps) to let him secretly into the library, which the ignorant monks do not use, and is later hired out by a monk who has sent to that distant post as a punishment for suspected heresy. (The blinkered conservatism is on both sides: in his novel Judith Trachtengart Franzos talks of "the stale air of the ghetto — mixing with other, though not purer air heavy with the incense of fanatical belief"). Sender eventually cuts off his sidelocks, the long skirts of his caftan and his ties with the ghetto, and sets out for the city, only to die before he gets there from pneumonia; his weak chest is the result of winter sports spent in the unhealthy monastery library.

Why this novel, which Franzos regarded as his major work, remained unpublished during his lifetime is a mystery. It is possible that he thought his critical portrayal of the ghetto might be exploited by anti-Semitic elements which were becoming increasingly active in Germany in the 1880s.

The relations between the Christian and Jewish communities come into sharpest focus in sexual matters—as a young man Franzos fell in love with a Christian girl and announced his engagement to her because of the barrier between the two groups. This problem forms the subject of a number of his works, including two of his best novels, Judith Trachtengart (1880) and Leib Weihnachtskuchen and his Child (1886).

Judith Trachtengart is the beautiful daughter of a wealthy Jew. The upper floor of their house is rented by the Polish district commissioner, whose family Judith has been betrothed to. Her father is aware that this treatment is put on to ensure the favours the commissioner expects from him, such as ignoring aunts of rent. Judith, however, takes it at face value. Similarly she believes the protestations of the young lord of the local estate when he falls in love with her. Count Baranowski is basically a decent man, but he is weak and gives in to the proposal of a vagabond monk, who performs a fake baptism and marriage. Judith goes through many humiliations, not least of which is the exclusion from her family and community. Even after she has shamed the count into marrying her properly and accepting their son as his heir, her brother will not recognise her. At the end she commits suicide.

Her grave-stone inscription – “Judith Countess Baranowska, daughter of Nathan ben Manasse, of the tribe of Israel” – assures her belonging to both communities, but that expresses a future hope rather than a present reality, as the end of the inscription makes clear: “She died in the darkness, but one day dawn will come.”

In Franzos’s last novel, Leib Weihnachtskuchen and his Child, the critical picture of 19th-century Hasidic Judaism is replaced by a sympathetic portrayal of an individual Hasid. The other central male character is Janko Vygod, a Slav peasant whose parents drink themselves happily to an early grave, leaving their farm under a burden of debt. Janko swears to keep his inheritance intact; his obsessive work to achieve this makes him an outsider among his easy-going neighbours.

The man he holds responsible for his misfortune is the village innkeeper, Leib Weihnachtskuchen. When he discovers the Jew is the opposite of the bloodsucking monster he imagined, the little shenker becomes his only friend. Gradally the Christian Janko falls in love with the Jew’s daughter. His determination to marry her is as obsessive as his determination to retain his farm and can only lead to tragedy.

In Leib, a painfully honest man who has a profound, living faith, Franzos has demonstrated his ability to portray sympathetically a person who has the religious belief he himself lacked. His depiction of anti-Semitism also goes below the surface. Like his flock, the village priest responds automatically to the word “Jew” with the common prejudices. But that does not stop him respecting Leib for the very qualities he believes Jews cannot by their very nature
possess. He is so unaware of the contradiction between his attitude to Jews in general and the way he sees individual Jews, that he can express both views almost in the same sentence. Franzos also uses the institution of the shabbos goy to show that the two communities can live together in harmony when they see and know each other as individuals.

Franzos showed the attitudes of the 19th-century assimilated Jew in their best light. His conviction that Germanisation was the way forward was based on the idealistic strain in German culture and will have looked very different in his day to our post-Holocaust perspective. He believed, following the example of Schiller, that literature should have an ethical purpose, but he managed to express this purpose through a range of vivid characters who still have the power to move the modern reader.

(Michael Mitchell’s translation of Leb Weihnachtskuchen and his Child is published by The Ascopp. 0-9545989-0-3, price £7.50.)

David Daiches

From his boyhood David Daiches delighted in words. He was exposed to several languages. Visitors to his parents’ Edinburgh home might speak Russian, German, Yiddish, or indeed an amalgam of more than one language. With his grandfather in Leeds he could communicate only in Yiddish or Hebrew, but as a student he read literature in Scots and learnt Gaelic. He also absorbed a musical tradition: his mother, Flora Levin and her sisters were gifted delighted in words. He was exposed to the 19th-century assimilated Jew and for his father’s sake, a Jewish girl. Shortly afterwards he was offered a job at the University of Chicago. He accepted the position, he said, to two purposes, for his father’s sake, to save embarrassment to the family. For the same reason, in Chicago he and Billie had an orthodox Jewish marriage. In the summer of 1958 they were back in Scotland for a holiday with both their families, making real the ‘impossible world’ they had always hoped for.

It was in the US that David’s career took off. It rapidly became apparent that he was a gifted teacher; and in addition, from 1948 he began to write a book, a year, mainly on modern poetry and fiction. His interests expanded to American literature. With the outbreak of war he tried to return to Britain, and in 1943 he joined the British Service Information in New York, going on to Washington as Second Secretary at the British Embassy. He continued to write, often scribbling on the train commuting to work; the result was ‘More Louis Stevenson – a revaluation’ (1947). By this time he had accepted a position as Professor of English at Cornell University, but the intention was always to return ‘home’. Eventually, in 1951, after several unsuccessful attempts at jobs in Scotland, he took up a lectureship in Cambridge. He had added books on Robert Burns and Wila Cather to his publications, as well as numerous articles and reviews. He was a regular broadcaster in the US, and in 1949 began to write for The New Yorker.

David, Billie and their three children settled in a small village outside Cambridge, and after six years David bought a Fellow of Jesus College. His early years at Cambridge were not entirely comfortable. His US reputation and manifest interests in contemporary American and Scottish literature cut little ice with Cambridge traditionalists. But as a teacher he was enormously influential, and of course he continued to publish. In 1961 came Wila Catter: A Critical Introduction; in 1956 Two Worlds: An Edinburgh Jewish Childhood, Critical Approaches to Literature and Literary Essays; in 1957 Milton; in 1960 A Critical History of English Literature. It was an extraordinarily productive period, and it was the prelude to the next chapter of his life.

But 1961 marked a change of direction for which he was more than ready. He became Professor of English and American Studies at the newly founded University of Sussex. The approach at Sussex was innovative and interdisciplinary, and David played a key role in shaping it. He responded with vigour and excitement to the challenge, and relished the opportunity to escape from the confines of Cambridge. At the same time he became involved in developing The Norton Anthology of English Literature, with his former colleague at Cornell, M H Abrams. It would become an invaluable collection for students of English literature, still in demand over 40 years after its first publication in 1962.

In the 1960s and ’70s David continued to teach and publish on literary themes, but he was moving into more wide-ranging cultural and historical areas, with Scotland continuing as a major focus. But not only Scotland. Alongside ‘The Paradox of Scottish Culture’ (1964), ‘Scottish Whisky’ (1969) and ‘Charles Edward Stuart’ (1971) were ‘More Literary Essays’ (1968), his sequel to ‘TWO Worlds’, ‘A Third World’ (1971), ‘Moses’ and ‘Was’ (both 1975), the latter an impossible to categorise autobiographical celebration of language and diversity. He continued to write and lecture on Scottish themes at the same time as maintaining his involvement with the more mainstream canon of English literature. He would describe himself as ‘the last generalist’.

In 1977 David retired from Sussex and returned at last to Scotland. In that year Billie died of cancer. He never came to terms with her loss. But he at once took his place as a leading figure in Scotland’s cultural and academic world, becoming Director of Edinburgh University’s Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in 1980, and contributing through lectures, publishing and broadcasting to the vital Scottish cultural climate of post-Holocaust Scottish life. He also contributed, in ways those who knew him will never forget, to every social occasion that he graced, with insight, wit and an inimitable penchant for puns. His family and friends will remember a man of huge intellectual curiosity who was a warm and gifted communicator. A man who could turn his talents as readily to making up nonsense songs for his grandchildren as to deploying an elegant and close-knit analysis of the Scottish Enlightenment.

When he lectured it was often without notes, and he was renowned for his extemporaneous performances.

Salis Daiches and Flora Levin brought their internationalism to Scotland; David had opportunities to re-connect with some of the countries whose languages he heard at home, and to explore new territory. He lectured in the USSR and Germany, Hungary and Yugoslavia, France and Italy, India and Hong Kong. Although David moved beyond orthodoxy, of any description, the spiritual and cultural richness of his Jewish inheritance informed his whole life. Without being tied to tradition he valued it, and maintained a very real continuity with his family’s past. His own parents had also instilled a receptiveness to the cultural environment of Scotland. Just as the resonance of the Scottish Enlightenment influenced his father and for the way he saw his role in Scotland, so the language, literature, music and intellectual climate of Scotland were profound currents throughout David’s personal and professional life. And there were tantalising analogies and correspondences: a shared respect for education, a long history of living with problematic neighbours, a shared enjoyment of the ‘Jewish dollars in Scotland and Scottish pedlars in Poland... Both David’s Jewishness and his Scottishness travelled with him wherever he went, and it was profoundly important to him that he was able to spend the last decades of his life in the city that had nourished both.

Jenni Calder

Jenni Calder, writer, has been living in Edinburgh for over 20 years. Her books include Scots in Canada. (2004); her latest biography, “Not Nuckecheeseuden,” and she is now working on Scots in America.
Dear Editor

Gordon Highlander!

May I just say how much I look forward to reading the "Edinburgh Star"? I was particularly interested in the article concerning the origins and history of the community in Aberdeen, which appeared in the last issue. My grandfather Barnet Gordon was a founder member of the original Shul having arrived in Aberdeen around 1890 from Janova in Lithuania along with his father, his brother and sister.

In 1914 when World War I broke out my father Alexander Gordon was called up to the army and became a 'Gordon highlander' and wore the kilt! He was sent to the trenches in France and elsewhere. There he experienced many horrors including the loss of friends and colleagues. After the war he joined his family business, which sold boots and shoes to farmers in the area until he married my mother Ada Simenoff and settled in Edinburgh. My cousin unearthed the photo showing my father wearing the kilt.

Brenda (Gordon) Rubin

Memories

We always look forward to our Edinburgh Star. I have spent ten years of my life in Edinburgh, five as a student and five, with my family, as a medical civil servant between 1968 and 1973. I first learned to play bridge with Nick and with five, with my family, as a student and five, with my family, as a student. I have placed in the permanent records of the archives, where they are available for any visitor to see, a memoir of Whittingehame and a photograph of several children in the Shul, shortly after their arrival in Edinburgh. It has meant the world to me in knowing that I am in my name carrying on the work that my parents started so many years ago.

Yours sincerely, and with best wishes for the New Year

Hilda Seltzer

Family Roots

One morning I discovered that I am not a "pure" Ashkenazi Jewess as I always thought; it was revealed that a larger part of my family are Sephardim and live in Cuba, Uruguay and France! Me being Yorkshire lass born in Leeds and raised in Edinburgh for the best part of my youth, suddenly discovering the family roots was a very exciting revelation that grew into a concentrated effort to search near and far for clues to discover relatives.

The story behind the Sephardim came from the fact that Napoleon's army arrived in Jonava, a shtetel near Kovna (19th century) There were Jewish soldiers in Napoleon's army. They made acquaintance with the local Jewish girls, the result being that some marriages came about. Thus... "the French connection!"

During the recent years, thousands of Jews from Russia arrived in Israel. I began to wonder if possibly I might discover some relatives amongst those families. And eventually, from the French part of the family living here in Israel (all born in Jonava) we discovered a distant cousin who had arrived in Tel-Aviv.

The possibilities are endless. There are many sites for root searches on the Internet. The most amazing thing is that so many people are looking for their lost identities, some contact with family, lost parents, siblings and names.

Many search for relatives who lived in Edinburgh in the past. This brought me to suggest that The Edinburgh Star could prepare a special section to which people can write letters in search of their families.

I am offering assistance and guidance to anyone who may want to start a search over the web.

Good Luck, Brenda Habshush (formerly Burns) Kibbutz Sde Boker, Israel

e-mail: brent@sde-boker.org.il

Synagogues abroad

On the 19th May David and I embarked on the P&O ship "Oceana" for a 17 night Mediterranean cruise. Although we shored at various places, the more interesting stops we made were in Dubrovnik and Corfu where we visited the Synagogues. The one in Dubrovnik is the second oldest in Europe and mainly kept as a Museum. In the museum shop one could purchase souvenirs and paintings depicting life as it was in pre-war days. The Synagogue in Corfu was well kept. Interestingly, instead of a Mechitza, seats were arranged back to back. The delightful lady who showed us around told us that services were still held on the Yom Tovim. There was also a room where forty or so Jewish People still living in Corfu could go for Kiddush after the Service. Before the War the Congregation numbered several thousand. Although neither Synagogue was easy to find, it was interesting to note that each had many visitors, comprising English, Scottish, Israeli and American, illustrating that we all tend to gravitate towards our own People wherever they are.

Rose Orgel, Photograph by David Goldberg

Caption Competition

Brenda (Gordon) Rubin

Small world

Following your article '60 Years Ago' I would like to add the name of Shimon Poliwhinsky who served in the British army during WWII. Shimon and his family lived opposite mine in South Clerk Street. We shared our Pesach order. I think it came from London. It is still sad to report that he never returned home: reported missing through enemy action.

It is interesting to note too, that the small area of South Clerk St. including Lutton Place, bounded by Preston St. and Lutton Place, produced the following academics in the first half of the 20th century:

7 in medicine (Sir Abraham Goldberg, Cyril Hyman, Mosiss Hyman, my brother Leon [Mordcha] Kaufman, Berl Osborne, my brother Abe Pinkinsky, Julius Zucker [son of Rev. Zucker])

Dentistry (Jack Hyman (brother of Cyril and Mosiss)

Engineering (Max Zucker [son of Rev. Zucker])

Languages (my sister Meechie Pinkinsky)

Mathematics (Prof Hyman Levy, Imperial College, London, also Dux of George Heriot's School)

Physics (Asher Salig Kaufman)

Asher S. Kaufman

Like Meechie Pinkinsky, who wrote in the last edition, and whom I remember well, I was born in Edinburgh, and lived there until shortly after the war ended, when my husband Jerry and I with our two-year-old son emigrated to the United States in 1951. My father, L.J. Cohen was treasurer of the Jewish community in Corfu for many years, and Dr. Daches was one of his closest friends. I have such wonderful memories of the warm friendly congregation, and of how much we were involved in every aspect of the community.

During the war: the weekly dances that we held in Duncan Street for Jewish servicemen who were in town; the 35 refugee children that my mother, in charge of the Children’s Refuge Committee brought into the city after finding homes for them in the congregation, (two brothers made their home with us for six years); the Whittingehame Farm School, the beautiful house near Dalkeith, given to the Jewish Community by Lord Trappin, nephew of Lord Balfour. My parents together with a chosen Committee furnished it, hiring a qualified teaching staff and then bringing 165 refugee teenage children from Dovercourt camp in England to make their home there until after the war. There they were schooled and taught how to farm in the event that they would eventually make their home in Palestine.

Now after 54 years, I am living with my youngest son Cohn, in this beautiful state of Virginia, close to the Capital, and for the last eleven years, have volunteered at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, working in the photo archives and now in collections. I have recently finished recording the names of the 14,500 children who were in the Lodz ghetto for an exhibition about the ghetto. This is scheduled to open at the museum in 18 months time, and I am now transcribing histories of survivors. I

With Compliments from John & Hazel Cosgrove

Brenda (Gordon) Rubin

The Edinburgh Star could prepare a special section to which people can write letters in search of their families.

I am offering assistance and guidance to anyone who may want to start a search over the web.

Good Luck, Brenda Habshush (formerly Burns) Kibbutz Sde Boker, Israel

Barbara Kwiecinska will donate a bottle of Champagne to whoever sends in the best caption to this picture.

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Many search for relatives who lived in Edinburgh in the
October
1 Saturday
WIZO; Theatre/Supper evening “Stones in his Pockets”; Kings Theatre
4,5 Tuesday & Wednesday
1st, 2nd day Rosh Hashanah
10 Monday
Lodge Solomon 7.00pm
12 Wednesday
Kol Nidre
13 Thursday
Yom Kippur
18 Tuesday
1st Day Succot
26 Wednesday
Simchat Torah
30 Sunday
8.00pm
EJLS; Bernard Jackson ‘History and Authority in the Halakhah: the Problem of the Agunah’

November
6 Sunday
13 Sunday 8.00pm
EJLS; Jenni Calder Professor David Daiches, personal memories of her father
21 Monday
Lodge Solomon 7.00pm
27 Sunday 9.00pm
EJLS; Literary Society Susanna Heschel will talk about the 19th century Jewish thinker, Abraham Geiger
30 Wednesday
WIZO; Lunch in Hilary Rifkind’s home

December
4 Sunday
EJLS Nathan Abrams; The Jewish Dream Factory: Jews and the American Film Industry.

On behalf of the committee of the Scottish Friends of Alyn, I should like to thank all those who so generously responded to our recent appeal. Alyn Hospital is Israel’s only orthopaedic hospital and rehabilitation centre for physically handicapped children, caring for children, regardless of religion or ethnic background, suffering either from crippling diseases or from trauma after accidents.

As a result of this generosity we have been able to purchase two special mattresses to prevent pressure sores for children in the rehabilitation wing of the hospital, and a digital camera for this ward to record the progress of the children’s steps to recovery. In addition we have been able to purchase a pack of therapeutic games and toys requested by the day case centre.

I should also like to thank all those who have marked the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries and other happy events by making a donation to Alyn. This is most appreciated. We wish all our friends and donors a happy and healthy New Year.

Clarice Osborne
Chairman of Edinburgh Alyn

Ian Shein would like to express his sincere thanks for the many cards, telephone calls and good wishes received during his stay in hospital. He is happy to say that he is now recuperating at hom.

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members’ homes.

For further information, contact Alice Kelpie (337 1894)

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

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

Forthcoming Events

November
6 Sunday
13 Sunday 8.00pm
EJLS; Jenni Calder Professor David Daiches, personal memories of her father
21 Monday
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30 Wednesday
WIZO; Lunch in Hilary Rifkind’s home

December
4 Sunday
EJLS Nathan Abrams; The Jewish Dream Factory: Jews and the American Film Industry.

Answers to Who are they?

1. Rose Elkana (nee Gordon), Nattie Gordon, Sharon Elkons/nee Reiff, Stefan Reiff, Shuli Reiff.
2. Brenda Rubin (nee Gordon), Judith Reefe (nee Rosin), Ena Armitai (nee Dorfman), Sarah Dorfman.

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Congratulations

David and Elisheva and grandparents Irene and Philip Mason on the arrival of Netanel Menachim Peretz.

Judy Sischo on her new appointment as President of the Rotary Club of Edinburgh.

Katie Lurie who attained an LLB (Hons.) degree from Cardiff University.

Amanda Hyams who celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday 6th August. Wishing Bessie Glass a speedy recovery from her successful cataract operation at the age of 100!

Susie and Jonathan Adler on the birth of their daughter Ruth on 17 August 2005.

Thank you

Edinburgh WIZO organisers would like to thank all who supported them in their various junctions during the past year and are very pleased to report that a total of £5795 has been sent of Head Office of WIZO in London, an impressive amount from a small group! Sylvia Donne – co chairman of Edinburgh WIZO

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Jenni Calder (née Daiches) (born 1941) is a Scottish literary historian, and arts establishment figure. She was formerly married to Angus Calder, and is the daughter of David Daiches. She also once ran the Edinburgh Book Festival. Calder is opposed to Scottish independence.[1]. Some works[edit]. Chronicles of Conscience.