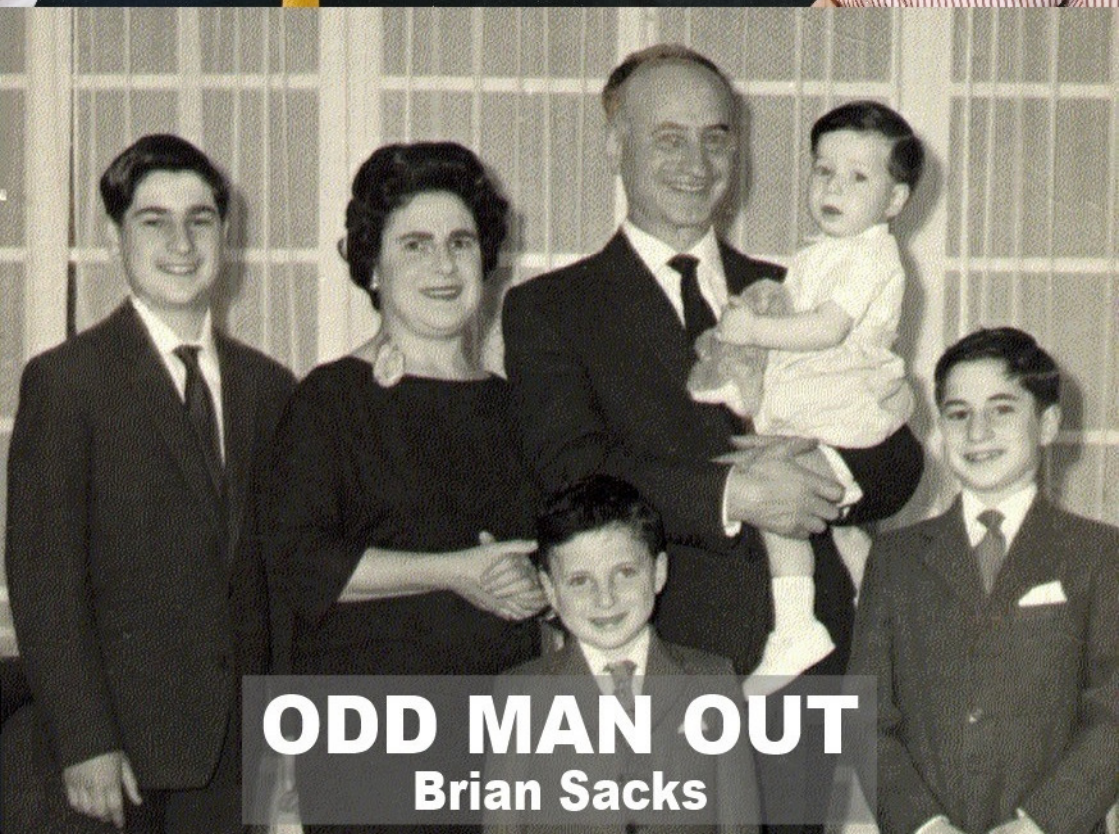

ODD MAN OUT

Brian Sacks

Volume 1

THROUGH CHILD'S EYES

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In memory of my parents, Jonathan, Daniel,
Ada, Benny and Rowland

Contents

1 Preface

I began scribbling recollections of my childhood onto hotel-supplied pieces of paper during a holiday in Eilat in 1999. I was trying to capture those memories before their clarity faded within my brain. So my motivation in those early writings was very personal; I was writing for myself.

Now, around a quarter of a century later, my motivation has extended to consider a wider readership. In particular, I wish to create a record for my grandchildren. I have brought together various other pieces I have written about the lives of myself, my family and my forebears. The earliest of those writings was my account of my first marathon in 1990. I conducted another significant exercise of focused recollection and recording on a holiday in October 2014, in which I attempted to capture my memories of growing up with my older brother Jonathan. Recognising that, for any individual reader, some sections may be less interesting than others, I have included a detailed Table of Contents.

When it first occurred to me, the title "Odd Man Out" was too hard to resist. Throughout my life, in whatever social situation I have found myself, I seem to have been the odd man out, whether through being the only non-religious one, or the only Jewish one, or the only one who doesn't give a fig about soccer or cricket, or the only one who works at a standing desk instead of sitting like everybody else. I have always been too inflexible and too obstinate to blend in, so instead I have embraced the fact that I am the odd man out.

But "Odd Man Out" would be an appropriate title for a complete account of my life, filled with its loves, heartaches, disappointments, struggles, highs and lows. Some of those stories and lessons of later life may eventually be written, but many are best left unrecorded. I have chosen "Odd Man Out" as the title of this hypothetical series. In fact, I have written a diary called "Moving On", recounting my experiences on emigrating to Israel in 2018, and I have designated "Moving On" as Volume 2 of "Odd Man Out".

I chose, for this present volume, the individual title "Through Child's Eyes" because that is more reflective of those childhood recollections that I specifically wanted to preserve in this book. I have recorded memories that were forged in the mind of a child or a young teenager, with the child's thirst for excessive and unfiltered detail. In particular, in relation to Jonathan, those are cherished memories and I feel loth to condense them down with the critical eye of an adult. That is my justification for what may sometimes be seen as unnecessary and banal detail.

So this book is largely the record of my childhood and student days. But I have extended the timeline in one area. Because running has played such a significant role in my life I have allowed myself to complete the story of my lifetime's enjoyment of the sport.

I enjoy reading autobiographies, partly because they enable me to see the world through the eyes of another person. I was reminded of this recently in reading the memoir of Burt Bacharach, who wrote about how as a teenager growing up in Queens, New York, each year he would travel into Manhattan to see in the New Year amongst the crowds at Times Square. It reminded me of something that had completely slipped my mind, which was that Jonathan used

to do the same thing at the same age, to travel into Trafalgar Square on New Year's Eve. It reminded me of the admiration that I felt toward Jonathan during those early years that I shared his bedroom and, to an extent, shared his life. Burt Bacharach, through explaining his thoughts and feelings on those occasions, effectively invited me into his headspace. Comparing and contrasting, it also helped me contemplate the young Jonathan's internal world.

Likewise, this autobiography may serve as a window into my childhood headspace. Without doubt it is less interesting than many memoirs, and that is leaving aside questions of whether or not you would have wanted to befriend me as a child. But nonetheless, at the very least, I hope this account will paint some kind of picture of a specific region of time and place and social and family environment that may be of interest because it is part of a history that will not return.

2 My earliest memory

My mother was bathing me in the china blue wash basin in the bathroom, and I was afraid that I'd fall down the plughole. This, my earliest memory, is remarkable for its clarity, and for the fact that it predates by months or years all my other early memories. These other recollections date from age three or four onwards, and are fading fast as I plunge still further into old age; nineteen-fifties memories of a comfortable life, living in a spacious home in Rathgar Close, Finchley, North West London. Rathgar Close was, and still is, a pleasant and compact tree-lined cul-de-sac of eight well-spaced, detached houses. Our house was built the year before I was born, and a combination of fate and soil subsidence decreed that only our family would ever live in it. Sixty years after its construction, my mother died, our erstwhile nanny Ada moved on to an old-age home, and after several months, the building was razed to the ground. A sturdier, grander and far more expensive house was built in its place.

Rathgar Close was not the first home for the young family. My parents, Libby and Louis, had married in September 1946 and spent the first few years of their married life living with Libby’s parents, Rachel and Elias Frumkin. Rachel and Elias, together with some of their extended family, lived in a four-storey turn-of-the-century townhouse at 404 Seven Sisters Road, across the street from Finsbury Park in an area of North London called Manor House. Louis’ parents, Israel and Annie Shakovitch, lived slightly more than two miles further east, at 43, Moresby Road, Clapton.

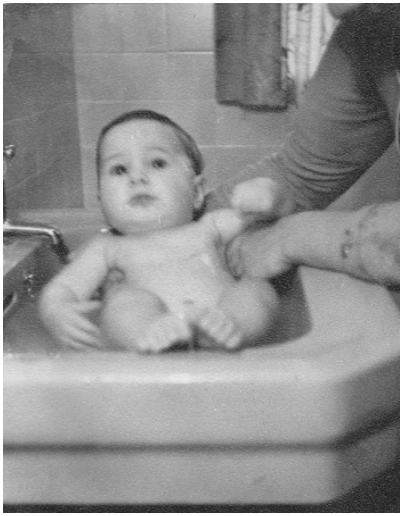
Louis and Libby's first child, Jonathan Henry, was born on March 8, 1948, and two years later, on June 20, 1950, the young family

moved to their newly-built house in Rathgar Close, Finchley. As such, they moved from a major centre of Jewish life during the early 20th century, to a growing suburban community on the outer reaches of the Northern Line Underground network. Their new home was situated in a neighbourhood known as Church End, which was well served by two state schools, St Mary's Primary and Christ's College Finchley.

I, Brian Zachary, was born on October 29, 1951, the second child of the family. My mother gave birth to me at the London Hospital, Stepney, within the sound of Bow Bells, and so I am an authentic Cockney. As of the time of writing, that was the first and last occasion that I have ever been an inpatient of a hospital.

By the time I was three, our household had grown again as Ada Tomlinson now lived with us; Ada who made the beds and did all sorts of other chores to keep the household running smoothly. My younger brother Alan was born in March 1956, followed by Eliot in January 1960. So within a few months, at the age of 40, my mother completed her family and also passed her driving test at her first attempt.

Thus each of my three brothers was born in the first quarter of an even year, while I was born in the last quarter of an odd year. I was given the Hebrew name Binyamin, meaning son of the right hand, and I responded by becoming a left-hander. It seems that I was predestined to be a non-conformist. To be the odd man out.



My earliest memory

8 Rathgar Close

3 The Grown-ups

Having introduced my parents, grandparents and Ada, and before proceeding further with my own story, it is perhaps a suitable point to stand aside and write further about the grown-ups who shaped the life of the family. In telling each of their stories, I seek the reader's indulgence as I range across the decades from the late 19th century to the early 21st century, before returning to the middle of the 20th century and my own childhood.

3.1 Grandparents

During much of our childhood, once the Sabbath had ended on Saturday evening, my brothers and I would climb into our father's Austin or Rover to visit our grandparents. It was a drive of perhaps 25 minutes into the older, grimier parts of London and our first stop, 404, Seven Sisters Road, Manor House, the home of my mother's parents. To us boys, they were Booba and Zeida Frumkin.

Booba Frumkin was a warm and welcoming lady, with a figure somewhat reminiscent of Margaret Dumont, the Marx Brothers' leading lady. Her domain was the living room, which adjoined the kitchen, and on our arrival she was quick to tempt us with cakes and biscuits. Although the whole house, with its dark and heavy furniture, seemed very old-fashioned to us, we were impressed by our grandparents' television. With a 21-inch screen, it was the largest we had ever seen, and at that time on a Saturday evening it would be showing "Dixon of Dock Green" or "The Black and White Minstrel Show".

Zeida Frumkin was a more retiring figure than his wife. He used to sit on his own, studying some religious text, in a corner of the front

room of the house. He would give us sweets when we would go in to see him. But he is a more distant memory, having died in 1958 when I was six years old. Booba married again, in 1961, but she was not happy in this second marriage. She died at age 75 in 1968.

It was a further drive of five or ten minutes to reach Booba and Zeida Sacks, who lived at 43, Moresby Road, Clapton, seemingly a somewhat poorer area. They lived in a more modest style than the Frumkins, and their TV was certainly less prominent. They also seemed thinner and frailer than my maternal grandparents. Zeida found it easier to smile than his rather austere wife; but both were always pleased to see us. It was always a somewhat tiresome requirement to kiss, or be kissed by, an elderly relative, but I especially remember that, in the case of Zeida Sacks, his badly shaved chin was particularly abrasive. His face also reminded me of Popeye the Sailor Man. I liked all my grandparents, but the relationships were ones of their talking or asking, and my answering politely. I wouldn't ask them questions about their own lives, or, unprompted, volunteer mundane information about my own.

Facially reminiscent of my paternal grandfather, and expressing a sentiment I share, Popeye the Sailor Man

But there is of course much more to tell about our grandparents beyond our impressions as young children. In later life, we learned

the details and the stories of their lives. In writing about my maternal forebears I have been greatly helped by the information provided by my cousins June Gordon and Louis Frydman. On my father's side I am very grateful for the written and photographic material provided by my cousin Madeleine Isenberg, and for the information I have learned from my second cousin Rosalind Gordon.

My grandfather Eliyahu Ephraim (Elias) Frumkin was born in 1882 in Aleksot, a suburb of Kovno in Lithuania. He was the fifth of the six children of the town Rabbi, Arye Leib Frumkin and his wife Sheina (nee Hodess). Arye Leib, my great-grandfather, was an exceptional man who had spent a year in Jerusalem between 1871 in 1872, researching the history of the great rabbis of Jerusalem. In 1884, he moved to Palestine (as that region of the Ottoman Empire was then known; it is now Israel) with his whole family and set up home in Petach Tikva as one of the founders of the city. It is now one of the largest cities in Israel.

In 1893 the family moved again to London and Arye Leib founded the Frumkin's Wine Shop at 162 Commercial Road, Stepney, East London. His wife Sheina took over running the shop while Arye Leib returned to writing. They both returned to Palestine in 1911 to live out their remaining lives. They left the business in the hands of their youngest children Elias (my grandfather; Eliyahu was his Hebrew name) and Rachel (Elias' younger sister), together with their spouses Rachel (my grandmother) and Zecharia Dimson (in memory of whom I was given the middle name Zachary).

My maternal grandmother Rachel Radogowski was born in Lithuania in 1893. She came to England as a young child to accompany her older sister who was getting married, and to help

with any children that might result from that marriage. Such exploitation seems unthinkable nowadays, but apparently not so in Lithuania at the start of the 20th century. Rachel received no schooling; she would be hidden away from the eyes of any visiting inspectors. She remained illiterate for life, only being taught to form a rudimentary "signature" - simply an "X" - by my grandfather. As a young child, she earned money by rolling and selling cigarettes.

The first member of the family to meet Rachel was Zecharia Dimson, on a sales visit to Notting Hill on behalf of Frumkin's Wines. He was so taken by her that he urged Elias to also meet this beautiful young lady. Elias and Rachel married in 1909, when Rachel was 16 years old. Their story merged into that of Frumkin's Wines, an institution of the Jewish East End. That story merits its own telling, and I present it as an Annexe to this book. Despite her lack of education, Rachel was a successful businesswoman who was well loved for the assistance and advice she gave amongst the poor of the Jewish East End and to German citizens trying to evade the Nazis.

When conscription was extended to married men in the middle of 1916, Elias, then aged 34, was medically examined, but rejected and exempted from military service. In his business life he was less active than his wife, but, with the benefit of his education, he did the desk work for the business and was active in blending wines and liqueurs.

In 1924, a family tragedy brought about a business crisis. Zecharia Dimson contracted typhoid while inspecting land for potential purchase by the Jewish Agency for Land in Palestine. He died a few days later in Jerusalem. His wife was too distressed to continue with the business at that time. Elias would not take on the extra

responsibility, leaving his wife Rachel to run the business on her own. To ease the burden, their son Aaron, at age 14, was withdrawn from school to work in the business. He felt that his young life had been cut short, and in particular he was distressed that he was denied the opportunity of further education. Some of those feelings perhaps found their way into the following account that Aaron recorded in his hand-written memoirs:

Regarding my father (by Aaron Frumkin)

With regard to his inactive lifestyle: he would stay up all night and sleep all day, banging away on his typewriter, apparently writing on matters of importance in the field of Commentary on the Bible. But in actual fact he did not write anything original in the whole of his lifetime. He may have impressed my mother but certainly not me. At one stage he was very bored and decided to go into business outside the wine trade. His older brother at the time was living in Germany. The German Mark had collapsed and my father sent to his brother a considerable amount of money to buy goods saleable in this country. My mother had suggested linens of all sorts but my uncle decided on buying novelties, wooden toys, doormats. Most of his purchases rotted in our cellar. After this disaster my father chose to go into the mail order dress business. He did get orders, but the majority of the dresses were returned, after having been worn once or twice, as being unsuitable. A great deal of money was wasted and lost.

> The final blow to the family was his investment in shares. He bought all his shares in futures or margins, so that when the world market for shares collapsed, he not only lost all his share capital, but was left heavily in debt. The conservative figure was in the region of thirty thousand pounds, probably underestimated. The result was that he had to dispose of the house we owned in St Leonards on Sea, mortgage the business property and the house we lived in, and mother had to dispose of all her jewellery. This was the burden we had to face right through the 1930s.

In 1927 Elias founded a small synagogue, known locally as the Frumkin Beth Hamedrash or the Frumkin Shteibel. Its later official name was the Seven Sisters Road Hebrew Congregation, its premises just a few doors along from my grandparents' house. It was the first synagogue that Jonathan attended as a very young child. It functioned until it was no longer viable owing to the Jewish population gradually moving out to the suburbs. It closed in the 1980's, and the proceeds of the sale were used to create a fund in memory of Rachel and Elias Frumkin. Amongst other enterprises, this fund provided the finance for the creation in 2001 of the Frumkin Midrasha (religious seminary) within the "Maalot Chaim" State School in Kfar Avraham, Petach Tikva.

My father's parents were both born in Poland. My grandfather Israel (Hebrew name Yehuda) Khanyshkevitch was born in Kielce in 1880, while my grandmother Annie (Chaya Gital) Goldberg was

born in Chmielnik in 1885. Israel worked as a tailor and was conscripted for a period of military service in the Russian army.

Israel and Annie married in December 1904. One year later to the day, their first child Harry Benjamin was born. My father David Leib (later known as Louis David) was born in February 1908, and Annie was pregnant with their third child when Israel emigrated to England in 1912. Their third child Milly was born in 1912, and Annie and the three children joined Israel in England the following year. Their fourth child Esther was born in 1916; she was later to change her name to Evelyn.

The family set up home in London's East End at 5, Philpot Street. Israel had premises at number 11a of the same road, where he worked as a woollen merchant and tailor. During the First World War, he was called up by the British Army, but failed the medical test. The family was poor. Whereas Harry, the eldest child, had the opportunity to complete his studies and gain his professional qualification as an accountant, his younger brother Louis left school at age 14 to assist his father in the shop.

Israel never learnt to speak English well; he could only speak enough to get by. He could not read English, and could only sign his own name, having been taught to do so by his children. But he was excellent at mental arithmetic, speedily adding up columns of pounds, shillings and pence as needed in his trade as a woollen salesman.

Israel could read the Hebrew prayer book, and for the last 28 years of his life he served as the *gabbai* of the local Springfield Synagogue, assisting in the running of its services. He enjoyed

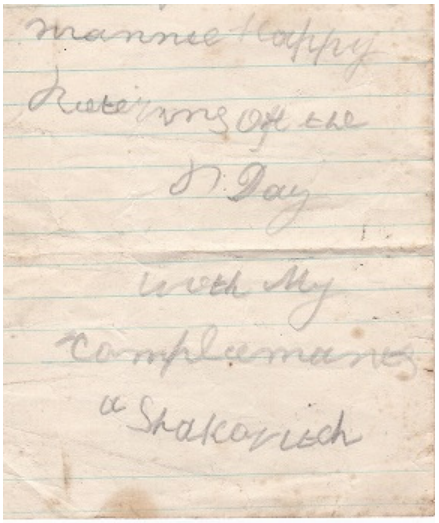
reading his Yiddish newspaper, which was printed using the Hebrew alphabet.

Annie was slightly more literate than her husband. She could write letters in Yiddish, again using the Hebrew alphabet, and even letters in English in a rudimentary, phonetic fashion. Israel and Annie were religious and would not use electricity on the Sabbath.

At a certain point, the family adopted the surname Shakovitch, without any official name change, and in 1932, Harry and my father Louis changed their name to Sacks. In 1937 or 1938, the family moved north to Clapton, to the house that Israel and Annie were to live in for the rest of their lives. It is probably at that time that the business moved 100 metres around the corner from its previous address, to 275, Commercial Road, and its sign now read "L. D. SACKS WOOLLENS AND WORSTEDS".

My mother's family, early 1923.
Top row: Rachel, Aaron, Elias.
Bottom row: Rosie, Libby, Gertie.

My father's family, around 1915.
Standing: Annie, Harry, David Leib (later known as Louis).
Seated: Milly, Israel.



Above left: Jonathan and Brian with "Booba Sacks"

Above right: Alan with "Booba Sacks" and "Zeida Sacks"

Left: Annie Shakovitch (who we knew as "Booba Sacks") could write in English in a rudimentary, phonetic fashion

3.2 Louis David Sacks

My father was born in Kielce, Southern Poland on February 13, 1908, and given the Hebrew name David Arye. So his Hebrew name was David Arye ben Yehuda; that is, David Arye, son of Yehuda. He would ever thereafter be addressed by this name when called up to the Reading of the Law in the synagogue.

His secular name was rather less static. The London Gazette issue of August 2, 1932, recording his naturalization as a British citizen on July 20, lists him as "David Leib Khanyshkevitch (known as Louis David Shakovitch)". An official Change of Name Deed, signed by him on August 22, 1932, records that the man "now or lately called Louis David Shakovitch" entirely relinquishes the surname Shakovitch, to adopt in its place the surname Sacks.

As already mentioned, Louis moved to England with his mother, brother and sister in 1913, to join his father who had emigrated the previous year. He attended school up to age 14 and, according to his sister Evelyn, he was a very bright pupil. However, as he was not born in England, he was not eligible to be awarded the free scholarship to continue his education beyond the minimum school leaving age of 14. His older brother Harry completed his school education at Jews' Free School, and later qualified as an accountant. However, the financial circumstances of the family did not allow Louis to be given the same opportunity. In leaving school to help his woollen merchant father in his shop, Louis had lost the possibility of advancing to a professional career.

Very little is known about my father's early life beyond those basic details. He probably attended the very popular Oxford and St George's Jewish Youth Club in Cannon Street Road, close to where

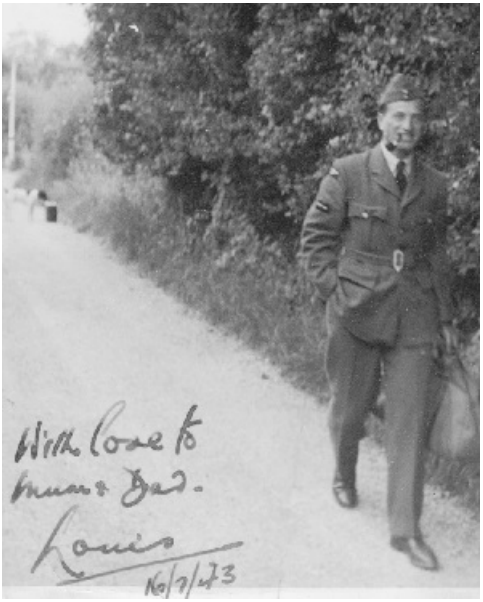
he lived; he probably learnt to box there and probably broke his nose there. He remained a keen follower of boxing throughout his life. We know that he read widely and that he attended night school, where he learnt book-keeping. He probably also took classes in the Arts and Humanities, because he developed a refined appreciation of art and classical music. He played the violin in an orchestra.

He did not talk about his early life. Amongst the few memorabilia of his that surfaced after he died were a few photographs of his life before he married; those photographs revealed a fun-loving and carefree side to his personality that was quite a surprise to his surviving family. They showed him snappily dressed, with perhaps a cigarette dangling jauntily in his mouth, very much at ease amongst a group of young friends of both sexes. The photos probably date from the 1930s, because they showed little or no receding of his hairline, whereas that was already significant by the time of his marriage in 1946. The photos showed him riding a bicycle, or enjoying the company of his friends in an open-topped car or on the deck of a ship. They are all out of doors, in holiday locations. They showed his immense physical strength, carrying two full-grown men or women, as his company at the time dictated, one on each shoulder. Some of the inscriptions on the backs of the photos referred to "Charlotte and I" on holiday in Tangiers. It is also known that at a certain point, possibly at that time or possibly several years later, my father was fond of a woman that his mother did not approve of, and instead she engaged the services of a *shadchan* – a marriage broker.

My father left the business in the hands of his father to serve in the Royal Air Force during World War II. The following entry about my father is taken from the book "Time of War" published in

Hebrew by the Frumkin Foundation in 1992, with an English translation appearing in 1996:

"In 1940 he volunteered for service in the Royal Air Force. Medical examinations revealed problems with his ears and prevented him from serving in a fighting unit. Instead his superior officers decided to take advantage of his professional knowledge of book keeping and appointed him book keeper and purser in one of the Air Force units. In this capacity he watched the development of the Air Force from the defence of Britain to the massive bombardment of Germany's industrial power and the resources of the Nazi war machine. Louis particularly remembers from those days the tension and damage caused by the heavy bombardment on the military airfields in which he served. He also remembers, from another point of view, the difficulties he had in trying to keep up the minimum of Jewish religious observance during his military service, at a time when most of his fellow soldiers in the various bases were gentiles. He was released from active duty in December 1945."



The medical examination referred to above would have identified that my father was deaf in one ear. He also had some colour blindness, which he sometimes in later life tried to disguise by

asking people's opinions on colour as if he was just questioning their personal tastes. His Royal Air Force Service & Release Book recorded his rank as LAC (Leading Aircraftman) and his height as 5 feet, 10 inches. It stated that he had served full-time from October 18, 1941 to December 18, 1945 and had earned the Defence Medal. He had been stationed at RAF Hendon, less than three miles away from where he was later to live for 46 years of his married life. His commanding officer wrote this commendation in the Release Book: "A very capable and conscientious airman, who has always performed his duties as a pay accounts clerk in a most satisfactory manner."

However, occasionally in later life he would mention anti-Semitism that he had encountered in the RAF.

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The top headline of the April 12, 1946 edition of the Jewish Chronicle read "Jewish resistance operations in Palestine". The accompanying article recounted the main incidents of the preceding week in the conflict between the Jewish underground resistance and the British Mandatory police and military authorities in Palestine. Jewish militants had blown up and completely destroyed Ashdod railway station and a railway bridge between Haifa and Acre. They had cut and mined railway lines elsewhere. In one incident, they had disguised themselves as Arabs; in another, when the British had sent up red flares as a call for reinforcements, the Jewish militants had sent up green flares, to fool the British into thinking that reinforcements were no longer necessary.

Another article on the front page recorded that American Congressmen and Senators condemned, from the floors of their

respective Houses, the British declaration of independence for Transjordan. Immediately below this, the newspaper reported on the French government's intention of freeing the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, who had helped Hitler recruit Bosnian Muslims for the Waffen SS during the Second World War.

Within the inside pages of this edition, an item in the Social and Personal section made the following declaration:

"The Engagement is announced of Louis David, younger son of Mr and Mrs I. Sacks, of 43, Moresby Road, E5, to Libby, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs E. Frumkin, of 404, Seven Sisters Road, N4."

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My mother kept just one letter from my father, which he wrote exactly a fortnight before their wedding. At the time of writing, he was lodging in a hotel in Leeds, having endured a tiring and frustrating day trying to buy woollen cloth to sell at his shop in London. It was, as he put it, an "uphill grind of impressing stony-hearted Yorkshiremen that I too have to make a living". He wrote that he was hopeful; he believed that somebody had set aside some material for him.

The day's work, and his evening meal, had left him so tired that he felt that the only reasonable way of whiling away the hours before bedtime was to invest nine pence in a visit the cinema. "From This Day Forward" was "most charming" and the leading actor Mark Stevens was the "epitome of wistfulness".

The film would have given my father much food for thought. It was the story of a couple at the outset of their married life, the husband

newly demobbed from the army and needing to make his way in a new world that was unfeelingly fickle in its demands for his skills and in its concern for his well-being. His new in-laws were a living demonstration of a marriage that had gone sour despite all the hopes and resolutions at its inception. Children were depicted as a challenge that could sink a marriage. The husband saw himself in a traditional role as the physically stronger breadwinner and head of the family, yet still entitled to drink away his sorrows when they were too difficult to face sober. Despite all the challenges and discouraging influences, he still held onto his belief in a marriage of enduring love. His faith was ultimately rewarded through the unfailing emotional support that his wife gave him throughout all the trials of his life.

Further on in my father's letter he wrote that the Somerset Maugham book that my mother had lent him was "annoyingly good", but that it was somewhat irritating that Maugham wrote in the first person and seemed to place undue stress on the "sexual antics" of his characters. My father's theory was that elderly novelists relived their sexual past through the characters of their own creation. Perhaps my father was unaware that Somerset Maugham was a homosexual, although that by no means disproves his theory.

This was a man presenting himself as a well-read, sophisticated, broadminded man of the world, who saw his bride as a kindred spirit. The letter, written with touches of humour in his elegant and flowing handwriting style, was peppered with occasional words in French and even in Latin.

As well as expressing the frustrations of his business life, my father also voiced another concern in his letter to his future bride; this one

regarding their start in married life. "I am troubled to picture myself swelling the multitude of residents" of the house he referred to as "Maison 404", that is, 404, Seven Sisters Road, the home of his future parents-in-law and their son Aaron, his wife Sadie, and their children June and Lionel.

That letter was written on September 2, 1946. At 38 years old, Louis David Sacks had lived through two World Wars and had served four years in the RAF. He had travelled widely compared to many of his contemporaries, and he had developed sophisticated tastes in the arts and music. And yet he had been deprived of the possibility of a professional career, instead being constrained to earn his living buying and selling cloth in the struggling shop started by his immigrant father. Louis' father had not possessed any significant business skills to pass on, nor had his mother necessarily imparted the most helpful interpersonal skills. Louis had experienced anti-Semitism during his military service, and he was now faced with the prospect of starting married life living not only under the roof of his parents-in-law, but in close proximity with much of the wider family.

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My father and mother were married at the Cricklewood Synagogue, Walm Lane, London on September 16, 1946. My father's hairline had now receded. He no longer had a ready smile, and youthful gaiety had been driven out by four years of military discipline. It had given way to middle-aged dignity and reserve.

Louis was to spend the first 45 months of his married life living in his parents-in-law's house, together with the young family of Libby's brother Aaron. Libby's older sisters Gertie and Rosie, together with their respective husbands Meyer Frydman and Wilfred Goldberg and their young families, lived in a house in Green Lanes, just a short walk away from 404, Seven Sisters Road. All that separated the two houses physically were their own two back gardens.

Jonathan was born on March 8, 1948. At that time, Louis was 40 years old and had been working full-time for 26 years. They had been years of struggle, of duty towards his parents and of discipline and deference to authority in the RAF. His childhood would have been a very distant memory.

I have started to describe a man who, in some sense, had been dealt a difficult hand in life. But that description alone does not give a

rounded picture of my father. It is also appropriate to write about some of his special interests and his admirable qualities.

He was a self-taught lover of classical music, in particular the music of Mahler. His car radio was permanently set to BBC Radio 3, a station for listeners with a refined taste in classical music. In popular music, he loved Danny Kaye, Ray Charles and Eartha Kitt. Totally unexpectedly, I managed to win him over to enjoying Joni Mitchell's album "Ladies of the Canyon".

He enjoyed reading and he loved to visit the British Museum and the Science Museum.

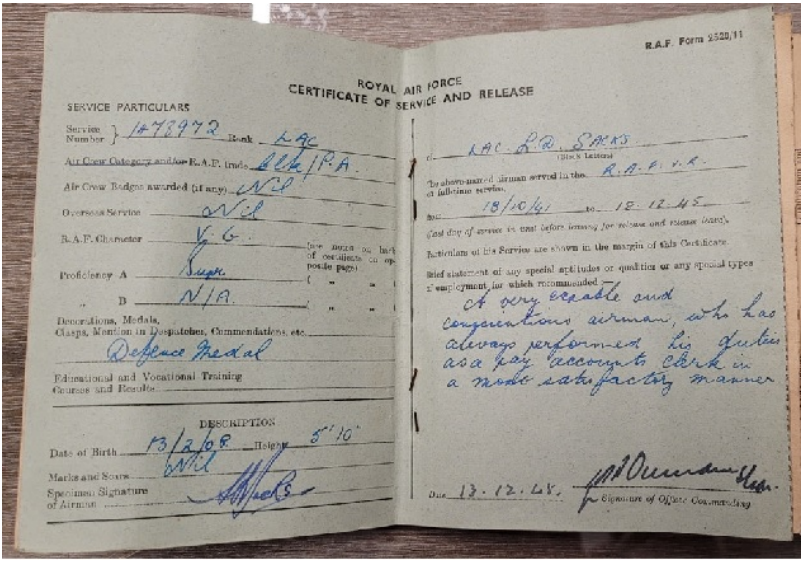
He was a loyal citizen and was honest in his business and financial affairs if perhaps old-fashioned; he was horrified at the concept of an overdrawn bank account, however temporary. He was a man of honesty and principles, a man without guile, who said what he thought. He had a strong sense of right and wrong.

He was dutiful towards his parents throughout their lives. He visited them morning and evening on his way to and from his shop; he was checking on his mother's welfare and collecting his father to join him in the shop, although whether his father was of any significant assistance is an open question. On our family holidays in Cliftonville, he would gather up seaweed to take back to his mother for use in her bath.

He was capable of being uncommonly kind, generous and supportive - especially to anyone who had shown kindness towards his parents. One example is illustrative: he was particularly fond of the family of his Uncle Heschel Klerman and Aunt Faigel; Faigel was his mother's sister. Heschel and Faigel had five children: Ben, Milly, Elsa, Rosie and Netta, and my father greatly appreciated that

they visited and were kind towards his parents. Milly's daughter Rosalind tells the story that when Rosalind became engaged to her fiance Malcolm in 1971, my father asked Malcolm what he did for a living. When Malcolm answered that he sold insurance, my father invited him to visit him at his shop. Malcolm duly paid a visit. My father signed up for an insurance policy, and also promised Malcolm that he would introduce him to a couple more of his business associates. Malcolm returned to Rosalind and declared, "What a lovely man!" The mutual respect between Malcolm and my father lasted for the rest of my father's life.

After my father died, my brother Jonathan would often describe one way in particular in which Louis had empowered him as a young child. When Jonathan would ask our father a question about Judaism, he would reply, "I don't know the answer, I did not receive an education, but you will, and one day you will tell me the answer". Jonathan would also describe the real strength that our father derived in his last years from reading a book of Tehillim (Psalms) in Hebrew, even though he did not understand the Hebrew that he was reading. I was too young to be a witness for the first anecdote, but I certainly saw the truth of the second one. Our father did not receive a significant Hebrew education, but he certainly had faith, and he lived by it.



R.A.F. Form 2528/11

ROYAL AIR FORCE
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE AND RELEASE

SERVICE PARTICULARS

Service Number 1473972 Rank LAC

Air Crew Category and/or R.A.F. trade Alt/R.A.

Air Crew Badge awarded (if any) Nil

Overseas Service Nil

R.A.F. Character V.G.

Proficiency A Superior (See paper as back of certificate or opposite page)

" B N/A. " "

Decorations, Medals, Clasps, Mention in Dispatches, Commendations, etc.
Defence Medal

Educational and Vocational Training Courses and Results

DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth 13/2/08 Height 5'10"

Marks and Scars Nil

Specimen Signature of Airman

LAC. L.D. SACKS
(Block Letters)

To above-named airman served in the R.A.F.V.R.
in full-time service

from 18/10/41 to 18.12.45

Last day of service to count before leaving for release and release leave).

Particulars of his Service are shown in the margin of this Certificate.

Brief statement of any special aptitudes or qualities or any special types of employment for which recommended.

A very reliable and conscientious airman, who has always performed his duties as a pay accounts Clerk in a most satisfactory manner

Date 17.12.45. Signature of Officer Commanding

Above:
Louis Sacks Royal Air Force Service and Release Book

Alongside: Louis Sacks, demonstrating his physical strength

3.3 Libby Frumkin Sacks

My mother told me her own story, when I interviewed her in early 2006, when she was 86 years old. It proved to be a timely interview, because within two years her health was in sharp decline and she died in 2010 at the age of 91. She spoke softly during the interview because her strength was already beginning to ebb away. She spoke modestly, with no rancour, and with none of the misgivings about her father that her brother Aaron had expressed. This is this story my mother told me:

I was born on August 17th 1919, and given the English name Louisa, and Hebrew name Liba bat Eliyahu. I have always been called Libby, except that at school I was still Louisa.

I was not a healthy child. I know that when I was young I was diagnosed with a heart murmur, and when I was about three I nearly died. Simultaneously I had come down with double pneumonia, measles and diptheria. The Lord apparently did not want to reclaim me so soon, however. I pulled through, and my parents gave me an extra name. I was now Liba Chaya bat Eliyahu – Chaya meaning life. I continued to be more than usually susceptible to illnesses throughout my primary school years.

My earliest memories are of being taken to my first school in Southwold Road, Clapton. Being a delicate child, I used to be taken in a pram. We lived in Clapton at the time, in a semi-detached house in the main road. When I was about six or seven, we moved to the house I was to live in for the next 23 years: 404, Seven Sisters Road, a large house on four floors, looking across to Finsbury Park. At that point, I left the Southwold Road School.

Four doors away from the new house in Seven Sisters Road, there was a secretarial College called Greg's College, which trained teenage girls for their future careers. My older sisters Rose and Gertie joined the college, and Mummy persuaded the College to enrol me as well, although it was completely inappropriate for me. After a couple of weeks, my parents found me a small private school, run in a private house by a Miss Thompson. It was a strange set up - I remember that Miss Thompson used to shout at the teachers and make them wash the floors.

I didn't see much of Mum and Dad except on Shabbat. During the week, they only used to arrive home from work by bus at 11 o'clock at night, because their wine shop in Commercial Road was open until 10:30. In the shop, my mother served behind the counter and was very popular; my father knew the wine trade, knew the composition of wines and liqueurs, and did the desk work for the business. So my parents were out of the house for most of the day, and we were looked after by a cook and a maid, who lived in rooms on the top floor. I and my sisters used to go to the shop on Sunday, and perhaps go along to the cinema down the road from the shop, or watch the weddings at the Philpot Street Synagogue.

I was the youngest of the children – Rose, born in 1915, was 4 years older than me and Gertie 2 years older than her, and those two were very close. Aaron was the oldest, nine years older than me, and was the 'grown-up', though he used to playfully fight with me on Friday nights – we used to chase each other round the table. By the time I was 11, Aaron had married Sadie, but they continued to live at the house, occupying the second floor. This large house now comprised: the kitchen, dining room and front room on the ground floor, my parents' bedroom and the drawing room on the first floor,

rooms for Aaron and Sadie on the second floor, and the girls' rooms and maid's and cook's rooms on the top floor.

At that time, our annual holiday was our stay in a very nice house we owned in St. Leonards, a pleasant seaside resort near Hastings in East Sussex.[1]

When I had reached age 11 and it was time to switch to a secondary school, my parents wanted me to go to a free council school like my sisters. These were known to generally provide only a poor standard of education. I don't remember how the notion formed in my mind – but form it did – that I was going to go to the Skinners' Company School for Girls. I was not to be shaken in my resolve on this. Skinners' was a fee-paying school, though I believe it was partly funded by the Guild of Skinners, and it had a good reputation. Unfortunately my father's absent-mindedness meant that he was normally rather late in his payment of fees, and he paid scant attention to the letters to parents that I brought home. I remember going to school supplied with white gym knickers, which should have been navy. Matters like that did not seem to impinge on him. Neither of my parents knew anything about the school system and they couldn't, for example, give any help with homework – Mummy couldn't read. I was a well-behaved but unremarkable student in the B-stream – I used to pass my exams, though I once failed a sewing exam and I gave up sewing and housewifery as soon as I could. My favourite subjects were French and German.

I took my Matriculation – the equivalent of today's GCSEs – just before I turned 16, and passed in several subjects.[2] I then had a final

[1] The house later needed to be sold to repay the debts incurred by Elias' ill-fated investments on the stock exchange.

year at Skinner's, taking a Commercial course to learn shorthand and typing. After that I started working in the wine shop.

Outside of school I had also been taught Chumash (that is, Five Books of Moses) translation by a Rabbi – who unforunately was rather inadequate as a teacher. I only had the benefit of a good Hebrew teacher many years later, after I married.

I carried on working in the wine shop for much of the war, going to work by bus or by tram and stepping over the fire hoses in the street. At one point during the war I was called up for war work in a wood factory in Edmonton. I was drilling holes in the wood, and I found the smell of the wood shavings unbearable. I wasn't there for long.

Around 1940 I volunteered to work as a part-time Civil Defence Fire Warden. I became the Senior Fire Guard of our area – post A5, within Stoke Newington. Every business premises needed to appoint a Fire Guard, and they were supposed to report to me. In practice, these guards were generally older men, all volunteers, and I and a companion used to go round to see them on duty. One of the roles of the fire wardens was to learn where all the fire hydrants were, so that we could inform the Fire Service if needed. Our main duty was to patrol the streets of our area on foot. There were always at least two of us together – we weren't allowed to patrol alone. If any incident occurred, we had to inform the fire or ambulance service as appropriate as to what help was needed, and lead the rescue services to the site. Another rescue service that played an

[2] Her University of London School Certificate records seven subject passes: English, History (English & European), French (with special credit in the oral examination), Arithmetic, Botany, Elementary Mathematics, German (with distinction, and with credit in the oral examination).

important role were the teams that would dig through the debris to rescue people trapped if, for example, a building had collapsed. We didn't have radios – there was just the telephone at the fire warden's post - so we had to go on foot to pass our information on. If an incident happened, we would run back to the warden's post – mine was a basement room in a house – and call the rescue services from there.

Our area was fairly lucky, certainly in regard to the fire-bombing of the earlier part of the war. I can't recall many incidents during my time of patrolling, although I do particularly remember one night when a lot of fire bombs were dropped. But across the road from our house was Finsbury Park, which was a constant target for German bombing because anti-aircraft artillery batteries were positioned there, and tanks were being repaired at a nearby race track.

There was also a large underground train station near our house. One of my routine tasks every evening was to register the number of people who wanted to spend the night in the station. But one night, a German bomb penetrated the midst of the station and many people were killed.

As for our house in Seven Sisters Road, it was subject both to the shock waves caused by the artillery fire from Finsbury Park and to the bombing by German aircraft. The Army Authorities therefore suggested that the house be reinforced with concrete. Because of this, our friends and neighbours considered the house to be very safe. Accordingly, when the bombs were falling, lots of people would come to sleep in our basement shelter and one even slept under our dining room table. We got fed up with this and took our chances sleeping upstairs.

Once the Germans started dropping the V-1 flying bombs in 1944, I switched to full-time fire warden duties, and was the Deputy Post Warden. I find it hard to remember the duties involved, but I think I was based rather more than before in the warden's post, taking and acting on the phone calls. It was in the warden's post that I learned to play table tennis!

The V-2 rocket attacks began late in 1944. They flew faster than the speed of sound, which meant that, unlike with the V-1's, there was no whistle warning enabling us to take cover – the whistle could only be heard after the rocket had landed. We weren't allowed to patrol once the V-2s started being fired. The V-2s caused much loss of life and damage to property. One of them fell near the home of my sister Rosie and her husband Wilfred Goldberg, and several of their neighbours were killed. Their daughter Angela, who was then 2 years old, was in the house at the time and was miraculously saved by the fact that she was sleeping in an iron cot, which prevented the roof beams from falling on top of her. I had that day gone down to Bournemouth with my mother, my first trip away for some years, and was there for one night and heard about this incident. I came back to London that day and brought Rosie and Angela back down to Bournemouth.

During the war, *shadchans* – matchmakers – used to come to the shop offering *shidduchim* for the supposedly eligible Frumkin girls. My parents' aspirations were straight out of "Fiddler on the Roof" – "For Papa, make him a scholar; for Mama, make him rich as a king…" In reality, most of the men who were available were those who were too unhealthy for military service, and they were best avoided.

Dayan Grunfeld[3] once brought Immanuel Jakobovits[4] as a possible match but I did not want to marry a rabbi, and so I scared him off by smoking. A *shadchan* once tried to match me up with a man who turned out to be a confidence trickster. I was furious with the *shadchan*.

The war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945, VE Day, and my brother Aaron and I went to Trafalgar Square to join the thousands of others in wild celebrations. In all I had served in Civil Defence for around 5 years and was awarded the Defence Medal, as were all others who had served a similar period.

During the war we hadn't been aware of the extent of the Holocaust, although we knew that terrible events were taking place. I recall that someone visited us from Poland and told us that she had seen my mother's sister and her family taken away in a lorry.

In 1946, the same *shadchan* that had disappointed previously told Annie Sacks to come to the shop to check me out. She did, and told her son Louis to ring me up. As they say, the rest is history – Louis and I married in September 1946. Louis had served in the Royal Air Force in an administrative capacity for several years during the war, and had been awarded a campaign medal. For many years afterwards, he and I used to march together on the Jewish Armistice Day, the week after the National Armistice Day.

Once we married, we lived in the house in Seven Sisters Road for nearly four years. I think that Louis coped with the lack of privacy by going upstairs to our room to read and to listen to music on the gramophone. On June 20th 1950, by which time Jonathan was two

[3] *Dayan* like *Rabbi* is a Jewish title. A Dayan is a judge in the religious court.
[4] Immanuel Jakobovits eventually served as Chief Rabbi from 1967 to 1991.

years old, we moved to our new house in Rathgar Close, Finchley. We were now a small nuclear family and life was quieter. I finally engaged a good Hebrew teacher for myself, and a neighbour, Mrs Simmonds, introduced me to bridge, which I have played with a group of friends ever since.

I gave birth to my four children, all boys, at four year intervals. I was a bit disappointed that I never had a girl, but I got over this setback. My obstetrician for Jonathan was Sir John Peel, the Queen's obstetrician, and I was also a private patient when I had Brian at the London Hospital in Stepney. I gave birth to Alan and Eliot in Hampstead, under the National Health Service.

I've never really thought about whether bringing up the children was different from what I had expected. Perhaps it is a good thing that I don't remember all that well. For example, I don't remember the boys fighting a lot (!). Ada has been part of the family since 1954, and she helped enormously at home with the children.

Louis was instrumental in setting up Finchley Central Federation Synagogue very soon after we moved to Finchley. The Synagogue began its life in Victoria Avenue, in an annexe to Victoria Hall, which was used for concerts and assemblies by St. Mary's Primary school next door. I involved myself with the Synagogue Ladies Guild from those early days, and have remained involved ever since. I was the Chairperson for two years until Louis fell out with the synagogue in a big way. From that time onwards, my continuing involvement was, in a way, an expression of my independence from Louis – I certainly did not receive any encouragement from him. But the Finchley Central Synagogue Ladies Guild has been an important part of my life for well over fifty years. For 35 years, until I was 80, I was part of the 'Meals on Wheels' service,

delivering meals first with my niece June, and then with Ada. Also for 35 years I made the 'Jewish Women's Week' collection for this area – over a period of a month I would knock on the doors of all the Jewish homes, collecting for WIZO.

Yet another activity I carried out for 35 years was visiting the Jewish patients at the Whittington Hospital in Highgate. I was appointed as a visitor in June 1966, under the auspices of the Jewish Visitation Committee. I generally found that the patients were very pleased to be visited, and they wanted to chat. Both the hospital and the Visitation Committee made presentations to congratulate and thank me for 35 years' visiting – it was very touching but really unnecessary.

How has my life changed as a result of Jonathan becoming Chief Rabbi? Not one bit.

◆◆◆◆

A detailed account of my mother's service in Air Raid Precautions during World War II is presented as an annexe to this book. As well as including my mother's personal account, the annexe documents the responsibilities of officers and the mandated procedures and forms for Incident Reporting Centres. It also presents various commendations and notes of appreciation that my mother received, and a timeline of her service.

In telling her story, my mother made mention of Ada Tomlinson and Finchley Central Synagogue. Ada and the Synagogue were both important elements of the environment that shaped the young Jonathan, Brian, Alan and Eliot.

Above: Libby Frumkin sitting on her mother's lap, alongside her sisters Rosie and Gertie

Alongside: Rosie, Libby and Gertie Frumkin

Alongside: Louisa Frumkin, Senior Fire Guard

Below: Certificate of Loyal Service

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON

CERTIFICATE OF LOYAL SERVICE

This Certificate is awarded by the Mayor, Aldermen & Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Stoke Newington who desire to place on record their high appreciation of the loyal and devoted service rendered by

LOUISA FRUMKIN

to the Civil Defence Organisation of the Borough during the period of the War from 5th OCTOBER, 1941 to 1st JULY, 1945

The Common Seal of the Council was hereunto affixed the Second day of July 1945.

A.M. Gordon MAYOR

C. Kent Wright. TOWN CLERK & A.R.P. CONTROLLER.

TOWN HALL, STOKE NEWINGTON CHURCH ST N.16.

3.4 Ada Tomlinson

The third adult presence at 8, Rathgar Close, was Ada Tomlinson. Ada had grown up in Sunderland, where she had worked in domestic service. She moved down to London to join the Sacks household in the summer of 1954, when she was 26 years old, and when my mother was turning 35. In later years, whenever my mother would celebrate a "special" birthday (such as 75, or 85) she made sure that it was also recognised as a "special anniversary" of Ada joining the household. Ada continued to live at 8, Rathgar Close until after my mother's death in 2010, many years beyond the time when her help was needed with the children.[5]

Ada's relatively compact bedroom, above the house's integral garage, held all her worldly possessions - clothes, photograph albums, a few trinkets inside a shell-encrusted jewellery box. I and my brothers were rarely invited into this room, her sanctuary, and if we were, then it was only for a few moments.

Ada was part of the family, and she probably felt that we were her family. Once a year, around Christmas time, she would travel back to spend a week or two with her sister and nieces in Sunderland. She also had Wednesday afternoon off each week, when she would meet up with friends in London; she had a small group of friends that included one or two of the home helps who had also worked for Mrs Frumkin. She always spoke to her family and friends about the Sacks family with warmth and pride.

[5] Ada was the last person to ever live in the house. The house proved difficult to sell, because of subsidence. When it was eventually sold, the new owner, a property developer, demolished it and built a much larger house in its place.

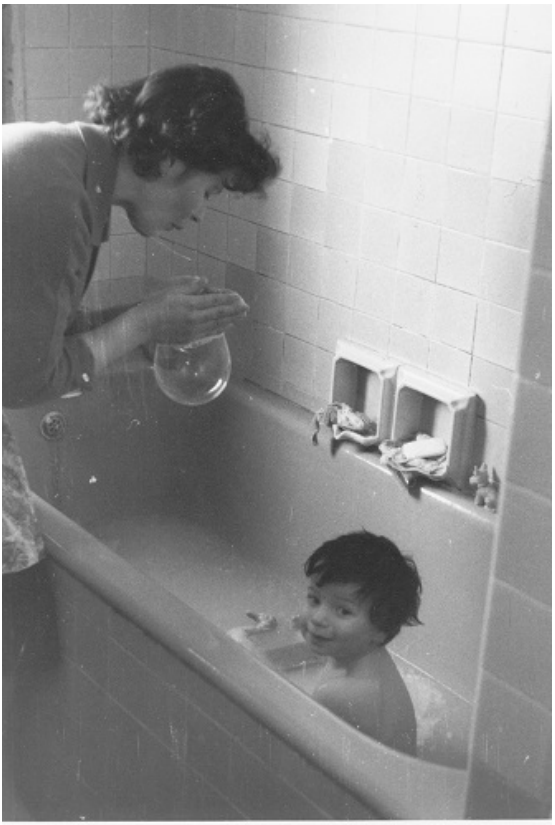
Ada's presence made family life much more comfortable and stress-free then it might otherwise have been. Ada was the first to rise each morning. She made breakfast for my parents, and brought it up to their bedroom on a tray. Although, when the children were at school, my mother made lunch, which was always the main meal of the day, it might be Ada who would set out the afternoon tea for the children once they returned from school, and later make the supper of scrambled egg or baked beans. Ada did all sorts of other chores to keep the household running smoothly. When bathing the children, Ada blew such enormous soap bubbles that she could make bath-time seem enjoyable. Often, when we were young, Ada would take my brothers and me on her Saturday afternoon trip to Woolworth's store in Finchley Central, and then on to a local park and its children's play area.

To my mind, Ada's lifelong relationship with the Sacks family was something quite remarkable, and a testimony to my mother's ability to handle relationships with sensitivity and kindness but also with authority. To the end, Ada always addressed my parents as Mr Sacks and Mrs Sacks; it never went to first name terms.

The last few years of Ada's life were quite sad. From her late seventies onwards, she frequently needed to attend hospital for injuries to her lower legs and for a very painful wrist fracture, sustained when falling on ice. During one of those hospital visits in 2008, it was also recognised that she was suffering from dementia. By this time, my mother was also in decline and I was acting as Ada's guardian and next of kin. My mother died in late 2010, and Ada spent the last four and a half years of her life living in an old-age home, with her dementia significantly worsening. Further falls rendered her unable to walk, and her antisocial behaviour led to her

being confined upstairs in her bedroom for twenty-four hours a day. On weekly visits, while still out in the street I would hear her calling "Brian, Brian" or "Dad, Dad".

My daughter Jessica had learnt more about Ada's life and its traumas than I or my brothers ever had during the many years we had lived in the same house as Ada. Jessica wrote a moving tribute that I read during the funeral that my brothers and I organised in a non-denominational chapel at the Hendon Cemetery in Holders Hill Road. Jessica's tribute to Ada's life is included as an Annexe to this book. Jessica and David's third child and second daughter was given the name Ya'ara Adina, the name Adina so as to preserve Ada's memory. The Hebrew name Adina means "gentle".



Above left:
Ada, Libby, Jonathan, Brian, October 1954

Above right:
Ada aged 80, July 2008

Alongside:
Ada could do magic: she could blow bubbles using only her bare hands and bathwater.

Collage of Ada's life with the Sacks Family

4 Childhood Years

Another of my earliest memories is of squeezing alongside Jonathan in his pedal car, a sturdy miniature version of an Austin A40, one of the popular English saloon cars of the time. I suppose I was about four years old, Jonathan about eight, and the year around 1956. I never possessed such a car myself, which may be just as well as I am not sure I could have mastered the knack of getting it to move forward rather than backwards. We would have been in the driveway of our home, or outside on the pavement of Rathgar Close. Later on, from when I was about seven, I owned a scooter, and I could occasionally borrow a bike from one of the neighbourhood children. I could satisfy my need for speed by plunging down the steep hill of Dollis Avenue a few yards away from our house, and I would sometimes race against my friends around the turning circle at the end of Grass Park, another traffic-free cul-de-sac nearby.

Whilst I would be occupied in this fashion, or attending morning school, Ada would be indoors making the beds and mum would be preparing lunch for my brothers and me. For four days of the week, Sunday through Wednesday, lunch, or dinner as we called it, centred around shepherd's pie. In the second half of the week, the menu changed. Thursdays meant liver, while on Fridays we had a light lunch as the main meal of the day was in the evening. The menu for Friday shabbos[6] supper was virtually identical to that for Saturday shabbos lunch, namely chicken soup, chicken, roast potatoes and carrots.

[6] Throughout my childhood I used the "Ashkenazi" pronunciation of Hebrew, of which "shabbos" is a particular example. Modern Hebrew, as spoken in Israel, uses the Sefardi pronunciation, and the word becomes "shabbat".

When I was young I was somewhat fascinated to watch, or even help in, preparation of the shepherd's pie. I suppose the fascination was in seeing, for the first time in my life, a machine convert something into something else; more than that, to assemble the machine from its simple component parts, and to completely understand how it worked.

First mum would assemble the parts of the meat-mincer and clamp it to the kitchen table. To transform slices of meat into mincemeat, she would push the slices into the funnel at the top of the mincer and turn a handle connected to a screw which forced the slices into a rotary knife. The mincemeat emerged at the far side to fall into an oven dish pre-spread with a layer of Tomor kosher margarine. When all the mincemeat had thus emerged and fallen, Mum would press it down in the dish, add an upper layer of mashed potato and place the dish in the oven, where it would cook for an hour or so. She would also make an apple crumble for our dessert, to be eaten together with a ring of tinned pineapple.

I never tired of shepherd's pie, and I don't believe my brothers did either. Only years later did we learn that most other people set some store in culinary variety. For my brothers and I, mum's cooking was the best in the world, and the routine suited us just fine.

Ada also laboured long and hard over laundry. This was some years before John Bloom delivered washing machines for the masses, and the tools of the job were a zinc washtub, a washboard made of corrugated glass inside a wooden frame, and a mangle. I was sometimes allowed to take my bath in the washtub in front of the coal fire in the comfort of the drawing room, and I remember my first unsuccessful physics experiment in which I stood in the

washtub and tried to lift myself up into the air by pulling up on the handles.

4.1 Playing and Learning with Jonathan

Our pedal car ride may be my only recollection of Jonathan and myself from my pre-school days. But moving further on in time into the late fifties and early sixties, the memories are clearer. We played football together in our 25 metre back garden, and this necessitated frequent visits to neighbours to retrieve our ball. Our neighbours on the right-hand side were three houses in Dollis Avenue, and so we sometimes surreptitiously climbed the fence rather than walk all the way round. To our left-hand side, and designated 7 Rathgar Close, was a plot that we called "the bombsite". At its rear there was an abandoned, broken down building, and the whole site was completely untended. It was overgrown with weeds and stinging nettles. As we made our way through the undergrowth looking for our ball, the nettles would sting our legs and we would pull up dock leaves to rub on the stings to ease the pain.

We played cricket, with the result that our "wicket" area at the back of the garden was denuded of its grass, causing silent grief to our mother. Jonathan, always meticulous, used linseed oil to maintain his cricket bat in pristine condition. He also took an interest in the professional game, supporting Surrey in the English County League. He used to tell me about Hanif Mohammed, and his world record innings of 499 runs, and of his being "run out" when attempting his 500th run. In another field of sport and entertainment, he also told me about Meadowlark Lemon and the Harlem Globetrotters. After Jonathan died, I was asked to write an article about Jonathan's interest and activity in sport, and I have included that article as an Annexe to this book.

There were two horse chestnut trees at the back of our garden. Every autumn, one of them produced a huge harvest of horse chestnuts or, as we would call them, conkers. In October and November, the back of our garden would be carpeted by a rain-sodden mulch of fallen leaves and horse chestnuts, the latter in varying stages of separation from their green, spiky cases. Jonathan and I would gather the conkers and collect them in a large wooden orange box. We would take some of the large ones, skewer them and thread each one through with a piece of string knotted at the bottom to hold it in place and make it battle-ready for conker-jousting at school. Later on in the year, when there was snow on the ground, Jonathan would build a snowman and we would have cheerful snowball fights.

Because there was an age gap that amounted to four school years, I don't think that Jonathan and I played together indoors very much while we both attended St Mary's Primary School. One thing we did share at that time, and which I passed on to Jonathan, was jaundice. When I was seven years old I spent six weeks in bed recuperating, and Jonathan followed suit shortly afterwards. He would have been in the top class of St Mary's, in the final weeks of term before moving on to Christ's College Grammar School.

Although we didn't play together much indoors, Jonathan, showing an early love of learning, taught me a lot, especially once he started his grammar school career. He taught me how to play chess and the notation used for recording games. My childhood was full of facts that I learned from Jonathan, such as the speed of light being 186,282 miles per second, the speed of sound being 700 miles per hour, and that you could tell how far away lightning was by timing the delay between lightning and thunder, five seconds

corresponding to a mile. A 'one' followed by a hundred 'noughts' was a 'googol' and a one followed by a googol noughts was a googolplex. I learned from Jonathan how to make hexaflexagons and dodecahedrons, and he introduced to the mathematical diversions of Martin Gardner. Jonathan demonstrated the Tower of Hanoi puzzle and its rules, and how to solve it optimally, and explained the mathematics that determined the minimum number of steps required.

Jonathan and I both had a toy 'computer', which was controlled with a knitting needle and could mechanically add two numbers. We played with magnets and gyroscopes, and would use our pocket money to acquire good-quality versions from a shop in Ballards Lane nearby. We valued precision magnifying glasses, and would focus the sun's rays at our bedroom window to set fire to pieces of paper or, may we be forgiven, to burn up small ants that were unfortunate enough to be scurrying around on the window ledge outside. We interested ourselves in quality wristwatches and their specifications: "17 jewels" hit the mark as far as we were concerned, and "21 jewels" was even better. The watches we appreciated bore names like Roamer, Cyma, Rolex and Omega. The closest I came to ownership was to possess the adverts, but Jonathan owned a handsome, slim, silver-faced Roamer, in which he took pride just as he took pride in all aspects of his appearance. Likewise we admired quality cars, and Jonathan would take me to the annual Motor Show at Earls Court to sit in their plush interiors and pick up their leaflets.

We fought and called each other names. We drove our mother to distraction, although she seemed to have forgotten about it by the time I interviewed her in 2006. I, for my part, have also forgotten

the details and the incidents, if not some of the epithets we employed against each other. In the family photograph taken to commemorate Jonathan’s barmitzvah, the bruises on my leg tell a tale of altercations that were not purely verbal. However, Jonathan's barmitzvah seemed to mark the end of our stage of juvenile squabbling, an ending that left no ill feelings on either side.

Young Jonathan and Brian, riding in the Austin A40 and watching television in the drawing room

4.2 A shared bedroom with Alan

I shared a bedroom with my brother Alan during my primary school years. It was a good size room at the back of the house, 14 feet by 14 feet, with its front wall comprised of main door and fitted cupboards. The cupboard nearest the door served as our wardrobe, also providing overflow space for my mother's dresses. The cupboard near the window was never opened and housed a wash basin that was never used, and the middle cupboard held clothes and toys for Alan and myself. My favourite toys sitting in that cupboard were my Meccano set, my Viewmaster stereoscope and its small collection of colour photograph discs, and my "Triang" Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud. I still possess the latter two of those toys, and they have pride of place on one of my display shelves.

Apart from the beds, the main item of furniture in our room was a tallboy that served as a bookcase, desk and chest of drawers. For a period when I was ten or eleven, one of those drawers was filled with postcards and information about the giant cruise ships of Cunard, P&O and other shipping lines. I had obtained these by writing off to all the shipping lines I could discover. Thinking back, it is hard to analyse why I had a passion for those enormous vessels, given that I had no idea what a cruise actually was. But I found the shape of their bows and funnels very appealing, and I was fascinated by numbers and superlatives. I suppose I was a natural, introverted collector. In later years, I collected match booklets (as opposed to match boxes), coins and UK postage stamps.

4.3 Phonograph and Record Collection

My prized possession in the room that I shared with Alan was my phonograph and record collection, kept on the wardrobe floor. More

than sixty years later, that same phonograph takes pride of place in a corner of my living room in Israel. Sitting on its turntable is one of the 78-revolution-per-minute 10-inch records that I valued so much in my childhood. Made of shellac, the predecessor to vinyl, all those records were scratched and cracked, and played with a metronomic click each second as the stylus hit the crack on each revolution of the turntable. Several of the records had pieces missing, so that only the intact remnant could be played. Today I have many of those recordings in digital format on my music player.

I don't know who purchased the records. Possibly my parents bought the ones that pre-dated "pop" – Al Jolson, Sophie Tucker, Danny Kaye, Paul Robeson, and film music such as "The Harry Lime Theme". There were some records for children, such as "Teddy Bears' Picnic" and "Kitty in a Basket", and "novelty" records such as "Last Train to Sam Fernando" and "The Runaway Train". But there was also contemporary pop: "Rock around the Clock" by Bill Haley, generally regarded as the first ever rock 'n' roll record; "Tom Dooley", by the Kingston Trio; "Catch a Falling Star" by Perry Como; "Wake up Little Susie" by the Everly Brothers; "When" by the Kalin Twins. Perhaps those records were bought by Ada. I was very fond of all of them, including "Thirteen Women", which was the 'B' side of "Rock around the Clock". Probably my favourite among those pop 78s was "Wake up Little Susie", and I was equally fond of its 'B' side, "Maybe Tomorrow".

I used to be told, some years later, that when I was very young I was always singing "Wonderful Copenhagen", and I do have a dim memory of being very fond of that song. But throughout my years of playing phonograph records, my favourite record, my perfect song, was "Goodnight Irene" as sung by Frank Sinatra. I could not

understand why it was labelled as the “B” side while the very ordinary “My Blue Heaven” was the “A” side. It was only many years later that I found out that this was a “Goodnight Irene” cover version, and that the original version of the song had been a major success several years earlier; and also that Frank Sinatra hated his own version of the song.

At some point around 1958 those 78s stopped miraculously appearing, but I continued to be aware of music played on the radio. I remember really liking “Poetry in Motion” by Johnny Tillotson and later, “Johnny Remember me” by John Leyton – both of which were huge hits. I remember a 1962 summer of glorious days on the beach, and the ever-present anthems of that summer were the huge hits “I remember You” by Frank Ifield and “Telstar” by the Tornados.

4.4 St Mary’s Primary School

St Mary’s Church of England Primary School was the natural choice for the elementary education of the four Sacks children. With a leather satchel on our back holding our pencil case and exercise books, it was for us a short walk from home to school; just one third of a mile, requiring the crossing of only one significant road, Victoria Avenue, immediately outside the school. We could safely walk home for lunch, and so the requirement for kosher food presented no difficulty. There was a sweet shop and a toy shop on the way to and from school, and both of these establishments were the beneficiaries of much of our pocket money. In my case, throughout my school years, my daily three pennies’ worth of “dinner money” was generally spent on sweetshop delights such as gobstoppers, aniseed balls, “shrimps” and milk gums.

Our four-times-daily walk along Hendon Lane also passed by the home of the well-known actor Peter Sallis, and a cobbler who, with blackened hands and a ready hammer, plied a thriving trade in shoe repair. Today, Peter Sallis' home remains a desirable property close to the intersection between Hendon Lane and Gravel Hill, while a gold and precious metal exchange operates in the premises of the erstwhile cobbler.

St Mary's was a well-managed, traditional school of around 300 pupils, covering the six academic years from age 5 to 11. The school was co-educational, with boys and girls sitting together in twin desks arranged in rows (or should that be columns) facing the teacher. It consisted of two main buildings, the infants' school and the junior school. Towards the end of the 20th century, the school itself moved to a new site in Dollis Park, around half a mile away. But the original infants' building of our childhood still stands, preserved and enhanced and now housing the Finchley Central Federation Synagogue. The junior building of our school days was razed many years ago, and Barnet County Court now stands on the site. The area between those buildings and Regents Part Road constituted the girls' playground, while the parallel space beyond the school buildings comprised the boys' playground.

Pupils spent their first two years moving up, at each half year, through the four classes of the infants' school. In my time, the four rows (or columns) of each class represented scholastic attainment, and so if one was gradually blossoming in relation to the other pupils, one might advance from the yellow row through to green, to blue, and ultimately to the red row. On completing infants' school, one could recite the multiplication tables up to 12x12 and read and

write in block letters. Neat writing in “longhand” (that is, cursive writing) was a skill to be perfected during the junior years.

At age 7, pupils moved on to the separate building of the junior school, for the four classes taking them to age 11. Each class had a register of 40 or more well-behaved pupils, arranged in double-desk rows as for the infants. The ultimate goal for pupils in the top class of the juniors’ was to pass the eleven-plus exam that would qualify them to progress to Grammar School; those that did not pass moved on to one of the less academic Secondary Modern schools.

St Mary’s was a peculiar product of its place and time: it was a Church school with a sizeable Jewish attendance roll. Perhaps a third of the pupils were Jewish; virtually all would be absent from school on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, though rather fewer would take other Jewish festivals off. Likewise, children from orthodox Jewish families would not take part in the annual week-long school journey organized for the older classes. When the Christian pupils went into Victoria Hall, next door to the school, for their religious assembly, the Jewish children, who had lined up in the playground separately, filed into the hall annexe for “Jewish assembly”, or more accurately, 15 minutes of quiet reading. Each day, the subject for the first teaching hour was “Divinity”; the Jewish pupils would read their own books, sitting at the back of the classroom, while the rest of the class learnt stories from the New Testament. However, I cannot remember whether Divinity classes continued past the infants’ years. In the summer term, the infants’ classes would dance around the maypole. The curriculum of the junior classes included music, taking place in the stand-alone music hut: songs like “Joe the Carrier Lad” and “All Things Bright and Beautiful”. We walked to Victoria Hall – the Hall that was also used

for Christian assembly and for school plays – for our lessons in physical education and in dancing (that is, folk dancing).

One of my classmates at St Mary's was Peter Samuelson, and his father, Sir Sydney Samuelson, made a fascinating film about the school during 1963 and 1964. The film can still be viewed on the Vimeo online platform by searching for "St Mary's School Finchley". Of the male teachers featured in the film, pupils such as I and my brothers still hold fond memories of Mr Davis (featured teaching woodwork) and the headmaster Mr Hudson (shown teaching history). Former pupils might have rather less fond memories of Mr Robinson (shown on playground and games duties) if, like me, they were frequent recipients of his fearsome slaps on the thigh.

I began my education at St Mary's when I was about five years old. I certainly did not shine as a pupil straight away. I remember nothing about the teacher in my first class except that I disliked her and that she once called me a baby. However, I was moved up to the juniors a term early, so it hadn't taken me too long to find my feet. I came top of class at the end of the first junior year.

The class teacher of my second junior form was Mr Robinson, who I have mentioned in connection with Sir Sydney Samuelson's film about the school. Mr Robinson had a moustache and strongly resembled the comic actor Jimmy Edwards although his moustache was not quite so elongated as that of the actor. The resemblance was not only physical. Like the cane-swishing Professor James Edwards of the television programme "Whack-O", Mr Robinson believed in corporal punishment.

Something about Mr Robinson brought out the cheekiness in me. My memory tells me that I was slapped virtually every day. The routine was always the same. I would be called out to the front of the class. Mr Robinson would lift the left leg of my short trousers and then bring down his hand onto the outside of my exposed thigh in a strong slap. Perhaps it was learning to endure this ritual that led me to foster a reputation for being immune to pain. Later on, towards the end of my time at primary school, I used to allow boys to dig keys into my hand to demonstrate this. I slipped to seventh in class during that year with Mr Robinson.

Unfortunately, my cheekiness and budding sense of humour was stifled when I went up to the third junior class. Mr Sullivan, the class teacher, had taught my brother Jonathan, and I regarded entering his class as a graduation to a stage in my development when I had to become more serious. I don't recall much of that year, except my parents taking me out of school in the summer for my first holiday abroad, to Knokke in Belgium and to Paris. I remember a feeling of relief on being taken out of class, so I infer that I generally felt ill-at-ease that year.

My final year at St Mary's, in Mrs Keen's class, is clearer in my memory. I felt that some of the other pupils in that class were really clever. Naomi Chowcat, who went on to become a family doctor, was the star pupil, and I really admired her. Peter Samuelson, the son of film magnate Sydney Samuelson, and Helen Spirig, of whom I never heard again, were also very able class-mates. I sometimes gave expression to my admiration of a fellow pupil, of Naomi for her brains or of Marion Ross for her beauty, by asking them to partner me in PE or dancing. The admiration was not always reciprocated.

Another of the boys at the top end of the class was Geoffrey Travis, who was ever so clean-cut and straight-laced. I met him several years later as a fellow Cambridge University student, and his hair was standing out radially in Afro-style about eight inches in all directions. Perhaps it is my loss that I never went through such a stage – there was no way that I could, because when I grew my hair long it merely looked curly and effeminate.

During this final year, our history lessons were given by the headmaster, Mr Hudson. The format was always the same. He stuck onto the wall a print of a painted scene illustrating the social history of the period he was covering. He would talk about all aspects of the picture, and for homework we would write an essay recounting what we had been taught. I remember once being keenly aware that I had never received a "star" for my history, and determining to end this drought by producing a really good piece of work. I devoted extra time and care to my essay. When our marked work was returned, not only did I not receive a star, but Naomi had been awarded two stars. I felt "Let's face it, some people have it and some people just don't."

If I was an undistinguished history student I was positively poor in art and in Physical Education and Games, as certified by the D classifications I received in those subjects in my final report. Generally speaking, I would work on my own effort for the first half of each art lesson, and then I would join several fellow pupils clustered around Alan Bannon's desk, watching admiringly as he produced a painting that was breathtakingly good. Despite my best research, I also never heard of Alan Bannon again.

The report comment alongside my "D" grading for Physical Education and Games bluntly reads "Lacks co-ordination". When,

in lessons, we were asked to organise ourselves into teams, I was always one of the last to be selected. I was one of the very few in the class who had no sporting talent whatsoever. But on one occasion in a bat-and-ball game, it seemed as if some invisible magician had cast a spell and conferred on me a wonderful talent. I had an unbelievable innings, hitting the ball repeatedly over the rafters and across the spacious hall. For the next game, I was the first to be chosen for a team; but alas, my talent proved to be short-lived.

The extent of the attainment I achieved in two years of school swimming lessons was the ability to swim three or four strokes. Then, between leaving St Mary's and starting at Christ's College, I learned to swim during my summer holiday at Cliftonville. Assisted by the buoyancy of the seawater, and helped by mum and dad, I suddenly acquired the knack. From then on I could swim long distances easily, employing either breaststroke or backstroke, but not the front crawl.

Once a year St Mary's held a School Sports Day. Presumably because of lack of ability at any mainstream running or jumping event, I always seem to enter events such as the sack race, the obstacle race, the three legged race, and the sedan chair. The latter was a team effort, with two runners joining hands to form a chair to carry the third member of the team. My team always seemed to win that event, only because our "passenger" was unusually small and light. Unfortunately, he also seemed to have received inadequate toilet training, meaning that the event was not particularly enjoyable as an olfactory experience.

In contrast to my limited sporting abilities, I had earned a reputation for my maths, and perhaps it was infuriating for some. This was a

year of practice tests, leading up to the all-important eleven-plus examination, which would determine whether one progressed to grammar school or to secondary modern school. One day, when we were marking each other's tests, the girl I was sitting next to changed my sixes into eights and marked them wrong. Unfortunately for her, the eights that she thus constructed looked nothing like eights in my own handwriting.

I remember a classmate telling me that I would come top in class, and I replied, "No, I'm no good at history, geography and science". Mrs Keen, a silver-haired, bespectacled and old-fashioned teacher, had a rather more blunt way of characterising my varying abilities. On some occasion I had helped Mrs Keen when she hadn't been able to solve a maths problem. Some time later, I heard her tell a school inspector, "He's better at maths than I am, but he can't take the top off a milk bottle."

There was a reason for the good lady to refer to milk bottles, and that was that I had been allotted a duty relating to them. Mrs Keen believed in full employment, and so assigned to each of her charges his own particular contribution to the smooth running of the class. With this still being several years before our local MP Margaret Thatcher abolished the practice, each child received a bottle of milk at break time, and Mrs Keen appointed me as class bottle opener. I was entrusted with a blue plastic gadget that I was to use to remove the foil bottle-tops. Needless to say, one could accomplish the task equally efficiently using just one's thumb, but that wasn't the point. For Mrs Keen this was an exercise in instilling responsibility and dependability.

Predictably for me, I quickly lost the bottle opener and for the following several days or weeks I tried to hide the fact. Then one

day, Mrs Keen pointedly asked me to come to the front of the class just before break, while my fellow pupils were still sitting at their desks. Mrs Keen asked me to open the bottles; I was being set up for public humiliation.

As luck would have it, the previous day I had met our family milkman and he had furnished me with another bottle opener identical to the one I had lost. No doubt to Mrs Keen’s consternation, I now walked to the front of the class with my bottle opener in my pocket, aware of the tension within the strangely hushed classroom, and feeling like a boy hero from a Mark Twain novel.

4.5 A snapshot of my early life

Looking back on the home life that I and my brothers enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s, it was in many ways less stressed than typical family lives of later generations. Our home was quite spacious with a sizeable back garden and we lived in a pleasant and relatively traffic-free cul-de-sac. Our schools were within walking distance, we could come home for lunch and our mother and Ada were both at home for most of the time. Our lives had a routine, and while it perhaps lacked variety, we were very comfortable with sameness.

Here I take a typical day around 1960, when I might have been eight or nine years old. I would wake up at eight o'clock and dress in front of an electric heater. Having outgrown Farleys' Rusks, I would eat a breakfast of Sugar Puffs, Frosties or Rice Crispies (with thiamine, niacin, riboflavin and Snap, Crackle and Pop). If it was a school day, I would walk to St Mary's with my satchel on my back.

My brothers and I walked home for lunch for most of our school careers. The lunch break of around 75 minutes allowed us a quick glance at the Andy Capp cartoon in the Daily Mirror (Mum's preferred newspaper; Dad's was the Daily Express. As both of those titles went progressively downmarket, Mum switched to the Daily Mail and Dad to the Daily Telegraph). Mum would give me a couple of pence "dinner money" to buy perhaps a gobstopper and a few aniseed balls or something similar, on my way back for afternoon lessons.

The St Mary's School day ended at four o'clock, Christ's College at 3:35. We brothers all had tea at five o'clock, consisting variously of biscuits or cupcake or Swiss roll, together with some sugary flavoured milk. After any homework, I would watch children's television on our 14-inch-screen standing TV in the drawing room in front of the coal fire. In this I am speaking of the days before coal fires were effectively banned in London. In later years the television was upgraded to a 17-inch set on a TV stand in the newly-built morning room. Supper was around seven o'clock, and was normally a dish of baked beans or a scrambled egg, followed by a dessert of half a shop-bought apple pie. Either Ada or mum would have served the tea and the supper.

During the course of the day we would not have seen much of Dad, who would only have returned from his shop at suppertime. But we may have encountered him on the stairs at breakfast time, when he might have augmented our "dinner money" (for spending at the sweet shop) by tuppence or a thrupenny bit.

To sum up, life in my early years was unstressed. Jonathan had his own bedroom, as did I before my younger brother Alan outgrew his cot and joined me in my room. On Saturday afternoons I would

accompany Ada on her trip to Woolworth's in Finchley Central, and then on to Victoria Park or Avenue House Park (which for some reason we called Holly Park) to spin on the roundabout, slide down the slide and swing on the swing. In the weeks approaching the eleven-plus exam that would determine whether I would advance to Grammar School, mum would help me in the drawing room with my homework practice tests. My life seemed in keeping with the natural order of things and not in any way unusual, except that mum was the best cook in the world and her face was the definition of beauty.

Above: Meat grinder, used for shepherd's pie

Left: My childhood wind-up phonograph, and 78 rpm record

Above: Brian, Jonathan and Austin A40

Below: Cherished toys: Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and View-Master stereoscope

St Mary's School, early 1960s.
(Photographs courtesy of the Samuelson Family)

Foreground, alongside: the infants' building, still preserved, at the time of writing, as Finchley Central Synagogue.

The juniors' building. Demolished many years ago, to be replaced by the Barnet County Court building.

5 Aspects of Jewish life

5.1 Hebrew Classes

In parallel with our school career, I and my brothers were receiving a Jewish and Hebrew education. Each of us, at around the age of six, enrolled at the Hebrew Classes of the Finchley United Synagogue. Our family were not members of the synagogue, but presumably its Hebrew Classes maintained some sort of open-door policy. The classes took place on Sunday mornings between 10 o'clock and 12:45. Although the synagogue itself was located at Kinloss Gardens, a quarter of an hour walk from our house in the direction of Golders Green, the classes in those early days of the 1950s took place in the buildings of St Mary's, the primary school that we attended. Later on, the classes transferred to the classroom block attached to the synagogue in Kinloss Gardens.

Classes for the early years laid a lot of stress on the teaching of Hebrew reading. The lessons always used a textbook called "Reshis Daas" (that name incorporating the Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew that was taught throughout the Classes). The book was filled with page after page of two-letter nonsense words in Hebrew, and made for very boring rote practice. This may have been a factor contributing to unruly behaviour by unmotivated children; a behaviour pattern that generally persisted as they progressed through the age groups.

As we became older, our Sunday sessions were supplemented by weekday classes, taking place in the classroom block at Kinloss Gardens each Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evening between 5 o'clock and 6:30. Later on, this was reduced to two evenings a

week. These classes at Kinloss Gardens were a fifteen minutes' walk away, as previously mentioned. When I was ten or eleven I would often walk with a friend, Robin Bloom, who lived nearby, and we would have small races along the way. Surprisingly, though in school I was always last in races as in every other sporting endeavour, I could more-or-less match Robin in these races. I also found that, though he would just beat me in the light, I seemed to run faster in the dark. In retrospect, this was all an early indicator towards my later love of running and preference for night-time.

My brothers and I each progressed through a series of external written examinations: the Junior Exam, taken below the age of 12, the Senior Exam for pupils under 14 and the School Certificate Exam, generally taken at age 15. The examining board for the first two of these was the London Board of Jewish Religious Education, and each year candidates from across London would come to the Jewish Free School in Camden Town in March to sit for their exam. The School Certificate Examination was set by Jews College, and candidates sat the exam at its building in Central London. Each year, only a handful of students of the Finchley Hebrew Classes progressed as far as the School Certificate Exam. The Hebrew Classes maintained an impressive Honours Board in a prominent position on the ground floor, listing the names of all pupils that had passed the School Certificate Exam. The names of myself and

Section of the Kinloss Hebrew Classes Honours Board

each of my brothers were eventually painted in gold lettering on this Board, although only Jonathan's name was unaccompanied by an indication of passing with Distinction.

The syllabi for the Junior, Senior and School Certificate exams grew in size at each new level, and comprised four main parts: Translation from Classical Hebrew to English, Classical Hebrew Grammar, Jewish Religion and Jewish History. The syllabus for the School Certificate exam was very extensive, including translation of fifty chapters of the Bible, significant sections of the Authorised Prayer Book, and parts of the Mishnah and the Commentaries of Rashi. The Mishnah is the Code of Jewish "Oral Law", written down by Judah haNasi at the beginning of the third century of the Common Era. Rashi was a venerated commentator of the Bible and Talmud who lived in France during the 11th century.

The chapters of the Five Books of Moses chosen for translation included passages that detailed specific measures for easing the plight of the poor and promoting justice and personal safety. We learned the Mosaic requirement for the farmer to leave the corners of his field unharvested, free to be gleaned by the poor, and for the homeowner to build a parapet around his roof. Passages from the Prophets called for ethical behaviour rather than empty ritual. We learnt the Jewish religious principle "The law of the land is Law". All of these helped shape my religious thinking, and I think the same would apply to my brothers.

The other parts of the School Certificate syllabus were also substantial. Classical Hebrew Grammar included all seven conjugations of regular verbs as well as certain specific irregular verbs. The Religious Knowledge course explored all the Jewish festivals in detail. The History syllabus covered the period up to the

Destruction of the Second Temple, including a comprehensive treatment of the history as told in the later books of the Bible, especially the Books of Kings. The course also included learning about notable figures in later Jewish history such as Saadia Gaon, Judah Halevi, Isaac Abravanel and Menasseh ben Israel. We learned about Theodore Herzl, but the syllabus was otherwise scanty in its coverage of Zionism. The course included no mention of pogroms, or the British Mandate for Palestine, or the Nazi Holocaust.

The School Certificate syllabus was so extensive that progressing on to Classical Hebrew O-Level was a step downwards in terms of the amount of content. However, the O-Level was much more centred around unseen translation of difficult parts of the Bible, and so was more challenging in this regard.

I was always very happy with the content of the lessons at Hebrew Classes. In contrast to my experience starting at St Mary's, it did not take me time to find my feet; I enjoyed the lessons and was "teacher's pet" straight away. One of the earliest texts that we worked through was the translation from Hebrew to English of the "Akeida" – the biblical account of the Binding of Isaac. There was a rhythm to the phrasing in both Hebrew and English that to me was almost musical.

My later memories of Hebrew classes are of the turgidly slow rate of progress of the class as a whole. Especially during the mid-week evening classes, tiredness and apathy contributed to the slow progress and poor behaviour of many of the pupils. A high proportion of attendees ended their Hebrew education on reaching their barmitzvah or batmitzvah.

A few months before both the Senior and the School Certificate exams, I decided it was necessary to stop wasting time and to actually start preparing, and so I ceased attending classes and I worked on my own. I would sit in the dining-room at home and work through the set texts, loving the rhythm and tranquillity of the biblical Hebrew.

Jonathan was taught in his School Certificate class by a very knowledgeable and committed teacher, Mrs Cohn. She was still teaching when I joined the class two or three years after Jonathan, but she resigned halfway through my course. Her leaving contributed to my decision to stop attending and instead to teach myself.

As such, my experience of the class was somewhat different from that of Jonathan three years previously. In Mrs Cohn's School Certificate class, Jonathan was part of a circle of friends who also met at the Kinloss Gardens Bnei Akiva youth group and who would go out together on Sundays, often to Speakers Corner in Hyde Park. Fellow student Leah Eldar Weininger remembers that Jonathan was "always witty and he had a mischievous streak".

My solitary and monastic preparation for the School Certificate exam reflected a different personality. Also, since the age of 12, and very much under Jonathan's conscious or subconscious influence, I had learnt to aspire for excellence in exam performance through disciplined study on my own.

5.2 Early years of Finchley Central Synagogue

Up until Jonathan's barmitzvah, our family attended Shabbat morning services at the synagogue that my father helped establish, Finchley Central Synagogue. At that time, the synagogue met in an annexe to Victoria Hall in Victoria Avenue; the same annexe was used for "Jewish assemblies" at our primary school, St. Mary's. The synagogue occupied a fairly sizeable room. More than half of this was set out with rows of chairs, the rows at the rear intended for women. The front of the room contained the bimah - the table where the leader of the service stood - and the Ark with the Torah scrolls, but was otherwise open space.

My clearest memory of those early days was of the celebration of Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law). This is the day at the end of the Festival of Succot (Tabernacles) on which Jews celebrate the conclusion of one year's reading of the Five Books of Moses and the start of the following year's reading. It is a day of joyful singing and dancing in the synagogue. On that day at Finchley Central Synagogue, in that annexe of Victoria Hall, the children would form a line and march around the open area of the room in a sedate procession, each child holding a flag on a stick, with an apple stuck into the top of the stick, and a lit candle stuck into the apple. For reasons of both Health & Safety legislation and Orthodox Jewish law, such a juxtaposition of young children and precariously-placed lit candles would never be seen nowadays on Simchat Torah. Nor, it should be said, would such orderly and placid celebrations take place in the synagogue on that day.

5.3 A new synagogue building and Jonathan's Barmitzvah

Jonathan's Barmitzvah on March 18, 1961 was the earliest family simcha (celebration) I can remember. It also brought about one of the first occasions that I shared a bedroom with Jonathan, because we both slept in the house of Mr and Mrs Spiro, our neighbours across the road, so that out-of-town guests could stay in our own rooms.

Several incidents from the celebration embedded themselves in my young mind. Some of them serve to emphasise how different were the cultural and religious mores of those days, more than half a century ago, in comparison with today.

The synagogue service took place in the newly-built Finchley Central Synagogue in Redbourne Avenue. This was the first time that the new building had been used for services, other than during the previous year's High Holy Days. In the interim, the synagogue had been closed while its shoddily built roof had been repaired. Meanwhile, services had continued in the synagogue's previous home, the same hall annexe that was used for St Mary's School "Jewish assemblies". My father had previously served as president of the synagogue, and he had been instrumental in bringing the new Redbourne Avenue synagogue building into being. However, he had recently been voted off the Synagogue Board, and he felt that he had been the victim of a planned campaign. Although my memory is clear on this, discretion dictates that I simply write that a tense confrontation arose at one point at the end of the service.

In Jonathan's contribution to the synagogue service, he set a standard that all his brothers were later to follow, which was to leyn

(chant) the full sedra, maftir and haftara (that is, the week's Torah reading and the accompanying reading from the later parts of the Bible). Jonathan chanted his readings faultlessly, to the approbation of the full congregation. On that particular Shabbat, there was not one maftir (short additional reading) but three, on account of it being a "special" Shabbat twice over; it was Shabbat Hachodesh and Shabbat Rosh Chodesh (that is, one of the special Shabbatot preceding Passover, and also a Shabbat coinciding with the New Moon). Each of these calendar singularities was recognised in the service by the inclusion of a further maftir, to be read from a further Torah scroll. Jonathan was intrigued by this alignment of Jewish calendar dates, to the extent that, if he had been asked during his teenage years to devise a question for a Jewish "Trivial Pursuit", it would quite likely have been "On what date (other than Chanukah) are three Torah scrolls taken out of the Ark for the Reading of the Law?"

Jonathan's Barmitzvah party the following day was a lavish affair in which Jonathan and my mother led off the ballroom dancing. It would be hard to imagine ballroom dancing, and mixed dancing at that, taking place at a barmitzvah party in orthodox circles today. But the contrast between past and present is extended still further, when one considers the barmitzvah party of my mother's older brother Aaron, in 1923. At that party, given by my grandfather who was later to found the Seven Sisters Road Hebrew Congregation, the guests marked their cards recording their partners for each dance.

But the one dance that stands out in my memory of Jonathan's barmitzvah was that performed by my father's cousins, Milly, Rosie, Elsa and Netta Klerman.

My father was especially fond of these cousins because they had always been kind to his mother Annie, the sister of their own mother Faigel. These two sisters, Annie and Faigel, were women of differing temperaments. While my father's mother Annie was taciturn and serious, Faigel was a joyful lady who enjoyed a flutter on the horses. Faigel and her children lived in the East End. Her children had inherited her cheerful nature and had also imbibed the boisterous spirit of the East End streets. They gave expression to their gaiety at Jonathan's barmitzvah party by performing their party piece, the Knicker Dance.

The Knicker dance may have been inspired by the French can-can. But capturing something of the spirit of the cousins' home town, one might say it was a bit less Paris, a bit more East End. Or should one say, a bit more south end.

Jonathan speaking at his Barmitzvah party

6 Grammar School Years

In September 1963 I began my grammar school career at Christ’s College, Finchley. Wearing short trousers to school was consigned to the past, as my childhood mutated into adolescence.

6.1 Christ's College, Finchley

Just like St Mary's, Christ's College Finchley was a natural choice for the Sacks boys. It was an all-boys Grammar school with a high academic reputation. Situated virtually around the corner in Hendon Lane, it was even closer to our house than was St Mary's - just a four minute’s walk away. The 36-metre tall tower of its "old building" was a local landmark visible for miles around; it was crowned by a copper spire that had turned to verdigris and it was the most impressive building in the area. Of the school's six hundred pupils, spanning the age range 11 to 18, half were Jewish. These included many from orthodox families, even though the Hasmonean Jewish Grammar School was only a mile away.

In graduating from St Mary's to Christ's College, each Sacks boy in turn was exchanging short trousers for long trousers and satchel for briefcase (a hand-me-down from an older brother, or received as a barmitzvah present). The yellow SMS badge of St Mary's was replaced by the handsome white CCF insignia that decorated the Christ's College blazer pocket. Music only occupied its small place in the academic curriculum during the First Form, and "Joe the Carrier Lad" gave way to Schubert's "Rose among the Heather". French and, later, Latin or German were added to the timetable, while Science split into its separate sub-disciplines of Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

But looking back over a timespan of sixty years, I can see that the invisible and internal effects of the move from primary school to grammar school were much more significant than the external and curricular changes just described. In my case, I did not feel that I was now in the company of more able classmates than I was in St Mary's. But now they were all boys, which perhaps made for a slightly more edgy atmosphere. In particular, it was unpleasant to witness the taunting or belittling of class members who were seen to be weak or different.

In St Mary's, we each sat at our own fixed desk in our own form room for almost all lessons, and these were mostly taught by the same form teacher. But in our first lesson in Grammar School, we were handed a small notebook to be carried in our pocket at all times. This, we were told, was our Homework Diary, in which we would record each homework assignment set during a lesson by a subject teacher. Next, in that same first lesson in our new school, we were instructed to copy off the blackboard the week's timetable for the forthcoming school year. This, spread over a double page, was a table of five rows corresponding to the days of the week, and seven columns representing the five morning periods and two afternoon periods of the school day. In each cell of the table we were to copy from the blackboard the lesson subject, the room where it was to take place, and whether a homework assignment was to be set during that period.

To summarise, on beginning his Grammar School career, conditions were set in place for a child who had enjoyed a relatively easy-going primary school experience, to switch into a constant state of stress, so ever-present but at such a low level, that he would not be consciously aware of the change.

Left: The distinctive tower of Christ's College Finchley, part of the school from 1860 to 1990.

Below: a section of the Christ's College School photograph 1965 -1966. Brian Sacks at the extreme left, second row from the top, Jonathan Sacks at the extreme right, third row from the bottom,

6.2 Switching bedrooms

Life was gradually changing in other ways as well. At age 12 I began sharing a bedroom with Jonathan. Having already joined him at Christ's College, and also about to start my preparation for my barmitzvah under his tutelage, we were becoming more involved in each other's lives.

Before that time, Jonathan and I slept in separate bedrooms at the back of the house, overlooking our 25 metre garden; I shared my bedroom with Alan. Our parents slept in the main bedroom facing the Close, while our live-in home help Ada Tomlinson occupied the fourth bedroom, also overlooking the road.

But now, my youngest brother Eliot was becoming too old to sleep in my parents' bedroom, and the house was becoming too small. So my parents decided to extend the house. Workmen were brought in, adding a morning room to adjoin the kitchen at the back of the house and, above it, an extension to Jonathan's bedroom. Eliot moved in to share my old bedroom with Alan, and I moved into Jonathan's newly-enlarged bedroom.

What had originally been the frame of the picture window looking out onto the back garden, now became the opening between the old and the new parts of our extended bedroom. Jonathan acquired a bookcase, perhaps one and a half metres long and one metre high, to partially fill this opening, and to accommodate his growing library. Already, in his Lower Sixth Form, Jonathan was accumulating a large collection of books, many of them bought in the second-hand shops of Hampstead. Jonathan expertly stained the plywood back of his bookcase using brown shoe polish.

The arrangement was that I was to sleep in the new part of the room, but use the cupboards in the old part, whereas Jonathan slept in the old part and used the cupboards and wardrobe in the new.

As is perhaps apparent, this was a bedroom with badly defined territories, in which I was the junior partner. Jonathan was an intense and serious student, and I was by nature tense and reactive. It probably wasn't an ideal arrangement for either of us. Life was more stressful than it had been in the years when we each had a bedroom to ourselves.

As Jonathan was maturing, he was becoming a lover of classical music. Dad's stereo system and classical record collection was in Jonathan's room, and Dad delighted in being able to share this passion with his firstborn son. I was completely excluded from this culture club. I was destined to have a poor relationship with my father throughout my teenage years. Sadly, nobody thought about Family Therapy in those days.

6.3 Passionate about pop music

I became a keen follower of the pop music scene at the beginning of 1963. At that time I was particularly taken by a song by Brenda Lee. Strangely, I cannot remember or work out, which song it was. The most likely candidate is "Losing You", although I cannot now see why I would have been so affected by it.

1963 was a fantastic year for a young follower of pop music. Early on in the year, I was watching a Children's TV programme called "Tuesday Rendezvous" and a group I had never heard of came on to play their new single. The group was the Beatles, and their song was "Please Please Me". I immediately liked the record, and my

devotion to the Beatles grew as they released one more brilliant record after another. The Beatles were the brightest stars in what was a galaxy of brilliant acts and performances that year. In my own mind I had a personal hit parade of my favourite records. But at number one, the one record that I thought captured perfection, was a title that had barely scraped into the national top 20: "Still", by Karl Denver.

Music was an enthusiasm that I shared with my brother. The first pop act that Jonathan and I shared a passion for was The Shadows, who occupied the top two positions in the Hit Parade at the end of January (with "Dance on" at number one and "The Next time/Bachelor Boy", by Cliff Richard and The Shadows at number two). Jonathan detailed for me the facts and figures of their sales successes with their previous big hits "Apache" and "Wonderful Land". He gave particular credit to Jerry Lordan, the composer of both tracks. Jonathan and I pooled our pocket money to make our first record purchase – an extended play record called "The Shadows to the Fore". It was the first 7-inch record I had ever seen, to be played on our parents' gramophone. I still possess it today.

Jonathan's and my first record. I still possess it today.

Another record that Jonathan particularly liked and drew to my attention at that time, was "Island of Dreams" by the Springfields.

This was before the lead singer of the group, a lady named Dusty, forged her own solo career. At that time, 1963 and 1964, Jonathan also enjoyed the music of the Beach Boys, the Four Seasons and Dionne Warwick. Jonathan remained ahead of the curve in his appreciation of pop music. I remember a difference of opinion we had with our father, who saw no worth in any of it – I suppose this was around 1964. My position was that I thought that the Beatles were brilliant, but I had not yet come to appreciate the Rolling Stones. Jonathan, on the other hand, thought that both groups were highly talented. A later manifestation of Jonathan's musical discernment came when the song “Bohemian Rhapsody” was first released in 1975. Although, for many people, it took time to develop an appreciation for the record, Jonathan explained at the time that Queen "really understand Opera".

I continued to be an avid follower of pop music throughout my school days. But I did not buy records, because they were beyond my financial reach and also I did not have a record player for modern vinyl 45’s. The only other record I bought while still at school was "Ode to Billie Joe", a song I had been introduced to in an English lesson given by our rather eccentric teacher Colin Dudley. My record buying career was to begin in earnest at the start of the nineteen seventies, once I became a student at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

6.4 Barmitzvah preparations and Alan Freedman

At around the time that I switched schools and bedrooms, I also started preparing for my Barmitzvah. Jonathan was my teacher, as I in my turn was later was to become Alan's teacher. Our lessons were on a Sunday afternoon, and, certainly at the beginning, Jonathan used to report progress to Dad. I remember that I scored only fair for "attitude" in the first lesson, but that problem sorted itself out very quickly and the lessons were fine. They always finished in time for Jonathan and I to listen to the "Top 20" show on Jonathan's blue padded transistor radio. Presented by Alan "Fluff" Freedman, this run-down (actually, run-up) of the brand new Hit Parade was probably the most important broadcast of the week for us.

For completeness, this account should mention my Barmitzvah itself. My performance in the synagogue demonstrated a retentive memory at its youthful peak, of which my current septuagenarian memory is but a sadly withered remnant. The synagogue service was followed up by no Barmitzvah party the following day, but by a lunch for the congregation and relatives in a large house around the corner from our home. I recited a less-than-inspiring speech written by my father. The Jewish laws of Shabbat mean that there are no photos of the event.

As a substitute for a Barmitzvah party, my parents took me and my brother Alan on a holiday to Israel one year later. It was the first time that anyone in our immediate family had visited the country.

6.5 Early days at Christ's College

I felt the impact of Jonathan's presence as soon as I entered Christ College. Our first English homework was an essay, and Jonathan very kindly helped me. His contribution was a wonderful lesson in creative writing. Of course I obtained a superb mark, 18/20, virtually all of which was attributable to Jonathan. However, I completed the following week's essay without Jonathan's assistance – except that I was still writing under the influence of his instruction the previous week. I obtained another excellent mark, 17/20, but felt the cutting import of our English teacher Mr Tyson's comment as he handed the essays back to the class: "Some of these were very good; some **suspiciously** so.." with a clear implication that he meant me. For my third essay, which I regarded as of a similar standard to the previous one, I gained 9/20, and my pattern of variability of performance in the subject was now established. By contrast, the rather more benevolent geography teacher, Mr Beadle, actually asked Jonathan to teach me how to shade maps in my exercise book using coloured pencils; Jonathan's work in geography, as in every other subject, was always beautifully presented. Jonathan showed me his technique of sharpening a pencil, tipping the sharpenings onto a piece of paper and rubbing his forefinger into them, and then colouring the map with his forefinger. This time I suffered no snide comeback from the teacher.

But Jonathan's real impact on me as I started my career in Christ's College was rather less tangible. At St Mary's, I was not especially concerned with exam results. While I was the most able mathematician in the class, I knew that others were better all-round students. I admired them and it was no problem for me that I placed lower than them in class. I did not revise for examinations.

But at Christ's College, I was now Sacks Minor; I bore the Sacks name. There was an expectation that I, like Jonathan, would be an excellent student. For the first time, I began to prepare for examinations, to aspire to come top. The days of innocence were over.

6.6 Christ's College Jewish assemblies

For the Jewish half of the school roll, the first event on the morning timetable was Jewish Assembly, which took place in the lunch hall. On entering this army-barrack-like structure one was assaulted by the stale, stodgy smell imprinted into its fabric by the emanations of countless school dinners over many years.

There were three parts to the proceedings. The assembly began with the recital of the first paragraph of the "Shema", perhaps the most important Jewish daily prayer. The entire student body chanted it in unison, with a precise rise-and-fall cadence that it had acquired over time. If one were asked to characterise the emotion encapsulated in this recital, one might answer "sheer uncomprehending boredom".

Next, one of the senior boys would give a reading of a religious or contemplative nature, and Jonathan, once in the Sixth Form, took an active role in this. Finally, the master who had, metaphorically, picked the short straw and was overseeing proceedings, would read out the day's notices. In my first year, this master was always Harry Turl, the elderly and bespectacled deputy head, in his final year before retirement. It was clear that by this stage he no longer induced any fear amongst the boys, because the entire pupil body would recite with him "Junior Literary and (rising to a crescendo) DEBATING Society" whenever that society was the subject of a

notice. The Jun Lit and Deb Soc, as the society was commonly abbreviated to, merits some further mention here.

At that point in time, my first year at the school, Jonathan was in the Fifth Form, preparing for his GCE O-levels (General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Exams). But he was also already showing signs of enterprise and leadership. In a show of defiance against the constitution of the extant school Literary and Debating Society, Jonathan, together with budding intellectual colleagues such as Andy Kirk, set up the new Junior Literary and Debating Society. Whereas the older club was only open to sixth formers, this new society was open to all pupils **except** sixth formers. The Jun Lit and Deb Soc was a major success, all the more notable considering that it did not concern itself with either football or girls. Its meetings in the school library were always packed and the debates were animated and varied. But the only real anecdote I remember from its meetings did not feature Jonathan, although he may well have organized the meeting. The guest speaker was the local MP, Margaret Thatcher. The vote of thanks was short but memorable: "Mrs Thatcher, you have been described as a parliamentary Boadicea. But I'm pleased to say that you haven't bored us here this afternoon!"

6.7 The Love of Running Part 1: The sixties and seventies

Perhaps the earliest hint of what was to become a love of running was my enjoyment of long walks. When I was seven years old, my father took me for a walk one shabbat afternoon, and we reached Lodge Lane in North Finchley - a round trip of about four miles. Soon my father and I were regularly walking six miles or so on Shabbat afternoons. The furthest points we reached on these walks seemed to me like the edges of the known universe. I learnt all the street names and got to love studying the maps of such exotic places as Whetstone and Southgate. Once my father needed to drive to Cockfosters and I directed him, and for many years afterwards he told the story of how, when I was seven, I had directed him to this destination.

I entered Christ's College still not having shown any sporting ability whatsoever. Very early on in the first term, I had my first cross-country race. Our teacher, Major Watterson, first walked around the course with us so that we would learn the route. He then told us, "I am going to start you off in reverse order, with the slowest person starting first". Perhaps because he knew something of the sporting abilities of my brother Jonathan, he set me off running first. The course was about one and a half miles, and at around the half-way mark, I did not know which way to go. I waited around for someone to catch up with me so that he could show me the route, and I then ran alongside him. A little further on, he ran around a lamppost one way and I went round it the other way, and he told me "You'd better go round it the right way or you'll be disqualified". I was incredulous, but as we continued down a hill towards Dollis Brook he was still saying this, and so I ran back up the hill and went round

the lamppost the right way. He went on to win the race and I came second. When Major Watterson read out the results he commended my performance as "good running". Finally I had found a sporting talent.

Throughout that first year I always came between fourth and seventh out of ninety in year-group cross-country races. Nevertheless, for some reason, not many people noticed. If there was a school team for cross-country, I certainly was not picked for it. At the end of the season there was an inter-house cross-country competition called the "Beakon Cup". Each of the four houses (North, South, East, West) fielded a team of eight runners, so I certainly merited a place. I pointed this out to my house team captain but he told me that I was just a reserve. Not having been selected to run, on the day of the race itself, I joined a group of boys who were to act as marshals for the race. We jogged around the course with Mr Philpott, a maths teacher, who dropped us off one by one to point the way for the runners at different points along the route. I wanted to jog around as far as possible to have the best view of the race, and ended up at a point where the runners had to step through a small brook just before the final run-in. I remember Geoff Coley winning the senior race, but he didn't win the unofficial style competition that I was adjudicating in my own mind. Some way behind him, in second place, one of the Zane boys – the whole family were talented sportsmen - paused, took a sprint run up and made a spectacular leap over the brook.

Things changed in the second year. Early on in the year we had a class cross-country race and I came fourth. This was a poor performance for me - I had lost fitness during the summer. Nonetheless, our PE teacher, John Lovett, was astonished. The

following week, I improved to second in class, more than a minute faster than the week before, and from then on I was a member of the school cross-country team, travelling to run in races against other local schools. Throughout the year I maintained a position of third or fourth fastest of my year group of ninety boys, although I ran a bad race, coming 18th, in the Beakon Cup.

It was a new and pleasant experience for me to be part of any school team or extra-mural activity. It was stimulating to realise that I was actually in contention, not far back from the leaders, in the early part of races. I found myself looking at the leader a few yards ahead and asking myself, "Why is it that he can run that little bit faster than I can?", whereas in any other sporting activity there was simply no equation - I was nowhere near being in the same league as others. This was just as true in sprinting; I could never beat anyone in a sprint, even if he were a "fatty". During one Games period in my first year, we were lined up to run 100 yards, presumably to see who could earn points for their house by running a "house standard" or "school standard" for the distance. After I ran my race, inevitably coming last, Mr Lovett sent me back to run it again. I asked him why and he told me that I had started the race in lane one and ended it in lane eight or thereabouts. I had been completely unaware of my lane drifting.

While I was fairly static in my cross-country position within the year group, others emerged as late developers. One of these was my friend and academic rival Rowland Jackson, who came good at around the end of the second year. From that time onwards and throughout the third year, Rowland and I were very well matched and finished our races virtually together, although he was a sturdier runner and less prone to nerves in important races.

One memorable and enjoyable race was the third year Beakon Cup. Rowland and I had run round the course together and we were approaching the finish when Rowland almost lost his shoe. He stopped to retie it and I stopped with him, but he motioned me to get running again. Shortly after this he caught me up through a great burst of effort, and we joined hands to finish the race together in third place. Real male-bonding stuff.

Another race in which Rowland and I came in together was the Barnet Schools Under-15 Championships - we placed 63rd and 64th. When we were back in the pavilion and getting changed, Mr Lovett came in and told us, "The boy who won the under-17 race has started in the under-21's, and he's in the first three of that!"

The boy Mr Lovett was referring to went on to win this second gruelling race within minutes of his first, and so another hero came into my life - David Bedford. From then on I followed his progress religiously in the local paper each week, and on occasion watched him race at the local Copthall Stadium on a Saturday. He eventually became the world record holder for the 10,000 metres distance.

Returning to the topic of my athletic progression, such as it was: I figured in the school cross-country team in the second and third years, and would sometimes be mentioned in school assemblies and the school magazine. I ran three timed miles during those two years. Twice during my second form, the Games teacher timed the class over one mile on a five-lap-to-the-mile grass track laid out on the school playing fields. My times were 6:42 and 6:40. Then in the third form, in 1966, I ran at the newly-built Copthall Stadium for the first time, in the Barnet Schools Championships. I came last by 19 seconds in the one mile, recording 6:29. To be fair, there was

just one representative per school in the race, so perhaps I was "worst of the best".

Starting around the end of the second form, when the year group was sent out for a cross-country run during the games afternoon, they would be sent on a course known as "The Partingdale". I already knew about this course from my brother Jonathan. It was actually a road course rather than cross-country, and although it was reputed to be three miles, in fact it was shorter to the extent that I eventually realised that a very good predictor of my flat-out mile time was to divide my Partingdale time by three. The first sixty percent of the course was uphill, up to the top of Partingdale Lane in Mill Hill. Much of the remainder of the run was a steep descent of Bittacy Hill, down to Dollis Brook. The course finished at the entrance to the school playing fields, around 150 metres beyond the crossing of Dollis Brook. The first time I ran it, in the second form, I recorded 20:30. I asked Mr Lovett, the Games teacher, whether that was as fast as Jonathan, and he told me that he didn't think Jonathan could run it at that speed.

I presume that a lot of my fellow pupils hated the Partingdale, but for me it was an easy and pleasant alternative to football. It also meant that I was finished, changed and on my way home considerably earlier in the afternoon than the footballers. I had trimmed my Partingdale best time to 18:51 by the time I finished the third year.

My running abilities led to a pleasant and unusual "perk" at that time. My science teacher expressed his surprise on one occasion when my name was read out, together with those of several other more obviously sporty pupils, by a boy who came into the lesson with a message from the PE department. The boys whose names

had been read out were to meet with Mr Lovett, the Head of PE. I explained to the aforementioned science teacher that, despite appearances to the contrary, I did actually have one sporting ability.

It transpired that Christ's College had been asked to provide some of the schoolboys who were to perform in the Opening Ceremony of the 1966 Soccer World Cup. Central to the ceremony would be teams of schoolboys representing the sixteen nations taking part in the competition. Christ's College would provide two of the teams. And so I received a Chile football kit, including, for the first time in my life, a brand-new pair of football boots. My part in the ceremony was to march round the Wembley pitch, in step with the rest of the surrogate Chile team. Ada and others later told me that I was prominent in the television coverage, as viewed by 400 million people worldwide. But I never saw the footage, despite significant efforts to track it down, until I discovered it on youtube around fifty years later.

As my fourth year at Christ’s College began, I was still in the school team, but my performances were soon noticeably slipping. As far as I was concerned, the cause was the Schools Kosher Meals Service. At this time, my mother had started working at the Frumkin's Wine shop every day, and so I no longer came home to lunch. Instead I joined the boys who walked from school to Kinloss Gardens, where the Kosher Meals Service operated. The meals were stodgy, and despite the extra exercise in walking to and from lunch, I put on weight and lost my place in the school team. In the first term of the fifth form I deliberately lost the excess weight, much to my mother's consternation. A few months beforehand there had been printed in the Jewish Chronicle a picture of myself and three other prize-winners for the School Certificate Hebrew examination.

My mother had thought that I looked "so nice" in the photo. But I hated my "chubby cheeks" in the picture. If there was any "look" I aspired to, it would have been that of an athlete, not of a "nice Jewish boy".

Once I lost my excess weight, my athletic decline abated, but my running didn't improve much either. It was not a great priority at that time. The important item on the agenda in the first half of 1968 was my preparation for O-levels.


22 JEWISH CHRONICLE July 7 1967

Critical teacher shortage

The four Rose and Sunlight Award winners. From left to right: Daniel Rose, Brian Sachs, Nigel Sloan and Lewis Glinert

One picture I hated

Once the O-level exams were out of the way, and as a reward for my efforts, my parents took me to Italy during the early summer of 1968. We spent a few days in a coastal resort, Milano Marittima, and then moved on to Florence and Venice. I remember, once in Milano Marittima, rowing out to sea with my father for about half a mile and then swimming back to shore as he rowed. It was my first holiday alone with my parents and I enjoyed it, striking up friendships with a young boy and a not-so-young girl, in both cases communicating in French. Perhaps the holiday strengthened me physically because when I returned to the sixth form my running was immediately on a higher level. My Partingdale time plunged, first to 17 minutes, then 16:10 and

eventually to 15:30. The Games masters took note. On one occasion I went around with a slower colleague, Paul Challener (who went on to become school captain), who had been one of the few runners faster than me in the third form. I still had a lot of energy left in me by the time we reached the top of Partingdale Lane and so, when we were just into Bittacy Hill and about to start its steep descent, I asked Paul whether he would mind me pushing ahead. I then sprinted off. After our return the Games teacher, Mr Quinn, remarked that I was slower than the previous week. I still remember Paul's answer on my behalf: "At Bittacy Hill Brian went off like a bullet. Like a bullet. The workers across the road all stopped and stared. At the bottom of the hill I tried to speed up but Brian was still gaining on me…". Moments like that are sweet.

Shortly after that, the school organised a 25-mile sponsored walk in aid of that year's School Charity, and a group of about ten of us decided to run it together with John Lovett, the head of PE. But John's pacing didn't suit me; the running was at a good pace but then he dallied for what seemed ages at the checkpoints, chatting up the girls who were manning them. As a result, the 25 miles took five hours, a time that I could have achieved with a fast, steady walk. But I remember, for the last mile or so, staggering from road-side bench to kerb-side pile of leaves, totally exhausted. Amazingly, as it seems to me now, I nonetheless ran with Roland the following day, feeling no ill effects.

This would have been in late 1968 or early 1969, but I learned of another participant's experience of it many years later. In 2011 I met up with Neil Joseph, two years above me in both Christ's College and Gonville and Caius College Cambridge. He had been a fine runner in his time, 1:55 for 800 metres. He had taken part in that

sponsored walk/run, presumably back in London during Cambridge University vacation, and I remember that he had finished after me. When I met him all those years later, the first time I had seen him for 38 years, I asked him if he was still running. He told me that he had had continuing calf problems throughout his life, for which blamed John Lovett, saying that it dated from that sponsored run.

Soon after that 25 mile event I was selected by the school for the Barnet cross-country championships, for the first time since the third form. Paul Challener told me that I was really fit and would do really well. But race day was snowy and the conditions were terrible. Inexperience caught me out: my eyesight was getting worse and in the changing room before the race I asked a teammate whether I should wear my spectacles during the race. He advised me not to. During the race I was well up early on but found that I could not see where I was going. I waited around until this same teammate caught me up and then I jogged around with him acting as my guide. I finished 46th, just behind him.

My running career really resumed once I had completed the two A-levels that I took in the Lower Sixth form. I found that I had four weeks to get fit before the Sinai Youth Group Sports Day, where I and my school-friend Benny Tiefenbrunner wanted to run the one mile. At that time, my personal best mile was the 6:29 that I had run in the Barnet Schools Championship in my third form, in 1966. In fact, I hadn't run a timed mile since then. I went down to the School fields, where the five-lap-to-a-mile track had been marked out, and ran the mile in 5:37. It was a revelation to me that I could run at that speed; I ran a second mile in that session in 5:45.

A week or so later I ran another time trial, this time with Benny Tiefenbrunner, over the same track. He led at a fierce pace, with me

clinging on just behind. Halfway through the race I felt that I had to get ahead because I certainly couldn't outsprint him at the finish. So I took over the lead for a couple of laps until, with about a hundred yards to go, Benny raced past me. But we both ran around 5:17, again a revelation.

The Sinai Sports race proved to be an exact repetition. Again Benny led at a strong pace. At six hundred metres we had a lead of about fifteen metres on Johnny Weisenberg, who I knew had also run in the Barnet cross-country championships. I called to Benny to keep pushing on the pace. We passed halfway in 2:35. With a lap and three-quarters to go I passed Benny, as in our previous dress rehearsal, and he duly re-passed me at the bottom bend with a hundred and fifty metres to go. Again he ran 5:17, and I around 5:18 or 5:19, on a track that was certainly better measured than our school field. Johnny didn't finish, and we won by more than half a lap.

The following day, during a PE lesson, John Lovett said to me that he wanted me to run the 1500 metres for the school in the Barnet Championships. I told him that he should choose Benny, that Benny was a better runner. But shortly afterwards he told that Benny didn't want the place anyway, so I ran. I remember that after about two laps I was moving up to third or fourth place, but then drifted back to finish seventh in 5:01. Nonetheless, John Lovett was very pleased with my performance.

On returning to school to begin the Upper Sixth form, my main focus was on preparation for the Cambridge Entrance Examination. My running really resumed early in 1970, once I had secured my place at Gonville and Caius College and left school. I trained about four times a week. Most of my runs were over a course known in

Christ's College as "The Five Mile Course", but once a week I took myself to Copthall Stadium for a track session. The so-called Five Mile Course was clearly closer to four miles, because I brought my time for it down to 22 minutes. This progression included a significant performance boost when I bought a pair of ripple-soled running shoes. I loved those shoes, and their replacements that I bought for several years afterwards; they seemed to give wings to my feet.

My weekly track session was influenced by my reading about the great Czech athlete of the early fifties, Emil Zatopek. Zatopek trained prodigiously, with his programme including monstrous interval sessions such as fifty times four hundred metres. My session began with a flat-out mile time trial. I would wait seven to ten minutes to get my breath back, and then embark on 16 times 400 metres. Each 400 metre lap would begin two minutes and fifteen seconds after the last. That meant that if I took 75 seconds for a lap, I then had a minute recovery time before embarking on the next lap. However, if my lap time slipped to 80 seconds, the recovery time was now just 55 seconds. This punishing session, devised by myself and carried out alone, was something that I was never able to replicate after that summer. No doubt I was able to physically, but the determination to face that session was no longer there. My ambition at that time was just to cut my mile time, and hopefully to break the 5 minute barrier. As it was, during that 1970 season, I cut my mile time to 5:07, and most of my mile time trials at the start of the track sessions were close to that mark. Around forty years later, Jewish athletics coach Alf Wilkins told me that those sessions I created for myself would have been good training for the 10,000 metres. If he had been coaching me for the mile, my training would have involved a lot more sprinting. I should add, writing in the third

decade of the twenty-first century, that those 1970 track sessions seem more demanding than those of many current day international athletes. Perhaps that is the result to be expected when a keen and green athletics follower takes his inspiration from Emil Zatopek.

One last loose end that I tied before leaving school was to ask PE teacher Martin Priestley for permission to return to run in the School Sports during the summer term. In all of my six years at Christ's College, I had never run in the School Sports, feeling that the longest available race, the one mile, was too short for me. Now, as I was leaving school prematurely, the idea finally appealed to me. Mr Priestley answered, "Certainly, you can come along and run as a guest".

My younger brother Alan kept me informed of the date of the School Sports, and I duly arrived at Copthall Stadium that afternoon ready to run. I went onto the infield where I met John Clark, the excellent runner in the year below me who could be virtually assured of winning the 1500m race. I asked him what time the race was scheduled for, and he demurred from answering, muttering with apparent misgivings, "You're good!" Only when I over-modestly assured him that I was merely a five-and-a-half minute miler, did he grudgingly let me know that the 1500m was in fact the next race.

I was actually shifting my position at the start line and taken by surprise when the starting gun fired, while Clark immediately shot off into a big lead. The 1500m race comprises three and three quarters laps of the track, and it was only at the end of that first three quarters that I reached the front of the group trailing some distance behind Clark. I relaxed for a few metres before setting off in pursuit. Clark won in 4:27, effectively setting a school record, his

performance being superior to the school mile record at that time. I placed second in 4:47. Clark had achieved the major part of his 20 seconds lead on me within the first three-quarter lap.

My performance was not included in the results as announced. I have to confess that I was miffed by that, though the logical and responsible part of my brain understood why.

In July 1970 Benny and I intended to run in the Sinai Youth Group Sports Championships again, and we ran a preparatory 800m trial at Copthall Stadium. Benny was apparently not in the form of the previous year. We ambled around the first lap in 75 seconds before I sped off to complete the trial in 2:26. It was the only 800m trial of any significance that I ever ran, and I cannot claim that it was an all-out effort.

Benny did not contest the one mile race in the Championships. As for me, I failed to convince the young lady starter that the race needed to start at the "1 mile" curve marked on the track. As far as she was concerned, the mile race was four laps, unaware of any difference between 400m and a quarter of a mile. As for myself, I wanted to record a valid mile time, and so I was the lone runner starting 9.344 metres back from the rest of the field.

It did not take me long to reach the front, but the leader refused to let me pass. He exhausted himself in the process, so that when I did manage to get ahead at some point in the third lap, I quickly built up a strong lead. On breaking the tape and enquiring of my time, I was told that the timekeeper had failed to start the stopwatch.

When I started studying at Gonville & Caius College Cambridge in 1970, I joined the college cross-country team and took part in a few inter-college races. I ran the first two track 5000m races of my life

in the inter-college “Cuppers 1970" competition, recording 18:00 and 17:42.The latter time remained my personal best for 20 years. I wasn't training regularly during that first year at Cambridge, instead relying on the natural fitness of youth. Very early on, I was running alongside international steeplechaser John Jackson, and he asked me, referring to my light blue vest, "Is that a Cambridge vest?" (that is, am I a Cambridge "Blue"?) I replied, "No, Marks & Spencer". But the fact that John Jackson had asked the question, I took as a delightful compliment.

I did run regularly in my second year at Cambridge, and I think it helped me to stay relaxed. In the summer of 1972, back in London after the end of that second year, I resumed my assault on the 5 minute barrier. I recorded some amazing times, including 4:53 for the mile, but finally decided that I couldn't trust my watch, and I mentally discarded those performances. One Sunday I found that the Maccabi National Championships were taking place at Copthall Stadium that afternoon, and I entered the 3000m. I won the silver medal, in 10:07.8. It was my first ever 3000m race, and it remained my all-time personal best. That July, I went on holiday to Yugoslavia with Benny Tiefenbrunner. Towards the end of the holiday, we found an athletics track and I ran a 1600m time trial, with Benny timing me. My time was 5:01. We had walked 18 miles the previous day, and I hadn't run for the previous week. I felt that the dramatic improvement relative to my 5:07 personal best for the mile was due to the synthetic "Tartan" track surface. I felt that it gave me a one second per minute advantage compared to the "cinder" track of Copthall.

As it happens, that run in Yugoslavia was not the first time I had run on a "Tartan" track. In the summer of 1970 I had gone on

holiday to Switzerland and Italy with a friend from synagogue, Alex Hajioff. During that holiday, I had found my way into the Rome Olympic Stadium, and then snatched my opportunity to run a mile. I remember running 5:15 (I was out of training by then), all the while being chased off the track by an irate groundsman.

I didn't run much during my third and fourth years at Cambridge. I ran 5000m in Cuppers 1972, in a mediocre time of around 18:50. I entered the 25 mile Cambridge Boundary Run early in my third year, but due to nerves and the fact that I had not trained for it in any way, I got a stitch after 100 yards and retired from the run after 15 miles. I was forced to take a taxi back to the college from Fulbourn Hospital, the point at which I had dropped out.

When I started training again after leaving Cambridge at the end of my fourth year, I found that I could not run more than 200 yards without stopping. But within four weeks I was fit enough to gain two silver medals in the 1974 Maccabi National Championships. My times for 1500m and 3000m were 4:45 and around 10:20.

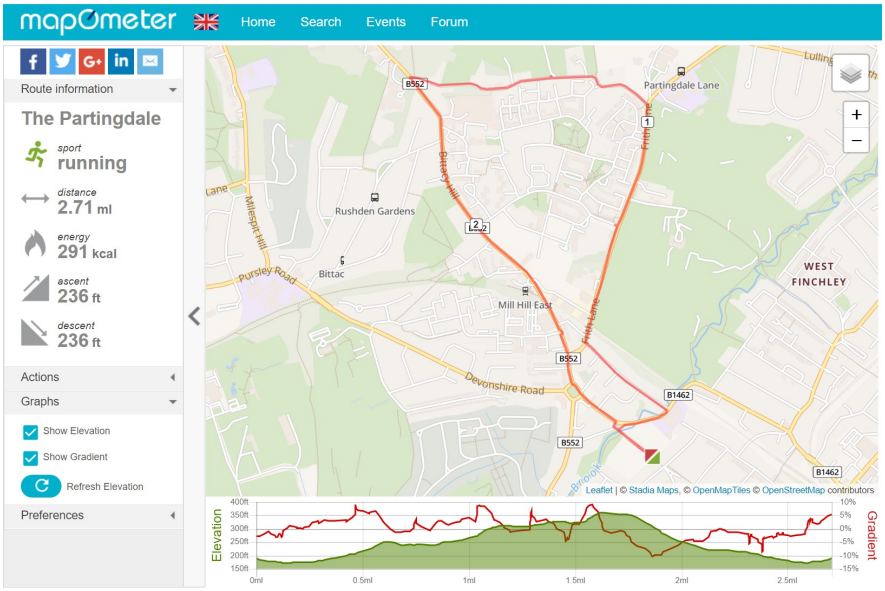
When I travelled up to Stockport to run in the Civil Service Cross Country Championships on December 3, 1975, I remember that, after a year and a quarter, it was the first day at work that I had ever enjoyed.

I continued to get fit during each of the following four summers, entering the Department of the Environment Sports Day from 1976 through 1979. In 1976, my brother Alan timed me at 4:58 for the mile at Copthall Stadium, which by this time was also a synthetic track.

I did very little running during my teaching stint at Woodhouse Sixth Form College, from 1980 to 1982. I had found that when I

ran, it put me in such a good mood that it made me feel, "Who cares about registration?" I realised that this was not a helpful attitude to maintain if one wanted to survive in the teaching profession.

My running career, for the time being, was on hold.



Loved by some, loathed by many – the Partingdale

World Cup Opening Ceremony 1966 – My walk-on part

6.8 The Athletics Fan

Early on in the 1965 athletics season I saw a three-mile race on television, which Bruce Tulloh won in 13 minutes 20 seconds. The following week there was another three-mile race on television, and I knowingly said to my brother Alan that I thought it would be won in about 13:10. At that time, the 13 minute barrier had never been broken. During the race, the British Championships at the White City stadium, two runners, Ron Clarke of Australia and Gerry Lindgren of America, were well ahead of the rest of the field, and the commentator David Coleman was gushing fanatically in his own unique style: "They are only two seconds outside the British two miles record, and they've still got a mile to go!"

At the finish, Ron Clarke sliced 12 seconds off the world record to run 12:52, and Gerry Lindgren was just one second behind. At that instant I became an athletics fan and a Ron Clarke fan. Looking back on it now, I think I also became a David Coleman fan.

Ron Clarke became a multiple-world-record holder that year and the next. Possessing an up-to-date copy of the Guinness Book of Records, I learned all the athletics world and national records, down to knowing the record holders' middle names. As I came to understand athletics in more detail it seemed to me that there was one record that was waiting to be broken: the world mile record. I remember saying to Jonathan that it's easy to beat that record, which stood at 3:53.6 to Michel Jazy of France. All that a runner needed to do was to run the first three laps in 60 seconds each and then a final lap in 53. Jonathan didn't think it was as easy as that - and of course he did have a point. Nonetheless, shortly after that conversation, Jim Ryun, a gangly 19-year-old from Wichita, Kansas, recorded

3:51.3 to shatter Michel Jazy's record by more than two seconds. I now had yet another running hero.

I read avidly on the sport. On entering the local library, I would immediately head to the shelf corresponding to Dewey number 796.426, to see if there was any new athletics book that I hadn't already read. I particularly remember Ron Clarke's "The Unforgiving Minute" and Peter Snell's "No Bugles, No Drums" - and sure enough, having read it from cover to cover, I could confirm that there were no bugles and no drums other than in the title. The library would even order books from abroad that I requested, obtaining "The Jim Ryun Story" from America and Michel Jazy's "Mes Victoires, Mes Defaits, Ma Vie" from France. I often bought "Athletics Weekly" from the newsagent, and I took out a year's subscription to the American magazine "Track & Field News".

In those days, most athletics events took place on Saturdays, which presented me with a challenge given that I did not use transport or carry money on Shabbat. Copthall Stadium was only a two-mile walk from the Shabbat dinner table, and Shaftesbury Harriers events at the stadium were free to walk into. I knew the names and performances of the club athletes from the reports in the local paper and from the list of club records displayed on the stadium noticeboard.

The Middlesex Championships sometimes also took place at Copthall, but not wishing to face embarrassment and probable refusal at the official entrance, I would climb over the gate some distance to the side. I remember once hearing an announcement of a victory by Lillian Board as I was climbing over. She would have been only 17 or 18 at the time. Tragically, Lillian, for two years the

Golden Girl of British athletics, died in 1970 at age 22 years and 13 days.

I would sometimes walk to Parliament Hill, a five-mile walk from our home, to see Dave Bedford race in the National or the Southern Cross Country Championships. In early 1970, I walked with my friend Benny Tiefenbrunner to watch the Southerns. David Bedford won the senior race over nine miles by a significant margin, and then a few minutes later entered the Junior race, over six miles, and won that. I must be one of the very few people who was actually present at BOTH of the Bedford same-day doubles – the Barnet Schools 1966 and the Southern Counties 1970. I also walked with Benny from my room in Cambridge to watch the International Cross Country Championships in 1972 taking place a few miles out of town. Somehow we managed to slip in through the crowds without having to worry about tickets.

I also occasionally attended national athletics matches at the West London White City Stadium. As often as not, these matches were on a Saturday, and so in accordance with Shabbat laws I would walk the eight miles each way to the White City. The greatest match I ever attended was Great Britain versus USA, on August 12, 1967. Its climax was the mile race between the world's two greatest milers, Jim Ryun and Kipchoge Keino. Ryun was at the peak of his powers and there were high hopes of a very fast time. These hopes were dispelled through the slow early pace, but a magnificent duel over the last lap saw Ryun win in 3:56.0. This stood as my "spectator's personal best" for ten years, until in 1977 I saw Steve Ovett beat the previous year's Olympic 1500 metre champion John Walker over a mile at Crystal Palace. Ovett's time was 3:54.7, a new British record. More significantly in retrospect, his victory

represented the handover of the title "World's greatest miler" from Walker to Ovett.

One of the thrills of attending athletics matches as a teenager was to meet the athletes, exchange a word or two with them and obtain their autographs. I remember the elation I felt outside the stadium after the Great Britain versus USA match in 1967, standing alongside the world's greatest pole vaulter, Bob Seagren, in the middle of a sea of beautiful AAU-USA badges. I remember at one match in 1969 meeting 10,000 metre runner Dick Taylor, with his bright ginger hair, and eliciting his opinion on the young upstart David Bedford, who had just set a British record at age 19. The opinion was none too flattering. I also remember my brother Alan pointing out someone about twenty yards away from us: "There's Dave Hemery!"

To any British athletics enthusiast, David Hemery was like a god. Many people would regard his 400 metre hurdles victory in the 1968 Olympics as a perfect race. Certainly David Coleman's commentary was one of his most famous, with its ending, "David Hemery wins for Great Britain. In second place it's Hennige and who cares who's third, it doesn't matter. A new world record if that time is correct and Hemery won that all the way. Hemery won that from start to finish. He killed the rest, he paralysed them!"…. The "who cares" third place in that race was taken by John Sherwood, of Great Britain, and even he said that David Coleman got it right.

6.9 Mathematics

The other great love affair of my teens - in these pages I will not make any revelations of a romantic nature - was with mathematics, an affair that really took off in the sixth form.

My scholastic career had been pretty successful up to that point. I had dutifully slightly surpassed Jonathan's achievements, by dint of diligent revision. My two most significant revision spells had been for the Hebrew School Certificate exam, taken in October 1966, and my GCE O-levels, taken in June 1968. In both cases I was faced with an extensive syllabus, and accordingly set out a detailed and demanding revision timetable, to which I adhered without buckling. I have never been able to work with such method and concentration since that time. If I were to pick out one part of that experience that I really enjoyed, it would be sitting alone in the dining room with the family Hebrew and English Bible, teaching myself the fifty chapters of translation on the School Certificate syllabus. I felt a sense of monastic purity immersing myself in a different world, one of black and white, good and evil simplicity. With the School Certificate exams taking place in October, it was the one time that my revision timetable required me to work over the summer holidays. I dutifully set aside a couple of hours each morning when I would work in the living room in Margate – quite probably commandeering the room for the purpose – and then I would holiday as normal in the afternoon.

My most ambitious revision stint was my preparation for O-levels during the first half of 1968. I prepared for what must have been the best part of five months, starting soon after my "mock" O-levels were out of the way. I worked methodically to a timetable that I mapped out at the start, allocating a specific number of days to each subject for a main revision stint, with another shorter period for final revision. Roughly speaking, the plan allocated time to a subject in inverse proportion to my basic ability in that subject. So I spent next to no time on maths, which came naturally to me, recognising that my time could be better spent mugging up on, for

example, geography, which certainly did not come so easily. In retrospect, this lack of flair in the subject is not surprising considering the sheltered life I had led. I remember, in my geography revision, learning a list of crops for each country, in most cases including "kale", while not having the vaguest idea of what kale actually was. Only after half a century did I find out.

I treated Classical Hebrew differently from the other subjects, since I was not only revising, but teaching myself that subject. So I would study Classical Hebrew each Sunday morning, as if I were in a Hebrew Class, as well as allocating a revision stint in the same way as for the other subjects.

All told, this meant that I would be revising for perhaps three hours a night during term time, while during the holidays, I would be revising nine or ten hours a day. My parents gave me the use of the dining room, which was a wonderful place in which to study. It had a long table with rounded ends, over which I spread my work, and around which I paced as I memorised. Having said all that, much of my learning was by rote, and its educational value was open to question.

I remember that summer term, as the O-levels grew ever nearer, as the summer of "Young Girl". One of our neighbours, David Barton, spent that summer in his driveway, tinkering with his prized late-nineteen-sixties Mercedes - as he continued to do for more than thirty years afterwards, until his life was cruelly blighted and brought to its end by cancer. His car radio was, it seemed to me, blaring out the song "Young Girl", by Gary Puckett, continuously. Ever since then I have mildly loathed the song. It has had an effect on me similar to that of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on the anti-hero of the film Clockwork Orange.

While I spent almost no time revising maths in the fifth form preparing for O-levels, I spent virtually all my time on this subject in the following two years. In the fifth form, the top mathematicians had taken Additional Maths O-level, which made good inroads into the A-level syllabus. Five pupils achieved grade A in Additional Maths. On starting the sixth form, these same five pupils formed a set who were to take two Maths A-levels in the lower sixth, with a view to taking a third Maths A-level (Further Maths) in the upper sixth. So my A-level subjects in the lower sixth were Pure Maths, Applied Maths and Physics. I concentrated almost exclusively on the maths. But working for these Maths A-levels felt totally different from my O-level revision work of the previous year. Now it was more akin to spending the evening enjoyably solving puzzles. And the maths was beautiful, both in itself and in the way it all interconnected. But there is no way I know to convey to a non-mathematician how satisfying an intellectual edifice it is. Part of its beauty is its truth – no one will ever come and disprove it, nor render it irrelevant.

Our A-level Maths set comprised: myself, Philip Candelas, Stuart Field, ‘Diddy’ Freedman (I cannot remember his real first name) and Nicholas Simons We all prospered under the ‘two Maths A-levels in one year’ regime, other than Simons who fell somewhat by the wayside. This was slightly surprising, as he was a member of the other family with four boys in the school all having a spectacular academic record. Of these five in our set, Diddy Freedman was the "character" – a short, cheeky, Jewish Northerner. I have never heard of him since those days.

Candelas and I were regarded as the maths stars and we shared the junior maths prize in the lower sixth. In addition to gaining our two

Grade As in the Maths A-levels, we both took the Applied Maths S-level and gained distinction. I had been woken on the morning of the S-level exam by my mother, agitatedly telling me that the school were on the phone asking why I wasn't in the exam room. The reason was that I had misread the exam timetable, and thought the exam was in the afternoon. Some minutes later I presented myself at the exam room in a very nervous state. The invigilator was our PE teacher Martin Priestley, who I have kept in touch with as a friend to this day. He still remembers that incident of more than fifty years ago with amusement.

I remember once or twice going round to Phil Candelas' house in Cheyne Walk, Hendon Central, to do maths with him. One of those occasions was straight after the S-level, when we compared notes on how we had answered the questions. Possibly with undue modesty, he sounded slightly pessimistic about his chances of gaining a distinction. I met his parents, who were friendly and hospitable. I also met his girlfriend Anne and her sister, who sang and played on guitar a song that she said she had written, "Suzanne". I was none the wiser, having never heard the Leonard Cohen song before. But she sang it really well. I remember Phil's house for its brightly painted exterior, and his father's Vanden Plas Princess (with Rolls-Royce engine) standing in the driveway. There was a pull-down lamp above the dining table, and in his bedroom Phil's bed was also pull-down from the wall. Although our house in Rathgar Close was perfectly comfortable, its fixtures and fittings dated from the early fifties when raw materials rationing was in force. As such, the Cheyne Walk features made quite an impression on me.

On moving into the Upper Sixth in September 1969, our main goal for the autumn term was the Cambridge Entrance exam in November. This would be far more demanding than any A-level or S-level, and the school was unable to provide us with any help in preparing for it. Accordingly, Phil and I set our own priorities, and I well remember a rather self-important teacher, Mr Petrie, telling us both, "If you think you can walk in and out of physics lessons as you please, you can walk straight out of school." As it was, I was rashly neglecting my physics, while I suspect that Phil was taking a much more thoughtful approach to his studies as a whole.

Phil was fortunate enough to have a very able private maths tutor. But he also had the intelligence and academic ability to make full use of this opportunity. I doubt whether I would have made such good use myself if I were in his position. I remember Candelas saying to me that I should be less concerned about being able to answer every single question on a topic, and instead should forge further ahead with my maths. At this stage, in late 1969, Candelas was already talking about cosmology and was recommending that I read Feynman's Lectures on Physics. He was clearly single-minded in his maths and took a very intelligent approach. But I also remember him saying that he would be earning £10,000 a year by the age of 25 – and with prices and salaries as they were in those days, that clearly meant that he did not envisage an academic career. Nonetheless, he held the extremely prestigious Rouse-Ball Chair of Mathematics at Oxford University for many years until his retirement. As a significant contributor to Superstring Theory, he was also elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Returning to November 1969: The Cambridge Entrance exam took place in the prefect's room at the very top of the Christ's College

"Old Building" – a room I had virtually never been to before. The invigilator was the English teacher Colin Dudley, and I remember him spending the first few minutes coaching his pupils as to how they would tackle their paper. I also remember being disturbed by the playground noise at break time. I did not perform at my best. When the results letter came several weeks later, it began "I am sorry to inform you that you have not…". What I had not achieved, was to gain a scholarship or an exhibition. But what I had achieved, was entry to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. I was exultant.

6.10 Beyond Cambridge Entrance

I am not sure of the extent to which Phil Candelas and I were subconsciously influenced by Mr Petrie's suggestion, but Phil and I both left school after gaining entrance to Cambridge University at the end of our fourth term of the Sixth Form. As a consequence, I never took Physics A-Level, and one of the recurring nightmares of my adult life is being forced to take that exam unprepared. My extensive catalogue of recurring nightmares also includes those in which I am forced to take Cambridge University Maths Tripos exams unprepared.

I used the two terms in which I would otherwise have been learning Physics to instead allow myself a kind of miniature gap year. I attended some First Year Mathematics lectures at King's College London and did some mathematics reading of my own. But I also took driving lessons and failed my first driving test, did some serious running as described elsewhere, formed my first romantic relationship and planned and enjoyed my first independent holiday abroad. I did return to school to take the Further Maths A-level, but in a display of immature nonchalance, I did not bother to pop back

to pick up the exam certificate. But I retained the official results slip in case it was ever needed. As it turned out, rarely has any employer or institution asked to see any of my certificates, and certainly not my A-level certificates.

6.11 A tale of two Sixth Formers

Jonathan and I took very different paths in our Sixth Form years, and the differences went beyond the subjects that we studied. When I pause to consider what made Jonathan tick as a sixth former, and compare him to myself at a similar age, the contrast could not be starker.

During my Sixth Form career, mathematics was my overriding academic passion. I was thrilled by its beauty and the genius of the men (yes, as taught, they were all men) who carved out its structures and its patterns from the universe of truth in which they lay buried. I had a gossamer-thin understanding of my other academic subject, physics, and virtually none of the world of mankind and womankind.

Outside of my examination subjects, I loved cross-country running, and my abilities in that field, such as they were, gave me a bit of "street credibility" with fellow pupils and some of the teachers. That, and the fact that I was on an accelerated course to prepare me for Cambridge Entrance within little more than a year, served as a smokescreen for the fact that I took very little communal responsibility within the school, in marked contrast to Jonathan.

Beyond the school gates, I was a fanatical follower athletics at all levels and at all times, ranging from the current day local schoolboy

scene to the athletes of the ancient Greek Olympic Games. I loved pop music and the companionship of my friends.

My small group of friends outside of school was Jewish and religious, and I followed suit, but without an excessive degree of commitment. When I heard friends of friends recounting pieces of rabbinical law or biblical commentary, these seemed to me to be as dross in comparison with the works of genius of the great mathematicians. After I had taken my Classical Hebrew O-level, and despite Jonathan's influence, I no longer had an appetite for further religious studies. Up until I had gained entry to Cambridge University, I was too occupied with my studies and interests to think about dipping my toe into the world of dating.

While I, as a sixth former, was principally interested in mathematics, Jonathan was interested in history, law, economics, politics; in society and the interest groups that it comprised; the wants, needs, and greeds of the individuals, each in their different circumstances, who made up those groups. Jonathan was trying to enter into the minds of the factory owners, the landowners, the farmers and the struggling, hungry, wretched masses of the nineteenth century. Like I was to do at a similar age, Jonathan was studying geniuses of recent centuries, and their works. But in his case, these great men and women had directed their abilities towards the prevention of war and the alleviation of poverty, crime and misery. The heroes of my academic life pursued pure and abstract truth, untainted by the shabby concerns of everyday man.

Also wrapped into the difference between Jonathan and myself, in an inextricable blending of cause and effect, was our respective situations as first and second child, and our differing relationships with our father.

For a schoolboy to leave the Friday Night family dinner table to walk to the surgery of the local Member of Parliament in order to discuss politics; that, to me, is something extraordinary. The MP was an ambitious young politician called Margaret Thatcher and the schoolboy was my brother Jonathan. It is difficult to discern any influence in this from our father; he was no role model in this regard. But just possibly, Jonathan felt that he had a duty to put right the wrongs and indignities that our father had suffered in his life; that through his achievements Jonathan could be our father's revenge.

I can speculate as to how Jonathan might have tried to find a point of meeting between the economic, social and political problems that he studied at school, and the solutions that he might have discerned in the Jewish lives of his friends and their families. Through them he might have seen a vision of a fuller, more joyous and more caring family and community life. Perhaps it was then that the concept of a "God-shaped hole in society" began to formulate in his mind.

6.12 Christ's College – A sad postscript

Before writing about my two closest friends at Christ's College, I will briefly mention a third friend.

When I was about 14 or 15 I befriended Stuart Field and would sometimes visit him in his home in East Finchley. Stuart was an archetypal English mousey-haired scientist - a sort of Richard Dawkins in miniature. He knew how to calculate using a slide rule, and actually enjoyed so doing. He was an expert in building crystal set radios and he initiated me into that world, helping me to understand, and to buy, components and a book of circuit diagrams. Under his tutelage I set up a simple device housed in a

disused chocolate box, from which an aerial extended out of the bedroom window and along the full length of the garden.

Stuart eventually gained entrance to Churchill College Cambridge to study Natural Sciences. But in later life he never responded to any attempt of mine to make contact.

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My two best friends at Christ's College were Benny Tiefenbrunner and Rowland Jackson. Rowland and I were in the same form, that is, the form for pupils who chose Latin as their second foreign language, from our third to fifth forms, 3L to 5L. Throughout this time, it was one or other of us who would come top of the form, and effectively the year, in the school exams. Years afterwards, Rowland confessed that he saw me very much as a rival, though I don't think I felt similarly myself; I certainly tried to do well in my exams, but I think I was more focused on my own performances rather than those of others. Though, for my part, I must concede that I was too bound up with exam marks. On one occasion, I was almost brought to tears on receiving a result which, though perfectly acceptable when viewed objectively, effectively meant that I would not come top of the form.

Throughout the third form, Rowland and I were very well matched in cross-country running. We bonded through this, often finishing our runs together. My running performances declined in the fourth form, but when they improved in the lower sixth, Rowland and I became occasional running partners again.

During my mid-teens, I often went round to Rowland's house, which was not far away in Stanhope Avenue. It was a fairly large terraced house, crammed full of old bric-a-brac plus general mess and disorder. There was an old grandfather clock standing in the hallway. Much of the space in the living room was taken up a piano, and Rowland would impress me with his recital of Mozart's Turkish March. Rowland's mother was an imposing

presence, full of energy, while his father seemed very meek and ineffectual. The household seemed different from mine in virtually every way, and seemed, in my perception, to represent the difference between a freer, more open, Christian way of life and the more restricted Jewish life. I never ate anything there, although the question never arose anyway; I suppose my visits were relatively brief interludes at the end of the school day.

Rowland was a boy scout, and I admired him as a more rounded and interesting person than I was. I remember once going on an expedition with him exploring Dollis Brook, which flowed for several miles through our neighbourhood and beyond. We were climbing through culverts, and it was the first time that I had ever heard that word. Rowland was six months younger than I was, but then I probably looked younger than anyone else in my class. In our fifth form, one of the books we were studying for our English Literature O-level was "Lord of the Flies", and so we went to the cinema to watch the film of the book. It was rated as certificate X, meaning that it was only intended for ages 16 and above. At the time I was already 16 but Rowland was still 15. Nonetheless, at the box office I was refused the tickets and so Rowland had to buy them on our behalf.

In mid-1975, my wife Joanna and I returned to London after Joanna graduated from Sussex University. Rowland was also living locally, in the early stages of the teaching career that he had embarked on an under the influence of Mr Robinson, one of our Christ's College teachers. Rowland and I started occasionally running together in the evenings, and he became a family friend. Within the following few years Rowland married Pauline and their son Iain was born, a little bit older than our Jessica. Our two families often visited each other. But by this time Rowland had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and its effects grew progressively worse. He became wheelchair-bound, placing a major strain on Pauline and Iain. Occasionally Pauline, also a schoolteacher, would need to travel on a school journey, and Rowland would spend the week or two in a

respite unit, and I would visit as often as I could. It was sad indeed to see that the boy that I used to run with had become the man who barely had the power to even speak. I had been the only school friend that he had kept up with. In 2001 Rowland passed away at the age of 48, and it was my sad honour to be the only non-family pallbearer and to lower him to his eternal rest.

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My friend Benny also passed away much too young, at age 70, on January 5, 2023. Three days later I wrote some personal memories to his wife, Penina, which I reproduce here:

> The first time I met Benny was in the middle of 1963, when we were 11 years old. It was a meeting of a fledgeling Bnei Akiva group, and we were both sitting on the floor in a small room at the top of Finchley Central Synagogue[7]. I was wearing short trousers[8]. Benny was wearing long trousers and was tall, elegant, self-confident and cheerful. In a word, he was impressive, a boy who it would be a privilege to know. It was a joy to me that we were already friends by the time we both took our places in Form 1A, Room 3, Christ's College Finchley, under the tutelage of form teacher Major Watterson. Benny and I were destined to remain in the same form throughout our school career as we progressed through Forms 2A, 3L, 4L and 5L (Latin was our second foreign language) and the Science Sixth Form.
>
> We did not spend much time together during morning or lunchtime breaks because Benny would spend those times in the thick of the football matches taking place in the large playground area closest to College Terrace. I would be one of the waifs and strays killing time aimlessly elsewhere.

[7] in Redbourne Avenue.

8 To the apparent mirth of my new schoolmates, I was still wearing short trousers when Benny and I both started at Christ's College shortly after this first meeting.

When Judy spoke on Friday she reminded me of something that had slipped into the backwater of my memory - that Benny was not always the responsible and dependable figure of his adolescent and adult life. In his younger days he was no teacher's pet and would sometimes get himself into trouble. He was not one of the louder children who disrupted lessons but I suspect that his conscientiousness at times left some room for improvement. I may have spent less time on the wrong side of school discipline in those early years, but I was certainly not more mature than he. He gave me a weighty book, "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" for my barmitzvah, and I have to confess that it was much too serious and depressing for me to read. On one occasion, we both received a serious telling-off from the school authorities. This was during our Fourth Year, for much of which I walked with Benny to and from Kosher Meals at Kinloss Gardens each day. On the day in question, on our way back to school, we had entered one of the blocks of Chessington Court and climbed onto the roof. This had not gone unnoticed.

When I was about 15, Benny brought me to my first meeting at Sinai Youth Group, meeting at Hendon United Synagogue, Raleigh Close. From then on, we walked together each Shabbat afternoon. At three o'clock, having had half an hour to digest a hearty Shabbat lunch, I would walk round to 33 Oakdene Park, N3, which became a home I knew almost as well as my own.[9]

I believe that both I and my younger brother answered our mother in the same way when she asked what we did at the Shabbat meetings of our youth groups. Certainly I would reply, "We sang songs, and then we played games, and then we sang songs, and then we played games". My level of social development was not high. It was Benny who introduced me into a group of friends that

[9] Am I correct in remembering a sign in the toilet declaring that "All toilet paper in this establishment has been fully reconditioned"?

was not exclusively male, and to boys and girls who upheld religious standards that were beyond those that I had previously known. In both those respects, it was only Benny's friendship that enabled me to move beyond my comfort zone and to achieve some personal development.

While Benny played a crucial role in raising my level of personal development, it must be acknowledged that I reciprocated by luring him back down towards my own level. In particular, some of my obsession with running and athletics rubbed off onto him. In the summer of 1969, we raced each other twice over one mile, leading each other to performances that surprised both of us. The first race was a private time trial in preparation for the Sinai Sports Championship, while the second race was the Championship itself. In both races, Benny beat me, but not by much, and we finished a long way in front of our competitors in the championship.

On two occasions we walked many miles on a Shabbat afternoon to watch a special cross-country event. The first was the Southern Counties Championships at Parliament Hill in 1970 and the second was the International Cross country Championships at Cambridge in 1972. The first of these was an event that is still often discussed today amongst the fans of the sport. David Bedford, just turned 20, won the senior title over 9 miles by a wide margin, and then a few minutes later entered the junior race over 6 miles and won that. There is a David Bedford connection to the occasion when I visited Benny at Gateshead yeshiva in July 1971, but that is a different story.

We went on three holidays together. Two of these were in 1969: the Sinai Youth Group camp, taking place in a school in, I believe, Gloucestershire, and the second was under canvas, in Snowdonia, together with our friend from Sinai, Jonathan

Weisenberg zichrono livracha[10]. Then in 1972 we spent more than a week walking and running[11] in Yugoslavia[12].

Our paths diverged in the middle period of our lives as we each married and built our families. I took the easier choice of staying in England while Benny and Penina followed their hearts' calling and set up home in Israel. I knew that Benny was serving his country of birth[13] with courage and principle and academic brilliance, but that his job was subject to official secrecy. It was only at his 50th birthday party that I found out that he was a real rocket scientist. Three years after that birthday party, my son Daniel died. In my last email to Benny, in late November last year, I wrote, "As a bit of a belated non-sequitur, I also want you to know that your flying to England to be with me when I sat shiva for Daniel, is one of the most beautiful acts of friendship that I have ever been blessed to receive." Benny at that stage could only reply by voicemail, and characteristically said that "a large part of the credit must go to Penina, who urged me to go, and I was very pleased that I was able to make a difficult situation a little bit easier for you". Indeed, that visit helped me more than Benny knew, and taught me the meaning of true friendship.

Sixty years of my life was blessed by being a friend of Benny.

Brian Sacks
January 8, 2023

[10] zichrono livracha: Hebrew for "of blessed memory".
[11] On the Shabbat of our holiday, we walked 18 miles, during which we found a running track with the new "Tartan" synthetic surface as opposed to the cinders surface of our local Copthall Stadium. We returned the following day and Benny generously timed me over 1600m, waited while I put myself through a rather punishing training session, and congratulated me at the end of it.
[12] On that holiday I realised how intense was the animosity between the different populations within that single country held together under the dictatorial rule of President Tito.
[13] Benny was born in Israel.

Brian and Benny, Jerusalem Botanincal Gardens August 1998

From left to right: P. K. Hess, N. Pittas, D. Greenburg, D. Glass and R. Jackson.

Above: Rowland as Toinette the maid, in "The Hypochondriack" 1964 or 1965

Alongside: Rowland and his wife Pauline, September 1999

7 Margate

All my life I have had a love of holidays by the sea, a love born through my family's annual holidays to Cliftonville. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, our family spent the month of August in Cliftonville, Kent. My brothers and I looked forward to that holiday throughout the preceding winter and spring. I always felt that part of my academic success, such as it was, was due to that annual holiday, which left me feeling so refreshed and ready to resume my education.

Our month of August spent in Cliftonville was an important and cherished part of the Sacks family life. In 2016, I was asked to write an article in the Margate Civic Journal, about those holidays and how I and my brothers experienced them. I reproduce a slightly enhanced version of that article below:

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I am a Londoner, an authentic Cockney, born within the sound of Bow Bells. I spent my childhood, together with my parents and three brothers, in Finchley, North London. But for one month a year, throughout the nineteen fifties and sixties, our household relocated eighty miles eastward. Its new setting was Margate's genteel next-door-neighbour, Cliftonville. But to us boys it was Margate, and the name conjured up magic.

Every year, in late July, we would each pack our child-sized suitcase to spend a month's holiday away (in the first year or two that I can remember, it was five or six weeks away). When I was ten, eleven or twelve – this was the early nineteen sixties - I would typically pack my case with a couple of Richmal Compton

"William" books, two or three board games and some bats and ping-pong balls. I wouldn't dream of packing clothes; that was mum's department.

My preparation for the holiday would have begun early in the year. I remember that at age eleven, in my last year at primary school, my pocket money was one shilling per week. I saved up for twenty weeks to accumulate the pound that would see me comfortably through my time in Margate.

The Margate experience had its own ritual, an ordered sequence of steps, each one carried out just once a year for this one purpose. My father bringing the ladder upstairs and the luggage cases down from the loft; my father securing the roof rack to the car and the luggage to the roof rack before setting off on the journey. The journey took us through the hallowed Blackwall Tunnel, in which the car noise echoed back in a low-pitched whistle, syncopated into sections corresponding to the sections of the tunnel walls. Once we were beyond London and speeding along the A2 (before the days of the motorway M2) we watched to see how high the speedometer needle went. Our record was 83 mph, this being before the days of the 70 mph speed limit. We considered that speed to be close to the physical limit for a production car, much as the speed of light was the overall physical limit to speed in the universe. As we headed into the final twenty miles of the journey, we watched for the first two-toned cream and mauve East Kent bus and for the first glimpse of the sea. Journey's end was a detached house, 12 Avenue Gardens, which my family shared for the month with my cousins June and Philip Gordon and their daughter Susan. It had four bedrooms, which were allocated:

Front double: June, Philip and Susan;
Rear double: Mum, Dad (and Eliot when young);
Single above porch: Ada;
Above garage: older boys.

Other notable features included: a serving hatch between kitchen and dining room, and a run of 11 steps with banisters on both sides, enabling me to swing from top to bottom in a single leap.

On arrival, the grown-ups busied themselves bringing cutlery and crockery out of storage, cleaning rooms and making beds. Within a day, Dad and Philip had the task of taking the panels of the canvas beach hut out from the garage and down to the Palm Bay beach. They then set up the hut on the same spot as each previous year, behind the platform, a few yards to the west of Sackett's Gap.

My father would normally stay with us for the first week, before travelling back to London and to his shop for the middle weeks of the holiday. He would return to Margate for the weekends, and for the final week of the holiday. He loved walking, and I and my brothers would often walk with him along the cliff-top to the "Captain Digby" inn, a mile and a half each way, with an ice cream as our reward.

The days in Margate had a reassuring sameness and structure. During the mornings, the women - my mother, June and our home-help Ada – cooked and shopped. Sometimes I and my brothers would accompany my mother to the shops, or else we played: cricket in the back garden, putting on the nearby green, or cricket, frisbee or, with limited success, kite-flying, on the cliff-top. Sometimes I would walk along the Northdown Road, destination Woolworths, WH Smith's or one of the bookshops. Or I would run

along the promenade to The Lido, with nine pence in my hand as my passport to slot machine diversion. The Lido was a semi-subterranean amusement arcade - all that was visible above ground was the forty foot high beacon that displayed the Lido name. I remember one of the amusement machines where the different options featured black-and-white photos of Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner and other film stars - so I learned their names many years before I ever saw them in films. I spent many a penny on the vertical pinball machines where one needed to get the ball to land in one of the holes in the middle of the 'clock face' rather than the hole at the bottom; and to some extent I learnt the knack and could almost break even on those machines.

One year, most probably when I was 13, June and Philip had come down to Margate with their dog, and on several mornings I ran to Broadstairs and back together with the dog on its lead. Strange to relate, there were two years during which I consistently studied in the morning: when I was 12 and preparing for my barmitzvah, and when I was 14 and studying for the School Certificate Hebrew Examination that I was to take that October. But those two years were exceptions. For much more of the time, mornings were a time of freedom, walking along the wide, brightly-gravelled cliff-top promenade, my mind exulting in a current chart hit that captured the euphoria of that special time – "San Francisco", by Scott McKenzie or "Something in the Air" by Thunderclap Newman. Perhaps my mood was enhanced by the salt-water seaside air, the most invigorating that I have ever inhaled.

Margate lunch would be shepherd's pie, not quite up to my mother's unsurpassable London standards, but wonderful nevertheless. After lunch we packed up a sturdy wheeled basket with the provisions

and towels we would need for the afternoon, and walked down to our Palm Bay beach hut. In more recent years, Palm Bay has lost out as a resort to foreign competition, but back then it was still in its heyday. In August the beach was filled with holiday makers. Children were digging holes and building sand castles, adults were relaxing in their deck chairs, playing quoits or carving up the waters in their speedboats. As far as we boys were concerned, it was the best beach in the known world. The bay was dominated by a huge platform, standing on metal columns six feet above the sand, accommodating beach huts, an ice cream kiosk and a cafe. Along the shoreline there was a large bank of seaweed, and my father used to take some of it back for his mother to add to her bath.

Afternoons on the beach during those sixties summers were spent beneath blue skies – or so my memory tells me. Actually, I and my brothers took a statistical interest in Margate weather, because the Evening Standard maintained a "Sunshine League", recording the hours of sunshine, daily and cumulatively over the summer, for the country's main seaside resorts. Margate normally maintained a respectable position in the top half of the table, rather like Tottenham Hotspur in the Football League. The winners were always Jersey (somewhat unfairly included in this English league), Shanklin and Eastbourne.

My brother Jonathan and I liked to dig very large holes on the beach – mine would be up to five feet deep, more than my own height. Jonathan noted that these holes could be disguised by constructing a cover of newspaper and spreading sand over it; but I am sure that he never allowed any mischievous consequence to come to pass. Another diversion was to polish copper coins in the sand so that they shone like new. That of course was in the pre-decimalisation

days when pennies and half-pennies were sizeable coins that had real value. On a related subject, spending a penny – literally – at the beach for us meant clambering up the stairs of the platform that dominated Palm Bay, running over hot concrete past the beach huts, up four wooden steps and past the ice cream kiosk and cafe, back down another four wooden steps, over more hot concrete and then along a boardwalk to reach a gents' toilet built into the cliff at the far end of the bay. In my mind I can still hear the clatter of my feet on that boardwalk. Inside the toilet, I would pop my old penny into a brass slot to enter a cubicle where my sandy feet would make their imprint in the sand-and-urine paste of those who had come before.

Beach afternoons always included a trip up to the kiosk for ice cream. Mine was often a neapolitan wafer, its vanilla, strawberry and chocolate sections leaving their corresponding colouring on the sides of card in which it was packaged. Normally afternoon tea was made from the provisions that we had brought down from the house, but occasionally for a treat we would visit the cafe on the platform. I have memories of cheese straws and of the novel experience of sliding my tray along canteen rails.

Our evening treat once or twice a week was a visit to the Dreamland fun-fair park. When I was young I enjoyed "hooking the duck". Once hooked, the plastic duck was inverted to reveal the painted number that indicated the little prize that one had won. But the attraction of that stall diminished with advancing age, to be supplanted by more active attractions: the dodgems, the electric cars (until I crashed, causing a painful meeting between nose and steering wheel), the helter-skelter, the rollercoaster and the ghost train. At the end of the evening we would make our way out to the seafront road, a golden furlong of slot-machine-and-bingo arcades.

Young and older generation alike would indulge in two or three games of bingo, testing their luck against two dozen other players for prizes worth about ten or twelve shillings.

At the end of August, on the drive back to London, I would be feeling a subdued sense of separation. The full realisation of the passing came on seeing the first London bus, seeming so strikingly red. One of the first things I wanted to do on return to our house in Rathgar Close was to open the drawing room doors to allow a long run up to the staircase. I could always jump up to step four but try as I may, I don't think I ever reached step five. In the other direction, I could always jump down from step nine, but never dared to jump from step ten. That was probably just as well.

The feeling of sadness of dislocation was gradually supplanted by the anticipation of the new school year. I faced it on the one hand with some trepidation, but also with the feeling that the month in Margate had rendered me fresh and ready for the year ahead.

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In August 2008 I returned for a sentimental journey with my daughter Jessica. Neighbouring Broadstairs was thriving, its beach and streets were busy. But at the Margate sea-front, one really hesitated to get out of the car. Cliftonville was a desiccated shadow of its former self. Its hotels had been demolished or converted into flats. The Palm Bay beach was deserted and neglected. In Northdown Road, the TV shop "Thornton Bobby" was still selling – for 100 pounds – the old-style cathode-ray-tube televisions that one would have found it hard to even give away. Like its memory, the town seemed frozen in time.

So it was really heartening to return a few years later on a glorious May bank holiday and see the beaches crowded again. Margate is back on the rise. It is a delight to revisit Dreamland, now restored to its former magnificence. And to look forward to sharing the joy with my grandchildren before too long!

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Enjoying the beach of Palm Bay, Cliftonville - "our beach"
Left: Brian and Jonathan, around 1953
Right: Brian, around 1960

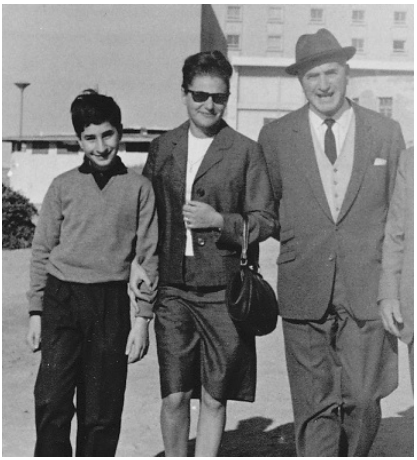
"Our spot on the beach": Louis, Jonathan, Brian, Libby, around 1956

Same spot: Ada, Alan, Eliot around 1964

Palm Beach as we knew it in its heyday of the 1960s

A favourite trip from Margate: The Viking Ship at Pegwell Bay. Alan, Eliot, Jonathan, Brian

Cliftonville-Margate was our regular annual summer holiday, but on rare occasions my parents would also travel abroad with one or more of the children. I travelled overseas with my parents three times, and I include here one picture from each of those occasions.



Above left: Belgium and France, summer 1962 (I am aged 10)

Above right: Israel, December 1965 to January 1966 (aged 14)

Alongside: Italy, summer 1968 (aged 16)

8 Family Life

8.1 Libby and Louis

My parents possessed strong but different personalities, and those personalities sometimes clashed. But Libby and Louis were bound together by an unbreakable bond of love.

My father died, at age 88, on December 14, 1996. He and my mother had celebrated their golden wedding less than three months previously, on September 16. A celebratory meal was held at Elaine and Jonathan's home, the Chief Rabbi's residence in Hamilton Terrace, St John's Wood. My brother Alan gave a speech. It lasted less than twenty seconds. From across the room, and with outstretched arm, Alan pointed an accusing finger at his father and stated,

"That suit, that my father is wearing, he wore for Jonathan's barmitzvah.
Because there is one thing you can say about my father.
He chooses quality. And he sticks with it".

In that short speech, Alan had captured one of the essences of the fifty year marriage.

My father loved walking, and my brothers and I probably had the most relaxed conversations with my father while walking with him. On more than one occasion my father said to me on a walk, "I knew that your mother was right for me very early on, because once we were walking together and she laddered her stocking. But she didn't make any fuss, she just carried on. Other women would have made a fuss". Looking back on it, my father's anecdote was simplistic,

arbitrary and chauvinistic. But it did emphasise to me that, as far as he was concerned, my mother was different, and better. As Alan was to put it many years later, she was "quality".

That same message was drummed into my brothers and me in a vignette that played out weekly, at our Sabbath midday meal. As we were eating our main course, my father would say, "Boys, your mother is the best cook in the world. You will remember this when you get married, because you will never have food as good as this again". Another of his common sayings was, "Don't throw stones at your mother, throw bricks at your father instead". This was to be taken as a paean of praise towards our mother and definitely not as a licence for loose behaviour towards our father.

My father was a keen photographer. His photographs of their honeymoon in the South of France, and of their early married life, depict my mother as his muse and the object of his fascination. Throughout their lives, they addressed each other as "Hon". The inscriptions of their birthday cards read, "To Hon ….. From Hon".

Many years and four children later, Louis still seemed more at ease alone with his wife, than together with his whole family. His normal weekday routine throughout the 1960s, when he still owned his shop, bears witness to this observation.

Shortly after 8 AM, he would have breakfast alone with his wife in their bedroom. Ada would have brought it up on a tray and set it down on their bedside table, so for a quarter of an hour or so, Libby and Louis would drink their tea and eat their toast and marmalade together. The children would be getting dressed and having breakfast downstairs in the presence of Ada, keeping Libby and Louis relatively undisturbed. After breakfast, Louis would go off in

his car to his parents and then to his shop, while Libby would go back to sleep for another couple of hours.

In the evening, Louis would come home and eat supper, always based around a slice of beef that he would smother in OK sauce. It would be followed by the same desert as always, and accompanied by the same glass of wine. He would eat alone at the kitchen table, unwinding from the rigours of the day. After the evening meal, Louis might take a walk for about half an hour with one of his sons. There were periods when my father liked to take his evening walk with me, and I think that this is true with each of my brothers at different times. On return, my father would retire upstairs to his bedroom, to read, watch television, or write to his sister Evelyn in Los Angeles. Louis kept up his bi-weekly correspondence with Evelyn, who he still called Esther, for forty years, writing his closely packed airmail letters sitting at a corner of Libby's dressing table. Libby would be together with him in the room, sitting in bed reading a book or doing a crossword puzzle and perhaps eating peanuts. Louis and Libby would often talk to each other in Yiddish or their own version of backwards slang, especially when they did not want to be overheard and understood.

After Louis died, Libby kept his wardrobe and its contents exactly as it was, and still felt his presence. She sometimes said, "I could hear Louis saying to me ‘Stand with your shoulders straight’".

8.2 Louis Sacks, Family man

Having written about my father's single life, his early married life, and his fifty years' relationship with my mother, I will now turn to his role within the family.

On his arrival in Finchley in 1950, my father immediately joined the drive to found a new synagogue. Together with colleagues, he put in the groundwork of enlisting a membership by walking around the area each night and knocking on the doors of houses where he saw a *mezuzah* on the doorpost. He can justifiably be considered to be one of the principal founders of the Finchley Central Synagogue, a community within the Federation of Synagogues. He served as Chairman and then President of the congregation for several years. After almost a decade of the synagogue meeting in a temporary rented hall in Victoria Avenue, he took a leading role in the planning and construction of a new permanent synagogue building in Redbourne Avenue nearby.

How could one sum our father as my brothers and I knew him during our childhood and youth?

His work was frustrating and unfulfilling, an expression of a life deprived of opportunity. His working week left him tired. While he owned his shop, on one night each week he would travel up to Leeds and Bradford in a train sleeper compartment in order to make purchases.

Shabbat was very important to him, both as a day of religious observance and as a day for building the characters of his children. The concept of "dignity" was very important to him. It was important for us all to dress smartly, attending the Synagogue in suits tailored from his own cloth. He instructed us to walk tall and not to put our hands in our pockets.

He was proud of his children and of their achievements, and wanted what was best for his them as he saw it. He did not want his

children to struggle in life in the way that he had struggled. He set a good example for his children as a proud and honest citizen.

He said of himself that he had been lonely for much of his life. But there were periods when he felt especially close to particular individuals with whom he sat in the Synagogue, perhaps sharing some sort of bond because of Synagogue affairs.

He was much more physically active than my mother. He had a little high-kicking "party piece" in the privacy of his bedroom; not up to chorus girls standards, but reasonably impressive for a middle-aged man, and an opportunity to display high-spiritedness for a short interlude.

Dad loved walking. Throughout my St Mary's School junior years (1960 to 1963) Dad would take a long walk with me on Shabbat afternoons. The first time we walked, it was for four miles, but the walks quickly lengthened to six miles. For many years during the 1960s and 1970s, Dad would regularly to take an after-dinner walk on weekdays with an appropriate-aged and available son.

He was happiest on Sundays and on holiday, happiest out of doors and when walking. When we were young, Dad would take us out to Hampstead Heath on a Sunday, to walk and to watch children floating their model boats in the boating pond. We would then visit his sister Milly and family, who lived nearby. My father also liked taking us up to the British Museum in Central London. For most of the time between 1966 and 1982, one of his sons was studying in Cambridge, and it was a real pleasure for him to travel up on a Sunday morning to visit his son and walk through the gardens of the colleges.

During our holidays in Margate, on a Sunday morning, Dad loved to walk with his children to the Captain Digby Inn in Kingsgate, a half-hour cliff-top walk each way. Or he would drive us to the visit the Montefiore Synagogue in Broadstairs, and then onto the Ramsgate Model Village or the Pegwell Bay Viking ship.

He enjoyed his occasional holidays in Israel, and was a passionate supporter of the country. He greatly admired Menachem Begin.

After buying Austin cars earlier in his married life, from the mid-1960s he always bought second-hand brown-coloured Rovers, which he would drive slowly while listening to the classical music station Radio 3.

His favourite television programme was the comedy Steptoe and Son, perhaps being aware of the parallels with his own life situation of working in a dingy shop together with his elderly father. He enjoyed watching boxing matches on television and current affairs programmes such as Panorama.

Later life

In 1970, our father's shop was compulsorily purchased, and he found a low-paid position in a family firm. He felt that his age prevented him from finding any better employment, and he gained little satisfaction from his work. Although he was apparently initially employed because of his knowledge of the textile trade, it seemed that this became less relevant later on, and he was mainly utilized as a letter writer. But he would not countenance the suggestion of ceasing employment, and so he continued to work for the firm until poor health forced him to retire at age 80.

After he sold his shop, at Jonathan's suggestion, he joined an art class at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, and enjoyed painting in oils for the rest of his life.

In the early 1970s, he bought a flat in Cliftonville, probably using the funds from the compulsory purchase of his shop. In later life, he would often take himself off to spend Shabbat on his own in that flat, as he particularly relished Cliftonville's sea air and cliff-top walks. He made the flat available to any of his sons and their families for their own holidays.

He underwent four hip replacement operations within a short period of time starting from when he was eighty years old. From that point on, he walked with a stick; this was a severe blow to his self image. He chose not to travel to Israel again because he was unwilling to pass through the airport in a wheelchair.

Our father died of stomach cancer on December 14, 1996. He had entered hospital one month previously, for an operation to remove the cancer. Although he initially made good progress after the operation, he began to deteriorate after a couple of weeks.

His wife Libby and his four sons maintained a constant presence at his bedside. It was painful indeed to see such a proud man brought low. In his final days it was very important for him to pray. As I read the *shema* prayer to him, he summoned his strength to call out its second verse loudly - the verse that one must only say aloud when one is at the point of death. His faith was absolute until the end.

8.3 Libby Sacks, mainstay of the family

When Jonathan spoke about our mother at her funeral, he described her this way:

"Mum was the background music of our lives, in ways we weren't always aware of at the time. She gave it its emotional tonality; its shape, its feeling, its colouration. And that background music was very simple. It consisted of one elemental thing: *ahavat chinam*, total, nonjudgemental affirmation".

His words glossed over the trials to her patience caused by a family of squabbling young boys. But nevertheless, they are an apt description of our mother. She was normally cheerful, nurturing, supportive, and a lover of peace.

To a considerable extent, Mum's role was within the home while Dad preferred to play his fatherly role outside. Mum enjoyed playing cards and tackling word puzzles, and it was she who taught us scrabble, cat's cradle, elementary origami, and card games such as rummy and pontoon. As we each prepared for our eleven-plus (the national test that determined whether we would graduate onto Grammar School) Mum would help us in the weeks before the exam as we worked through practice papers at home.

As I have already noted, Dad and all the family very much appreciated Mum's cooking. The Shabbat menu, both on Friday evening and Saturday lunchtime, was chicken soup, followed by a main course of chicken, roast potatoes and carrots, and a dessert of fruit salad and chocolate-topped apple cake. After the meal, we could choose three sweets (or, for American readers, candies) of Cadbury's Roses, or Russian Caramels. She was a believer in the comfort value of sweet food.

One of the most stressful times in any Orthodox Jewish household is the period of weeks leading up to the Passover festival. The kitchen is almost literally turned upside down; all cutlery, crockery and utensils are put away and special "Passover" ones are brought out of storage; special food is bought and all "everyday" food is finished off; all surfaces are covered with tinfoil - the list continues. It must be said that each year Mum and Ada, working together, made that whole period much less stressful for the family than it otherwise would have been.

Both Mum and Dad were smokers, although they each gave up the habit during their late middle age. I remember one occasion when I was about eight years old and was feeling particularly warm towards my parents; I walked round to the sweet shop to buy Mum a present of a box of Du Maurier cigarettes, and Dad a tin of Rothmans cigars. During the 1950s, in leafy suburban Finchley, nothing was considered suspicious about a young child, already known to the shop, making such a purchase.

Jonathan, Brian and Alan admiring new brother Eliot

Jonathan wearing the St Mary's cap and scarf, Alan and Brian

9 A Day in the Life

9.1 A Day in the Life Part 1: Shabbat

Shabbat, starting at sundown Friday evening and ending at nightfall the following day, was very important to our father. It was the day of the week in which he stamped his mark on his young family and on our personalities and our vision of the world.

My father, my brothers and I would attend the Friday evening service at Finchley Central Synagogue. Dad had been one of its founders, but by the mid-sixties he was disenchanted with the synagogue. Nonetheless, he retained family membership because it was a local synagogue that my mother was able to walk to. Although she did not normally attend Shabbat services, she did attend on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and occasionally for other services. She was not able to walk to the other congregations that my father preferred. This relative nearness is the reason that we attended Finchley Central Synagogue on a Friday evening. But my father endured the service and the company of his fellow congregants, rather than enjoyed them.

At around 8:30 on Saturday morning my brothers and I would be woken to get dressed in our smart suit and shirt and tie. The march of a couple of miles to my father's favoured shul represented, to him, religious and moral rectitude moulded into the strictures of military discipline, in a world of good and bad, holy and godless. A clash of personalities between Dad and myself during those walks led to a breakdown of our relationship during my years at Christ's College. But our father's upstanding pride made a lasting impression on Jonathan. During the 1960s, it was very unusual to see a

yarmulke (which we called a kappel) being worn openly in the street. On one occasion, as we were walking back from synagogue in Margate, another congregant ran up and said to my father, "Your son has forgotten to take his kappel off!" My father replied, "No son of mine will be ashamed to wear his kappel in the street".

9.2 A Day in the Life Part 2: Dad's shop

When my brothers and I were young - up to around age 11 - our father would sometimes, during school holidays, take us with him to his shop at 275, Commercial Road. On the way, he would pick up his father Israel from his home in Clapton. Israel was around eighty years old at this time and of little practical help in the shop, but at least he and my father were company from each other during the long hours between customers. The first things my father did on entering the shop were to disable the burglar alarm and then to put the kettle on in the back room.

The shop was dark, drab, dusty and uninviting, although, in that respect, it was in keeping with its surroundings. Rolls of cloth were displayed in the grimy window; all appeared to be sombre fabrics intended for men's suits. The shop was quite deep, with a long counter on which my father would roll out lengths of cloth for cutting to specific lengths. Other than that, the main area of the shop was bare and under-utilised. A room at the back of the shop contained a desk and my father's account books, the cash till and the gas ring. Most of my father's stock was in the basement. My father would carry heavy rolls of cloth on his shoulder, up and down a long staircase of backless wooden planks. During the course of the day, perhaps two or three potential customers would walk through the door.

If I or my brothers needed to use the toilet, our choice was either to walk to the underground station a couple of hundred yards away, or else to go out of the front door and into a separate side entrance and up two flights of steps, where there was a metal bucket we could use.

My brothers and I would always spend a large part of the day at my maternal grandmother's wine shop, a short walk away at 162, Commercial Road. The wine shop was much more enticing for a young child. We would be welcomed by our grandmother and our Uncle Meyer or Uncle Wilfred. Benny was also there to greet us; he had worked at the wine shop for many years, was always cheerful, was tall and slim and vaguely reminded me of the Shadows guitarist Hank Marvin. Here we could ask for, and receive, a small Britvic bottle of pineapple juice, and we could roam around upstairs or in the basement, gathering wine labels for our collection. Frumkin's produced a varied range of wines as well as cherry brandy and other spirits. The barrels were all downstairs, so the smells of damp wood and liquor added to the sense of adventure as one climbed one's way down into the dark.

When writing the booklet "The Story of Frumkin's Wines", I added some further personal memories:

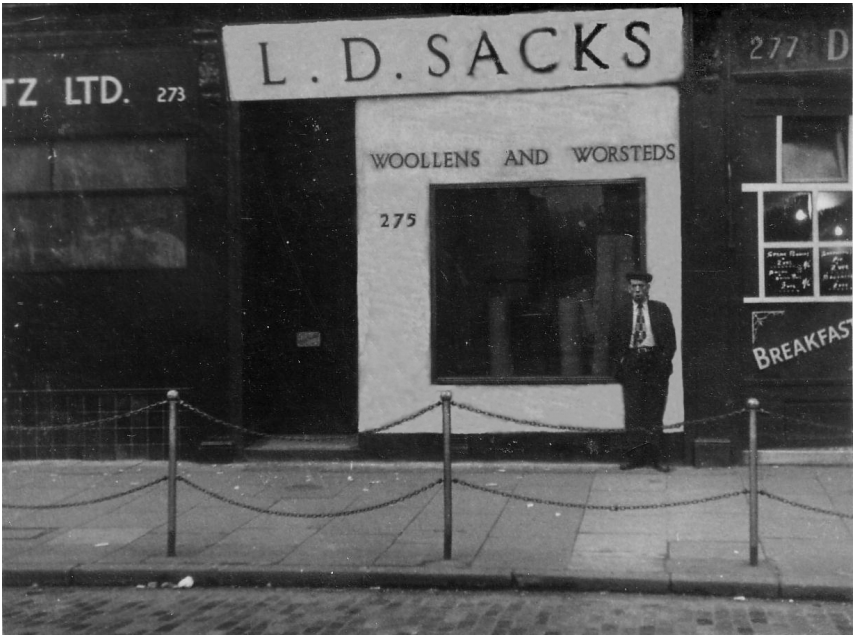
Health & Safety was not so rigidly enforced in those days, and I remember a lift shaft that, in my eyes, was an awe-inspiring chasm to be treated with respect from a safe distance.

In describing what Frumkin's Wines meant to me as a child, I must not overlook the wine and spirit labels and their wonderful designs. My thanks go to Lionel Frumkin for the information that the labels were printed by Ormerods, the still-operating "Print specialists since

1879". Gracing my family's Shabbat dinner table from my earliest childhood, at a time when travel to Israel was beyond any realistic expectation, it was the Frumkin's wine labels that shaped my imagination of the country; a land of wide plains, placid lakes and rolling hills, of serene camels and serene sunsets, of neatly sown fields extending into the distance beneath blue skies.

In the summer of 1970, when I was 18, Uncle Meyer was kind enough to employ me at the Commercial Road shop for two or three weeks at a rate of twelve pounds per week. I remember that the most popular item was VP Wine at eleven shillings and sixpence, appealing to a clientele possibly somewhat downmarket from that drawn in by the West End branch. Next in popularity was Johnny Walker Red Label whisky, at fifty shillings and eleven pence.

Thus I was lucky enough to work in the East End branch in its final year of operation, and to man the cash register in the final year of pounds, shillings and pence. That short spell of employment enabled me to fund my first independent holiday abroad, before moving out to embark on my student career. For me, life was opening up, but for Frumkin’s in the East End, an era of more than three quarters of a century was drawing to its close.



My father's shop: 275 Commercial Road, London E1

My grandfather, Israel Shakovitch, at 275 Commercial Road

9.3 A Day in the Life 3: December 25

As a family, we were comfortable with Christmas. Did we have a Christmas tree, did we receive Christmas presents? Emphatically no. We were proudly Jewish, but we were proud citizens of a Christian country. We received our presents on Chanukah, and as we sang Maoz Tzur in front of the lit Chanukah candelabra, Dad would accompany us on his violin, virtually the only time during the year that he would play it.

But Christmas was part of the national culture, a day when shops would be shut and most people would be at home with their families. Quite likely, there would be snow on the ground. On that day, or perhaps on the Shabbat immediately before Christmas, our mother would make a Christmas pudding, full of currants and Golden Syrup.

Probably the most significant aspect of Christmas for my brothers and I was the TV schedule for the day itself and the days on either side. My brothers and I would re-watch the Beatles films "Help" or "Hard Day's Night" on TV and submit to my father's exhortations to, yet again, watch "Mary Poppins".

10 Cambridge Days: Six sketches

10.1 College Life

I never rated Frank Powell, the venerable and somewhat crusty College Director of Studies of Mathematics, as a great mathematician. But he made a profound impact on my life. He invited the new intake of Gonville and Caius College mathematicians to attend a two week introductory course at the start of September 1970, a month before term officially began. I don't suppose I learnt any maths during that time. But the two weeks that we mathematicians spent together, in the absence of other students, helped form a bond of friendship that has lasted, as I write this, for more than fifty years.

Perhaps the main factor sustaining this bond during our three undergraduate years at college was the evening meal, or "Hall". College rules dictated that we ate in the impressive college dining hall most evenings during term-time. Though we came from very different backgrounds, our year group of mathematicians would tend to eat together and then spend time together talking over coffee in the Buttery downstairs.

A little reminiscence on Hall: Hall took place in two sittings, the first informal, the second formal. For formal hall we wore our undergraduate academic gowns, in my case a hand-me-down from Jonathan. Formal hall was heralded by a sonorous gong, followed by grace in Latin, read by a scholar (that is, a holder of a college scholarship, normally awarded for an exceptional performance in the entrance exam, or for obtaining a First in a university exam). My memories of the meals themselves feature the ubiquitous,

highly peelable rolls, which invited one to peel off and eat the crust and then discard the rest. Maintaining a kosher diet, I would then wait for my omelette, slightly undercooked for my liking, which would always appear either first or last but certainly not at the same time as the regular meals. I ate the same dessert as my fellow diners, and I can recommend the college trifles, though I cannot confirm that the same chef is still making them.

Allowing my reminiscence to drift on to the end of the meal: at the bottom of the broad staircase leading down from Hall there was a large mat designed to dampen impact shock to the knees – or so it seemed to me. It was too inviting. In the style of Charles Paddock, the American sprinter who featured briefly in the film "Chariots of Fire", I would finish my descent of the staircase with a flying leap. Maybe it was a release of tension or maybe, in honour of Sir Isaac Newton, an expression of appreciation for the law of gravity.

First year students were entitled to accommodation in college, at a rent commensurate with the desirability of the room. Jonathan had recommended that I apply for "one of the cheaper rooms in Harvey Court". Harvey Court was a newly built 1960s block about six hundred metres away from Caius across the river Cam. The building formed the four sides around a raised central quadrangle, reached by a flight of steps from ground level. I was allocated the room immediately next to the top of this staircase, and I felt that everyone was looking into my room as they walked towards the stairs.

One unusual feature of my room was that the college had given it over to local interior designer Joshua Taylor to exercise his creativity upon. The rather surly porter of the block told me that it was the "joke room". One notable feature was a green chair whose

seat, shaped as if cut out of an egg shell, was suspended from an outer frame by thick rubber bands. It looked as if it had come straight out of an arty psychedelic sixties film. The rest of the room was expressed in black and white. In the summer term, when my girlfriend of the time (later my wife) came to visit, she noted that the walls were bare. That inspired me to go out and buy a sheet of cartridge paper, a paintbrush and, in keeping with the room, a small pot of black poster paint. Using these, in three hours I painted Bob Beamon, the long jumper whose giant leap for mankind in Mexico City in 1968 came a year before that other giant leap by Neil Armstrong. My Bob Beamon painting hangs on my wall to this day.

10.2 Cambridge Bed Race 1971

I remember a moment in time from my first year at Cambridge. I was standing just outside Harvey Court porter's lodge, and I felt a tangible consciousness of expanded horizons, a realisation that I was living through a special time. Interwoven into the fabric of the moment was the wonderful (to me) music of the time: "I'll be there" by the Jackson Five, featuring the young Michael Jackson's amazing voice; "Crackin' Rosie", bringing Neil Diamond to my awareness for the first time; "I hear you knocking" by Dave Edmunds; "When I'm dead and gone" by McGuiness Flint.

But the moment in time was really made by the anticipation of a nocturnal adventure such as I had never experienced in my sheltered life before. For the first time I was to spend the night with a girl in bed.

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The Cambridge Bed Race was one of the highlights of the student rag week. Each college raised a team consisting of around twelve

runners plus, most importantly, one pretty girl, while the college engineers would fashion a mechanically efficient and roadworthy bed on wheels. The race, starting at midnight Saturday night, was to push the bed, with girl lying snugly inside, from Cambridge to London. The race was run as a relay, such that at any time, two runners would be pushing the bed while the remaining team members would be getting their breath back in an accompanying mini-van. The best overall speed was achieved with relay legs of around 200 – 300 metres. During the race, the bed itself would maintain a fairly constant velocity of perhaps 10 to 12 miles per hour, though on downhill stretches its speed could test the top sprint speed of the runners. The mini-van meanwhile would begin each stage behind the bed, having let out the new runners and picked up the runners of the previous stage. The van would then race past the bed, to be able to let out the next pair of runners. In this fashion the Caius bed finished in a creditable fourth place, in around six hours.

And so, just before dawn, I was to be found panting in the car park of Jack Straw's Castle pub, Hampstead, sweaty, spent and satisfied. The night is vibrant in my memory to this day.

"Ah", but you might well ask, "How was it for the girl in the bed?"

Well, I feel sure that, had I asked her, "Did the earth move for you?", she would have answered "Yes – about 56 miles!".

10.3 Cambridge University Jewish Society

Outside of college, my main social activity revolved around the Jewish Society, based in the synagogue building in Thompson's Lane. Here again I made friendships that have lasted all my life. Most of my waking time during Shabbat was spent at the Jewish

Society, beginning with the Friday evening synagogue service, and including all meals until sundown on Saturday.

As a Cambridge University student in the early seventies, one could fairly be accused of living in an ivory tower. Colleges were still single-sex, and so one socialised with fellow students, all male and generally all equally eccentric. But Cambridge University Jewish Society was there to bring one back in touch with real life to a certain extent. Here a *kashrut* observer[14] could extend his diet to include meat. Here one met townspeople, dons and students of colleges outside of the university. One even met girls, though normally each already had a man in tow.

Cambridge University Jewish Society also offered the opportunity to take on responsibility. During my undergraduate career I served four terms as some sort of "officer", starting as maintenance officer (paper towels in the toilets etc.) and ending as Society Secretary (designing, drawing and distributing publicity posters). But in between those postings, I demonstrated the masochism that later showed itself in serial marathon running, by serving as Synagogue Secretary **twice**.

The Synagogue Secretary post was essentially a begging role, and carried a corresponding social standing. One was tasked with recruiting volunteers for all parts of each synagogue service. Finding people to lead services was relatively easy. The real problem was finding volunteers for each week's Torah reading. To learn the week's "leyning" involves learning by heart both the musical notes and all vowels, as the Torah scroll includes neither. As a consequence, to learn a full week's leyning would take months

[14] Observer of the Jewish dietary laws

and would require determination and a very retentive memory. It was an unrealistic task for a single student and instead I needed each week to find four or five students prepared to share the leyning between themselves. The situation was characterised by the saying "Beggars can't be choosers".

But this maxim did not seem to cut much ice with many of the ordinary members of the congregation. The leyners themselves came from two distinct subsections of the young Anglo-Jewish community of that time – the Modern Orthodox and the Archaic Orthodox. The Modern Orthodox students typically wore corduroy jeans to synagogue, while the Archaic Orthodox wore dull suits with thin lapels, dull shirts with thin collars and thin, dull ties. It also seemed to be the case that the Modern Orthodox possessed pleasant, melodious voices whereas the typical Archaic Orthodox voice was either flat and out-of-tune or gratingly harsh and precise.

No doubt in London, the Modern Orthodox and the Archaic Orthodox community members would attend different synagogues, but Cambridge did not afford the luxury of choice. This meant that I had to field the complaints from the Archaics that a man wearing jeans should not be allowed to stand and leyn at the bima (the central lectern); and the complaints from everyone else about the (lack of) vocal talents of the Archaics.

Such complaints were a resounding vote of confidence however, in comparison to the response to my solution to the problem occasioned when one too many women arrived in synagogue. At this time in Cambridge, males greatly outnumbered females. Of the thirty university colleges, only three were for girls. The arrangement of the synagogue reflected this gender imbalance, and the ladies gallery totalled only about 12 seats, in two rows. So when, on one

occasion, a thirteenth lady came to attend Saturday morning service, I set out a couple of chairs immediately in front of the ladies gallery. This occasioned what was, to me, the surreal sight of several “frummers”[15] descending on me from various parts of the congregation, united in the aim of impressing on me the gravity of the wise Rabbinic law that women must be kept behind a barrier in the synagogue. In that moment of enlightenment, Cambridge University Jewish Society showed me that if anyone in my family was destined to become Chief Rabbi, it was not me.

10.4 Ron

I thank Ron for many things.

Ron Hassett came up to Gonville & Caius College Cambridge at the same time as I did, and we met through attending the Jewish Society. For me, attending the Jewish society was as much a law of nature as the law that says apples fall downwards. Quite apart from anything else, my brother Jonathan had been President of the Jewish Society, and he was still intermittently around Cambridge (though not for the purpose of keeping an eye on me). I hasten to confirm however, that Cambridge was indeed an opportunity for me to develop my independent identity. Jonathan did have the grace to disappear to Oxford during the working week.

For Ron, on the other hand, attending Jewish society was a complete break from his upbringing. This had been totally secular; he had received no Jewish education and had not celebrated a Barmitzvah. He had grown up in Loughborough, which, in regards

[15] A "frummer", colloquially speaking, is a person who is especially observant of Jewish Law

to having a Jewish community, might just as well have been Alaska. He seemed the archetypal tall, lean, refined and cultured Englishman.

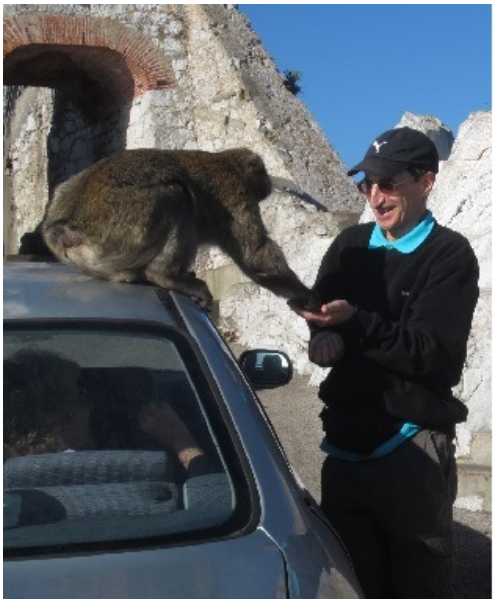
But I began by saying that I thank Ron for many things. The first thing he gave me was friendship and a boost to my self-esteem, for he placed me in the role of teacher. We often walked together to Jewish Society for synagogue services or meals, and spent many hours in college talking. During the first year I taught him some elements of Judaism and he took to this knowledge and practice like a duck takes to water. He even deferred to me by lending a sympathetic ear to my complaints about how the Rabbis had (as I claimed) misinterpreted the religion of the prophets.

Because my First Year accommodation was in Harvey Court, across the River Cam from the main college, attending the evening meal in Hall meant walking through Kings College and across Kings Bridge. There was a spot in the vicinity of the bridge where local youths would "mug" students, demanding money at knifepoint. I was with Ron on one such occasion, and he simply pooh-poohed the knife with which we were threatened. I was reminded of that incident many years later when I watched the film Crocodile Dundee. The eponymous hero of the film faced the same situation and duplicated Ron's response, but with the addition of a visual aid. Crocodile Mick scornfully told his girlfriend, "That's not a knife...", continuing, as he pulled out a machete from his clothing, "…THAT'S a knife!"

Ron has now been the Rabbi of Gibraltar for most of his adult life. He and his wife Cochava have twelve children. Ron has graciously hosted me and shown me the sites of Gibraltar on several occasions. He is something of a monkey whisperer, always able to coax the

Barbary apes into position for an amazing photograph. Black yarmulke and long beard notwithstanding, Ron's grace and his keen wit remain as strong as they always were.

Ron pointing out the sites of Gibraltar



Barbary Apes on the Rock of Gibraltar

10.5 Jewish Folk Tale, 1971

In 2008 I was asked to write a Chassidic tale (Jewish folk tale) in Hebrew. It gave me the opportunity to set down on paper an incident that had happened to me in Gateshead when I was visiting my friend Benny Tiefenbrunner during College vacation in July 1971. Actually, 10th July 1971 - I checked that up by consulting my copy of "The Dave Bedford Story"…

I had always thought that there was a pearl of Chassidic wisdom that could be prised out of the incident. In the following narration, all the events taking place in Gateshead are recorded accurately, other than the name of Rabbi Freilich's son.

But the reader should be aware that in the surrounding story framework, I lay down the "Chassidic Tale" style with a trowel; a style in which tales are set in 18th century Poland where life could sometimes be cheap. Also, take note that this surrounding story framework is only as historically accurate as most Chassidic tales…

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All this happened a long time ago.

In the great city of London there lived a young man named Jacob, who loved to study the Talmud. But Jacob's younger brother Benjamin was not like Jacob. Benjamin preferred to learn about running.

One day Jacob said to Benjamin, "To learn about running instead of studying Talmud, this is *bitul zman*, this is a waste of time". But Benjamin answered him, "No, Jacob, all knowledge is important,

not just Talmud. Whatever we learn might help us one day. Only God knows the future; it is a mystery to man."

The years passed, and one day Benjamin made a journey to the great yeshiva in Gateshead. He lodged at the house of a learned Rabbi, Rabbi Freilich. Rabbi Freilich and his wife had a young family, and their youngest child was Jankele, a nine-year-old boy with long sidelocks. After the Sabbath midday meal, Benjamin offered that he would take Jankele for a walk, so that Rabbi Freilich and his wife could rest.

David Bedford
European 10,000 metres record
Portsmouth, 10 July 1971

At this time there lived in London a great runner by the name of David Bedford. It was known that on that day David Bedford was going to try to run a distance of ten thousand metres faster than any man had ever run such a distance before. Benjamin wanted to know whether David Bedford had succeeded in his momentous quest. And so, when Benjamin and Jankele encountered one of the young men of the town, Benjamin stopped and asked him, "Do you know how well David Bedford did when he ran ten thousand metres this afternoon?"

The young man answered, "I think he ran about twenty-eight minutes." He paused for a moment, and then added, "It's not that I don't like Jews, but when I'm with my friends I don't like Jews. And

I've got to tell you that you shouldn't be walking in these streets." Benjamin thanked him, and he and Jankele continued on their way.

After another minute or two, six more of the young men of the town came running towards Benjamin and Jankele in a very menacing fashion, screaming that they were going to "beat those Jews up". They had almost reached their intended victims when suddenly from behind them came a great shout:

"Stop! They're my friends!"

The youth whom Benjamin and Jankele had met before had his arms outstretched, as if he were a giant bird protecting his young. And the shouting ones were quietened by his words, and Benjamin and Jankele were spared.

The following day, Benjamin returned to London and told his brother Jacob this story of how his love of running had saved him and his young ward from a beating. Jacob remembered the conversation he had had with his brother those many years before. Now he said, "I see that you were right that every kind of knowledge is important. Life for the faithful is full of danger, and I see that whatever we learn may one day help us."

From that day on, Jacob studied and taught himself all of the knowledge of God and man. He became the Leader of the Rabbis of the Nation. His fame spread across all the lands, and throughout the world people would say, "Rabbi Jacob is a great and a wise man. He is a master of all of the knowledge under the sun!"

And in his quiet moments, away from his followers and his holy books, Jacob's footsteps could be heard as he pounded his circuits around the synagogue grounds.

10.6 Partial eclipse of a would-be mathematician

There now follows another slice of my story in which exams and results are again all-too-depressingly prominent. But however much I have left exams behind me in the last fifty years, they loomed large during my student days. And if my dreams are a window into my subconscious, then those exams still trouble me to this day.

I was in a very good place mathematically when I started at Cambridge, having taken three Maths A-levels and attended lectures at Kings College London as well as forging ahead with some of my own studies. I found First Year Cambridge mathematics comfortable. But I found that my room in Harvey Court was rather exposed to viewing, as it was next to the main staircase and I was over-sensitive towards people observing me as they walked towards that staircase. The main task for undergraduate Mathematicians at Cambridge was to attend lectures in the morning - generally, in the first year, two lectures per morning, and so 12 per 6-day-week. Two of those lectures, the Saturday ones, I had to catch up on after Shabbat by borrowing someone else's notes, since I did not attend lectures on Shabbat (or on Jewish Festivals). Then, after lunch each weekday, I needed to work through the notes of the morning lectures, because the reality was that in the lectures themselves the most I could hope to do was to keep up with copying the notes from the blackboard; I couldn't absorb the material at the same time. Working through the notes of a lecture during that first year took a bit more than one hour. In subsequent years it took more like one and a half hours.

For me, absorbing the material was always the significant task in keeping up with my studies during the term. I felt that, if I knew the material, I generally had the ability to answer the questions, be they

Supervision questions or exam questions. This lesser concern over supervision questions in comparison with working through lecture notes occasionally generated mild disapproval from my tutors, who thought I wasn't working enough.

The First Year exams, Tripos Part 1A, were spread over just two days. On the first day, I was disturbed by someone else in the exam room who kept up a constant cough. At the end of the day I asked to be moved to the other exam room for the second day. But here too I was disturbed by the candidate sitting closest to me who was fretting demonstratively. I certainly felt that my exam performance had been compromised on both days. For some reason Jonathan learned of my exam results first, and when he told me that I had gained a First, that was all I wanted to know; that was enough. But then he told me that I had gained the Michael Latham prize for the best First Year Caius mathematician.

The second year had its pluses and minuses mathematically. I had a room in college, in St Michael's Court, whereas most of the college second-year mathematicians were out in digs some way away. I had earned the right to a room in college by virtue of having earned a Scholarship through my First in Tripos 1A. The room was quite satisfactory, notwithstanding that it was on the third floor whereas the toilet was in the basement. But I seemed to spend much of the year two weeks behind in working through my lecture notes. The Succot (Tabernacles) Festival caused significant disruption to the start of my academic year. The pace of the mathematics was more strenuous than in the first year, with generally three lectures per day rather than two. One course in the first term, Complex Analysis, was probably my favourite course of the whole degree because of what I felt was the beauty of the mathematics - the way one could

work out infinite integrals by expressing them as the limits of integrals enclosing regions of the complex plane, and the relationship of those integrals to the number of singularities that these regions enclosed.

Another course in the first or second term of that second year was Quantum Mechanics, in which I was supervised by Stephen Hawking. This was in the days before he was fitted with a voice box, and when only a few close associates could make out what he was trying to enunciate. To me his speech was completely unintelligible. He could write, on a piece of paper on his thigh, through the use of two fingers. Beyond this he was almost completely paralysed. During those weeks of supervisions, I did not manage to make out, let alone understand, one word he uttered or one formula he wrote. When it came to the exam, I chose not to attempt the question on Quantum Mechanics.

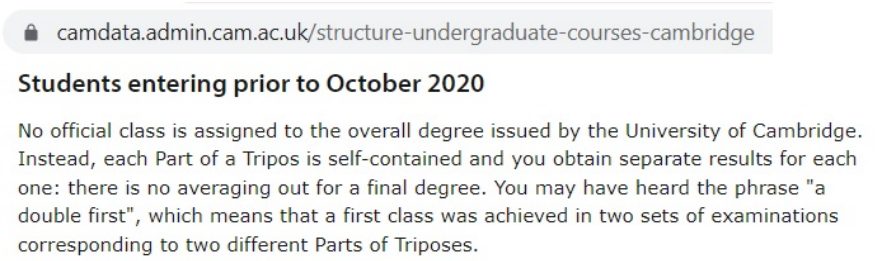
That second year, as it happens, was the only year during my time in Cambridge that I did reasonably regular running training, and I am sure that made me more relaxed about my studies.

At the end of the year, in Tripos Part 1B, I again gained a First, but I was by no means the best college mathematician that year. In one of the exams I arrived at 9:30, having mistaken the start time, which was actually 9:00. I only just avoided being excluded from the exam altogether.

In writing about my third undergraduate year, I start to move out of the sunshine and into the shadows. The hints were there in my past - needing perfect silence in order to think, being irritated by coughing or outside noise during important exams.

My college room in the third year was immediately above the college grand piano, which was in constant use by music students and organ scholars throughout the day. This situation accelerated my concentration difficulties significantly as I approached finals, and the effect was long-lasting. Without wishing to paint a clearer picture, I will say that ever since that time I have wished that I still possessed the ability for unclouded and undistracted thinking that had been mine when I was a teenager.

For the record, I obtained an Upper Second in my finals, Mathematics Tripos Part 2. Eighteen years later, I discovered that I had officially achieved a Double First, having gained a First in two parts of Tripos. But it certainly did not feel like a Double First at the time, and nor, in my dream life, has it felt like it ever since.



A belatedly-discovered crumb of consolation

11 The Love of Running Part 2: The eighties and beyond

By the time I finished my two years' teaching stint at Woodhouse Sixth Form College in July 1982, I had lost my running fitness and my weight had increased to nine and a half stone (In previous years, my weight had never topped nine stone, and when race fit it was below eight and a half stone). I wanted to try to regain my fitness, so I enquired at the local library and learned about Serpentine Running Club, which catered for all ability levels and met mid-week in Wembley for an evening group run.

My first race was a 10 mile event in October 1982, which I completed in 69 minutes. I was beaten somewhat handsomely by David Bedford (and 67 others) but spent a proportion of the race running alongside the boxer John Conteh and I eventually beat him by several places.

In October 1983 I completed my Masters in Information Technology, and returned to the workplace as a computer professional. Freed from the pressure of exams and writing my thesis, I was able to attend Running Club more frequently.

One of my next races was the Reading Half Marathon in March 1984, my first attempt at the distance. Despite losing 90 seconds before actually reaching the start line, I recorded 1:29:46. The half marathon became perhaps my favourite distance, racing it around 18 times in the following years.

I remember wistfully thinking to myself at some point in 1982 or 1983, "If only I could run even 5:30 for the mile again..". In fact,

5:30 for the mile did prove to be a barrier for two or three years, up to 1986. Then in 1987 I made a leap forward. This was because up to that time, my fatherly responsibilities had only allowed me to go to the running club on Wednesday, when the training run was a relatively undemanding four miles or so. From 1987, altered family timetables meant that I could attend the main session on Tuesday evening, when I could run up to eight or nine miles, with strong running partners. My first breakthrough that year was in the Roding Valley Half Marathon in March, where I cut my personal best by more than two and a half minutes to 1:24:21. My breakthrough in the mile occurred a few months later, when I cut my 1980's mile best from 5:31 to 5:19.8.

I made further progress in 1988, including a half marathon in 1:23:00, ten kilometres in 37:31 and a mile in 5:15.0. Finally, in respect of my improvement in times, my marathon training in 1990 led to a spin-off improvement in my times over all distances. I set out to rewrite my personal bests, and recorded 4:41.0 for 1500 m, 5:2.0 for the mile, 10:10.7 for 3000 m, 17:33.9 for 5000 m and 36:43.3 for 10,000 m on the track, all in quality races. The events were all Open Graded Meetings, with the 10,000 m (the only 10,000 m I ever ran on the track) also serving as the Hertfordshire County Championship. My road race performances were 2:59:36 for the marathon, 2:10:47 for 20 miles, 1:21:47 for the half marathon, and 36:50 for 10 kilometres, all in official races over accurately measured courses.

I never improved my times again. But running continued to be a very important part of my life for the next sixteen years. I ran the Corporate Challenge race in Battersea Park as part of the BACS team on eleven occasions. This three and a half mile event was

massive, with around fourteen thousand runners in London and more than a hundred thousand in simultaneous races worldwide. I was the fastest BACS runner on six of those occasions, setting the BACS record of 20:29 in 1990 despite very hot conditions and the lack of mile markers.

My final major race was the 2006 London Marathon. I ran it in memory, and in place, of my son Daniel, who had died the previous November.

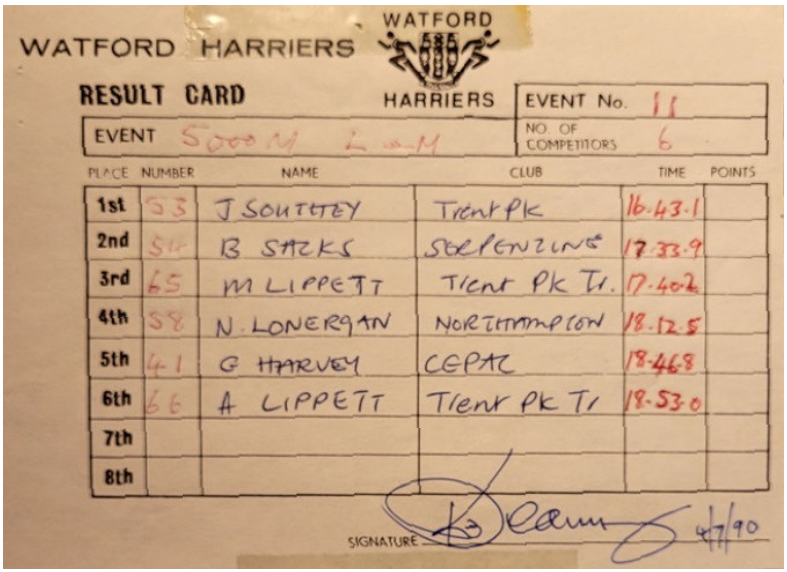
By 2007, my knees and hips were telling me more and more insistently that it was time, if not to stop completely, at least to significantly reduce my running. I did allow myself a three months' running season in 2013, in which I ran three races over 5000 m. I was pleased to enter the Over-60 national rankings with a time of 23:07. I allowed myself similar short seasons, of around three months' running and three or four races, in 2016 and 2021, and I never feel that I have necessarily run my last race.

A new avenue of involvement in the sport opened up in 2006 when I wrote a major feature article on the London Marathon for the Jewish Chronicle. Then early in 2007, the Sports Editor Danny Caro agreed to my suggestion that I become the Jewish Chronicle athletics correspondent.

Towards the end of 2009 I wrote a significant article on the state of Jewish athletics in the UK. My findings were that participation was on the wane and that the problem began in schools. I formed the idea of trying to reverse this decline through an Award and Recognition Scheme that would also do something to keep alive the memory of my son Daniel. This idea came to fruition with the Daniel Sacks Awards for Outstanding Young Athletic

Achievement. The Awards ran for eleven years, from 2010 to 2020, and celebrated the achievements of young UK Jewish athletes. Each year, after the end of the athletics season, one or more boys' winners and girls' winners were chosen, based on quality of performance and consistency over the season. The scheme also tried to recognize all young community athletes through performance tables and photos on a dedicated website.

Throughout my life, athletics has been a passion. Running has given me a feeling of well-being that sometimes bordered on exhilaration. It has given me personal challenge, self-image and self-esteem, companionship and the esteem of friends and colleagues. It has added another dimension to the way people perceived me and it has shielded me from being pigeonholed into an identity that I was not comfortable with. I am very grateful to athletics.



WATFORD HARRIERS

WATFORD HARRIERS

RESULT CARD

EVENT No. 11

EVENT 5000 M L.M

NO. OF COMPETITORS 6

PLACE	NUMBER	NAME	CLUB	TIME	POINTS
1st	53	J SOUTTEY	Trent Pk	16.43.1	
2nd	54	B SACKS	Serpentine	17.33.9	
3rd	65	M LIPPETT	Trent Pk Tr.	17.40.2	
4th	58	N LONERGAN	NORTHAMPTON	18.12.5	
5th	41	G HARVEY	CEPAC	18.46.8	
6th	66	A LIPPETT	Trent Pk Tr	18.53.0	
7th					
8th					

SIGNATURE 4/7/90

Finally, in 1990, beating a personal best from 1970

Roding Valley Half Marathon March 1987, 1:24:21

Lensbury 10K June 1988, 37:31

Harrow Half Marathon November 1989, 1:24:35

St Albans Half Marathon June 1994, 1:26:01

Above: Together with three of the Daniel Sacks Awards winners for 2014: Lia Radus, Sophie Dowson, Eden Davis.

Alongside: Together with Lucie Wolfenden, Girls' winner for 2016.

On the poster in the background: previous Award winners Sam Shindler-Glass and Ellie Edwards, who both went on to become Maccabiah gold medallists.

12 The Lure of the Marathon

12.1 My First Marathon: London, April 1990

I first submitted an entry to the London Marathon ballot in 1987. The ballot was always three or four times oversubscribed. It was only on my third application, this time for the 1990 London Marathon, that my number came up and I won my place in the race. I was notified that my application was successful around October 1989. 1989 was a year throughout which I had felt very much under stress from the difficulties of attempting to move house, and it had been the first year since I had resumed running in 1982, in which my athletic progress had stalled. Nonetheless, I ran the Harrow Half Marathon in early November 1989 feeling very undertrained, and was agreeably surprised with my finishing time of 1:24:35. In view of that performance, I felt that it was completely realistic to aim to break the three-hour barrier in the marathon, and that became my ambition.

I began my training at the start of January, running 10 miles with a friend on the first Sunday of the year. On most subsequent Sundays, I ran 16 miles with a relatively serious group from Muswell Hill Runners. I also did a Tuesday night session with that group most weeks. My weekly training total rose gradually to 46 miles, more than twice my weekly mileage at any time during the 1980s. I lost weight without any conscious effort, coming down to the sub-eight-and-a-half stone mark (sub-54 kg mark) as I had during my running seasons of the 1970s.

The challenge of the Marathon focused my mind and my motivation in a way that no previous challenge had done. For the first time, I

did not allow any self-destructive thought, at any time, to instantaneously cause me to stop and walk in the middle of a run. Four weeks before the marathon I developed a problem in my left knee which was diagnosed, by a sports physiotherapist, as a cruciate ligament tear. I did not let that interfere with my plans. My left knee carries the same basic injury today.

In my innocence I thought that I would run the marathon according to my normal race plan of a stronger second half. I thought that I would run the first half at 6:50 per mile pace, the second half at 6:45 pace, and that would give me a sufficient cushion to allow for the minute or two that I would lose after the firing of the starting gun until I reached the start line itself. This was before the age of transponders laced into shoes, and so one's official time was "gun to tape".

As I wrote in my account of the race a few days afterwards, things worked out rather differently. I supply that account below. For completeness, the 20 mile race that I ran six weeks before the marathon was the Verlea 20, and I recorded 10 mile splits of 66:56 and 63:51 for a finishing time of 2:10:47. This reinforced my belief that I could run a faster second half in the marathon itself.

When I ran the marathon six weeks later, I was not aware of the moment when I actually passed the start line, but only registered that I passed the first mile mark at 7:46. The second mile took me 7:02, and so it is reasonable to assume that it had taken about 45 seconds from the firing of the starting gun for me to reach the start line.

I gradually increased my speed from that point. At around 7 miles, I had brought my "gun to tape" average down to sub-seven-minute

miling. I passed 20 miles in 2:10:46, so I had averaged 6:30 for each of those 20 miles after passing the start line. In fact, between miles 7 and 20, and allowing for the full half marathon distance of 13 miles 192 yards, I had run a full half marathon in sub-1:24. The final 6 miles and 385 yards of my marathon averaged 7:53 miling. Since I really "hit the wall" once I had negotiated the tough climb around the Tower of London at around 22 and a half miles, I would think that from that point on my average speed was even slower. I present the rest of the story as I wrote it in May 1990:

The Unforgiving Minute

April 1990

Whether you regard it as lucky or not is up to you, but at least it was third time successful - I am referring to my application for a place in the London Marathon.

Notification came at the end of last year which gave me 17 weeks to prepare for the 26 miles and 385 yards. As things turned out, it was quite a pleasant way to spend the winter. One of the most important parts of the preparations was a 15 to 18 mile run across Hampstead Heath every Sunday with a group of like-minded fools. I did run one race of over 20 miles as a confidence booster.

Came the day of the Race, Sunday 22nd April. I got up (with the help of an alarm clock) at 5.30 a.m. - I may say, I don't do that every day! At 7.30 a.m. I got off the train at Blackheath and stepped straight into a downpour - somewhat dampening to the spirits and not boding well for a fast time. At about 8 o'clock the rain eased but the heavens opened up again just before the Race began at 9.30

a.m., drenching the World Record Marathon field of 25,600 runners.

During the early part of the Race I seemed to be running in a bit of a daze. I was surrounded by other runners and there were huge crowds of cheering spectators as well as numerous bands all doing their own version of Dire Straits "Walk of Life". One had to balance being carried away by the spirit of the occasion with running the race to one's own rhythm.

At each mile point there was a drinks station on both sides of the road. At these points one's path became somewhat blocked by helpers and other runners pausing for refreshment.

Anyway, I kept an eye on the time at each mile marker and seemed to be going well. Just before halfway we crossed Tower Bridge and wound our way through the new developments in the Docklands area. I passed the 20 mile mark one second faster than I had in my race six weeks earlier.

Next came a new experience for me, the new Marathoner's lesson - The Wall. The Wall occurs at the 18 to 20 mile point and essentially happens when the body has used up all its energy. It is then that one realises that the Wall is not just for others, it's for you too! I quickly realised that although I felt fine from the waist up, my legs had nothing left to give. I had a distinct feeling that if I pushed it at all, I would collapse there and then. So I decided that I would "switch off" from the Race – I said to myself "I've done my 20 mile race; now I'm doing tomorrow's 6 mile slow jog but I'm doing it a day early". It's a lonely feeling as other runners stream past but there are those who are just walking and obviously suffering more.

Along the Mall with less than two miles to go, I ran alongside the spectators hoping for a psychological lift. Some nice person called "Come on Number 7056". I was thinking of the charities I was running for and reminding myself of the words of wellwishers.

I was promising myself a walk at the 3 hour stage but at 2 hours 58, as I was approaching Westminster Bridge, I heard an announcer say over the public address system "Let's see how many we can get in in under 3 hours". I made a final effort and passed the finishing posts at 2.59.45 (my official time was 2.59.36).

After collecting my medal, the medical station suddenly seemed a very inviting place. I was wheeled in and put on a stretcher. When I left 40 minutes later I was shuffling along like most of the others at about half a mile an hour.

Would I do it again? Yes I would, and I would try to avoid "The Wall". My advice to anyone thinking about entering a Marathon? It would be "Forget about the Marathon initially, but start running with a club that encourages beginners. You'll become more healthy, easily give up smoking and most importantly, enjoy it."

P.S. The pretentious title? See Rudyard Kipling's "If".

Above: rounding the Tower of London at 2 hours, 27 minutes, after around 22 miles running.

Right: crossing the finishing line just in time.

12.2 My Second Marathon: London, April 1991

I applied for my second London Marathon believing that if I ran at a more even pace, I could avoid "hitting the wall". But things didn't work out the way I had hoped. Perhaps, at 39 years old, age was catching up with me. Perhaps the terror of the event no longer focused my mind in the way it had the previous year. In place of a 20 mile race as a sharpener, I chose the rather easier option of a 5000 metre time trial on the track (although I was pleased with the outcome - a solo clocking of 18:03).

My son Daniel celebrated his barmitzvah three or four weeks before the marathon, and the party took place in our home the next afternoon. Not surprisingly, I had to forego my long Sunday run that day. Instead, I did an extended run on Tuesday evening, with the following week's long run less than five days after that. That temporary training overload induced a tiredness into my body that I was not able to shake off.

I felt very lethargic when I started tapering down with two weeks to go. On the Sunday before the marathon I ran with a running club colleague, somewhat faster than I would have preferred. On the Thursday, 3 days before the race, I attended an early morning barmitzvah of a friend of Daniel, and the shock to the system of this early rising, and some exposure to arctic-like temperatures during the week, led to me catching a slight cold.

The result of all this was that my calves felt tight within 50 yards of starting the marathon, and I could not seem to raise my speed above about 6:48 per mile. I passed halfway in 1:29:55 and 20 miles at something in the 2 hour 16's. But the 23rd mile, that horrible mile that involved rounding the Tower of London, seemed to take 8

minutes. On seeing this, and aware of exhortations from family and friends to "not take it too hard", I stopped and walked. In a way, that's when I really experienced the spirit of the marathon. One friendly runner, as he passed me, encouraged me to start running again, and he gave me moral support for quite some way, as also did the crowd. I interspersed running and walking for the last couple of miles. When I came to Westminster Bridge I switched into a flamboyant sprint, indicative, of course, of not having given my all in the previous miles. The sheepish look on my face as I crossed the line told a story of slight embarrassment.

I had missed the three hour barrier. Having, in effect, tossed my time away in the last 3 miles, my finishing time was 3:09:09. I thought I would never run another Marathon again.

12.3 My Third Marathon: London, April 2002

I never thought that I would run a third marathon. The distance needed too much dedication, and for everything to go well during training and during the race. My second marathon in 1991 had convinced me that I would never beat 3 hours again, leaving aside the fact that I would never be under 40 again.

But in the autumn of 2001 I had signed up for a five-day "New England in the Fall" cycle ride, and I had raised significant charity sponsorship in relation to my completing the event. During the weekend on which I was to fly to America to join the ride, prominent in the national news was Osama bin Laden's taunt that he was set to repeat his performance of the September 11 outrage. I lost my nerve, and pulled out of the event. That left me in the position of needing to find an alternative challenge to justify the charity sponsorship that I had already collected. The London Marathon of April 2002 filled this need.

I was now 50 years old, and beset by running injury problems. My calf muscles were particularly vulnerable. My response during my training for the marathon was to perform rigourous warming up and stretching before training, and to do all my running on the relatively soft surface of the Copthall Stadium running track. Despite these measures, during training I sustained such upsetting calf muscle injuries that during the final 10 weeks before the marathon I twice decided that I would not run the race. Instead I would justify my sponsorship through contesting the 2.5 km swim in the "BT Swimathon" event.

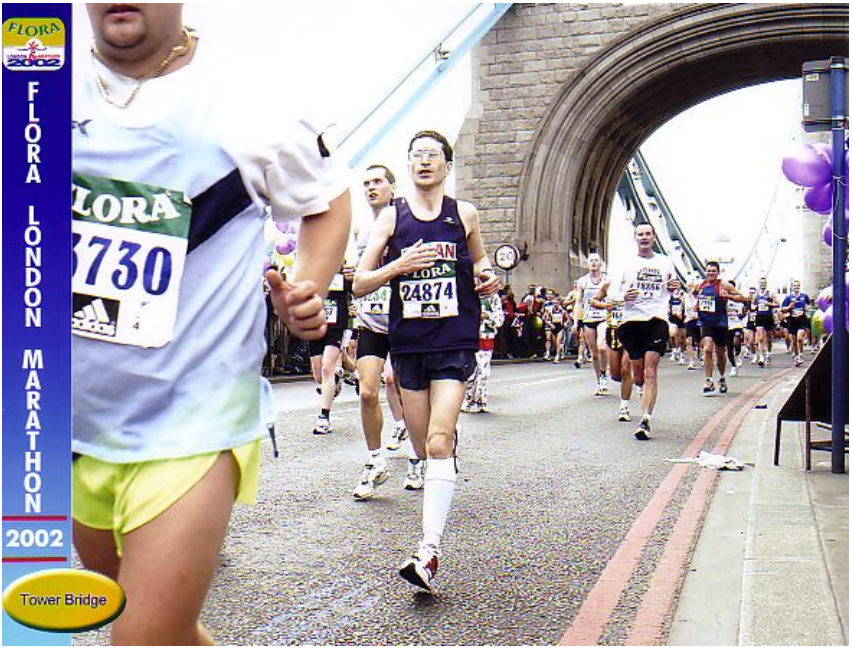
But both times that I decided to withdraw from the marathon, my decision was followed by such depression that within about 10 days

I decided to give my marathon another chance. In the event, I did complete both the Swimathon and the Marathon, and my sponsors felt that I had properly paid my dues.

As I embarked from Greenwich Park on the 26-plus miles of the London Marathon 2002, I was taking my first running steps on the hard surface of a road for 18 months. My clearest memory of the first half of the race was the experience of being overtaken by pacer groups, each aiming for a specific finishing time such as 3 hours 30 or 3 hours 40. Each group ran as a pack, and being overtaken by it felt like being swamped by a tidal wave.

I passed halfway in around 1 hour 48, and continued running to just beyond the 30 km mark. This was slightly further than the longest run I had achieved in training, which was seventeen and a half miles. But at that point, and indicative of my poor preparation, I needed to stop and walk. I lost all motivation except that I felt that, to avoid personal embarrassment, I needed to finish in less than 4 hours. The rest of the event for me was simply governed by that limitation. For the first and last time in a marathon, I popped into one of the portaloos, but this proved to be nothing but a waste of the best part of a minute.

I remember running the last section of the race and rounding Big Ben aware that alongside me was a semi-professional walker who was managing to walk at the pace that I was running. I assume that both of us successfully beat the four-hour mark. My official time was 3:58:56.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FLORA
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THE ROYAL PARKS
JAMES

12.4 My Fourth Marathon: London, April 2006

On October 29, 2005, my son Daniel took me to the cinema to celebrate my 54th birthday. We watched the animated film "Chicken Run".

As I was driving him back to my house, Daniel told me that he was just beginning his preparations to run his eighth marathon. Daniel had run the previous seven London Marathons, from 1999 to 2005, on each occasion raising funds for the charity British Emunah.

Five days after taking me to the cinema, Daniel took his own life.

In April 2006 I ran the London Marathon in his memory, using the entry that would have been his.

A few days later, I wrote an account of the experience, and I reproduce it unchanged here:

Once More Unto Greenwich

April 2006

When I started training for the Marathon in January, my fiancee Batzi asked me what, for me, would constitute 'success'. I replied: 3 hours 57 minutes - because I felt that if I could beat, when four years older, my time in the 2002 marathon (3 hours 58 minutes), that would be a real achievement. On my application form for the marathon I had estimated 3 hours 51 minutes, knowing that the faster the estimate, the better would be my starting position. From the start, Batzi assured me of her complete support, and accompanied me on almost every one of my training runs in the months that followed.

I began proper training around the beginning of January, but almost immediately took a nine-day break to get over a calf injury. I intended to follow the rule that I kept to in 2002, to protect my calf muscles by doing all my runs on the comparatively soft and even surface of the local Copthall running track. My training was to consist of three runs per week, on Sunday morning, and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, these being the times that Copthall Stadium was open. Although marathon runners customarily do a long Sunday run, I quickly decided that I should attempt my long runs on my mid-week sessions, as my legs and metabolism generally were more warmed up in the evening. I intended to increase my long runs at a rate of a quarter of an hour per week. This was proceeding quite well during late January and early February, with my longest run having reached around eleven and a half miles. Then, during the second week of February, I suffered a bad head cold. Luckily it coincided with a calf niggle, so my resulting time off from running dealt with both the cold and the calf problem simultaneously. However, the cold left me with lingering stomach problems, probably because of swallowing mucus. When I returned to running after the cold, I found that my runs needed to be punctuated by frequent pit stops.

Shortly after resuming running, I interviewed the successful Jewish marathon runner Daniel Felsenstein, who told me that his marathon training placed little emphasis on long runs, and involved a lot of quality track work. I myself had been finding that my natural rate of lapping Copthall had been no faster than eight minutes 45 seconds miling, a full half minute slower than my equivalent natural per-mile pace in 2002. I could well do with some speed training. Accordingly, on both the Saturdays 9 weeks before and 7 weeks before the marathon, I ran a five-kilometre time trial at Copthall, on

each occasion hoping to beat 23 minutes (the weekend 8 weeks before the marathon, Batzi and I spent on the coast at Bournemouth). My times for 5 kilometres were each around 23 minutes 20 seconds, with the second attempt slower than the first (albeit in windier conditions). Meanwhile, in my mid-week runs, I still wasn't extending the distances I was achieving. I was unable to run for more than an hour without needing a pit stop. As I walked back from that second time trial, seven weeks before the marathon, I told Batzi that I thought I was heading for a four-and-a-half hour performance in the marathon. My confidence was no stronger the following Thursday, when I only managed to run five miles despite aiming to achieve a much longer distance. By the following day I realised that I needed to make major changes in order to achieve the long training runs that are an essential part of marathon preparation. I looked at an online race calendar, thinking that if I entered a half-marathon, that would at least mean that I would achieve a run of that distance. I entered the Brentwood Half Marathon that weekend (so six weeks before the marathon), and was well pleased to run it in 1 hour 41 minutes, with my speed increasing throughout the run. Although I had thought that I was starting too fast, with my first five miles each taking eight minutes, I had found that I could increase the pace to seven and a half minute miling for the remainder of the race. I was pleased that I had completed the race without needing a pit stop, and, looking ahead to the need to take on board energy during the marathon, that I had successfully experimented with sucking sweets during a race.

I next looked for a means of achieving longer distances. The online road race calendar only offered one suitable opportunity, so I rang up my chosen charity, British Emunah, and contacted Martin Fine, another of their runners, who was of a similar standard to myself.

Thus on the following Saturday, 5 weeks before the marathon, I ran 21 miles through the streets of London with Martin and his friend David Pinnick. Although the run was punctuated with a few three minute breathers, it was hard – especially the long climb from Swiss Cottage to Hampstead boating pond after more than 17 miles of running. The following Saturdays I ran with Martin and David respectively 22 miles, 23 miles and 18 miles, and these runs really boosted my stamina and confidence. My mid-week runs had become stronger and faster. For the last two weeks before the marathon I 'tapered', which was largely a sub-conscious process of deciding not to push hard in training, and to conserve energy in daily life. I caught the traditional pre-marathon cold 12 days before the race, but did not let it interfere with my training schedule. Six days before the race I hurt my knees by breaking out into a sudden sprint while wearing street shoes, when I thought I saw a traffic warden descending on my car, but ice treatment on Friday helped to reduce the pain.

I had, in the last few weeks before the marathon, been selecting the songs for a 'Marathon Folder' I set up on my little music player. I had decided that I needed songs with no beat whatsoever – so that they would not induce me to alter my stride rate to fit in with the music. The songs were to be enjoyable and moderately, but not overly, stirring. I had 'road tested' my selections on my runs at Copthall, and had deleted the ones that were unsuitable.

◆◆◆◆

The day of the race, Sunday 23rd April, dawned overcast and wet. Martin, David and I travelled up to the start at Greenwich by taxi. Our taxi deposited us at the entrance to Greenwich Park at 8 a.m., and we made the long trudge up the road inside the park to the field

alongside our designated 'Red Start'. Rain continued to pour down, which encouraged the runners to crowd into the changing tents – which became crowded and warm. Here I was recognised by Peter Bohm, who had been my contemporary at Cambridge and had served a term as President of the Cambridge University Jewish Society, but who I hadn't seen for many years. I made the necessary preparations in terms of choosing my running clothes, applying muscle cream and liniment, depositing my belongings for transport to the finish, and visiting the toilet. I put into my shorts pockets about a dozen hard sweets and my music player and headphones. Five minutes before race start I entered my starting gate, number five out of nine, seemingly designated for runners estimating to finish with times between 3 hours 45 minutes and 4 hours. I had not found time to do any warm-up, but I stretched my calves for a couple of minutes once inside the gate. I was so far back from the start line that I was not aware exactly when the race started. I, and those around me, passed the start slightly more than five minutes after the gun had sounded, but my official time would take account of this, with my personal 'clock' only starting at the time I crossed the start line, as picked up from the transponder laced into one of my shoes.

Soon after the race start I took out of my pocket my music player and heaphones, to try, for the first time, listening to music during a race. I immediately judged the experiment a success, because it took care of the mental aspect. It had the effect of mentally detaching me from the race, whereas physically, I was not only in a race, but in probably the most congested one I had ever paticipated in. The music helped me to run as I felt – and I felt, in those early miles, like running slowly and with no desire to extend my stride length.

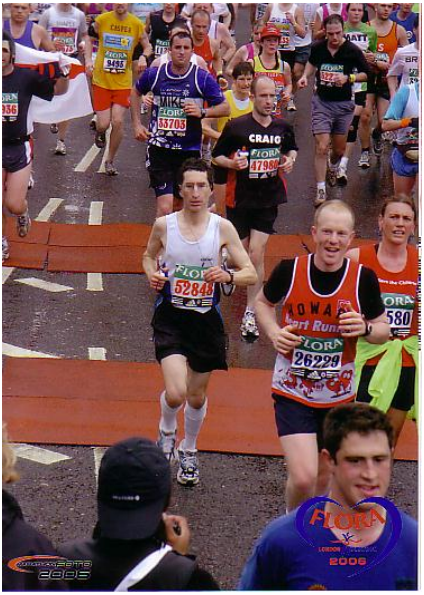
The first few miles would serve as my warm-up, and I was mindful of James Espir's advice to take them slowly.

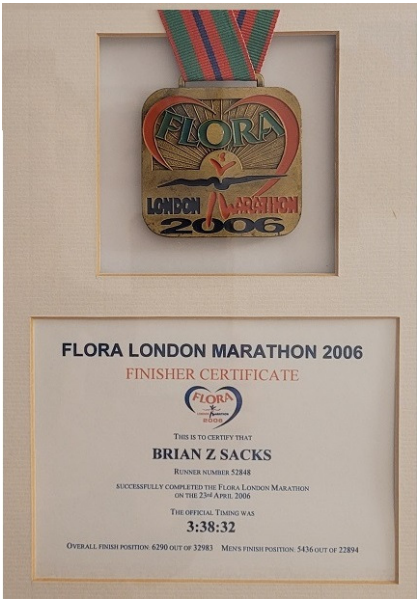
As it was, my first three miles averaged 8 minutes 53 seconds per mile, and I realised that this pace was too slow. I gradually increased my speed, and passed the half-way point in 1 hour 52 minutes. This was almost four minutes slower than my equivalent time in 2002, and the thought recurred to me that if I beat my 2002 time, it would indeed be a success. But I continued to gradually increase the pace. The cool and wet conditions were conducive to running, apart from the fact that my clothes were completely soaked through. My music was keeping me both energised and somewhat detached from the race. At various points my calves and my suspect knee were hurting, but I tried not to let this affect my speed. During the course of the race I sucked about half my sweets (in lieu of the energy gels that the experts recommended) and jettisoned or lost the rest. I took on some of the energy drink supplied at a few of the drink stations, but tried not to drink too much.

For much of the route, the road was narrow and the congestion was such that, to run at the pace I wanted, I had to be forcing my way through the entire time – holding both arms out in front and asking to be allowed through. My healthy respect for the 'Wall' kept my speed in check however. By the latter stages of the race, my hamstrings were certainly feeling the miles. Nevertheless, at about 22 miles I began to feel confident that, at my fourth attempt, I might finally evade the Wall. I told myself that if I managed to keep going for just a few more miles, I would achieve something that I would be proud of for years. I did some mental calculations on the basis of eight minutes per mile, and realised that I could be close to 3 hours 40 minutes. As I moved into the last three miles I felt confident to

increase the pace further. I continued to increase my speed for the rest of the race, and finished in a time of 3 hours, 38 minutes and 32 seconds.

I felt fine after the race, but for the following few days I could not bend down and could only walk down stairs backwards. But I had the satisfaction of having beaten my 2002 time by more than twenty minutes – and having finally conquered the Wall.





Above: Enroute and enjoying the music during London Marathon 2006

Alongside: Framed mementos of the day

13 Jonathan

13.1 Jonathan watching

When the spoof chat show host Alan Partridge asked one of his guests what his autobiography was about, his equally spoof interviewee, Lord Morgan of Glossop, replied "My life, you..", completing his four word response with an epithet unsuitable for these pages. His reply, suitably shortened and sanitised, would equally apply to this book. But in my life I have enjoyed the unique privilege of watching, at close quarters, my older brother Jonathan develop from a child into an admired young man, and I feel it is fitting to include in my account some of those memories.

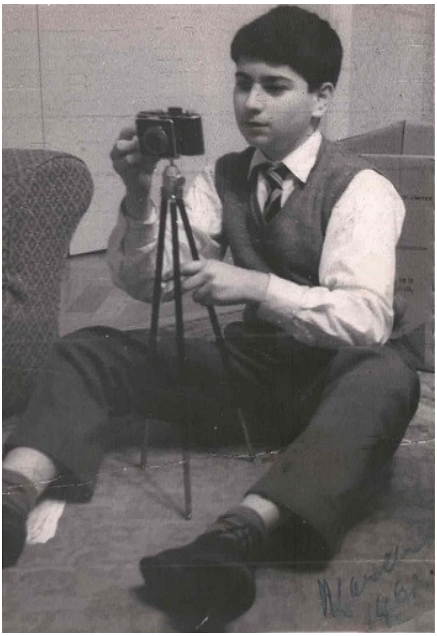
In the preface to this book I proffered a justification for any perceived excessive or banal detail, my excuse being that I was writing for myself, and that I cherish my childhood memories as they were originally forged. I beg the reader's indulgence for this. When I was in youth group situations, the traditional song "You'll never get to heaven" would sometimes be sung, in which verses were improvised relating to each person present. The only time that I was ever the subject of such a verse, it went "You'll never get to heaven with Brian Sacks, because Brian Sacks knows too many facts".

When the Almighty spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush, He declared "I am what I am". Popeye the Sailor Man frequently made the same assertion on the black and white TV screens of my childhood. And now I do the same.

Jonathan's early years in Christ's College

Jonathan hit the ground running, in scholastic terms, on starting his grammar school career at Christ's College, Finchley. He placed second in the "A" form in the end of year school examinations in July 1960. It may have been that he would have placed first were it not for being let down by his marks in Art and Woodwork. Be that as it may, Chris Deacon, the boy who surpassed Jonathan in those exams, accompanied him six years later in winning a place at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.

In his first year or two at Christ's College, Jonathan's favourite extramural interest was photography. He was a member of the school Photographic Society, run by Mr Tallis, one of the more elderly teachers. Jonathan was expert in lens specifications and shutter speeds, and possessed a single lens reflex camera, a tripod and an exposure meter. He developed his own photographs in the school's photographic darkroom.



Budding photographer Jonathan, dated March 1962

At that time, Jonathan's professional ambition was to utilise his mathematical ability by becoming an accountant. He

enjoyed the Mathematical Diversions of Martin Gardner and introduced me to some of them, as I have recounted within this book.

Jonathan's O-Level year

Jonathan's O-Level results were impressive but not exceptional. He had prepared well, but not single-mindedly to the exclusion of, for example, his debating activities. He achieved ten passes, of which six were at Grade A, the others B or C. There was perhaps a touch of unfulfilled competitiveness mixed in with his admiration of his colleague Andrew Kirk’s achievement of seven Grade A's.

His ten subjects had exceeded the standard Christ's College tally of eight by including Additional Mathematics and Classical Hebrew. His Grade A's in both Mathematics and Additional Mathematics set him up to join the accelerated class that took Pure Mathematics A-Level in the Lower Sixth form after just one year of preparation. His Grade A's in English Language and English Literature were perhaps an early portent of his ability in later life to watch any Hollywood film and extract from it a philosophical, ethical or religious message. He did not achieve the top grade in Classical Hebrew, his only formal preparation for the exam being a Sunday morning class taking place in Willesden. His other subjects included Latin, French, Physics and History. He enjoyed history and I remember him talking about the significance of the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

Jonathan's Sixth Form career

Jonathan entered Lower VI Econ (Lower Sixth Form, Economics) in September 1964, at the start of my second year at the school. Pupils entering the Economics stream of the Sixth Form were

aspiring lawyers, politicians and Chief Executives, destined to rise to the top in society and in the professional world through the power of their speech, intellect, culture and poise. Jonathan progressed as a natural leader in this conducive environment. He was quickly appointed as a junior prefect, progressing on to being selected as a senior prefect, and, in the Upper Sixth form, Deputy Head Boy.

Within days of Jonathan starting in the Lower Sixth, an opportunity arose for any would-be parliamentarians to hone and test their skills. One of the masters organised a school Mock Election, to take place in parallel with the national General Election on October 15, 1964. Jonathan rose to the challenge. He stood as the school's Liberal Party candidate and fought an energetic campaign, organising break-time meetings, making speeches and producing a succession of posters to explain his policies and convince the electorate.

The election gripped the entire school community, not least because candidate meetings provided the opportunity for boys to stay indoors during break-time and vociferously shout and heckle with impunity.

On October 15, more than five hundred pupils voted, out of the school roll of six hundred. If the pupils had voted in line with their parents' loyalties, it would have been a landslide victory for the Conservative Party. As it was, Jonathan came close to achieving a David-versus-Goliath upset. He fell short of the Conservative candidate's 212 tally by just 8 votes. The other two candidates were also-rans, with Labour securing 79 votes and the Independent candidate gaining 7. Jonathan had achieved a much larger share of the vote than anyone had expected at the beginning of the campaign.

Jonathan continued his debating activities during his Sixth Form years. My mother's cousin Gladys Dimson was a councillor in the London Borough of Haringey, and in late 1964 she sent my mother a local government magazine that featured a prominent picture of Jonathan, in school uniform, standing at a microphone. The caption read, "Jonathan Sacks, of Finchley, questions the panel of experts during 'Tomorrow's Challenge', a youth conference of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, at Church House, Westminster." Jonathan reached the final of the London Evening Standard Schools Debating Competition, and, as his keen supporter, I wanted to be present in the audience. Jonathan put in a strong performance in a difficult competition, but he did not win. It did not help that the event was held on a Friday evening, so that the laws of Shabbat meant that we could not use transport. We had arranged to sleep that night at the home of our aunt Rose Goldberg in Willesden, about six miles away from the competition venue, which was Central Hall, Westminster. After the competition, Jonathan and I made our way to our aunt, partly walking and partly running, and Jonathan said he was pleased that he had been able to keep up with me. This was a reference to one of the only areas of achievement within school in which I had surpassed him. He had been shielded, on the grounds of asthma, from the rigours of cross country running for part of his school career and one could fairly say that his reputation was firmly based on brain rather than brawn.

One interesting postscript to the Jun Lit and Deb Soc phenomenon of Jonathan's Fifth form occurred two years later, when Jonathan was in the Upper Sixth. Neil Joseph, who was destined to become Head Boy and also go on to Gonville and Caius College, set up the Religious Literary and Debating Society. The first meeting featured two of the school’s outstanding debaters, my brother Jonathan and

Graham Zellick. Both were to progress to Gonville and Caius College and then to enjoy stellar career success. The motion under debate was "This house believes there is a God". Jonathan won by a whitewash, with Graham not securing a single vote. There was no second meeting of the Religious Literary and Debating Society.

Jonathan maintained a keen interest in politics throughout his sixth form years. He attended – I do not know how often – the surgeries of our local MP, Margaret Thatcher (British Members of Parliament hold surgeries to give residents of their constituency - the local area that they represent - an opportunity to meet them and discuss matters of concern). But, in common with our parents, Jonathan's loyalty lay with the party he had represented in the school mock election, the Liberal Party. Its national leader was Jo Grimond, and the fact that Mr Grimond was often in the newspaper headlines created a useful spin-off for Jonathan. During his Sixth Form he called himself Jo (he also called our parents 'mater' and 'pater' for a time) and he would cut out the 'Jo' from the newspaper headline to affix it to the umbrella with which he strode into school. The umbrella was one manifestation of Jonathan's self-assurance and pride in his personal appearance. Jonathan's all-encompassing self-imposed standard of immaculate presentation extended as far as the shelves of his bedroom wardrobes, to each of which he taped a typewritten label specifying its content.

As a sixth former, Jonathan held a healthy regard for his own academic abilities and achievements, but he equally admired academic excellence in others. For a time he was a member of Mensa, the "High IQ" society, and I remember him telling me about its youngest member, Fey Lazarides, just eight years old. Jonathan also spoke to me about Michael Weitzman, a pupil two years his

senior at Hasmonean Grammar School, who had achieved seven A-levels, all of them (or at least six of them) at Grade A.

Jonathan's A-level (Advanced Level) subjects were Pure Mathematics, British Constitution, and Economics. He sat his Pure Mathematics A-level in the Lower Sixth form (gaining a Grade B), leaving just British Constitution and Economics as his Upper Sixth form subjects. By the time he came to take those exams, his only requirement for entry into Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge was to achieve one grade E; he had won a place that was unconditional beyond fulfilment of the university requirement of achieving two A-level passes. He was Deputy Head Boy of the school throughout his Upper Sixth Form.

Jonathan's Economics teacher was Dr Leslie Bather, who was also the school Deputy Head. To all intents and purposes Dr Bather was the effective Head of the school, certainly with regard to enforcing discipline. The click-clack of Dr Bather's footsteps in the school corridor would strike dread into the heart of any boy who was unfortunate enough to have been sent to stand outside a classroom. For, as Jonathan put it, Dr Bather had an affinity for Keynes, and canes.

Be that as it may, Dr Bather described Jonathan as "the most complete pupil he had ever taught". It was easy to understand this when one saw Jonathan's written work in his two main subjects. It was, without fail, comprehensive, beautifully neat, and of a very high standard. Jonathan took out a personal subscription to "The Times" and would cut out all articles that were relevant to his studies and file them in his set of box files.

It was no surprise to anyone that Jonathan achieved Grade A in both his British Constitution and his Economics A-levels.

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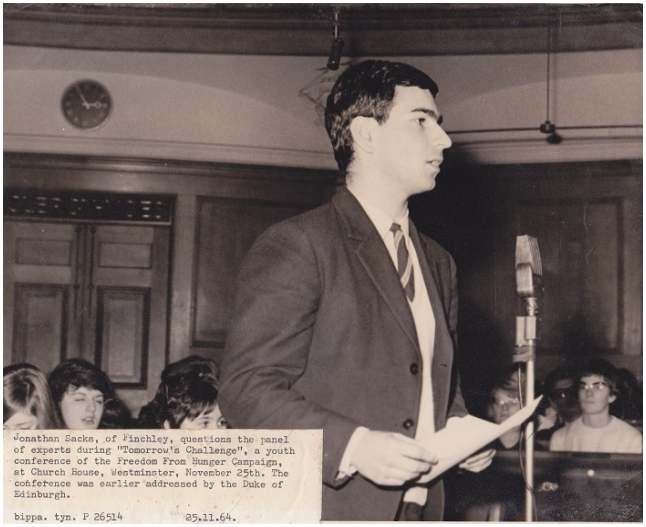
Once in the sixth form, Jonathan would often give the day’s religious or contemplative reading at Jewish Assembly. His interests and aspirations were becoming spiritual, as well as academic and worldly.

In Jonathan’s early years at Christ's College, his periodical of choice had been the satirical, comic-style "Mad" magazine. During the Sixth Form he progressed to science fiction periodicals. His science fiction reading also encompassed the novels of John Wyndham and Ray Bradbury, while his viewing included the stories of Professor Quatermass, as presented on television and cinema screen.

One dystopia that Jonathan encountered in his science fiction reading was the "Midas Plague”, a future time when consumer goods were so over-plentiful that the new rich were those with the fewest possessions. Jonathan developed that idea in "Reflection 1000", a piece he wrote for the Christ's College school magazine. His article imagined a future in which everyone possessed more worldly goods than they needed, and in which all scientific questions had been answered. People then turned to finding an answer to the ultimate question; to proving or disproving the existence of God. His article may yet prove to be prophetic for mankind; it certainly hinted at a possible change of direction for Jonathan and his life’s work.



Jonathan Sacks, of Finchley, questions the panel of experts during "Tomorrow's Challenge", a youth conference of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, at Church House, Westminster, November 25th. The conference was earlier addressed by the Duke of Edinburgh.

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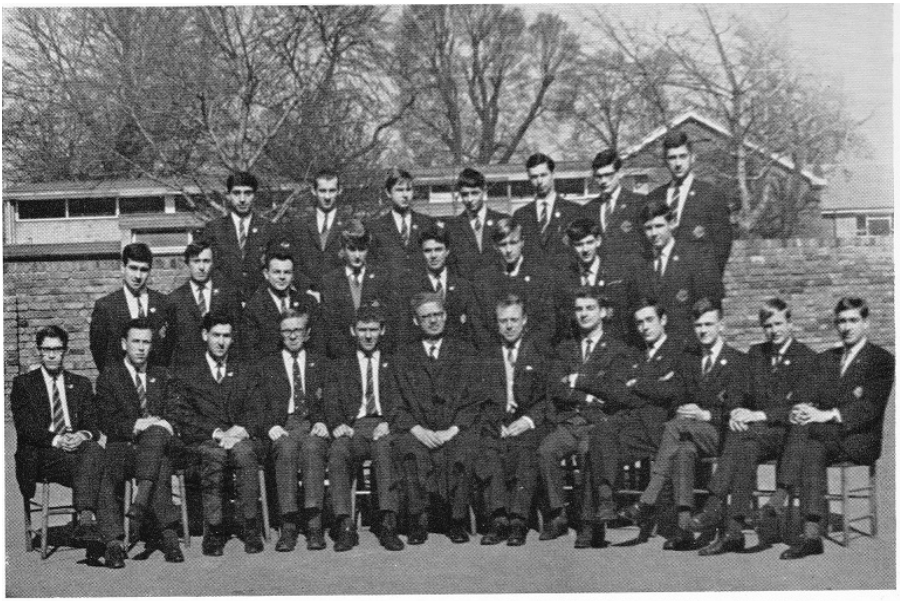
Alongside: Freedom from Hunger Conference

Below: Prefects team and Senior Staff during Jonathan's Lower Sixth Form year 1964-5



Back row (from left to right): A. P. Kirk, D. Varcoe, S. Bartholomew, M. N. Grayeff, B. J. Mathiason, W. Foster, A. H. Rutland.
Middle row: J. H. Sacks, K. S. Embleton, M. B. Lewis, S. C. Kettner, D. M. Zane, L. H. McMahon, D. A. Clutterbuck, C. R. Deacon.
Front row: J. C. Smaje, K. A. Price, M. H. Keene, P. W. Graves, P. M. Kenning, Headmaster, Dr. L. Bather, M. S. Coorsh, C. R. Barrett, D. J. Lanning, D. M. Chalmers and A. R. Myers.

REFLECTION: 1,000

The year is 1,000. The serf has just come in from his small plot of land. He has worked 100 hours that week. 900 years later and the man in the factory has completed the 60 hours that constitute his week's work. The present, and the figure has become 40 hours. This is civilisation. The story of man has been of a long ritual process of work to provide food for his existence; the history of man has been a gradual lessening of this ritual.

We are now faced with automation taking away this ritual completely, and a pattern of development for the future becomes apparent. If output increases by 4 per cent. each year, in seventy years our living standards will be 15 times as high as now. Work will become a process of consumption rather than production. It will be the poor who will have the lowliest jobs, using up all the mansions, fine clothes and cars. Only the very highest in the land will be able to afford little enough to live in ramshackle huts. There will be a Midas Plague.

Man will then realise his folly and learn to moderate production. With machines doing every routine function, including the designing, manufacturing and controlling of more machines, the emphasis of man's work will be to add to the store of knowledge. So a society will evolve where the sole determinant of rank will be intelligence.

With the ritual of learning the knowledge accumulated by previous generations alleviated by Huxleian teaching machines, intelligence raised by increasing a baby's oxygen supply at birth (a thing already accomplished), and all the world's geniuses concentrating on it, man's store of knowledge would very quickly increase. Now eventually, there must come a time when all that can be solved has been solved. If the purpose of life has been to achieve this, will life cease, lacking any further goal? Clearly not. There has to be something that cannot be answered. That is religion. The existence of God can never be proved or disproved. Religion must therefore be the final question. To find an answer to it will be the ultimate incentive for man's existence.

J. Sacks, (L.VI. Econ.).

Printed in the Christ's College school magazine "The Finchleian" July 1965

Life beyond the school gates

Sharing a bedroom with Jonathan during his teenage years, I learned quite a bit from him about his life beyond home and school. Jonathan was my role model in this as in almost everything else, although I realised that I could never attain his self-assurance in mixed company.

When he was 15 years old, Jonathan attended the Bnei Akiva youth group at the Kinloss Gardens Finchley Synagogue. In those days, as I have mentioned previously, Orthodox Judaism was practiced with a lighter touch, and an integral part of each Bnei Akiva meeting was the mixed *rikudim* - Israeli folk dancing. Jonathan went to Bnei Akiva camp that summer, and on his return, he talked about the initiative tests that were organised at the camp as team competitions. Years later, his contemporaries would tell me that everyone wanted to be on Jonathan's team because then they were bound to win.

Jonathan sometimes went ten-pin bowling in Child's Hill, south of Golders Green, and, to my young mind, this was a mark of his style and sophistication. On occasion, I and my brothers might find ourselves on a table with Jonathan at, for example, a Barmitzvah. The seating would be such that each boy would have a girl seated on either side. On such occasions we could see that Jonathan's powers of conversation, combined with his dark good looks, seemed to slay the hearts of his dinner companions.

Jonathan at Cambridge

Jonathan went up to Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge in October 1966. (One "goes up" to Cambridge, irrespective of where

one lived or was educated previously; one is now, somewhat curiously, referred to as a Cantabrigian).

Cambridge opened Jonathan to new freedoms and new ideas. Our father, at least during college terms, was no longer such a dominant presence in Jonathan's life. Now living in a room above the Gonville & Caius Porters' Lodge, Jonathan was free to observe, read, explore and define himself. When I visited him there I saw that he was reading the poems of TS Eliot. After one month of studying Economics, he changed course, to instead read for the Moral Sciences Tripos; another piece of Cambridge nomenclature meaning that he was now studying Philosophy.

In his first year, Jonathan took part in debates in the Cambridge Union Society, and particularly enjoyed debating with Clive James on one occasion. When weather permitted, he punted and played croquet. At the end of his first year, he underwent the stresses and then experienced the relief of Israel's victory in the Six Day War.

In subsequent years, he was less involved with the Union Society and more with the Jewish Society. He invited Rabbi Shmuel Lew of Lubavitch to come up from London to give regular *shiurim* (lessons) in his rooms. Jonathan was president of the Jewish Society for one of the terms in his final undergraduate year.

Jonathan's Role in the home

Jonathan always dressed neatly and always had gravitas. All the members of the family realised that anything he said was worth listening to. A mentoring and leadership role in the family came naturally to him. In part he fulfilled this role by simply demonstrating a work ethic and setting a standard for his brothers to aim at and maybe exceed. In this regard, he was supplying the

leadership that our father was unable to provide. Our father had left school at age fourteen more than forty years previously, and could not give any scholastic guidance. Furthermore, he had rather outdated views regarding how to bring up his children, and in any case was too tired at the end of the day to take much of a role in family life.

One notable instance of Jonathan's involvement in the smooth running of the family would have been when he was around nineteen. The family sometimes felt that its youngest member, Eliot, could benefit from a little "time out". On such occasions, Jonathan would invite Eliot into his bedroom. When we later asked Eliot what manner of lesson Jonathan had imparted, the answer was that Jonathan had been teaching Eliot philosophy. Eliot was, more than a decade later, to go on to gain a Double First in philosophy at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Once Jonathan started studying at Cambridge, he was only living at home half the year. My father set up his stereo system and classical record collection in Jonathan's part of the bedroom. Before he married, my father had played the violin seriously, and he had refined tastes in classical music. As Jonathan was maturing, he was also becoming a lover of classical music and the arts. I remember his enthusiasm for Fellini's film “8½”, which was to become recognised as a shibboleth for sophisticated cinematic taste. My father delighted in being able to share his enthusiasm for music and culture with his firstborn son. He probably looked to Jonathan for both friendship and validation. I can well believe that this was at some times pleasant for Jonathan, and at other times a burden.

13.2 Jonathan and I through the years

As I have mentioned previously, I devoted some time, during a holiday abroad in 2014, to focused recollection of my lifetime's relationship with Jonathan. The following section is a small part of the outcome. I feel entitled to set it down on paper, given that hundreds and thousands of other people have also written about what Jonathan meant to them and how he had helped them.

I need to emphasise at the outset that I could equally write at length about each of my family members and how they have enhanced my life. But I know that their modesty would lead each of them to strongly try to dissuade me from so doing. So I will merely here express how fortunate I am to have such a wonderful family.

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Occasionally, and from when he was quite young, Jonathan made observations that I found powerful at the time and no less impressive now as I look back. When I was about eleven, Jonathan said to me, "You will never be fat, because you are tense" – and time has proved that he was right. When I was seventeen, and had presumably said something that wasn't helpful, he said, "Before you say something, think whether it is constructive or destructive. If it is constructive, say it. If it is destructive, don't say it." I have tried to live by that formula ever since.

Many years later, when I was perhaps in my late twenties, Jonathan said this to me: "The only way out of a self-absorbed depression is to think what you can do to help another person". That idea can be a lifeline for a person to reach for and catch onto, when caught in a web of depression and repetitive thoughts. On a lighter note, Jonathan once told me, quoting the Jerusalem Talmud, "You will be

judged in heaven for each legitimate pleasure that you denied yourself".

Returning to my school years: Jonathan introduced me to authors that I might otherwise never have read. When I was fifteen he bought me three or four paperbacks; they included "The man who was Thursday", by G.K. Chesterton, and “The Russian Interpreter” by Michael Frayn. I read and enjoyed them all, and I am sure that they helped develop my literary sensibilities. On a related note, at around the same time, Jonathan showed me how I could use Roget's Thesaurus to diversify the vocabulary I used in my own writing.

In the spring of 1969, when I was preparing for my mathematics A-levels, I had had an altercation with my younger brother Alan, who had recently celebrated his barmitzvah. The argument upset me to such a point that I jumped onto two trains and found myself in Cambridge. When I had walked the mile or two from the railway station to Gonville and Caius College, and found myself in Trinity Street amongst all the undergraduates, I felt suddenly out of place and I almost turned back. But somehow I found myself knocking on Jonathan’s door inside the College. Jonathan was, at that time, in his final undergraduate year. He had only recently started going out with Elaine. That evening, Elaine cooked me an omelette and that night Jonathan gave up his bed for me and slept on the sofa.

As a postscript to that incident, two or three months later, it was just a few words from Jonathan that helped me to re-evaluate my relationship with Alan in a very positive way; such was the respect that I, and I think the whole family, paid to Jonathan's words and thoughts.

By the end of 1969 I had gained my own place at Gonville and Caius College, on the strength of my performance in the Cambridge Entrance Examination. I left school at that point, and continued my mathematics studies by attending lectures at Kings College London. I also spread my wings in other directions, such as learning to drive, and asking a girl out. Around June 1970, I embarked on another step along my personal road to independence: I wanted to plan a holiday abroad. I agreed to travel with my friend Alex, who, at the time, was in the latter stages of a gap year at Gateshead Yeshiva. Jonathan mentored me for this project. He briefed me about joining the Youth Hostel Association and about student air travel. But my clearest memory is of Jonathan asking me in general terms where I wanted to go, and then getting me to open an atlas and mark out an itinerary that approximated to a straight line, consisting of places worth visiting. He then advised me on how to book up the rail travel that would bring the plan to realisation. He tutored me on other essential life skills for a young man on holiday, such as how to wash my socks while staying in a youth hostel, and how to peel an orange (two great circle longitudinal cuts, each incision at 90 degrees longitudinal separation from the other).

Jonathan's involvement in that first independent holiday, it transpired, did not end at the planning stage. The holiday start date had been successively put back as my friend had been persuaded (or perhaps coerced) into lengthening his stay in Gateshead. For completeness, I should mention that when I expressed my exasperation at the delay, Jonathan's sympathies were completely with my friend. So it was to a very large extent coincidence that Alex and I were on the same flight to Zurich as were Jonathan and Elaine for the commencement of their honeymoon. We arrived late in the evening, and that night Alex and I were anxiously walking

the streets unable to find our youth hostel. Then I saw, coming towards us, Jonathan together with Elaine, to at least point us towards help. The phrase “deus ex machina” seemed to sum up the situation nicely.

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In the summer of 1970 Jonathan married Elaine and I started my student career. Our lives were now less entwined. In the years that followed, Elaine and Jonathan were very kind and hospitable, in particular during the few years in the mid-1970s when we were neighbours in East Finchley. During those years, Jonathan and I would occasionally run together in the local park on a Sunday morning. I remember once walking with Jonathan along East End Road in East Finchley on a Shabbat afternoon. From across the street, a local youth shouted out "Jew!". Jonathan gave him an elaborate theatrical bow, and that, to me, was a wonderful lesson in Jewish pride.

During those years as a newly married man in his twenties, not yet weighed down by the constraints of his public position, I could not help but admire the presence that Jonathan exuded, one that I could never aspire to. There is a specific kind of emotional maturity that enables one to be fully secure in oneself and yet provide solidity and support to a partner; to take a firm control but to always extend a listening ear; and to take a similar role with friends and in the community. Jonathan epitomised all this with his beard, his reassuring stockiness, even his pipe. Where did it come from? It is hard to know; maybe Dad’s admiration contributed to Jonathan's self-assurance.

I was also witness at that time to the physical energy that Jonathan put into improving the living space that he shared with Elaine. He painted the walls of the flat that he and Elaine shared on the grounds of Harvey Court, Cambridge during 1970/1971, showing unusual initiative for what were merely college lodgings. He was a keen gardener during the years in which both he and I lived in East Finchley. I know that when he moved to Golders Green in 1978 to commence his rabbinical career, he built his desk out of two chests of drawers and a standard home internal door. I also know that he worked through his distress from deaths and funerals in his community by washing cars – either his own or the car of one of his neighbours.

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Jonathan continued to touch my life on occasion in ways for which I always remained very thankful. I will record some of those here:

In 1974, after completing the exams for my Cambridge Diploma in Statistics, I was searching for a subject for a statistical study in order to fulfil the project requirements of the course. Jonathan provided the suggestion that I did develop and use successfully.

During the early 1980s, my wife and I were struggling with two young children and one income. On two occasions, when he changed his car, Jonathan gave me the one he was replacing instead of selling it for a few hundred pounds.

In 1983 I was completing my second postgraduate degree, an MSc in Computer Science. Jonathan owned a personal computer and printer, which was very unusual in those days. I went to his home to print off some standard application letters to send to software companies. Jonathan looked over the text I was using and made just

one suggestion. This referred to where I had written something like, "I have passed my examinations and am now completing my post-exam dissertation". Jonathan asked, "Well, what is the dissertation about?" My elaborating on that point directly led to the job that I was offered and accepted.

Jonathan decorated a room in the first house that my wife and I owned. It was a substantial room that became my study; I certainly would never have attempted such a task myself. As it was, Jonathan papered it in hessian to a standard that any professional would be proud of.

I will finish these recollections by regressing to an earlier time. I was probably 16, Jonathan 19 or 20. Jonathan took me for a walk and into a Finchley coffee shop. He bought us both a cup of coffee – mine cost one shilling and sixpence. It sounds trivial, but it was another little rite of passage into adulthood and self-esteem that was meaningful for me. I have not forgotten it.

14 Annexe: A Tribute to Ada Tomlinson

by Jessica Sacks

Ada's War as she remembered it was very different from Booba's. Booba, my grandmother, was empowered by the call to play her part; she embraced her new independence, put on her uniform and served. In 1940 Ada was twelve, attending classes in Sunderland in a bare room that was holding out against the bombing. Her mother had died eight years previously, her younger sister had been taken in by relatives, and her older siblings had left one by one, leaving Ada alone with an abusive stepmother and a lying, favoured stepsister. Evacuation to the countryside had seemed like an escape, a fleeting interlude she remembered fondly. But her step-sister was unhappy away from home, and so they were both brought back.

"We used to have a lovely town," Ada remembered; but she watched it being bombed to rubble, to be rebuilt much later in ugly concrete blocks. She was never to forget the terror of the day the shipyard her brother worked in took a direct hit. How she stood outside the house all afternoon, looking down the street for him, waiting.

"That horrible woman my dad married," her horrible daughter, and, more importantly, Ada's beloved brother, father and mother, were the cast of Ada's terrifying world in her last Alzheimer-ridden years. In that sense, Ada's war never ended. But we were there too: the family of her inter-war years.

We, the Sackses, were Ada's family. Her room was full of photographs of all of us, at all ages – under the glass of the dresser and in numerous little albums in its drawers. Four generations of

our lives were gathered there, from Margate, Finchley, Jerusalem. But for us children, Ada seemed to stand perfectly still as we all grew up around her. “I fetched them all up” she said proudly of her four boys; but it was true of us also, at least of Daniel and me, who spent many mornings and afternoons being babysat by her.

Ada could do magic; she could make the best omelette in the world, she could knit a doll which turned into another doll when inverted, she could blow bubbles using only her bare hands and bathwater. She gave us lady’s finger biscuits and I was sure that SHE was the lady they were modelled on, with her long slender fingers and pearly nail varnish. With her fair hair done up in combs, the most glamorous lady in my life, though also the most home-bound.

And so quiet. Who could extract an opinion from Ada? As the years went by she appeared more and more to fade into the wall, especially around outsiders. She would not say Boo to a goose. But every day she would take out the toast crumbs to feed the birds – and then she would stand at the living room window to bang on it and shoo away the squirrels who came to plunder. “The squirrels and the pigeons have driven away all the smaller birds”, she explained to me. And once, seething with anger, she led me down to the fence at the bottom of the garden to show me the sorry state of the hens the neighbour was neglecting on the other side. Perhaps only in that world of birds and squirrels, as she stood behind the glass, could she step out from being the frightened, defenceless little girl Ada, and rise up to defend the defenceless.

When Booba died we took Ada, already in the grip of Alzheimer’s, to the hospital to see her body. When Booba’s face was uncovered, silent, stoical Ada broke down in sobs, hysterical with grief. It was the end of the most remarkable of friendships. A minute; then she

gathered herself. She bid Mrs. Sacks farewell and covered her again, plucking gently at the edges of the sheet, so that it would fall just right. It was the same habitual, meticulous motion that she used every Shabbat for the tablecloth at home. Of true lady's fingers; simple labour, never seeking reward or thanks: with silent and endless care and love.

15 Annexe: Louisa Frumkin ARP

My mother never spoke about herself except in a modest and unassuming way. But I interviewed her about her life in early 2006, when she was 86 years old. She spoke with characteristic modesty about the war years, during which time she continued to work during the day in the family business while at night she served as a voluntary Civil Defence Senior Fire Guard and Deputy Post Warden in the Air Raid Precautions service. I present her account in full in the following pages.

In her early twenties she was carrying heavy responsibility under difficult and dangerous conditions. An indication of the extent of her responsibilities is given by the "Duties of a Senior Fire Guard" document transcribed verbatim in the section "Responsibilities and Procedures".

Some idea of what life must have been like for her is contained in a letter she wrote to a friend, at a time when she was still working all day in the family wine shop:

"I feel rather dull after several nights without sleep. We have had two or three alerts every night for the last four nights and although thank God little damage was done, it meant a rather rude awakening every hour or so and having to rush round to the post.

Our barrage last night was very heavy. I don't think you have had the pleasure of hearing our park guns, they are really sweet music."

After my mother died in late 2010, a fuller picture emerged from the papers she left behind. I am here documenting some of these findings, as a tribute to someone whose modesty meant that she would never have spoken of these things herself.

Louisa Frumkin in her own words

“Around 1940 I volunteered to work as a part-time Civil Defence Fire Warden.

I became the Senior Fire Guard of our area – post A5, within Stoke Newington. Every business premises needed to appoint a Fire Guard, and they were supposed to report to me. In practice, these guards were generally older men, all volunteers, and I and a companion used to go round to see them on duty.

One of the roles of the fire wardens was to learn where all the fire hydrants were, so that we could inform the Fire Service if needed. Our main duty was to patrol the streets of our area on foot. There were always at least two of us together – we weren't allowed to patrol alone. If any incident occurred, we had to inform the fire or ambulance service as appropriate as to what help was needed, and lead the rescue services to the site. Another rescue service that played an important role were the teams that would dig through the debris to rescue people trapped if, for example, a building had collapsed. We didn't have radios – there was just the

telephone at the fire warden's post - so we had to go on foot to pass our information on. If an incident happened, we would run back to the warden's post – mine was a basement room in a house – and call the rescue services from there.

Our area was fairly lucky, certainly in regard to the fire-bombing of the earlier part of the war. I can't recall many incidents during my time of patrolling, although I do particularly remember one night when a lot of fire bombs were dropped. But across the road from our house was Finsbury Park, which was a constant target for German bombing because anti-aircraft artillery batteries were positioned there, and tanks were being repaired at a nearby race track.

There was also a large underground station near our house. One of my routine tasks every evening was to register the number of people who wanted to spend the night in the station. But one night, a German bomb penetrated the midst of the station and many people were killed.

As for our house in Seven Sisters Road, it was subject to both the shock waves caused by the artillery fire from Finsbury Park and the bombing by German aircraft. The Army Authorities therefore suggested that the house be reinforced with concrete. Because of this, our friends and neighbours considered the house very safe. Accordingly, when the bombs were falling, lots of people would come to sleep in our basement shelter and one even slept under our dining room table. We got fed up with this and took our chances sleeping upstairs.

Once the Germans started dropping the V-1 flying bombs in 1944, I switched to full-time fire warden duties, and was the Deputy Post

Warden. I find it hard to remember the duties involved, but I think I was based rather more than before in the warden's post, taking and acting on the phone calls. It was in the warden's post that I learned to play table tennis!

The V-2 rocket attacks began late in 1944. They flew faster than the speed of sound, which meant that, unlike with the V-1's, there was no whistle warning enabling us to take cover – the whistle could only be heard after the rocket had landed. We weren't allowed to patrol once the V-2s started being fired. The V-2s caused much loss of life and damage to property. One of them fell near the home of my sister Rosie and her husband Wilfred Goldberg, and several of their neighbours were killed. Their daughter Angela, who was then 2 years old, was in the house at the time and was miraculously saved by the fact that she was sleeping in an iron cot, which prevented the roof beams from falling on top of her. I had that day gone down to Bournemouth with my mother, my first trip away for some years, and was there for one night and heard about this incident. I came back to London that day and brought Rosie and Angela back down to Bournemouth.

The war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945, VE Day, and my brother Aaron and I went to Trafalgar Square to join the thousands of others in wild celebrations. In all I had served in Civil Defence for around 5 years and was awarded the Defence Medal, as were all others who had served a similar period."

Responsibilities and Procedures

The documents in this section give an indication of the responsibilities placed upon Miss Frumkin in her early twenties:

Duties of a Senior Fire Guard
Stirrup Hand Pump Drill
Message Transmission

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON

Duties of a Senior Fire Guard

A.Normal duties

(i) to be responsible to his head Fire Guard for the Fire Guard organisation of his area
(ii) to know all his Fire Guard Street Captains, and to hold weekly meetings with them
(iii) to be responsible for the compilation of all records, including a register of all Fire Guards in his area showing details of their training and any failures to maintain duty, and records of the equipment distributed on free loan or otherwise
(iv) to ensure that adequate equipment is available, and to receive receipts for equipment from his Fire Guard Street Captains
(v) to ensure that the whole of his area is covered by fire prevention arrangements by checking the arrangements made by his Fire Guard Street Captains
(vi) to arrange for the protection of unoccupied premises, churches, halls etc by Fire Guard parties, and to ensure that Parties are conversant with the means of access to such buildings and with the distribution of equipment in them.
(vii) in consultation with the Fire Guard Staff Officer and his Head Fire Guard, to arrange for the protection of isolated business premises by Fire Guard Parties.
(viii) to be conversant with the Fire Prevention arrangements at business premises in his area
(ix) to contact (if authorised by the appropriate authority) personnel on duty at business premises in his area and to report on these contacts to his Head Fire Guard
(x) to see that men (if any) directed by the local authority under the

Compulsory Enrolment Order do duty in the Fire Guard Parties to which they have been directed
(xi) to consider reports on high fire risks received from his Fire Guard Street Captains and to refer them to his Head Fire Guard
(xii) to organise training in his area and to maintain a register showing the stage of training reached by each Fire Guard
(xiii) to ensure that Fire Guards are regularly rehearsed in their duties by the Street Fire Party Leaders under the supervision of the Fire Guard Street Captains
(xiv) to arrange the simple exercises of Street Fire Parties in his area
(xv) to nominate suitable persons to be appointed as Fire Guard Street Captains and Street Fire Party Leaders, as vacancies arise
(xvi) to decide with his Fire Guard Street Captains rallying points for reinforcement purposes
(xvii) during alerts to visit the teams on duty
(xviii) to arrange a rota of Fire Guard Street Captains to ensure a regular check on the maintenance of duty in his area
(xix) to maintain liaison with the Superintendent of any Fire Guard Depot deploying Fire Guards in his area
(xx) to visit and supervise teams deployed in his area from a Fire Guard Depot
(xxi) where a light trailer pump is allotted to a building in his area:

(a) to call for volunteers to man it

(b) to ensure that these attend for training and practice under the N.F.S.

(c) to see that the Pump Party Leader maintains the equipment in an efficient condition.

B.Operational duty

(i) on an alert, to see any trailer pumps allotted to his area are duly

manned
(ii) to visit attacked districts and encourage and direct the Street Fire Party Leaders and their Parties; and if necessary to take operational charge
(iii) in the event of a serious incident developing in the vicinity of a building to which a trailer pump is allocated, to determine, if the N.F.S. is not available, whether it should be moved to the site of that incident and if reinforcements are required
(iv) where necessary, to call upon the Superintendent of any Fire Guard Depot in his area for additional Fire Guards.

C.Duties after a raid

(i) to arrange for the immediate replacement of equipment reported by Street Captains as destroyed or damaged, e.g. water containers
(ii) to prepare a consolidated report on the raid in his area from the reports submitted by Street Captains and to submit it to the Head File Guard and to the Wardens' Post
(iii) to assist any Fire Guard casualties in making out claim forms for compensation.

THE STIRRUP HAND PUMP DRILL

To be learnt and practised by Squads.

The full party consists of three persons numbered 1 to 3.
No.1 is in charge of the party.

When moving to attack a fire:
No.1 carries the axe and handlamp (if provided) and perhaps a filled bucket. No.2 carries the pump, & No.3 two filled buckets.

On the order from No.1:

"Get to work"	No.1 goes forward with nozzle. No.3 places buckets where ordered by No.1 and helps in running out hose. He then returns to No.2 and maintains water supply, relieving No.2 at the pump when required. No.2 places pump in bucket and pumps a few (about 10) strokes to fill the hose.
"Water on"	No.2 pumps.
"Water off"	No.2 stops pumping.
"Knock off and make up"	Hose is cleared by pumping water back into bucket. Hose is coiled and secured.

Notes:
No.2 maintains water supply while No.3 is pumping.
Nos.2 & 3 must make frequent contacts with No.1
Rates of pumping should be 70 full strokes per minute for the jet, 35 full strokes for the spray. When the spray is being used resistance is greater than with the jet; this is easily noticeable after a little practice by the person pumping.

If only two persons are available:
No.1 carries the pump, No.2 carries two filled buckets.

If only one person is available:
The pumping and direction of the jet or spray will have to be done from the buckets. The fire-fighter will not be able to approach so near to the fire.

Duties (details):

No.1	No.2	No.3
Is in charge of party. Selects position for pump. Goes forward with nozzle. Gives orders "Water on" etc. as needed.	Operates pump at about 70 strokes per minute for jet and 35 strokes per minute for spray, asking No.3 to relieve him as necessary. When not pumping maintains water supply.	Lights hose forward to No.1. Maintains water supply. Relieves No.2 when required.
Nos.2 & 3 between them keep in contact with No.1		

Incident Reporting and Message Transmission

This sub-section documents the mandated procedures at ARP Incident Reporting Centres, and the reporting forms used.

These procedures and forms represent the systematisation of the transmission of messages, from incident occurring, to being accurately recorded and report being transmitted, action being decided upon, and rescue agencies being alerted.

The diagram on page 3 of "Report Centre Procedure" illustrates (in those early days of telephony) the separate telephones for In/Out/Direct lines. Also note the fact that many messages were passed by messenger running from place to place, especially because telephone communication was often disrupted.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON:

Air Raid Precautions Department:

REPORT CENTRE PROCEDURE:

The responsibility of the Report Centre is to collate and act upon information supplied from various sources, which may be received in the manifold duties and operations of Civil Defence.

It is very important that the Report Centre should be able to receive and collate these reports with extreme accuracy, and so ensure that as complete information as possible regarding different Incidents that happen in the Borough - both during an air raid and otherwise - may be fully and faithfully recorded, and that whatever action may be required as a result of these reports, is carried out with a minimum of delay.

RECEPTION OF MESSAGES:

Information can be received either by telephone or messenger, and in planning the lay-out of the reception side of Report Centre work, it is important that the despatch and reception of messages should be carried out with the minimum of delay. For this reason it is desirable that the telephones used for the reception of messages should not, in any circumstances, be used for the despatch of messages, and the same thing applies to the telephones reserved for the despatch of messages; they should not be used for incoming calls.

It is also important that adequate arrangements be made to receive those messages which come in by hand.

The usual procedure in carrying out these duties is by the installation of a Message Room which will be in the care, or at least under the supervision of a Message Supervisor, who will be responsible to the officer in charge for all messages received and despatched, whether by telephone or messenger.

DESPATCH OF MESSAGES:

In order to facilitate the easy despatch of certain messages to fixed points, such as the Police Station, Fire Brigade, etc., there would normally be a direct line to these particular static sources of information.

The usual method carried out for the despatch of messages is by telephone. This method is the quickest and presents the minimum amount of delay, but it must be realised that under active service conditions telephones cannot always be relied upon. The causes of delay may be from various reasons, i.e. destruction of lines by enemy action, or congestion owing to intense enemy activity etc., and it is therefore very important that the persons responsible for the despatch of messages should have a very accurate knowledge of the amount of time taken for the despatch of a message to a given point, so that in the event of congestion occurring on any particular line, it may be advantageous to despatch a message or messages by other means.

MESSENGERS' WAITING ROOM:

In order to facilitate the despatch of messages, as mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, it is essential that such alternative means should be readily to hand, and as this will be by Messengers, travelling either on foot, by cycle or motor-cycle, there should be some accommodation available for them to wait until such time as their services are required. It therefore becomes necessary to have a Messengers' Waiting Room preferably adjoining the Message Room.

(P.T.O.)

When the information is received in the Message Room it becomes necessary to record it in such a way that the situation can be readily appreciated at any moment. The necessary action must also be assessed and carried out without delay. Therefore on receipt a message is passed from the Message Room into what is known as the Map Room where the information is recorded and appropriate action taken.

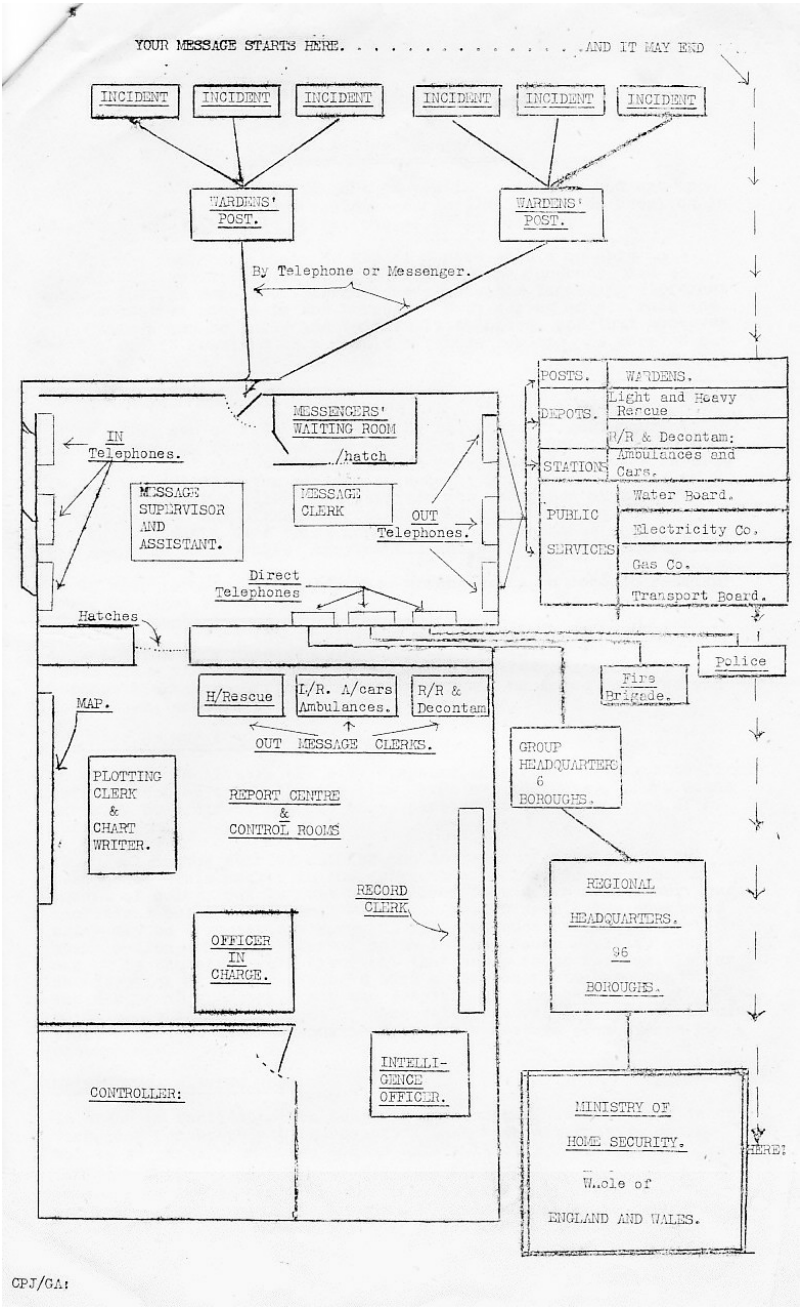
In order that smooth working may be achieved, and to obtain complete co-ordination, there are four principles which should be kept in mind:-

1. The principle of Common Knowledge: Each service requires full information for the intelligent employment of its resources. This implies that each service requires a complete picture of what has occurred.

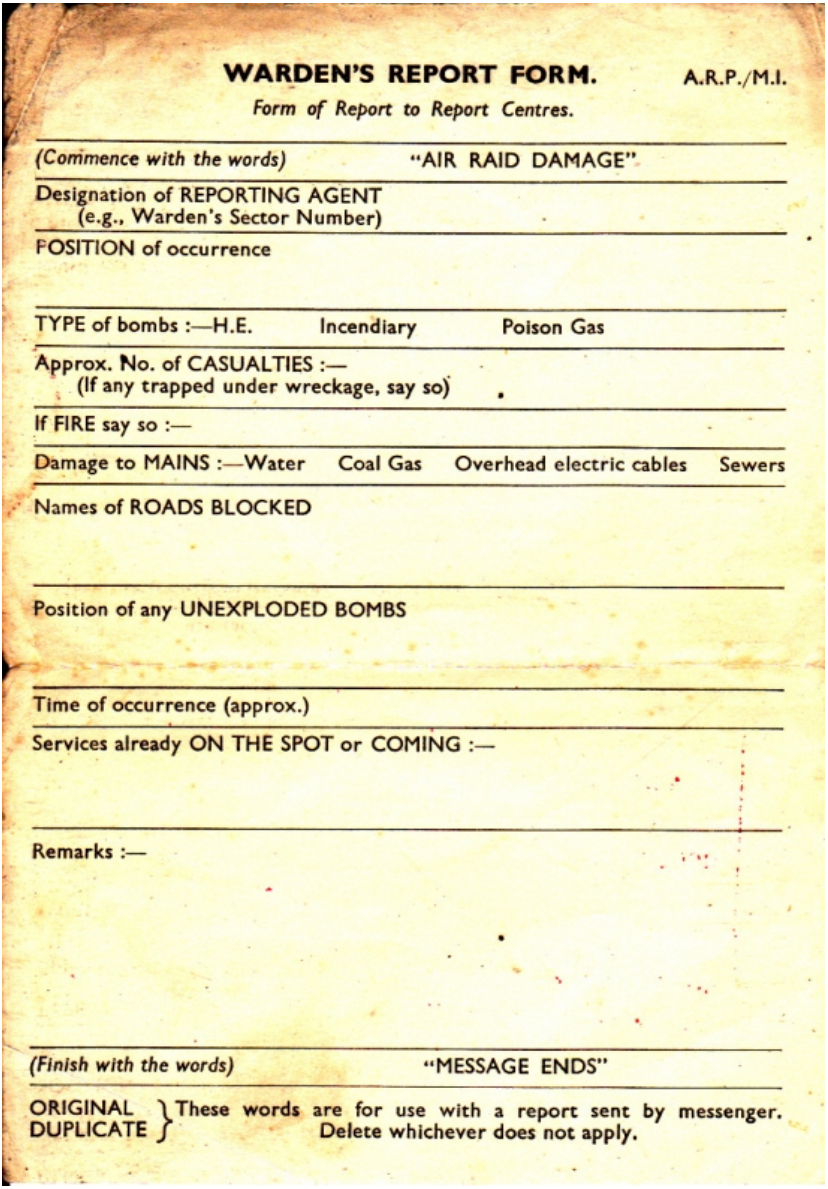
2. The principle of Common Action: Each service requires to note what other services are doing in order to achieve some form of concerted action. This will enable the decision of priorities to be obtained if necessary.

3. The principle of Co-ordination: Concerted action is based chiefly by having some supreme co-ordinating authority.

4. The principle of Central Control: By carrying out this system duplication is avoided.


YOUR MESSAGE STARTS HERE. . . . . AND IT MAY END
INCIDENT
INCIDENT
INCIDENT
INCIDENT
INCIDENT
INCIDENT
WARDENS' POST.
WARDENS' POST.
By Telephone or Messenger.
MESSENGERS' WAITING ROOM
/hatch
IN Telephones.
MESSAGE SUPERVISOR AND ASSISTANT.
MESSAGE CLERK
OUT Telephones.
Direct Telephones
Hatches
POSTS. WARDENS.
DEPOTS. Light and Heavy Rescue
R/R & Decontam:
STATIONS Ambulances and Cars.
PUBLIC SERVICES Water Board.
Electricity Co.
Gas Co.
Transport Board.
Police
Fire Brigade.
H/Rescue
L/R. A/cars Ambulances.
R/R & Decontam
OUT MESSAGE CLERKS.
MAP.
PLOTTING CLERK & CHART WRITER.
REPORT CENTRE & CONTROL ROOMS
GROUP HEADQUARTERS 6 BOROUGHS.
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS. 96 BOROUGHS.
RECORD CLERK
OFFICER IN CHARGE.
INTELLI-GENCE OFFICER.
CONTROLLER:
MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY.
Whole of ENGLAND AND WALES.
CPJ/GA:

Warden's Report Form Front and Rear - the rear comprising an "Express" Report



WARDEN'S REPORT FORM. A.R.P./M.I.

Form of Report to Report Centres.

(Commence with the words) "AIR RAID DAMAGE"

Designation of REPORTING AGENT
(e.g., Warden's Sector Number)

POSITION of occurrence

TYPE of bombs :—H.E. Incendiary Poison Gas

Approx. No. of CASUALTIES :—
(If any trapped under wreckage, say so)

If FIRE say so :—

Damage to MAINS :—Water Coal Gas Overhead electric cables Sewers

Names of ROADS BLOCKED

Position of any UNEXPLODED BOMBS

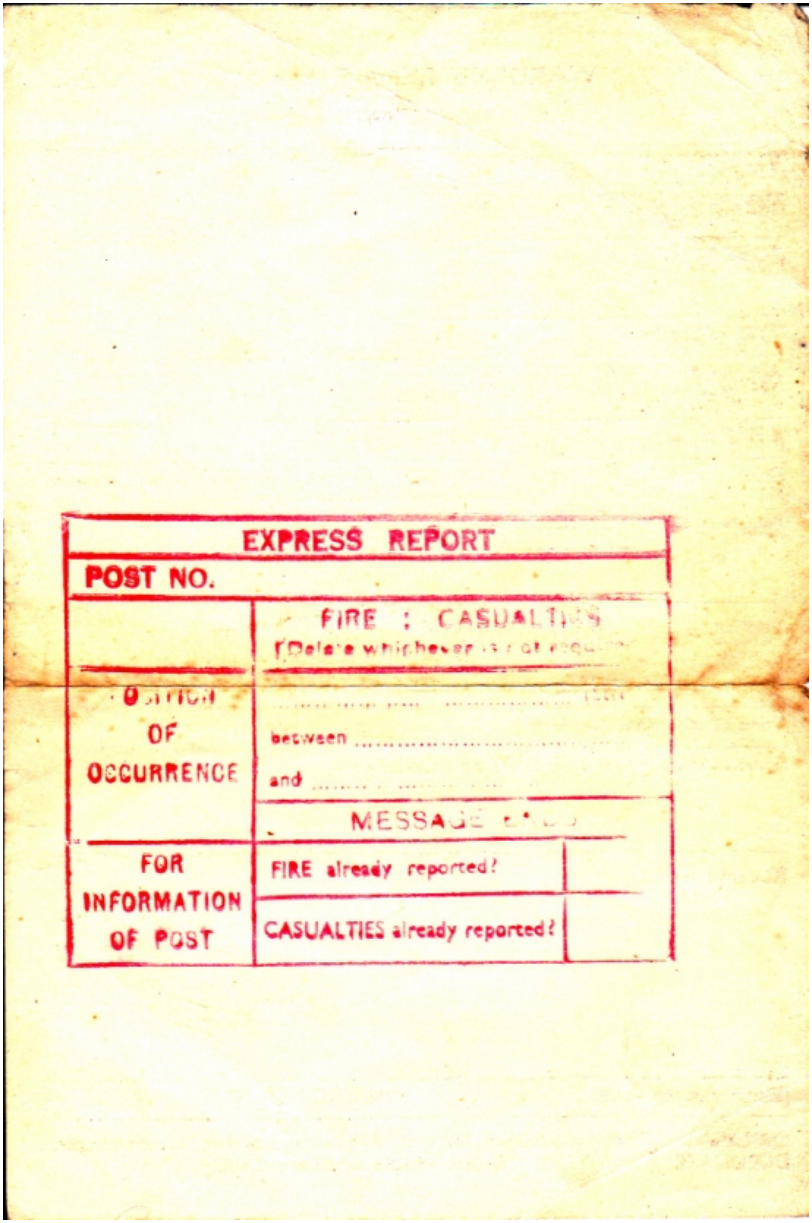
Time of occurrence (approx.)

Services already ON THE SPOT or COMING :—

Remarks :—

(Finish with the words) "MESSAGE ENDS"

ORIGINAL } These words are for use with a report sent by messenger.
DUPLICATE } Delete whichever does not apply.



EXPRESS REPORT

POST NO.

FIRE : CASUALTIES

(Delete whichever is not req...

OF OCCURRENCE

between .....

and .....

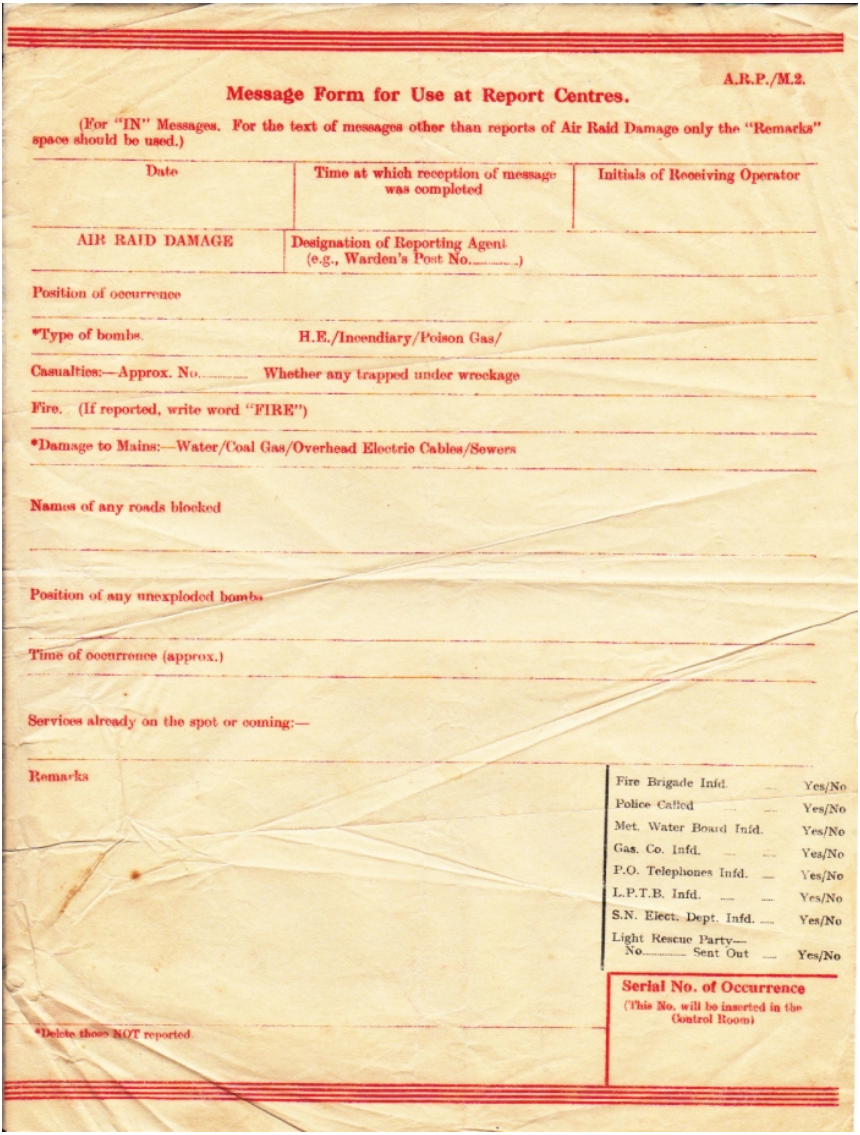
MESSAGE ...

FOR INFORMATION OF POST

FIRE already reported?

CASUALTIES already reported?

Report Centre Form, for capturing information supplied by Warden or other on-the-spot source



A.R.P./M.2.

Message Form for Use at Report Centres.

(For "IN" Messages. For the text of messages other than reports of Air Raid Damage only the "Remarks" space should be used.)

Date	Time at which reception of message was completed	Initials of Receiving Operator

AIR RAID DAMAGE

Designation of Reporting Agent (e.g., Warden's Post No.....)

Position of occurrence

*Type of bombs. H.E./Incendiary/Poison Gas/

Casualties:—Approx. No..... Whether any trapped under wreckage

Fire. (If reported, write word "FIRE")

*Damage to Mains:—Water/Coal Gas/Overhead Electric Cables/Sewers

Names of any roads blocked

Position of any unexploded bombs

Time of occurrence (approx.)

Services already on the spot or coming:—

Remarks

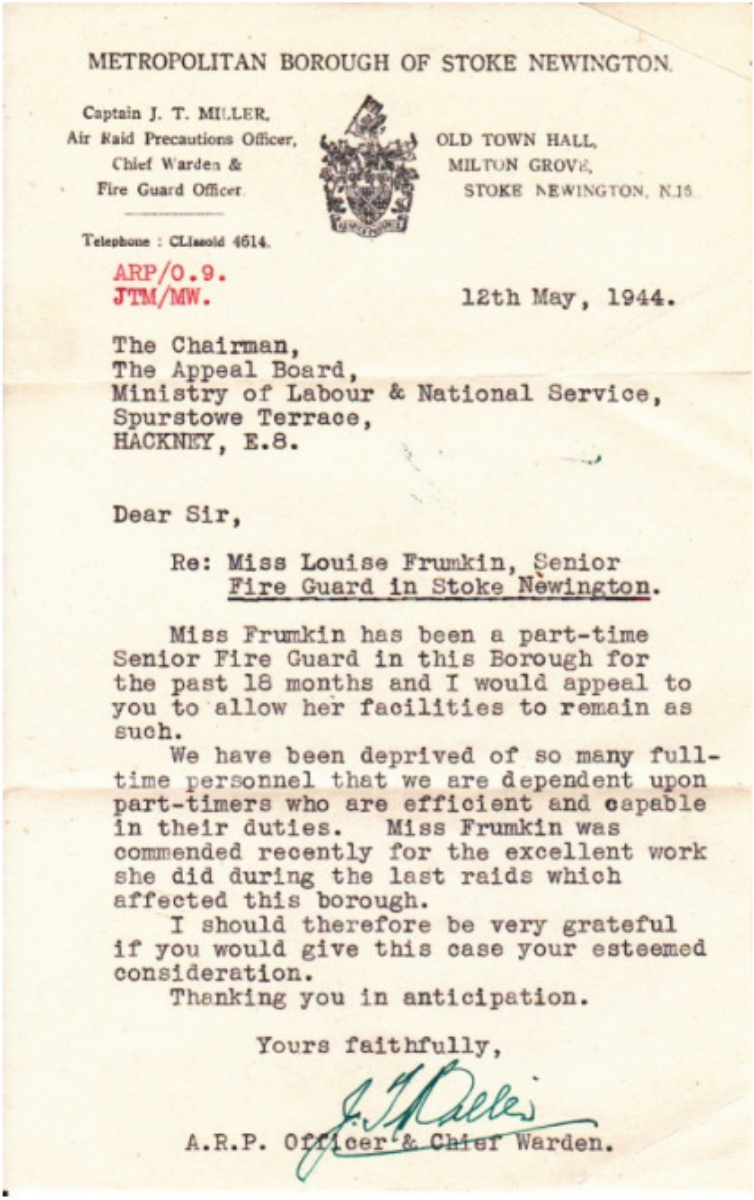
Fire Brigade Infd.	Yes/No
Police Called	Yes/No
Met. Water Board Infd.	Yes/No
Gas. Co. Infd.	Yes/No
P.O. Telephones Infd.	Yes/No
L.P.T.B. Infd.	Yes/No
S.N. Elect. Dept. Infd.	Yes/No
Light Rescue Party— No..... Sent Out	Yes/No

Serial No. of Occurrence
(This No. will be inserted in the Control Room)

*Delete those NOT reported.

Commendations from superiors

12 May 1944: Commendation from Chief Warden, Stoke Newington



METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON.

Captain J. T. MILLER,
Air Raid Precautions Officer,
Chief Warden &
Fire Guard Officer.

OLD TOWN HALL,
MILTON GROVE,
STOKE NEWINGTON, N.16.

Telephone : CLissold 4614.

ARP/O.9.
JTM/MW.

12th May, 1944.

The Chairman,
The Appeal Board,
Ministry of Labour & National Service,
Spurstowe Terrace,
HACKNEY, E.8.

Dear Sir,

Re: Miss Louise Frumkin, Senior Fire Guard in Stoke Newington.

Miss Frumkin has been a part-time Senior Fire Guard in this Borough for the past 18 months and I would appeal to you to allow her facilities to remain as such.

We have been deprived of so many full-time personnel that we are dependent upon part-timers who are efficient and capable in their duties. Miss Frumkin was commended recently for the excellent work she did during the last raids which affected this borough.

I should therefore be very grateful if you would give this case your esteemed consideration.

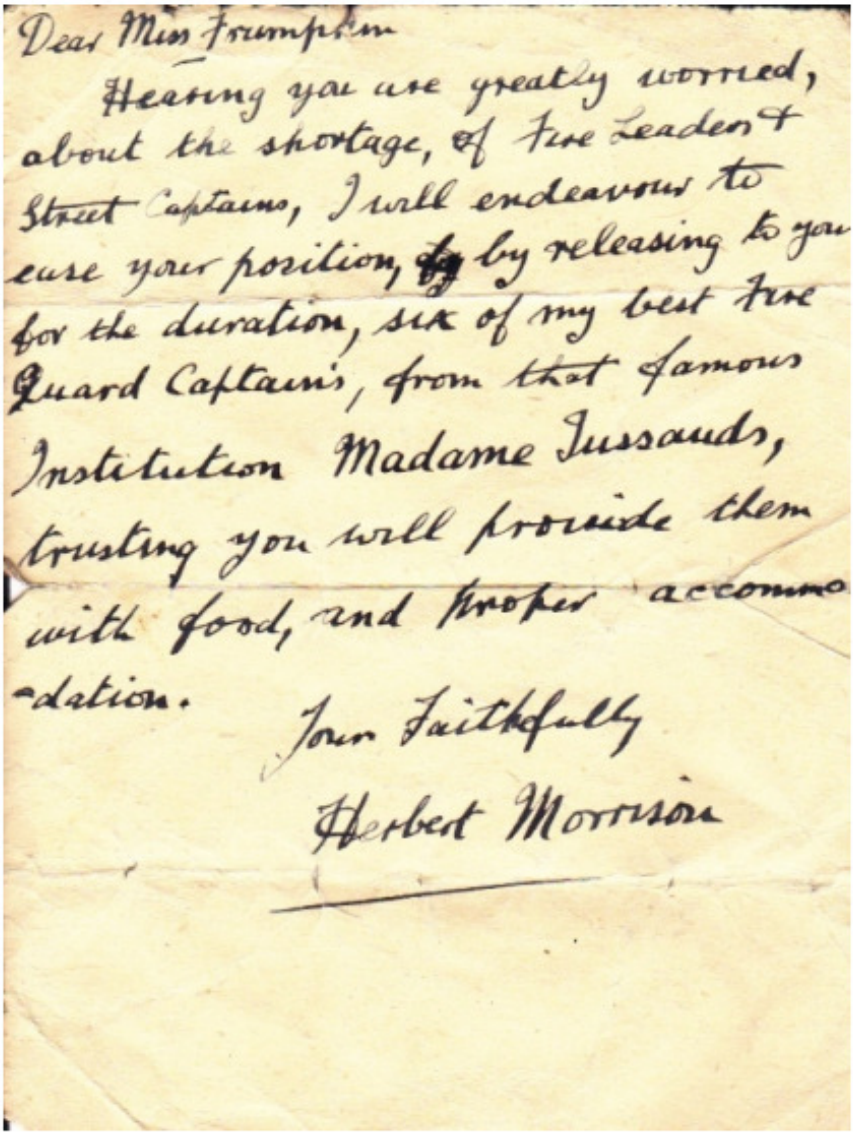
Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,

J. T. Miller

A.R.P. Officer & Chief Warden.

4 September 1943: From Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary



Dear Miss Trumpkin

Hearing you are greatly worried, about the shortage, of fire Leaders & Street Captains, I will endeavour to ease your position, by releasing to you for the duration, six of my best fire Guard Captains, from that famous Institution Madame Tussauds, trusting you will provide them with food, and proper accommo-dation.

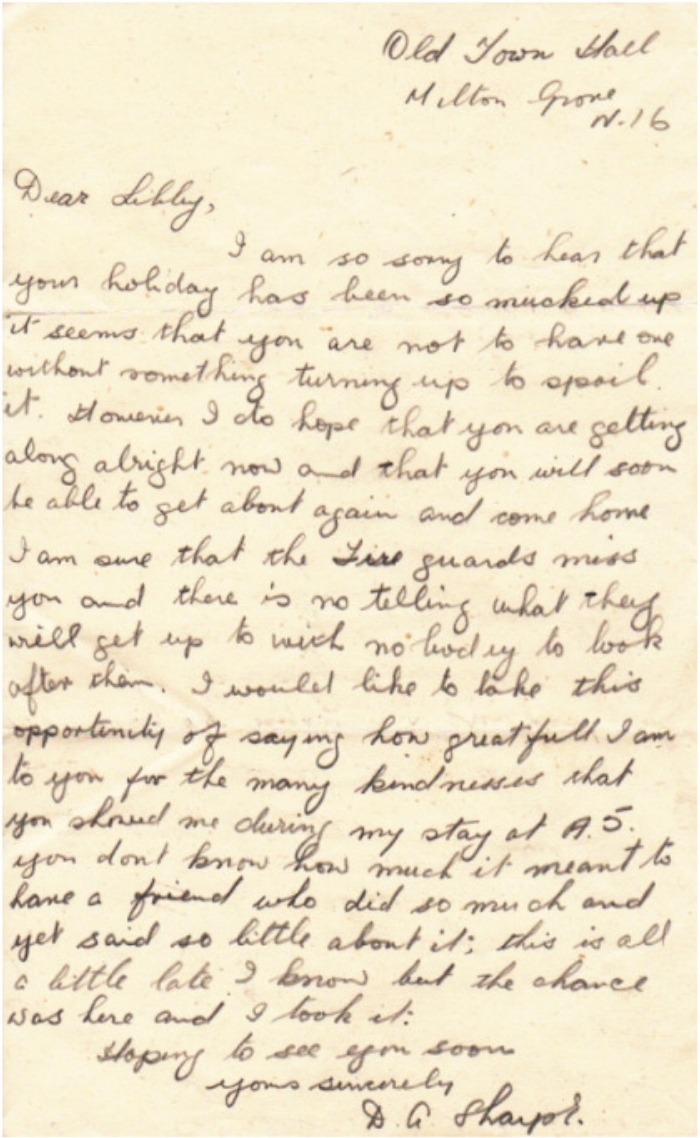
Your Faithfully

Herbert Morrison


IF USED FOR TRANSMISSION TO ANY PLACE ABROAD TO WHICH THE 2½d. RATE
OF LETTER POSTAGE DOES NOT APPLY, THE ADDITIONAL POSTAGE REQUIRED
SHOULD BE PREPAID BY MEANS OF ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMPS
LETTER CARD
4 SEP 1943
POSTAGE
Miss L. Trumpkin
S. T. G.
A.R.P. POST.
24 Portland Rise
N 4

Appreciation from colleagues in Post A5

These and other letters from my mother's colleagues at the post attest to her quiet and modest kindness and competence.



Old Town Hall
Milton Grove
N.16

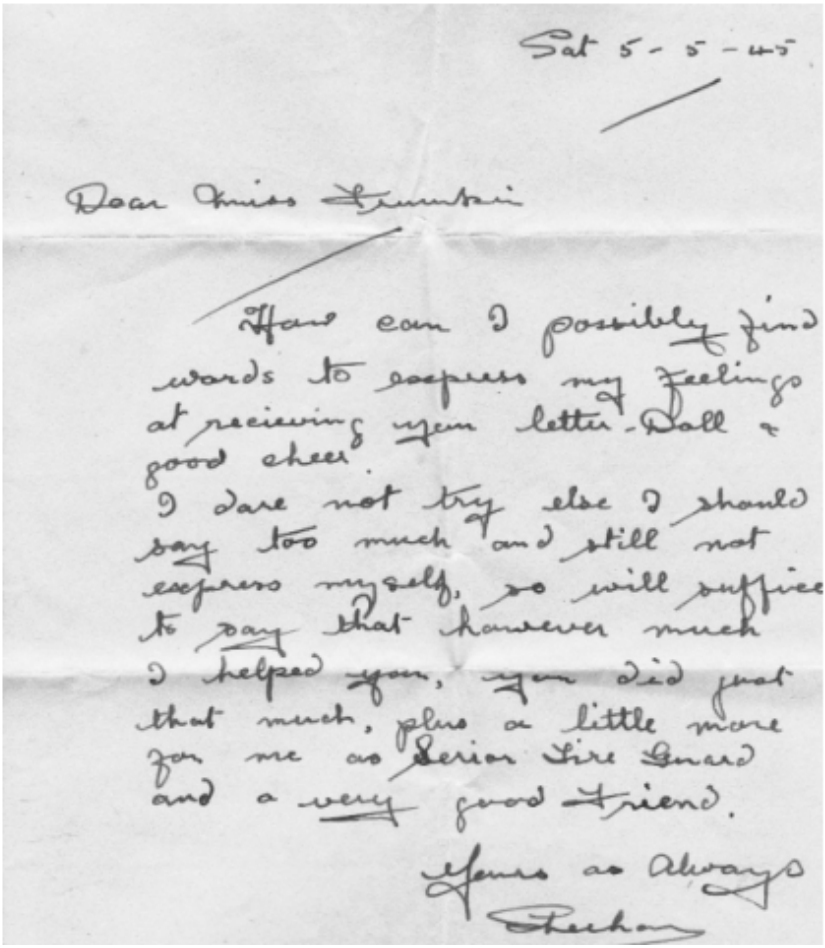
Dear Libby,

I am so sorry to hear that your holiday has been so mucked up it seems that you are not to have one without something turning up to spoil it. However I do hope that you are getting along alright now and that you will soon be able to get about again and come home I am sure that the Fire guards miss you and there is no telling what they will get up to with no body to look after them. I would like to take this opportunity of saying how greatfull I am to you for the many kindnesses that you showed me during my stay at A.5. you dont know how much it meant to have a friend who did so much and yet said so little about it; this is all a little late I know but the chance was here and I took it.

Hoping to see you soon

yours sincerely

D. A. Sharpe.



Sat 5 - 5 - 45

Dear Miss Trumbull

How can I possibly find words to express my feelings at recieving your letter. Doll & good cheer.

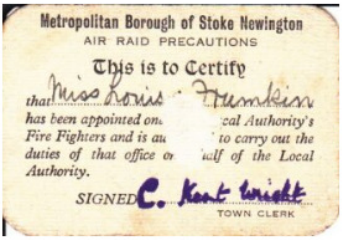
I dare not try else I should say too much and still not express myself, so will suffice to say that however much I helped you, you did just that much, plus a little more for me as Senior Fire Guard and a very good friend.

Yours as Always

Sherman

Timeline 1941 - 1942

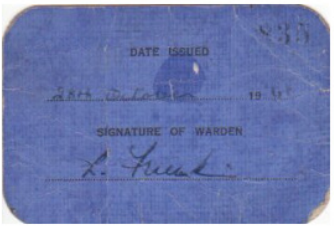
28 February 1941: Fire Fighter Certificate



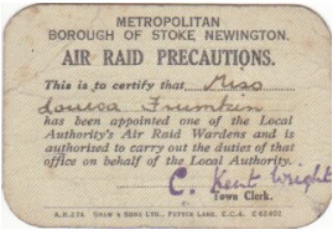
Metropolitan Borough of Stoke Newington
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS
This is to Certify
that Miss Louise Frumkin
has been appointed on[illegible]cal Authority's
Fire Fighters and is au[illegible]to carry out the
duties of that office o[illegible]alf of the Local
Authority.
SIGNED C. Kent Wright
TOWN CLERK

No. FF1715
Date Issued
28th February 1941
Signature of Fire Fighter
Louisa Frumkin

28 October 1941: Air Raid Warden certificate



DATE ISSUED
28th October 1941
SIGNATURE OF WARDEN
L. Frumkin

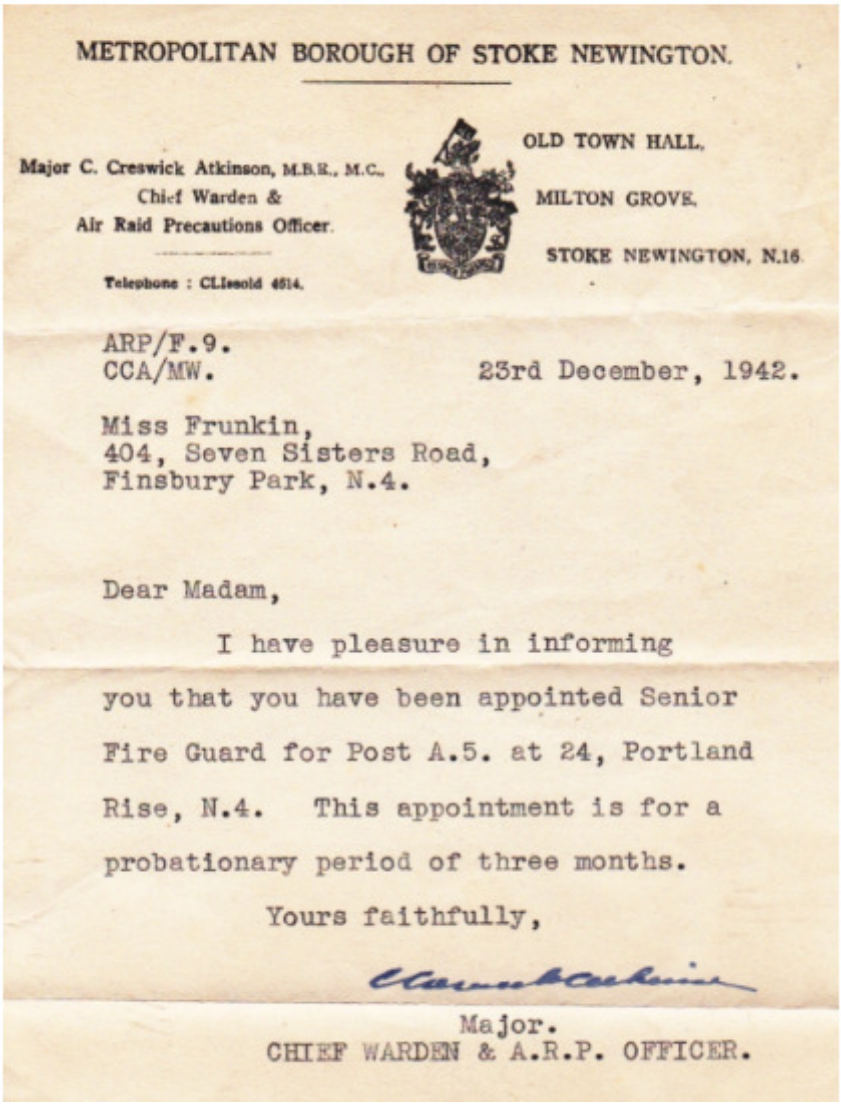


METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON.
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.
This is to certify that Miss
Louisa Frumkin
has been appointed one of the Local
Authority's Air Raid Wardens and is
authorised to carry out the duties of that
office on behalf of the Local Authority.
C. Kent Wright
Town Clerk.

20 November 1941: Air Raid Precautions Examination certificate

Metropolitan Borough of
Stoke Newington
This is to Certify that
Miss Louisa Frumkin
has been examined, and has obtained 82%
showing a satisfactory knowledge of Air Raid Precautions
and has also offered her services to the Borough
Council in the event of a National Emergency for which
public spirited offer I tender my thanks on behalf of the
Borough Council of Stoke Newington.
A W Gordon
Mayor
Date 20th November 1941

23 December 1942: Appointment as Senior Fire Guard



METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON.

Major C. Creswick Atkinson, M.B.E., M.C.,
Chief Warden &
Air Raid Precautions Officer.

Telephone : CLIssold 4514.

OLD TOWN HALL,
MILTON GROVE,
STOKE NEWINGTON, N.16.

ARP/F.9.
CCA/MW.

23rd December, 1942.

Miss Frunkin,
404, Seven Sisters Road,
Finsbury Park, N.4.

Dear Madam,

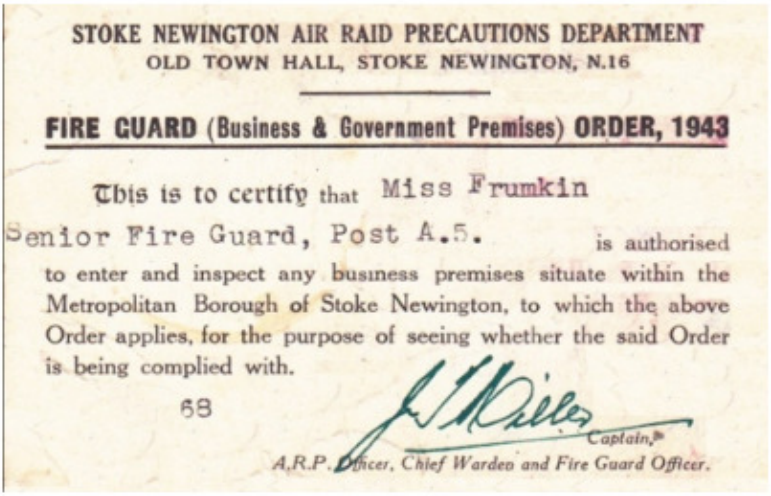
I have pleasure in informing you that you have been appointed Senior Fire Guard for Post A.5. at 24, Portland Rise, N.4. This appointment is for a probationary period of three months.

Yours faithfully,

Major.
CHIEF WARDEN & A.R.P. OFFICER.

Timeline 1943 - 1945

Permit to enter and inspect business premises



STOKE NEWINGTON AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS DEPARTMENT
OLD TOWN HALL, STOKE NEWINGTON, N.16

FIRE GUARD (Business & Government Premises) ORDER, 1943

This is to certify that Miss Frumkin
Senior Fire Guard, Post A.5. is authorised to enter and inspect any business premises situate within the Metropolitan Borough of Stoke Newington, to which the above Order applies, for the purpose of seeing whether the said Order is being complied with.

68

Captain,
A.R.P. Officer, Chief Warden and Fire Guard Officer.

Permit to enter Manor House Underground Station

LONDON PASSENGER TRANSPORT BOARD

PERMIT

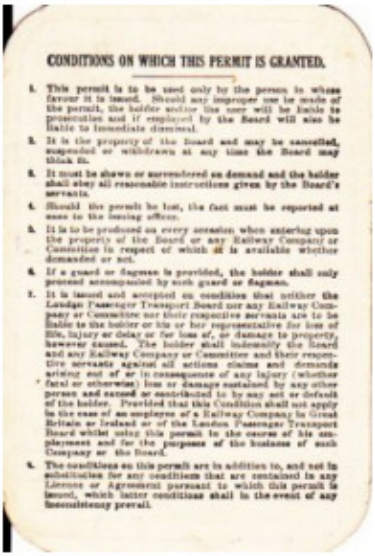
Expiring 30th JUNE, 1945
BORO OF STOKE NEWINGTON
L. FRUMKIN

is authorised to have access to
MANOR HOUSE STATION
but NOT to travel free on any part of the Board's Undertaking.

No. 4251 Secretary

Signature of holder

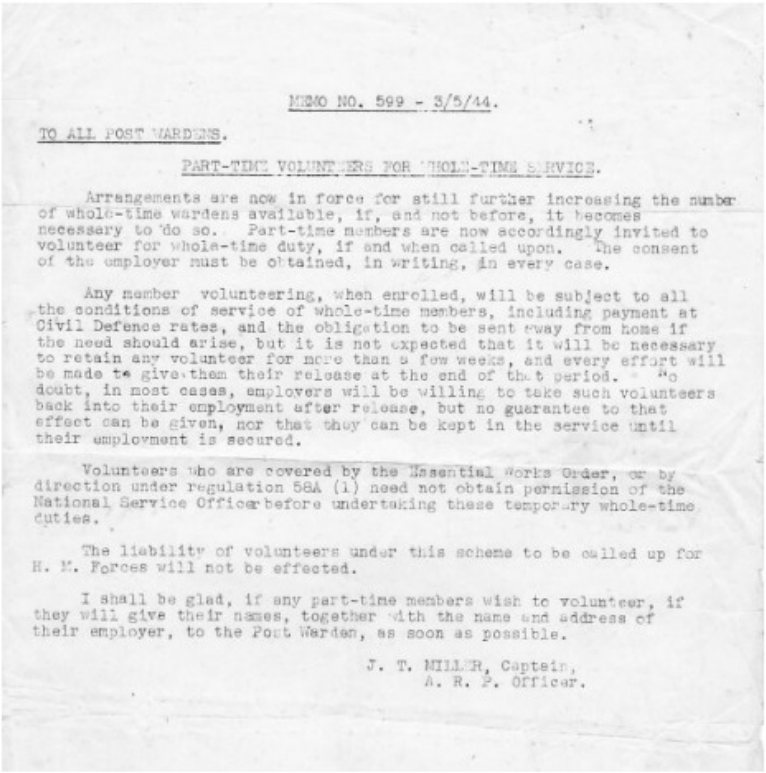
Subject to Conditions on back.



CONDITIONS ON WHICH THIS PERMIT IS GRANTED.

1. This permit is to be used only by the person in whose favour it is issued. Should any improper use be made of the permit, the holder and/or the user will be liable to prosecution and if employed by the Board will also be liable to immediate dismissal.
2. It is the property of the Board and may be cancelled, suspended or withdrawn at any time the Board may think fit.
3. It must be shown or surrendered on demand and the holder shall obey all reasonable instructions given by the Board's servants.
4. Should the permit be lost, the fact must be reported at once to the issuing office.
5. It is to be produced on every occasion when entering upon the property of the Board or any Railway Company or Committee in respect of which it is available whether demanded or not.
6. If a guard or flagman is provided, the holder shall only proceed accompanied by such guard or flagman.
7. It is issued and accepted on condition that neither the London Passenger Transport Board nor any Railway Company or Committee nor their respective servants are to be liable to the holder or his or her representative for loss of life, injury or delay or for loss of, or damage to property, however caused. The holder shall indemnify the Board and any Railway Company or Committee and their respective servants against all actions claims and demands arising out of or in consequence of any injury (whether fatal or otherwise) loss or damage sustained by any other person and caused or contributed to by any act or default of the holder. Provided that this Condition shall not apply in the case of an employee of a Railway Company in Great Britain or Ireland or of the London Passenger Transport Board whilst using this permit in the course of his employment and for the purposes of the business of such Company or the Board.
8. The conditions on this permit are in addition to, and not in substitution for any conditions that are contained in any Licence or Agreement pursuant to which this permit is issued, which latter conditions shall in the event of any inconsistency prevail.

3 May 1944: Memo requesting part-time volunteers to consider serving full-time



MEMO NO. 599 - 3/5/44.

TO ALL POST WARDENS.

PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS FOR WHOLE-TIME SERVICE.

Arrangements are now in force for still further increasing the number of whole-time wardens available, if, and not before, it becomes necessary to do so. Part-time members are now accordingly invited to volunteer for whole-time duty, if and when called upon. The consent of the employer must be obtained, in writing, in every case.

Any member volunteering, when enrolled, will be subject to all the conditions of service of whole-time members, including payment at Civil Defence rates, and the obligation to be sent away from home if the need should arise, but it is not expected that it will be necessary to retain any volunteer for more than a few weeks, and every effort will be made to give them their release at the end of that period. No doubt, in most cases, employers will be willing to take such volunteers back into their employment after release, but no guarantee to that effect can be given, nor that they can be kept in the service until their employment is secured.

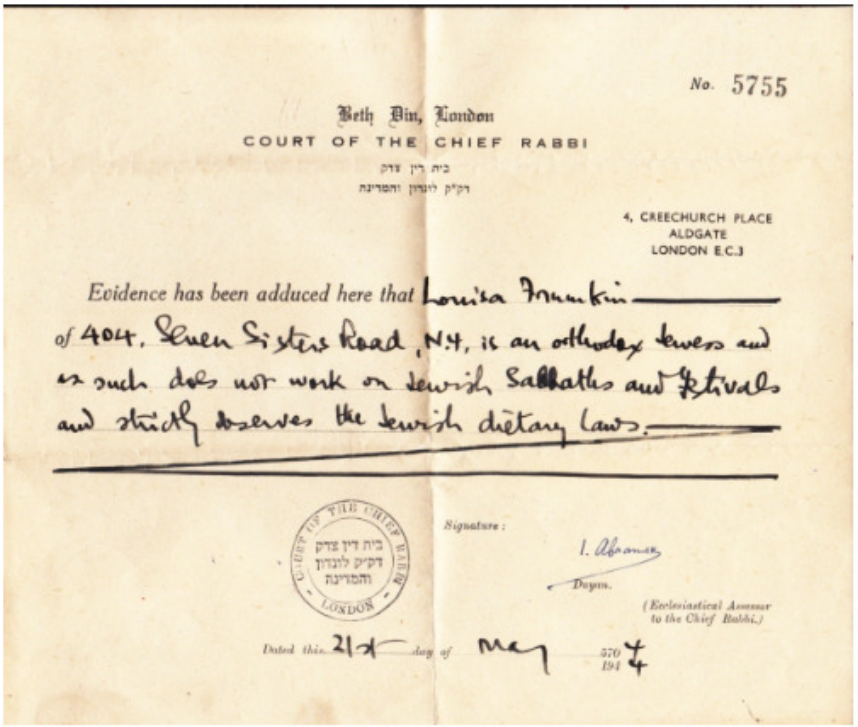
Volunteers who are covered by the Essential Works Order, or by direction under regulation 58A (1) need not obtain permission of the National Service Officer before undertaking these temporary whole-time duties.

The liability of volunteers under this scheme to be called up for H. M. Forces will not be effected.

I shall be glad, if any part-time members wish to volunteer, if they will give their names, together with the name and address of their employer, to the Post Warden, as soon as possible.

J. T. MILLER, Captain,
A. R. P. Officer.

21 May 1944: Jewish Observance Certificate



No. 5755

Beth Din, London
COURT OF THE CHIEF RABBI
בית דין צדק
דק"ק לונדון והסביבה

4, CREECHURCH PLACE
ALDGATE
LONDON E.C.3

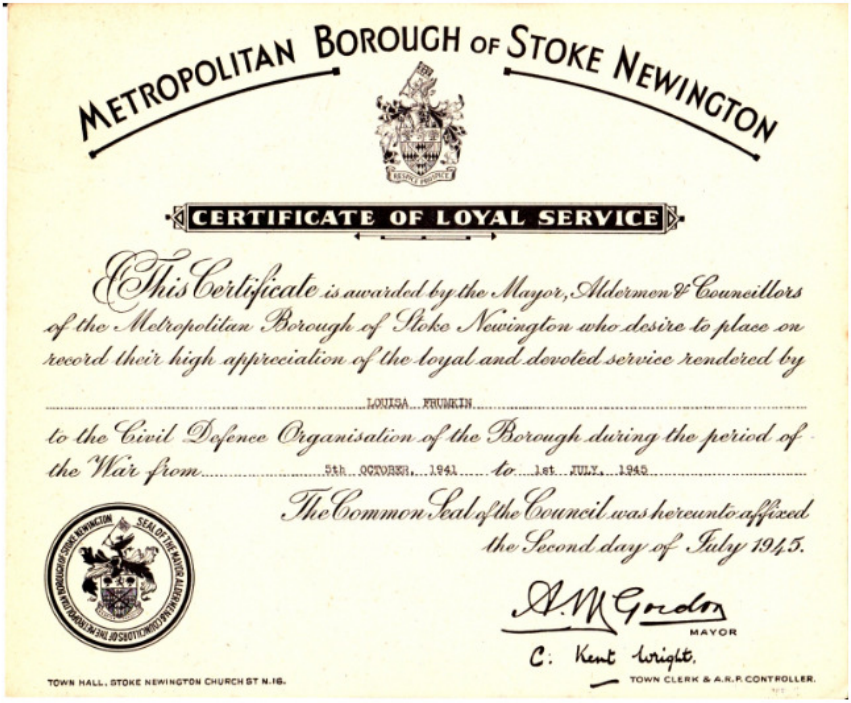
Evidence has been adduced here that Louisa Frumkin
of 404, Seven Sisters Road, N.4, is an orthodox Jewess and
as such does not work on Jewish Sabbaths and Festivals
and strictly observes the Jewish dietary laws.

CHIEF OF THE CHIEF RABBI בית דין צדק דק"ק לונדון והסביבה LONDON

Signature: I. Abramsky
Dayan.
(Ecclesiastical Assessor to the Chief Rabbi.)

Dated this 21st *day of* May 5704 / 1944

End of War, 1945: Certificate of Loyal Service



METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STOKE NEWINGTON

CERTIFICATE OF LOYAL SERVICE

This Certificate is awarded by the Mayor, Aldermen & Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Stoke Newington who desire to place on record their high appreciation of the loyal and devoted service rendered by

LOUISA FRUMKIN

to the Civil Defence Organisation of the Borough during the period of the War from 5th OCTOBER, 1941 to 1st JULY, 1945

The Common Seal of the Council was hereunto affixed the Second day of July 1945.

A.W. Gordon MAYOR

C. Kent Wright TOWN CLERK & A.R.P. CONTROLLER.

TOWN HALL, STOKE NEWINGTON CHURCH ST N.16.

End of War, 1945: Defence Medal

Defence | for veterans

Defence Medal

The 1939-45 Defence Medal

Medal

The obverse of the medal (shown here) shows the uncrowned head of King George VI. The reverse bears the Royal Crown resting on an oak tree, flanked by two lions above the words 'The Defence Medal', with the date 1939 top left and 1945 top right.

Ribbon

Flame coloured in the centre flanked by stripes of green to symbolise enemy attacks on Britain's green and pleasant land, with narrow black stripes to represent the black-out.

Defence Medal (1939-45)

Criteria

The Defence Medal was awarded for non-operational service. This type of service in the UK included those service personnel working in headquarters, on training bases and airfields and members of the Home Guard. Home Guard service counts between the dates of 14 May 1940 and 31 December 1944. The Defence Medal was also awarded for non-operational service overseas, for example in India or South Africa.

The table below shows the qualifying time required depending on the area served.

Area	Time required
UK	1080 days
Overseas non-operational	360 days
Overseas non-operational in an area deemed to be closely threatened or subject to air attack	180 days

16 Annexe: Jonathan's Sporting Interests

(published in Jewish Sports Magazine, Spring 2021)

Tribute

A sporting tribute to the late **Lord Sacks**

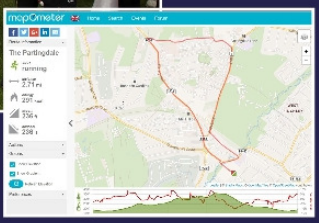
As Jonathan's younger brother, four school years below him, I was privileged to witness his beginnings as an orator and a leader during the three years that we shared at Christ's College Finchley, 1963 to 1966.

But even from those early times, Jonathan was known for his brain rather than his brawn. My only recollections regarding his football activities were his boots, because they became my hand-me-downs; the laces were extraordinarily long as they had to be wound around the bottom of the boot twice before being tied at the top. We did play cricket together in our back garden, and, always meticulous, Jonathan used linseed oil to maintain his bat in pristine condition.

It was Jonathan who first warned me of the rigours of the legendary "Partingdale", the course that was sometimes imposed on the boys during "cross country" games periods (Christ's College was boys-only in those days). Jonathan gained some satisfaction in gradually improving over the course. For any readers who wish to run in the footsteps of a young Jonathan Sacks, a map is provided alongside. Be warned that it is hilly, and there is a long and dramatic plunge down Bittacy Hill from the top of Partingdale Lane.

As a Cambridge undergraduate from 1966 to 1969, Jonathan's sporting activities were confined to croquet, especially in his first year, and punting on the River Cam. Soon after I followed him up to Cambridge in 1970, someone remarked to me: "You are a fast walker, just like Jonathan". Throughout his life, Jonathan liked to keep fit by walking. For two or three years during the mid-1970s, Jonathan and I were neighbours in East Finchley, and I occasionally went on a Sunday run with him; two circuits around the grounds of Stephens House & Gardens, perhaps a mile and a half. The next time I was to run with him was in 1992, during his early days as Chief Rabbi. At that time he was running three miles every day, and his security staff found it hard to keep up with him. He kept the maxim "daily jogging leads to positive thinking and goal achievement" framed on his desk.

Jonathan was also a keen follower of football and cricket. In 1991, shortly before he and fellow Arsenal supporter George Carey took up their respective positions as Chief Rabbi and Archbishop of Canterbury, they were both invited to a home match against Manchester United. Arsenal were beaten 2-6 in their worst home defeat for 63 years. Jonathan later wrote: "The next day a



BY BRIAN SACKS

national paper carried the story and concluded: 'If the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi between them cannot bring about a win for Arsenal, does this not finally prove that God does not exist?' The day after, I sent them this reply: 'To the contrary, it proves that God exists, it's just that He supports Manchester United!'"

Jonathan also told my brother, Alan, that during the game he was sitting in the stand next to George Carey and was chuffed that so many people were turning around and taking his photograph. It was only at the end of the game that he discovered that on the other side from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Jonathan was sitting next to England football captain Bryan Robson, who was injured that day and could not play, and people were in fact taking photographs of him, not Jonathan.

Alan remembers watching only one football match with Jonathan in Israel on television, a World Cup match between Holland and Brazil. For a long time afterwards Jonathan spoke about how the State of Israel had brought new life to biblical and Talmudic phrases – as shown in the table alongside.

Jonathan supported Surrey, the dominant English cricket team throughout the 1950s. Surrey won the County Championship seven years in a row, from 1952 until 1958. Jonathan's hero was Peter May, a lean and elegant batsman, who went on from captaining Surrey to captaining England. But in the early 1960s, when he was barely 30, May retired to take up a job in the City. He was Jonathan's last real sporting hero. Jonathan did go to a Test Match once in the early 1980s, to watch England play Australia at Lord's.

It was always important to Jonathan to stay fit. Enjoying rambles over Hampstead Heath with Elaine and listening to music while walking on his treadmill, he achieved 10,000 steps a day. He exercised using a Swiss ball and maintained both suppleness and muscular strength.

For the barmitzvah of his nephew Gad in 2006, Jonathan and Gad went to the Jerusalem Teddy Stadium, the closest that Israel has to a Wembley Stadium. They spent half an hour on the pitch, kicking a ball around and practising penalties. I trust you will enjoy this video of Jonathan's vain attempt at stopping a penalty kick from 13-year-old Gad; I feel it illustrates how, beyond the scholarship and the honours and titles, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks was a warm-hearted family man with a great sense of fun.

Football Term	Hebrew version	Translation or Derivation
Referee	שופט (Shofet)	Judge
Corner	קרן (Keren)	The same term is used for the corners of the Altar in the Temple
Foul	עבירה (Aveira)	Transgression, or crime
Draw	תיקו (Teiko)	An acronym for four Hebrew words that roughly translate to "problems will be resolved in the time of the Messiah"

Jonathan in goal at Jerusalem Teddy Stadium

17 Annexe: The Story of Frumkins Wines

Booklet produced for the Frumkin Foundation in 2022

THE STORY OF FRUMKIN'S WINES

THE STORY OF FRUMKIN'S WINES

by

Brian Sacks

With acknowledgements to
Shalva Dimson
Elroy Dimson
Lionel Frumkin

And with particular thanks to

June Gordon

the last "regular" behind the counter
at L. Frumkin & Co

Published by
The Frumkin Foundation
2022

The Story of Frumkin's Wines

For more than a century, the name of L. Frumkin and Company, Wine Merchants, was known throughout the London community - not only as a wine shop, but as the place where poor Jewish immigrants to London's East End could come for advice and practical help.

For more than seventy years of that century, Aaron Frumkin (Zichrono Livracha – may his memory be for a blessing) worked for the firm. In his latter years he spoke and wrote eloquently about its history. The following piece is compiled in very large part from the wealth of material Aaron left us.

Aaron as a babe in his mother's arms, 1910

The founding of the Firm

Arye Leib Frumkin, his wife Sheina and family arrived in England in late 1893 and settled in London's East End. The East End was the home of two distinct Jewish communities: North of the Whitechapel Road lived the older-established Sephardi Jewish community while south of the Whitechapel Road lived the many thousands of Jewish immigrants who had fled from persecution in Eastern Europe. The East End's Docklands was also an area frequented by seamen, an area of vice, gin palaces and whore houses.

Arye Leib found no vacancies in the pulpit – many Rabbis had recently come to London from Russia. He also found that he was not cut out to be a tailor (no pun intended). Soon the family rented a Public House off Commercial Road, but then found that the Law demanded that the Pub stay open on Shabbat – so this enterprise came to an abrupt end. The venture that was to follow would operate for more than a century, and would never during that time open on Shabbat or Jewish festival.

The family decided that, having wide links with the large Jewish community, who were living mainly in the East End, they would sell Kosher wines. During 1894, Arye Leib negotiated the purchase of a building site on the corner of Commercial Road and Cannon Street Road, in the heart of the East End. He invited a Mr. Lusk and his partner to join him in its development. On completion of the buildings, L. Frumkin and Company (Wine Merchants), of 162 Commercial Road, and Luck and Bennett (Hosiers) of 164 Commercial Road, came into existence. The initial "L" stood for Louis, the name that Arye Leib went by for official purposes. Later on (around 1907), the side portion of 162 Commercial Road was let to J.L. Fine J.P. as a Travel Agency.

L. Frumkin & Co, 162 Commercial Road. E1, around 1914. Zecharia Dimson at far left, next to young Aaron Frumkin. Rachel Frumkin is at the left of doorway, Rachel Dimson towards the right

The first twenty years – 1894 to the start of the First World War

Once the wine business had been set up, Arye Leib turned largely to writing books. Sheina took over the business and established a link with the Company which had taken over the vineyards that Arye Leib had set up in Palestine years before. Wines from this source were then imported for many years.

Wine Label from 1900 – courtesy Lionel Frumkin

By the early 1900's some of the wider family also worked for the firm. Arye Leib's son Elias (Eliyahu Ephraim) compounded liqueurs, particularly Cherry Brandy for which the Company became famous. He also canvassed for customers. Business was brisk, with an average of 300 customers at any one time. But these

customers generally paid off their purchases at threepence per week and sometimes absconded to America leaving debts unpaid.

Arye Leib's daughter Rachel manufactured raisin wine and blended imported wines to produce wines of differing strengths. Rachel invented the first kosher ‘champagne’, that is, sparkling wine for the Jewish market. She also worked as a saleslady in the shop. In 1907 Rachel married Rabbi Zecharia Dimson, who also became a partner in the firm. To expand the business, Zecharia canvassed for customers further afield. On one sales visit to Notting Hill he met a beautiful young lady, Rachel Radogowski, and urged Elias to meet her. Elias and Rachel married in 1909.

In 1911 Arye Leib and Sheina returned to Palestine, leaving the business in the hands of their children.

L. Frumkin and Company had become during these years, not just a business, but an institution. The corner of Commercial Road and Cannon Street Road was known as Frumkin’s Corner, the outstanding landmark of the area. Sheina had quickly been recognised by the local Jewish residents as a woman to be consulted on many subjects, particularly health and family relationships. Frumkin’s became the place where new immigrants, after a few nights lodging at the Mansell Street Jewish Shelter, would be sent to receive monetary help and advice on finding work and a place to live.

For part of the early 20th century, the firm was called Frumkin & Dimson, representing the partnership of the two families. Photo restored by Elroy Dimson.

The First World War

The War changed all aspects of life in the East End. Many young men went away to fight. Frumkin's Corner became a Speakers' Corner. Every day a podium would be set up and speakers pressed the need for volunteers; at the same time Suffragettes, including Emily Pankhurst, preached for Votes for Women.

In 1916 the Russian Convention was signed. Under this agreement, all Russian Nationals not eligible to serve in the British Army, were to be shipped back to serve in the Russian Army. The night before the deadline, thirty young men assembled above the shop and were

given a meal, drinks, clothing and a hearty send off. Only two are known to have survived.

During the war years the price of spirits trebled; whisky rose in price from three shillings and sixpence to ten shillings and sixpence a bottle. Opening hours were also restricted. The family had been living above the shop but in 1917, German bombing forced the family to evacuate to Twyford in Berkshire. In late 1918, after the end of the war, Elias and family moved back to Upper Clapton. In 1919 Zecharia Dimson and family also moved to Clapton.

(This and subsequent labels are not related chronologically to the text alongside)

After the War

After the war ended, the British people turned to living life to the full, and Frumkin's had its part to play in this change of mood. Engaged couples, having chosen their ring at Kutchinsky's, would cross the road to place their Drinks order with Frumkin's. On average Frumkin's supplied thirty wedding orders per week.

Rabbi Zecharia Dimson often visited the City to buy wines of all types, and to attend Wine Auctions. On these visits he dressed impeccably in frock coat and top hat, and was remembered for many years after his death by City gentlemen.

Zecharia's great love was for Palestine. During 1923 he was asked by the Jewish National Fund to inspect land in the North of the country, with a view to purchase. During this visit he contracted typhoid, and died on January 4, 1924 at the Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem. He was only 38 years old. His death was a terrible shock to the whole family. Aaron wrote of his deep sadness on the passing of his uncle Zecharia: "He was extremely loving and kind to his two sons and to me. He taught me how to swim and how to play cricket, chess and draughts, and when he had the time, he paid me far more attention on outings than my own father ever did".

Zecharia's widow Rachel Dimson was too distressed to continue to work in the firm. The main responsibility for the business fell to Elias' wife Rachel Frumkin. But she herself had devoted her childhood to looking after her elder sister. She had not received any education, and could neither read nor write. Her son Aaron, though he was only fourteen, felt that he had leave school to join the firm. Guided by members of staff he learned to appreciate wines, and by age 15 he was attending wine auctions on his own. The senior cellarman, Reb Moishe, taught Aaron all he knew about producing and bottling wines and running the cellar.

When Rachel Dimson recovered from her grief, she decided to branch out on her own. In 1929, she opened R. Dimson Ltd, in the up-and-coming neighbourhood of Cricklewood in North West London. She imported products from Palestine and sold them under her own name.

Rachel Frumkin

From 1926 onwards, Rachel Frumkin had complete charge of the Frumkin's counter, though at busy times everyone helped. Her personality developed and she had a wonderful memory for names and faces. People would travel long distances to talk with her – about drinks or about other matters.

Rachel's advice would be sought about minor or major matters – even matchmaking, family concerns and birth control. Her matchmaking efforts resulted in many a happy union.

All who came would be offered a drink and a slice of cake – Len Deighton referred to this in his 'London Dossier'. Rachel's advice on wines was almost always taken, and she was very successful in securing wedding orders. Her charm won over suppliers as well, and if there was ever a shortage one could almost guarantee that the goods would still be forthcoming.

Rachel Frumkin at the counter, 1960

Rachel Frumkin realised that at times like Passover there were very many willing purchasers. At the same time there were widows and old men in dire need of some income. Rachel recognised that the firm could offer some of these people work as agents, to secure further sales. At one time the firm had 50 of these 'travellers' on the road. Christmas-time was the other busy period, with East End firms fostering their relationships with their clients by giving gifts of wines or spirits. Aaron wrote that for the three weeks before both Passover and Christmas he would not see his bed, but perhaps snatch an hour's sleep a night on the floor behind the counter. One of his duties before Passover was the preparation of 500 bottles of raisin wine for distribution to the needy; his mother insisted that everyone should be able to drink wine at Passover.

Aaron tells this story, showing something of Rachel's personality:

One Sunday morning, at about 11 o'clock, the shop was full and a long queue had formed in the street. The Law did not permit the sale of any liquor before noon on a Sunday, and a neighbour telephoned the Police. In due course, a Police inspector arrived and said "Mrs. Frumkin, it seems to me that you are breaking the Law". Rachel replied "How can you say that? You know it is before our Jewish holidays - all these people are personal friends, who have come to wish me well."

During these years, the business had many distinguished customers: the Bishop of Stepney bought clarets and loved to converse with Rachel; Mrs. Sebag Montefiore bought Kosher wines, especially Mizrachi No. 4. One young man working for the firm would dress up elegantly, enter the House of Lords, and sell liqueurs to several members who were regular purchasers.

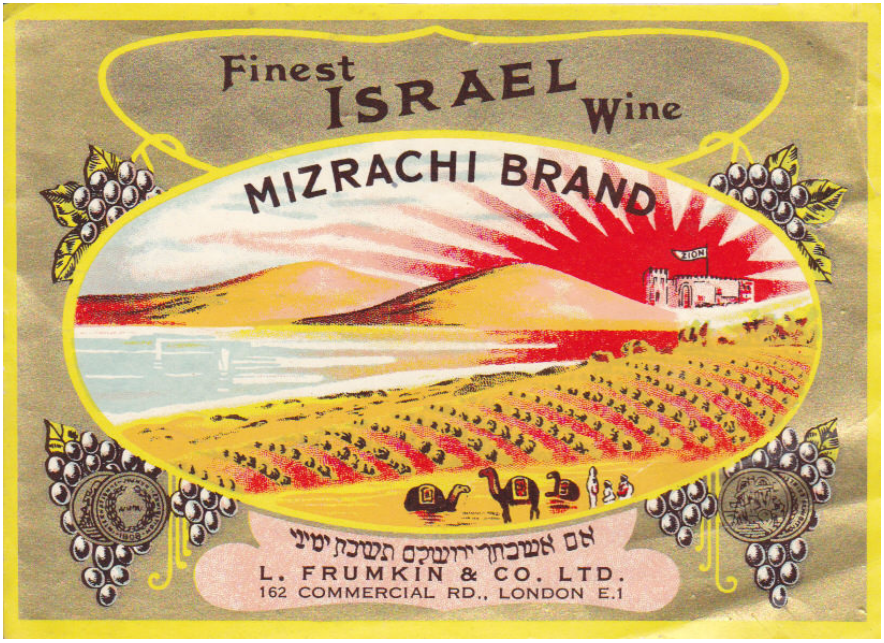
During the American Prohibition, the Mayor of New York bought the best wines that the shop had to offer. His courier was a seaman who made the New-York-to-London round trip every six weeks, and sewed twelve bottles into the lining of his coat.


MIZRACHI
לפסח
כשר
ISRAEL BRANDY
70°
PROOF
SHIPPED & BOTTLED BY
L. FRUMKIN & Co LTD LONDON. E.I.


ARE YOU ? GETTING MARRIED
OR MAKING PARTIES
THEN COME TO
FRUMKIN'S
162.
COMMERCIAL ROAD,
E.1
The old Established firm with a reputation for
Liquers, Brandies, Spirits & Wines, Etc.
Note the address:-
162, COMMERCIAL ROAD, E.1
חתונה האבען אדער
מאכט איר פארטיעס דען קומט צו
?נעהמ איר
פרומקינ'ס
די בעסטע ליקערס, ברענדיס, ספיריטס און ווינעז
162, מאמערשאל רויד, א. 1

The 1930's

Unfortunately, Elias Frumkin made a number of investments that proved very costly when the Stock Market Crash occurred in 1929. This meant that the 1930's was to be a period of fighting back for the firm. Aaron decided that it was necessary to secure as many wedding orders as possible, and he put four travellers on the road for this purpose. The most successful of these was Mr. Abrahams. A price war resulted amongst the Jewish wine merchants, but the firm was generally very successful, averaging orders for thirty weddings and several barmitzvahs per week.



After the rise of Hitler in 1933, Frumkin's received many appeals for help from German Jews. Rachel committed herself to helping as much as she could. She obtained, over a period, permits for six girls to come and work for her. She also advised German citizens who

were in England only on a temporary visit, how to best tackle their problems. For some years she almost lived in the Foreign Office and Home Office and, due to this persistence, a number of families were permitted to live in England. Rachel always maintained that this was the greatest period of her life.

Bottle Decorations

After the Second World War

By the end of the Second World War, Rachel, Elias and Aaron had been joined at 162 Commercial Road by Elias' sons-in-law Wilfred Goldberg and Rabbi Meyer Frydman.

The 1950s saw a migration of the London Jewish Community out of the East End into the suburbs of north-west London, and the growth of the Jewish clothing trade in the West End. Frumkin's responded

Frumkin's Corner, 1947

to these changes by setting up further branches - first in Hale Lane, Edgware and then at 66 Great Titchfield Street in the West End.

The Hale Lane branch operated from around 1949 to 1960. It was run by Aaron's cousin Monty Jacoby, until he emigrated to Australia in the mid-1950s. For the last 4 or 5 years of its existence, the branch employed a Miss Leon as manageress, overseen by Wilfred Goldberg.

Aaron set up the Great Titchfield Street branch in 1959. He acknowledged that this move was influenced by his second wife Yetta working in the West End, and by tensions between himself and his brothers-in-law Wilfred and Meyer. Meanwhile, Rachel, Wilfred and Meyer continued to run the East End branch, with occasional help from Rachel and Elias' youngest daughter Libby Sacks. Rachel passed away in 1968 and was deeply mourned by the hundreds of people who had become her friends. Wilfred died in September 1970, and the East End branch closed in early 1971.

The Great Titchfield Street shop was smaller but more up-market than its Commercial Road parent. At first it catered to a mainly

01-636 5532

01-580 9701

Directors:
A. FRUMKIN
G. FRYDMAN
R. GOLDBERG

LF
& CO. LTD.

Telegrams:
Inland: FRUMWIN, EDO, LONDON
Overseas: FRUMWIN, LONDON

L. FRUMKIN & CO. LTD.

Established 1894

Wines — Spirits — Cigars

66 GT. TITCHFIELD STREET,
LONDON, W.1

Please accept with our compliments

This stamp

issued on behalf of charity

depicting Rabbi Leib Frumkin
author and scholar,
the Founder of our Company during the year 1894.

1980 being our 86th Anniversary
we are proud to announce the establishment
in Israel of the
FRUMKIN FOUNDATION
for the advancement of Hebrew studies

Jewish clientele, but this changed as the 'rag trade' shrank. Two break-ins in the early 1980s hastened a change in the nature of the shop. On each occasion, the shop window was broken and a few bottles stolen, and so Aaron decided to only keep dummy bottles in the window. The most interesting dummies, ranging from miniatures to Nebuchadnezzar sizes, were champagne bottles. Thus came about the shop's emergence as a specialist in champagnes.

Aaron Frumkin behind the counter at Great Tichfield Street

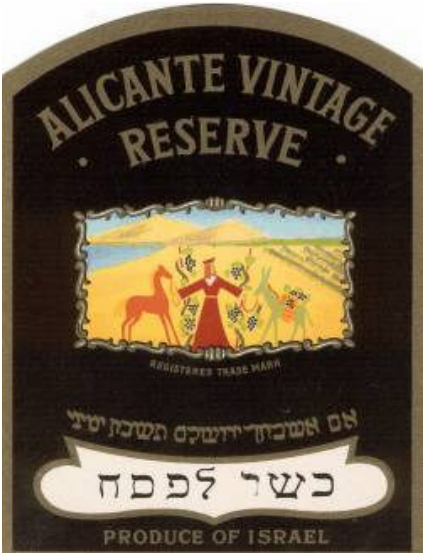
The atmosphere of the shop was captured in the 1990 Radio 4 programme "Frumkin's: a tale of two wine shops", which featured Aaron, his daughter June, Phyllis Seymour and Ben Nathan. By the time of this programme, Ben had worked with Aaron for 55 years and Phyllis for 33 years. Both Ben and Phyllis talked of Frumkin's as "home" and "family", and worked at Frumkin's until they died -

Ben in his mid-seventies in 1992, Phyllis at age seventy in 1994. This family – Aaron, June, Ben and Phyllis, occasionally joined behind the counter by Aaron's sister Libby and his son Lionel – always remained a family that supported not just its own members but whoever stepped inside the door.

Variations on a Theme

Aaron, however, spoke in the programme of the threat to small businesses posed by high West End rents. Frumkin's was also now a family whose younger members had chosen the professions rather

than trade. The firm celebrated its centenary in 1994, but in 1997 closed its doors for the last time.



1994, Celebrating the Centenary: David Dimson, Phyllis Dimson, Libby Sacks, June Gordon, Aaron Frumkin

1994, inside Great Titchfield Street: Aaron Frumkin, June Gordon, Libby Sacks, Phyllis Dimson, David Dimson

Some Press Cuttings

Mercury

Chronicle and Westminster Chronicle

'82 Tel. 01-741 1622 15p

INSIDE

Wonder of Rotary

ALTHOUGH having reached a vintage 72 years of age, veteran wine merchant Aaron Frumkin still went down to the docks to pick up the famous French wine. Mr. Frumkin's family have been wine and spirit suppliers in Great Titchfield Street since 1894.

THE ROTARY Club of St. Marylebone will once again help pensioners

Marylebone Mercury November 19, 1982

Wine time at Passover

Further to Monty Modlyn's interview with Dr Sammy Sacks (LONDON EXTRA, October 28), where he says that every Pesach there were queues outside Frumkin's wine shop in Commercial Road, I would like you to know that the reason for the queues was that the late Mrs Frumkin — my mother — gave away 500 bottles of wine to people who would not have been able to afford wine for Pesach.

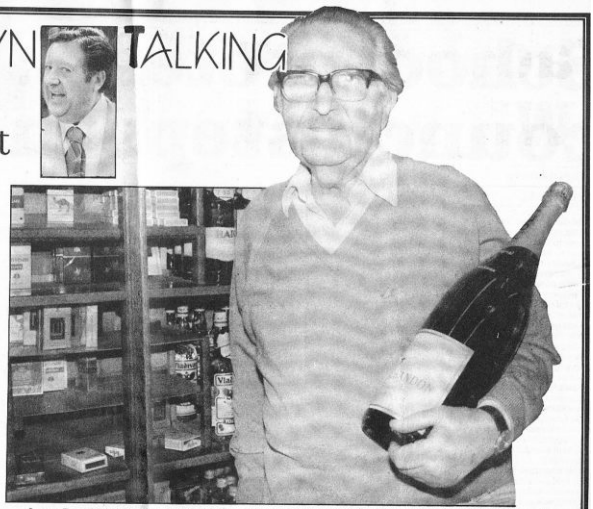
AARON FRUMKIN
L. Frumkin & Co Ltd,
66 Gt Titchfield Street,
London, W1.

Jewish Chronicle November 11,1983

2 JEWISH CHRONICLE LONDON EXTRA JUNE 9, 1989

MONTY MODLYN TALKING

Wine man's youthful secret



Aaron Frumkin, with a double magnum of champagne, behind the counter in Great Titchfield Street

Frumkin's wine shop on the corner of Commercial Road and Cannon Street Road was once as well known to east Londoners as the Tower of London. Those long queues for Passover wine will stick in many people's memories.

Frumkin's, which is believed to be the oldest independent wine merchant in London, moved away from the East End in 1969 as Jewish residents and business folk shifted to the West End and north London.

Aaron Frumkin, the founder's grandson, is 79, and still serving behind the counter in Great Titchfield Street in the West End.

Aaron looks no more than 50. What keeps you looking so young? "I have always kept myself active. I come into the shop every day. I enjoy a glass or two of champagne, and I like meeting people."

I mentioned to Aaron how as a boy I used to accompany my father to buy Passover wine and the odd bottle of cherry brandy and advocaat that my mother enjoyed very much.

"I will never forget the warmth of the East End. I was born and lived above the shop that was started by my grandfather, Rabbi Leib Frumkin, way back in 1894.

"My grandfather was a pioneer in Palestine. He left Lithuania to settle in Petach Tikva, near Tel Aviv, in 1880. A street is named after him there and in Jerusalem. He came to London in 1893."

Where did you go to school? "Firstly, in the East End, and then we moved to Upper Clapton, an area that was then considered a posh place to live. My father, Elias, was a founder of the Lea Bridge Road Synagogue.

"I left Detmole Road School, in Clapton, when I was 14, and went straight into the wine shop, working in the large cellar helping to make raisin wine that sold for 1s 6d (7½p) a bottle. It was strong stuff, and could make you *shika* quite easily.

"My mother, Rachel, really was the mainstay of the business.

"I have three sisters, Rose, who is 75, Gertie, 77, and Libby, 69. They all used to help in the old wine shop. My daughter, June Gordon, who is a fully trained physiotherapist, helps me now.

"Ben Nathan, the tall chap lowering cases into the cellar, has been with me from the East End days — that is, for more than 50 years. And Phyllis Seymour has been with me for more than 30 years."

Tell me about your mother, Rachel. You say she ordered you to make at least 500 bottles of raisin wine for the poor in the East End? "Yes, there were so many poor folk then. In fact, mother kept me busy working in the cellar and the shop. I used to sleep on sacks under the counter. Passover time was so busy and exciting. I loved it, I really did, all the hard work. As I grew older my main job was to visit the brides' parents so they could order the wines and spirits. Often my mother paid something towards their simchas."

Why did your mother more or less run the shop? "My father, Elias, was a great talmudist.

He used to study and pray, which was superb for him, but it couldn't pay the bills. So mother was the boss."

Have you studied the wine trade yourself? "I have visited every top chateau in France. I stayed at the home of Madame Bollinger and the owners of most of the Moet et Chandon champagne growers.

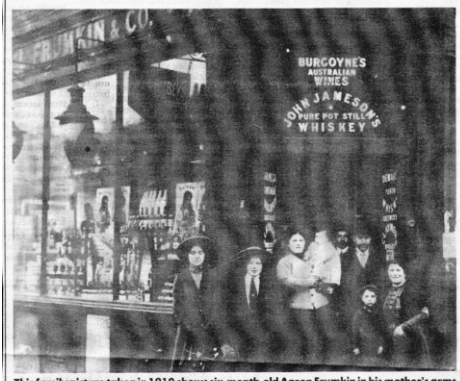
"My son, Lionel, who is a wine consultant, went to Bordeaux University to study the wine trade, and to the Sorbonne."

Just before I left, Aaron said: "I heard that you and your wife, Dorothy, are celebrating your pearl wedding this month." Yes, it's true. Let's hope I look as good as you do at 79. L'chayim.

INCIDENTALLY
CHRONICLER

22 JEWISH CHRONICLE DECEMBER 15, 1989

IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF TRADITION



This family picture taken in 1910 shows six-month-old Aaron Frumkin in his mother's arms outside the family's wine shop in Commercial Road in London's East End

In an age of high street multiple off-licences and supermarket outlets the independent wine and spirits retailer is very much the exception. However, one firm of shippers still relishing its independence is L. Frumkin & Co Ltd, the oldest Jewish wine merchants in Britain.

The first 96 years of the firm, which opened its doors in 1894 in premises in Commercial Road, will be celebrated in a Radio 4 documentary called "Frumkin's — a tale of two wine shops," to be broadcast on December 30, at 10.15 pm.

Frumkin's was started by Rabbi Leib Frumkin, a scholar and writer who hailed originally from Kovno in Lithuania. He was, in the words of Aaron Frumkin, his grandson and now head of the business, "a man who was far too busy with his studies to accept a call to a pulpit, though he attended the Sandy's Row Synagogue regularly.

"He opened the shop to provide regular supplies of kosher wine to local East End synagogues and to the then growing Jewish community. An active partner was my grandmother, Jane, who carried on, in a modified form, the tradition of the rebetzin having a communal monopoly for the sale of oil or salt," Mr Frumkin added.

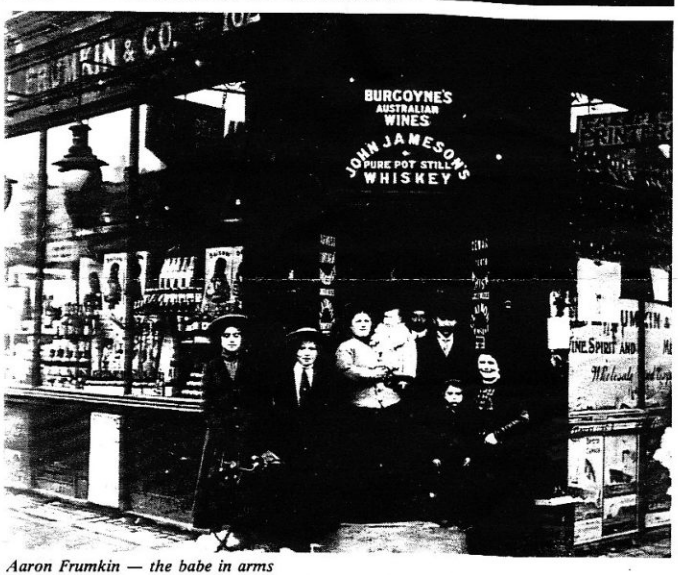
Frumkin's moved to its new premises in the West End's Great Titchfield Street in 1959. "The character of the business is still much the same," Aaron Frumkin said, adding: "We still import kosher wines and spirits as well as non-kosher ones, but we have stopped dealing in cigars, they're just too expensive."

At the age of 79 his ambitions are modest, mainly to see the firm celebrate its centenary. As for the longer term, he is happy to know that a fourth generation, his daughter, will carry on the family name and business into the 21st century.

"Unfortunately," Aaron Frumkin concluded, "I cannot expect the founder's great-grandson to play an active part as, like his great-grandfather, he is a busy academic." His name? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

Two Jewish Chronicle Features from 1989

DIARY



Aaron Frumkin — the babe in arms

Birthday celebratory tasting

BOLLINGER at 6/8 a bottle; Veuve Clicquot, 7/6; Perrier Jouet 5/6; Champagne, Very Fine Quality, British, 2/-. You wouldn't get away with that nowadays.

These figures were picked from a price list issued by the London firm of L. Frumkin & Co in 1910. The reason it appeared was the 79th birthday of Aaron Frumkin, who still goes into his ship in Great Titchfield Street in the West End, every day.

To mark the birthday last week, the Frumkin shop held a tasting of Moet & Chandon's Petite Liquorelle sparkling liqueur.

In 1910, the Frumkin shop was in Commercial Road, East London. It had been started by Aaron Frumkin's grandfather, Lionel, back in the last century. The birthday boy was able to produce a photograph of himself outside the shop in 1910, albeit a babe in arms.

At one time, Frumkin had three shops — the third being in Edgware — but he has now "retired" to his Great Tichfield Street shop.

The 1910 price list makes interesting reading. With champagnes costing around six or seven bob, a bottle of Haig whisky would have set you back 4/-. Among the brands is John Walker's Kilmarnock Whisky, now known somewhat less formally. You could buy Liquid Sunshine Rum, Fine Old London Gin (sweetened or unsweetened), and Ginger Brandy. Or how about: "Advocat (sic) Liqueur, a combination of Brandy and New Laid Eggs, recommended for Invalids."

Snow relief

THERE'S no business like snow business. Spittoon reported recently that the mild winter had put a spoke in the wheels of an ad campaign.

Foster's lager's ad-placer's sat through the winter watching the weather forecasters spouting forth, and praying for some white stuff to go with their amber nectar.

A "seasonal" ad featuring snow — and Paul Hogan, of course — was loaded and ready to fire as soon as the first flake floated earthwards. But all winter they waited, and not so much as a soggy bit of sleet appeared, in London at least.

And then, just as most sane people were packing up their winter boots and putting their snow shoes away for another year, came spring. Spring, quite naturally in this topsy-turvy year, meant snow.

Presumably great sighs of relief and rejoicing were heard at Foster's as Hogan made a late entrance, delivered his punch line, and disappeared from the TV screen almost as quickly as the snow on the London roads. Blink and you missed it.

It may seem rash to prepare an advertisement when you can't be sure when it will be used. This has left Spittoon speculating on great topical ads that were never used. An ad to commemorate England regaining the World Cup, perhaps? A summer drought along the lines of 1976? A tribute to Nottingham Forest winning a cup double? There must be hundreds of long shots like that.

Spittoon

1989

Aaron Frumkin with some of his 3,000 bottles

Meet a man with a lotta bottles

WINE MERCHANT Aaron Frumkin is a man with a lot of "baby" bottles .. more than 3,000 of them at the last count. But they're certainly not for feeding babies.

Gleaming and glistening in an infinite variety of colours, they are miniature liqueur bottles which take pride of place in Aaron's shop.

The miniatures, many of them highly prized and worth considerably more than a vintage bottle of champagne, come from countries all round the world.

So do visitors to Aaron's London shop—all eager to see his bristling bottle battalion.

Stacked neatly together, like little sentinels, and with brightly coloured stoppers, they provide a warm welcome to Aaron's shop in Great Titchfield Street.

"Some of the most prized bottles come from European countries like Finland, Russia and Czechoslovakia," he says.

"One is in the shape of a French gendarme. It's from the Caribbean and is valued at £25."

Why does Aaron devote so much time to collecting miniatures?

ATTRACTION

"I find them educational," he says. "Because I'm a wine merchant, I have to know about the types of liqueur available.

"By ordering miniatures I discover the quality of the liqueur."

One of the attractions about the miniature bottles is that they are individually crafted instead of machine-made. Most are made of glass, but some are produced in china or ceramic.

"It's a selling point," Aaron explains, pointing out a bottle in the shape of an orb with a jewelled cross as its stopper.

"This one was made in France, and is filled with passion fruit liqueur," he says. "It is a famous bottle, and one that is very attractive."

Rynbende, the Dutch company, produced a miniature which is now a collector's item, as it is no longer made.

The bottle is divided into four chambers, each with a different liqueur inside—kummel, orange curacao, creme de menthe and cherry brandy.

CATERPILLAR

Other more eccentric miniatures have creatures inside them. A Mexican tequila has a caterpillar inside the bottle to give it a touch of authenticity.

"It's because the liqueur is made from the extract of leaves that the caterpillar feeds on," Aaron says.

Another charming miniature is made by Bols. Shaped like a bell, it has a tiny model ballerina set inside. Wind the base of the bottle and the ballerina begins to dance.

Aaron—whose wine business, Frumkins, has been established since 1894—travels far and wide to add to his collection. He has been known to bring back 150 bottles on one trip abroad, but sticks usually to a modest 40, though even these can cause problems at Customs.

Not surprisingly, Aaron's shop is not short of customers including the rich and famous.

One who was a regular caller was the late Reginald Bosanquet.

"He was a very kind man," Aaron says, "and often used to bring me back bottles when he had been away."

December 12, 1984

Toast of the trade

Drink in the tale of a vintner of vintage standing

R4 AARON FRUMKIN started work at the age of 14 in his grandmother's Commercial Road wine shop, selling kosher wines to the Jewish community of London's East End. Today, just a few months off his 80th birthday, he still puts in a full, five-day week at his own little wine shop in Great Titchfield Street, happy – as he himself puts it – to be 'the oldest independent working wine merchant in London'.

But what Aaron prides himself on most is the quality of the service offered to customers by himself and his loyal members of staff (his assistants Ben and Phyllis have been with him 55 years and 30 years respectively). Old-fashioned courtesy is the order of the day and, however busy they may be with Christmas or New Year orders, you can always be sure of advice and a friendly chat at Frumkins.

'It's a family tradition,' Aaron explains. 'We enjoy talking to people on any subject.'

His daughter June (pictured above with Aaron in the shop) continues this tradition of friendly, personal attention, though perhaps not quite as personal as that offered by Aaron's mother: 'In the old days she turned the shop into an institution by advising East End women on birth control!'

And those *were* the days, he reckons, when a bottle of Mouton Rothschild 1945 cost £1.15s (you'd be lucky to pick one up for £300 today) and suppliers invited you to taste even the most exalted wines: 'They used to be such distinguished people, devoted to wine. Now it's got into the hands of accountants and they couldn't care less about quality.'

Aaron has drunk the best at the greatest vineyards of Europe but this New Year, as ever, his tipple will be a modest Burgundy: 'That's my favourite – a nice Chambertin or Nuits-St-Georges. But it's the glass of cognac a day that keeps me going!'

DAVID GILLARD

■ *The Saturday Feature: Frumkins, 10.15pm Radio 4*

Radio Times December 30, 1989

Ruth Rothenberg gets a taste of a Jewish family business

A drink to Frumkin's anniversary

A family party is planned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of a wine shop that started in the the East End but has now found a home in central London.

The extended Frumkin family will toast the firm's founder, Rabbi Arye Leib Frumkin, and his grandson, Aaron, who still comes in every day as he approaches his 84th birthday this month.

Aaron Frumkin retains fond memories of his East End upbringing, when he brewed up raisin wine and mead at 162 Commercial Road.

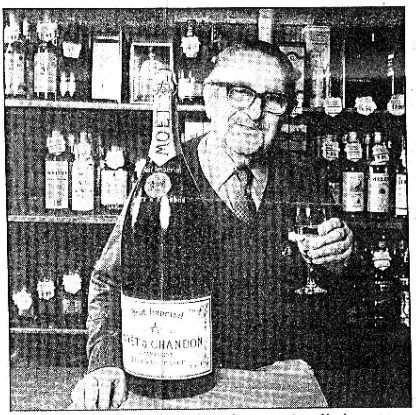
His rabbinical grandfather came into the business by a roundabout route. Rabbi Frumkin had left Lithuania for Palestine around 1870 and was among the resettlers of Petach Tikvah, which had been abandoned by earlier Jewish colonists because of malaria.

He was forced out of the country after an Arab workman had a fatal accident while building a well for him. He arrived in London in 1893.

The following year, he started selling kosher wines to the growing Jewish community of the East End, leaving the business to be run by his wife, Sheina (Jane), while he concentrated on his studies.

He returned to Palestine in 1910, leaving the business in the hands of his son, Elya, just as Elya's son, Aaron, was born.

Aaron Frumkin grew up thoroughly versed in the wine trade. His mother, Rachel, was widely known for her social work among the poor, advising on anything from measles to birth control. When Jewish refugees began pouring over from the Continent in the 1930s, she badgered the Foreign Office for permits and arranged the newcomers' accommodation.



Bubbly personality: Aaron Frumkin raises a glass to a century of business

Before Pesach, she would distribute 500 bottles of home-made wine to the poor, who lined up outside the shop door, while crowds milled round the busy Pesach market in nearby Hessel Street.

"They came in through the front door and went out at the back, and woe betide anyone who came back for more," recalled Mr Frumkin, who took over the wine-making when he was 19. He broke hundreds of dozens of eggs to use the yolks for advocaat — the whites were sent to a baker.

He became *the* wine merchant for Jewish weddings, catering a peak of 30 a week in the 1930s.

His own wedding picture — taken by the fashionable photographer of the day, Boris, in 1931 — shows him with his shock of thick black hair, now a distinguished grey, and his late wife, Sadie, in her beaded wedding gown.

The kosher wine trade has changed over the years, with the development of Israel's own table wines and the shift in Jewish population. Frumkin's had an Edgware branch in the 1950s and 1960s. The East End shop closed in 1969.

But the firm had already moved to the West End in 1959, where a vibrant Jewish rag trade operated north of Oxford Street.

"We used to have a totally Jewish clientele here, but the rag trade has shrunk," Mr Frumkin acknowledged.

The cosy shop in Great Titchfield Street exudes a calm, courteous, old-fashioned atmosphere, with knowledgeable service from wine expert Lionel Frumkin, Aaron's son, and his daughter, June Gordon, a former physiotherapist at the London Jewish Hospital.

"We are very personal and local," Mr Frumkin said. "Our customers are loyal and so are our staff. Our secretary, Phyllis Seymour, has been with us 33 years."

Also looking in once a week or so is his youngest sister, Libby Sacks. But he does not think he will get much help from his nephew — Libby's son, Jonathan.

Although a good family member, Jonathan is simply too busy as Chief Rabbi to pop in on a regular basis.

Jewish Chronicle, 1994

Some personal memories – by Brian Sacks

My father's woollens and worsteds materials shop, at 275, Commercial Road, was a short walk away from Frumkin's Wines, at 162, Commercial Road. So when I or my brothers would spend a working day with my father, we would spend part of the time at the wine shop. In my case, these visits were in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Frumkin's Wines was a very enticing place for a young child. I would be welcomed by my grandmother Rachel (to me she was, of course, Booba Frumkin) and by Uncle Mayer (Rev. Mayer Frydman) or Uncle Wilfred (Goldberg). Benny was also there to

greet me; he was always cheerful, was tall and slim and vaguely reminded me of the Shadows guitarist Hank Marvin. Fairly soon after arrival I would ask for, and receive, a small Britvic bottle of pineapple juice.

Health & Safety was not so rigidly enforced in those days, and I remember a lift shaft that, to my eyes, was an awe-inspiring chasm to be treated with respect from a safe distance. But I was free to roam around upstairs or in the basement, gathering wine labels for my collection. The barrels of wines and spirits were all downstairs, so the smells of damp wood and liquor added to the sense of adventure as I climbed down into the dark.

In describing what Frumkin's Wines meant to me as a child, I must not overlook their colourful and evocative wine and spirit labels. My thanks go to Lionel Frumkin for the information that the labels were printed by Ormerods, the still-operating "Print specialists since 1879". Gracing the Shabbat dinner table from my earliest childhood, at a time when travel to Israel was beyond any realistic expectations, it was the Frumkin's wine labels that shaped my imagination of the country; a land of wide plains, placid lakes and rolling hills, of serene camels and serene sunsets, of neatly sown fields extending into the distance beneath blue skies.

In the summer of 1970, when I was 18, Uncle Mayer was kind enough to employ me at the Commercial Road shop for two or three weeks at a rate of twelve pounds per week. I remember that the most popular item was VP Wine at eleven shillings and sixpence, appealing to a clientele possibly somewhat downmarket from that drawn in by the West End branch. Next in popularity was Johnny Walker Red Label whisky, at fifty shillings and eleven pence.

Thus I was lucky enough to work in the East End branch in its final year of operation, and to man the cash register in the final year of pounds, shillings and pence. That short spell of employment enabled me to fund my first independent holiday abroad, before moving out of home (during term time) to embark on my student career. For me, life was opening up, but for Frumkin's in London's East End, an era extending back more than three quarters of a century was gently slipping into history.

It used to be called Frumkins Corner..
162 Commercial Road in the 21st Century