

## OCHJS NEWS BULLETIN No. 26 : OCTOBER 2005

### MSt CELEBRATIONS

The customary end-of-year festivities took place on 22 June, a wonderfully warm evening which enhanced the party mood. This year's prize for the best MSt dissertation was awarded to a (completely overwhelmed) Lena Okolovich from Russia, for her thesis entitled : "Some Fabulous Creatures in Ashkenazi Jewish Folklore: their Genesis, Attributes and Functions".

Eighteen students passed the MSt, including some candidates from the previous academic year who had returned to complete unfinished courses. Student representative Esther Jilovsky, assisted by Kelly Murphy and Julia Jenkin graciously thanked various members of staff for their help during the year, and presented gifts and flowers. The recipients included minibus driver Brian Beeney who was very touched by the gift of a personal CD player.



### NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

Eight students have embarked upon the MSt course this autumn, two from the UK and six from the United States. Dr Timothy Edwards has been appointed as lector in Biblical Hebrew, with effect from January 2006; in Michaelmas Term his teaching duties are being shared by Rota Vavilova (a former graduate of the Centre's Diploma programme, currently a doctoral student at Oxford) and Dr David Lamb. Meanwhile, Jonathan Kirkpatrick, Jill Middlemas and Zoe

Waxman have all taken up new appointments elsewhere, in which we wish them good fortune.

## CONGRATULATIONS

*Mazal tov* to Tali Argov, the Centre's Modern Hebrew lector, on the award of her Ph.D from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Tali's dissertation, *The Poetics of Yair Hurvitz's Poetry* was written under the supervision of Prof. Dan Miron. Yair Hurvitz (1941-1988) together with Yona Wallach (1944-1984) and Meir Wieseltier (1940- ) created the group known in the 1960s as "The Tel Aviv Poets". Although quintessentially modern, Hurvitz's poetry converses with virtually all the major evolutionary phases of Hebrew literature, beginning with the Hebrew Bible, continuing into the Mishna, Talmud and Midrash, and encompassing the Hebrew poets of the Medieval Spanish Golden age and echoes of the mystical tradition from Cabbalah to Hassidism, as well as works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hebrew Revival.

## SEMINARS AND LECTURES

The exceptionally late and mid-week dating of the Jewish festivals this year has meant delaying the start of the Centre's usual programme of David Patterson Seminars until week 4 of Michaelmas Term. To view the programme please consult the OCHJS website.

In compensation, on the day after Simchat Torah (27 October) we welcome Eilat Negev and Yehuda Koren to lecture about their book *In Our Hearts We Were Giants*, described as a "Holocaust fable with a happy ending." The book tells the story of a Transylvanian Jewish circus troupe of dwarves (all members of the same family) who were sent to the death camps, partly for experimentation by the notorious Josef Mengele. The book has been the subject of two American TV documentaries.

Later in term, on 7 November, we have the 8<sup>th</sup> in our series of Isaiah Berlin Public Lectures in Middle East Dialogue, to be held at St Anne's College. The speaker, Steven Simon, is the resident expert on Middle Eastern affairs at the RAND Corporation. He was previously deputy director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and also served at the White House as Director for Global Issues and Senior Director for Transnational Threats. His subject on 7 November is "Building a Successful Palestinian State".

Three earlier lectures from this series by Michael Oren, Avraham Sela and Shlomo Ben-Ami have been published in a specially enlarged issue of *Israel Studies* (volume 10, number 2, Indiana University Press), introduced by Emanuele Ottolenghi as guest editor. *Bulletin recipients interested in obtaining a copy may do so by e-mailing the Centre: enquiries@ochjs.ac.uk*

## FAREWELL TO SYLVIA

Sylvia Hawkins, our Domestic Supervisor, sadly took the decision to leave the Centre in July, having worked here for thirty years. Sylvia, supported by her late husband Alan (who died in 2003), was the mainstay of the domestic team,

ensuring that accommodation was clean and properly equipped, that events were catered for, and that all our academic visitors were comfortable in their lodgings. She will be remembered by many former visiting fellows, scholars and students of the Centre for her cheerfulness and obliging disposition. We shall miss her, and wish her every happiness for the future.

## **LIBRARY NEWS**

Augmentation of the Library continues apace. The Centre recently announced the acquisition from the Copenhagen family of Jerusalem of their distinguished literary inheritance of more than 20,000 volumes. Among the material in this major collection assembled over three generations is the extensive typographical output of Jews of the Low Countries from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as well as books and fiches on the history of Dutch and other European communities up to and including the Holocaust.

*Anybody who wishes to receive the press release giving a fuller description of the collection should please e-mail us.*

New library space is being constructed to accommodate the Copenhagen collection, which is at present in professional storage. More news of this project in the next Bulletin!

Peter Oppenheimer – President  
Sue Forteach - Bulletin Compiler