

OCHJS NEWS BULLETIN NO 28 : MARCH 2006

Academic Visitors ● Recent Lectures ● New Visiting Fellowship
Building Developments ● Long Service Celebration
New Arrivals

This is the bulletin promised for "early in the new year" when sending out our number 27 in December 2005. The best laid plans.....

ACADEMIC VISITORS

Among the Centre's visitors in the academic year to date, Professor Gary Gilbert from Claremont McKenna College, California is working on relations between Jews and (non-Christian) gentiles in the Diaspora during the Roman period, particularly the extent of religious and social engagement by gentiles in Jewish communities.

Moshe Zeidner, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Haifa, is writing *A Primer of Emotional Intelligence*, including emotional intelligence in biblical sources and traditional commentaries.

Professor Jonathan Goldstein from the State University of West Georgia is continuing his comparison of the Baghdadi Jewish communities in Rangoon (Burma) and Surabaya (Indonesia). His findings will be presented in May at a Haifa University conference on "Jews of the Persian Gulf". The project forms part of a longer-term research programme, covering in addition the Jews of Manila, Harbin, Singapore and Bangkok.

Shortly to arrive at Yarnton is Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan of Arizona State University, working on *Judaism and Nature* (to be published by Rowan & Littlefield). This is the first full-length study of conceptions of nature in the Jewish tradition, from the Bible, through the rabbinic corpus, medieval philosophy and kabbalah, to the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah), Zionism, and contemporary Jewish environmentalism. The book will highlight the ecological wisdom of the Jewish tradition, as well as tension between the doctrines of revelation and creation in Jewish thought.

Professor Stephen Geller of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York is writing a commentary on the Book of Psalms, and Dr Motti Golani of Haifa will be researching The Yishuv and the military conflict in Palestine between December 1947 and May 1948.

We also welcome back Stephen Russell, a graduate of the Centre's MSt (formerly Diploma) programme to pursue research for his doctoral thesis at N.Y.U. on the origins of the Exodus tradition.

KENNEDY LEIGH FELLOWSHIPS

The Centre is pleased to announce the availability of Kennedy-Leigh Visiting Fellowships for Israeli writers and academics. Information is available on the Centre's website:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ochjs/scholars/index.html>

Please note that the closing date for all Visiting Fellowship applications for the academic year 2006-7 is 31 March 2006.

RECENT LECTURES

The 9th Isaiah Berlin Lecture in Middle East Dialogue was delivered on 28 February at St Cross College by Professor Ruth Gavison, Chair of Human Rights in the Law Faculty at the Hebrew University, on the subject of *Rights Discourse and the Alleged Palestinian Right of Return*.

The 14th Stencl Lecture in Yiddish Studies was delivered on 9th March by Dr Heather Valencia from the University of Stirling. Dr Valencia spoke about the poetry of Kadia Molodowsky, and especially its response to the Holocaust.

BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS

The conversion of the derelict buildings at the far end of Church Lane is nearing completion in April 2006. Planning permission has been obtained to transform one of the barns on the site into additional residential facilities for academic visitors. The second barn is being converted for library storage. The recently acquired Copenhagen collection will be located in the new buildings, which are to be known as Manor Farm (avoiding confusion with our next-door neighbours, whose home has long been named Mead Farm.)

At the other (Cassington Road) end of Church Lane the entire Exeter Farm premises have now been sold. The former Presidential lodgings (replaced by the Perry Orchard house on the Yarnton Manor curtilage) were relinquished in 2005, and now in March 2006 contracts have been exchanged for the disposal of the so-called barns that make up the remainder of the Exeter Farm site. A developer is to convert the barns into apartments. The library storage and Journal of Jewish Studies' office formerly maintained there are being transferred to the central premises of the Muller Library – completing a most welcome restructuring and modernisation of key parts of the Centre's real estate.

LONG SERVICE CELEBRATION

Maureen Peacock, Personal Assistant to the President, completed her 20th year at the Centre in 2005. Maureen has worked closely with all the Centre's presidents and acting presidents to date: the late David Patterson, Philip Alexander, Bernard Wasserstein, and Martin Goodman, as well as the current incumbent Peter Oppenheimer. (Some of them are presumably wondering what her Memoirs may say.....). Maureen also acted as Secretary to the Qumran Project under the administration of Professor Alan Crown, and was actively involved in the cataloguing of the photographic copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls. At the annual staff lunch Peter presented her with an appropriate gift on behalf of himself and his predecessors.

NEW ARRIVALS

Hearty congratulations to our former Assistant Librarian Zosia Sochanska and her husband Bartek on the birth of their son Stefan in December 2005. And to Katarina (one of last year's visiting scholars) and Robert Wiecha on the arrival of their daughter Daniella, another December baby.

Peter Oppenheimer – President

Sue Forteath - Bulletin Compiler

(Comments welcome on the new format of this bulletin.....!)