

OCHJS NEWS BULLETIN NO 36 : NOVEMBER 2008

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GRADUATION PARTY

All students passed the MSt course of 2007-2008, three with distinction. Many congratulations to all and we wish you every success for the future. The prize for the best dissertation was awarded to Or Rogovin for his thesis on " *Chelm Revisited: Art as Commemoration in Y. Y. Trunk's Chelemer khakhomim.*"

At the annual graduation party on 18 June, there were a few staff members to bid farewell to, in addition to the students. Assistant Librarian Michael Fischer left to return to his home country Germany and François Guesnet, Fellow in Russian Jewish History departed to take up his new post in the Hebrew and Jewish Studies department at University College London, that of Corob Lecturer in Modern Jewish History. Dr Tim Edwards, the Centre's Biblical Hebrew Lector for the past three years left to take up a position working for a Christian charity organization. Tim was presented with a book on The Psalms.

PETER OPPENHEIMER'S RETIREMENT

A Reception for Peter Oppenheimer was held at Yarnton on 25 September prior to his departure at the end of the month. Staff members, governors, visiting fellows and Peter's wife Catherine joined the gathering. Professor Goodman spoke of Peter's many achievements during his eight-year period of office, most notably the re-designation of the Diploma in Jewish Studies as a Masters' degree and the upgrading of the Centre's status to a Recognised Independent Centre of the University. Peter's endless supply of jokes for every occasion was also alluded to, and regret expressed that these had not been recorded for posterity! They would be much missed.

Dr van Boxel thanked Peter for his co-operation particularly regarding library developments and then proposed a champagne toast for a long, happy and healthy retirement. Peter was presented with a greeting card containing messages of good will and to his great surprise, a (carefully disguised) armillary sundial made of brass, on which his name had been engraved. This was unveiled by Peter and his P.A. Maureen Peacock, acting on behalf of the Centre's staff. With customary wit, Peter wrote in a 'thank you' note to everyone who contributed to the gift that he could now genuinely look forward to his name being tarnished!

NEWCOMERS



After Peter's departure the reins of the Centre's presidency were taken up, on 1 October, by a new pair of hands. Dr David Ariel, referred to in our last bulletin, moved to the UK in order to take up the post having served for twenty-five years as President of Siegal College of Jewish Studies (Cleveland, Ohio.) David has lectured widely on Jewish subjects throughout North America, Israel, and the former Soviet Union and served as a consultant to universities, foundations and academic accrediting agencies. He is settling into his new home, the newly-refurbished Orangery on the Yarnton Manor estate, and during his first month here has spent most of his time meeting Fellows, Governors, support staff and various representatives of the Bodleian Library and the University with a view to planning the future development of the Centre.

Other recent arrivals are the ten new students of the MSt course this year: two American, one Canadian, five English, one Irish and one of dual Jordanian/UK nationality. A few are already familiar with Oxford having completed their under-graduate studies here. All are wished a happy and fruitful academic year. Greetings too are extended to Mr Stephen Herring our new Biblical Hebrew Lecturer (who is a doctoral candidate at the University of Aberdeen) and to Ms Milena Zeidler (a former graduate of the MSt programme) who has recently settled into her role of Assistant Librarian.

Visiting Fellows this term include Professor Peter Machinist from Harvard, currently working on a commentary on Nahum; Visiting Writers Sami Berdugo, Itzhak Ben-Ner and Dr Yitzhak Laor; Dr Anat Zanger of Tel Aviv University whose main interest is Israeli cinema and culture; Professor Reuven Snir (from Haifa) whose research focus is Jews in modern Arab culture, and Professor Henrietta Mondry of the University of Canterbury (New Zealand), working on cultural history, 19th century literature and contemporary political culture. Most of our academic visitors will be participating either in the David Patterson Seminars or the symposium being held at Yarnton on 4 December, jointly with University College London, on the subject of multiplicity and fragmentation in Israeli identity. (Registration and other details will be available on the website shortly.)

A welcome lunch for all newcomers was held on Friday 10 October at the end of orientation week. In addition the new President hosted a dinner for students and visiting fellows on 20 October.

BIRTH CONGRATULATIONS

Sophie and Adam Silverstein are to be warmly congratulated on the safe arrival (on Monday 9 June) of a baby girl, Zara Eva, sister to Ella Zoe.

David Ariel - President
Sue Forteach - Bulletin Compiler