

## *The Early Years*

### **Sir Isaiah Berlin recalls**

I came up to Oxford in the Michaelmas Term of 1928, and I fear I took no steps to seek out a synagogue or any other Jewish institution (which I imagined did not exist – I was almost right). However, I received a visit from Mr. Chaim Rabinovitch, now known as Chaim Raphael, the well-known writer on Jewish themes, whilst I was at lunch with my (gentile) friends sometime in November of that term. He invited me to come to a meeting of the Adler, or perhaps the Zionist Society (although I am not sure that it was in existence in 1928), and asked me if I wished to join the Jewish congregation. I did so immediately, and went to a service two or three Sabbaths later, and found that the Wardens were both members of eminent *Sephardic* families, one, the future Judge Mocatta, who the other was I am afraid I cannot remember. After that I became a fairly regular attender.

I became interested at that time in the social structure of the Jews at Oxford, of whom there were not too many. I have no idea of their number, but I doubt if there were more than seventy or eighty, if that. Sociologically, the Jewish hierarchy went more or less as follows. At the top were various Maranos – crypto Jews – members of indisputably Jewish families who did not wish to be identified as such in any way. I met two or three undergraduates like that. The *Sephardim*, on the other hand, were perfectly identified Jews. One of my contemporaries at Corpus was a future solicitor called Henriques (his uncle was a friend of the President of my college, and known to his friends as Qs or Queus); he and his cousins took little interest in general Jewish affairs, but were perfectly open and un-selfconscious about their membership of the Jewish community. These were, as it were, the ‘grandees’. Below them, came the children of the, mostly German Jewish, middle class – with names like Heinemann, Bensinger, Schwab, etc., whose families tended to be members of the *B’nai B’rith* and prominent figures in the London Jewish community. A life-time friend of mine, now no longer alive, belonged to the ‘grandees’ and was typical of them, not in the least embarrassed about his Jewish origins

- I mean, the late Sir Henry d'Avigdor Goldsmid, a prominent figure in the literary world at Balliol (I met him quite early in my Oxford life); although he was pretty scathing about the Anglo-Jewish community, whom he looked on as vulgar and ignorant for the most part, and with which he did not much in those days associate, he spoke with pride about his own family, its grandeur in the early nineteenth century greater than that of the Rothschilds - and so on. The middle-class Jews, to whom I suppose I belonged myself, went to the synagogue from time to time, not regularly - rather like Anglicans in Oxford used to go to church. But we were faithful members of the Jewish community, and in my case habitués of the Zionist Society, not the Adler Society, which had a somewhat anti-Zionist tinge. There were two Jewish contemporaries in this university to whom I was close. One was Walter Ettinghausen, now known as Walter Eytan - a prominent Israeli diplomat, ex-Ambassador in Paris and ex-head of the Israeli Broadcasting Corporation; he was pious and anti-Zionist when he came up, but as a result of Hitler and the fate of his relations in Frankfurt (whence his family had come) he made a revolution of a hundred and eighty degrees and turned into a passionate Zionist, and indeed became the unofficial, unpaid head and quasi-rabbi of the Jewish community in Oxford in the thirties. During the war he was a cryptographer at Bletchley and after the war went to Israel and stayed there. My other friend was Wolf Aviram Halpern, whose father was an eminent Zionist leader, head of the Jewish Colonial Trust, which became the Central Israel Bank. Besides these, there were various other schoolfellows of mine from St. Paul's and other friends whom I met at Jewish gatherings.

Below this socially - this was due entirely to levels of income - came the children of Yiddish-speaking Jews up and down England, some of whom were exceedingly brilliant and very attractive, with whom I made friends. For instance, there was Sol Adler, a scholar of New College, who became professor at Harvard, later a Research fellow in Cambridge, and ended up by going to Communist China and staying there as adviser to various Chinese Communist governments. There was an excellent philosopher called Abe Adel, with whom I used to go to lectures, now retired from a Chair in New York - and there were other agreeable people. The children of Yiddish-speaking families, usually rabbis and other synagogue officials, tended to congregate together and did not seem to me to have a great deal of contact with their gentile contemporaries. The gravitational pull of their *Yiddishkeit* was powerful. My best friend among them was Abe Harman, at Wadham, who later became Israel's Ambassador to the United

States, and then President of the Hebrew University and an Honorary Fellow of Wadham College. I do not mean that they spoke Yiddish all the time, but they liked to do so, took great comfort in it, and it created a warm, cohesive feeling among them - I could speak no Yiddish, though I understood a certain amount - nevertheless, I was happy in their company and they were probably not too unhappy in mine. They became rabbis in various congregations in England, and they remained deeply embedded in the affairs of Jewish religious life - and I am sure were among the people who kept it alive and successful through the years. There were Israelis too, for example my friend Akiba Persitz, son of a prominent Jewish family in what was then Palestine, who was at University College. He had nothing to do with the English-speaking Jews but was on very happy terms with his gentile contemporaries and seemed a man from another country, more Israeli than Jewish, which has been increasingly the case ever since, in my opinion.

There were Jewish dons - Herbert Loewe, later Cecil Roth, Walter Ettinghausen who became a lecturer in German at Queens, and one or two others, but no Jewish Fellows of colleges save two. At this point I wish to go back in history. Cecil Roth has established that the first Jewish Fellow of any Oxford College was a famous mathematician, whose name was Sylvester; he taught in Cambridge, but could not get a Fellowship in a college because of the religious Tests. When Gladstone abolished these he was elected to a mathematics Chair in Oxford and thereupon became a Fellow of New College. He stayed for a few years and then went, I think, to some university in Louisiana. After that there was a gap, and the next Jew to obtain a Fellowship was Samuel Alexander, the philosopher, who came from Melbourne to Lincoln College - it is not clear that Lincoln, when they elected him, realised that he was a Jew, but he made no secret of it; he taught philosophy here for a few years, and then went to Manchester as Professor. He wrote an excellent book on Spinoza, was much respected in his day and received the Order of Merit. Then there was another gap. The next Jew was Professor Arthur Goodhart - he came, I believe, from a Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge - I don't know how many people in Cambridge knew that he was in fact Jewish - and became Oxford Professor of Jurisprudence in 1931, which carries with it a Fellowship at University College. While he could scarcely conceal his origins, he was not identified, so far as I know, in any way with the Jewish community; neither his wife nor his children were Jews. With the advent of Israel he did develop fairly strong pro-Zionist views, but

that, of course, was a post-war development. The next Jew to be elected to a Fellowship was myself. I became a lecturer in New College in the Michaelmas Term in 1932 and a Fellow of All Souls in the same term, and went on teaching at New College until the war. German refugees were given Chairs; the great Latinist, Professor Frankel at Corpus, physicists like Einstein and Simon were, and certainly two or three other eminent scientists in other colleges. Among non-Fellows, there were classicists and economists and at least one distinguished philosopher - men who did a great deal for both human scholarship and natural science in Oxford during the thirties and during and after the war. Professor Sir Rudolf Peierls is a fine example of these Jews. There were no other Jewish Fellows, so far as I know (I may be mistaken) until Keith Joseph, (now a member of the House of Lords), was elected to All Souls a year or two after the end of the war. Since then, of course, the situation has changed enormously. I can think of no college which does not have Jewish Fellows, at least one if not more. Last spring I counted no fewer than seven heads of colleges who were less or more identifiable Jews. With Lord Goodman, Professor Hart and myself - none of whom could be accused of failing to identify themselves as Jews - they form a *Minyan*. The situation has altered radically, and my amateur statistics no longer apply.

As for the synagogue, it continued to have a perfectly regular attendance before the war, and indeed after. Cecil Roth, who was the *guru* of the community, at one time tried to make it into a University synagogue, as St. Mary's is the University Church. He wanted the university members of it, senior and junior, to wear gowns and academic caps - mortarboards. There were so many excellent people, non-academics, by now, partly as a result of the immigration from the blitz during the war, partly from other attractions of this city, that the idea of discriminating in favour of academics seemed completely unacceptable. Since I was the only established academic in Oxford before the war, I was a Trustee of the synagogue, and was therefore consulted on the matter. Jonathan Cohen at Queen's, David Daube at All Souls, David Lewis at Christ Church, were dead against this so it didn't go through. After that, as you know, the community and the synagogue have grown apace and flourished; there is scarcely room to contain all the congregants on *Yom Kippur*. So it is in general a great success story (the only serious row in my time was over a member who brought his dog into the synagogue on a Sunday afternoon), and I am happy to be able to record that during the sixty-two years during which I have been a member of the Oxford community, no recession, only progress has occurred. Long may this last.



## **Reminiscences, 1918 - 1930**

by **Judah Benzion Segal**, Emeritus Professor of Semitic Languages, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University

I first saw Oxford and the dreaming spires in 1918. My family had left Newcastle-upon-Tyne to settle in the South when my father was about to go to Palestine (accompanied by my brother Sam) as member of the international Zionist Commission in the heady months after the Balfour declaration. My parents were familiar with Oxford. They had lived in the shadow of Jacob's Ladder near Hinksey while my father studied at St. Catherine's and ministered to the small Jewish Congregation.

During the war the community had grown; now, with the end of hostilities in sight, most of the Jewish wartime residents abandoned Oxford for the wider opportunities of London. During the Vacation it was not always possible to form a *minyan*. But we were regular attenders at synagogue, although it was a long walk from St. Clements. There was, of course, no kosher butcher in Oxford. My mother would receive her weekly parcel of kosher meat from Barnetts in London. Especially exciting was the fortnight before Passover, when we would study the food catalogue from Selfridges and discuss for days on end the delicacies we would order.

Oxford was on the route for '*schnorrers*' from the Midlands to London, and we would finance them for the next stage southwards as far as Reading. Nowhere did they find a kinder reception than at the house of Herbert Loewe in Beaumont Street. His generosity knew no bounds, for he would literally give his own coat to clothe the ill-clad. On *Shabbat* he held open house for Jewish students.

In the summer of 1925 I celebrated my barmitzvah. My father - who had returned from Palestine and was then Minister at Bristol - had himself delivered barmitzvah sermons to both my elder brothers. But on my barmitzvah *shabbat*, as chance would have it, Dr. Hertz, the Chief Rabbi, was making a pastoral visit to Oxford. Etiquette required that he be invited to preach. 'What is your name?', he inquired of me on his way to

the pulpit. Thereupon he adjured me sternly to be worthy of my name Judah, not to be a weak and vacillating Reuben - as I gazed upwards in wonderment and no little awe at his purple cummerbund. Later, in the privacy of our home, my father shyly read to me the sermon that he had prepared.

In 1927 my mother left Oxford for Jerusalem where my father had been appointed to the Hebrew University. I remained at school in Oxford, and lived for a short while at the house of an elderly Jewish couple in Richmond Road, a few doors away from the Synagogue. Mr. Freedson was a watchmaker, his wife a dressmaker. I remember her kindness, for she was one of the several unsung Jewish heroines who for a pittance, in provincial towns up and down Britain, provided kosher meals for stray Jews. I last saw Mrs. Freedson, widowed and blind, in the geriatric hospital in Cowley Road; the community had deserted her.

I have a memory, before exchanging Oxford for a university career at Cambridge, of a sultry Sunday in 1930 — or was it 1931? - - when a convoy of celebrities, guided by Herbert Loewe, placed plaques at sites of Jewish interest in Oxford. One stands in the Botanical Gardens, another in St. Aldates, a third at Osney. The climax of the afternoon was a tea party at which we were addressed by Dr. Buchler, Principal of Jews' College. It was an occasion that has remained memorable to all who participated.



*Herbert Loewe (1882 - 1940)*

### **Raphael Loewe remembers his father**

**H**ERBERT Martin James Loewe was appointed to a lectureship in Oriental Languages at Exeter College in 1913, and to a University lectureship in Rabbinics, which he held until his appointment to the Cambridge Readership in Rabbinics in 1931. On his return from war service in India in 1920 together with his wife (Ethel Hyamson who had been born in Oxford in 1887) he made his home in Beaumont Street a focus for Jewish undergraduate activity. It was here that on Sabbaths and Festivals he dispensed a generous hospitality in the tradition which he himself had witnessed, when a student, in Israel Abrahams' home in Cambridge. After Loewe's departure from Oxford, this tradition was maintained over many years by Dr. and Mrs. Cecil Roth. Loewe's spiritual stature, his staunchly observant Jewish practice and his tolerance, meant that his influence both over the Jewish student body and amongst his non-Jewish academic colleagues was marked. Many who subsequently achieved positions of eminence in the orthodox, reform, and liberal sections of the Jewish community, as well as in its lay leadership, remained conscious of the amount that they owed to my father's great religious guidance.

## **Recollections of Oxford**

by *Walter Eytan*, former Israeli Ambassador in Paris

THE first I ever heard of the Oxford Jewish Congregation was from my father, who came up to Queen's in 1901. There was then a single Jewish couple living in the city, the Lipsons, in the house next to the Synagogue. They provided kosher meals for undergraduates who wanted them. More than this I never learned about Jewish life at Oxford at that time, but when I went up to Queen's in my turn 27 years later, I found the same Lipsons in the same house, still providing this service. They were elderly by then and hunchbacked, their house smelled musty as if no window were ever opened, and I was not tempted to go there often. The Lipsons also provided caretaking services to the Synagogue, such as sweeping the floors, and held the keys. There was still, to anyone's knowledge, no other Jewish family in the city.

The congregation was always called the Oxford (not the Oxford University) Jewish Congregation, though the Synagogue was run wholly by undergraduates. There were not many of us in my time, but almost always a few who were capable – some more, some less – of leading Friday night and *Shabbat* morning prayers. There were evidently others who were not interested in the Synagogue at all. The Synagogue itself was an unprepossessing building, tucked away, almost invisible behind a wall, in Richmond Road, off Walton Street. You had to look for it to find it, and when you found it, you might easily have taken it for some decaying non-denominational chapel such as existed in those days.

It consisted of the Synagogue proper (which nowadays in America would be called the Sanctuary) and one additional room, a good deal smaller, which opened off it. The Synagogue was too far off the beaten track to serve as anything like a real social centre, but there would be occasional Friday night gatherings for a modest meal, and sometimes a “business meeting” to discuss congregational affairs. The Synagogue was closed during University vacations, and even in term-time little happened there except on the Sabbath. There were a few apostates, ex-Jews and Crypto-

Jews, among the dons who lived in Oxford all year round, but rarely more than one self-confessed Jew (Herbert Loewe in my father's day, Cecil Roth in mine, eccentrics both) who would share in congregational life or show interest in the Jewish undergraduates.

In the late 1930's Jewish refugees from Germany began to arrive. Most of them were academics, brought over by the Oxford Refugee Committee of which Bill (later Sir William) Deakin was chairman. They added little or nothing to the life of the Synagogue. At the same time a London Jew, true son of Cockaigne, called Mr Silk, settled in Oxford with his family and opened a grocer's shop in the Cowley Road, selling not only the standard goods and goodies but a few typically "Jewish" titbits *haimishe* (pickled) herring and the like. I taught his son Hebrew. At the same time we heard of one or two other ex-London families who reportedly had moved to Oxford, but they were not readily apparent.

Everything changed dramatically with the outbreak of war on September 3rd 1939. The doldrums were past. London was being emptied of people whom the Government wanted out of the way of the massive air-raids everyone expected at any moment. Many months passed before London was actually bombed, but in the meantime hundreds of invalids, the sick and the old, women, children, entire families arrived in Oxford. Many of them were Jews. My first intimation of what was afoot came with a phone call, in that first week of September, from the Radcliffe Infirmary (as it was called then). They had a very sick old man, bearded, who spoke a language they did not understand, and who could not understand them. They thought he might be Jewish, and would I come and see? It was vacation time, I was the only Jew in town they knew of, so I went. The poor man was dying, and all he wanted, in simple Yiddish, was a glass of tea. He almost took on a new spell of life when at last someone understood him, he drank his tea eagerly, and a few days later he died.

Other deaths followed, and we had to improvise a *hevra kadisha*. I had once read the rules in a booklet issued by the "Lavadores" of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation in London, and so I knew roughly what had to be done. I found two German refugees (one called Mr Simon and short and stout, the other quite tall) who were ready to help and soon we were conducting our first *tehara* and burial. There was a small Jewish section just inside the entrance to Wolvercote Cemetery: only a few people had been buried there a long time before, but now this plot came to life, (if I may use the expression) and began to fill up. There must be scores of Jewish graves there today. After a while, as the need arose, we had

to organise a women's branch of the *hevra kadisha*. The first volunteer was my mother, who had come to live in Oxford and launched all kinds of activities on behalf of the refugees from Germany.

Other communal needs began to make themselves felt as well. People wanted to get married, especially soldiers stationed near Oxford, far from their own homes. I had myself appointed the Synagogue's "Marriage Secretary" by the Registrar-General at Somerset House and was soon marrying couples who wanted a Jewish wedding and not just a civil registry office affair. I have often wondered how these young people fared in life and hope they lived happily ever after.

By this time communal responsibilities had become more than one person could discharge in his spare time, and the community had grown so large that we began looking round for a full-time professional. He appeared in the shape of the neophyte Reverend Jacob Weinberg, son of a famous East End "rebbe" Jack Weinberg, from the summer of 1940, held the fort (as Marriage Secretary too) until the end of the war, when people began to return to London, and Jack himself was appointed Minister of the Jewish Congregation in Muizenberg, near Cape Town. He had won his spurs in war-time Oxford and rose in due course to be Rabbi Dr. Jacob Weinberg, J.P., serving the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation until his retirement. He died a few years ago.

It was in his hands that I left the community and the Synagogue when I was called up in the autumn of 1940. The community continued to grow, and its needs to expand. As the war went on, I was able from time to time to come home on one-day Sabbath leaves. I found the Synagogue full, never so well attended as during those years. The war saw its heyday - and brought changes: women and men were sitting side by side. Among the congregants were Viscount Samuel, the first High Commissioner of Palestine, and his wife, who never missed a *Shabbat* morning. There was also Rabbi Dr. Louis Rabinowitz (of the Cricklewood Synagogue, later Chief Rabbi of South Africa), an absolutely spell-binding preacher. We had Dr. Israel Brodie too, who was to become Chief Rabbi of the British Empire (or Commonwealth?). Oxford was now "home" to a large, active Jewish community in exile - from London. I had been its first-ever representative on the Board of Deputies in 1939-40: I do not know who succeeded me. After the war I moved to Jerusalem and have no knowledge of what has happened at Oxford since. From the fact that the Congregation is celebrating its 150th anniversary, I gather that the community "flourishes like the green bay-tree", and I wish it well.

## **Reminiscences, 1928 - 1932**

by **Edgar Duchin**

**I**N the spring of 1928 I won a classical scholarship to Brasenose College, Oxford. I then spent four months at a *yeshivah* in Frankfurt, where I studied Talmud and was immersed in a fairly orthodox community.

When I arrived in Oxford it was to a totally different environment. For the first year and part of the second year however, I maintained my orthodoxy. The chef of the college was very helpful and prepared fish and dairy meals for me, while a Jewish family who lived next door to the synagogue in Richmond Road provided cooked kosher meals for me and other students who kept kosher, on Friday evenings. I remember these included Leon Hertz, a son of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hertz. His brother, Samuel Hertz, was also at Oxford at this time.

During the first year I attended the synagogue, sometimes conducting the services. I remember in the beginning of Michaelmas term after the long vacation coincided with *Rosh Hashanah*, I certainly conducted the services then and intended to blow the *shofar*, but unfortunately dropped my *shofar* which cracked.

The wardens of the synagogues at the time came from the elite of Sephardi Jewry, particularly Alan Mocatta, later Judge Sir Alan Mocatta, and Robert Carvalho, later President of the Anglo-Jewish Association.

I had become treasurer of the synagogue (my name appeared on a commemorative tablet which, I am afraid, has disappeared on the building of the new modern synagogue today). When Mocatta and Carvalho were to retire, this was in the spring of 1929, they both asked me to become a warden, their view being that coming from the respectable background of St. Paul's School, I would better represent the community with the gentiles, than the provincial Jewish students from Newcastle or Leeds. However, by that time I had already begun to lose my faith and resisted their blandishments. I did not, however, break with the Jewish community. About that time I was very friendly with Wolf Abiram Halpern, who was

the son of one of the pillars of the Zionist movement. I became an enthusiastic Zionist and eventually chairman of the Oxford University Zionist Society.

Undoubtedly the great Jewish personality of my period was Herbert J. Loewe, then Reader in Rabbinics at Oxford University. He and his wife kept open house in their beautiful residence in Beaumont Street where they lived with their two sons, Raphael and Michael. Though not a great scholar, Herbert had a fine knowledge of Anglo-Jewish history and biblical studies. His great strength however, was his tolerance. He steadfastly refused to listen to the complaints of the more orthodox students and also their parents and insisted that the services should hold a fair balance between the claims of the orthodox and the progressives or liberals. I remember he was particularly annoyed when a group of Jewish mothers, prompted by the *B'nai B'rith* of which they were members, descended once in term-time to check that the arrangements for *kashrut* for their dear sons were satisfactory. Herbert and Mrs. Loewe kept open house especially on Friday evenings and Sabbaths and were careful to invite Jewish students to dinner or lunch in rotation. There was always a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. I have particular cause to remember the Loewes with gratitude because during my second summer term my mother died. I had to lose several weeks of the term. When I returned in the autumn, the Loewes went specially out of their way to invite and comfort me. Herbert also fostered the Jewish Society (then known as the Adler Society). We had as visiting speakers such eminent members of Anglo-Jewry as Claude G. Montefiore, Basil Henriques and Israel Zangwill, and I'm sure there were others.



## Memories of the Thirties

by **Sydney Brookfield**, *Retired Head of Mathematics Department at Radley College*

**I**N 1930, except for a handful of residents, the Oxford Jewish Congregation consisted entirely of undergraduates. On every Sabbath they conducted services, on an agreed compromise between Orthodox and Liberal, in the old Synagogue which resembled a decrepit Methodist chapel.

Their spiritual father was Herbert Loewe, a don of Exeter College, who lived in Beaumont Street with his wife and two small sons, and held open house for all Jewish undergraduates at tea-time every Sabbath of term. In June 1931, Loewe was leaving to take up a Readership at Cambridge. He realised that the year was the centenary of Adolph Neubauer, a famous scholar and fellow of Exeter College, so a special memorial service was arranged with a printed order of service. (A copy is now in the hands of Miriam Kochan who is distantly related to Neubauer.) The congregation in the synagogue that day included the Mayor, the Vice-Chancellor and many dignitaries of the City and the University. The undergraduates formed a choir, especially trained by the organ scholar at Exeter College. After the ceremony all were transported in coaches to the unveiling of memorial tablets: at the entrance to the Botanical Gardens, the site of a Jewish cemetery in the 13th century; at the Town Hall in St. Aldate's, originally called Old Jewry; and in the ruins of Osney Abbey near to where Robert of Reading (Haggai of Oxford) suffered for his faith on 17th April 1222 (4th Iyyar 4982 AM).

During the synagogue ceremony, the Oxford Congregation took into its custody the scrolls of the Canterbury Congregation, which was going into abeyance. A formal agreement had been drawn up by Loewe, correctly signed and sealed in the ancient manner. To accommodate the Canterbury scrolls in height, a black box had to be added to the top of the old *Arun Kodesh* (now in the lounge of the Jewish Centre). Mowbrays must have regarded this as a cathedral repair since they charged £25, which in those

days broke the undergraduate budget for several years.

This great occasion was referred to by unfeeling and cynical undergraduates as “Loewe’s Goodbye Party”. There still exists a copy of the third *Yekum Purkon*, a prayer for the University, written by Loewe, and read every Sabbath morning. It was based on the Aramaic Bidding Prayer recited on behalf of the Colleges of Sura and Pumbeditha in Babylonia during the third century. He must have had great fun translating into Aramaic “The Right Honourable the Chancellor, the Right Worshipful the Vice-Chancellor, the Doctors, the Proctors, the Heads of Houses, Fellows and Scholars, Graduates and Undergraduates.”

Undergraduates of those days included Isaiah Berlin; Alan Mocatta; Robert Carvalho; Walter Ettinghausen (later Ambassador in Paris); S. Goldman, later Rabbi in St. John’s Wood; S. Weintraub, who joined the Mathematics Staff, Southampton University; Edgar Duchin; Chaim Rabinowitz (Raphael); Sydney Golt; B. Marmorstein; E. Cashdan; Henry Baker; Lucien Harris; A. Shannon; A Portrait, later in Rothschild’s Bank; Sam Miller; Ronnie Solomon, who was killed in the war. Ben Segal was then at Magdalen College School. We saw little of a young graduate called Cecil Roth.

Amongst the few residents, Mr. and Mrs. Freedson lived almost next door to the synagogue and provided Kosher meals for undergraduates every Sabbath. Rosa Davies (Mrs. Trendell) managed her father’s dress shop in George Street. Mr. Kursbat was a civil engineer with the City, before emigrating to Canada. The Leverton family had a business at Faringdon. Bobbie Silk moved from Banbury to open the first Oxford self-service grocery before going into the property world. The 1930’s ended with the tide of refugees from London who formed the nucleus of our present congregation.

### **Prayer for the University**

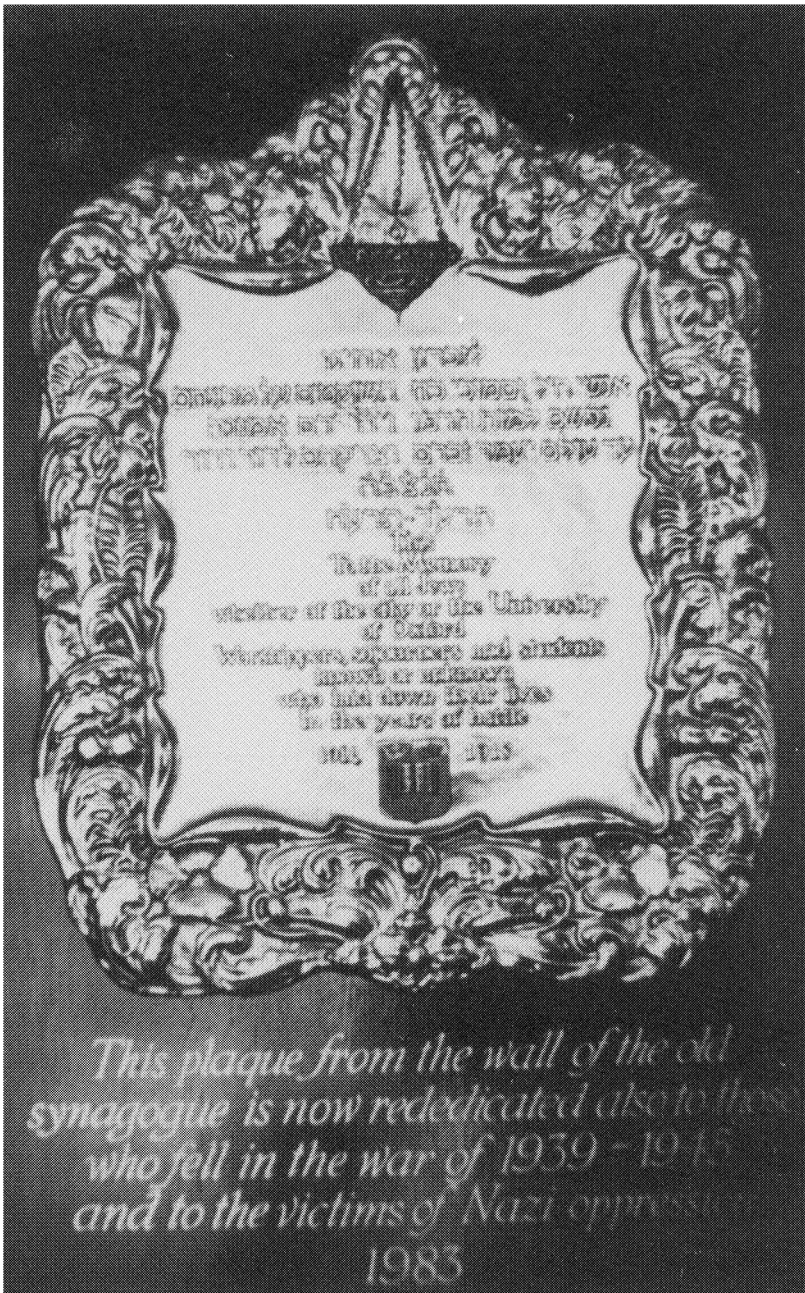
*(Based on the Aramaic Bidding Prayer recited on behalf of the Colleges of **Sura** and **Pumbeditha** in Babylonia during the third century and on the Hebrew Thanksgiving pronounced after a single lecture or at the completion of a Terminal Course.)*

May salvation from heaven, grace, loving kindness, mercy, long life, ample sustenance, heavenly aid, health of body, a higher enlightenment, and a living and abiding succession of disciples that will not break with truth nor neglect the words of the Law, be vouchsafed unto all the members of this learned University; unto the Right Honourable the Chancellor, the Right Worshipful the Vice-Chancellor, the Doctors, the Proctors, the Head of Houses, Fellows and Scholars, Graduates and Undergraduates; unto all their disciples and unto all the disciples of their disciples; unto all who busy themselves in the Law and unto all who in faith and sincerity come here to learn or to teach all other branches of learning. May the King of the universe bless them, prolong their lives, increase their days and add to their years and may they be saved and delivered from every trouble and mishap. May our Lord Who is in heaven be their help at all times and seasons; and let us say, Amen.

May it be Thy Will, O Lord our God and the God of our fathers, that Thy Law be our occupation in this world and in the world to come. We thank Thee that Thou hast cast our lot among those that study in College; vouchsafe that the words of Thy Law be ever in the mouth of all that fear Thy Name, and even yet of all that loiter at the corners of the streets. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach us Thy statutes.

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מַתִּיבְתָּא יִתְגַּדֵּל אִיקָרִיהּ • וּלְתַנְיָגִיהּ יִסְגֵי הֲדַרִּיהּ • לְמַלְפָּנֵי  
וּלְדִינֵי דִי בָבָא • וּלְרִישֵׁי כָּלִי • לְחַבְרֵיָא וּלְאַלּוֹפֵי בֵי מְדֻרָּשָׁא •  
רַבְרָבֵיָא עִם וְעִירֵיָא • לְכָל־תַּלְמִידֵיהוֹן וּלְכָל־תַּלְמִידֵי תַלְמִידֵיהוֹן  
וּלְכָל־מֶן דִּי עֲסָקִין בְּאוֹרִיתָא • וּלְכָל מֶן דְּאֵתִין בְּהִימְנוּתָא  
וּבְקוּשָׁטָא לְמִילָף וּלְאַלְפָּא כָּל מְלִי דְּחוּבְמָתָא • מַלְכָּא דִּי־עֲלָמָא  
יִבְרַךְ יִתְהוֹן יִפִּישׁ חַיֵּיהוֹן וְיִשְׁגָּא יוֹמֵיהוֹן וְיִתֵּן אֲרָכָה לְשָׁנֵיהוֹן •  
וְיִתְפָּרְקוּן וְיִשְׁתַּיְזְבוּן מֶן כָּל־עֲקָא וּמֶן כָּל־מַרְעִין בִּישׁוּן • מֶרֶן  
דִּי בְשִׁמְיָא יְהֵא בְּסַעֲדָהוֹן כָּל־זְמַן וְעַד • וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן :

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שְׁתֵּהא תוֹרְתְךָ  
אוּמְנוּתֵנוּ בְּעוֹלָם הָזֶה וּבְעוֹלָם הַבָּא : מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
שְׁשֻׁמָּת חֻלְקֵנוּ מִיּוֹשְׁבֵי בֵּית הַמְּדֻרָּשׁ : וְהַעֲרַב־נָא דְּבְרֵי תוֹרְתְךָ  
בְּפִי כָּל־יִרְאֵי שְׁמֶךָ גַּם בְּפִי כָּל־יּוֹשְׁבֵי קִרְנוֹת : בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה  
יי לְמַדְּנוּ חֻקֶּיךָ :



Memorial Plaque displayed in the foyer of the new Synagogue and dedicated to those who fell in the War of 1914 - 1918 and in the Second World War. Photo by courtesy of Ivor Fields