

Lochs & Bagels

Haggis, neeps and tatties. An incantation of Shakespeare's evil witches? A chant from the shrouded world of the Cabalists?

BY MYRNA AND HARVEY FROMMER

Actually, it's a traditional Scottish dish of oatmeal cooked in a sheep's stomach and served with turnips and potatoes. Once a year, on the night that celebrates Scottish national poet Robert Burns, a small group of Scots in Edinburgh prepare it in their own special way — strictly kosher.

This small group of proud Scots, whose forebears came from various parts of Europe in the early 1800s, have cherished and preserved their Jewish heritage and religion in Scotland for over 170 years.

"Jews have a very distinguished history in Glasgow," said Henry Diamond. "They have done all kinds of worthwhile things. One of the things I'm very happy about is that the Jews of Glasgow, and elsewhere in Scotland, did not form any kind of closed community. They took a very active part in the affairs of the community from the beginning."

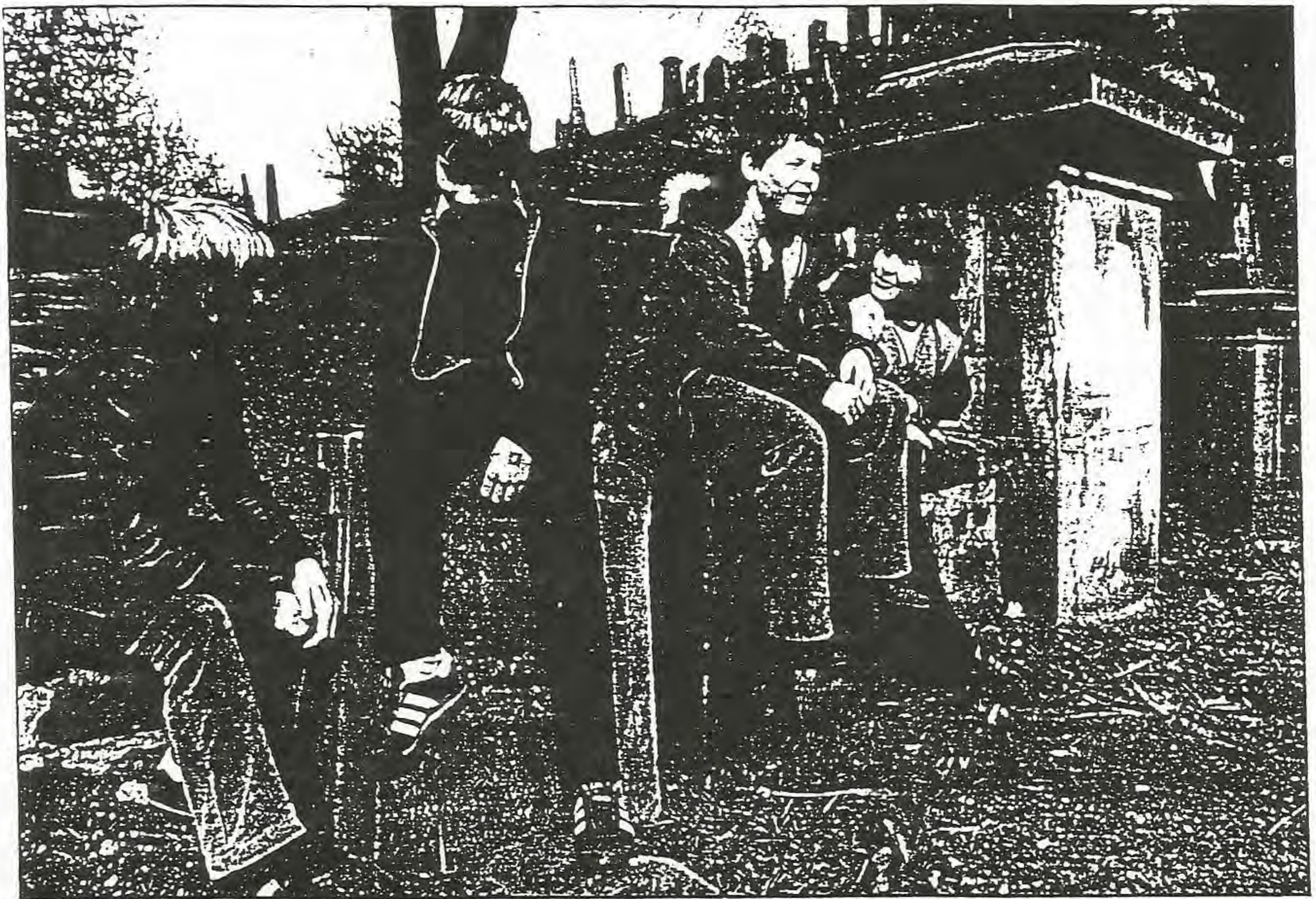
As Glasgow's chief of public relations and an active member of its Jewish community, Diamond is an unabashed booster of this 815-

year-old city. Once Glasgow suggested smokestacks and industrial grime, he explained. Today this historic city, the third largest in the United Kingdom, evokes "architectural beauty, imagination, enterprise, and daring." Last year, Glasgow was named Europe's Garden City and this year it serves as the continent's Cultural Capital, a showcase for the arts from around the world. In November, the city will devote an entire week to Jewish culture, including a concert by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Compared to their arrival in other European countries, Jews came to Scotland relatively recently. The first mention of a Jew in Scotland is found in the minutes of the Edinburgh Town Council on September 1, 1665. The first Jew of record in Glasgow was Isaac Cohen who registered as a Freeman in 1812 and is credited with introducing the silk hat to Scotland. However, organized Jewish life began in the 19th century with the northerly migration of British Jews and the arrival of German and Dutch Jews attracted to opportunities in the linen and cloth business. The Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation dates back to 1816; the Glasgow community was formed in 1823, assembling for worship in a two-room rented flat.

Freelance writers Harvey and Myrna Frommer live in New York. Writer/photographer Richard Lobell contributed to this report.

The Proud,
Shrinking
Jewish
Community
of Scotland



The western necropolis in Glasgow was the first land purchased by the Jewish community for a cemetery. Today, schoolchildren play among the tombstones of this unused and unattended graveyard.

But it was the flood of Jewish emigres from Eastern Europe in the 1880s that combined with the existing community to give Scottish Jewry its distinctive identity. Of the multitude who headed for America, over 1.5 million crossed the North Sea to Scotland and traveled across Britain by train to Liverpool where they embarked for the Atlantic crossing. Some of the refugees remained in Scotland to join established Jewish communities and to form new ones.

These new immigrants spoke Yiddish, generally were traditional in their beliefs and practices, and worked in the tailoring, furniture, and tobacco industries. Their arrival swelled Scotland's Jewish population: Glasgow had 47 Jewish citizens in 1831; 4,000 in 1897; nearly 8,000 in 1902; and 14,000 in 1921. By the turn of the century, both Glasgow and Edinburgh had developed complex communal structures to serve their Jewish citizens, providing synagogues and kosher food as well as educational, social and burial organizations.

Smaller Jewish communities developed throughout Scotland

wherever business opportunities were perceived. Jews lived in the beautiful Highland cities of Inverness and Aberdeen, and the coastal cities of Dundee and Ayr. In towns and villages from the Borders in the south to the northernmost Shetland Isles, individual Jews ran grocery stores and peddled wares. The population reached 20,000 during World War II as Jews from England fled German bombing. Today, however, Scottish Jews number 16,000 and the smaller communities have all but disappeared. Jewish life is centered in its two major cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The 12,000 Jews of Glasgow operate a wide variety of independent communal institutions, including seven synagogues, the Glasgow Israel Appeal, residences for the aged, a geriatric hospital, and a society for the blind. Kosher meat is provided by the sole remaining kosher butcher, shipped in from England, or imported frozen from the United States. Bagels come in just one variety and lox — a Scottish specialty — is nonetheless a once-a-week treat.

Children learn their *alephbet*

and more at synagogue Hebrew schools and at the Calderwood Lodge, a Jewish day school. Almost a dozen youth groups, many Israel-oriented, provide a social and cultural outlet for teenagers. One of the most colorful of these is the Jewish Lads Brigade, which was founded as a paramilitary group in 1894 and which served under Lord Allenby in 1914. Today, the Brigade includes a sizeable complement of lasses and sponsors a variety of activities of the non-military sort. It is the only Jewish group in the world with its own bagpipe band.

Adults can socialize at the Maccabi club or at the Bonnyton Golf Club, where the food is kosher and the doors are closed on Shabbat. Bonnyton was founded as a Jewish response to the exclusive policies of other clubs, but Scottish Jews deny the existence of anti-Semitism in their country. "Scotland is the only country in Europe in which there has never been a pogrom," noted Glasgow resident Cyril Malcolm. "Long may that continue!"

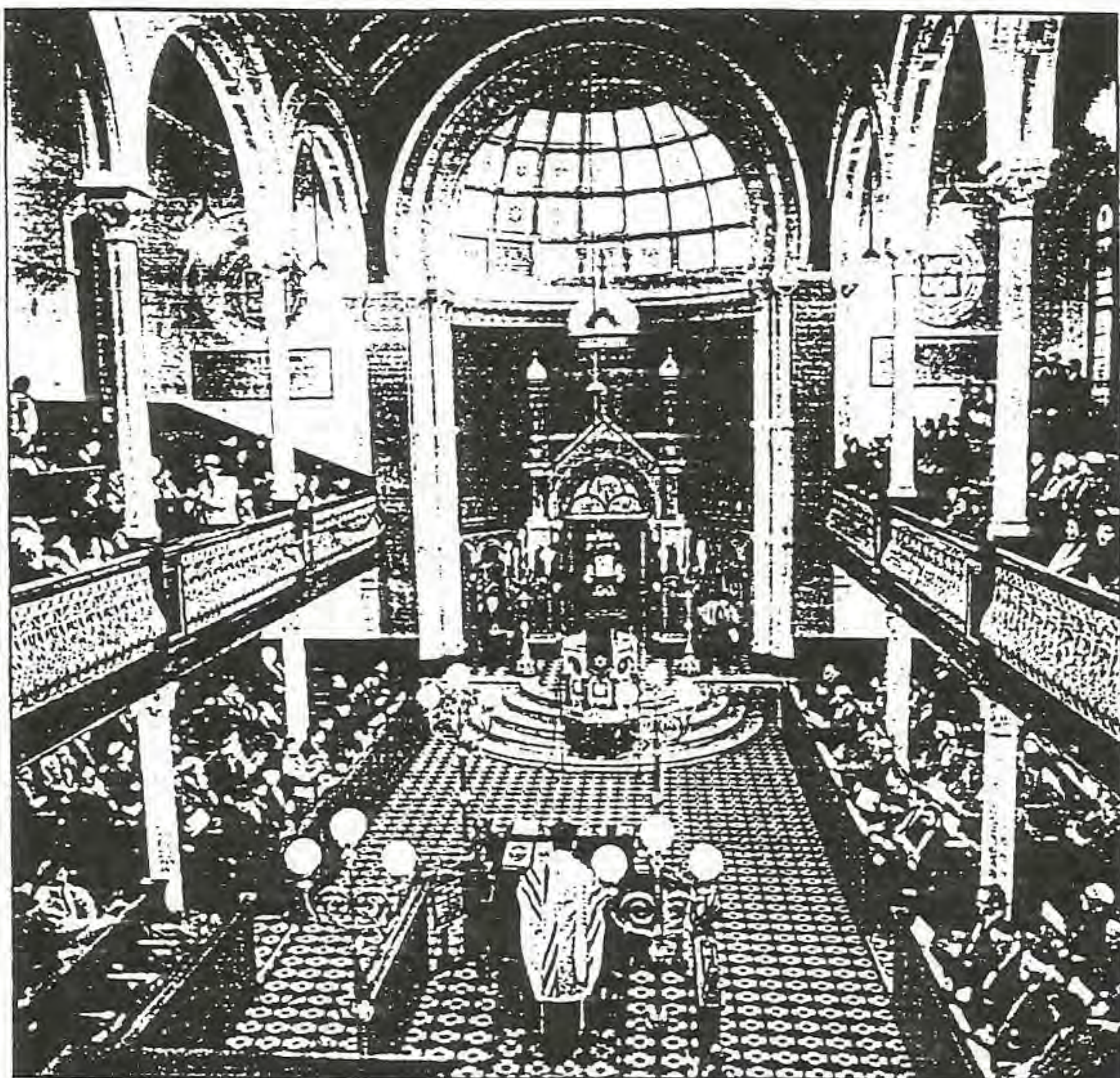
In this small Jewish community, cut off from the larger Jew-

ish population centers in England, the same individuals participate in most communal activities and everyone knows one another. "So if you want to get married you have a choice," says one Glasgow native. "You can marry the boy next door or you can leave." This young woman met her spouse in Israel and now lives in the United States.

Contributing to this attrition of young Jews is a lack of economic opportunities in Scotland. But the community is not worried about its future. "We hit our peak during the war," explains Glasgow resident Alice Malcolm. "Today, the Jewish population has just settled."

"Up until World War II, you couldn't get a seat in this synagogue," said Stuart Samuel, the late vice president and senior warden of the Garnethill Synagogue, the oldest in Glasgow. "It used to be standing room only during the Holy Days. But after the war, the neighborhood changed. As they prospered, Jews moved south of the river to where it was cleaner and quieter. This used to be near the shipbuilding and other heavy industries. It was dirty and noisy. Now, since the Clean Air Act of the 1950s, the Garnethill area is no longer polluted. But the Jews have remained largely in the south, and all of Glasgow's synagogues, with the exception of Garnethill, are there."

Samuel, who passed away ear-



Celebrating the installation of Rabbi Adrian Jesner at Garnethill.

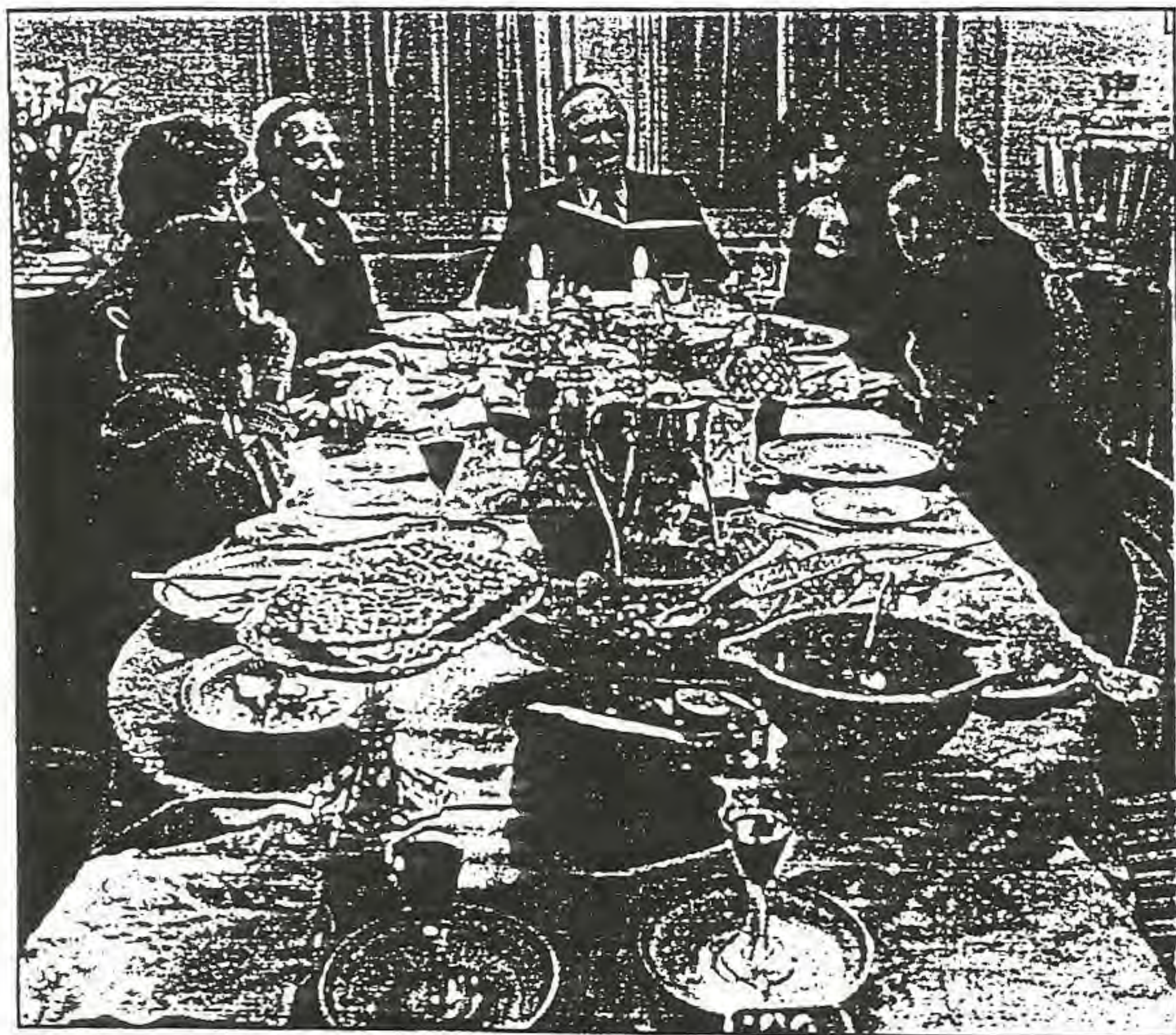
lier this year, devoted much of his time to the synagogue since his retirement. He was the grandson of Garnethill's first rabbi, Rev. E.P. Phillips, who began his 50-year association with the synagogue in 1879, the year the building was dedicated.

Named for its location, the

synagogue is reached after a steep climb up the old cobblestone streets of Glasgow's west end to a hilltop corner where Hill and Thistle Streets meet. The synagogue overlooks a landscape of spires and towers, forever changing under the inconstant light of the northern sky. Beyond the city, the mountains of the Highlands range to the north; the River Clyde meanders to the south. Though in the center of a city, one is surrounded by the harsh wild beauty that is Scotland.

Yet, in this brooding site, the Garnethill Synagogue bespeaks eastern exotica. Its design is Romanesque. Its arched portals, round windows and elaborate Byzantine detail are unique in a city marked by medieval Gothic.

"I have worshipped here all my life," Samuel said, running his hand familiarly along the smooth wooden rim of a pew. "I prefer this area to the south, I like the terrain, its hills and vistas, this setting for a synagogue. I am committed not only to the continuation of a Jewish community in Glasgow, but to a future for Garnethill. People say this is a dying congregation, and to be truthful, we sometimes have difficulty getting a minyan. But ten years ago, they were giving it ten years. And it still is here." □



The Malcolm and Collins families of Glasgow celebrate Passover.