

MS 2523 Birmingham Young Israel Society, c1870-c1931

Administrative History

The Birmingham Young Israel Society was one of several Jewish arts and social organizations active in the city during the early twentieth century. Information about the Society's organization and activities is limited, since the only document to survive is a single minute book, dating from the early 1930s. The minutes of the first meeting in this book mention a previous meeting, so clearly there were other records which have not survived.

The Society's aim, according to minutes of a meeting held on 22 October 1930, was 'To foster and diffuse Jewish culture among Jewish youth and to represent Jewish youth in communal affairs'. The same meeting raised the age limit for membership from 16 to 17.

The Society was managed by an elected Committee consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Committee was responsible for organizing a programme of activities for the year and deciding when meetings should take place. During the period covered by the minutes, the Society met weekly.

Activities organized by the Society included dances, debates, play readings, concerts, mock trials, and games. A Dramatic Section is mentioned in the minutes of 18 February 1931. The Society occasionally held joint events with other Jewish groups in Birmingham, including the Jewish Arts, Literary and Jewish Social and Dramatic Society and with Jewish youth groups in other cities.

Volume of minutes of the Birmingham Young Israel Society. This is one of several collections deposited by the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation. Most of the material deposited relates to Singers Hill Synagogue (JA), but there is also a small collection of records from the New Synagogue, Park Road (JB), which merged with Singers Hill in 1997. The archive also contains records of the Birmingham Jewish Arts Society (MS 2520), Birmingham Youth Council (MS 2522), Young Israel Council (MS 2523), Birmingham Shechita Board (MS 2529), Birmingham Hebrew Educational Aid Society (MS 2539), and the personal papers of the historian Zoe Josephs (MS 2524). The personal papers of Dorothy Gillman (MS 2525) and Constance Davis (MS 2526) were also deposited by the Congregation.

Other collections held by Birmingham City Archives which may be of interest include Birmingham and District War Refugees Fund (MS 652), which includes minute books, registration forms, and correspondence, and may include information about Jewish refugees; records of Henry Yeoville Thomason (MS 1460), which include architectural drawings of Singers Hill Synagogue; personal papers of CB Lander (1904-1989), including family papers about naturalization, Jewish friends, and Jewish affairs and history (MS 1515); microfilms of minutes of the Birmingham Hebrew Philanthropic Society, the Birmingham Hebrew Educational Aid and Clothing Society, the Ladies Benevolent Board, and the Board of Guardians (MS 1678); and papers of Dr Carl Chinn (MS 1902), which contain some material about the Jewish community in Birmingham, including several autobiographies.

Birmingham Central Library Local Studies and History holds material about the Jewish community including a set of Birmingham Hebrew Congregation Yearbooks, 1913-1971; an Order of Service held to celebrate the opening of the Birmingham Hebrew School at St Luke's Rd, Edgbaston, May 1, 1932.

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Minutes of the Birmingham Young Israel Society

c1870-c1931

Creator of material: Birmingham Young Israel Society.

Minutes of the Birmingham Young Israel Society's meetings. The meetings are usually social events: dances, debates, play readings, concerts, short story readings, games, or mock trials. The minutes briefly describe the meeting and note the names of some of the people who took part. For example, the entry for 11 November 1931 reads, 'The 7th Ordinary Meeting was held at Tony's Ballroom on Nov 11 /31 and took the form of an Armistice Dance, which was attended by the majority of the members. The evening was a financial and social success.'

There are two loose documents enclosed in the book: a list of names, including some of the clergy of the Hebrew Congregation, written on the back of an advertisement for Farmans Automobile Agents, 1936; and an invitation to a Ploughman's Lunch written on DOZ Young Farmers Club headed paper, n.d.;

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