

mainly as get-togethers, and the whole thing of the cooking, the preparations, the eating, the getting together was part of our joy of life. One of the particular aspects of Jewish life is that dishes are used to celebrate festivals. Each festival has special dishes that are used in the rituals, and those foods that are picked or chosen to be part of the celebration are embellished and acquire a different form from what they would be in the country... Another thing I realised when I came here is that food is important to Jews, as a migrating people: as they are not in the land of their ancestors, food represents continuity. It is a way of remembering your parents and grandparents - it is a way of holding on to your roots. It has that kind of importance. Looking at all the other communities, I realised that they felt that by cooking a dish they were keeping up the traditions of their parents."

Food represents more than the food itself. Claudia acknowledges: "For the East European Jews who had an often tragic life - because they were persecuted... they had to suffer the pogroms... they were in ghettos... forced to live in the Pale of Settlement... they weren't allowed to go into professions... their life was restricted... was hard - home life became important to them, religious life became important to them. Their food reflects that side of their life and celebrates it. And that is what my book is about."

Her book has come at a time of new interest in Jewish culture all over the world. "In the last few years, here and in America, I have noticed that people are extremely interested in 'what kind' of Jews. There is a recognition that Jewish culture is a multicultural. In Holland, for example, a huge stack of reviews appeared, not just on food pages, and sometimes on the front page". One journalist tried to explain the fascination to her. He said the Dutch felt guilty about what had happened to their Jews in the Holocaust. (Contrary to many people's belief, the Dutch lost 85 per cent of their Jews.) They had become interested in who the Jews were. The world's papers have been full of stories of the Holocaust - all very, very painful. So to find a book that is about the joyful life of the Jews and that provides an insight into the extraordinary diversity of their culture is a special event.

Claudia sums up the interest in her book: "From the point of view of gastronomy there is something else. The Anglo-Saxon world has developed an 'eclectic fusion magpie cuisine' which can be very engaging - but it has no culture, no background, it does not represent any tradition. It's here today, gone tomorrow. It is subject to fashion. So when you hear that there is this cuisine people can trace back hundreds of years and people are still doing it, it is a surprise..."

ESTHER CAPLIN

CLAUDIA RODEN
VIKING, 1997 - £20

The Sassoon family of Baghdad (who founded the Bombay community) and the family of Rabbi Yossef Hayin, 1870



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'Open House' on Central Square

The Suburb's architectural event of the year occurs each September as part of London's 'Open House' days. This year it also marked the publication of a new booklet called 'The Artisans' Quarter': A guide to the most historic (north-west) part of the Suburb, written by the architect Stephen Brookhouse of Denman Drive.

He and three other volunteers conducted some 120 out of the many more visitors that day on walks around part of the Artisans' Quarter: for those who missed this opportunity, his book provides a guide to where to walk on your own and what you will see (£3.50 from the Gallery, at the Temple fortune end of Hampstead Way).

Among the visitors were many architects and architectural students, testimony to the continuing influence of the 90-year-old Suburb on architectural and planning developments even today, and to the world importance of our Lutyens buildings in Central Square.

St Jude's church, in particular, swarmed with visitors who were studying not only the building itself but our Archives Trust's excellent exhibition on the history of the Suburb. There were good audiences for the lectures, too.

Dr Chris Miele of English Heritage spoke about the murals painted in the 1920s by Walter Starmer (and unveiled by the Prince of Wales), a Devon man, whom the then Vicar (Basil Bouchier) had met on the Somme where Starmer was working as a war artist - his paintings are in the Imperial War Museum. Starmer began in the big Lady Chapel with a series about women in the Bible, female saints and great women from Queen Victoria to Elizabeth Barrett Browning: a unique theme. At this time there was a revival of the mediaeval fresco technique in which pigments fuse with damp plaster. Parish archives show that (contrary to some beliefs) Lutyens warmly approved of this treatment of his architecture, and later wanted similar frescoes in his (unfinished) Liverpool Cathedral. Such a great series, covering the

whole church, is unparalleled. The bold scale of the figures are right for this huge building, but their impact has been diminished by fading or an over zealous cleaning in the 1950s, and restoration is under discussion. As it was the women of the Suburb who raised money for the Lady Chapel murals in the first place, perhaps this is a cause today's Suburb women might take up? (Starmer also designed the West window, depicting St Jude.)

Another restoration project is further advanced. Organist Andrew McCrea announced that a decade of fund-raising is nearing completion and the superb 'Father' Willis organ will be returned to full voice in time for the Millennium. Built in 1880 for St Jude's in Whitechapel, it was secured by Henrietta Barnett for the Suburb when that church (of which Samuel Barnett had been vicar) was demolished in 1924. When people had said such a fine instrument was too good for the ignorant masses of Whitechapel, she retorted "The best is never

too good for the worst", and had the church doors flung wide so that its chords ('shouting, whispering or pleading') would draw people in from the street. Aisles were kept dim so that none might feel ashamed of their rags.

Once the organ was at the rear of the church but, as it was difficult for the choir to keep time, it was moved to the front. Despite its present infirmities, it has remained fine enough for many recording companies to use it. Andrew demonstrated its versatility with a recital that included a Handel-like work by John Stanley (great choral effects of exceptional clarity), a softer prelude, and then a passionate Rheinburger fugue in which the whole instrument brings the piece to a climax.

There will probably be next year not only an event to launch the organ in its new glory but also an interim 'work-in-progress' viewing to see, with the organ dismantled, just how it is constructed in all its astonishing intricacy. (Next year's 'Open House' day: 19 September).

ELIZABETH GUNDREY

'Through Darkest Gaul with Trencher and Tastevin'

This is a remarkable little book, both for its contents and its provenance.

It is a three-part account of travels through France, mostly by van, with a friend, 'in search of France's disappearing cuisine' - the game plan being to keep it cheap: 'sleep in the van, breakfast on muesli and coffee, lunch on picnics garnered from boulangerie and fromagerie along the way, and then settle down in the evening for a serious dinner at a picturesque auberge specializing in local cuisine' - though it doesn't quite work out like that...

It takes the form of a diary recording (with digressions and diversions) the journey day by day, expatiating on the towns

and villages encountered en route, the topography, the views, the weather, the architecture, the hotels and restaurants - and of course the food and drink. All are conveyed with gusto and a lip-smacking relish not just for the eating and drinking, but also the sights and sounds met with on the way, with addresses and phone numbers so you can check out the restaurants for yourself.

But the diary is not just a narrative record; it was originally sent out every day by e-mail, in true epistolary form as 'a daily soup-opera' to half-a-hundred correspondents, who started asking for it in old-fashioned hard copy. To publish

the resulting book, the author has set up his own publishing house, Diatribal Press (logo: a fist with thumb turned down) from his house in Hutchings Walk. Several other titles are in the pipeline, 'all by accomplished

authors'. Let us hope that for the business at least, the fist may turn 'thumbs up'.

ALEC WORSTER

JOHN WHITING
DIATRIBAL PRESS - £8.95

TRUST AGM (continued from page 1)

would look into this and consider a change if that seemed appropriate.

Toynbee Hall appeal
Simon Abbott said that it had been a year ago when at this meeting Elizabeth Gundry had suggested that a Suburb-wide appeal be made to raise money from this privileged area for the work of Henrietta Barnett's

other foundation Toynbee Hall in the East End. She had asked "Why shouldn't we raise ten thousand pounds?"

"I am pleased to be able to announce that thanks to Elizabeth's untiring work and enthusiasm the £10,000 has been topped and that at a later ceremony Martin Bell will be handing over a cheque to Toynbee's chairman John Profumo," he said.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

WORDSEARCH

SUBURB TREES

Find and ring the names of 18 trees which grow on the Suburb. The names are hidden in the box of letters, and may read forwards, backwards, up, down or diagonally. ASH has been ringed to start you off: can you find 17 more? Answers may also be listed on a postcard. Entries should be sent to 2 North Square NW11 7AA and should give the name, address and telephone number of the sender.

The closing date is December 12.

The first correct entry drawn after the closing date will receive a £20 book token.

L C N F I M A E B E T I H W R
Y I K B F I V I O S A M L I K
R N A H J U T G C P R V O L U
R D O X O Q B N T A U H X T P
E M G I K L R C L D C E B U O
H A L P R M L P G R A A J N Q
C E V I J X O Y I J L C R T H
E B C R M P H B T M P S O S A
S N W I H E R R O W A N E E W
G R B S D E J N H G N I V H T
R O A B V G D B E E C H U C H
S H U L P C M F M N D I Q F O
X E I P B E E R T P I L U T R
U S T O W A V S M O K B A W N
W E Y K R E N A L P I Z P O M

SHEILA McMICHAEL

Wordsearch Winner

Congratulations to Mrs Dora Marks of 23 Brookland hill, who won the last Wordsearch on the Ladies

Championship at Wimbledon. Mrs Marks is a previous winner of Wordsearch.

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