

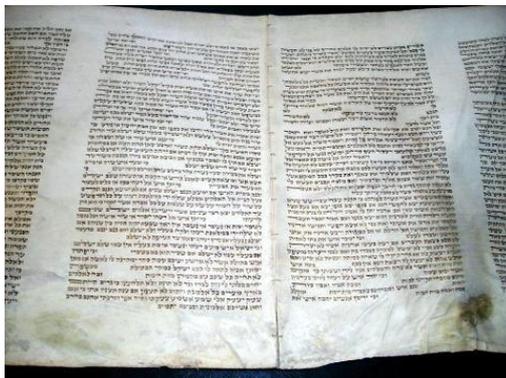
Our Scrolls



The LJS owns six scrolls, and has two on permanent loan, one from the Memorial Scrolls Trust at Westminster Synagogue (No 1), and one from our member Harriett Goldenberg (No 6).

1. Our Czech Scroll

In February 1964, 1564 Torah scrolls arrived in London from what was then Czechoslovakia, under the auspices of the Westminster Synagogue. They had been stored under very poor conditions in the Michle Synagogue in Prague for about 20 years and were in urgent need of care and attention. Over the years the majority have been restored and sent out to congregations all over the world who needed scrolls, to encourage development and to serve as a memorial to the members of the lost Czech communities who had once used them.



The full story of the Scrolls can be read at www.memorialscrollstrust.org



The rescue of the Scrolls was made possible by the generosity and commitment of Ralph Yablon, a member of Westminster Synagogue. In recognition, a small scroll (the parchment is 12" high) No 172, was presented to him. In due course, it passed to his son Anthony, a member of the LJS, who in turn arranged to have it transferred to us. It was received and entrusted to the care of our Religion School (now known as *Rimon*) at the

Shabbat Service in Chanukkah 1999, in the presence of the then Czech ambassador, Karel Seifter, himself once a Czech Jewish refugee. It now resides in the Children's Ark donated to the school by Barbara and Malcolm Godfrey in memory of their daughter Claire.

The scroll is recorded as having belonged to the Jewish community in Moravske Budejovice (as the name implies, in Moravia, about 50 miles west of Brno) and according to the Memorial Scrolls Trust is one of nine from that community. This is unlikely as there were never more than about 100 Jews resident there. It is probable that scrolls from a number of dissolved congregations in the area were collected and dispatched to Prague from there. In September 2006 a plaque commemorating the community was affixed to the wall of a house which now occupies the site of the synagogue. The LJS was invited to be represented at the ceremony, but unfortunately the invitation arrived too late for us to take it up. Ann and Bob Kirk visited in November of that year; some photographs of the town are available, as is a DVD of the September ceremony. Most importantly, we also have a list of names of the 88 Jewish inhabitants of Moravske Budejovice deported to Terezin between April and September 1942, together with a note of their final destination.

The scroll suffered considerable damage, presumably through storage in the damp surroundings of the Michle Synagogue. It is in excess of 200 years old, written with copper sulphate ink, which has turned brown and has faded considerably over the years. The finials are decorated and do not require *rimmonim*.

Christine Stevenson made a mantle for it.

Five scrolls are housed permanently in the Ark in the sanctuary.

2. A Sephardi Scroll, of uncertain age (The format points to an origin pre-1880). Possibly written in Iraq, it is thought to have been taken to Morocco before being brought to the UK. It is written on leather rather than parchment and is therefore heavy and prone to tear. The leather is 23" high.

The scroll appears originally to have been kept in a scroll case, and was adapted at some time before the 1939-45 war to the two-stave format it now has.

3. A second Sephardi Scroll – The parchment is 22.75” high, the writing extremely faded and no longer suitable for use. Already in 1984 it was not considered worth repairing. This scroll and No1 above are used only for *hakkafot* (processions).

4. The ‘Sellar’ scroll was presented by Irvine Sellar on the occasion of our 75th Anniversary in memory of his mother, Esther Sellar - dedicated during the anniversary service on 8th February 1986. It is a ‘*vav amud*’ scroll (with specific exceptions all columns begin with the letter *vav*). According to Vivian Solomons, who inspected it in 1997, it was written in Israel in the early 1920s, on 18” parchment, in a Polish (Ashkenazi) script. It has ‘balanced’ staves, i.e. one handle is longer than the other, so that the *atzey* (staves or rollers) fit into each other. Extensive repair and restoration were carried out by Avielah Barclay in 2008, funded by Irvine Sellar. A panel inside the mantle commemorates Mrs Sellar.

5. Scroll marked ‘C’ on the *Devarim* staff. This scroll is made up of four sections, as described by Dr Eric Ray when he inspected and repaired it in 1990. There is a note dating from 1984 when it was proposed to combine sections of two existing scrolls to produce one of acceptable standard; it is probable that this is the result. By definition the parchment varies, on average at 15” in height.
 - **Section 1** - *Bereshit* to *Shirat Ha-Yam* (Creation to Song at the Sea) is in Polish script, dating from approx 1910.
 - **Section 2** - *Shirat Ha-Yam* to *Yitro* (Song at the Sea to just before the Ten Commandments) also dates from the early 1900s, in German script with according to Dr Ray, some Czech influence.
 - **Section 3** - *Yitro* to *Balak* (the Commandments, in the first column of this section, to *Balak*). In Russian script, dating from the 1860s.
 - **Section 4** - *Balak* (Mah Tovu) to end . In Polish script, written between 1780 and 1820. More restoration was carried out by Avielah Barclay in 2009, funded by Anthony Roe in memory of his wife Maureen. A panel inside the mantle commemorates Maureen, a much loved member of the community.

At the time of our move back into the rebuilt LJS in 1991 a new set of mantles was made for these four scrolls, the design echoing that of the Ark doors.

For Rosh HaShanah 2013 (5774) Christine Stevenson commissioned and donated a new set of mantles for High Holyday use, made by Diana Springall.

6. Our latest acquisition – a Lightweight Scroll.

For some time we had been looking for a lightweight scroll, to be able to ensure that no member wishing to participate in a service would be debarred by reason of the weight of our standard scrolls. This Scroll is on permanent loan from our member Harriett Goldenberg, who generously responded to our search.



This is probably the most travelled of our scrolls. It originated somewhere in the Pale of Settlement in the late 19th century; it is written in ferrous sulphate ink (which remains black) on 15.5" high parchment. Early in the 20th century it was taken to Melfort, in rural Saskatchewan, Canada. When that community closed down the scroll, together with five others, was handed over to the community in Saskatoon – where Harriett grew up – who, however, did not need it. Meanwhile, Harriett had moved to England and was involved in the small Winchester Reform community, and through the good offices of her father the scroll was given to her and sent to Winchester. From there, it followed her successively to Southgate Reform, Beit K'lal Yisrael in Kensington (where a new mantle was made for it) and Ealing Liberal. It came to the LJS in time for the Bat Mitzvah of Olivia, Harriett and John's daughter, in July 2015.

In the Ark in the John D Rayner Room

7. The 'Polish' Scroll, so called because it is believed to originate in Poland. It is over 250 years old, made up of two sections – 1) *Bereshit* (Genesis), using copper-sulphate ink (turned brown). Script has Czech/Bohemian influence, and is written in 60 lines per column 2) *Shemot* (Exodus) to *Devarim* (Deuteronomy), using ferrous sulphate ink which has remained black, shows Polish style, and has 48 lines per column. Both scribes appear to have Chasidic background. The parchment is 18.5" high



Christine Stevenson made two mantles for this scroll, one red, and one white for the High Holydays



For many years this was thought to be Czech scroll No 944, which we had acquired on loan from the Memorial Scrolls Trust in 1968 at the request of Rabbi Dr David Goldstein and facilitated by Mr E W (Teddy) Joseph, then Chairman of the Council. In 2010 we discovered that we were mistaken. This emerged when we agreed to lend another scroll to the Gloucestershire Liberal Community. A check before transfer showed that the latter was in fact the Czech scroll, and it was formally transferred to Gloucester with the agreement of the Memorial Scrolls Trust.

8. Scroll donated by Adam Blitz in honour of his niece Romilly's baby naming (Daughter of Brad and Hayley Blitz) in November 2005. It is quite heavy. The staves are carved, including the finials, and therefore require no *rimmonim*. There is a rather unusual stop bar.

It is understood to originate in Romania, and came to this country via Israel. Some restoration work has been carried out, but more is required. It is inscribed in Hebrew and English: *In loving memory of David Winsor (Kurt Wang) 2 Dec 1924 - 9 Nov 2004.*

Some more research is required. We know that the congregation's first scroll was donated by Leonard Montefiore - the record states 'with silver', i e *rimmonim* and *yad*. Another scroll is recorded as having been presented by the YMO (the Synagogue's Younger Members' Organisation) in 1935. Neither scroll has been identified. If I had to make a guess, I would suggest that Scroll No 2 (written on leather) is the one donated by Leonard Montefiore, and No 3 is the one presented by the YMO.

RSK 19 Nov 2015