

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH UNIT

### Report of Vital Statistics for 1989

The Community Research Unit has compiled the statistics of synagogue marriages and of burials and cremations of Jews for 1989. The findings are presented below. As in past years, marriage and death totals are subdivided into various synagogue groupings. This is done for analytical purposes and in order to indicate trends. The statistics for groups show only which section of the community recorded the marriage or death. They in no way measure the level of religious observance of individuals involved.

#### Marriages

The total number of synagogue marriages recorded in 1989 was 1057, compared with 1104 in 1988. The 1989 figure shows an decrease of 4.3 per cent on last year and brings the total to just above the lowest recorded figure of 1049 in 1987. This average annual downward trend that has been charted throughout the 1980's is thus continued. (see Table 5). The slight increase last year has not influenced this regular pattern.

Comparison of the experience of the three major synagogue groupings, Orthodox, Reform and Liberal shows that each group decreased from 1988 to 1989, the Orthodox by 3.7 percent and the Progressive by 6.6 percent. The proportion of Orthodox marriages rose very slightly from 79.3 per cent in 1988 to 79.8 percent in 1989. Progressive marriages were 20.2 per cent of all those notified to the Unit in 1989 as compared to 20.7 per cent in 1988: both Reform and Liberal marriages declined by 6.6 percent.

The Unit also analysed the marital status of those marrying in synagogues. For the Central Orthodox 11.5 per cent of people marrying were doing so for (at least) the second time. Information was provided for 452 people from all other synagogical groups except the Right-wing Orthodox and, of them, 21.7 per cent were remarrying. In 1988 in England and Wales 23.9 percent of all people who married were remarrying: the synagogue figure is thus some two percent below the national level.

## Gittin

It is not possible to collect number of divorces among Jewish couples as secular divorce statistics do not note the religion of partners and communal institutions do not record divorces of members. We are, however, able to indicate trends in divorce through compiling annual figures of gittin issued by all Batei Din (Orthodox & Reform) throughout Great Britain.

### Gittin

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>London</u>	<u>Provinces</u>
1983	307	248	59
1984	277	233	44
1985	279	233	46
1986	270	230	40
1987	273	222	51
1988	254	199	55
1989	228	171	57
Annual Averages 1983-1987	281.2	233.2	48.0

These figures obviously underestimate the extent of divorce within the community since many couples only follow secular procedures. This fact makes the data given below difficult to interpret: the decline shown in gittin figures must be balanced against increasing numbers of marriages involving divorces. Furthermore, decline in figures of religious divorce could indicate simply that fewer couples feel the need to obtain a get.

## Deaths

Burials and cremations under Jewish auspices in 1989 rose 2.4 percent from 4427 in 1988 to 4535 in 1989 but the pattern of deaths throughout the community shows no significant change from 1987. Preliminary national figures for England and Wales show a slight overall fall of less than one percent from 1988-1989.

The balance between synagogal groups shows a shift in the pattern of Progressive deaths. Reform deaths accounted for 14 percent (12 percent in 1988) of all those recorded while Liberal were 7 percent (8 percent in 1988). Reform and Orthodox deaths both rose while Liberals fell after an increase from 1987-88.

### Geographical Distributions

London has continued to account for a higher proportion of marriages than of burials and cremations: 74.2 per cent of synagogue marriages were solemnised in the London area. The ratio between London and the Provinces for Progressive marriages was 83:17 and for the Orthodox 72:28.

The proportion of burials and cremations recorded in London rose to 68.5 percent the first noteworthy change this decade. These geographical figures refer to the area in which the death is recorded not to where the person lived.

### Births 1988

Total figures of milah and circumcision were collected and extrapolated to estimate births within the community. The figures are given below.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Births</u>
1977-81	3299 ) annual
1982-86	3332 ) average
1987	3532
1988	3681

The excess of deaths over births in 1988 was 746, approximately 648 lower than the average excess of deaths for the period 1983-87. Figures for 1989 births are not yet available and until they are we cannot know whether the overall reduction in natural decrease will continue, especially in light of the 1989 increase in deaths.

Table 1 Synagogue Marriages by Synagogue Grouping, 1988, 1989 and annual averages 1984-88

	<u>1988</u>		<u>1989</u>		<u>% change 1988-9</u>	<u>Annual Average 1984-8</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%
Central Orthodox	702	63.6	679	64.2	-3.3	709.6	63.7
Right Wing Orthodox	118	10.7	118	11.2	0.0	112.0	10.0
Sephardi	56	5.1	47	4.4	-16.1	49.8	4.5
Total Orthodox	<u>876</u>	<u>79.3</u>	<u>844</u>	<u>79.8</u>	<u>-3.7</u>	<u>871.4</u>	<u>78.2</u>
Reform	182	16.5	170	16.0	-6.6	176.2	15.8
Liberal	46	4.2	43	4.2	-6.6	66.6	6.0
Total Progressive	<u>228</u>	<u>20.7</u>	<u>213</u>	<u>20.2</u>	<u>-6.6</u>	<u>242.8</u>	<u>21.8</u>
TOTAL	<u>1104</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>1057</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>-4.3</u>	<u>1114.2</u>	<u>100.0</u>

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Table 2 Synagogue Marriages 1989, synagogue groups by place of solemnisation

	<u>London</u>		<u>Provinces</u>		<u>Total = 100%</u>
	No.	%	No.	%	
Central Orthodox	467	68.8	212	31.2	679
Right Wing Orthodox	100	84.7	18	15.3	118
Sephardi	41	87.2	6	12.8	47
Total Orthodox	<u>608</u>	<u>72.0</u>	<u>236</u>	<u>28.0</u>	<u>844</u>
Reform	136	80.0	34	20.0	170
Liberal	40	93.0	3	7.0	43
Total Progressive	<u>176</u>	<u>82.6</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>17.4</u>	<u>213</u>
TOTAL	<u>784</u>	<u>74.2</u>	<u>273</u>	<u>25.8</u>	<u>1057</u>
Total 1988	818	74.1	286	25.9	1104
% change 1988-89	-4.2		-4.5		-4.3

Burials and Cremations under Jewish auspices in Great Britain according to synagogue group 1988, 1989 and annual average 1984-8

	<u>1988</u>		<u>1989</u>		<u>% change</u> <u>1988-9</u>	<u>Annual Average</u> <u>1984-8</u>	
	No	%	No	%		No.	%
Orthodox	3545	80.0	3593	79.2	+1.3	3767.8	80.0
Reform	526	11.9	628	13.8	+19.3	566.0	12.0
Liberal	356	8.1	314	7.0	-11.8	376.8	8.0
<u>Total</u>	<u>4427</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>4535</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>+2.4</u>	<u>4710.6</u>	<u>100</u>

Table 4 1989 Synagogue Marriages and Burials and Cremations under Jewish Auspices according to synagogue group and place recorded

	<u>Marriages</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Central Orthodox	64.2 )	79.2
Right Wing	11.2 )	
Sephardi	4.4 )	
Reform	16.0	13.8
Liberal	4.2	7.0
<u>London</u>	<u>74.2</u>	<u>68.5</u>
<u>Provinces</u>	<u>25.8</u>	<u>31.7</u>
<u>No = 100%</u>	<u>1057</u>	<u>4535</u>

Table 5 Annual Averages Synagogue Marriages and Community Deaths 1980-88

<u>Years</u>	<u>Synagogue</u> <u>Marriages</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
1980-84	1169.0	4763.0
1981-85	1153.4	4800.8
1982-86	1136.8	4837.6
1983-87	1128.2	4766.4
1984-88	1114.2	4710.6

## REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY RESEARCH UNIT 1989-90

In recent years the Community Research Unit report has concentrated solely on the vital statistics which are collected annually. This regular survey represents only a part of the Unit's work. The current report attempts to redress this imbalance by including the other aspects of the Unit's research.

The work of the Unit depends greatly on the support and co-operation of all sectors of the Community. This is unfailingly given and our thanks are due to all those who participate by supplying the information we periodically request.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Synagogue Marriages 1989: The total number of synagogue marriages recorded in 1989 was 1057, 4.3 percent lower than the 1988 figure of 1104. Decline is found among all synagogue groupings with the fall among the Orthodox being 3.7 percent and among the Progressive 6.6 percent. The ratio of Orthodox to Progressive marriages has remained at the level of 80:20 but there has been a very slight further shift towards marriage solemnisations in London: 74 percent of all synagogue marriages were solemnised there in 1989 as against 73 percent in 1988.

Deaths 1989: Burials and cremations recorded by the community indicate a 2.4 percent increase in community deaths from 4427 in 1988 to 4535 in 1989. The pattern of two-thirds of deaths being recorded by London as against provincial burial authorities is maintained. The balance of deaths between synagogal groups shows that Orthodox returns continue to account for 80 percent of all burials and cremations.

Births 1988: Total figures of milah and circumcision were collected for 1988 and extrapolated to estimate births within the community. The estimated total is 3681, an increase of 4.2 percent on the 1987 figure.

The natural increase or decrease in size of the community is calculated by the difference between births and deaths. No allowance is here made for change in numbers due to migration as we cannot collect these statistics. In 1988, the excess of deaths over births (and thus the natural decrease of the community in that year) was 746. This decrease is 648 lower than the average for the previous five years due to falls in deaths and increases in births over that time. In view of the increase of deaths in 1989 we do not yet know whether this overall reduction in excess will continue into 1989.

Full tabulations of the vital statistics are available from the Unit on request.

## ONGOING STUDIES

Re-estimating the size of British Jewry: During the past year the Unit has been concerned in a major study updating the estimate of the size of British Jewry to the period 1984-88. This has involved contacting every burial society in the community and obtaining basic details (but not names and addresses) of every death recorded. Information covering over 22,000 deaths has been computerised and is currently being analysed.

The study is the third in a series carried out by the Unit. In 1968 the size and structure of the community for 1960-65 were estimated by Prof S J Prais and Mrs M Schmool, the Unit's current Executive Director. The methods used then were adopted and developed by Prof S Haberman and Dr B Kosmin in their re-estimation for the period 1975-79. This latest study, in developing a fuller data set than has heretofore been possible, will allow more particular analyses, e.g. of place of death as against place of burial.

The work could not have been carried out without the full co-operation of the community as a complete dataset of the period was needed. The Unit is grateful to every synagogue and burial society secretary who so patiently provided and/or permitted Unit staff to extract the required basic information.

Synagogue Membership 1989-90: In 1983 the Unit published a handbook of synagogue membership which has been widely used within and beyond the community. The data are now 6 years out of date and the booklet is being updated. This has involved contacting all synagogues and (where appropriate) central synagogal authorities for details of membership. This study has been run parallel with the Small Communities study reported below.

The membership figures are being computerised on the Unit computer. The resulting booklet will be produced in-house with the Board's desk-top publishing facility.

## WORK WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Small Communities Study: In late October 1989, the Unit embarked on a study of those communities with an estimated Jewish population of less than 1500. The study was requested by the Board's Provincial Committee and was directed at examining the facilities in and needs of these communities. 84 synagogues and other Jewish provincial groupings were included. A full report has already been presented to the Provincial Committee and will be available to Deputies in due course.

Ethnic Question in the 1991 Census: The Unit liaised with the Law and Parliamentary and Defence Committees on this topic. Formal written information was obtained from the OPCS as to how answers to the question will be analysed. This information will form the basis of advice to the community.

Education: Following the Youth Debate at the plenary session of the Board in January 1990, the Unit is working with the Education and Youth Committee in the initial stages of a project on the needs of Jewish youth, involving youth organisations throughout the community.

#### RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY

From time to time communal organisations approach the Unit for technical help in their own particular projects. The Executive Director has, in the past year, worked with Birmingham Jewish Representative Council (in developing a questionnaire for a community study), the Outreach project at Manor House (with preliminary exploratory research into inter-marriage), Jews College (in analysing the patterns of attendance at the two Traditional Alternatives Symposia) and with Leeds and Manchester Jewish Social Services (as consultant on a study of access to Mental Health Care). The Manchester Study, which has been in preliminary and planning stages for some time, is scheduled to commence fieldwork in April 1991.

Regular enquiries come into the Unit for information needed by scholars, community workers, industry and local authorities. Typical of such enquiries are requests for numbers of children in Jewish day schools, for estimates of Jewish population in particular areas or boroughs (e.g. to assess whether special pre-Pesach dustbin collections or Kosher delicatessen at supermarkets are needed), for details of women's communal involvement and for levels of regular synagogue attendance.

#### COMPUTERISATION

The Unit has been able to benefit from the information-technology revolution. An Amstrad personal computer is used in the Unit office to process small-medium sized studies. The facilities provide an opportunity both to speed up and, as appropriate, to deepen analyses. Hand tabulations which previously took more than a day can be done in a few hours.

At the same time, the Unit benefits from access to the main-frame computer (and computer-support services) at the City University, which allows us to mount fuller analyses as in the current re-estimation of population.