

CROFTWEIT

We were four families, living in a large ex-Provost's house sitting in an even larger garden, from 1940 until mid-1945 when the war in Europe ended. Although it was a large house there were about fourteen or fifteen people living in it. Two families were from Glasgow and the other two were from London. They were all related: three of the wives were sisters, the fourth, a sister-in-law of one of the wives, plus the mother of the three sisters who was also grandmother to the six children, one of whom was an adult who had finished drama school and was working in the theatre in Glasgow. Two of the husbands lived in the house, travelling daily to Stirling by bus. The other two husbands stayed when they could get away from work in London or Glasgow. The families had moved to Crieff in 1940 to escape the bombs in Glasgow and London, joining other friends from Glasgow.

They and their friends were Jewish. As they were the only Jews in Crieff at that time, they met in one of the houses for prayers at the two principal festivals, New Year and the Day of Atonement. Croftweit became the obvious choice as it had a large first-floor drawing room, big enough to hold everyone who wanted to be part of the service.

These are my personal memories. I was Cynthia Grossman, one of the children, and was just 10 years old when I arrived in Crieff, living at 28 North Bridge Street with my family and relatives before we moved into Croftweit.

I do not remember the house being a regular synagogue, perhaps better described as an ad hoc one. It was used for an informal Sunday school for the Jewish children living in Crieff. I believe a teacher would come from Glasgow for the day, probably by train. I do not remember if this was a regular weekly arrangement and how long it went on for. I enjoyed my schooling at Morrison's Academy but didn't enjoy my Hebrew lessons, probably because the teacher was old (to us) and out of touch with more recent teaching methods.

I have nothing that obviously dates from our time in Croftweit, except memories of a happy childhood, in spite of the war. As you know, after we left Croftweit, the Academy bought it to use as another boarding house for the Girls' School.