

MS 2529 Birmingham Shechita Board, 1826-1997

Administrative History

The Birmingham Shechita Board and its predecessor, the Committee for Superintendence of Shechita, were responsible for supervising the butchers who supplied kosher meat to the Jewish community in Birmingham.

Records of the Board and the Committee date from 1891. Before this date, information about the supply of kosher meat can be found in the Council minutes of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation (see JA/1/A). These show that Council oversaw the supply of kosher meat and that meat was taxed to raise money for the Congregation or to enforce the Congregation's Laws. 'In 1826, when Moses Solomon held services in his own house, the malcontents were punished by having to pay a tax of 1d per pound on meat from the Congregation's butchers'. (Josephs, Birmingham Jewry II, p. 8) A Meat Committee is mentioned in the Congregation's Annual Report of 1854 (see JA/2/G/2) and its reports appear in Council minutes in 1866 and 1878.

In 1891, a sub-committee of the Council of the Congregation was appointed to organize the supply of kosher meat, called 'The Committee for Superintending the Affairs of the Shechitah', the 'Committee of Superintendence of Shechitah' or 'The Shechitah Board'. The history of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation notes that 'In 1892 the superintendence of the affairs of the Shechita was relegated to a Special Committee, with Albert Bremer as its first President, and the laws of the Congregation were altered for the permanent establishment of the same.' (Levine, History of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation, p. 26.) In 1920, the Committee was dissolved and replaced by the Birmingham Shechita Board.

The Board, set up on 27 April 1920, was made up of representatives from three synagogues in the city: Singers Hill; the Wrottesley St Beth Hamedrash (later the Central Synagogue); and the Beth Hamedrash, Holloway Head. The Board's reports appear in the Congregation Yearbooks. According to the 1929 Yearbook, the Board comprised a Chairman, Treasurer, three Trustees, two clerical advisers, a committee of 13, and a Secretary. The reports usually include a balance sheet showing income and expenditure and staff superannuation, a report about inspections of butchers' shops, statistics showing the number of cattle killed kosher and trefah, and a list of kosher butchers and poulterers licensed by the Board.

The Laws of the Board, which appear in the minutes of its first meeting on 27 April 1920 and include the following laws:

- 1) That [the Board's] objects be the supply of Kosher Meat and Poultry to the Birmingham Jewish Community and the exercise of authority over all Butchers and Poulterers supplying Kosher;
- 2) That the Board be constituted on the basis of one representative for each complete eighty seatholders of the following bodies: Singers Hill Congregation, Wrottesley St Beth Hamedrash and Holloway Head Beth Hamedrash;
- 3) That the Minister of Singers Hill and the rabbis of Wrottesley St and Holloway Head are ex-officio members;

The President and Treasurer shall be elected at the first meeting held after the election of the

new Committee by nomination and show of hands;

11) All real and funded property of the Board shall be conveyed to and invested in the names of three Trustees;

15) The Secretary shall devote such time as is necessary for the efficient carrying out of the business of the Board and shall generally be under the directions of the President or in his absence the Treasurer. He shall keep books of account to the satisfaction of the Board. He shall conduct the correspondence and present copies of all letters. He shall attend all meetings and issue the notices for such meetings and keep minutes of the proceedings thereat. He shall prepare an Annual Statement of the accounts of the Board with a Balance Sheet of the Income and Expenditure up to Dec 31st in each year and submit the same to the Auditors and to the Committee as early as possible thereafter;

18) A Banking Account ...shall be kept in the name of the President and Treasurer;

19) all moneys received by the Board shall be paid into the Banking Account and all payments shall be by cheque only...signed by the two in whose names the account stands;

23) Shochet must hold the kabbalah of the London Ecclesiastical Authorities.' Creator of the material: Birmingham Shechita Board

The collection has been arranged in chronological order.

Minutes of meetings of the Birmingham Shechitah Board and its predecessor, the Committee for the Superintendence of Shechita, ledgers, cash books, and invoices. The archive deposited by the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation contains material from a number of Jewish organizations. Most of the material relates to Singers Hill Synagogue, but there is also a small collection of records from the New Synagogue, Park Road, 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) and 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 include material about the Jewish community in Birmingham, including some 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.

Access: Partially closed. Financial records are closed for 50 years; records that contain personal information are closed for 80 years. Please see individual catalogue entries for specific closure periods.

Copyright: With depositor.

Condition: Good unless otherwise specified.

MS 2529/A Records of meetings, 1826-1997

MS 2529/A/1 Minutes of Board meetings, 1826-1997

Minutes of meetings of the Birmingham Shechita Board and its predecessor, the Committee for the Superintendence of Shechita.

MS 2529/A/1/1	<u>Minute book</u>	1826-1997
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The minutes include discussions about the employment, recruitment, and salaries of butchers, granting licences to sell meat to the Jewish community, settling disputes, inspecting butchers' shops, and elections of Committee members. Not all the butchers are Jewish. The Committee acts when the food laws have been infringed: the minutes of 20 February 1898 include discussion about a case of a butcher selling unpurged joints of meat to Jewish customers and a meeting of 1 December 1895 orders that the door between a pork shop and a butcher's shop be bricked up. The Committee's Income and Expenditure Account and the Congregation's Report and Balance Sheet, which includes a short report about the Committee's work, are enclosed in the later minutes. The minutes also include copies of correspondence asking the Chief Rabbi's advice, and correspondence with the superintendent of the Birmingham City Meat Market, giving the Board permission to use Birmingham City's slaughterhouse between 8.00 and 10.30 am on Sundays.

Access: Open.
Copyright: With depositor.
Extent: 1 Volume

MS 2529/A/1/2	<u>Minute book</u>	1826-1997
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Access: Closed until 01/01/2034.
Copyright: With depositor.
Extent: 1 Volume

MS 2529/A/2 Attendance registers, 1826-1997

Access: Open.

MS 2529/A/2/1	<u>Attendance register</u>	1826-1997
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Register signed by members of the Committee for the Superintendence of Shechita/Birmingham Shechita Board, recording attendance at meetings.

Access: Open.

Condition: Poor.
 Copyright: With depositor.
 Extent: 1 Volume

MS 2529/A/3 Rough minutes of Board meetings,1826-1997

Some of the minutes are written in shorthand.

MS 2529/A/3/1	<u>Minute book</u> Access: Open. Condition: Fair. Copyright: With depositor. Extent: 1 Volume	1826-1997
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MS 2529/B Financial records, 1826-1997

MS 2529/B/1 Ledgers,1826-1997

MS 2529/B/1/1	<u>Ledger</u> Access: Open. Copyright: With depositor. Extent: 1 Volume	1826-1997
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MS 2529/B/1/2	<u>Ledger</u> Access: Closed until 01/01/2019. Copyright: With depositor. Extent: 1 Volume	1826-1997
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MS 2529/B/1/3	<u>Ledger</u> Ledger of Shechita Board accounts, which duplicates part of MS 2529/B/1/2. Access: Closed until 01/01/2035. Copyright: With depositor. Extent: 1 Volume	1826-1997
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MS 2529/B/2	<u>Ledgers recording accounts with butchers used by the Board.</u> Access: Closed until 01/01/2035. Copyright: With depositor. Extent: 1 Volume	1826-1997
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MS 2529/B/3 Books listing numbers of animals killed kosher and trefah per week,1826-1997

MS 2529/B/3/1	<u>Book</u> Access: Open. Copyright: With depositor. Extent: 1 Volume	1826-1997
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MS 2529/B/3/2	<u>Book</u> Access: Open.	1826-1997
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Copyright: With depositor.
Extent: 1 Volume

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| MS 2529/B/4 | <u>Cash book</u>
Account book listing names of wholesalers, the name of the butcher or poulterer, the invoice number, the number of birds or animals, the price per bird or animal, the meat total, and the total cost.
Access: Closed until 01/01/2040.
Copyright: With depositor.
Extent: 1 Volume | 1826-1997 |
| MS 2529/B/5 | <u>File of invoices</u>
Invoices received by the Shechita Board from a variety of organisations including butchers, accountants, insurance companies, and Manchester Shechita Board.
Access: Closed until 01/01/2039.
Copyright: Unknown.
Extent: 1 File | 1826-1997 |
| MS 2529/B/6 | <u>File of invoices</u>
File of invoices received by the Shechita Board from various organizations including Elbe's butchers and Luton Kosher Butchers.
Access: Closed until 01/01/2039.
Copyright: Unknown.
Extent: 1 File | 1826-1997 |
| MS 2529/B/7 | <u>Incoming receipt book</u>
Book of carbon copy receipts for payments from butchers to the Shechita Board for poultry or meat.
Access: Closed until 01/01/2039.
Copyright: With depositor.
Extent: 1 Volume | 1826-1997 |
| MS 2529/B/8 | <u>Salaries book</u>
Ledger listing payments and National Insurance deductions.
Access: Closed until 01/01/2056.
Condition: Fair.
Copyright: With depositor.
Extent: 1 Volume | 1826-1997 |