

# School and Hebrew Classes

In 1970 the Stepney Green Jewish School moved to Ilford:



Stepney Jewish Girls School, 1930.  
Courtesy of the Jewish Museum.

*“... the number of Jewish people in Stepney had dropped dramatically and it was mainly older people still living there... who have past school age, so the numbers in the school didn't really justify it anymore whereas Ilford was crying out for a Jewish school so it was quite fortuitous they were able to make the joint connection and moved the school here.”*  
(Kenneth)

The local secondary schools in Ilford had a high proportion of Jewish children:

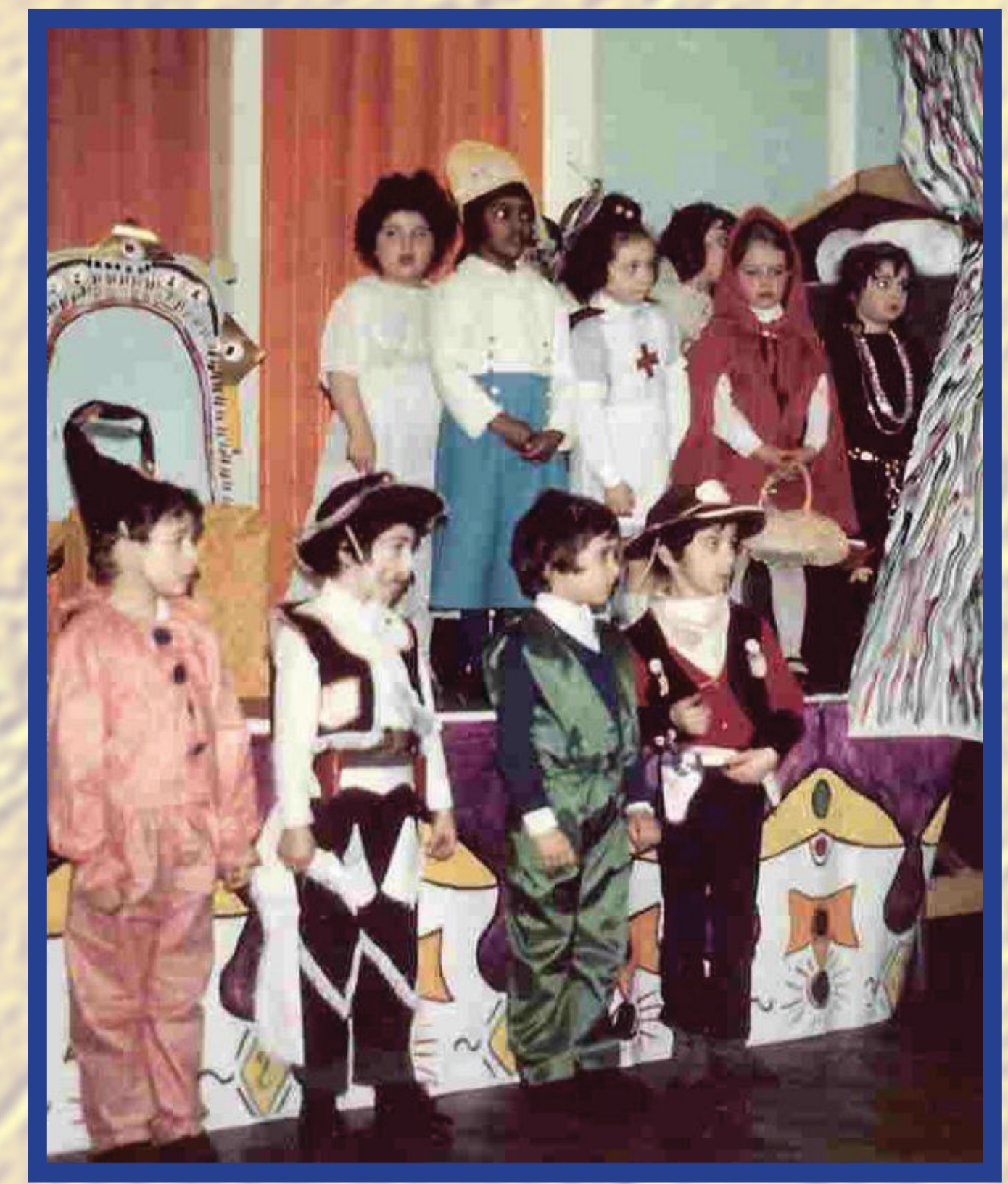


Simon Marks Primary School Choir singing at Wembley, c.1975.

*“I went to Ilford County High School and at the time... we had a thriving Jewish community, a third of my school... was actually Jewish. The teachers knew [on] Jewish holidays they could never teach anything new because so many people would be away”*  
(Simon)

Many of the children would attend Hebrew Classes after school:

*“... at one point we had something like nine hundred children to teach in part-time classes. So we were spread all over the borough – we had our main synagogue – we had an old building down the road, which had been the synagogue ‘til we built the new one, and we had classrooms in both those buildings. We used Gearies School on a Sunday morning and we used Highlands School Sunday morning and two evenings a week as well. ”*  
(Kenneth)



Simon Marks Primary School Purim c.1975

And with Hebrew classes came bar mitzvahs:

*“The Synagogues were absolutely crowded, you know, when a boy gets Bar Mitzvah at 13 he has a large party I remember the days when the Synagogue in Beehive Lane, you had to book two years ahead if you wanted to have a party there”*  
(Maureen)



School children in sukkah c.2000.

Friday Night Kiddush at Simon Marks Primary School in Hackney, c.1970



An Eastside Community Heritage Exhibition. Visit: [www.hidden-histories.org.uk](http://www.hidden-histories.org.uk)