



TOUR participants are introduced to the Brave New World of the Technion



CLOSE encounters with wildlife at the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History

BY PAUL HARRIS

Technion tour shows hidden Israel as well

A 22-year-old student, in the first year of a post-graduate PhD course, cut through the complexities of producing 3D body parts on a laser printer to a largely non-academic group.

It was impossible not to reflect that Israel's — and the world's — scientific future is in safe hands.

The student, Londoner Abby Newman, who gained her degree at Imperial College before emigrating to Israel, was describing some of the groundbreaking work being undertaken at the Technion, one of Israel's leading universities.

Her small audience was part of the first group from TechnionUK to visit the campus for many years, and of which I was privileged to be part.

The Technion, established in 1912, is an open campus, situated atop Mount Carmel, near Haifa. Its sports facilities, parks and

Printing 3D body parts with stem cells

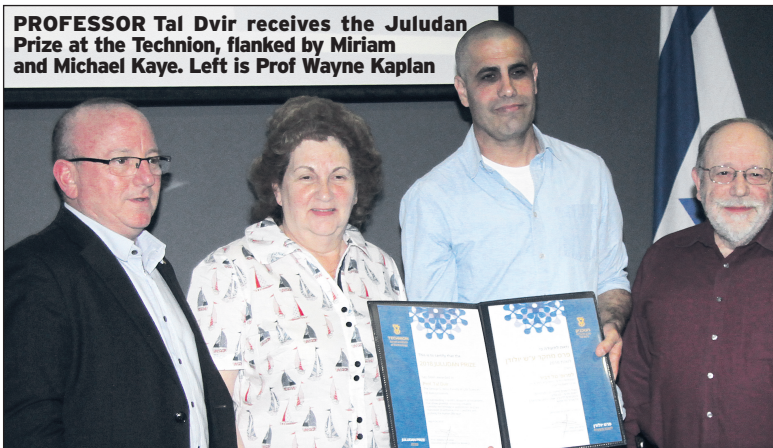
restaurants are all open to the local community.

The vast campus, covering a 327-acre site, accommodates in dormitories 5,000 of its 15,000 students, some of whose families live with them.

The Technion, officially the Israel Institute of Technology, is at the cutting-edge of scientific research.

While Abby was explaining the intricacies of 3D laser printing, using stem cells, which can be reprogrammed to be utilised for the body parts that are being produced, another group was being enlightened about an app which is under development to analyse breath to identify cancer.

Our visit to the Technion coin-



PROFESSOR Tal Dvir receives the Juludan Prize at the Technion, flanked by Miriam and Michael Kaye. Left is Prof Wayne Kaplan

cidated with the award of the annual Juludan Prize to Professor Tal Dvir for his research into engineering personalised tissue implants for 3D printing to produce bionic organs, particularly the heart.

It was presented by Michael Kaye whose late father-in-law, Julek Tigner's legacy 31 years ago made the award possible.

The TechnionUK trip, led by its CEO Alan Aziz, incorporated many unique aspects of Israel unrelated to the university itself.

Alan explained: "The basic idea was to take people to the Technion, but also to show them things in Israel they haven't done before."

"I'm also interested in helping people to develop their relationship with Israel."

The Technion has a hardship

fund which ensures that students from all backgrounds are able to avail themselves of its unique facilities.

Alan explained the importance of legacies: "They allow the Technion to extend the amazing work it currently does and take it even further."

"Legacies allow the Technion to think outside the box and invest in areas in which its current budget restricts its activities."

A half-hour drive from the Technion is the Druze village of Dalyat al Carmel, where the group were hosted to a vegetarian feast at the home of a local family.

Dr Amir Khnifess, chairman of the Israeli-Druze Centre, told the group that there are 120,000 Druze living mainly in 17 towns and villages in Carmel and Galilee, with

four concentrations, too, on the Golan Heights whose residents were embraced by Israel after the 1967 Six-Day War.

"They have a unique, almost blood covenant relationship with Israel," explained Dr Khnifess.

"They serve in the Israeli army and have become fully integrated into Israeli society."

Last Thursday, having exchanged *mishloach manot* for Purim, the Technion group enjoyed a conducted tour of the Tel Aviv's new Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, the largest of its kind in the Middle East and housing 6.5 million specimens from throughout the world.

Retiring British ambassador to Israel, David Quarrey, hosted the group for lunch and revealed that Britain is currently Israel's third largest trading partner after America and China, having been overtaken by the latter.

There was a chastening experience at the Holon Children's Museum, which includes a permanent section, Dialogue in the Dark, through which participants are led by a sight-impaired guide, for more than an hour, allowing them to experience different sounds and situations encountered by blind people.

A walking tour of Carmel Market, led by former lawyer, Inbal Baum, of Delicious Israel, included Shlomo Cohen's Cafe Cohen coffee shop.

Shlomo, 72, a retired teacher, not only dispenses excellent coffee but entertains with chazanut and

songs of all genres on Friday afternoons.

We encountered Irit Aharon, of unknown vintage, the exuberant owner of a three-table eatery, who literally dances as she works, producing local specialties, including shakshuka and spongy lahuhua bread made to her secret recipe.

One of the highlights of the trip was the tiny Joseph Bau Museum in Tel Aviv, commemorating the eponymous animator, artist and master forger for Mossad and in the Krakow ghetto.

Now run by his two daughters, the museum is threatened with closure because the landlord wants to redevelop the property, possibly the world's smallest cinema.

Participants in the tour also visited the First Aliyah Museum in Zichron Yaakov, as well as enjoying a wine and chocolate tasting at Tishbi winery.

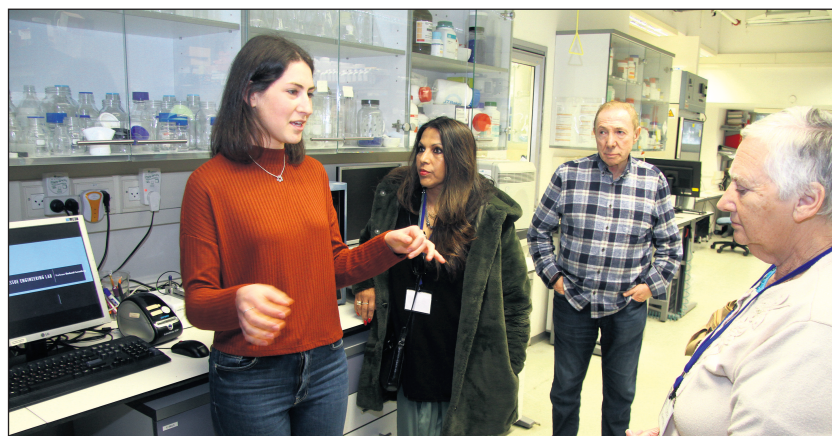
They also heard talks by Keren Hajioff, head of social media for the IDF, Josh Phillips, former IDF Lone Soldier, and Gill Hoffman foreign editor of the *Jerusalem Post*.

There were countless more dining experiences and visits and as a veteran of hundreds of travel press trips over four decades, many of which have been to Israel, this tour ranks high on my list of favourites.

Many of the participants had enjoyed Alan Aziz's previous tours and I, for one, look forward in the future to being introduced by TechnionUK to further aspects of Israel I never knew existed.



SHLOMO Cohen entertains at his Carmel Market cafe



STUDENT Abby Newman explains groundbreaking work in 3D technology using stem cells



IRIT Aharon's zany cookery routine at Carmel Market