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TAMMUZ 5773

SCoJeC Returns to Oban!

SCoJeC was welcomed back to Oban Library in March, where Outreach Worker Fiona Frank, and Linda Martin, our new Highlands Volunteer Ambassador, set out a kosher buffet for local Jewish, 'Jew-ish', and other interested people, who came to discuss the findings of our *Being Jewish in Scotland* project and hear a talk from author J David Simons. One man, originally from Glasgow but now living in Oban, came to reconnect with his Jewish culinary past, and was very disappointed to learn that he had missed the latkes at Chanukah! (see *Four Corners* 37)

The discussion was followed by a talk from author J David Simons about his books *The Credit Draper*, which is partly set in Oban and the surrounding countryside, and *The Liberation of Celia Kahn*. He began by giving a brief history of Jewish immigration into Scotland at the beginning of the 20th century, intertwined with the history of his own family, and explained the role of credit drapers in providing work for these new immigrants.

The next day David spoke again, this time at Waterstone's bookshop, when one man came back to hear the talk for a second time! Here the audience included someone with first-hand knowledge of the subject, since Irvine Waugh's grandfather was a credit draper.



ABOVE: AUTHOR J DAVID SIMONS (HOLDING BOOK) WITH IRVINE WAUGH, WHOSE GRANDFATHER WAS A CREDIT DRAPER, AND BELOW, SPEAKING IN OBAN LIBRARY.

Investing in Ideas

We are delighted to announce that SCoJeC has been awarded £10,000 by the Big Lottery *Investing in Ideas* programme to launch a new web-based discussion site and 'e-learning' space to act as an information exchange for Jewish people around Scotland.

During our *Being Jewish in Scotland* project we met many Jewish people in remote parts of Scotland who told us how much they would like to meet other Jewish people both locally and further afield. People from Dumfriesshire to Shetland were interested in taking part in Jewish learning and discussion groups, and asked about learning opportunities for their children as well as themselves. And even people in the larger Jewish communities told us that they don't always know what's going on and want to share ideas and information.

There's nothing to beat personal contact, and we continue to support groups to run local events and to run our own 'outreach activities' around the country, such as our recent six-stop Klezmer dance tour (see p6), which attracted more than 150 people from Findhorn to Maybole and from Dunoon to Dundee. We envisage that the new discussion site will help Jewish community groups and individuals to arrange and publicise even more activities and gatherings. But we also see it as a tool to help Jewish people in Scotland to connect with one another all year round, providing opportunities to learn from each other and from experts, to share experiences, and to counter the isolation that people can sometimes feel far from their nearest Jewish community.

There will be a Hebrew language section for Israelis in Scotland, people will be able to start discussions about Jewish books, films, art, dance, food, and anything else of interest, and there'll be a dedicated 'e-learning' space for interactive seminars and classes.

But this initiative isn't going to happen on its own. We will use the grant to engage an IT consultant to help to set up the new discussion site, and we will be appointing an 'online outreach worker' who will work with local groups and individuals to encourage the use of the site, and to run training sessions around the country for those who are a bit nervous of anything 'online'.

If you're interested in getting involved in this project, please get in touch with Fiona Frank (contact details on back page) or visit: <http://tinyurl.com/investinginideas>



The
Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities

www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND



Glasgow Jewish Community Futures

The results of the research phase of Glasgow Jewish Representative Council's 'Glasgow Jewish Community Futures' project have now been published, and the Representative Council plans to work with these findings to propose actions in the coming years.

Initially, three working groups spent several months considering key issues affecting the future of the Glasgow community: spiritual and religious needs, social care needs, and Jewish identity and involvement. Their findings were then drawn together into a comprehensive report by Paul Morron, then Vice President of the Representative Council. The report included a series of recommendations, and also proposed questions for consideration as part of a wider consultation process across the whole of Glasgow's Jewish community.

More than 350 people were consulted during the research phase of the investigation, which was carried out by Fiona Frank, who, together with research interns Shani Zour and Conrad Cohen, was seconded from SCoJeC to the Representative Council. The consultation included an online and paper survey, open meetings, 'parlour conversations', Jewish school assemblies and meetings with young people and students, and two focus groups with local Israelis which were conducted in Hebrew.

Its findings endorsed many of the recommendations from the consultation report, but also went further. Respondents raised new issues, stressing the importance of professional support, for example, in youth activities, and communications, and stressed the importance of leadership training and succession planning.

But people did more than just ask. More than a dozen people put their names forward to help with the production of a new Glasgow newsletter, and to help organise events for young people, and for Israelis. They called for more social, cultural, and educational events; and for Jewish communal organisations to work more closely together across the whole community, including both Reform and Orthodox communities. Israel, too, had a high profile with many respondents reporting a heightened sense of insecurity, and saying they felt there was widespread hatred of, and ignorance towards, Israel in Scotland.

Glasgow Jewish Representative Council appreciates the support offered by SCoJeC during this consultation and looks forward to on taking forward some of the recommendations of the report.

A summary of the report including key findings and recommendations, and the full report, are available at: www.glasgowjewishrepCouncil.org
For information or comments, email: office@glasgowjewishrepCouncil.org



SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE *EDINBURGH JEWS*
(L TO R): FIONA FRANK, HANNAH HOLTSCHNEIDER (EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY), GILLIAN RAAB, HARVEY KAPLAN (SCOTTISH JEWISH ARCHIVE CENTRE), AND EPHRAIM BOROWSKI

TWO EXHIBITS: A LITHUANIAN MAN IN CHURCH STREET BESIDE HIS SHOP C1900. PESACH 1917 OUTSIDE GRAHAM ST SYNAGOGUE, WORLD WAR I.

“Edinburgh Jews”

SCoJeC Outreach Worker Fiona Frank, Vice Chair Gillian Raab, and Director Ephraim Borowski, were three of the speakers at a recent conference about Edinburgh's Jewish history.

The day included a preview of the exhibition *Edinburgh Jews*, which gives a unique insight into the history of the long-established Jewish community, whose presence can be traced back to the middle of the eighteenth century. The exhibition gives an overview of both local interest and the impact of global conflicts on the city and Jewish population, and includes a number of exhibits from private family collections. Each display combines informative text, newspaper articles, personal recollections, historic maps, paintings, drawings, and photographs. There is also a detailed topographical map of Jewish life in Edinburgh for the period 1894 to 1969 that identifies the community's homes, places of work, types of professions, and public spaces.

The exhibition is at the University of Edinburgh's New College, from 4 June to 5 December. Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

There is also an online exhibition at: <http://jewishstudies.div.ed.ac.uk/exhibition/>

AGM&BBQ



Below: The sun shone on SCoJeC's pre-AGM barbecue at Dundee Synagogue, as people from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, Aberdeen, and the Highlands enjoyed BBQ chef Joe Azulai's tasty smoky sausages which had been brought from Glasgow that morning by SCoJeC Outreach Worker, Fiona Frank.



Above: Getting down to the serious business: (left to right) Paul Morron (the newly elected President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council), Chair Hilary Rifkind, and Director Ephraim Borowski.

For the full AGM reports: www.scojec.org/scojec/annual_reports/reports.html

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Rejects Dialogue



In the run-up to their General Assembly, the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland published a report entitled *The inheritance of Abraham? A report on the 'promised land'*. It describes itself as "a theological reflection that explores the idea that biblical authority can be used to give a people, any people, the divine right to a land", and calls for the Church to "refute claims that scripture offers any peoples a privileged claim for possession of a particular territory".

The punctuation in the title of the document is sufficient to indicate where it is coming from: it is not a reasoned academic discussion of either theology or politics, but a tendentious and biased polemic, and it is hardly surprising that almost all online support for the document has been from the extreme left and the extreme right, including Aryan supremacists in the USA.

Following protests from SCoJeC, the Board of Deputies, and others, the Council of Christians and Jews arranged a meeting between representatives of the Church and the Jewish Community, following which the Church acknowledged "*that the drafting of the report published by the Church and Society Council for discussion at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has given cause for concern and misunderstanding of its position and requires a new introduction to set the context for the report and give clarity about some of the language used.*"

We hoped that the revisions would address the issues raised by the Jewish community, but although the new document affirmed the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security, and condemned of all acts of terrorism, violence, and intimidation, the unacceptable underlying supersessionist message remained unaltered.

At the Church of Scotland General Assembly, a countermotion proposed by Rev David Randall to "Instruct the Council to engage in further dialogue with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities with a view to bringing a new report to the General Assembly of 2014" was overwhelmingly defeated, despite not calling for the rejection of the report, and the report itself was then overwhelmingly adopted.

It will not be easy to rebuild bridges now that the Church has openly rejected working towards an understanding that could bring our communities together. Instead this report has driven us further apart.

Where to next?

PHILIP ROSENBERG, INCOMING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS.

Jewish communities across the world considered *The Inheritance of Abraham?* a new low in the attempt to delegitimise and demonise Israel theologically.

The original document built on the worst aspects of other similar reports that claim that G-d has rejected Israel, attempt to caricature Zionism as aggressive, expansionist, and even genocidal, and completely ignore the indiscriminate and deliberate lethal targeting of Israeli civilians in schools, buses, restaurants, and seminaries. But this report went further, adopting a style of theological polemic that characterised Judaism as the problem. This is arrogant, unscholarly, and, by definition, openly anti-Jewish.

A meeting hastily convened by the Council of Christians and Jews between representatives of the Kirk and Jewish leaders made a decisive impact. They issued a statement acknowledging some of the most serious problems and agreed to remove elements of anti-Jewish polemic. However, because of its constant need to narrate around the worst excesses of the original, the revision emerges a more confused document. Having realised its flaws, it would clearly have been wiser to re-write it completely.

But the reason these corrosive narratives are gaining ground in the churches, trades unions, and other similar spaces is that they are frustrated with the current impasse in the peace negotiations – as are British Jews, Israelis, and Palestinians – and anti-Israel head-bangers are filling the vacuum. It is not enough just to oppose delegitimation and boycotts without offering a new way forward. We need to work together with churches and others towards a coherent, positive vision that helps to bring a future of peace, security, prosperity, and equality to Israelis and Palestinians. It is not about dictating terms to the parties, but doing all that we can to help facilitate their coming together and achieving a positive outcome.

The Middle East does not need more divisive theological papers. It needs us to invest actively in peace. As the Chief Rabbi said during Interfaith Week in 2009, faith groups in this country should stop importing conflict, and seek instead to work together to export peace.

"A Shocking Calumny"

MARK GARDNER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, CST



The original version of the Church of Scotland's 'promised land' report was a deeply shocking example of "supersession" theology: meaning a Christian theology that explicitly regards itself as having replaced Jews in the eyes of G-d.

Historically, this "supersession" had grievous consequences for Jews, whose conscious rejection of Christianity was deemed a revolt against G-d and humanity. For most of the last 2013 years, such thinking drove widespread hatred and fear of Jews and Judaism. The Church of Scotland should be a living contrast to this sordid, bloody past.

It was, therefore, absolutely correct that SCoJeC, and others, should have reacted to the original report with unprecedented pain and fury, because such calumnies had not been seen from mainstream churches for many decades. Indeed, we dared to hope they had disappeared.

What of the new report? After SCoJeC's intervention, the Church deleted the original's worst excesses. The rewrite now accepts Israel's existence, but remains coy about its Jewish nature; and says it opposes supersession, antisemitism, and (bizarrely, given this context) Islamophobia.

Despite the many deletions and important clarifications, the new report is just a rewrite, speedily done for the General Assembly. It is fanciful to believe that the first report's doctrine and politics have been fundamentally rethought. It is still a report by Christians for Christians and is still about Jews, Judaism, and Israel. It still contains nothing from any Jewish authority, and remains, at absolute best, a childish presentation of Jewish belief and practise.

The report does, however, contain a new quote about "Jewish dialoguers" using the accusation of antisemitism to stifle Christian criticism of Israel. If this is a sly message to SCoJeC, then it has been slipped in with the very worst of faith. It is also profoundly ignorant: criticism of Israel is one thing, but criticising Judaism is something else altogether.



Israelis in Scotland

In the course of our *Being Jewish in Scotland* project we met a number of Israelis who had settled in various parts of Scotland. Although they all felt at home here and many are married to Scots and are raising families here, several told us about difficulties they encounter because of local people's attitudes to Israel. One woman told us: "I find it hard. There is strong hidden hatred and racism in Scotland, and I live in a place where being different or other somehow then local people is not acceptable. I can't always speak of my holidays, I can't openly wear my Star of David without thinking if it's safe to do so."

These, and other similar comments, highlighted the concerns and anxieties of many Israelis living in Scotland. Subsequent discussions revealed that the Israelis long for opportunities to come together to share experiences, and gain mutual support, and the Israeli students in particular told us how much they would like to meet other Jewish and Israeli students across Scotland.

So, a few days after Yom HaAztma'ut, SCoJeC hosted a Scotland-wide event for Israelis living in Scotland, when more than 40 people came together to celebrate their culture.

There were a few minor hitches, such as a locked kitchen door, but one participant saved the day by climbing through the service hatch to reach to pass out the mountains of traditional Israeli food, such as falafel, hummus, tahini, burekas, and salad, that had been prepared. A variety of activities were on offer from Israeli folk-dancing to the Great Israeli Trivia Quiz, and showing of the film *Mitzva Savta*, as well as a special children's programme so that parents could relax and enjoy the event, while their children painted and made masks.

We hope to continue to promote events for Israelis throughout Scotland so do get in touch if you're Israeli and not already on our mailing list!



Former Manchester Jewish student Chaplain, author, and broadcaster, Rabbi YY Rubenstein, who was a pupil at Govan High School, has donated £1,000 towards the cost of a visit to Auschwitz for pupils who recently acted as guides for the the Anne Frank Foundation exhibition. "I was very moved and indeed proud" he said "to learn about the work being done in my old school by the pupils themselves to educate their peers and others about the horrors of racism, and the ultimate horror of the Holocaust. The school feels this visit is essential against a backdrop of increasing antisemitism in Europe."

SCoJeC strongly believes in the importance of education about the Holocaust, and is supporting Rabbi Rubenstein's efforts. Donations made through SCoJeC's MyDonate page, <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/scojec>, that specify they are intended for this project, will be passed on in full.

Is Rosh HaShanah early?

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI

"Rosh HaShanah is early this year," I said naively to my orthodox cousin in Jerusalem. "No it's not," she replied; "September is late!" Who was right? It's really a bit like falling out over whether the distance between Glasgow and Edinburgh is in miles or kilometres.

Probably the best known fact about the Jewish calendar is that it is lunar – except that it isn't! Our months are lunar, but our years are solar.

Jewish months almost always alternate between 29 and 30 days, because the average astronomical lunar month is roughly 29½ days, and there are 12 of these lunar months in a standard Jewish year, so here's a quiz question: how many days are there in an average Jewish year? That's just simple arithmetic, isn't it?

12 months of 29½ days = 354 days. But no, the average Jewish year is 365¼ days, just like the civil year! The difference is that whereas the civil year lags by 6 hours a year and uses leap years to catch up by adding a day, the Jewish year lags by more than 11 days a year, and adds a whole month 7 times in a 19 year cycle to catch up.

That's the difference between our calendar and the Muslims': they also have 12 lunar months, but no adjustment, so every year is shorter than the solar year by roughly 11¼ days. That's why the Islamic calendar began in the year 622 CE, and now, after 1391 years, this is year 1434! That is why Eid can be in mid-summer, and 16 years later in mid-winter. That can't happen to Rosh HaShanah!

The reason, as usual, is in a verse of the Torah: "Observe the month of spring, and keep the Passover," says Deuteronomy 16, so we add a 'leap month' whenever Pesach would otherwise fall while the roads are impassable or before the fruit starts to ripen. So Pesach still blooms in the spring, tra la!

Simple! – or may be not! The Talmud asks, "Who is wise? – One who foresees the *nolad*," using an unusual term that can refer either to the new moon or to a future yet to unfold, equating astronomical prediction with lateral thinking, and commending both.

Summer CALENDAR

The Fast of 9 Av is a day of mourning the destruction of the Temples: evening 15 till nightfall 16 July



JEWISH STUDENT BALL Defies Threats

Students at St Andrews University stood firm in the face of attempts to force the cancellation of a charity ball that is the biggest event of the Jewish student year. The day before the St Andrews J-Soc "Matzah Ball" was due to take place, the St Andrews Golf Hotel cancelled the booking in the face of threats on the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) website. The hotel cited "health and safety reasons", despite being reassured by the police that the threats were "fairly harmless".

The hotel is believed to have received more than 300 telephone calls and e-mails, some of these sufficiently aggressive and threatening to have been reported to the police. The Jewish Student Society also received e-mail from the SPSC threatening a protest if they did not change the list of charities that would benefit.

Despite this set-back, the student organisers persisted and were able to find a suitable alternative venue. The event, jointly organised with the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, went ahead without incident and interference, and was a major social and financial success raising £1,000 – considerably more than expected.

A senior member of the Jewish society said she felt disgusted that the protesters had turned to threats of violence rather than engage the organisers in an open dialogue. "I am a firm believer in freedom of expression but the problem came with their extremely offensive comments. I've lived in Israel, I've worked in Palestinian communities, and I've never felt more threatened in my life by people who don't even know who I am."

Joel Salmon, President of St Andrews J-Soc said they had been "overwhelmed by the support received from the Jewish community, the university, and the local authorities, and the protest was organised by people with little or no connection to St Andrews."

The Jewish student Chaplain, Rabbi Yossi Bodenheimer commented, "The aim of Chaplaincy is to make Jewish students feel comfortable socialising and learning together, as well as encouraging them to be proud of their Jewish identity. This incident must be taken very seriously, because it does the very opposite."

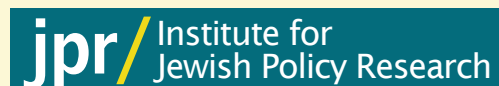


Charitable giving has never been easier! Well, it's certainly easier for SCoJeC's supporters since we joined the world of online giving. BT's MyDonate service allows anyone with an interest in supporting Jewish life in Scotland to make donation to keep our work going and growing.

This is an excellent opportunity for more people to become involved in our work, and it really is about much more than the actual donation. Now those both near and far can show their commitment to sustaining Jewish life across Scotland through generosity and goodwill. In a time of economic pressure the voluntary and community sector is being squeezed, but at same time there are so many different ways to give through text, email, and direct debit, that it really has never been easier to give to charitable causes.

To support our work, please look out for the MyDonate button on emails from SCoJeC or alternatively please visit our giving site:

<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/scojec>



Your chance to help plan the future of Jewish life in the UK!

Jewish community organisations, groups, synagogues, schools and welfare services rely on accurate data to help them to plan and prioritise their allocation of resources, and the National Jewish Community Survey has been specifically designed for this purpose. The survey seeks to hear directly from Jewish people living in Britain, irrespective of the nature of their Jewish identity and level of involvement in the community.

For more information see:

www.jpr.org.uk/downloads/census-faqs.pdf and to participate in the online survey visit:

www.ipsos-mori.com/NJCS

Hebrew Classes in Dundee

SHARON LEVY

A famous Israeli song entitled *Children are Joy!* mentions the story of Hebrew classes in a little village called Tudra. There, the teacher would write the Hebrew letters on a board in honey and then ask the students to lick it away and learn the shape of each letter through their tongue. In Dundee our dedicated tutor Etty has different ways to connect with those students who come every week to her Hebrew class. Having fun seems to be the key to success, and the fact that all students passed the end of the year self-assessment exercise suggests that honey is not needed in Dundee!

For details of the class, please contact the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community (contact details on back page)





Klezmatize

SCoJeC invited the duo "Klezmatize", Emma Stiman and John Sikorski, to join us for the latest in our ongoing series of *Being Jewish in Scotland* events. Guests at Maybole, Findhorn, Inverness, Glasgow, Dunoon, and Dundee, Jewish and non-Jewish, came together to listen to klezmer music, and, led by SCoJeC Outreach Worker, Fiona Frank, to dance horas, freylechs, patsch dances, turkischers and kolomeykes.

We squashed into a tiny balcony dance floor at Gordon Cockburn's gallery in Maybole, Ayrshire, yeehawed in a barn outside Inverness, relaxed in a hotel in Dunoon, joined a regular dance group for their Tuesday night session in the spectacular Universal Hall at the Findhorn Foundation, and brought the week to a close with a Sunday afternoon family dance at the beautiful Dundee Synagogue.

The Glasgow event at the Sikorski Polish Club, celebrated links between the two communities. One participant said: "I hope that having this event here will bring the Polish community again closer to the Jewish community, the way it used to be before 1930, when the communities existed in great harmony."

Each event began with a kosher buffet and discussion, at which we heard many more stories about when and how people had arrived here; tales of immigration, travel, exploration, and adventure, about parents or grandparents from the Ukraine, Hungary, Lithuania, and Austria, who had travelled to make a new life in Europe or the USA.

But the main event was the dancing. "I had a fantastic time. I haven't danced so much in years!" said one lady at Dunoon, where two people with walking sticks couldn't resist joining in the last dance! And Linda Martin, SCoJeC's new Volunteer Ambassador, even showed off a bit of the Highland Fling at the Inverness event when the band segued from a Hora to a Scottish number!



SCoJeC

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TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE:
KLEMATIZE DUO AT THE
MAYBOLE GALLERY;
DANCING AT THE DUNDEE
EVENT; AT FINDHORN; AT
GLASGOW; PLAYING IN
DUNOON; DANCING
AT DUNDEE.



CHATTING WITH THE
DUO AT THE MAYBOLE
GALLERY;
DANCING AT THE
DUNOON EVENT.