

An Israeli Succot

SHARON LEVY

Whilst enjoying the familiar atmosphere in a Tel Aviv market during a recent trip back home, I bought a small black and white poster of a cottage cheese tub. The scene is set, I think, in Israel of the 1950s – it is the same container that I remember from my childhood, but it is also the one that you can still find on most supermarket shelves across the land. The caption above the picture simply reads: "Home is where your roots are".

I have been in Scotland now for over 20 years, and although it is a place blessed with much rain, my roots are still only slowly growing into this foreign terrain. My experience is not unique, and similar sentiments are noted by many immigrants in the tapestry of ethnic groups that have chosen Scotland as their place of residence. However, as an Israeli, I always thought that the smallness of my homeland and the relatively remoteness of Scotland means that there are only a few of us around.

So it was with great delight that I found myself amongst nearly 50 Israelis enjoying a joint BBQ in the woods, celebrating Succot together. Being outdoors in a beautiful site, chatting in Hebrew, and seeing young families enjoying the range of activities laid on by the forestry commission staff, was great!

For the first time in many years, Succot was not just a hopeless attempt to build a flimsy shelter in a cold, wet, and extremely windy place, but rather a start of a new and exciting journey. This Succot I was amongst fellow travellers who had launched on their path to discovering Scotland from the same cottage cheese tub. That Sunday, together, we created and shared a temporary shelter, but also built foundations for a vibrant and sustainable community of Israelis in Scotland.

A big thank you goes to the Forestry Commission for supporting this imaginative activity as part of SCoJeC's new YaChaS project.

More about YaChaS: www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_yachas/yachas.html

ISSUE 40 · NOV 2013 · CHANUKAH 5774


The
Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities
www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND





Award for Scottish Genealogist

Neville Lamdan, who is overseeing the project on the genealogical and demographic profile of Scottish Jewry which is supported by SCOJeC, has been honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) in recognition of his role as the founder, first Director, and now Chair of the Executive Committee, of the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem.

Neville was born and grew up in Glasgow, a member of the Mandel family, and gained a doctorate from Oxford after an MA from Glasgow. He first entered the British Foreign Service and served in the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, and after he made aliyah and joined the Israeli Foreign Service, he held posts in Washington, at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, and finally as Israeli Ambassador to the Vatican. After his retirement he has focussed on his special interest in Jewish genealogy.

Neville's personal quest into his roots began in the 1970s, and he has traced the history of his own family during the great migration period from Russia to Glasgow. The major genealogical and demographic study of Scottish Jewry that he is currently overseeing is now well advanced and is producing a significant amount of new information on the growth, development, and dispersal of Jews in Scotland, using the extensive collection of available data from the National Records of Scotland.

The final stage of the study will include the detailed statistical and historical analysis of the results currently being assiduously produced by Michael Tobias, who is also the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from IAJGS. The study, and the role of both Lamdan and Tobias in it, will ensure further international recognition for research into the origins and history of Scotland's Jews, and for the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre where the results will be stored and made available for further research.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe OPEN DAY

JULIAN GOODMAN AND MICHELINE BRANNAN

The Annual Festival Open Day at the Community Centre in Salisbury Road on Sunday 18 August was once again a runaway success, thanks to the expert hosting talents of David Neville and the excellent refreshments. A vast array of Fringe performers gave us excerpts of their shows, and were probed by David to give us more insights into each performance. As in recent years, a bus party from the Glasgow Jewish Community swelled the numbers to about 200.

Among the guests was Emily Rose, grand-daughter of the late Arthur Kleinberg, Edinburgh's renowned kosher baker, who gave a sample of her show on at The Fringe, *Confessions of a Rabbi's Daughter*, showing at Mood Nightclub. She performed her song based on "Eishet Chayil" and one about "Every Little Thought and Every Little Word". This show was about a woman about to become a Rebbetzin like her mother, but rather than marrying a rabbi, she finds herself falling for another girl.

Actor Jack Klaff was appearing in two shows. The first, *Out to Lunch*, was about a black South African who, being friends with a Brussels-born woman, discusses the disparity between the billions in the world who are too fat, the billions who are hungry, and the solutions to these problems. He also performed an excerpt from his other show, *Newton* – about the life of Sir Isaac – that involved a draper providing the crimson drapes for Newton, and explored his interest in Kabbalah and Newton's predictions about the creation of the State of Israel. Jack Klaff's amazing gift for accents and characterisation was a joy to listen to in both excerpts. Another New York production, *Breaking the Silence*, was about the third generation of Holocaust survivors – and exploring the 'Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma', it explained the need for the third generation to hear the stories of survival from the lips of their grandparents, as this is the last opportunity to hear from survivors themselves before it is too late.

Other acts included Bremner Duthie, Al Lubel, Hayden Cohen, and Rachel Mars, as well as old favourites Dean Friedman and Daniel Cainer, who entertained the audience with some popular songs.

AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE FROM BOTH EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW ENJOYED (LEFT TO RIGHT): DANIEL CAINER, A STALWART OF MANY EDINBURGH FESTIVAL OPEN DAYS; EMILY ROSE, WHOSE GRANDFATHER WAS EDINBURGH'S KOSHER BAKER; AND JACK KLAFF WITH EVENT ORGANISER DAVID NEVILLE.



Q: How many Jews in Scotland?

A: Well, it all depends!

There was mixed news for the Jewish Community in the first data about religion from the 2011 census, published by National Records of Scotland (NRS) in September. The number of people who said they are Jewish fell by 8.7% from 6448 in 2001 to 5887 in 2011 – probably a smaller reduction than many people expected – but other minority religions increased by between 25% (Sikhs) and 150% (Hindus).

The pattern is interesting too: although Glasgow and East Renfrewshire still constitute by far the largest community, their numbers are down by 20% from 4222 to 3396, while the number of Jewish people in the rest of Scotland has increased by 16%, with increases in Aberdeen and Fife of no less than 46% and 77% respectively! As a result the Greater Glasgow community now accounts for only 56% of the total, down from 64% ten years ago.

It is, however, important to remember that the census can never accurately say how many Jewish people there are in Scotland, only how many ticked the box to indicate that they are Jewish. Uniquely the religion question was voluntary, and many people have personal reasons for not declaring their religion. In addition, the Scottish census asked "What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?" unlike England and Wales, where the question was simply "What is your religion?", and obviously where there is no local Jewish community to "belong to", even committed Jews, as well as those who choose not to join, would have to respond that they don't "belong to" any "religious body".

On the other hand, it is not inconceivable that the increase outside the Glasgow area is evidence of the success of SCoJeC's Outreach programmes: as one respondent to the *Being Jewish in Scotland* project put it, "I am a community of one; SCoJeC is my community!" – giving her something to belong to!

There can be no dispute that the published figure is an underestimate, but quantifying that requires other evidence. So after the census, SCoJeC asked everyone on our e-mail list and readers of *Four Corners* whether they had ticked "Jewish". Exactly 1 in 3 of those who responded that they could remember how they had answered said they had not identified themselves as Jewish. If that is correct – and research by YouGov for the Westminster Faith Debates obtained the same figure – then the actual number of Jewish people in Scotland is likely to be some 50% higher than the figure published by NRS, around 8830.

The question of these potentially 'missing' people is not just theoretical, as experience shows that people brought up Jewish, or who regard themselves as Jewish by ethnicity, often request specifically Jewish welfare services even though they do not consider themselves religiously Jewish.

The census figures revealed other interesting facts too: the number of people who said they were born in Israel has increased by 20% from 334 to 400, and 186 people said their national identity is partly or wholly Israeli. Another 85 said that their *national* identity is wholly or partially Jewish, while 326 people speak Hebrew at home (the 60th most common foreign language!) – and 34 speak Yiddish at home!

It is too soon to make detailed statements about what the census tells us about the demographic composition of the Scottish Jewish community because the data on the correlation between religion and other characteristics such as age, gender, education, and employment have not yet been published. However this first release certainly provides food for thought, and challenges SCoJeC and other communal organisations to continue and expand our programme of support and activities for Jewish people living beyond the central belt.

13 What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?

◆ This question is voluntary

- ☐ None
- ☐ Church of Scotland
- ☐ Roman Catholic
- ☐ Other Christian, please specify
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Sikh
- ☒ Jewish
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Another religion or body, please specify

14 What do you feel is your national identity?

◆ Tick **ALL** that apply.

- ☒ Scottish
- ☐ English
- ☐ Welsh
- ☐ Northern Irish
- ☐ British
- ☒ Other, please write in



World Jewish Relief

SYRIA CRISIS APPEAL

World Jewish Relief (WJR), working in partnership with the Israeli NGO IsraAID, and local Jordanian partners, has launched an emergency appeal to help support those affected by what is currently the world's greatest refugee crisis. Half of the 1.9 million people who have fled to surrounding countries and the 4.25 million displaced within Syria, are children, many of whom are traumatised by what they have experienced.

For information and to make donations:
www.wjr.org.uk/syria tel: 020 8736 1250
 WJR Syria Crisis Appeal, Oscar Joseph House,
 54 Crewys Road, London, NW2 2AD.

PHOTOGRAPHS © REUTERS COURTESY TRUST.ORG



SCoJeC CHAIR HILARY RIFKIND WITH RABBI EPHRAIM MIRVIS AT THE RECEPTION FOLLOWING HIS INSTALLATION AS CHIEF RABBI BY HIS PREDECESSOR LORD SACKS.

CHANUKAH

TALYA SILVER

'Tis the season of lights and latkes, doughnuts and dreidels. And nowadays, multicultural "Happy Holiday" greetings from harassed shop workers and polite colleagues – a welcome improvement on the pogroms that used to rage at Christmas time, and further back, at Saturnalia, the pagan winter festival. Tolerance and diversity are virtues that the Western world genuinely tries to espouse.

But there's a seamy underside to multiculturalism, which is that all the "Happy Whatever-You-Celebrate" dilutes the power of each individual tradition, dims the unique message it aims to convey. The irony of this occurring specifically at Chanukah time makes the candles shiver.

Chanukah commemorates the war we fought against the Greeks and the miracle of our victory: "The few against the many... the weak against the strong". Yet it's not the only miraculous-seeming victory we've been granted – think of the War of Independence or the Six Day War. And why did we even fight against the Greeks? Unlike, Haman or Hitler or so many in between, they weren't threatening our existence.

Only our identity.

Greek culture was powerful and expansionist, and sought to impose itself on all the countries it conquered. Some Jews did fall under the spell of Hellenism, were attracted to its emphasis on physical perfection and human reason. Other Jews continued to assert Jewish practice and pride – and that's when the Greeks got nasty. Bans on learning and teaching Torah, on practicing *brit milah* and Shabbat. The similarities to Soviet attempts to stamp out religion thousands of years later are chilling – but violating the Greek bans carried the consequence of the death penalty, not just exile to Siberia (though that sometimes turned out to be equivalent). Just as in Soviet Russia, brave individuals defied the Greek laws. Youngsters hid in caves and pretended to play spinning top while secretly learning Torah. Leaders demonstrated publicly and suffered the consequences. And eventually, they went to war.

A small band of Jews drew a line in the sand, and said, "No further." They fought for their right to believe and to practice – and they won.

So when we light our candles today, would it not be ironic if we knew more about Christmas or Eid than about the Torah our ancestors died to learn?

Communities Connect

Intercommunal visit to the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre

A full minibus of people from Aberdeen, Tayside and Fife, and the Edinburgh Jewish communities visited the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow with financial support from SCoJeC.

They were welcomed with an excellent lunch provided by Garnethill Synagogue, after which Harvey Kaplan, Director of the Archives Centre, led a tour of the Synagogue and the *New Life in Scotland* exhibition, which depicts patterns of immigration from the 18th to late 20th century, and also describes the life of the community and prominent individuals during that time.

The visit has resulted in new friendships between people from the different communities. "It is wonderful to be in touch with other Jewish people," said Esther Finlay, originally from Israel, where she met her Scottish husband. "In September, 1989, we moved to Scotland and my third child was born in Dundee. I live in Montrose and hadn't come across any other Jews – it was like living in a desert. One day, one of my friends told me she had seen a leaflet about SCoJeC's *Being Jewish in Scotland* project in the library, and I got involved. This trip has been a wonderful opportunity for the smaller

Jewish communities to find out more about each other, and about the history of Judaism in Scotland."

ABOVE:
IN FRONT OF THE
BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED ARK
IN GARNETHILL SYNAGOGUE

LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM:
A BLUSTERY ARRIVAL IN
GLASGOW; LISTENING TO
SCOTTISH JEWISH ARCHIVES
CENTRE DIRECTOR, HARVEY
KAPLAN; AND ENJOYING AN
EXCELLENT LUNCH!



Winter Calendar

Chanukah: Evening of Wed 27 Nov till Thu 5 Dec

Fast of 10th Tevet: Fri 13 Dec (day)

Tu b'Shvat: (New Year for Trees) Thu 16 Jan



Life in the 'Chai-lands'

SCoJeC's latest series of events, "Chai – Life in the Highlands", was attended by Jewish people from as far away as the USA, Canada, South Africa, and South America, who have now made their home in Scotland.

The roadshow visited Inverness, Ullapool, and Stirling, and at each of the events SCoJeC's Volunteer Ambassador to the Highlands, Linda Martin, talked about Jewish dietary law, and gave a Jewish cookery demonstration including gefilte fish, blintzes, and hummus – which the participants later enjoyed as part of the buffet! She also showed the groups how to plait 3-, 6-, and 8-strand challah – using nylon stockings at two of the events, since we hadn't been able to prepare dough in advance!

The cookery talk and demonstration brought back many childhood memories, particularly for one lady who told us about the Shabbat cholent her grandmother used to make, and its wonderful flavour and melt-in-the-mouth texture. The same lady recalled watching her grandmother plait 6-strand Shabbat challah, and had always had wanted to be able to do it herself – an ambition finally achieved at this event!

At each event, SCoJeC's Outreach Project Manager, Fiona Frank, also spoke about the findings of our *Being Jewish in Scotland* project, and follow-up developments such as YaCHaS and SCoJeC CoNNeCT (see pages 1 and 6).

In total more than 35 people attended these events, several of whom told us that they previously knew no other local Jewish people. One woman who has lived in Scotland for 16 years told us that although she bakes challah at home, and she and her daughter observe all of the Jewish festivals, she had never been to a local Jewish event, and this was also a first for three Jewish women in Ullapool. Other participants

in Inverness came from the small regular Hebrew class that started after SCoJeC's "Celebration of Jewish Writing", which was the first Jewish event to have been held in the city for 50 years.

A great time was had by all, and, as we packed up at each venue, new friends were exchanging contact details, and planning to meet up again soon.



Assisting the Police in Dundee

Publicising the findings from SCoJeC's *Being Jewish in Scotland* project is crucial to influencing public policy and practice, and we have been arranging a number of events for senior staff from the various agencies that need to be able to provide appropriate services.

At the most recent event at the Dundee synagogue in September, senior officers from Police Scotland, the senior Sheriff in Dundee, Procurators Fiscal, and representatives of the NHS were invited to a presentation by SCoJeC's Project and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank, who conducted the research. SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski introduced the talk by asking the guests a series of questions: "Which is the odd one out: a cow, a camel, a duck, or a giraffe?" Explaining that the camel is the only non-kosher animal, Ephraim challenged the guests to think differently and to understand that reality may look different from the perspective of a different culture.

Jewish people are scattered across Scotland, many living in remote and isolated areas. We may be a small group, although, as Ephraim explained, the census figures are likely to be a considerable underestimate (see p 3): when a Jew in the outer Hebrides is asked "to which faith group do you belong?", the only true answer is "none", because the nearest community to 'belong to' is hundreds of miles away.

This was further explored by Fiona who offered vivid examples of responses to the survey. She highlighted the tensions people told us they experience when identifying themselves as Jews, how they relate to the wider community and how that community regards them in return. Personal stories depicting bigotry and discrimination were shared as was the story of a 10-year-old child who was accused of being a 'Christ killer' – such fragments of personal statements of Jewish life in the context of a civilised, modern Scottish society in the 21st century!

A lively discussion followed the presentation, and it was abundantly clear that those present had understood the key messages, and the need to collaborate with local communities to support preventative action.

Members of the local community then gave the guests a tour of the synagogue. Conversations continued over lunch, and Sharon Levy of Tayside and Fife Jewish Community closed the event by affirming the need to continue and build on the excellent relationship the community enjoys with the local police. One of the participants later commented: "Police colleagues and partners from other agencies all agreed that it had been a most enlightening dialogue about what life is really like for some Scottish Jews. There was sadness and disappointment that a significant level of bigotry and antisemitism seem to be accepted by victims as a 'normal' occurrence, and therefore a part of life, not worth reporting to police. This is contrary to Police Scotland's Zero Tolerance approach – we want all incidents where prejudice may be a motivating factor to be reported."

SHARON LEVY





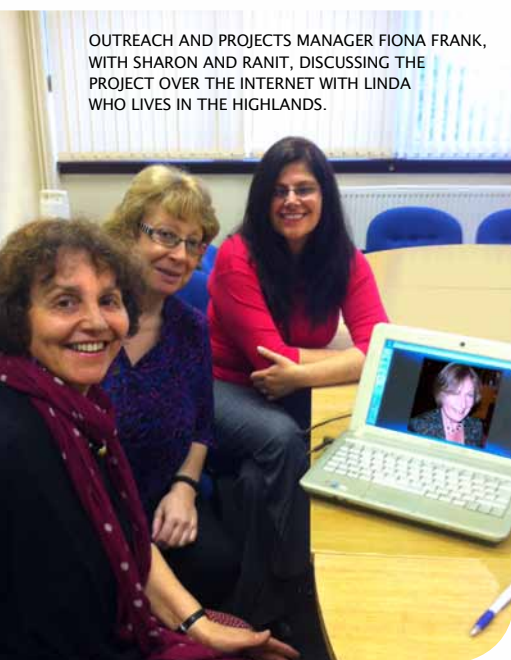
SCoJeC's NEW FACES

SCoJeC has made several exciting new part-time appointments since the last edition of *Four Corners*.

Our new Public Affairs Officer is **Nicola Livingston**, who has stepped down from the post of Hon Secretary which she held for the past three years. She is also Chair of University Jewish Chaplaincy Scotland and a trustee of Cosgrove Care. Nicola said, "I am greatly looking forward to working in a professional capacity for SCoJeC. My previous involvement has given me insight into the issues that concern Jewish people in Scotland, and I am keen to ensure that public bodies understand and take the community's needs and opinions into account in their strategic planning."



OUTREACH AND PROJECTS MANAGER FIONA FRANK, WITH SHARON AND RANIT, DISCUSSING THE PROJECT OVER THE INTERNET WITH LINDA WHO LIVES IN THE HIGHLANDS.



Joining the SCoJeC team to work on our Lottery-funded CoNNeCT project – which we're running in partnership with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council – are online outreach workers **Linda Martin** and **Sharon Mail**. Both are familiar with SCoJeC's outreach work: Linda is also the SCoJeC volunteer Ambassador to the Highlands and Islands, and Sharon has reported on our activities for the past eight years as the Scotland correspondent for the *Jewish Telegraph*. Working with them as our IT Consultant and Ivrit specialist will be **Ranit Edgar**, who came from Israel to Scotland to study and has now made Glasgow her home.

It's all part of the drive to bring Jews together to connect, exchange views, and be kept aware of everything Jewish-related going on across Scotland with the help of modern technology. Linda, whose main focus will be on helping develop discussion boards and webinar facilities, said, "I know at first hand the enrichment that this project can bring – not only to those who are geographically or socially distant, but to all Jewish people in Scotland, and through them to those with whom they have contact."

Also joining the team is **Zoe Jacobs**. Zoe's post is funded by the Scottish Government through the Adopt an Intern programme to assist the Edinburgh Dialogue project to review future options for the community, and to help run events and activities for Jewish people in Edinburgh. Zoe, who is from Maidenhead and is in her fourth year at Glasgow University, has extensive experience of Jewish youth work, and was described by one of her referees as "a powerhouse of energy and innovation".

Finally, recent Edinburgh University MSc graduate and former Colorado State University Hillel president (and volleyball star!) **Lisa Weintraub** will be working for us as a volunteer to support SCoJeC's outreach and interfaith work.



Chanukah Parties



Stirling:

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER, 3-7PM

SCoJeC YaCHaS Chanukah party for Israelis and their families, together with Tayside and Fife Jewish Community (see above).

Contact scojec@scojec.org

Inverness:

**MONDAY 2 DECEMBER 4.30-6.30
AT INVERNESS LIBRARY**

Latkes, candles, dreidels, a retelling of the Chanukah story, and a chance to meet up with old friends and new. All Jewish people, people with Jewish heritage, and those with an interest in Judaism welcome.

Contact fiona@scojec.org 07779 206 522



SCoJeC

SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
222 FENWICK ROAD, GLASGOW G46 6UE
scojec@scojec.org 0141-638 6411 07887-488 100

PUBLIC AFFAIRS	NICOLA	07801 286 881 nicola@scojec.org
OUTREACH & EVENTS	FIONA	07779-206 522 fiona@scojec.org
POLICY & RESEARCH	LEAH	0141-638 6411 leah@scojec.org

Contacts in the Corners

GLASGOW	JULIA	0141-577 8200 office@glasgowjewishrepouncil.org
EDINBURGH	JACKIE	07734-291 836 secretary@ehcong.com
TAYSIDE & FIFE	ETTY	07707-490 232 taysideandfife@scojec.org
ABERDEEN	EHUD	07810-024 456 info@aberdeenhebrew.org.uk
SMALL COMMUNITIES	FRANK	01445-712 151 communities@scojec.org
STUDENTS	YOSSI & SARAH	07791-292 790 yossi@mychaplancy.co.uk

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN FOUR CORNERS ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHOR, NOT NECESSARILY OF SCoJeC
© SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES
SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION NO SC029438