



Scots Jews: Identity and Belonging

MICHAEL MAIL

The caterer making kosher haggis for Burns Night, a Lochgilphead sheep farmer cajoling her flock on a blustery Scots day, Jewish and Muslim pupils of Scotland's only Jewish school poring together over the text of the Hebrew Bible – these are just some of the remarkable images captured by Judah Passow in his photographic study of Jewish life in Scotland. SCoJeC has been supporting this project, and we were delighted when the former Culture Minister Linda Fabiani agreed to sponsor an exhibition at the Scottish Parliament.

At the reception to launch the exhibition, which was attended by MSPs, Ministers, and representatives from civic Scotland, including from many of Scotland's faith communities, both she and the First Minister spoke warmly about the contribution of the Jewish community to Scottish life and the importance of Scotland as a multi-cultural, multi-faith society. Alex Salmond said he was proud of Scotland's reputation for tolerance, which enabled Jewish people to integrate without assimilating, and to feel comfortable with both their Scottish and Jewish identities.

The originator of the project, Michael Mail, explained that he had been looking for a way to recognise and celebrate the Scottish Jewish story, and when he had seen Judah's striking images he recognised them as the perfect vehicle through which to capture a community living diverse lifestyles across Scotland. He then introduced Judah who spoke about his journeys around Scotland, and how impressed he was with the warmth and spirit of the Jewish community and how active it remains.

The proceedings were rounded off with a vote of thanks by SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski, who said that Judah's photographs were a visual counterpart of SCoJeC's own *Being Jewish in Scotland* project, which had not only gathered the views of Jewish people throughout Scotland, but had also created communities in places where many people had thought they were alone.

The exhibition will also be shown at a number of venues around Scotland beginning with Rozelle House in Ayr from July to September 2014 as part of a festival of Jewish arts and culture. The international launch is taking place at the Weill Gallery in New York this April during Scotland Week, and the photographs will also be published by Bloomsbury in autumn 2014.



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The
Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities
www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND



ABOVE, PASSOW'S PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE:

GUESTS WAITING AFTER A WEDDING AT
GARNETHILL SYNAGOGUE, GLASGOW.

A MEMBER OF DUNDEE SYNAGOGUE SHOWS
A TORAH SCROLL TO PUPILS FROM A LOCAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL.

FRIDAY NIGHT, LERWICK.

LEFT, AT THE RECEPTION:

TOP: FIRST MINISTER ALEX SALMOND ADMIRES
THE EXHIBITION WITH PHOTOGRAPHER JUDAH
PASSOW AND PRODUCER MICHAEL MAIL.

BELOW: SCoJeC DIRECTOR EPHRAIM BOROWSKI,
SCoJeC CHAIR HILARY RIFKIND, ALEX SALMOND,
JUDAH PASSOW, MICHAEL MAIL, AND LINDA
FABIANI MSP.

Jewish Glasgow

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

It's more than 15 years since a pictorial history of the Glasgow Jewish community was proposed by Stephen Kliner (pictured right) when he was President of Glasgow Jewish Representative Council. But it was only 5 years ago that he set to work with fellow past President Kenneth Collins (centre) and Scottish Jewish Archives Centre (SJAC) Director Harvey Kaplan (left). Design was crucial to his conception, and Stephen says that *Four Corners* designer, Jaqueline Friedman, formerly of Argyll and now living in Israel, was the catalyst: "She has a feel for the community here. She captured the essence of what I had in mind all those years ago."

The book was launched at Giffnock Synagogue in November, when Kenneth, who wrote the text, gave an illustrated presentation to an audience of more than 200, and talked about how difficult it was to choose the pictures because there were often so many of the same subject.

The book includes chapters on Jewish Identity, Education, Business and Employment, Health and Welfare, Religious Life, Zionism, Leisure and Culture, and Art, each with its own title page. Most of the photos came from the SJAC collection, and were selected to present as wide a variety of communal life and personalities as possible.

The project has been a runaway success, especially amongst ex-pats in Israel, and the first print-run quickly sold out. It is now available again from the SJAC, www.sjac.org.uk/events/book.html



Launch of *Jewish Glasgow* in Tel Aviv

MICHAEL DIAMOND

I would never have imagined myself sitting in the darkened carriage of a Haifa-bound late-night train, peering excitedly at old photographs through the dull glow of a tiny illuminated magnifying glass. But there we were, hunched over, heads together, Significant Other and myself (two ex-Glaswegians), poring over faces and places, looking for something familiar, or a family likeness among the crowds.

Along with around 250 other Israeli-Glaswegians, we had just attended the launch of *Jewish Glasgow* in the Diaspora Museum at Tel Aviv University (pictured above), and I commented later to Significant Other that in my 27 years in Israel, I'd never heard so much Scotbrew spoken in a single place.

I've seen volumes before about Jewish communities – usually wordy analyses with the emphasis on history. They seem written by academics for academics, usually long, factual descriptions of historical details, not of great interest to the average reader. But this book is different. It is large-format, beautifully presented, and exquisitely readable. It overflows with photos, documents and vignettes, and is hugely entertaining if you've been part of the Glasgow community (and fascinating if you haven't). It's clearly meant for the masses, illustrating the vitality of a unique Jewish community.

When you're holding a thousand photos of your distant home community, what's more natural than searching for familiar faces? Significant Other and I jostled for position, vying to see who could identify most people. (Subconsciously, I'm sure, we were searching for self-affirmation; perhaps I was significant enough to be recorded for posterity?)

We'd been at it for about 15 minutes; I was beginning to despair. We'd examined by now about 500 faces and none of them were ours. Then I turned to page 105 – and there I was, first row, Calderwood Lodge, 1965, aged 7! Below, from the same era, in a picture I'd never seen before, I spotted myself again, this time in the Superman outfit I'd worn at Purim. (Truth is, it was the outfit I recognised; I don't remember ever looking so cute.) My spirits now raised, I was feeling for S O; we had to find someone for her too. And there indeed is a photograph of her grandfather's shop, right next door to Geneen's.

I was beginning to wonder about my own father too. He'd been very active in the community for decades. Surely he'd be mentioned? Then I turned the page and saw him staring at me from his very own half-page – wearing that hideous shirt of newspaper cuttings he'd worn a few too many times, to the family's collective embarrassment.

And immediately opposite my dad, in a photo of the Glasgow Jewish Choral Society, is my mum, long since passed. I take comfort in the knowledge that when the book is closed, my parents are side by side once again.

If you have an ex-Glaswegian Jewish relative or friend you must give them this book. It's a link to their heritage, a record of their origins, and will remain on their family bookshelves for generations to come. Trust me – they'll love you for it.



Mitzvah Day activities this year included making Chanukah decorations for a local care home, cards to send to Israeli and British soldiers, collecting clothes and toys to fill decorated shoeboxes for the Samaritans' "Operation Christmas Child" appeal and food for Jewish Care's kosher food bank, and encouraging people to join the Anthony Nolan bone marrow register.



Mitzvah Day



Edible, Educational, Ears

ZOE JACOBS

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Purim is the best festival. Probably. Okay, there are three types of people who would argue with that: the food-lovers (surely Chanukah or Pesach?), the religious type (Yom Kippur), and the ones who don't like dressing up. Give me a mo and I'll change your mind, whichever group you fall into.

I have long found Purim the most fun festival – as a child you get to do the three best things: cook, dress up, and make noise. Especially when you got a little older and find out you are eating something that represents the baddie's ears! This is all the more exciting: if the pastry is Haman's ear, then the brown gooey stuff (poppy seeds, or chocolate if you are really lucky) is obviously earwax! (I know it's gross, but it's about the best thing to a seven-year-old). You get to eat the baddie's ears! Imagine eating Cruella de Vil's ears! Or Lord Voldemort's! So yes, eating latkes to commemorate the oil in the temple, or eating matzah to commemorate leaving Egypt in a hurry, is good, I agree, but nothing as exciting as eating Haman's ears. Particularly if his ears happen to be home made from puff pastry and chocolate.

As a Jewish youth worker, I spend most of my time creating fun activities that are secretly educational.

You never want the children to realise they're learning. Purim offers us this wonderful chance, and best of all, I don't even have to write a lesson plan. The Megillah comes as a fully-functioning-interactive-storytelling-mega-fun-bonanza. A blessing to anyone in education! We hide the education under greggars, fancy dress, yummy food, and some panto-style audience participation. But, just for you, be you a teacher, a parent, a grandparent, or a child, the Megillah has handily popped in some incredibly strong and inspiring morals, values, and role models. We are shown strength through Vashti's refusal to follow the King's orders when she didn't agree with them. We're shown love as Mordechai brings up his niece as if she were his own. We're shown bravery as Esther risks her own life for her people, and we're shown gratitude as Ahashverosh ensures he thanks those who have helped him. On Yom Kippur we repent for last year's sins, and offer an ideal for next year – but how do we know how we should act without good role models?

And lastly, for those who don't like dressing up ... You can't tell anyone that Purim is educational. That really is a state secret. I've told you in strictest confidence. So you'd better dress up: we've got to keep up the pretence! But also, I mean – you get to wear silly clothes, what's not to love?! For one day, you can be superman! Or batman! Or Harry Potter! Or Voldemort. Careful with the last one, though ... you'll have seven year olds nibbling your ears ...

Calendar

Purim

Fast of Esther: Thurs 13 March

Purim: Sat night 15, Sun 16 March

Pesach

Search for chametz: Sun evening 13 April

Burning the chametz: Mon morning 14 April

First Seder: Mon evening 14 April

Second Seder: Tues evening 15 April

Yom Tov: Mon evening 14 till Wed night 16 April

Chol HaMoed (middle days) continue till

Yom Tov: Sun evening 20 till Tues night 22 April

Yom HaAtzma'ut

(Israel Independence Day): Tues 6 May

Lag b'Omer: Sun 18 May

Chanukah in Inverness...

More than 25 people, including 6 children, joined us at Inverness Library for our second annual Inverness Chanukah event, many bringing chanukiot – including one modeled on the Loch Ness Monster! – and local storyteller Martin Wattsmann excited us all with a his retelling of the traditional Chanukah story – we really didn't know whether the messengers would get back to the temple in time with the oil, but of course the light was still burning when they did!

While the adults chatted over latkes and watched the candles, some of the children talked to Fiona Frank, SCoJeC's Outreach worker, about being the only Jewish child in their school. Sadly, not all their experiences were positive. One had been told, with evident pleasure, that Hitler wanted to kill all the Jews, and others that "the Jews killed Jesus". Another said that this was the very first time she'd felt comfortable talking about being Jewish.

A local resident wrote to say, *"Two years ago I thought I was the only Jew in and around Inverness, and now I have many new friends of whose existence I was not aware before."* What better reason could there be for SCoJeC to put on events such as this to support Jewish life in small communities?

... and in Bridge of Allan with YaCHaS

More than 60 Israelis gathered in Bridge of Allan on a cold but sunny afternoon, to light Chanukah candles, sing *Maoz Tzur*, and enjoy a delicious feast of levivot, sufganiyot, falafel, salads, and hummus with their family and friends.

The celebrations included *rikodei-am* (Israeli folk dancing), a Chanukah trivia quiz, Chanukah-themed children's art sessions, with prizes for the best chanukiot.

This was the first YaCHaS event in Stirlingshire, and many new faces joined us. One participant told us that although she had been living in Scotland for the last 30 years, it was only recently that she had become aware of other Israelis living in Scotland.

Everyone was very happy to share their traditions with friends. *"It's great to celebrate with Israelis, Jewish, and non-Jewish friends,"* commented one participant. *"Chanukah takes me back to my childhood memories from home, and I am happy to be able to share our culture and tradition with my friends."*



What's 'Being Jewish in Scotland' got to do with *them*?

When Interfaith Scotland asked us to put on an event during interfaith week to bring together people of different faiths, we decided to ask a wider group of people to think about the questions from our *Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry:

- what's good about being part of your community in Scotland?
- what's not so good about it?
- do you talk publicly about being part of your community?
- has being of your community ever made a difference to how you've been treated?
- is there anything you'd like the Scottish Government or any public authorities to do differently to improve the life of people of your community in Scotland?

And we asked people to tell us a typical story about their experiences.

These questions worked very well for the 30 or so people who came to the event, including older people and students, Christians, atheists, and Muslims, Americans, Israelis, and Scots. After a presentation by Fiona Frank on the *Being Jewish in Scotland* findings, and a buffet that, because Interfaith Week coincided with Chanukah, included latkes, the audience split into small groups to discuss the various questions from their own point of view. Shani Zour, SCoJeC's YaCHaS project worker, also led a discussion in Ivrit with the Israelis.

One participant told us that, as an older gay man, he found it reassuring to hear younger gay people being open about their identity – something that hadn't been possible when he was young.

"*These were great conversations,*" commented a North American student at the end of the day – and they were indeed!

YaCHaS Remembers

SCoJeC's YaCHaS group, part of project to build connections between Israelis living in Scotland, met to share memories of the iconic Israeli singer Arik Einstein, who died suddenly last November.

The gathering, 30 days after his death, and only a couple of days after what would have been his 75th birthday, was an emotional occasion. To many Israelis, Einstein symbolised the essence of "the old and the beautiful Israel", and his unforgettable songs, which many regard as the sound track to the country they miss and long for, united young and old in their grief and memories.

Candles were lit, and anecdotes about Einstein shared, but there was laughter too, with food, drink, and a lively musical trivia quiz about Einstein's songs, and everyone wished the evening, a testimony to Einstein's unique personality and creativity, could have lasted longer.

Tribe Scotland

RABBI ELI WOLFSON

Children from Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh met up in December for a fun day jointly organised by Tribe and Enjoy, a joint venture between Giffnock and Newton Mearns Shuls in Glasgow.



After a get-to-know-you bowling session, the army of hungry children gratefully polished off a sumptuous lunch at Edinburgh Synagogue, during which Rabbi Wolfson spoke about the camps and other activities offered by Tribe throughout the UK.

Isaac Ansell-Forsyth and his team of youth leaders from Edinburgh Tribe then turned the community centre into a sports complex and ran an afternoon of activities that included everything from human pyramids to football.

After a quick snack, the children bade farewell to their new friends, and the Glasgow and Aberdeen contingents set off on the trek back home. Everyone had a fabulous time, and plans are already under way to hold another cross-community event, this time in Glasgow.

Holocaust Memorial Day



This year's Scottish Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration, in the Macrobert Arts Centre at Stirling University, was, for many people, the most emotional yet. The Scottish Government was represented by Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, who spoke movingly about Jewish experiences of persecution and migration.

Dr Alfred Munzer, who was born in Holland and lost his two sisters and his father in the Holocaust, was the first speaker. As a baby, he was given shelter by an Indonesian family who protected him and loved him as one of their own. After the War his mother, who survived 12 concentration camps, went back for him, and together they made a new life in America. The bond with his Indonesian family, though, has remained through the generations.

The other keynote speaker, Arn Chorn Pond, broke down while recalling his experience as a survivor of the Cambodian genocide. Whilst still a young boy, his siblings were taken from him – and were killed. He was forced to participate in Khmer Rouge mass killings, and, when he was only 12, to become a soldier. Later, he managed to flee into the jungle, before being taken to America.

"From Yesterday For Tomorrow" director Ben Freeman gave a presentation that included film clips from interviews with Holocaust survivors and visits to Auschwitz and Treblinka. This was followed by a number of performances including *The Roma Journey* and a poem about the Rwandan Genocide.



Tu b'Shevat

with SCoJeC and Forestry Scotland in Aberfoyle



"A mixture of outdoors, education, and lots of different people to speak to, with a bit of Jewish culture added in – a unique experience for us, and right on our doorstep."

Following on from our successful Succot event (featured in the last *Four Corners*), SCoJeC has again worked with Forestry Scotland to take Jewish people out to Scotland's beautiful countryside.

This time it was a trip to Achray Forest near Aberfoyle, where more than 30 adults and children, from Stirling, Edinburgh, Bridge of Allan, and Glasgow, got together to celebrate Tu b'Shevat, the traditional 'New Year for Trees'. SCoJeC provided a kosher buffet, complete with 15 species of fruit, after which rangers from Forestry Scotland helped us plant trees, a traditional Tu b'Shevat activity. This was followed by a nature walk to a bird and squirrel hide with wardens from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It was a beautiful day and we didn't need the rain gear we had all brought with us, though the children had a great time splashing through puddles!

The group shared memories of previous Tu b'Shevat activities. One Israeli remembered returning to the kibbutz where she had been part of a tree planting expedition at the age of 11, and told us how thrilled she had been to see that the saplings she had planted just a few years ago were now a group of tall trees. Another participant, from Glasgow, remembered planting trees as part of Habonim camping trips.

The day provided a new experience for two men, however, who told us this was the first time they had ever planted a tree!



Commonwealth Games

GLASGOW 2014

As a worldwide elite multi-sport event, the Commonwealth Games rank second only to the Olympics. From 23 July to 3 August this year, the Games come to Glasgow, but with some events in other parts of Scotland – for example, the shooting competition at Barry in Tayside, and diving in the Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh. Not all events are ticketed: the marathon and cycling time trials and road race are all held through the City's streets and are free of charge.

The Jewish Community in Glasgow is also preparing to welcome Jewish visitors and team members from across the world. Special events will be held during the Games and synagogue services extended, for example, by Garnethill synagogue in the city centre, who will hold special Friday night services in addition to their usual Shabbat morning services.



The Glasgow Jewish Representative Council has a seat on the Religion and Belief Liaison Group of Glasgow 2014, and Rabbi Moshe Rubin of Giffnock Synagogue has been appointed Jewish chaplain and joins the Game's chaplaincy team. We have ensured kosher food is available to volunteers, team members, and visitors, including, if required, in the Athletes Village.

Shortly, the Representative Council's new website will be launched and will contain special pages outlining a diary of events that the Jewish community will host during the Games, details

and times of synagogue services across the City, availability of kosher food, etc, as well as other details of "Jewish Glasgow". It will be a unique occasion with a unique atmosphere in Glasgow, so why not come along and join us?

PAUL H. MORRON, PRESIDENT, GLASGOW JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, SHOWN WITH RABBI RUBIN AND A FRIEND.

CoNNeCT Discussion Forum Goes Live!

Jewish people throughout Scotland are getting closer together online thanks to SCoJeC CoNNeCT!

During our *Being Jewish in Scotland* project many people told us they wanted to know more about what is happening around the community, and wanted new ways of connecting with other Jewish people throughout Scotland. So we were delighted to receive a Lottery grant to develop some new resources to enable people to get in touch with one another online.

The first of these, the SCoJeC CoNNeCT discussion forum, is being launched on 16 March at SCoJeC's Inverness Purim Party, which will be held at Green Drive Hall, starting at 2.30 p.m – all welcome!

The forum is a place to connect online and chat about topics of Jewish interest in a friendly and safe environment.

To join the discussion, go to www.scojec.org/discussion/forum/index.php and click on "register". You'll receive an e-mail to which you must reply in order to confirm your e-mail address, after which the moderator will approve your registration – and away you go!

We also plan to run 'webinars' to enable people to have online video discussions about topics of Jewish interest. Recently our online outreach worker, Linda Martin, tested the system by demonstrating the fine art of making hamentaschen to an audience that reached from Inverness to Lancashire!

The next phase of the CoNNeCT project is being developed in partnership with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, and will include a calendar of events of Jewish interest, a directory of communal organisations, and job and volunteering opportunities.

The CoNNeCT team is led by SCoJeC Projects and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank, with online outreach workers Linda Martin and Sharon Mail, and project worker, Glasgow-based Israeli Ranit Edgar. But we also need YOUR help!

Would you like to help make sure the discussion stays lively and the forum remains safe? Or would you like to help local Jewish organisations upload information about their events to the online calendar? We need English and Ivrit speakers, so if you're interested, please get in touch with any of the team to offer your services:

English: Linda@scojec.org Ivrit: Ranit@scojec.org



WHY IS SCOJEC TALKING ABOUT Water Rates?

PAUL SPICKER

SCoJeC's work on consultations helps to give every part of the community in Scotland a voice. Over time, Tayside and Fife Jewish Community has contributed to several consultations on matters of religious significance, for example on death registration and religious observance in schools,

You might wonder what water rates have to do with Judaism, but this is also vitally important for us. Because we're a small charity, the shul is exempt from rates and water rates. But it's been mooted by Government several times that these charities should lose their exemption from water charges. That's worth several hundred pounds a year to us.

We're a small community, with very limited means, and our outgoings exceed our income; we keep going with string, sticky tape, voluntary labour, and occasional donations. For most of the last few years, the water charges would have been enough to close us down. SCoJeC has been able to make representations about the importance of the current exemptions, and if we're still here, it's partly thanks to that! Read SCoJeC's recent consultation responses, including about water charges, at www.scojec.org/consultations/consultations.html



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