



50th ISSUE

מדל טוב!

Four Corners does more than provide information about what has been happening in the regions; it opens the mind, sparking new ideas, new ventures, new friendships. It fosters a sense of belonging. A 'good magazine' will entertain for an hour or so. A 'great magazine' will stimulate the imagination and lead to a fuller life. In its 50th issue, I congratulate *Four Corners* on being such a great magazine.

LINDA MARTIN, HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS

I congratulate SCoJeC on publishing the 50th edition of *Four Corners*. It is a particularly high quality production with varied content and a reach from Orkney and Shetland to the Borders. Of particular note have been the special issues containing matters of significance such as the updated research on *Being Jewish in Scotland*. It is readily accessible to Jewish readers and is an excellent form of communication with the non-Jewish community. We wish the magazine well for the future.

PAUL MORRISON, GLASGOW
JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE
COUNCIL

Four Corners reassures us that there is sound leadership for the Jewish community and we are engaging effectively with politicians and public bodies. It shows that we have vibrant Jewish life throughout Scotland, and reflects what SCoJeC achieves through its outreach and educational services. Isolated Jewish people find, for the first time, that they are not alone. Scots who have never met a Jewish person learn about Judaism at first hand. Here's to the next 50 issues and to SCoJeC's continued success.

RAYMOND TAYLOR, EDINBURGH

Four Corners gives the Aberdeen Jewish Community a connection with the other Scottish Communities that it would otherwise not have. It is our newspaper, keeping us informed of matters of relevance and communal activity throughout Scotland. It ensures we are not isolated and lets us share what we have been doing or plan to do. Mazal Tov to the editorial team on this 50th Edition; we appreciate all your hard work.

DEBBY TAYLOR, ABERDEEN

Reaching out, SCoJeC has found Jewish people all over the country. Many have no community to relate to, unless it's the whole of Scotland. The first step is to make sure that people are in touch with what's happening. That's where *Four Corners* comes in. Most community newsletters are based in a city or town; *Four Corners* is for all of us. This is part of a model for the Jewish communities of the future.

PAUL SPICKER, TAYSIDE & FIFE

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of Jewish
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Shavuot

DIANNA WOLFSON

Some of you may remember *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The mission was to find the answer to "Life, the Universe, and Everything" and the answer was 42! Right? Wrong! The answer should have been 10!

Let me explain ...

Pesach is hard work! We felt the hard labour of the Jewish slaves as we sat at the Seder table, exhausted. However, the memory of a happy time with family and friends during the Festival of Freedom sustains us as we get back to our normal routine.

From the second Seder we started counting the Omer every night, marking the days towards the festival of Shavuot. Just as we re-enacted the story of the going out from Egypt at our Seder, we should also celebrate the most

momentous event that occurred when G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people, not only for those who stood at Mount Sinai but for all future generations. The people were transfixed as they heard the heavenly voice utter the Ten Commandments, the headlines, as it were, for the whole of the 613 mitzvot. Why then, is Shavuot such a neglected festival?

I did not have the opportunity of a Jewish education as a child. When I came to Glasgow in 1955, I became one of the traditional 'three times a year' Jews, keeping a kosher home and celebrating what I was told were the main festivals. Forty years ago, I made a commitment to live an observant Jewish life. Shavuot, which celebrates the Giving of the Torah, is the festival when I can renew my acceptance of the Torah.

The number 10, representing the Ten Commandments given to the Jewish people on Shavuot, gives the answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything. Let us all reconnect with them this year.

Calendar

Shavuot: after Shabbat 11th June
till Monday night 13th June

Fast of Tammuz:
dawn till nightfall Sunday 24th July

The "Three Weeks" between the Fasts of Tammuz and Av are a time of mourning for the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem by the Assyrians in 586 BCE and by the Romans in 70 CE.

Fast of Av (Tisha b'Av):
dusk on Shabbat 13th August
till nightfall Sunday 14th August

Rosh HaShanah:
Sunday evening 2 October
till Tuesday night 4 October

Educational, Memorable, Positive!

SCoJeC's Education and Community Development Worker, Zoe Jacobs, with the masks she devised to represent the 10 plagues, for use in teaching sessions; leading a session about Pesach for a class at Carrongrange School for special needs children in Larbert, with pupils acting the Egyptian princess finding the baby Moses in the bulrushes, playing the parts of Moses and the burning bush, and tasting matza; Zoe presenting an interactive session about Chanukah for First Kilsyth Cubs Pack and Clyde scouts in November.

These sessions help to reduce antisemitism by increasing knowledge and understanding of Judaism in a fun and interactive way, and explain how the stories behind the various Jewish festivals, many of which are important to more than one faith community, are relevant to modern life.



L'Chaim!

KIDDUSH CUPS IN LINLITHGOW

In March, an interfaith group of volunteers gathered in the beautiful Linlithgow Burgh Halls, ready to offer their talent, time and imagination in order to help SCoJeC with the *JOES Boxes* project. Some 25 volunteers helped us decorate wine glasses to create Kiddush cups – the wine glasses used in the ceremony welcoming in Shabbat.

As part of the evening, there was a short presentation about the *Boxes* project, and how it aims to increase education and understanding about modern Jewish lives in Scotland. Throughout the presentation there were plenty of interesting questions from the volunteers, including the use of different artefacts such as the greggor or the seder plate, and the religious, spiritual or emotional connection to them.

While we decorated the glasses, supported and guided by the superb artists Tom and Roi – we discussed the concept of Kiddush – the idea of separating the special from the ordinary, and how can we use this concept in education to further inform young people about Judaism. We also talked about different ways of thinking about Jewish artefacts, the idea of tzitzit being a reminder of something important – and if the volunteers were to wear something similar what would it remind them of?

The glasses were decorated beautifully, with volunteers inspired by their own lives and how they interpreted the idea of Kiddush and the peace that comes from Shabbat. It was a lovely evening enjoyed by children and adults alike, with a great outcome for the *JOES Boxes* project and for all who attended.



FORT WILLIAM WELCOMES JOES Boxes

ZOE JACOBS

My trip to Fort William in April was exceptionally busy, but very lovely all the same. The Passover Education session at West Highland College was attended by a small but interested audience, including a gentleman who had not attended a Jewish event in nearly 40 years. He found the experience quite emotional and at times almost overwhelming. Even after all these years, he was able to quote the *Mah Nishtanah*, the traditional Four Questions, when the time came!

The following day, Joe Goldblatt and I visited Banavie Primary School, running sessions for 100 children, firstly aged 5-7 and then 8-12. The sessions about Passover included an interactive drama-based retelling of the story, getting all the children to participate in different aspects of the tale. The afternoon was spent in Spean Bridge Primary School running the same sessions, again to around 100 children. The afternoon was particularly lovely as we had the addition of some songs from Joe, which were greeted with great enthusiasm.

That evening at Lochaber Yacht Club we held a Seder Song session, offering the Jewish community the chance to practise the most traditional Seder songs in advance of Passover the following week, and learn some new ones to add to the mix. This was attended by ten people, all of whom enjoyed the buffet, the tunes, and the family atmosphere.

With thanks to Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust for their generous support for both these events.

RACISM

Are We Winning?

On 22 March, SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski participated in a panel on the topic "Racism – are we winning?" at the biennial conference on Hate Crime hosted by the Lord Advocate and the Chief Constable of Police Scotland at Hampden Park.

The conference was tragically overshadowed by the terrorist attacks on Brussels that morning, and by the sadly expected backlash against the Muslim and Jewish Communities in Scotland. Speaking at the conference, the First Minister acknowledged that, while religious hate crime in general has fallen, hatred directed against Islam and Judaism has increased, and referred to the findings of SCoJeC's government-funded inquiry into *What's Changed about Being Jewish in Scotland* in 2015 "that there was an increase in the number of Jewish people considering leaving Scotland. That is unacceptable. There had also been an increase – as a result of negative experiences – in individuals hiding their Jewish identity which is, again, completely unacceptable." The First Minister also reiterated the statement she had made at her first public meeting with the Community that "I don't want to be the First Minister, or even live in, a country where Jewish people want to leave or hide their identity."

The session on Racism was chaired by the Radio Scotland broadcaster and Channel 4 Head of Programmes, Stuart Cosgrove, who posed the question "Are we winning?" to a panel of representatives of the Polish, Roma, Muslim, Chinese, and Jewish Communities. Ephraim's answer was "Slowly!", and he and others echoed the statement by the Lord Advocate that language that was common only a decade ago is unacceptable now. After Zosia Fraser, from the Polish community in the Highlands, said that her community is "invisible" to public policy, Ephraim suggested this is because the fixation on skin colour in terms such as "BME" excludes those who are neither "black" nor the majority, and when he gave the example of the victim of an antisemitic attack who had been told that it could not have been racist because he was "not black enough", it drew an audible gasp from the audience.

Speaking the next day on Radio Scotland, Ephraim echoed the Chief Constable's call for people to be "alert, not alarmed", and concluded, "Stop putting up with it. If you're a victim, report it; if you're a witness, report it. Even if they can't find the perpetrator, it helps form a better picture of the problem".



Combating Antisemitism

IN EUROPE



Brannan: Paul Morron, President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council; Rabbi Yossi Bodenheim, Jewish Student Chaplain; Brianna Sommer, President of Edinburgh University Jewish Students Society; and Itamar Nitzan, who represents Israelis in Scotland on SCoJeC's Council.

Ephraim described the Jewish community in Scotland and the increase in antisemitism in 2014, and this was illustrated by Yossi and Brianna who detailed their own experiences on and around campus, and Itamar who explained that many Israelis in Scotland feel vulnerable. Paul expressed concern that the Scottish Government had not issued an unequivocal condemnation of antisemitism until pressed to do so. Although the situation has improved somewhat since SCoJeC raised these concerns directly with the First Minister, there remains a general anti-Israel sentiment in Scotland, which is often used as a mask for antisemitism.

Ms von Schnurbein was appointed following the EU's first Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights, in October 2015, which brought local, national, and EU policy makers together with religious leaders and representatives of civil society, education, and the media, and agreed strategies to address the significant rise in antisemitic and anti-Muslim incidents, including the creation of her new position.

Commenting after the meeting, Ephraim said: "This was very useful meeting, and it was encouraging to hear how seriously the European Commission is taking the problems of antisemitism in particular and religious hatred in general. We were all agreed that public engagement and support by politicians for the Community should be more visible at all levels, and that there is a need for a single legally enforceable definition of antisemitism."

L TO R: MICHELINE BRANNAN, EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, KATHARINA VON SCHNURBEIN, PAUL MORRON, BRIANNA SOMMER, ITAMAR NITZAN, RABBI YOSHI BODENHEIM.

Foundation Stone

FOR THE NEW CALDERWOOD

On 4 May, Rabbi Moshe Rubin of Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue, jointly with Monsignor Monaghan, parish priest for St Cadoc's, blessed foundation stones for the new primary school which will replace Calderwood Lodge, and provide an additional primary school for the Roman Catholic faith. The new campus, costing £18.2m, will have separate areas reflecting the identities of each faith, while providing shared spaces around a joint interactive zone at the centre of the building.

Paul Morron, President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, said: "The bringing together of new Jewish and Catholic primary schools on a single campus is a momentous initiative. It delivers a powerful message to the wider community that two different faiths can work in close co-operation. It's an exciting venture that East Renfrewshire can be rightly proud of."

Pupils and teachers from the two schools also took part in the ceremony.



PHOTO: MARTIN SHIELDS

Religious Leaders Forum

MICHELINE BRANNAN

The Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre in Eskdalemuir was the striking setting for the Religious Leaders Forum in May, at which the Jewish Community was represented by Rabbi David Rose of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and Micheline Brannan, Vice-Chair of SCoJeC.

During the morning, Rabbi Rose was asked to comment on the current controversy about antisemitism and anti-Zionism. He explained that criticism of the actions of the Israeli Government can be legitimate, and indeed there is lively controversy in Israel itself where all shades of opinion are freely expressed. However, challenging the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state is damaging to Jews everywhere. Antisemitism is sometimes disguised as anti-Zionism, and when people allege, for example,

that the media are manipulated by Zionists, this is antisemitic. Stimulated by Rabbi Rose's comments, there was also a discussion about Islamophobia and the challenges of combatting radicalisation and extremism in faith groups.

After lunch, the religious leaders were invited to meet a group of Primary pupils from Lincluden Primary School, Dumfries, who were visiting the monastery. The pupils put questions to the religious leaders, such as how long they had been believers in their faiths, and what role they had as leaders.

This was followed by a Scottish Government presentation about changes to the "Getting it Right for Every Child" policy, including how the new unified framework and introduction of a 'named person' for every child will benefit children without undermining the key role of parents in determining what is best for their own family.

The Significance of Four Corners TO SCoJeC's OUTREACH WORK

For anyone searching for anything of a Jewish nature in Scotland, SCoJeC quickly comes to the forefront, and any communication with SCoJeC invariably leads to receipt of a copy of *Four Corners*. As someone who had absolutely no personal knowledge of anyone or anything associated with Scottish Jewry before contacting SCoJeC, I know at first hand what a delight it is to discover a thriving network of communities and individuals throughout the country, and to get an inkling of the varied activities which take place.

Four Corners does more than provide information about what has been happening in the regions and in Government; it opens the mind to all kinds of possibilities, sparking new ideas, new ventures, new friendships. It fosters a sense of belonging, no matter how far one is – either geographically or in religious observance – from the traditional centres of Jewish life in Scotland, and encourages a sense of being part of the wider community, often discovering that there are other Jewish people previously unknown to them in their own neighbourhood.

Four Corners extends an invitation to all who read it to have a voice, to make their opinions known, their need met. A 'good magazine' will entertain for an hour or so. A 'great magazine' will stimulate the imagination and lead to a fuller life. In its 50th Year, I congratulate *Four Corners* on being such a 'great magazine'.

LINDA MARTIN, SCoJEC VOLUNTARY AMBASSADOR FOR THE HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS



RELIGIOUS LEADERS WITH PUPILS OF LINCLUDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL, ON THE STEPS OF THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE, RABBI ROSE CENTRE, SECOND ROW FROM TOP.

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Aberdeen Shul Facelift

Aberdeen Hebrew Congregation have been busy all year, preparing for Passover! Our first Mitzvah Day saw the Synagogue, the hall, and toilets all nicely repaired and painted; our second Mitzvah Day saw the rest of the hall repainted, and the old fireplace removed and replaced. The windows in the community rooms were all removed, renovated, and replaced, making them safe, wind- and waterproof, and a lot more attractive to look at!

People emailed from far and wide to request a seat for the Seder; in fact there were so many requests that for the first time ever, we were in danger of having to turn people away. Finally we moved some furniture out in order to accommodate all who wished to come; and in the end we managed to fit 35 souls around our Seder table. There were members, friends, students, and visitors from overseas; and a fantastic time was had by all, if the renditions of *Chad Gadya* and *Echad Mi Yode'a* were anything to go by! *Next year in Jerusalem!*

PURIM IN EDINBURGH

Both Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and Sukkat Shalom held traditional Megillah readings. EHC followed up by a Seudah (festive meal) and entertainment by a magician who involved the children in various tricks including this human pyramid (L). Sukkat Shalom revived their famous Purimspiel (R), this time set in medieval Edinburgh when King Achashverosh (whose reign has unaccountably been omitted from history texts!) was prevented from persecuting the McGillah clan.





Manifesto Presentation

SCoJeC representatives presented the leaders of the main political parties with copies of the "Ten Commitments" from the *Jewish Manifesto for the Scottish Election* (www.scojec.org/manifesto_2016.html) produced jointly with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council and the Board of Deputies, immediately after members of the outgoing Parliament were piped from the Chamber and the election campaign began in earnest.

L-R: SCoJeC CHAIR HILARY RIFKIND, THE FIRST MINISTER, SCoJeC DIRECTOR EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, CONSERVATIVE LEADER RUTH DAVIDSON, GLASGOW JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT PAUL MORRISON, LABOUR LEADER KEZIA DUGDALE, AND LIB-DEM LEADER WILLIE RENNIE.

After SCoJeC received almost as many reports of antisemitic incidents in August 2014 as in the whole of the previous year, and many Jewish people told us that they now felt uncomfortable and anxious and even afraid to go about their day-to-day activities, the Scottish Government was sufficiently concerned that it agreed to fund a study of how the experience of Being Jewish in Scotland had changed since our original inquiry in 2012.

Around 500 Jewish people came to our focus groups or completed questionnaires, and our findings were sobering: several people told us they could think of nothing at all good about being Jewish in Scotland. Other typical comments include:

- *"For the first time in 62 years I did not attend high holiday services this year due to my security concerns."*
- *"Negativity towards Israel in Scotland has caused me sleepless nights. I can honestly say that for the first time in my life I am considering moving from Scotland!"*
- *"I began to fear that antisemitism was being legitimised."*

Most tellingly, the person who in 2012 had said that Scotland is a 'darn good place to be a Jew' told us:

- *"I feel alienated, and no longer Scottish first then Jewish. I feel Jewish only."*

We published an initial overview of what we found in a special issue of Four Corners last year and have now completed a full analysis of our findings, which will shortly be posted on our Resources webpage at:

www.scojec.org/resources/resources.html

WHAT'S CHANGED ABOUT Being Jewish in Scotland



SCoJeC

SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
222 FENWICK ROAD, GLASGOW G46 6UE

scojec@scojec.org 0141-638 6411 07887-488 100

POLICY & RESEARCH	LEAH	0141-638 6411 leah@scojec.org
PROJECTS & OUTREACH	FIONA	07779-206 522 fiona@scojec.org
EDUCATION & EVENTS	ZOE	07504-081 219 zoe@scojec.org

Contacts in the Corners

GLASGOW	ORLI	0141-577 8200 office@glasgowjewishrepcouncil.org
EDINBURGH	JACKIE	07734-291 836 secretary@ehcong.com
TAYSIDE & FIFE	PAUL	07906-219 262 taysideandfife@scojec.org
ABERDEEN		07810-024 456 aberdeenhebrew@gmail.com
SMALL COMMUNITIES	FRANK	01445-712 151 communities@scojec.org
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS	LINDA	07527-040 501 linda@scojec.org
STUDENTS	YOSSI & SARAH	07791-292 790 yossi@mychaplaincy.co.uk

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