



Edinburgh's Festivals



The Edinburgh community's annual **Festival Open Day** was produced and compered by David Neville with his usual professional aplomb. The nine turns that encapsulated the Jewish contribution to the Festival were funny, risqué, and thought provoking, and a credit to the participants who gave us a taste of the shows they were putting on at the Fringe. They were much appreciated by the audience that filled the synagogue hall – as was the traditional bagel lunch with its accompanying noisy and good humoured chatter.



This year's Fringe also featured the first ever **International Shalom Festival** held in Scotland. This 'celebration of all things Israeli' included a cookery demonstration by a Druze chef, a talk by a Samaritan elder, and a range of imaginative ornaments made from fragments of rockets shot down by Iron Dome, as well as a Gala Concert that kept many of the 800 visitors dancing till late. Thanks to the efforts of Nigel Goodrich of the Confederation of Friends of Israel in Scotland, the event succeeded in its aim of demonstrating "the diverse culture, music, art, dance, and food of Israel, with the aim of building cultural bridges and cultivating international friendship" despite a campaign to ban Israel from the Fringe. A vocal pro-Palestinian protest failed to disrupt the event, and the Fringe management maintained their principle of open access.



SHALOM FESTIVAL PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER STANFORD



שנה טובה SHANAH TOVAH!

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

New Year Message



FROM THE FIRST MINISTER, THE RT HON NICOLA STURGEON MSP

"On behalf of the Scottish Government, I am delighted to send my warmest greetings to Jewish people across the world as they begin to celebrate Rosh Hashanah.

"The Scottish Government deeply values the positive contribution made by Scotland's Jewish communities to our society, and the important role they play in supporting community cohesion as part of our modern and diverse country.

"At this time of reflection, I hope the forthcoming year will bring joy and happiness to all."

THE FIRST MINISTER WITH (L TO R) SCOJEC CHAIR MICHELINE BRANNAN, FORMER CHAIR HILARY RIFKIND, AND DIRECTOR EPHRAIM BOROWSKI AT THE LAUNCH OF THE JEWISH MANIFESTO FOR THE SCOTTISH ELECTION.



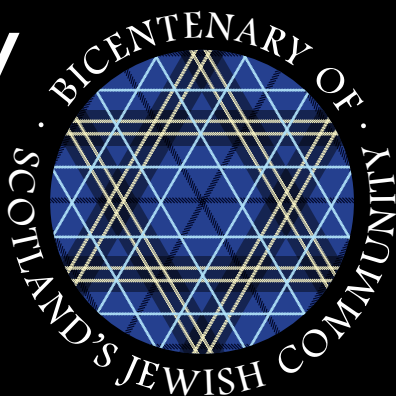
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Scottish Jewry APPROACHES 200!

This Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the bicentenary year of the organised Jewish community in Scotland. The first Minister, Moses Joel, was appointed to the Edinburgh community in 1817, although the date of its foundation is often given as 1816, and the first reference to a synagogue in Richmond Court, off Richmond Street, is in the 1821 Edinburgh Almanack. In 1825 the community purchased the three storey tenement in Richmond Court shown in the picture, for use as a synagogue. This was demolished in the 1930s and replaced by the Grade 2 Listed building that houses EHC today.



A SCOTTISH JEWISH Heritage Centre

Garnethill Synagogue, Scotland's oldest, opened in 1879, is to house a Jewish Heritage Centre and Holocaust-era Study Centre, thanks to a grant of £348,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund that will also ensure its long-term wellbeing and showcase the architectural heritage of the Grade A listed building.

The project is a partnership between the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre and Garnethill Synagogue Preservation Trust, owners of the synagogue, and will create a Study Centre and a Holocaust-era archive that will document the experiences of refugees and survivors fleeing from Nazi Europe, showing how they found a safe haven in Scotland and went on to make pioneering contributions to the development of modern Glasgow and Scottish public life.

Educational and community benefits are central to the project, and the Centre will develop a walking trail in the surrounding Garnethill area, which was a hub for Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s, offer volunteer-led programmes for schools and other visitors, and provide new resources for international researchers and those investigating family and local history.



Jewish Lives, Scottish Spaces

DEBORAH BUTCHER

They say a picture paints a thousand words. Photos are potentially very useful sources to the historical researcher, revealing much about individuals, events, places and organisations. Yet sometimes they invite more questions than they resolve.

The photograph above is from the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, but we do not know who these women are, what they are sewing, or for whom. Fortunately, most of the Centre's photos are less enigmatic than this! Indeed, the picture below yields much information about the Queen Esther Lodge of the Order of the Shield of David – the lodge's size, dress code, patronage, hierarchy, and membership demographic, but without more evidence, what belonging meant to these women, why they joined, and their activities remain inscrutable. So we need your help. Do you recognise any of the faces in these photos? Perhaps you, or a relative, belonged to a Jewish friendly society? If so, we would love to hear from you.

Our exhibition, *Jewish Lives, Scottish Spaces* researches Yiddish theatre, the religious history of Scottish Jewry, and WIZO and the 1937 Jewish Book Week organised by B'nai Brith's Glasgow Women's Lodge. We are gathering memories associated with the experiences of Jewish refugees settling in Scotland, including correspondence between relations separated by war, and hope to publish an anthology of *Letters (from) Home*. We warmly invite you to contribute correspondence or other materials you are able to share.

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, *Jewish Lives, Scottish Spaces* is led jointly by the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow in partnership with the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/jeyo395> for more information or contact deborah.butcher@glasgow.ac.uk.





SCoJeC meets

SNP Group at Westminster

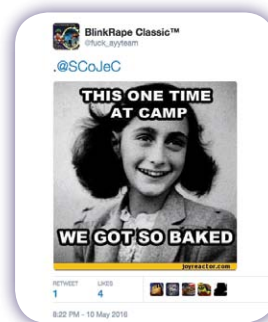
SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski was part of a delegation of national communal organisations that met Angus Robertson MP, the Leader of the SNP group in the UK Parliament, and Kirsten Oswald MP for East Renfrewshire, the area of Scotland with the largest Jewish community, in the House of Commons.

The delegation, which was led by Sir Mick Davis, Chair of the Jewish Leadership Council, explained the concerns of the Community, including antisemitism, hate crime, the centrality of Israel to Jewish identity, community safety, the difficulty of maintaining culturally sensitive services, and public funding for Jewish schools.

(R TO L) EPHRAIM BOROWSKI (SCOJEC); DEBBIE FOX (JEWISH CARE); SIR MICK DAVIS (JLC); ANGUS ROBERTSON MP; KIRSTEN OSWALD MP; MARK GARDNER (COMMUNITY SECURITY TRUST); GILLIAN MERRON (BOARD OF DEPUTIES); KAREN POLLOCK (HOLOCAUST EDUCATIONAL TRUST).

Hate Crime stats: Jews still at greater risk

The overall number of charges for religiously aggravated hate crime in Scotland increased slightly last year, according to figures released by the Scottish Government and Crown Office. This is the first annual increase since the peak in 2011-12, but the number of charges relating to antisemitism fell by 28%.



ABOVE: ONE OF THE MANY ANTISEMITIC TWITTER MESSAGES SENT TO SCoJEC THIS YEAR.

For a detailed analysis of the figures see www.scojec.org/16_hate_crime.html

However, when the size of the various faith communities is taken into account, the Jewish community is still disproportionately affected. Although charges relating to hate crime against Islam doubled during this period, Jewish people were nearly twice as likely to be a victim of hate crime as Muslims, 9 times more likely than Catholics, and more than 30 times more likely than Protestants.

Pears Foundation supports SCoJeC education

SCoJeC's capacity to deliver "positive, memorable, and authoritative" educational sessions and resources in Scottish schools has been given a great boost with the award of a £12,700 grant from the Pears Foundation, who previously supported our 2011 project, with Learning and Teaching Scotland, to put their *Jewish Way of Life* resource on line for Scottish schools. See www.scojec.org/jwol_launch.html

The new project will start in January 2017, with a course to train volunteers to go into schools, youth groups and social clubs, to explain and demystify Judaism. Volunteers will be trained to give accurate information, while leaving room to reflect on individual experience. The training will be followed by visits to schools in different regions of Scotland to put theory into practice in as many local schools as time permits. If further funding can be raised, these visits will be combined with social events for the Jewish communities living in the areas visited, as we were able to do last year thanks to the generosity of the Netherlee and Clarkston Trust. (See page 5 for more information about SCoJeC's latest educational activities.)

Pears Foundation Director Amy Braier said: "We are delighted to support this project and give more children the opportunity to meet Jewish people, ask questions, and develop their understanding of what it means to be Jewish in Britain today."



Around the Corners

Following the AGM of the Tayside and Fife Community in Dundee Synagogue, award-winning novelist Ellen Galford gave a talk on "Yiddish Lost and Found", an irreverent and schmaltz-free exploration of the evocative Yiddish that survived three generations of her family's journey from Lithuania to the fleshpots of the Bronx, and thence to her own tentative venture into Yiddish poetry in Edinburgh. As the meeting took place on Tisha b'Av, the fast that recalls the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem more than 2600 years ago, the traditional SCoJeC buffet was replaced by a short service and readings from the Book of Lamentations.

The Chinese Cultural Centre in Inverness was the venue for a well-attended gathering of the Jewish Network of the Highlands and Islands. The star attraction was Sam Wilding's grandmother's cheesecake - and she brought along one she had prepared earlier, containing no less than 2 kg of cream cheese and 10 eggs! She also spoke about the "Brooklyn Trifecta" of latkes, blintzes, and a knish, and Linda Martin, SCoJeC's Volunteer Ambassador for the Highlands & Islands, demonstrated how to make traditional potato latkes and cheese blintzes. One of the participants commented: "Sam was a brilliant presenter, and her cheesecake was the most deeeelicious I have ever tasted (with all due respect to my mother)", and another said the event was "inspirational, educating, entertaining and very tasty, and I believe it has increased interest in Jewish tradition and the connection to Jewish roots."



Universalism & Particularism

RABBI DAVID ROSE

Tishrei is the pre-eminent month of the Jewish year. It contains four out of the six festivals from the Torah and in total incorporates 12 festival days. Indeed in Jewish tradition these festivals are regarded as the Tishrei cycle.

This festival series contains a fascinating duality that goes to the heart of Judaism. The holidays alternate between universalism and particularism. Rosh Hashanah is a universal festival, celebrating the creation of the world and the appraisal by G-d of all its inhabitants. Yom Kippur is an intensely particular festival, focused on the special relationship between G-d and Israel. Succot is the most universalistic of all the Jewish festivals, when in the times of the Temple sacrifices were offered for all the nations of the world and in the messianic age all peoples will go up to worship in Jerusalem. Simchat Torah, on the other hand, concludes the festival cycle by concentrating on the Torah, the special inheritance of the Jewish people.

This mixture of universalism and particularism is central to Judaism. We believe in a universal G-d who relates to and cares for all people, and who is served in many different ways, while at the same time having our own particular relationship with G-d and our own unique way of approaching him.

This message of Tishrei is especially appropriate this year when Scottish Jewry celebrates the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the first Scottish Jewish community in Edinburgh. Jews in Scotland have excelled in combining these two aspects of Jewish life. We have integrated well into Scottish life and culture and made a tremendous contribution to Scottish society. Yet we have also created committed Jewish communities and a strong proud Jewish identity. As we begin our celebrations this Tishrei let us carry forward that successful combination into the future.

FESTIVAL CALENDAR

Rosh HaShanah
Sun eve 2 Oct to
Tues eve 4 Oct

Fast of Gedaliah
Wed 5 Oct

Kol Nidre
Tues eve 11 Oct

Yom Kippur
Tues eve 11 Oct to
Wed eve 12th Oct

Succot
Sun eve 16 Oct to
Tues eve 18 Oct

Chol haMoed
Tues eve 18 Oct to
Sun 23 Oct

Hoshanah Rabbah
Sun 23rd Oct

Shemini Atzeret/
Simchat Torah
Sun eve 23 Oct to
Tues eve 25 Oct

A HAPPY NEW YEAR
לשנה טובה

The Rabbi and the Two Muslim Ladies

RABBI SHAUL ROBINSON, LINCOLN SQUARE SYNAGOGUE, NEW YORK (PICTURED WITH SHLOIME RUBIN (RIGHT) OF GLASGOW, AT A NEW YORK WEDDING).

I am on my way back from an absolutely wonderful week in Scotland, visiting my mother, relaxing, a little teaching, re-connecting with my roots and old friends, and much more.

I have to say that I was definitely somewhat apprehensive as to what kind of reaction I would get as a kippah-wearing Jew in Scotland in 2016 – especially at the Edinburgh Festival, where there has been plenty of anti-Israel sentiment. Well I can report that my experiences were all positive. I did not experience any hostility at all.

There is no question that the political climate in Scotland is very anti-Israel. The Middle East section in a bookshop in the most Jewish part of Glasgow has one book from an Israeli perspective and about ten from a Palestinian perspective. But I cannot say that I encountered even a whiff of antisemitism in Scotland. In fact I had two memorable encounters with Muslims.

First, at the Festival, I went to hear a Muslim woman stand-up comedian. She told her story of moving away from her religion and becoming secular. Comedians often pick on members of the audience. I was in the front row so when she asked “are there any Jewish people here today?” I was the guy! (She had a funny routine about how she wants to take a Jewish boyfriend home to meet her father.) After the show I went over to talk to her and we had a great conversation.

Then, on my last day I was in the bookshop again, and I was approached by a Muslim lady. “Here we go, at last!” I thought to myself. The woman asked me if I would be prepared to move back to Iraq!! After a little to and fro I established that she had lived in Scotland for much of her life but was now living in Iraq. She said that Iraq desperately needs its Christians and Jews back. I explained I was a Litvak, and tried to explain why the Jews mostly left Iraq and were unlikely to return. She said that her father had told her of the many Jewish merchants he used to do business with in Baghdad, and she was so sad that they were gone, because “people just need to live together”.

So there we have it – not scientific or rigorous, just my impressions of an uplifting week as a Jew in Scotland. Of course I have to sign off with such major respect for the entire Jewish community that proudly keep the flag flying of warm Yiddishkeit despite dwindling numbers!



Communal collaboration

SCOJeC welcomes the appointment of Peter Spiers to the post of Scotland Director of the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC). Peter was the unanimous choice of the interview panel which comprised representatives of SCOJeC, the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, and the JLC, and has previously worked for a number of front-bench politicians at both Holyrood and Westminster. He has spent the first 3 months getting to know both politicians and key figures in the Jewish Community, and his first project will be to assist with arrangements to mark the 200th anniversary of the organised Jewish Community in Scotland, and co-ordinating the many events that will be taking place on this theme.

Peter says he has been passionate about the Jewish Community for as long as he's been involved in politics, adding, “It is an exciting and demanding task to assist with advocacy on behalf of Jewish people in Scotland, and I am delighted to have been appointed. My first three months have been enjoyable

and challenging. I have met many people doing great work within the community, from rabbis and people organising youth groups to those involved in the Shalom Festival, and I have been able to discuss their work with many politicians. I look forward to engaging with other stakeholders to further the interests of the Jewish Community in Scotland.”

“Making abstract ideas real and living”

ZOE JACOBS, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER



It's always interesting running a session you've run quite a few times before but for a completely different audience. Usually I talk about Judaism to non-Jewish people, so I have to understand how Judaism appears from the outside, and how to present this world, which is so innate and normal to me, to people for whom it is completely alien.

This time it was a largely Jewish crowd gathering at Giffnock synagogue in anticipation of the wonderful concert to be held there an hour later, with Gica and Herbie Loening performing on fiddle and guitar. Despite the atypical audience, or perhaps because of it, the presentation seemed to really engage people – particularly that idea of trying to see something we have seen every day for all our lives as if we have never experienced it before.

Thankfully, what we experienced before was Gica's wonderful performances. Having teamed up with her in St Andrews, we had no doubt it would be a fantastic concert. This time it was even more exciting, as she played while Fiona Frank taught dances to some enthusiastic audience members. The music was varied and interesting, the explanations of each tune gave us an insight into Gica's own musical interests as well as the history of the piece, and it all came together so well to create a really lovely evening.

A big thanks to Gica and her son, Herbie, for such a beautiful concert, and a big thank you to all those who have donated money or artefacts to the JOES Boxes project. Please do keep the donations coming!

I also visited St Ninian's in Stirling for an event to mark LaG b'Omer, that was organised with the support of the Central Scotland Regional Equality Council and attracted more than 50 people, including the local Provost and councillors.

Participants took turns in two groups: 'I led Team Learn' in an interactive session about our JOES Boxes project, while 'Team Create' worked with the Glasgow-based Israeli artists Tom and Roi, making bows and arrows. The younger participants competed to see how far they could make their arrows fly, then headed home clutching their new homemade treasures, reminders of what they've learnt and whom they've met.

The objective of these events is that participants enjoy the experience, the company, and the fun, while also learning a lot, questioning their assumptions, and going away with plenty to think about. One participant commented that the activities brought the artefacts to life, moving them from inanimate objects to artefacts with meaning and religious life behind each one. Another said, *"It was a really good idea, as so much prejudice is borne out of ignorance and all efforts to educate must be worthwhile, especially for the children, the next generation. The fact that so many people came is testament to the benefits of such education."*



SCoJeC's JOES Boxes recognised in Parliament

A motion entitled "Jewish Objects for Education in Scotland" has been tabled by Jackson Carlaw, the MSP for Eastwood, and has been supported by 26 other MSPs from all parties. The motion *"applauds the proactive approach"* of the project, congratulates Zoe Jacobs, SCoJeC's Education and Community Development Worker, and commends the initiative as *"a helpful means to engage with people in Scotland from a young age to help further religious understanding ... and ... to further understanding and minimise religious hatred"*.

Commenting on the motion, Zoe said:

"I am delighted that the JOES Boxes project is getting the recognition it deserves. Working on a national project is so exciting, especially as this is the first time anything like this has ever been done. The idea of these resources, donated by Jewish families, is to show that we're real, living people, with our own stories and ideas and values. It's wonderful knowing that people are actively trying to learn more, to create an environment in which people feel included and understood, and I am thrilled to be able to help them do that!"

Any schools wishing to borrow one of JOES Boxes should contact their local Education Authority. An online guide and information leaflet about the items included in the Boxes is available at www.scojec.org/joesboxes.html

AGM Reflects on another successful year

Once again the main theme of SCoJeC's AGM was very upbeat – the amazing amount we have achieved in all the four strands of our work:

- ◆ **Representing the Community** to the Scottish Government, politicians, the public and voluntary sector, and other communities.
- ◆ **Advancing Public Understanding** by responding to general enquiries, providing formal and informal education, and maintaining our much commended website as a key source of information.
- ◆ **Community Development:** providing a support network for the smaller Jewish communities and potentially vulnerable Jewish people, publishing *Four Corners*, arranging events, working with Jewish Student Chaplaincy, and helping people to report antisemitic hate crime.
- ◆ **Community Empowerment:** keeping ethnic minority communities up-to-date by publishing MEMO, a weekly digest of current information, circulating a daily Political Affairs Brief (PAB) to national and local communal organisations, and assisting Scottish communal organisations to comply with child protection and Immigration regulations.

However concerns were expressed about future viability, particularly because the Jewish Leadership Council had withdrawn their £10k per annum support for PAB and the Board of Deputies was not prepared to provide any funding.

The meeting expressed its unanimous thanks to Zoe Jacobs, whose initial contract ended in June, for her exceptional and imaginative input into our education and community development work, and welcomed the news that we are working on a package to enable her to return to work for us in the future, to Fiona Frank for managing those activities and producing our detailed and authoritative report on *What's changed about Being Jewish in Scotland*, and former Public Affairs Officer Nicola Livingston for her contribution to our engagement with MSPs and Ministers. The meeting also praised Director, Ephraim Borowski, for his single-handed 19-year leadership of SCoJeC's official team – all done on a voluntary basis. The AGM agreed with the incoming Chair that this is not sustainable and that SCoJeC must now plan and fund-raise for a paid Chief Executive Officer post.

NEW FACES on Executive

(L-R) FIONA BRODIE, MICHELINE BRANNAN, EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, HILARY RIFKIND

Micheline Brannan, who has a background of public service and has served in various positions within the Jewish community, has stepped up from Vice Chair to Chair. Micheline says, "After 3 months at the helm, I have learnt so much about SCoJeC and its stakeholders. I want to support the team who work tirelessly to deliver the Government's and the Jewish Community's expectations, and to enable everyone to give of their best."

Fiona Brodie, who takes over as Vice Chair, says "SCoJeC is all about providing representation, information, service, and support for, or on behalf of, the Scottish Jewish Community. Having seen the amazing work that's been done over the years, it's an honour to be playing a further part in it as Vice Chair."



SCoJeC's achievements rewarded BY GOVERNMENT



SCoJeC's successes have been rewarded by a 20% increase in funding from the Scottish Government's "Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund" for 2016-17. The aims of this

fund are "to reduce discrimination, lessen the experience of hate crime, improve participation and community cohesion, and address imbalances in representation in public life, including education, in order better to reflect our communities", and our proposal included better education and public information about Jews and Judaism; stronger networks and support for Jewish people in Scotland; and building people's confidence to report antisemitic incidents. You can find out lots more about what we'll be doing from our website, www.scojec.org, and please contact us if you'd like to get involved in our volunteer programme, or attend our events.

SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski said: "We are delighted that the Scottish Government has so significantly increased its support, particularly in the current economic climate. However the grant only covers around a third of the projected cost of our proposal, and in order to be able to continue to represent and support Jewish people and Jewish life in Scotland effectively, we need the generous support of the Community."

SCoJeC

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READ OUR REPORT: *What's changed about Being Jewish in Scotland*
AT www.scojec.org/bjis2.html