

Meeting with First Minister

SCoJeC Chair Micheline Brannan, Director Ephraim Borowski, and Glasgow Jewish Representative Council Joint President Nicola Livingston met the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at the Scottish Government offices in Glasgow to discuss a wide range of issues affecting Jewish people in Scotland. Since the meeting took place shortly after a number of reports had been published by the Community Security Trust (CST) and others that showed that the number of antisemitic incidents had risen to an all-time high, and that there is significant crossover between extreme anti-Zionism and antisemitic themes such as Holocaust denial, we discussed these topics in some detail.

Our discussion also covered related topics such as the safety of students on campus and extreme hostility to Israelis in Scotland – including how the Israeli Ambassador had been received in Parliament – and placed these concerns in the context of the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism, which the Scottish Government has adopted. The First Minister expressed concern at the effect that antisemitism has on the well-being of Jewish people in Scotland, and commented that it is important for politicians and others to choose their words carefully.

We also discussed how Scotland could play a positive role in the Middle East by promoting dialogue. Nicola Livingston said it would send a strong message to those who attempt to divide rather than unite communities if we work to develop links between Scotland and Israel around areas in which both countries excel, such as medicine, education, and technology.

SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski commented, *"We are very grateful to the First Minister for the opportunity to discuss our concerns face to face in such a positive and friendly way. We were able to assure her that the Community appreciates the support we receive from the Scottish Government, and to commend the excellent record of Scottish police and prosecutors in dealing with antisemitism. We left reassured about her commitment to making Scotland a place where Jewish people can feel secure and at home."*



שנה טובה

SHANAH TOVAH!

New Year Message

FROM THE FIRST MINISTER, THE RT HON NICOLA STURGEON MSP

"I send my warmest greetings to everyone in Scotland's Jewish communities marking the high holy days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and wish everyone joy and happiness for the forthcoming year. The positive contribution made by Scotland's Jewish communities to our society is deeply valued, and we appreciate all that you have to offer.

"Scotland is at its strongest when we are a nation that celebrates diversity. I want to make sure that all Jewish people in Scotland feel they can celebrate their identity, and I know we still have work to do to achieve this.

"We will continue to stand together against all forms of hate crime and prejudice, and redouble our efforts to build a country where we live in strong, resilient, and supportive communities, and where everyone can live freely and in peace."



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The
Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities
www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION NO SC029438



The Community Welcomes Visitors

Left to right:

The new Glasgow Lord Provost Eva Bolander was shown round Garnethill Synagogue and the Scottish Jewish archives Centre in May by [L-R] Dianna Wolfson, Fiona Brodie, and Harvey Kaplan.

New Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Barney Crockett, visited Aberdeen synagogue in July.

Members of the Glasgow Ahmadiyya Muslim Community visited Garnethill Synagogue in June.

Shalom

AT THE

Shalom Festival

The International Shalom Festival came to Drummond Community High School as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The hall was transformed into a 'souk'. Stalls were laid out along an avenue of olive trees leading to a Bedouin tent draped with kilims and carpets. There sat the white-clad Balha family, Ora, who is Jewish, Ihab, a Muslim Arab, and their three children. They run the *Orchard of Abraham's Children*, a multifaith kindergarten in Jaffa. This was the essence of the Festival, a celebration of peaceful co-existence and building a shared future.

To that end, the Festival also hosted the Ahmadiyya Muslim Imam, Muad Odeh, from Haifa, along with Glasgow Ahmadiyyas, making the point that life is safer for Ahmadiyyas in Israel than it was for the unfortunate shopkeeper Assad Shah, who was murdered in Shawlands. A daily programme of films included the controversial *Disturbing the Peace* which outlines the history of *Combatants for Peace*, a group formed by former Israeli elite troops and Palestinian militants who have laid down their weapons to join hands across the divide. All the way from south Hebron came Riyadh Halees, who has not been able to enter Israel for 12 years. Supporting him was IDF veteran Maia Hascal, featured in the film. They share a joint commitment to non-violence and a better future.

Another significant highlight was the return of the Incubator Theatre of Jerusalem with their hip hop opera *The City*, a take on American film noir that had to be cancelled in 2014 because of disruption and intimidation by anti-Israel protesters. This time they performed the opera seven times and were well received by sell-out audiences. In contrast with last year's baying mob of protesters, there was only a small demonstration outside the venue on the first day.

The Festival concluded with a Gala Concert that was attended by MSPs and Councillor Donald Wilson, former Lord Provost of Edinburgh City Council, which provided the venue. A bus brought people from Glasgow to join the fun. Meskie Shibru, an Ethiopian Israeli, started off the entertainment by singing in Amharic, Hebrew, and even in Yiddish; she was followed by rock band Jamaya, who soon had many up dancing. During the concert, Shalom Festival founder and CEO Nigel Goodrich was presented with a magnificent Chanukiah designed and made by one of the exhibitors, Yaron Bob of *Rockets into Roses*, a project that makes jewelry and ornaments out of spent missiles fired into Israel from the Gaza Strip. Nigel said "never again will Israelis be prevented from performing at the world's biggest arts festival; never again will Jewish people stand alone in Edinburgh".

THE MAIN SPONSOR OF THE FESTIVAL WAS HARRIET LYALL OF EDINBURGH HEBREW CONGREGATION, IN MEMORY OF HER MOTHER GOLDA (NÉE ARONSON).



REMEMBERING YONI

In September 2002, Yoni Jesner (centre) was on his way to the airport to fly home to Scotland for Succot before starting university when he was killed in a terrorist attack on a bus in Tel Aviv. Here his mother Marsha Gladstone reflects on his 15th Yahrzeit.



Although measured mathematically, our personal experience of time is anything but precise. Thus my heart struggles when my brains tells me that fifteen years have passed since I last saw Yoni. Perhaps reaching this milestone ought to mark some major shift or change in my post-death relationship with him, but once again the maths and the emotions just don't see eye to eye on this. Sometimes fifteen years feel like fifty, and I can be overwhelmed by the feeling that Yoni has slipped so far away, seen only faintly and from a great distance. And yet there are also wonderful moments of clarity when I can be suffused with his essence, and the fear that any feeling of closeness to him might be lost to me forever is replaced by a joyous moment of euphoria. It's a very strange phenomenon, just the opposite of what you'd expect, but as the years go on, more and more people tell me how they have been touched by Yoni. And now that a fifteen year span has elapsed since his death, a whole new generation has grown up of young people who never knew Yoni, yet are inspired by his legacy. But what is the difference between the memory of a person and their legacy?

According to physics there is no such thing as energy stopping, it is just converted into another form, and so although Yoni's memory resides in a static kind of way within the hearts and minds of all who knew him, his legacy is the energy he left in this world and which forms the ongoing unbroken chain reaction begun by Yoni himself, and which is continued by so many young people each and every day through their participation in the Yoni Jesner Awards.

That Yoni's energy and influence is still very much a part of this world was never more clear to me than when I walked into the Yoni Jesner Awards ceremony in June and saw a hall packed with hundreds of people, all the students about to receive their awards, their teachers and parents. The excitement and anticipation was palpable, and as the drums rolled and the lights flashed to signal the start of the ceremony, a huge cheer went up from the crowd, and for that moment I was indeed totally suffused with Yoni's presence.

I hope and pray that Yoni's energy will continue to live on and inspire many more generations in this way, and please G-d with the help and support of so many wonderful friends, it will.

A Word of Encouragement

DITZA HOPPENSTEIN

Elul, Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur – a heaviness accompanies these words. Repentance. Guilt. Failure. Do we just look at what we did wrong this year? At how we failed to grow? Where we fell short of our goals? Of course not! When taking a full assessment of something we have to notice the positive and the negative. We often remember this when it comes to our jobs, projects etc. but when it comes to assessing our own growth we somehow fall into that common trap of focusing only on the negative.

Often the narrative is: "I am a terrible mother. My kids ate cheerios – breakfast, lunch and supper today. I lost my temper and shouted. I wasn't patient enough. I didn't give my son focused attention when he was trying to tell me something important." Instead of: "I am a good mother. My children had enough to eat. I played animal dominoes for half an hour with the boys. I nursed the baby (x1000). I let them have a fun (read: splashing) bath."

However, the Torah tells us that even this second, positive narrative is missing a lot. *Tehillim* (Psalms 34:16) writes "turn away from bad and do good". The Vilna Gaon comments saying that there are 300 levels of "turn away from bad" and only 10 levels of "do good". Pushing off a sin for even just a minute is considered a level. Doing the a lesser version of the sin is a level. And each and every level is recognised and rewarded, not only refraining from the sin completely.

So, really, my narrative should be: "I am a good mother. My children had enough to eat. They didn't just eat junk. Milk is protein. I took a deep breath and intended to stay calm. I lasted a minute until the toddler added oil to the mischief-made flood in the kitchen. I played with my children. I listened to my son. I had patience to let them have a fun bath despite the mess."

On a similar note, Job writes "man is born to work/strive". It doesn't say "man is born to succeed". Whether or not we succeed is not in our hands and is not how G-d measures us. Rather, it is the effort that we put in. It is taking a deep breath, even if I lose my temper in the end.

FESTIVAL CALENDAR

Rosh HaShanah

Wed eve to Fri night
20-22 September

Fast of Gedaliah

Sun 24 September

Kol Nidrei

Fri eve 29 September

Yom Kippur

Fri eve to Sat night
29-30 September

Succot

Wed eve to Fri night
4-6 October

Chol haMoed

Fri eve to Wed eve
6-11 October

Hoshanah Rabbah

Tue eve to Wed night
10-11 October

Shemini Atzeret Simchat Torah

Wed eve to Fri night
11-13 October



**NEW NATIONAL CST
24hr EMERGENCY NUMBER**

0800 032 3263

**From 31 August other numbers
will all cease to operate.**

**In an emergency, ring 999, then,
when it's safe, report to CST and SCoJeC.**

Walking Jewish Edinburgh

As part of the Edinburgh Community's celebration of its bicentenary, the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, the oldest Jewish cultural organisation in Scotland, joined the *Jewish Lives, Scottish Spaces* project to arrange a walking tour of the landmarks of two centuries of Jewish life in Edinburgh.

Visitors to the Festival joined residents to explore how the Jewish community moved from Canongate in the Old Town to the St Leonard's area, which was densely

populated with new immigrants from the 1880s onwards. With increasing economic stability, the community moved further south into Newington, Marchmont, and the Grange, while shops such as bakeries and butchers remained in the area of the Bridges. The walk was illustrated by the stories of memorable individuals such as the Lipetz brothers, GPs who were early advocates of the NHS and a multi-disciplinary approach to health and social care, baker Arthur Kleinberg who shared his challah recipe with the community when his bakery closed, and Joe Lurie, the last kosher butcher in Edinburgh and soul of the community, whose father Abraham had served in World War I as part of a British Jewish Battalion.

Crossing the Meadows, the walkers stopped at the bench facing the tennis courts to hear about the 'Yiddish Parliament' that used to gather on Shabbat afternoons to kibbitz about community affairs. The walk ended at the synagogue in Salisbury Road, a landmark signalling the union of a previously divided community in 1932 under the leadership of Rabbi Salis Daiches, arriving just in time to join the annual celebration of Jewish-themed acts at the Festival Fringe.

FROM TOP: THE LIPETZ BROTHERS' GP PRACTICE IN ROXBURGH STREET; HOME OF RABBI DAICHES IN MILLERFIELD PLACE; SHOWING THE ORIGINAL LOCATION OF LURIE'S KOSHER BUTCHER SHOP. PHOTOS COURTESY OF JANET MUNDY, EWA LIPINSKA, AND BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT.



Calderwood Lodge A WORLD FIRST

The first day at school is always exciting, but this was more exciting than most for everyone at Calderwood Lodge Jewish Primary School, as they started the new term in a brand new building in Newton Mearns.

The building is a unique partnership that brings together a Catholic and a Jewish primary school on the same campus. The schools, which cost East Renfrewshire Council more than £17 million and used 4593 tonnes of concrete, will share some facilities, including a central amphitheatre and outdoor sports facilities, as well as specialist areas such as for computing, art, science, music, and drama.

Anne Marie Absolom, Head Teacher at St Clare's Primary, said: *"Bringing these Catholic and Jewish primary schools together on a single campus delivers a powerful message that two different faiths can work in close co-operation whilst retaining their own identity."*

Marion Carlton, Head Teacher of Calderwood Lodge, said: *"The design of this fabulous new campus has been based on feedback from parents and representatives from both faith communities, and we are all so excited about getting started in our new home. I know it will provide us with excellent opportunities for shared learning and interaction amongst all the pupils and staff. Bringing together two faith communities on one campus is creative and innovative, and I have no doubt we will all reap the benefits."*

ABOVE: THE TWO HEADS WITH PUPILS OF BOTH SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE NEW SHARED CAMPUS.

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: THE FIRST CLASS IN THE OLD SCHOOL IN NEWLANDS; FORMER PUPIL BRIAN ALTMAN GOES BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER 44 YEARS; A NOSTALGIC VISIT TO THE SCHOOL HALL ON THE CLOSING OPEN DAY IN JUNE; GLASGOW JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL JOINT PRESIDENT, EYV YEDD, HEAD TEACHER, MARION CARLTON, AND FORMER CHAIR OF THE CALDERWOOD JEWISH EDUCATION COMMITTEE, MICHAEL CLERCK, WITH THE MOSAIC CREATED BY PUPILS IN 2013 TO CELEBRATE THE SCHOOL'S JUBILEE.



Edinburgh Fringe OPEN DAY



John Danzig, who was elected Chair of the Management Committee of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation at their AGM in June, reflects on a successful event:

I have just left the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation's Festival Open Day that is held each year in our beautiful Community Centre. There was an audience of at least 150 people this year, who were presented with a considerable array of talented individuals, from old favourites like Daniel Cainer and his keyboard reminiscences, to the amazing Ben Caplan and his klezmer band, imaginatively describing the Jewish Romanian refugees as they transform their broken spirits in the Canada of the early 1900s.

Other notables were the funny stand-up Danny Lobell, the Kafkaesque anecdotes of Alon Nashman (very talented!), Niv Petel's 'physical solo', and finally the delightful Melanie Gall with her magnificent voice, in three (yes three) different productions, including Piaff, Brel, and Lynn (Vera that is).

I cannot leave this piece without mentioning the delightfully charismatic Israeli cabaret artist Bat-El. Her rare genetic condition, all 120 cm of her, generates a veritable outpouring of insights into the human condition, ranging from the nature of identity to the impact of a mother's love. The show could be described as Vulnerability with Attitude and is very moving. And all of this was complemented by a fantastic bagel lunch – heaven!



TOP LEFT: A FULL HOUSE FOR LUNCH AND FOR THE SHOW.

ABOVE: TOP ROW (L TO R): DANIELLA ISAACS; DANNY LOBELL WITH DAVID IAN NEVILLE; DANIEL CAINER (WITH BAGEL!).

CENTRE: 2B THEATRE COMPANY WITH BEN CAPLAN.

FOOT: RACHEL CREEGER; BAT-EL; AND MELANIE GALL WITH DAVID IAN NEVILLE.

Balfour Walk

Whittingehame House near Haddington has two connections with the Jewish community. It was the home of Lord Arthur James Balfour, the author of the Balfour Declaration, and later a school for child refugees from the Holocaust. To mark the centenary of the Declaration, SCoJeC arranged a guided walk round the estate, with the kind permission of the current owner, his great-nephew, Michael Brander, who showed walkers the Balfour graves, the old Yew tree, and other areas that are not normally open to the public.

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CHARITABLE TRUST.



Ready to Represent the Community

The latest group of graduates from SCoJeC's "Volunteer Ambassador" course, which is supported by the Pears Foundation, celebrated the end of their training with a celebration lunch at Mark's Deli.

The participants commented on the fact that the course was designed to encompass the diversity of Jewish affiliation in Scotland, and that they learned about how to create lesson plans and run activities rather than just giving talks, so they now know how to plait four-stranded challah!

The course reflects the fact that Jewish people in Scotland range from highly observant to secular, and we have Orthodox, Liberal, and Reform communities here as well as many unaffiliated Jewish people – so we pay particular attention to ensuring that our Ambassadors can represent the whole spectrum of Judaism. As well as looking at the content of lessons on topics such as the Jewish Life Cycle, the Synagogue, Jewish Daily Life and Festivals, the course covered presentation skills, knowledge and confidence in leading positive and memorable educational activities about Judaism for groups of all ages.

The participants all said that the course had been well led by SCoJeC's former Education Officer, Zoe Jacobs, and that they felt comfortable with making and using their own materials, and ready to go out and represent the Jewish community in schools and adult groups around the country – "We got to know each other really well – we're a very supportive group; we gelled really well".



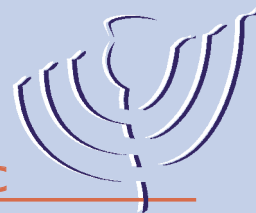
"Scotland's Shames"

SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski was part of a delegation of communal leaders who met Ian Blackford MP, the SNP's new Leader in the House of Commons, and Joanna Cherry QC, who speaks on Justice and Home Affairs for the SNP at Westminster. Although the vast majority of issues that affect the Community, such as family law, education, and hate crime, are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, he said that although the legislation may be different, the issues are essentially the same for the Scottish and UK parliaments.

CST Director David Delew said that the CST works closely with SCoJeC and commended Police Scotland for acting more quickly and decisively than English police forces. Ian Blackford reiterated the Scottish Government's policy of zero tolerance for hate crime, and Joanna Cherry felt there had been a change in political discourse that opened a space for hate speech against the Jewish Community, adding memorably that "Scotland has enough problems with secessionism, without antisemitism being added to the list of Scotland's shames".



JOEL SALMON (BOARD OF DEPUTIES), JOANNA CHERRY MP, DAVID DELEW (COMMUNITY SECURITY TRUST), EPHRAIM BOROWSKI (SCOJEC DIRECTOR), IAN BLACKFORD MP, GILLIAN MERRON (BOARD OF DEPUTIES), PETER SPEIRS (JEWISH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL)



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SCoJeC (SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES) IS
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READ OUR REPORT: **What's changed about Being Jewish in Scotland**
AT www.scojec.org/bjis2.html