

# The Great Get Together

SCOJeC and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council arranged a special event in Giffnock Synagogue as part of "The Great Get Together" a UK-wide initiative inspired by Jo Cox MP, who was murdered in June 2016. It is based on a rejection of divisive politics and a desire to bring diverse communities together to celebrate the things that unite us.

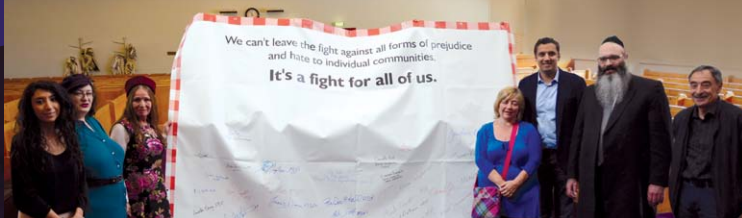
Anas Sarwar MSP, who recently set up a Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia, organised the main Scottish event. He, along with representatives of Interfaith Glasgow and the Jewish Leadership Council, joined us in signing the 'pledge wall', which proclaimed the simple but strong message:

**"We can't leave the fight against all forms of prejudice and hate to individual communities. It's a fight for all of us."**

The visitors were also given a short tour of the synagogue by Rabbi Rubin, and later, over lunch, they discussed issues faced by the Jewish community and other minority communities, interfaith activities, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and how we can work together.

Anas said: "Our pledge was signed by people from all faiths and none, and I'm delighted the Jewish community was able to take part. There are major challenges facing society with everyday racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia and more, and this was an opportunity for different groups in society to demonstrate that the fight against all forms of prejudice and hate is a fight for all of us."

SCOJeC Director Ephraim Borowski commented: "The murder of Jo Cox was a tragedy, but it is good to see people of all backgrounds coming together, not only to honour her memory, but to perpetuate her tireless and impassioned campaigning for the principle that humanity "has much more in common than divides us", and we are delighted to have had the opportunity to be part of this nation-wide celebration of the diversity of modern Britain."



We can't leave the fight against all forms of prejudice and hate to individual communities. It's a fight for all of us.

RABBI RUBIN  
ADDING HIS  
SIGNATURE TO  
THE PLEDGE,  
WATCHED BY  
ANAS SARWAR MSP

FOUR CORNERS  
רובע ארבע



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SHANAH TOVAH! שנה טובה

The  
Scottish Council  
of Jewish  
Communities  
[www.scojec.org](http://www.scojec.org)

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION  
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION NO SC029438



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

## 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 as they begin to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and mark the holy day of Yom Kippur. At this time of reflection, I hope the forthcoming year will bring joy and happiness to all.

The Scottish Government appreciates and values our relationships with our Jewish communities, and I want to thank you all for the significant and important contributions you all make to Scottish society. I have enjoyed meeting with a number of Jewish organisations, including SCOJeC, this past year and I very much look forward to continued positive engagement in the year ahead.

It is essential that everyone feels connected, has a sense of belonging and feels valued in Scotland and I am proud of the way in which we continue to work together to tackle prejudice and build a more inclusive, safer Scotland.

On behalf of the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland, I wish you Shanah Tovah!



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# SCoJeC's FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## Ellen Galford *Among Others*

Inverness: Sun 2 Sept, afternoon  
Dumfries: Sun 14 Oct, afternoon

SHIMCA CENTRE, IV33 3GG  
RUGMAN'S HALL, WHITESANDS, DG1 2PJ

Ellen Galford, Edinburgh-based Yiddish and local history enthusiast, will read from her performance piece *Among Others*, written last year to commemorate 200 years of Jewish life in Scotland, and will introduce the audience to some of her own personal family memories. After a break for tea and cakes (all kosher) Ellen will lead an interactive writing workshop, encouraging participants to tell and record stories about their own family and cultural memories. Bring along your old family photo album, or your grandma's candlesticks, or your dad's medals, to help the stories flow. The event is free and all are welcome, Jewish and non-Jewish, adults and children.

## Tracey S Rosenberg *The Western Wall*

Greenock: Sun 7 Oct, afternoon  
Aberdeen: Sun 4 Nov, afternoon

BEACON ARTS CENTRE, CUSTOM HOUSE QUAY, PA15 1EQ  
ABERDEEN SYNAGOGUE, DEE ST, AB11 6DS

Tracey S Rosenberg will read and discuss her new story, *The Western Wall*, a fictional response to Muriel Spark's award-winning novel *The Mandelbaum Gate*. As part of the celebrations of Spark's centenary, Tracey was awarded a grant from Creative Scotland to travel to Jerusalem, and in her story three modern young women wrestle with their own personal identities and narratives. After a break for food (of course!), Tracey will lead a workshop to help participants to explore their own identity.

*You don't have to be a great writer to join in any of these events, and no-one will be forced to share anything they don't want to!*  
For more details contact Joanne: [events@scojec.org](mailto:events@scojec.org) or 07724-549 817

## Scotland's Jewish Gathering 2018

Edinburgh: Fri 26 to Sun 28 Oct

EHC, SALISBURY RD, EH16 5AB

Exciting weekend for all! Fully catered weekend for everyone who identifies as Jewish in Scotland, to bring people together and strengthen community cohesion. Wonderful mix of speakers, live music, and discussion. Families welcome – activities for children. Students & under 17s go free!

For info contact: [gathering@scojec.org](mailto:gathering@scojec.org). Book at: [tinyurl.com/gatheringSJ](http://tinyurl.com/gatheringSJ) or: [www.scojec.org/gathering.html](http://www.scojec.org/gathering.html)

## Charlie's Promise

### AT REFUGEE FESTIVAL SCOTLAND

As part of this year's Refugee Festival Scotland, SCoJeC invited author Annemarie Allan to talk about her new children's novel *Charlie's Promise*, the story of a Jewish boy who escapes Nazi Germany in the hope of finding refuge with relatives in Scotland.

Annemarie spoke about her own connection with refugees, recalling how her family had fled France and arrived in Edinburgh as refugees from the Nazis, and she explained that she had drawn upon the wealth of her family history and life experiences to inspire *Charlie's Promise*.

After her talk she led a writing workshop, where she encouraged participants to delve into their own backgrounds in search of inspiration to write creatively about what they thought life would be like from a refugee's perspective.

The afternoon concluded with SCoJeC's traditional kosher buffet, and some participants read haikus they had written during the workshop.



## The Dybbuk ON ARRAN

SCoJeC's last event of the summer took place on a sunny evening on the enchanting Isle of Arran in the home of a local member of the Jewish community, and was attended by visitors from the USA, Israel, and mainland Scotland, as well as local residents.

Lynn Holden, a cultural historian, read excerpts from her forthcoming book *A Cultural History of Ghost Stories*. Referring to other-worldly tales she has gathered from around the globe, she illustrated the enormous variation of spirit folklore across different cultures throughout history. In particular, she spoke about the malevolent spirit in Jewish mythology known as the 'dybbuk'. The word is derived from the Hebrew '*davak*' meaning to 'stick to' or 'cling to', and a dybbuk is believed to be the dislocated soul of a dead person that can possess the bodies of the living.

Throughout the evening, Lynn encouraged participants to contribute their own ghost stories, and the youngest participant – only 4 years old – was keen to tell his own story by drawing a picture of a ghost and describing to the audience how the mischievous ghost was 'kidnapping' the fruit! Lynn's final story was accompanied by the gentle playing of a harp that one of the audience had brought with her – a wonderful and unexpected contribution that really created an ethereal atmosphere.

The event was rounded off by discussion over the kosher buffet in the conservatory. "I came for the company," said one participant, "for the chance to meet people and Jewish people who come to Arran, and to hear ghost stories. And the food was good too!"







## Past Reflections



## New Beginnings

*Rabbi Yossi Bodenheimer reflects on his years as Jewish Student Chaplain as he prepares to leave Scotland.*

Whilst sitting on the beach of the beautiful Isle of Skye on our family camping trip over the sunny summer holidays, we had the chance to sit and reflect on the past six years of our journey in Scotland. Scotland is truly a beautiful country but even more beautiful are the people.

Working as the Jewish Student Chaplain has given me the opportunity to travel the country – if there was a Jewish student anywhere, I was there. We were based in Giffnock where the community is like a big family to us and the shul always welcomed the students with open arms, and of course the other shuls in Glasgow have always been very supportive and hospitable for the students as well.

Getting around the country in rain, snow, hailstorms, sunshine, (sometimes all in one day), and meeting the other communities – our usual Shabbat dinners hosted in the Edinburgh shul, our shabbatons and events in Aberdeen, or my weekly visits to St Andrews – what always really inspired us when visiting these communities was to see people who are physically so far from vibrant Jewish life but make such a tremendous effort to keep the shuls, community, and Jewish student societies going strong.

As the High Holidays are quickly approaching and it's that time of year where we reflect on the past and make commitments for the future. We stand in front of G-d and say, "I promise this year I will...." – and usually by the time the High Holidays are over we are back to our old selves!

The question is asked, Doesn't G-d know that every year we stand in front of him and make all sorts of commitments that sometimes wear off pretty quickly? Are we not fooling ourselves? The answer is that although we may or may not keep to our hopes, we have still created a strong foundation for the rest of the year. A building with strong and sturdy foundations is likely to last longer than one with weak ones.

Sarah and I both feel that these six years in Scotland are truly strong foundations for the rest of our journey ahead.

Helping hundreds of Jewish students on their University experience by spreading a positive attitude towards our beautiful tradition and Torah, watching so many of them get involved, explore, and always keen to learn, has given us as a family the great opportunity to keep giving and giving, and see so much success as student communities grow and feel prouder of who they are.

The people and our time in Scotland have a very special place in our hearts and we already can't wait to come back and visit.

*Shana tovah and much love, Yossi, Sarah, and the Bodenheimer kids*

## Across the Beautiful Banks of the Silvery Tay

It's already five years since Dundee Hebrew Congregation changed its name to the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community in recognition of the fact that most of their members live on the other side of the Tay, and indeed that Jewish students in St Andrews probably outnumber all the other Jewish people in the area.

This is more than just a change of name. The existing building in Dundee has been placed on the market, and the long-term plan is to hold 'pop-up services' in various venues in the area, in St Andrews and Perth as well as Dundee.

For now, the plan is to hold some services in the present shul in Dundee, and some in St Andrews. A formal Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the University of St Andrews, which enables them to hold services in the University Chaplaincy. A new Ark has been commissioned and two Sifrei Torah will be permanently kept there, there will be dedicated storage for prayer books and other artefacts, and detailed arrangements have been made to enable members to access the building for services.

Appropriately the first services in the new facility will take place during Rosh haShanah, 9th to 11th September. Services will be divided between Dundee and St Andrews, and all local people and students will be welcome. We're planning an inauguration as part of the SCoJeC Council meeting on Sunday 7th April.

For further information contact Paul at [taysideandfife@scojec.org](mailto:taysideandfife@scojec.org)

## Festival Calendar

<b>Rosh HaShanah</b>	Sun eve to Tue night	9–11 Sept
<b>Fast of Gedaliah</b>		Wed 12 Sept
<b>Kol Nidrei</b>		Tue eve 18 Sept
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	Tue eve to Wed night	18–19 Sept
<b>Succot</b>	Sun eve to Tue night	23–25 Sept
<b>Chol haMoed</b>	Tue night to Sat night	25–29 Sept
<b>Hoshanah Rabbah</b>	After Shabbat to Sun night	29–30 Sept
<b>Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah</b>	Sun eve to Tue night	30 Sept–2 Oct

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# NO REDUCTION IN Antisemitic Incidents IN SCOTLAND

Scottish Government and Crown Office figures for 2017-18 show a slight fall in the number of prosecutions for religious hate crime

These numbers relate to charges, not reported incidents – around twice as many were reported – and the reduction was largely attributable to a drop in the number of charges relating to Roman Catholicism, which fell by more than 25%, while charges for conduct relating to Protestantism, Islam, and Judaism were all stable. Of the charges relating to Judaism, 13 were for threatening or abusive behaviour (62%), compared with half the previous year.

Although the overall number of charges for crimes relating to Judaism is low, it remains a matter of concern that it is significantly out of proportion to the number of Jewish people in Scotland. Although barely one tenth of one per cent of the population of Scotland is Jewish, 3% of religiously motivated hate crime is antisemitic in nature. As we have noted previously, and as evidenced by other parts of Europe, antisemitism does not require the presence of Jews to flourish. Why Scotland is in such poor company is a matter that should concern the Scottish Government and indeed all reasonable people.

	NUMBER OF CHARGES 2017-18	NUMBER OF CHARGES 2016-17	SIZE OF COMMUNITY (2011 CENSUS)	CHARGES PER 10,000 MEMBERS 2017-18	CHARGES PER 10,000 MEMBERS 2016-17	% CHANGE
TOTAL	641	744	5,295,403	1.21	1.40	-13.8 %
PROTESTANT/C of SCOTLAND	174	179	1,717,871	1.01	1.04	-2.8 %
ROMAN CATHOLIC	319	428	841,053	3.79	5.09	-25.5 %
ISLAM	115	114	76,737	14.99	14.86	+0.9 %
JUDAISM	21	23	5,887	35.67	39.07	-8.7 %

Commenting on the figures, the Lord Advocate said: "Crime motivated by hatred is not only a wrong against the individual, but is an affront to our collective values as a community, creating division and fear. That is why we treat it so seriously and why we will continue to do so. People who live in Scotland, regardless of their personal or social circumstances, can be assured that they live in a just society and that they will be protected from crime – and in particular from hate crime."

SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski said: "While it is reassuring that the number of charges for antisemitic hate crime has leveled out, it remains a matter of concern that Jewish people remain 30 times more likely than others to be targeted for their religion, and we very much welcome the attention that both the Scottish Government and Police Scotland are giving to this. We encourage members of the Community to report all incidents, however apparently trivial, as they may assist the police and prosecutors in identifying patterns of behaviour."

## Complacency VERGING ON Complicity

... was the striking phrase MPs used to describe the attitude of international charities to "endemic abuse" by their staff in crisis zones. Sadly, these phrases seem also to apply to the Labour Party. Reports of antisemitic comments by senior figures surface almost daily, yet the leadership takes no action. Despite a series of unprecedented manifestations of communal unanimity – the "Enough is Enough" demonstration at Westminster, an open letter signed by 68 leaders of all the Jewish denominations in the UK, and a joint front page editorial

in the main communal newspapers – Labour's National Executive Committee rejected the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism, preferring their own watered-down version that seems designed to let their less savoury members off the hook.

However leading members of Scottish Labour, including front-benchers Anas Sarwar, Jackie Baillie, and Monica Lennon, and former leader Kezia Dugdale have very strongly and publicly called for the party to adopt the definition in full, although their Scottish Leader, Richard Leonard, has refused to do so. SCoJeC has also discussed these issues with politicians and officials from other parties, and Director Ephraim Borowski recently spoke about antisemitism to the Cross Party Group on Freedom of Religion. We have also arranged a joint meeting with Anas Sarwar's Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia on *Islamophobia and antisemitism – shared experiences, shared challenges, shared ideas*, in the Parliament on 23rd October.



Anas Sarwar  
@AnasSarwar

I can't believe I actually need to say this. The Labour Party must adopt the IHRA definition of anti-semitism now. No consultation or discussion required. The party OF equality should be leading the fight FOR equality.

6:23 pm · 17 Jul 2018

30 Retweets 64 Likes



Around 50 people joined the Scottish Israel Cultural Association in Linlithgow to welcome the Israeli Women's Road Cycling Team to Scotland for the European Championships.







# Munch Time!

There was plenty of food to go around recently when pupils of two schools, one in Glasgow and one in Edinburgh, learned about aspects of Judaism and enjoyed the symbolic foods of the Seder during one visit and grape juice and challah during the other.

Pupils of P3 at Battlefield Primary School in Glasgow had been learning about Pesach, and Volunteer Ambassador Cheryl Goldberg, with an array of props, enhanced their learning through role-play of the story of Moses (assisted by 'Shaun the Sheep'), Pharaoh, and the Ten Plagues. After a successful crossing of the Red Sea, the class celebrated by sampling the seder foods and matzah crackers. One pupil commented that the charoset tasted "just like apple crumble – yum!"

A small class of teenage pupils at Pilrig Park School in Edinburgh learned about Shabbat with Joanne Gabbay and Margalit Borowski, who presented an activity-based session through the senses of sight, smell, and touch. The pupils also enjoyed trying on kippot and a tallit, rolling out a model Torah Scroll and holding the silver yad, tasting grape juice and sampling challot (specially prepared earlier!). They enjoyed the experience of working with a basinful of dough (also prepared earlier) as they kneaded and plaited their own challah. The class teacher, Mr Bewick, organised the school ovens while the pupils were creating their shapes, and, before the visitors had left, the first batch of challot was being baked ready to be taken home at the end of the day.

Mr Bewick commented, "Activities were spot-on for our special needs school: sensory, creative, hands-on. The materials were ideal and reflected considerable time and generosity on the part of the community ambassadors who were highly organised, prepared, and professional. They set a delightful tone with our pupils, were extremely knowledgeable on the subject matter, and shared it as part of a living faith in Scotland."

ANTICLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: PUPILS AT BALARNOCK, BATTLEFIELD, AND PILRIG PARK PRIMARY SCHOOLS.



## Two Hundred Years of SCOTTISH JEWRY



After seven years of research, the completion of the project was marked at a SJAC event at Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow with the launch of the 'Family Tree of Scottish Jewry', as well as a new book, *Two Hundred Years of Scottish Jewry*.

Around 60 people heard the keynote speech by Scotland's leading historian, Sir Tom Devine, who described the study and the new volume as a 'landmark' both in Jewish and Scottish history. He underscored the rapid acculturation of the Jews in Scotland, suggesting that it was their 'social capital' that gave

them the skills to succeed in the various sectors of Scottish society. These included medicine, law, arts, and culture, all based on an entrepreneurial and professional spirit that gave the second generation the aspirations to make their way in their new country and to enrich the society that, in the main, had welcomed them. He compared this social advancement with that of other minority communities in Scotland, such as the Irish, Italians, and Lithuanian Catholics.

Dr Neville Lamdan, Chairman of the International Institute of Jewish Genealogy and the creator of the project, outlined what had been achieved and how the understanding of Jewish history in Scotland needed to be revised, as shown in the project's publications. Harvey Kaplan, Director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, gave a demonstration of the 'Family Tree', which contains over 100,000 names and will be a major asset for the further study of Jewish family history in Scotland and the community in general.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Kenneth Collins, Chair of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre and editor of the new book *Two Hundred Years of Scottish Jewry*. Copies of this book (£20) and of the shorter introduction to the project *The Jewish Experience in Scotland* (£10) can be ordered from the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre at [info@sjac.org.uk](mailto:info@sjac.org.uk).



## Another Successful Year



SCoJeC was delighted to welcome two guest speakers to our AGM in June, Sabir Zazai, the new CEO of the Scottish Refugee Council, and the new President of the Board of Deputies, Marie van der Zyl (below right, with SCoJeC Chair Micheline Brannan, centre)

Sabir spoke movingly of his own experience as a refugee. His family spent ten years as internal refugees from the war in Afghanistan before sending him abroad to escape conscription by the Taliban. After he was granted asylum, he lived in Coventry, where the bombed cathedral has become a symbol of coexistence. He compared Scotland's integration strategy favourably with England, and welcomed SCoJeC's work with refugee organisations. Marie said she intended to be "a president for the whole of the UK", and praised SCoJeC and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council for their success in promoting the interests of Jewish people in Scotland. She said that London has a lot to learn! Micheline reported on the year's activities, and thanked all SCoJeC's staff for their enormous dedication, and community funders and the Scottish Government for their continuing financial support. She commented:

"It is amazing how much SCoJeC can achieve with scarce resources. We have held educational and outreach events all over Scotland, giving Jewish people in far flung places a sense of belonging to our community, and educating their non-Jewish neighbours about Jews and Judaism, in a way that is always well-received. While antisemitic incidents and hostility to Israel continue to affect the community, both on line and on the streets, Scotland remains a good place to be Jewish."

SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski commented that SCoJeC's new strapline, *Representing, Connecting, and Supporting Jewish People in Scotland* captures the essence of our work. He emphasised the essential link between these functions, because "we can only represent Jewish people in Scotland if we listen to what they have to say, and we can only hear what they have to say if we get them in the same room, and we can only get them into the room by putting on events that attract them there."

The following office-bearers were elected:

Chair, Micheline Brannan; Vice-chair, Fiona Brodie; Hon Secretary, Simon Dover.



## Community Leaders Meet First Minister

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon welcomed SCoJeC Chair Micheline Brannan to St Andrews House in June with Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl and Glasgow Jewish Representative Council co-president Evy Yedd. They had a very positive meeting and discussed antisemitism, Scotland's Jewish Community, and the impact of attitudes to Israel on Jewish people in Scotland.

Micheline said, "We raised concerns about antisemitism, telling the First Minister the finding of our Scottish Government-funded inquiry into *What's Changed about Being Jewish in Scotland* that for the first time in recent memory, Jewish people in Scotland are feeling uncomfortable about openly identifying as Jewish. We praised the First Minister's lead on adopting the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism, which recognises how delegitimisation, demonisation, and double standards applied to Israel can cross the line into antisemitism."

After the meeting, the First Minister said: "I was clear that my government will not tolerate antisemitism in Scotland and will work with the Jewish community and all others to defeat it. We were very proud to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism and we would call on all others who have not yet done so to do so. I re-emphasised my government's commitment to a two-state solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, leading to a secure Israel alongside a secure and viable Palestinian state. I look forward to continuing these valuable conversations. The Jewish community is a vital part of our national life in Scotland."

Micheline added: "We had a wonderful reception from the First Minister who listened very carefully to everything we said, and reaffirmed her warmth towards the Jewish community. It was reassuring to hear her reiterate her firm rejection of antisemitism, no matter what the source, and her willingness to take action to prevent it. We thanked her for her support through meetings and participation in community events, and she was enthusiastic for that to continue. Notwithstanding the occasional difficulties faced by members of the community, we assured her that Scotland is a good place to be Jewish."



## SCoJeC

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities



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