

FOUR CORNERS אברדן ABERDEEN'S Ark

The North-East Jewish community has celebrated the reopening of Britain's most northerly synagogue with a rededication Shabbat and an open day for visitors.

After the synagogue was badly damaged by a flood last year, the Aberdeen community didn't think they would be able to raise the £10 000 needed for repairs, but in fact their appeal raised more than £25 000 from donors around the world.

To thank the donors and everyone else who assisted the Community in their time of need, a special open day was held at the synagogue following a weekend of celebrations to rededicate the building. Rev Malcolm Wiseman led the Friday night service and the rededication service on Shabbat. Rev Wiseman knows the Aberdeen Community well, having taken many services in the Synagogue in his role as minister to small communities. Rabbi Robert Ash also joined the Community for Shabbat.

Members of the public, rabbis and leaders of other Scottish communities, other religious leaders, Aberdeen's Lord Provost Barney Crockett, the Deputy

Lord Provost, Aberdeen City Councillors, and the Minister for Local Government, Kevin Stewart (pictured right), who is the local MSP, attended the rededication, and enjoyed the excellent range of traditional Jewish food from Mark's Deli in Glasgow.

Visitors to the building were also able to see the new covers for the Bimah and Torah scrolls, all of which had been designed and embroidered by synagogue member Debby Taylor, and incorporated the names of the people and organisations who helped the Community over the past nine months, as well as Scottish thistles and tartan.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JENNIE MILNE



Enough is Enough

In the wake of the unprecedented communal demonstration at Westminster to proclaim that "Enough is Enough" of antisemitism in the Labour party, leading Scottish Labour politicians approached SCOJeC to assure us of their support.

Former Leader Kezia Dugdale expressed her "sincere and deep disappointment at the reality that these abhorrent views continue to exist in society and in my party". Labour Leader Richard Leonard has invited SCOJeC to address the parliamentary party, and to contribute to a forthcoming training programme. Eastwood Labour publicly declared its "deep sense of shame" that antisemitism "is present to an unacceptable extent in the party at all levels", and Glasgow Labour leaders undertook to support the adoption of the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism, which Edinburgh City Council have also unanimously adopted.

COMMUNAL REPRESENTATIVES MEET (TOP) GLASGOW LABOUR LEADERS; (BOTTOM LEFT) SCOTTISH LABOUR LEADER RICHARD LEONARD AND SHADOW COMMUNITIES SECRETARY MONICA LENNON; (BOTTOM RIGHT) ANAS SARWAR MSP.



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www.scojec.org

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Through the Straits

RABBI SHMUEL
SIMENOWITZ

As we sail away from the tranquil shores of Shavuot – the wedding of the Jewish People with their Creator, celebrating the giving of the Torah at Sinai – we move into a more introspective and foreboding period commencing with the Fast of the 17th day of Tammuz which commemorates a host of historical calamities. Moses smashed the original set of tablets when he saw the Jews worshipping the Golden Calf, the daily sacrifice in the First Temple ceased as a result of the Babylonian siege, and the subsequent breach of the walls of Jerusalem culminated in the destruction of the Temple three weeks later on the ninth day of Av (“Tisha b’Av”).

The three-week period between the 17th of Tammuz and the ninth of Av is referred to as “bein hamitzarim”, literally, “between the straits”.

Emotionally we find ourselves in the doldrums of despair, suspended midway in the air on a Falkirkian Wheel of Misfortune. During this period, mourning customs, such as refraining from haircuts and eating meat and drinking wine are observed, intensifying incrementally until the ninth.

Tisha b’Av is the dark day in the Jewish firmament. It memorialises the destruction of both Temples, and is additionally a temporal repository of all Jewish tragedy throughout the ages. Our mourning is absolute. In addition to fasting, we sit on the floor and read Lamentations and the kinot – dirges and elegies recalling all the tragedies which have befallen us.

Sadly, a tragedy almost greater than the loss of the two Temples is the fact that the passage of time has deadened our sensitivities to the enormity of our loss. It has been suggested that if we cannot cry over the loss, we should at least cry over the fact that we can no longer cry.

The Talmud tells us that while the rabbis grieved upon seeing a fox cavort through the plowed under ruins of the Temples, Rabbi Akiva laughed with joy for he saw in that vignette the fulfilment of the prophet’s words that also predict its ultimate rebuilding.

Happily, “if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?” The 15th day of Av is one of the two most celebratory days in the Jewish calendar (the other, oddly enough, being Yom Kippur) on which Jewish maidens collectively danced in the fields in borrowed white clothing “so as not to embarrass those who lacked”, for the avowed purpose of finding husbands and ensuring Jewish continuity.

So let us join hands and hearts and dance through the fields of our history and collective memories, some lush and verdant, others scorched and parched, a dance that inextricably links us to our past while propelling us towards a rich future.

Rabbi Shmuel Simenowitz is a former maple syrup farmer, “Jewish Blues” singer, and breeder of heavy horses and Highland cattle, and an intellectual property lawyer who has worked with the likes of Bob Dylan and the Beatles, Dean of Yeshivat Iyun Halachah – and lover of all things Scottish, especially the spirit!



SUMMER CALENDAR

Fast of Tammuz:
Dawn till nightfall Sunday 1 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 21 July till nightfall Sunday 22 July

Rosh HaShanah:
Dusk on Sun 9 Sept till nightfall Tues 11 Sept

‘Nazi Dog’ CONVICTION

SCOJeC has welcomed the conviction of a man who made a grossly offensive video of himself training his dog to give a Nazi salute in response to repeated prompts of “Gas the Jews” and “Sieg Heil”. The video has been viewed more than 4 million times on YouTube, and attracted a torrent of comments praising or denying the Holocaust, calling for antisemitic genocide, and other antisemitic themes.

SCOJeC was called to give evidence about ‘jokes’ that minimise and mock the Holocaust, and their effect on the community, many of whom are Holocaust survivors or their descendants. Each time the case appeared in court, we received a large number of abusive and antisemitic messages, including death threats, especially by social media. These have been reported to the police. Meanwhile the culprit has raised £192 000 by crowd-funding for his appeal.



Alice in Vienna

Eighty years after Alice Malcolm fled her native Vienna on the eve of the Nazi takeover, she was personally welcomed back by the President of Austria, Alexander Van der Bellen.

Alice, who has lived in Scotland all her adult life, was accompanied by her children and one of her grandchildren on the visit, which was organised by the Jewish Welcome Service in Vienna with the assistance of SCOJeC’s Fiona Frank. She was the oldest member of this year’s group, and the only one who had been born in Vienna. As well as a formal dinner with the President, she attended the

Shabbat service at the Seitenstettengasse Synagogue, where the Rabbi welcomed her to the synagogue from the pulpit. Alice and her family also visited the building where her grandparents had lived before the war, and met the Ministry of the Interior, who have agreed to place ‘Stolpersteine’ (‘stumbling stone’ memorials inscribed with the names of Holocaust victims) there.

“It was really wonderful to go back after all this time” Alice said. “A big advantage was knowing the language”. President Van der Bellen posted a picture of their meeting on his Facebook page, and wrote, “Alice Malcolm is 93 and lives in Glasgow. Today is her first time since her expulsion in 1939 in the city of her childhood and youth. With all my heart: welcome to Vienna!”

For Alice’s life story, see the Gathering the Voices website www.gatheringthevoices.com.



Family Arts Day

More than 80 young people and their families took part in Jewish Arts Family Book Day at Calderwood Lodge Jewish Primary School. The event, in memory of Naomi Livingstone, a young Glasgow mother who died last year, included storytelling and craft with the PJ Library and community artists Tom Krasny and Roi Carmeli, an illustration session with acclaimed artist and writer Sarah Lightman, a talk about Yiddish with author Ellen Galford, and a performance of Robert Burns in Yiddish by the community’s own National Treasure, Ida Schuster Berkeley.

Event organiser Shayna Conn said: “We are delighted that the event was so successful. It brought the community together in the way that the late Naomi Livingstone strove to achieve”.



Boxing Clever!

SCoJEC is proud to announce that all our Volunteer Educational Ambassadors (VEAs) have now passed their AQA Qualification. Huge congratulations go to our newly-qualified VEAs: Joanne Gabbay, Diane Kay, Cheryl Goldberg, and Matat Jablon. We would also like to thank Margalit Borowski and Debby Taylor for their invaluable mentoring support during school placements, and our former Education Officer Zoe Jacobs who led the extensive training course. The VEAs have hit the ground running and are already delivering Jewish education to both schools and other local organisations.

Our volunteers have also been further afield – Margalit Borowski visited four schools in Arran, and Joe Goldblatt visited eight schools in the Highlands and Orkney, to talk about SCoJEC's acclaimed JOES BOXES – *Jewish Objects for Education in Scotland* – that we provided to all local authorities in Scotland, to help make teaching about Judaism more interesting, relevant, and memorable. Joe reports that, after he demonstrated a Jewish wedding, the 'groom' asked with a shaking voice "Are we really married?!", and was very relieved to be told that Joe isn't licensed to perform marriages in Orkney!

In Glasgow, a 14 year old pupil asked to borrow one of the boxes. John has a deep personal interest in Judaism, and, together with his former primary 7 teacher, has been researching Judaism in his own time. When he returned the box, John said:

'The JOES box scheme was great for me and one of my previous teachers to get a hands on experience of Jewish life. Judaism fascinates us both and to be able to get to see and touch objects that people use to show love for G-d is an ultimately incredible experience! The JOES box scheme was a fantastic idea, and is a fantastic way to teach young people like myself another culture and religion.'

If you would like to book a session for your local school or other organisation, or to borrow one of JOES Boxes, please contact us using the form at www.scojec.org/school-booking-form.html

TOP TO BOTTOM: SCoJEC'S VOLUNTEER EDUCATIONAL AMBASSADORS SHOWING OFF THEIR CERTIFICATES; JOE GOLDBLATT WITH EXCITED PUPILS AND "JOES BOX" AT THE TAOBH NA PAIRCE GELIC SCHOOL IN LEITH; MARGALIT BOROWSKI EXPLAINING A TALLIT ON ARRAN.



Nights at the Opera



Scotland's historic synagogues have become opera houses! A candle-lit Garnethill (above) was the spectacular setting for a 14-piece orchestra and singers including acclaimed soprano Catriona Clark. Edinburgh's opera night (below) also featured Classical Musicians Scotland, and followed a light supper of chicken soup and hot salt beef, which amazingly was many visitors' first experience of tradition European Jewish cuisine!

John Danzig, Chair of Edinburgh Synagogue, said: "We are very excited by this initiative. We have passion and vision, and Jewish Scotland is thriving."



New Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre

The Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed to contribute the bulk of the £465 000 needed to establish a new Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre in Garnethill Synagogue in the centre of Glasgow. Other major funding has been committed by The Association of Jewish Refugees, the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust, and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The centre – a partnership between the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre and Garnethill Synagogue Preservation Trust – will include a Scottish Holocaust-era Study Centre with resources for education, research, and other visitors, and there will be a public display about refugees and survivors who found sanctuary and built a new life in Scotland. The A-listed Garnethill Synagogue, Scotland's oldest, which opened in 1879, will also be opened up to the public, and there will be a local Heritage Walking Trail, highlighting the area's importance as a focus of refugee activity, especially during the Second World War, when the synagogue helped set up a hostel for refugee boys, and there was a nearby hostel for refugee girls and women and a centre for refugees to meet. A number of refugees studied or taught at renowned Glasgow School of Art, which is only two blocks away. If you can assist with information, on-going funding or volunteering contact info@sjac.org.uk or call 0141 332 4911

IMAGE OF GARNETHILL SYNAGOGUE REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF SCOTTISH JEWISH ARCHIVES CENTRE

Dumfries Seder

A very successful evening was held in Dumfries when 23 people from the Jewish community across the region sat down to celebrate Passover. Logistically this proved quite a challenge because this year the first night of Pesach fell on Good Friday at the beginning of a busy Easter weekend.

The community were treated to a variety of interesting food as the Seder was a pot luck event and everyone brought a dish. The variety of food on offer showed how international our Community in the South West of Scotland is. We were treated to dishes from Iraq, Yemen, Hungary, Poland, India, and last but not least Scotland. We did our best to follow an orthodox Haggadah but there is no doubt that the unique diversity of nationalities produced a very colourful Seder.

The Community will meet again in July for a screening of the film *Remember Baghdad* and then at Chanukah.

ANDREW CROSBIE

sCoJeC's Summer Events

■ Sunday 17 June, Stirling: *Charlie's Promise*

An afternoon with award-winning author Annemarie Allan: reading, discussion, and bagel buffet

2-4.30PM • SMITH ART GALLERY & MUSEUM, DUMBARTON ROAD, STIRLING, FK8 2RQ

Charlie's Promise is set on the cusp of World War II. Two young friends in a small Scottish harbour town find a hungry and frightened Jewish boy named Jozef who has escaped Nazi Germany in the hope of finding refuge with relatives in Scotland.

Book at www.scojec.org/charlie.html

■ Monday 2 July, Arran: *'The Dybbuk' and other Ghost Stories*

An evening with author Lynn Holden: readings, kosher buffet, and writing workshop

6.30PM • IN A PRIVATE HOME ON ARRAN • DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED AFTER BOOKING

Lynn has written about immigrants, refugees, ghosts, and dybbuks, and is the author of *An Encyclopedia of Taboos*.

Booking essential, at www.scojec.org/ghost.html or contact events@scojec.org

■ Thursday 5 July, Dumfries: *Remembering Baghdad*

A film by Fiona Murphy

6PM • ROBERT BURNS CENTRE FILM THEATRE, MILL ROAD, DUMFRIES DG2 7BE

Iraq's last Jews tell the story of their country. Five Iraqi Jewish families look back on a scarcely imaginable time in Baghdad, when Iraq was once one of the most diverse and tolerant places on earth. Today, after decades of war and instability, Iraq is a very different place, but Londoner Edwin Shuker decides to return to the country he loved ...

Book at <http://www.rbcft.co.uk>

■ Friday 26 to Sunday 28 October, Edinburgh:

Scotland's Jewish Gathering 2018

To register interest, please contact gathering@scojec.org

PRIVACY NOTICE

New data protection regulations came into effect on 25th May to give individuals more control over any data from which they could be identified. These regulations permit organisations to use personal data provided they comply with one of the six "lawful bases for processing", one of which is the "legitimate interests" of either the individual, the organisation, or a third party.

sCoJeC has undertaken an audit of the data we hold, and concluded that continuing to circulate Four Corners and our occasional e-news is a reasonable and proportionate way for us to promote our activities and inform Jewish people in Scotland of matters that might interest or affect them.

The only data sCoJeC holds about people on these lists is your name, address or e-mail address, and possibly your phone number, and we will only use these to send you information and publicity about our activities and other matters of interest to Jewish people in Scotland. We will not share your data with any other body, and of course, you have the right to ask to be removed from our mailing lists by emailing unsubscribe@scojec.org.

Access our full Data Processing and Protection Policy at www.scojec.org/policies.html



Seret Cinema COMES TO SCOTLAND

The Seret International Film Festival returned to Scotland with well-attended screenings in Edinburgh of *The Testament* and *Ben Gurion, Epilogue*. The festival, which also had showings in London and Brighton, is committed to a line-up of films reflecting the multicultural mix that makes up modern Israel, and is the vision of three Israeli women - Anat Koren, Odelia Haroush, and Patty Hochman - who are all passionate about film. The showings in the Cameo Cinema were hosted by the Scottish Israeli Cultural Association (SICA).

SICA will continue to work with BEMIS, Seret, and other partners to bring Israeli cultural events to Scotland. SICA is by Israelis, for Israelis and for anyone who wishes to take part, share, learn and enjoy!

sCoJeC



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sCoJeC REALLY NEEDS YOUR GENEROUS ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE ALL OUR WORK.

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