



Woodland Welcome



Building on our previous successful virtual events held jointly with Interfaith Glasgow's Weekend Club, SCoJeC was delighted to join Scottish Forestry for an afternoon of activities and interfaith dialogue in the outdoor setting of Greenbank Garden in Clarkston. The Weekend Club is an interfaith response to the social isolation often experienced by people from refugee backgrounds, which aims to address the need for newcomers to get to know Glasgow and Scotland better, build social connections, and practise speaking English in fun and relaxed settings.

Craig and Nicole from Operation Outdoor Play led the group in a 'tree-sure' hunt around the woodlands, identifying different types of trees and their leaves, followed by a group craft session. Everyone then came together to plant trees in compostable pots to be distributed among local communal organisations. Philip Mendelsohn, Chair of Interfaith Glasgow and Treasurer of SCoJeC, led a short discussion about Judaism and the Jewish community, and explained some traditional blessings related to nature.

Lynnda Wardle, Programme Manager at Interfaith Scotland, said, "We shared a wonderful afternoon in the autumn sunshine, appreciating what the beautiful site has to offer, admiring 200-year-old trees, and in the run-up to COP26, it was relevant to plant trees and discuss the importance of preserving nature for the future of our planet."



WESTMINSTER SNP Leaders VISIT GIFFNOCK SHUL

SCoJeC was delighted to arrange for Ian Blackford and Kirsten Oswald, the Westminster Leader and Deputy Leader of the SNP, to visit Giffnock Synagogue. Jewish Student Chaplain Rabbi Aharon Lemberger and SCoJeC Treasurer Philip Mendelsohn explained the Torah scrolls and showed them John K Clark's magnificent painted glass windows, which were originally commissioned for Queen's Park synagogue.

Glasgow Rep Council President Paul Edlin and SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski then told the visitors about antisemitic incidents during the recent war in Gaza, and initiatives to engage with the Muslim community. Ian Blackford commented "I enjoyed the constructive and wide-ranging discussion. We recognise the fears of the Jewish community over antisemitism and are clear that one instance of antisemitism is one too many. We want Scotland's Jewish community to feel safe."



Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities

www.SCoJeC.org

REPRESENTING, CONNECTING, AND SUPPORTING
JEWISH PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND



facebook.com/scojec



twitter.com/scojec



youtube.com/c/scojec

ISSUE 71 • CHANUKAH 5782 • WINTER 2021



UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021



CJC at COP26

A MESSAGE FROM the Maccabees

November is not usually a month to inspire anyone. Kicked off by the bizarre 'trick-or-treating' (why did we let the Americans do that to us?) and then followed swiftly by bonfire night – at least it's less about anti-Catholic effigy burning nowadays! – the month tends to settle into post-autumnal gloom.

But this year, the first two weeks of the month, not least in Scotland, but also all around the world, the mood was sharpened and hardened by COP26. By the time you read this, you'll know the answer but as I write, I don't. Will the world's leaders finally step up with the kinds of offers that they very reasonably know we actually don't want them to make? Yes, I know we all say we want the climate crisis addressed and resolved, but do we really? It'll cost us and it'll inconvenience us. Leaders of democratic countries are afraid of being thrown out. Despotism is afraid of civil unrest.

I'm at COP as CEO of the Commonwealth Jewish Council and we're hosting a panel at which we will ask several leading personalities, not least our own Chief Rabbi, 'Are Religious Leaders Rising to the Climate Challenge?' From a cursory glance, I'd say, mostly not. Chief Rabbi Mirvis has been strikingly forthright in support of action and COP will also be graced by Rabbis Mason and Wittenberg, from different wings of the Jewish community, but both notable for their espousal of the issues and their articulation of the need for Jews to play a part. Famously too, the Pope made a major and early statement about the *religious* need to address climate challenges.

But taken overall, we don't see many religious leaders urging their flocks to make significant changes. Within the Jewish world, for the few rabbis we can name, there are oceans of others who haven't even noted that something needs to be done, even if not by them. It's similar in other religious communities too.

It's not good enough to mouth platitudes, reminding everyone of beautiful teachings to be found in the tradition. Leaders should strive to lead.

With Chanukah brightening (literally!) the end of November we must be aware that those Maccabees back in the day didn't just talk. They acted and called others to arms with them to save the day. They recognised urgency. I'm not saying we should all move to mud huts and ride bicycles. If you don't like that kind of prescription, then by all means act to ensure that exceptional money is devoted to devising smart technological ways out. There are many types of ways forward, but none of them includes doing nothing!

The CJC has put out five easy ways you can take action to make a difference. Check it out at <https://tinyurl.com/cjc-cop> and do at least one of them. Those Maccabees knew that you didn't put off action until all the outcomes were clear. They lit the Menorah and got going. And, unexpectedly, they found a wonderful oil conservation system. Now wouldn't that be wonderful.

Chanukah sameach – but do something!

CLIVE A LAWTON – CEO, COMMONWEALTH JEWISH COUNCIL

COMMONWEALTH
JEWISH COUNCIL PANEL
ON FIRST DAY OF THE
CONFERENCE: (L TO R)
CHIEF RABBI
EPHRAIM MIRVIS;
BISHOP OLIVIA GRAHAM;
CHIEF IMAM
SAYED ALI ABBAS RAZAWI;
COMMONWEALTH
JEWISH COUNCIL CEO
CLIVE LAWTON.



TOP TO BOTTOM:
ECO-SYNAGOGUE AND
BOARD OF DEPUTIES
AT GARNETHILL
SYNAGOGUE;
TALANOAH DIALOGUE IN
GARNETHILL;
ECO-RABBIS AT
INTERFAITH VIGIL
IN GEORGE SQUARE.

WINTER CALENDAR

★ Chanukah: first candle after dark Sunday 28 November, eighth candle after dark Sunday 5 December

★ Fast of Tevet: Tues 14 Dec ★ Tu b'Shevat: Mon 17 Jan ★ Fast of Esther: Wed 16 Mar ★ Purim: Wed night 16 - Thu 17 Mar

A Matana a Month

The Matana Club is now one year old and continues to bring the gift of joy and fun to Jewish children across Scotland.

The Matana (*gift in Hebrew*) Club, is a monthly free surprise box sent by post, with fun activities, information, recipes, food, and crafts relating to upcoming Jewish holidays. The Club, which has been running since September 2020, is for Jewish children across Scotland, in nursery through to P7. It also includes regular online sessions.

The Club currently reaches 180 children from more than 21 locations across the country, including Campbeltown, the Isle of Lewis, Pittenweem, and Dunbar, as well as the more populous areas of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Each member receives the same box, meaning that the fun educational learning is not hampered by geographical location or proximity to a Jewish Community hub.

The Scotland Virtual Committee, who run the Matana Club, also reflects the desire to create a Scotland-wide Jewish identity. The committee consists of representatives from all of the Jewish Youth Educational providers across the country, including UJIA, Giffnock Newton Mearns Shul, Enjoy, Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, Garnethill Hebrew Congregation, Glasgow Reform Synagogue, Glasgow Zionist Federation, 5th Giffnock Guides, and Glasgow JLGB, as well as SCoJEC.

Throughout last year, even during the most stringent of lockdowns, children across Scotland had fun exploring Jewish traditions through a variety of at-home activities and online sessions, including a Tu B'Shvat seder, a chocolate seder at Pesach, a rousing Chanukah sing-along and make-your-own chanukiah at Chanukah, an online art session with an Israeli illustrator at Purim in partnership with PJ Library, a paper cutting session with a local Scottish artists for Shavuot, and a Tel Aviv beach party to celebrate the end of term. Learning has never been so fun and exciting.

As things have been easing and opening, so too has Matana Club. In August 2021, with the financial help of UJIA's Summer Engagement Fund, Matana broke from its online presence and toured Scotland. It visited East Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Fife, and Edinburgh to offer fun face-to-face sessions where more than 150 people attended across the four locations. Families gathered and got to know their Jewish neighbours and start to create their own communities.

Matana Club has ambitious plans for the future, including more face-to-face meetings across Scotland. Online sessions will still be available. Just as things change due to the pandemic, so too does Matana Club, reflecting the needs of members; creating a vibrant Scottish Jewish community for children, young people, and families.

To join Matana Club, visit: bit.ly/matanascotland



Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre AND HOLOCAUST-ERA STUDY CENTRE

KERRY PATTERSON
HERITAGE CENTRE MANAGER

July saw the launch of the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre, a joint initiative between the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre and Garnethill Synagogue Preservation Trust to enable more people to enjoy historic Garnethill Synagogue and unique SJAC archive collections. A team of volunteers will help visitors to explore the history and experiences of Jewish people in Scotland and learn how the development of Scotland has been affected by Jewish immigration over 200 years. The Centre also includes a Scottish Holocaust-era Study room with specialist reference library, digital research resources, and a school visit facility.

Although an official launch event wasn't possible, the Centre has already welcomed Glasgow Lord Provost Philip Braat, Kaukab Stewart MSP, Patrick Grady MP, Alison Thewlis MP, representatives of the Architectural Heritage Trust, and Community Security Trust, as well as individual visitors, and has been mentioned in the Scottish Parliament.

The Centre is now developing a school visit service that will support students to work with interactive learning kits based on Holocaust-era refugee collections held in the Archives. These follow the experiences of refugees Dorrit Sim, Ernst Marchand, and Hilda Goldwag, who fled from Nazi Germany and occupied Europe, and found a safe haven in Scotland before the outbreak of the Second World War. Students will also be able to reflect on wider issues of citizenship, democracy, persecution, and belonging, through the refugees' experiences.

For more info and to book a guided tour see www.sjhc.org.uk or email info@sjhc.org.uk





Jewish Scotland Gets Connected!

It's become a cliché that, although Covid has been difficult for everyone, and tragic for too many, there were some unexpected benefits – organisations discovered that virtual activities could reach people who can't participate in live activities because of disability, childcare responsibilities, transport difficulties, or other reasons. We don't want to lose this advantage, so SCoJeC was delighted to announce in March that we have been awarded very significant funding for a project to encourage organisations in the Scottish community to offer hybrid programming, to enable people to participate fully in events either in person and online.

We were delighted by the wide range of communal organisations that expressed an interest in benefiting from this project, including the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, synagogues in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre, and Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.

Mike Beral, our Programme Manager (top left), has organised numerous hybrid events for a number of communities in London. He is supported by two recent arrivals in the Scottish Community, Technical Assistants Sami Zerovabell in the west of Scotland (lower left) and Adam Schwartz in the east (lower right), and in addition, Fiona Frank, SCoJeC's acclaimed former Projects and Outreach Manager (top right), will be delivering some Zoom training.

We have also bought top of the range equipment for communal organisations across the whole country to use. Hands-on training events will take place mainly in Glasgow and Edinburgh and will be recorded for use as a revision guide and resource for others who are not able to attend.

The project has now taken off, with a training session in Edinburgh's Salisbury Centre. This was followed by the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre's (EJCC) first live audience event since the pandemic, chaired by David Neville. Mia Hasenson-Gross, Executive Director of Jewish human rights group René Cassin, gave a presentation from her home in London to raise awareness of the oppression of Uyghurs in China, and it was also shared on Zoom by the JSC team to create a truly hybrid occasion. Hilary Rifkind, Chair of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, who attended the training session in person and then the EJCC event remotely, reported that *"It felt quite intimate and probably no different from being in the room."* Sadly though, it was not possible to share the excellent refreshments with the digital participants!

A few days later, the project supported another hybrid event, this time the launch of a new book by former SCoJeC Chair Kenneth Collins. *Zev's Children – an International Jewish Family* follows the descendants of Kenneth's five-times-great great-grandfather from Ukraine in 1740 to present day Argentina, Russia, the United States, Israel, and, of course, Scotland. Several of those relatives and others from various parts of the world, as well as around Scotland, participated remotely alongside the live audience at the Archives Centre in Glasgow. Archives trustee Fiona Brodie commented, *"We made use of some of the new equipment purchased by the project, and uploaded a recording to our YouTube channel for others to view later. Our thanks are due to the Project for an excellent start."*



Klezmer FROM LOCH AWE

One of SCoJeC's main purposes is to bring Jewish people in Scotland together, so we were delighted to reunite celebrated Klezmer musicians Gica Loening and Michael Alpert for the first time since lockdown to share a variety of traditional and more recently composed music with an audience around the country.

A live audience of friends and family, in a cottage on the banks of Loch Awe, cheered as Michael and Gica used their music to introduce us to their own family histories and what brought them to Scotland. Michael's rendition of the Sy Kahn song *Crossing the Border* prompted Gica to share how her parents 'crossed the border' in 1939 when they fled to Edinburgh from Berlin, and how they built a home for themselves on the East Coast. These heart-warming tales added to the cozy atmosphere of the evening. Gica reflected after the event that: *"It was lovely to beam our klezmer, Scots tunes, and stories out to SCoJeC members, friends, and family across Scotland and beyond, from the intimate setting of a West Highland coast rural retreat. It was a unique experience to play for both zoom as well as a small in-house live audience, and we hope that the convivial atmosphere carried across the airwaves. We look forward to playing for you all in person, face to face, heart to heart as soon as we can!"*

Adam Schwartz, one of JSC's Technical Assistants, commented *"It was a delight to be a part of this event, which evoked the sense of Yiddish culture with a modern twist, and Michael and Gica's storytelling connected the audience to their own life story. I felt very honoured to present Gica and Michael to the Jewish communities across Scotland. Here's to more amazing Jewish programming in Scotland!"*



SCoJeC



JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
222 FENWICK ROAD, GLASGOW G46 6UE

scojec@scojec.org 0141-638 6411

POLICY & RESEARCH LEAH
leah@scojec.org 0141-638 6411

PROJECTS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT KIRSTY
kirsty@scojec.org 07779-206 522

EDUCATION
education@scojec.org 0141-638 6411

JEWISH SCOTLAND CONNECTED MIKE
mike@scojec.org 07871-804 081

Contacts in the Corners

GLASGOW EVY
office@glasgowjewishrepcouncil.org 0141-577 8200

EDINBURGH
edinburgh@scojec.org 0141-638 6411

TAYSIDE & FIFE PAUL
taysideandfife@scojec.org 07906-219 262

ABERDEEN
aberdeensynagogue@gmail.com 07955-706 333

HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS, BORDERS AND ELSEWHERE
communities@scojec.org 0141-638 6411

SCOTTISH ISRAELI CULTURAL ASSOCIATION (SICA)
info@scotil.org

STUDENTS AHARON
scotchaplain@mychaplancy.co.uk 07791-292 790
HODAYA
07817-250 732

◆ Forthcoming Events:

- ◆ Northern lights: Join in Scotland-wide celebrations of Chanukah, Sun 28 Nov to Sun 5 Dec.
- ◆ Look out also for our varied programme including panel discussions on sectarianism in football, and evenings of music and culture.

SEE MORE DETAILS AT:
www.scojec.org/whats-on.html

◆ News:

SIGN UP FOR RSS NEWS FEEDS:
www.scojec.org/rss/rss.xml

SIGN UP FOR E-NEWS, NEWSLETTERS, ETC:
www.scojec.org/mailling-lists.html

◆ Coronavirus Pandemic Info:

COMMUNAL SUPPORT, WELFARE SERVICES, & ACTIVITIES:
www.scojec.org/lockdown.html

◆ SCoJeC is grateful to:

- ◆ Glasgow Jewish Community Trust
- ◆ Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust
- ◆ JDC Tikkun in Action Fund
- ◆ Eloise Bishop (Woodlands photographs, p1)
- ◆ Alan Kay (CoP photographs, p2)

◆ Help SCoJeC help your community:

- ◆ DONATE AT: www.scojec.org/donate.html
- ◆ Amazon will donate 5p for every £10 you spend! <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC029438>

The views expressed in Four Corners are those of the author, not necessarily of the Council.

All text and illustrations are copyright and may only be reproduced with permission and acknowledgement.

© SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES (SCOJEC)
Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438