



On the Fringe OPEN DAY

After a two-year absence because of the pandemic, the Festival and Fringe returned to Edinburgh this year, and with them a large variety of Jewish themes and Jewish performers, inspiring the local community to revive their long-established Festival Open Day. As hallowed by tradition, this took place in the landmark Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation building, but for the first time it was hosted jointly with the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre, whose chair, Adrian Harris, produced and compèred the show. The capacity crowd of well over 100, including many from Glasgow and elsewhere, were also treated to a lavish bagel lunch.

TOP: EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY KLEZMER BAND
LED BY PHIL ALEXANDER

SECOND ROW: *LIFE BEFORE THE LINE*, DANIEL CAINER,
CAROLE SHAW IN *AMAZING ADVENTURES OF HER MAJESTY -
PLATINUM JUBILEE EDITION*.

COLLAGE ALSO INCLUDES: JEREMY SASSOON, STEVE SPIRO;
ERIN HUNTER IN *SURFING THE HOLYLAND*, FRECHOT ENSEMBLE IN
MATERNITY; PRUDENCE WRIGHT HOLMES IN *HIDING ANNE FRANK*;
RACHEL CREEGER IN *PRAY IT FORWARD*; AMY LEVER;
MELANIE GALL IN *INGENUE*.



First Minister's New Year Greetings

I send my warmest wishes to our Jewish communities here in Scotland and around the world, as you begin this special season of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

I imagine that in the wake of the pandemic, many of you are finding that you approach the old traditions with new excitement and anticipation. The experiences of the last two years have certainly taught us to treasure each and every gathering as a precious opportunity. I know you will cherish the presence of family and friends, and the chance to share the rituals and celebrations of your heritage together.

As this festival is a time to reflect on the past and look to the future, I want to reiterate that the Scottish Government places a great value on our strong relationship with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities and those whom you work so tirelessly to represent. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to hold meetings this year with members of the Jewish community, including the meeting with Jewish students to hear their experiences of life in Scotland and at university.

Together, we will continue to work towards a vision of strong, connected and resilient communities, and to resist divisive, hateful narratives which threaten that unity. Scotland will always be a home for people of all faiths and none to follow their ways of life freely.

I hope the goodness and sweetness of Rosh HaShanah remain with you for the year ahead. On behalf of the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland, I wish you *Shanah Tovah!*



שנה טובה

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Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities

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Chaplaincy Changes

Edinburgh University now has the largest Jewish Student Society in the UK, and as a result University Jewish Chaplaincy has decided to create a second chaplaincy post for Scotland. We are therefore delighted to welcome Rabbi Eliran Shabo and his wife Ayalah, who will look after the welfare of Jewish students in Edinburgh and other universities and colleges on the East Coast, while Aharon and Hodaya Lemberger will continue to be responsible for students in Glasgow and the West.



Eliran and Ayalah (left, in Edinburgh) were both born in Israel and met at university when they worked together in the student union. Eliran got his Rabbinical Ordination from the Ohr Torah Stone organisation and together with Ayalah graduated from a program for Educators and Rabbis in the Diaspora. For the past two years they have lived in Athens, where Eliran was the Junior Rabbi and led the Jewish Studies program for high school students. Initially Ayalah was responsible for collaboration between the local and Israeli communities and later taught the high-school programme at teen level. They will be living near Edinburgh University with their children Avigail Bella (5) and Nadav Meir (2), and they are looking forward to welcoming the students to their home.

Previously Rabbi Lemberger (below, with Students in Ukraine, and with Humza Yousaf (left) and Hodaya) was Chaplain for the whole of Scotland, and also part-time Rabbi of Newton Mearns Synagogue. Now, following its merger with Giffnock, he has been appointed as the Youth Rabbi of the combined Giffnock Newton Mearns Synagogue, and, together with Hodaya, will continue to support Jewish students in and around Glasgow. We wish them all success in their new posts.



Three Scots, an Indian, and an American went into a bar ...

... for a special tasting of Israeli whisky – in Falkirk!

In July the whisky of the month at the monthly whisky-tasting at Behind The Wall, a bar in the centre of Falkirk, was from the Milk & Honey distillery in Tel Aviv. The group of local aficionados was augmented for the occasion by an American rabbi, three members of the Giffnock Jewish community, and a senior member of Falkirk's local Jewish community. The distillery's local representative, who hails from Goa in India, introduced us to six different single malts, and we think there was also a bonus seventh that we were too far gone to appreciate!



High Holidays

HOLIDAYS THAT TAKE US HIGH

RABBI AHARON LEMBERGER

Are these Days of Awe uplifting or frightening?

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur can be perceived as scary days, when one comes to shul in formal dress, all serious, ready to repent and ask forgiveness and waiting for judgement.

That is what I was taught as a kid about these special days. But later on I have learned that there is a different way to look at these days, a way that really helps one rise, become motivated and empowered.

The time from Rosh Hashanah till Yom Kippur is called "Aseret Yemei T'shuvah" – The ten days of T'shuvah. What does "T'shuvah" actually mean and how is it done?

The word "T'shuvah" comes from the word Lashuv, which means to return. To do T'shuvah means to return. But return to where?

To answer that we need to understand one basic concept that we say at the end of our prayer on Yom Kippur – "elokai, ad shelo notsarti aini kda" – "My God, till the day I was born, there was no need for me". But, the day Hashem decided I need to be born, it means that the world can not survive without me in it, since there is something special, some task, mission or action, that only I, with my special skills and challenges, can do.

Take a moment to think and understand how special is that! How amazing to recognise the fact that each one of us is here for a reason, with something special about us!

Sadly, during our daily life, throughout the year, usually we don't have time to think about this, and life stirs us away from our purpose. That is why once a year we have this opportunity to return – to go back to that moment when we were born and God announced that we are needed in this world, in order to get back on the path of seeking, using the tools the Torah gives us, our own "letter in the Torah", our special task that we must achieve in this world.

When we crown Hashem and announce that he is King of the universe, it means that he is leading it, and therefore there is a purpose for everything, and a reason for us to be born when and where we were born and with our own skill set.

When we hear the Shofar blowing, we need to wake up and ask ourselves –

Do I know who am I?

Why am I here?

How do I use my desires and skills to fulfil that need that the world had, that I was born for?

Festival Calendar 5783

Rosh haShanah	Sun 25 Sept (evening) to Tues 27 (night)
Fast of Gedaliah	Wed 28 Sept (dawn to dusk)
Yom Kippur (Kol Nidrei)	Tues 4 Oct (evening)
Yom Kippur day	to Wed 5 Oct (night)
Sukkot	Sun 9 Oct (evening) to Tues 11 (night)
<i>Chol haMoed continues till</i>	
Shmini Atzeret	Sun 16 Oct (evening) to Mon 17
Simchat Torah	Mon 17 Oct (evening) to Tues 18 (night)
Chanukah	Sun 18 Dec (evening) to Mon 26 Dec

The Scottish Clearances AND THE JEWS

BY SHARON SHENHAV

As Israelis, we escape the summer heat of our homeland at our other home on the beautiful, cool, and friendly island of Arran, where we have been welcomed with warmth and generosity, and I find myself heavily involved in island life. A few years ago, my friend Barb Taub and I established the "Arran Jewish Cultural Association" with the help of SCoJeC, and although there are few Jews on the island, our Klezmer concerts, Holocaust memorial events, and bagel workshops have been highly successful and well attended by our non-Jewish neighbors and visitors.

This summer I have taken on a new challenge. A local playwright, Cecily Gill, has written a play, *Sail or Stay*, 19th Centuries, with and about the Arran Clearances in the 18th century when the local landowner, the Duke of Hamilton, sent

farming families to the unknown and foreign shores of Canada, and replaced them with sheep. I was selected to perform a small role, and as I work on my Scottish accent, I am conscious of the similarities between the Clearances and my family's experiences, which included forced expulsions as well as 'voluntary' decisions to leave countries where Jews were persecuted.

My mother's family lived in Cordova, Spain, for much of the Middle Ages, settling in Germany. When a pogrom murdered 1,500 and was expelled in 14th Century, family took the my great great grandfather's parents in the he took his four children to North 1810 year-old survivor to Russia, and in 1880 Dakota, where he failed as a farmer in a mostly American Indian territory.

I grew up in a Jewish neighborhood in Chicago, married a young physician, and completed law school. Successful young professionals, we had a comfortable life, and in 1979, after our son's bar mitzvah, we decided to make Aliyah. Unlike our forebears, this decision was purely voluntary – remembering the yearning of our ancestors for a homeland, we decided we must participate in building the only Jewish state.

As I rehearse saying goodbye to my Scottish island sister, I am conscious of the pain my ancestors must have felt as they left their families, community, and culture for the unknown. While our grandparents and those before them were forced to leave countries which threatened their survival, and embarked on voyages to new cultures, languages, and communities, we were able to plan our move. Unlike our grandparents and the Scottish islanders, we knew (more or less) what to expect. We brought furniture, artwork and appliances; we were welcomed by government representatives, enrolled in Hebrew language courses, and given temporary housing. We had left our ageing parents, siblings, and friends in the "old country", but we are able to visit regularly. Our goodbyes were not final like those of our grandparents and the islanders who left for Canada!

Isle of Arran Concert

When music professor, researcher, and pianist, Dr Deborah Nemko, performed to standing-room-only crowds on Arran in late 2019, nobody could have guessed it would be the last event for over two years. Appropriately, her return in August this year heralded the first new live event for the Arran Jewish Cultural Association, SCoJeC's Arran affiliate.

Dr Nemko's research specialty is recovering works composed by Dutch composers during the Holocaust and restoring them to the performance repertory. Hosted by Alice Maxwell in Lamlash, Dr Nemko's house concert provided a mix of stunning performances of holocaust-era composers including Fania Chapiro and Dick Kattenburg, along with contemporary supporters Maurice Ravel and Johanna Bordewijk-Roepman (whose support of Jewish composers led to Nazi suppression of their own works). Dr Nemko introduced each piece with a brief discussion of the composer's background and historical context. The concert ended on a popular high note as Dr Nemko's piano joined with Alice Maxwell on violin in two rousing final pieces.

The audience greeted the return of live performances with enthusiasm and delight, and chatting around a groaning table afterwards, all agreed they are looking forward to future events on Arran.



A Hybrid Future?

MIKE BERAL, SCoJeC JSC PROGRAMME MANAGER

Nearly 18 months ago, at the height of the pandemic, SCoJeC successfully applied for funding for *Jewish Scotland Connected*, to explore how hybrid technology could overcome lockdown and bring together Jewish people across Scotland for a range of different events. The project was an exciting experiment. Would people want to participate? Could volunteers master the technology? Would the partner organisations grasp the opportunity to extend their reach beyond their traditional local populations?

What none of us could have anticipated was the continuing impact of the pandemic. A hybrid event can only take place in conjunction with a physical one, and for many partners, just getting back to their normal programme of in-person events remains challenging.

We had some great successes. As a result of the project, SCoJeC now owns two full sets of audio and video equipment that can be loaned to partners for their own hybrid events. Nearly 20 volunteers were trained to use the equipment, and there are full user guides on the SCoJeC website. We delivered two large, technically complex events – the annual Glasgow Yom HaShoah and the First Minister's Questions – and several smaller ones. Indeed, Ms Sturgeon commented that this was the first time she had addressed a meeting that was livestreamed in multiple venues and all virtual and live audience members were able to ask questions.

Looking to the future, we have learned that technical training and equipment are enablers, but do not on their own deliver hybrid events – the organisers also need explicitly to 'think hybrid' in planning their programme. That's an additional effort when restarting after a two year pause. But hybrid is not going away – its time is here, and we now have a much clearer idea of how to use it effectively. In future we could try hosting events away from the central belt with virtual participants in the major communities, and find ways to put a 'Scottish wrapper' around events in London, Israel, or anywhere in the Jewish world, by having a local expert introduce it or lead a discussion after it.

So for the time being the project has come to an end, but its legacy lives on.





SCoJeC's YEAR OF THE HYBRID!

SCoJeC's AGM in June was an odd event, as we all took part on screen, even though several of us were sitting round the same table!

Naturally, the Covid pandemic dominated the agenda. We heard how it changed (and arguably increased) our engagement with the Scottish Government, but it interfered with many of our other activities, both representative and communal. There were notable successes: the inclusion of "Jewish" as an ethnicity as well as a religion in the 2022 census; our hybrid First

Minister's Question Time with live audiences in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, and another 120 on Zoom; arranging a meeting between the First Minister and Jewish students about campus experiences; and ensuring that new legislation about civil partnerships and funerals take account of communal needs.

Our virtual events improved our reach to isolated Jewish individuals initially, but our ground-breaking *Jewish Scotland Connected* project encountered challenges because hybrid events build on live events, and we found that people were tired of Zoom and averse to mixing in the real world. Still, we discussed opportunities for 'reverse geography' with a live event in a remote venue; 'putting a kilt round' events taking place elsewhere; and how hybrid events can raise the international profile of the Scottish Community.

Treasurer Philip Mendelsohn reported that we had again broken even, although our main Scottish Government funding is eroded by inflation. Chair Nicola Livingston reported progress in our discussions with the Board of Deputies and the JLC, and thanked staff, Executive, and Council, for all their dedication throughout the year.

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Briefing Local Councillors

SCoJeC and the Glasgow Rep Council held a very successful briefing session for local Councillors from East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, and Inverclyde Councils, covering the basics of Judaism, the history and demography of the Scottish Community, education and welfare, marking Holocaust Memorial Day, and antisemitism.



♦ **Watch Out for**
Red Sky's programme, *Being Jewish in Scotland*, will be shown on BBC Scotland before Rosh Hashanah (see *Four Corners* 73)

◆ SCoJeC is grateful to:

- ◆ Mike Beral, Adam Schwartz, and Sami Zerovabeli for delivering the JSC Hybrid Events Project
- ◆ Eloise Bishop (photography p4)
- ◆ Glasgow Jewish Community Trust
- ◆ Netherlee & Clarkston Charitable Trust
- ◆ Fanny & Moray Glasser Trust
- ◆ Corra Foundation & Sky

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**Sharing
Jewish Scotland**



**CORRA
FOUNDATION**
voice • power • change

SCoJeC are thrilled to announce that we have been awarded a £10,000 grant from Sky through the Corra Foundation. The grant is to support our aim of promoting a better understanding of Jewish people in Scotland – our past and our present, our vibrant and diverse histories and stories, as well as our challenges. We don't want to frame this solely in terms of tackling antisemitism, though that will be covered, but to present a positive picture of Jewish life in Scotland.

The funding will be used to create a range of resources under the overall heading of *Sharing Jewish Scotland*, that will be delivered in schools and beyond, to help create a better understanding of our community. In addition to creating new resources, this project will update some of SCoJeC's existing educational resources to appeal to wider audiences, in particular, educators and young people.

We are very grateful to Sky and Corra for this funding and the exciting opportunity it presents us to introduce people all over Scotland to our community. We firmly believe that education and engagement are key to tackling ignorance and antisemitism, and key to building bridges and creating new friendships. We look forward to sharing our progress over the coming year.

Carolyn Sawers, Acting Chief Executive of Corra, commented "We are very excited to be able to support the important work of SCoJeC. This grant is part of a wider package of donations from Sky which Corra is delighted to be delivering to organisations working to tackle racism, including antisemitism. Education is a crucial area for this work: the more we understand, the better we can value and celebrate the diversity of all Scotland's communities."