



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Report of the Chair **AGM, June 2014**

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) was established in 1999 at the time of Devolution, when all the Jewish communities in Scotland agreed that there should be a single representative voice that could speak authoritatively for the entire Community to the Scottish Government and other Scotland-wide public bodies. SCoJeC's Council has representatives appointed by the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, the Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Tayside and Fife communities, the Highlands and Islands, Jewish Students and Chaplaincy, and 6 members co-opted for their experience in various walks of life.

Much of SCoJeC's work takes place behind the scenes. Our Director, Ephraim Borowski, whose work is undertaken in a voluntary capacity, and our new part-time Public Affairs Officer, Nicola Livingston, meet regularly with Government ministers, officials, MSPs and others, and attend a myriad of meetings and briefings to ensure that the interests of Jewish people in Scotland are always taken into account. Leah Granat is responsible for research and publications, producing digests of matters of interest in politics and the media, including MEMO, our weekly bulletin of information of interest to minority communities, and editing our quarterly publication *Four Corners* (<http://www.scojec.org/4cs/4cs.html>), both of which are supported by the Scottish Government's Equality Fund. The Minister for Community Safety recently congratulated us on publishing the 400th issue of MEMO, which she described as "an invaluable source of information" that "has made a significant contribution to informing and empowering Scotland's minority ethnic, religious and cultural communities.

This also supports other Outreach activities and enabled us to employ Fiona Frank as our Outreach and Projects Manager. She has been very successful, along with our volunteer grants adviser Michael Wilson, in obtaining funds from the Big Lottery, the Voluntary Action Fund (VAF), the Forestry Commission Scotland, and communal trusts to enable us to arrange events and activities throughout the country, including in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Most of these grants are to help us meet needs that we identified in last year's *Being Jewish in Scotland* enquiry (www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_bjis/bjis.html). "SCoJeC CoNNeCT" is an on-line discussion forum (www.scojec.org/discussion/forum/index.php), and other internet-based resources are being developed in collaboration with the Glasgow Rep Council to help isolated, remote, and unaffiliated Jewish people in Scotland keep in touch. We also heard from Israelis in Scotland about their feelings of isolation and vulnerability, and the Lottery funder our "YaCHaS" project (short for "Israeli Connections in Scotland" in Ivrit) to create a network and employ a Hebrew-speaking support worker. This has resulted in some very successful events, the most spectacular being the recent LaG b'Omer party in Vogrie Country Park attended by 178 people including around 90 children.

VAF has also recently awarded us funds to work with several communal organisations, including the Representative Council and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, to recruit and train volunteers, and Adopt-an-Intern have again enabled us to employ interns to help with the Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue project and with a Jewish Arts project at the Maclaurin Gallery in Ayr, but undoubtedly our highest profile grant-funded project was the photographic snapshot of Jewish life in Scotland by the acclaimed photographer, Judah

Passow, which was supported by large grants from Creative Scotland and some very generous private sponsors. The launch of the exhibition was marked by a sparkling reception in the Scottish Parliament addressed by the First Minister, and it will now travel widely in Scotland, providing opportunities for us to hold more local events.

On the external front, during this year we have met with the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister, ministers for Education, Culture, Community Safety, Children, and External Affairs, opposition party leaders and other MSPs, the Lord Advocate, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Moderator and Principal Clerk of the Church of Scotland, the new Roman Catholic Archbishop of Edinburgh, officials from various government departments, leaders and representatives of Scotland's faith and ethnic communities, and many others. Just this month we arranged for the new Chief Rabbi to visit the Parliament, leading Time for Reflection, holding separate meetings with the Presiding Officer, the first Minister, all the other party leaders, and the leaders of the Church of Scotland, and addressing a public meeting attended by MSPs and representatives of other communities.

We have responded on behalf of the Community to consultations by the Scottish Government, Parliamentary committees, and others on issues such as Religious Observance in Schools, the Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill, the Certification of Death Act, local policing, census information, and welfare reform. We have received praise from all sectors of the community for our concern to ensure that all views are represented in responses, especially when the subject is controversial and potentially divisive, such as same-sex marriage. All our responses are on our website at <http://www.scojec.org/consultations/consultations.html>.

We continue to be actively involved in promoting good inter-community and inter-faith relations. Ephraim is Convener of Bemis, the Scottish ethnic minority umbrella organisation, and was recently appointed the first Convener of Police Scotland's new National Independent Strategic Advisers Group. Despite the damage done by the 2013 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voting to accept a grossly offensive "report" about the Jewish attitude to Israel and to reject dialogue, we continued to meet them in various forums, and were delighted that they invited the new Chief Rabbi to address this year's Assembly, and hope that this will lead to genuine dialogue.

Within the community, SCoJeC also acts as umbrella for a number of legal purposes, such as the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme, sponsoring visa applications on behalf of Jewish communal organisations, and confirming the authenticity of proposed marriage officiants who are not synagogue rabbis for National Records of Scotland. Our website (www.scojec.org) is increasingly popular as the source of information on the Jewish community for government and other officials, visitors, ex-pats, and others, and received almost 707 000 hits in 2013.

In conclusion I wish to thank our Director Ephraim Borowski, Leah Granat, our full-time Research and Publications Officer, part-timers Nicola Livingston and Fiona Frank, and everyone else who gives so generously of their time and expertise, for their outstanding service, not just to SCoJeC but to the Jewish Community of Scotland. We recognise that our success is entirely dependent on their good will, and that we need urgently to address how to put our work on a sustainable footing. My thanks are extended also to my fellow members of the SCoJeC Executive and the Council, for all their efforts on behalf of our organisation and the Scottish Jewish Community.

Hilary Rifkind, Chair



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Finance Report Half-Year Results to June 2014

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Year ending 31st December 2014

Forecast for 2014

	Actual to Date	Half Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Projection for 2014	Actual for 2013
Income					
Affiliations	1110	3125	6250	6110	5740
Equalities Funding	18000	18000	36000	36000	36000
JLC	4190	5000	10000	10000	9130
General Donations	14202	5375	10750	22452	16918
Photography Project	28000			28000	40455
Project VOLUNTEER	7500			30000	
Project CONNECT	0			0	10000
Project YACHAS	0			0	10000
Bank Interest					34
Loan to Archives	2000			2000	
	75,002	31,500	63,000	134,562	128,276
Expenditure					
Staff	26546	20500	41000	53092	27200
Sessional Staff	12056	4625	9250	24111	61746
Office & Telephone	2322	4500	9000	9645	9111
Advertising, Print & Stationery	10330	13778	27555	20661	10905
Travel	4641	3000	6000	9281	9960
Events and Hospitality	8025	4375	8750	16050	12122
Subscriptions and Affiliations	180	600	1200	1200	1083
Accountancy Fees	1080	450	900	2400	300
Bank Charges	88	0	0	100	
Sundry Expenses	316	1343	2687	1000	2708
Loan to Archives					2000
Capital Expenditure	2476			2476	
	68,059	53,171	106,342	140,015	137,136
Surplus / (Deficit)	6,943	-21,671	-43,342	-5,453	-8,860
Movement of funds					
General Funds	28,924		6,601		7,648
Equalities Fund	-10,955		-3,088		2,147
Photography Project	29,012		0		22,555
Project VOLUNTEER	3,029		0		
Project CONNECT	783		0		6,922
Project YACHAS	3,004		0		8,615
Pilgrimage Project	3,575		3,575		3,575
	57,372		7,088		51,461



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Director's Report **AGM, 29th June 2014**

The Council, like Scottish Devolution, is now 15 years old, and I am delighted to be able to report that we are continuing both to achieve major successes, and to expand our activities, despite our very limited core budget, in ways that we would never have envisaged when we set out.

The formal accounts for 2013, elsewhere in the AGM papers, record our charitable objectives, our principal activities, and some of what we have achieved, but I will single out some particular successes:

- The *Being Jewish in Scotland* project, funded by the Scottish Government two years ago, provided us with evidence which enabled us to obtain two Lottery grants, one to create an on-line presence to help isolated and unaffiliated Jewish people connect with the community; and the other to create a new network for the estimated thousand Israelis in Scotland.
- We continue arrange events in remote parts of the country – this year including Inverness, Dumfries, and the Shetlands – and every time we do, we connect with more people who each genuinely thought he or she was the only Jew in the area. In Inverness, where 2 years ago someone said “I am a community of one”, 30 people attended our Chanukah party, and the same person wrote to say that for the first time she feels part of a community.
- We have also started holding more events in the central belt, including developing a unique collaboration with the Forestry Commission Scotland. Our recent LaG b’Omer party, in partnership with *Enjoy*, and supported by the Clarkston Trust and Jewish Youth Fund, was attended by almost 200 people, half of them children.
- We are continuing to work on joint projects with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council and the Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue Group, and our new Volunteering “cluster project” includes the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, and Sukkat Shalom.

All of this, and much more, is the product of the imagination and enthusiasm of our Outreach and Projects Manager, Fiona Frank, and has been made possible by the exceptional voluntary help of Michael Wilson with our grant applications. Fiona is also assisted by our Volunteer Ambassador to the Highlands, Linda Martin, our Israeli outreach worker, Shani Zour, and a team of others including Sharon Mail, Ranit Edgar, Leah Granat, and a number of interns who assist with different activities. Fiona has reported separately below.

Of course SCoJeC’s main *raison d’etre* is to represent the Jewish Community of Scotland to the outside world by being the single point of contact for Government, politicians, the churches, the media and so forth. There is no disconnect: our internal communal activities mushroomed in the context of the *Being Jewish in Scotland* project, which the Scottish

Government saw as a contribution to “community safety” – by giving more people more of a sense of belonging, we reduce their sense of vulnerability – but in addition, the more people we connect with, the better the information we have about what matters to Jewish people throughout Scotland. We are no longer hypothesising based on our own necessarily limited experience; we now have empirical evidence.

Highlights of our external relations activities in the past year have included:

- We facilitated the visit of the new Chief Rabbi to the Parliament to lead Time for Reflection and meet the leaders of all five political parties, including the First Minister.
- Judah Passow’s photographic project came to fruition with a superb event in the Parliament addressed by the First Minister to mark the launch of his snapshot of *Scots Jews*, funded largely by Creative Scotland. The exhibition then appeared at Tartan Week in New York, and will appear in book form from Bloomsbury next year.
- Through our involvement with the National Implementation Group, we have succeeded in mitigating some of the effects of the new death registration system which is about to be introduced, meaning that far fewer funerals will be delayed than had originally been anticipated.
- We have been working, with some success, towards rebuilding our relationship with the Church of Scotland after last year’s General Assembly adopted an outrageously offensive report on *The Inheritance of Abraham?*, and voted against continued dialogue with the Jewish Community. More recently we have met the new Moderator and Principal Clerk with the Chief Rabbi and on our own, and with officials from the Church and Society Council, and are planning new dialogue and a joint conference on our *Being Jewish in Scotland* report and their paper on *One Scotland, Many Cultures*.
- As a result of our leading roles in Bemis and the new Police Scotland National Independent Strategic Advisory Group, we have been at the centre of policy-making relating to diversity matters, and have delivered presentations at at 3 conferences, including the Lord Advocate’s biennial conference on hate crime.
- MEMO, our weekly digest of material of interest to ethnic minorities in Scotland, which is funded by the Scottish Government, has reached its 400th issue, and we also continue to produce digests of information for the Jewish Community, supported by the JLC, and the Board of Deputies.

In addition to all this, we also continue to provide services to the entire community, which would otherwise have to be undertaken by individual organisations at considerable cost and reputational risk if not carried out correctly. The most onerous of these is “Disclosure” checks under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme, where a single check through SCoJeC allows individuals to volunteer for any of the communal organisations under our umbrella, but we also act as a clearing house for enquiries from National Records of Scotland about whether clergy who are not employed by Scottish synagogues are recognised by “the Hebrew Congregation” for the purposes of conducting weddings, and we are licensed by the UK Border Agency to sponsor applicants for visas to work in certain communal positions.

Much of this work continues to be carried out by Leah Granat, who has developed the skills to design and program the CoNNeCT website, as well as continuing to produce these digests, edit *Four Corners*, and answer the myriad of e-mail and telephone requests and queries that flood in from all round the world, in her capacity as Research and Publications Officer. If recent trends continue, we will need to set up a separate branch to handle requests for tours and accommodation! Fortunately we have at last been able to employ Nicola Livingston as our Public Affairs Officer; this has somewhat eased the burden, and Nicola is increasingly engaged with our meetings with politicians and others.

Despite all these successes, we remain concerned by the fragility of our situation. We rely almost entirely on public funding for specific projects, which cannot be relied on in the longer term, and we need constantly to devise new projects in order to attract short-term grants. Meanwhile, projects that are peripheral to the continued welfare of the Jewish Community of Scotland attract substantial funding both from public and private donors. The Genealogy Project supported by the Rothschild Foundation and now the National Lottery, and the Photography Project funded by Creative Scotland and private donors, are fascinating and academically valuable, but both look backwards, and they do not contribute to the present and future well-being of a secure and well-integrated Jewish Community in Scotland. As I point out annually, ensuring that future requires foresight and generosity from within the community itself to support our core internal and external activities. We are delighted to have seen an increase this year in the number of communal bodies who contribute to our work, but there is a long way yet to go.

We also need to address how we might have to adjust our role depending on the outcome of the forthcoming Referendum. Whatever the result, Scotland will have greater autonomy, and consequently there will be more matters on our agenda. Just as that will affect the relationship between Holyrood and Westminster, it will affect our relationship with the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council. In the event of independence, would we have to follow the Republic of Ireland out of the Board, or would it reposition itself as the Board of Deputies of the British Isles rather than the United Kingdom? If the Union survives, how will we address the West Lothian Question – will we find ourselves lobbying Scottish MPs to vote in the interests of the English Community? Speaking personally, whatever the outcome in September, I favour the model adopted by some other bodies, of a Federation of Five Countries: Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Republic. Clearly the Board would be by far the largest, and would have to resource the new structure, as it is at last doing in Wales and NI, but the division of labour between what is common and what is separate and different would be clearer.

Finally, as ever, my thanks to our growing staff, the burgeoning ranks of our volunteers, and all the members of our Executive and Council for their contribution and their commitment. It is only thanks to them, and their continued willingness to prioritise the importance of what we do above such trivial matters as normal working hours, that we are able to achieve so much. To them are due not only my personal thanks for their support, but also the wholehearted gratitude of SCoJeC and the entire community; it is their work that ensures that Scotland remains a welcoming and hospitable place for its Jewish Community.

Ephraim Borowski, Director



Scottish Council of
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Current Matters

June 2014

Parliament and Government

Consultation on “Women on Board”
Assisted Suicide
European Election results
Referendum Issues
General Election manifesto
Hate Crime
Community Safety Unit
Death Registration
Marriage and Civil Partnership Bill

Interfaith and Community Relations

Church of Scotland
CCJ
Interfaith Scotland
Chief Rabbi’s visit

Projects

Equality Fund
Outreach events
Volunteer cluster project
CoNNeCT
YaCHaS
Photography
Education

Communal Matters

Board of Deputies and JLC
Four Corners and Annual Update
PVG
Website

Finance and Administration

Staffing
Fundraising and sponsorship

Dates of meetings

Proposed: Sunday 6th October in Glasgow



Scottish Council of
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Consultation Responses submitted **2013–14**

Note that copies of all of these responses, and of responses submitted in previous years, are available on SCoJeC's website at www.scojec.org/consultations/consultations.html

Assisted Suicide Bill (*Scottish Parliament*)

Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011 (*Scottish Government Implementation Group*)

Holocaust Commission (*Downing Street*)

Promoting greater accountability and transparency in local government (*Member's Bill proposal, Scottish Parliament*)

Water and Sewerage Charges – Exemption Scheme for Small Third Sector Organisations (*Scottish Government*)

Inquiry on Lobbying (*Scottish Parliament Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee*)

Impact of police reform on local policing (*Scottish Parliament Justice Sub-Committee on Policing*)

Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy

Religious Observance in Schools (*Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee*)

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill (*Scottish Parliament*)

Implementation of the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011: Expedited "not staying registration" Procedure (*Scottish Government*)

Beyond 2011: user requirements for population and socio-demographic information (*National Records of Scotland*)



Scottish Council of
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SCoJeC Events 2013–14

August 2013

Visit by a group from all the east coast communities to the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13viii_sjac/sjac.html

September 2013

Seminar for staff from Police Scotland, the senior Dundee Sheriff, Procurators Fiscal, and representatives of the NHS (in partnership with Tayside and Fife Jewish Community)

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_police_dundee/dundee.html

September 2013

YaCHaS Succot party at Chatelherault

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_yachas_succot/succot.html and

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_yachas_succot/succot_ivrit.html

October 2013

Chai Life in the Highlands (three events in Inverness, Ullapool, and Stirling)

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13x_chai_life/chai.html

November 2013

Interfaith week event: *Being Jewish in Scotland*

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13xi_interfaith/interfaith.html

December 2013

Chanukah party in Inverness

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13xii_inverness_chanukah/inverness.html

YaCHaS Chanukah party in Bridge of Allan

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13xii_yachas_chanukah/chanukah.html and

http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13xii_yachas_chanukah/chanukah_ivrit.html

January 2014

YaCHaS memorial event for Arik Einstein

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14i_yachas_einstein/einstein.html and

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14i_yachas_einstein/einstein_ivrit.html

Tu b'Shevat event in Achray Forest

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14i_tu_b_shevat/tu_b_shevat.html

February 2014

Scottish Parliament reception: Photography exhibition *Jewish Identity and Belonging*

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14ii_passow/passow.html

March 2014

Purim party in Inverness

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14iii_inverness/purim.html

YaCHaS Purim party in Edinburgh

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14iii_yachas/purim.html and

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14iii_yachas/purim_ivrit.html

May 2014

LaG b'Omer "Fire and Light" extravaganza

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14v_lag_b_omer/lag_b_omer.html

June 2014

Lunchtime meeting at the Scottish Parliament: Chief Rabbi, MSPs, and faith representatives

http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14vi_chief_rabbi/chief_rabbi.html



Scottish Council of
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**Meetings, Briefings,
Conferences, etc attended**
2013–14

Regular Meetings

Scottish Government implementation group: Death certification regulations

Police Scotland National Independent Strategic Advisory Group

Strathclyde Police Lay Advisory Group (*now disbanded*)

Central Police (now Forth Valley Division) Diversity Advisory Group

Joint Faiths Advisory Board on Criminal Justice

Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education

BEMIS

Interfaith Scotland

Board of Deputies: Plenary meetings

Regional Deputies Assembly

Defence and Group Relations Division

Community Issues Division

Executive Committee

Occasional Meetings and conferences

First Minister, Presiding Officer, party leaders to introduce Chief Rabbi

Lord Advocate: Frank Mulholland

Minister for External Affairs and International Development: Humza Yousaf

Scottish Government Community Safety Unit

Various MSPs to discuss matters of concern to the community

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Human Rights

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Race Equality

CST telephone briefings on antisemitic incident statistics

Church of Scotland: Moderator and Principal Clerk

Church and Society Council officers

Mission and Discipleship Council

National Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Education Trust Parliamentary reception

Scottish Alliance of Regional Equality Councils:

Tackling the barriers to reporting prejudice and hate crime (as speaker)

Crown Office Hate Crime Conference (as speaker)

National Records of Scotland re census

Voluntary Action Fund seminars

various interfaith events



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Projects and Outreach Report

AGM, 29th June 2013

This year has seen us develop several new partnerships as well as gaining funding for new projects and one-off events. The evidence we collected in our 'Being Jewish in Scotland' inquiry helped us obtain funding for three new projects: CoNNeCT and YaChaS, both supported by Lottery Funds, and a Voluntary Action Fund 'cluster' project to expand Jewish volunteering in partnership with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, Sukkat Shalom, and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

The CoNNeCT project comes to an end this month, and has lived up to its name: an online discussion forum is now in place on the SCoJeC website to help to 'CoNNeCT' Jewish people over Scotland. Leah Granat was responsible for designing and programming for the discussion forum and other resources, Ranit Edgar has assisted with the project, and Linda Martin, our "Online Outreach Worker", has been promoting the new material and will continue to do so under the cluster partnership project through to next March. A communal events calendar and community directory are also planned, to be hosted on the Rep Council website, and Sharon Mail, our second Online Outreach Worker, is working with communal organisations across Glasgow to get them fully involved with this project.

The YaCHaS project, 'connecting Israelis throughout Scotland', continues till August. It has been run by our development worker Shani Zour, with several well-received events throughout the year – including a Sukkot gathering, a Chanukah party, a Purim party, and a very successful informal evening arranged at short notice to honour the passing of Israeli singer Arik Einstein. An event is being planned for July, and Shani has just hosted two gatherings to hear the views of Israelis in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Shani has also been very active on the 'Israelis in Scotland' Facebook group and receives regular enquiries about social and administrative issues from Israelis living in Scotland or who are planning to come and live here, and has developed relationships with staff in the Israeli Consulate who have been able to offer direct assistance with visas, etc.

Another side-effect of our presence on the internet is the increasing numbers of requests we receive from Jewish visitors from around the world, and we are pleased to have been able to provide advice and arrange home hospitality for many of them.

The new VAF volunteering project will enable us and our four partner organisations to improve our volunteering policies and practices, and to recruit and train volunteers. There are four projects:

1. Glasgow Jewish Representative Council's "Speakers" project will bring people together in Glasgow and the rest of Scotland to share good practice in talking to schools and other groups about Judaism, and representing the Jewish community on interfaith panels; we also plan to produce new materials and recruit and train new speakers, in order to be able to respond better to requests for speakers and representatives.
2. The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre will provide training for their existing and new volunteers who provide a service for researchers, schools and others to find out more about the history of Jewish people in Scotland.
3. Sukkat Shalom's Refugee and Immigrant Support project will provide training for

volunteers to provide befriending and language support to Edinburgh refugees and immigrants.

4. The Rep Council and SCoJeC will encourage more people to volunteer to help keep the three parts of the CoNNeCT project – the online discussion forum, the calendar, and the community directory – current and active. To this end we are starting a new experiment in the form of “Kosher Coffeebreak Kits” – we will post cake to anywhere in Scotland to encourage people to get together in small groups to discuss the ‘film of the month’, ‘book of the month’, or ‘topic of the month’, and to post reports on the forum to continue the discussion!

Following last year’s successful internship, Adopt an Intern have agreed to fund another, this time to assist the Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue group with bringing together Jewish people across Edinburgh. This work has been started by Zoe Jacobs and will now be taken over by Shani Zour. We have also been able to assist the Scottish Jewish Archives and the Maclaurin Gallery to obtain internships from this scheme.

Outreach

We have also continued to run outreach events in different parts of the country, meeting new Jewish people wherever we’ve been. The latest was a “Fire and Light Extravaganza” for Lag B’Omer in Vogrie Forest, supported by Forestry Commission Scotland, with whom we have developed an excellent relationship since I spoke at an interfaith event they organised last year, and they have given substantial financial support to three successful woodland events, including the YaCHaS Sukkot gathering and a Tu B’Shvat event, as well as the Lag B’Omer extravaganza. This was organised in partnership with Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and Enjoy, the youth wing of Giffnock and Newton Mearns shuls, and had a record attendance of 178 people from all over Scotland, of whom more than half were children.

We also held a Purim party in Inverness and an event in Edinburgh, funded by Interfaith Scotland as part of Scottish Interfaith Week, at which we asked people from different faiths and none to consider the research questions from our Being Jewish in Scotland project. At the end of this month we will deliver a Creative Writing event, “An Edinburgh Jewish Welcome – You’re Welcome to Write!”, with three professional Jewish writers, as part of Scottish Refugee Week and funded by the Scottish Refugee Council.

The Maclaurin Gallery in Ayr have approached us to work with them on a Festival of Jewish Arts and Culture to be run alongside an exhibition of art by three Scottish Jewish artists and the exhibition of Judah Passow’s photographic portrait of Scots Jews. As part of this festival, which runs from 26 July to 22 September, we will be working in partnership with them and the Ben Uri London Jewish Museum of Art to produce a Learning Pack for schools, and the Maclaurin Gallery has also proposed a two day conference on “Jewish Arts and Jewish Life in Scotland”, on 14 and 15 September.

I am again working with the Limmud Scotland committee and seeking to help them encourage people from around Scotland to participate in their Shabbat Dinner in November and their Learning Day in March, and we are making arrangements for a six-stop Klezmer/Baroque/Scots musical tour during the European Week of Jewish Culture and Heritage, 14-21 September, provided we can negotiate the visa system successfully!

Fiona Frank
June 2014