BELOW: EPHRAIM READS THE MEGILLAH WATCHED BY ASSAF LIBMAN & ABERDEEN SYNAGOGUE MEMBERS

PURIM

Purim Shabbaton

IN ABERDEEN

KENNETH COLLINS

There was an extra twinkle to the Northern Lights last month when SCoJeC held a highly successful event in Aberdeen over Purim and Shabbat. The festivities began with a megillah reading organised by community member Prof. Chris Fynsk at Aberdeen University, using an historic scroll from their extensive Judaica collection. The megillah was expertly read by SCoJeC Director, Ephraim Borowski, to a large, appreciative and noisy gathering of the community and students, as well as many children who had great fun stamping and shaking rattles at every mention of Haman. Thirty people enjoyed Friday night dinner at the synagogue in Dee Street where the Kabbalat Shabbat service was led by Ephraim. It was the first time for many years there has been an evening service in Aberdeen outside the High Holy Days.

During the meal, prepared by Irene Collins and Margalit Borowski, visitors from Glasgow and Dundee took the opportunity to get to know the local Jewish community. Ehud Reiter welcomed the visitors and spoke about the efforts being made to keep the Aberdeen community going, and the problem of maintaining the fabric of their shul. The shul functions as the centre for Jewish life and attracts people, many with young families, from the universities and the oil industry, from America and Israel and from all over the United Kingdom. SCoJeC Chair, Kenneth Collins, said it was inspiring to see how a small group of people have managed to maintain Jewish life in Aberdeen despite its isolation.

A Shabbat morning service, again led by Ephraim, was followed by kiddush and lunch. Kenneth then gave a talk about the early history of the Aberdeen Hebrew Congregation and the Aberdeen shechitah case [see page 6], and Ephraim related this to SCoJeC's current efforts to defend shechitah in Scotland. Thanks are due to Ehud, and Yoni Shoshan for their assistance in making the weekend a success. Here's to the next SCoJeC event in Aberdeen!

ABERDEEN SYNAGOGUE MEMBERS BEFORE THE MEGILLAH READING

FOUR CORNERS

ISSUE 17
PESACH 5768
APRIL 2008

Welcome... Spring is always a bit of a mad time of the Jewish year – as the Megillah says, in the Purim story things are "turned upside down" – and before Pesach we turn our houses upside down to get rid of chametz and get ready for the seder. Now into all that turmoil comes the latest issue of Four Corners, with some disorder of its own: we've moved our web-site but attracted more readers, a thorn in the side of the establishment gets a gong from the establishment, we've taken on the press for their tolerance of antisemitism, and we hear echoes of 19th-century attacks on shechitah in our 21st century Parliament.

All Scottish Jewish life is here! Now read on ....

SCoJeC
AGM
22 June 2008 Glasgow

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Please send your comments and contributions to Four Corners

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FOUR CORNERS IS PRODUCED BY SCoJeC, THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS, NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF SCoJeC.

PURIM

Purim Spiel

AT ELJC

CATHERINE LYONS

Ahashverus wakes from a dream about .... a giant pepperpot and a strange blue box that makes a funny noise: has anything like this appeared before in Shushan, or in any Purim shpiel you've seen? The next series of Dr Who starts this month, but the Purim shpiel audience at the Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community didn't need to wait. Dr Who and his plucky assistant Rose appeared in Shushan before our very eyes. We even had the Tardis on stage, well, an 8" Tardis money box, but it was much bigger on the inside.

ABOVE: HAMAN (MAURICE NAFTALIN) WHISPERS IN THE EAR OF KING AHASHVERUS (PHIL WADLER)

BELOW: FINALE OF 2008 PURIM SPIEL AT ELJC SUKKAT SHALOM

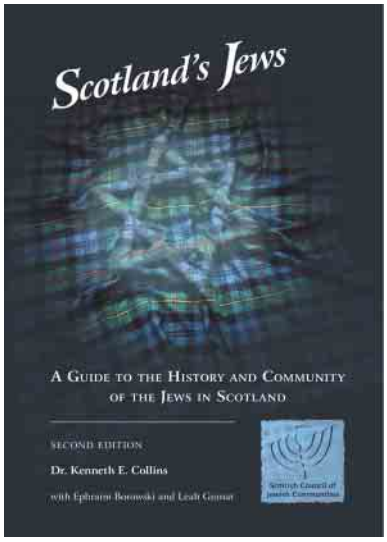
It turns out that the evil Haman (booo!) is really the evil Davros, building secret Daleks to "ex-ter-min-ate" the Jews. Haman/Davros was having great problems getting the Daleks to articulate their genocidal intent; but they did manage to command "ex-fo-li-ate!" to our generously bearded Haman and Ahashverus. But all is well: Dr Who adopts the name Mordechai, and Rose calls herself Esther. Esther wins the confidence of Ahashverus, and ... well, you know the rest.

A great performance; a real winner of a show; I don't think I've ever seen a standing ovation at a Purim shpiel before!

SCoJeC PROJECT PROGRESS

Last year SCoJeC was delighted to receive external grant funding for a number of projects, and we are now making good progress to bring these to a successful conclusion.

The Scottish Executive, as it then was, gave us £10 000 to produce a new and expanded edition of Scotland's Jews, Kenneth Collins' short history of the Community. The new edition will be considerably expanded, to include a section by Ephraim Borowski about the principal beliefs and practices of Judaism, an analysis by Marlena Schmool of the demography of the Community based on the 2001 census, sections by Leah Granat about Jewish requirements in specific contexts such as health and employment, and a description of John Clark's celebrated stained glass windows, which were created for Queens Park synagogue in Glasgow. There will also be forewords by the Chief Rabbi and the First Minister, and short accounts of their dual identity by a number of notable Scottish Jews.



The new book will be launched at the SCoJeC AGM in Garnethill synagogue in Glasgow on 22nd June, which will take place back-to-back with the opening of the spectacular new Lottery-funded facilities of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre. This will be an opportunity for the Community to say thank you and farewell to Kenneth when he steps down as Chair, prior to moving to Israel.

We also received a £10 000 Government grant, and a further £10 000 from the Clore Foundation, to fund an outreach project designed to help us make and keep contact with isolated and remote Jewish people throughout Scotland. These funds have already helped us hold a number of events in the Highlands, and we are very pleased now to have employed a part-time project worker to move this work forward. Sharon Mail is a journalist who has been writing for the Scottish edition of the Jewish Telegraph for the past two years, and is leaving that job in order to have time for her other writing commitments. She has worked previously in business as an IT and communications consultant, and will assist SCoJeC with those aspects of our work, as well as using local newspapers, libraries, and other agencies to help make contact with the scattered Scottish diaspora. Readers who would like to assist with this work are welcome to contact her at sharon@scojec.org.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

This year Scotland's national Holocaust Memorial Event was hosted by East Renfrewshire Council, and took the form of a question and answer session with a panel of guests that included Dr Stephen Smith, Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister, and Annabel Goldie, Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party. Unfortunately, George Reid, the former Presiding Officer of the Parliament, who was chairing the event, provoked outrage when he said "I find it strange, when we've dealing with intolerance and injustice, that no one has mentioned the Palestinians." The Glasgow Jewish Representative Council sent a letter of complaint, and SCoJeC has protested that his comments were "out of order, ill-informed, and inappropriate", and has raised the matter with the Scottish Government Equality Unit, which is responsible for the event.

Glasgow Reform Synagogue also held a Holocaust Memorial Day event which was attended by the Reverend Mario Conti, Archbishop of Glasgow and Sheilagh Kesting, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and the Glasgow Forum of Faiths organised an event at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art.

Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association and the City of Edinburgh Council hosted an event in the Lothian Chambers with readings of survivor testimonies, poems, music and reflections on recent visits to Auschwitz, and Holocaust survivor David Goldberg, a member of Edinburgh Synagogue, was the guest speaker at yet another event at Edinburgh University.

ScoJeC Reports Antisemitism

TO PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Like many people, you have probably been appalled by the quantity and level of personal, racist, and other abuse that regularly appears on mainstream websites. In particular we have been horrified by the number of contributions to the online discussion forums on the Scotsman and Herald websites that unambiguously foment hatred of Jewish people. These include:

THE SCOTSMAN

jews are not fit to breathe our air. They must be attacked wherever you see them; throw rocks at their ugly, hooked-nosed women and mentally ill children, and light up the REAL ovens.

The zionist nose print is on every atrocity that happens worldwide.

People around the world will one day unite to declare that Hitler may have been right all along ... Mark my words.

"If you want to see the bif stuff just think Russia, WW1,WW2,Africa,Iraq,Armenia ... them, Zionists, all of it, every single bit of it ... it's hard to tell what their most sickening terror atack has been. I suppose since it's The Scotsman forum i would have to say The Lockerbie Bombing."

The Herald

SCOTLAND'S LEADING QUALITY DAILY NEWSPAPER

"Jews got what they deserved if u read bible in old testament God punished those who stopped praying to him which was mostly jews and holocaust was the punishment".

"Hurray for Poland may it lead the charge against the secular jew forces that have taken over Europe".

The hosting of such unacceptable views by respectable newspapers gives them legitimacy, undermines efforts to make the rhetoric of hatred unacceptable in the public forum, and may incite more, and more violent, attacks against Jewish people. SCoJeC has therefore complained to both the Press Complaints Commission and the police. We also wrote to MSPs inviting them to condemn this trend and use their influence to reverse it.

We are certain that none of these comments would have been allowed to reach the letters page of the print editions, but they seem to be routinely accepted on what is, in effect, the online letters page. While it is true that they can be removed from the website, this normally only happens if the newspaper receives a complaint – i.e. after offence has already been caused.

Responses to our letters have been mixed. The editors of both newspapers have simply ignored them, and, more than a month later, we are still waiting for a reply – though some offensive comments have been removed from their websites.

fast free fair Press Complaints Commission

The response from the Press Complaints Commission is scarcely more satisfactory: their Code states "the press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to … an individual's religion'. So, provided they make pejorative reference to the religion of enough individuals, newspapers are in the clear! And "material only comes under the jurisdiction of the PCC if an editor has exercised control", so the way to avoid criticism for not exercising proper control is not to exercise any control at all! Kafka could not have made this up!!

More positively, the response from MSPs expressing outrage that reputable newspapers did not prevent publication of blatantly antisemitic comments has been overwhelming, and the police are currently considering prosecutions against both newspapers and authors.

No fewer than 34 MSPs have written to us to express their abhorrence, and many also wrote to the editors. Stewart Maxwell, who is Minister for Communities and Sport, wrote to the Herald pointing out that some antisemitic comments have remained online since 31 July 2007:

"Clearly these comments are strongly antisemitic and insulting to the Jewish community and offensive to all right-minded people in Scotland. It seems to me unacceptable that 'The Herald' has allowed comments such as these to appear on their website for eight months without taking any action to remove them."

He also wrote to Justice Minister, Kenny MacAskill:

"I am concerned that our two national newspapers are allowing such comments to be published and to remain on their websites for, in some cases, many months. Is it possible for us to force the website owners to be more vigilant in what they publish?

Replies from other MSPs include:

"I agree with you that bigoted and racist views have no place on the websites of our national press, and I fully support your efforts to persuade editors to take their editorial responsibilities seriously." *Former First Minister Jack McConnell MSP*

"It was with great unease and anger that I reviewed your letter detailing the atrocious commentary found in the Scotsman and Herald internet blogs ... I condemn antisemitic rhetoric and recognise that its only purpose is to persecute and exacerbate negative feelings toward the Jewish community ... My concerns and sympathies are with the Jewish community at this time." *Kenneth Gibson MSP*

"I was appalled to read of the detail of some of the comments which have been posted,and can well understand your extreme concern." *Derek Brownlee MSP*

Bill Kidd MSP tabled the below motion in the Scottish Parliament, and this had been signed by 22 MSPs by the end of March.

The Parliament abhors the publication in both The Scotsman and The Herald newspapers' online blogs of blatantly antisemitic rhetoric by individuals who hide their identities behind screen names; believes that any such racist statements have no place in national newspapers, in print or online, and calls on the editors of these two major newspapers to ensure that such foul-mouthed attacks on any section of society are removed from their blogs before publication.

It is very reassuring that the police are taking the matter seriously, and that both the Minister for Communities and the Convener of the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Parliament are keen to pursue the matter. It has become obvious that we have identified a matter of much more general concern than the interests of our own Community, and we do not think it unreasonable to look forward to legislation that will make Scotland truly a country in which many cultures can flourish without intimidation and abuse.

You are invited to join

DUNDEE SYNAGOGUE'S

Communal Seder

SAT 19th APRIL 7pm

Time is short, so please let us know as early as possible if you would like to attend - we want to make sure we don't run out of matzah!!

To book a place contact
Harry Riffkin
01383 411017 (daytime)
h.riffkin@btopenworld.com

Pesach Calendar

APRIL 2008

Bedikat Chametz (searching for chametz): evening Thu 17th
Biur Chametz (burning the chametz): morning Fri 18th
First Seder night: Sat 19th after Shabbat
Yom Tov: evening Sat 19th till night Mon 21st
Chol HaMoed (middle days of Pesach) continue till...
Yom Tov: evening Fri 25th till night Sun 27th

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

ADAPTED FROM HTTP://WWW.AISH.COM/PASSINSIGHT/PASSINSIGHTDEFAULT/BORN_FREE$.ASP

BY SARA RIGLER

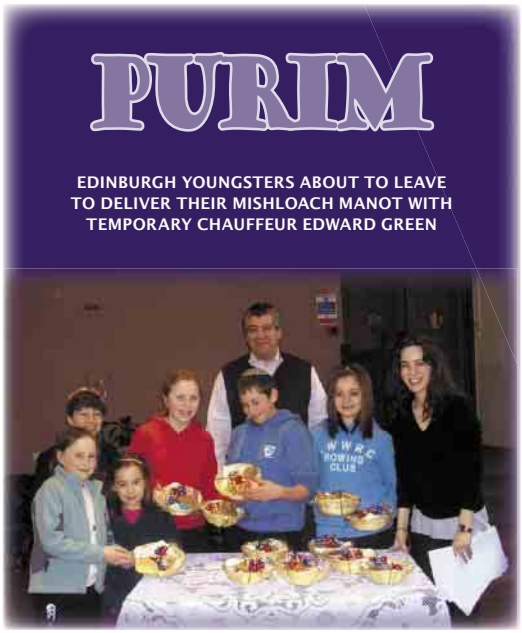
When the Passover Haggaddah says that every Jew is obligated to see himself or herself as if he or she personally had gone out of Egypt, this strains the imaginative powers of even the most imaginative of us. The humiliations and torture of slavery are all so remote from our experience that, try as we may, the empirical sense of being enslaved eludes us. How, then, can each of us personally experience liberation from slavery?

If we look carefully at the Torah's account of the Exodus, we see that slavery to Pharaoh is juxtaposed to service of God. The opposite of Egyptian bondage was not a libertine free-for-all. The objective and culmination of the Exodus was the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. God makes this clear the very first time He reveals Himself to Moses at the burning bush. *"When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain."* [Exodus. 3:12]

From the second day of Passover, Jews begin counting 49 days until Shavuot, the holiday which commemorates the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Shavuot is considered the culmination of Passover. Ultimate freedom, by the Torah's definition, means serving God. This is surprising. The 613 commandments of the Torah are often regarded from the outside as 613 restrictions. How can they be synonymous with freedom? According to cognitive psychology, all human actions are in response to an "inner tape" which plays non-stop in the human brain. This tape is most often recorded by heredity and environment. It tells us what to do, and, like automatons, we obey: "That person just insulted you. Insult him back!" "That driver just cut you up. Get angry!" This is the Torah's definition of slavery. This is the voice of Pharaoh; it brooks no disobedience, nor does it even occur to us to disobey. There is no such thing as a bad slave, because a slave has no viable choices.

That freedom entails choice is obvious when we observe the elections held in countries ruled by dictators. All the accoutrements of free elections are there, such as voting booths and secret ballots. But if only one candidate is running, the election is clearly not "free." Freedom requires choice. When God gave the Jewish people the Torah, He gave us 613 choices. Observe Shabbat or not. Love your neighbor or not. Gossip or not. Unlike Pharaoh, God, as you might have noticed, brooks a great deal of disobedience. That's why a person who violates a Divine commandment is not struck by lightening. Immediate punishment would limit our freedom of choice. The key phrase is "moral choice." Your decision whether to go to the movies or a ballet tonight, or whether to eat vanilla or chocolate ice cream is not an exercise of free will. Since there is no moral element present, they are mere preferences, not choices. Only in the moral realm do you have free choice. When your inner tape says to give tit for tat, to respond to an insult with an even more lethal barb, you have the power to change the tape. You have the power to ask yourself, "Is this who I really want to be?" The very act of choosing between your knee-jerk response and the Divine imperative to be kind is freedom. Each of us at every moment is heeding the voice of Pharaoh or the voice of God. The voice of Pharaoh commands us to do what is instinctive, automatic, reflexive. "Doing what comes naturally," is ultimate bondage because we exercise no power of choice. The voice of God, on the other hand, offers an alternative to instinct. For example, by commanding us not to take revenge, God in effect is saying: "Your instinct is to hurt those who hurt you. By commanding you to act otherwise, I'm offering you the ability to choose a different course."

The exercise of choice is the essence of freedom. Forget the taskmaster's whip and the massive bricks. Each of us is enslaved every time we act on automatic pilot, every time we react according to our instinctual programming. To experience liberation this Passover, we need only to break the bonds of instinct, to learn to deliberate and decide what we shall do or what we shall say, based on who we want to become – a slave of Pharaoh or a servant of God.



Mazal Tov to Ephraim!

LEAH GRANAT

Mazal Tov to SCoJeC director Ephraim Borowski, who was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours List, for services on behalf of the Jewish Community in Scotland.

It's a richly deserved award for Ephraim, who has worked unstintingly, and voluntarily for the community all of his adult life. He has played a leading role in the development of structures to enable the community to respond effectively to political and demographic change and to represent the views, needs and potentials of the Jewish community to wider Scottish society, and the creation of SCoJeC, the democratic body that represents all of the Jewish communities in Scotland, is due to his recognition and understanding of the changes that would flow from devolution.

He has also served the UK-wide Jewish community as Regional Chair to the Board of Deputies of British Jews, was Chair of Giffnock Synagogue, and, for more than ten years, was Hon Secretary and Vice President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council. Last year, he was the only Scot named in the Jewish Chronicle's list of the most influential members of the UK Jewish community.

Ephraim's work has not been confined to the Jewish community. His passionate belief in equality of opportunity for all has led him to be invited to participate at a strategic level on Scottish Executive advisory groups such as the Race Equality Advisory Forum and the Faith Liaison Group and the Scottish Committees of both the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality. He has been actively involved in bodies such as the Scottish Inter Faith Council, and BEMIS (the umbrella ethnic minority organisation in Scotland) of which he is Vice-Convener.

Kenneth Collins, SCoJeC chair, expressed his pleasure at the award: "The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities welcomes the award of an MBE to its Director Ephraim Borowski with great pride. The award of such an honour for services to the Scottish Jewish community is rare indeed. Ephraim has worked for the Council as Director with great devotion for many years and the award will be seen both as a personal achievement as well as a recognition of the work that the Council has done in meeting the challenges of creating an inclusive Scotland in the wake of devolution."

Reflecting on the award, Ephraim said: "According to Jewish tradition, everyone has a responsibility to work for the welfare of the community, but Judaism also teaches that virtue is its own reward, and one should neither seek nor expect payment or glory.

"I find it difficult to interpret this honour as recognising any personal achievement, as opposed to the achievements of the organisation with which I am most associated. It is in that spirit that I welcome it as public recognition of the success of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities. Established less than ten years ago as the democratic representative body for the entire Community within a devolved Scotland, SCoJeC has undoubtedly exceeded expectations not only in promoting the interests of our own community, but also working with others for the common good.

"That success was not one person's alone, and I wish therefore to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the many people who have contributed to the Council's success. It has been a privilege to work with them all, but I trust others will forgive me singling out our Public Affairs Officer, Leah Granat, without whom we would not have achieved a fraction of what we have accomplished."

Family

VALERIE HOUSE

Over the past year or so increasing problems with health have meant that travel to JNAH meetings (and, indeed, most other travel) has been very curtailed. But with a less active life there has been more time for contemplation, and I have been re-reading three family-written books. Two are memoirs by cousins of my paternal grandfather's generation, and one is a novel based on my mother's parents and cousins. In fact the characters in the novel were drawn so recognisably that there was a distinct coldness and distance between some of the cousins, though eventually that was resolved. I have childhood memories of visiting the author and her family on my frequent stays with my Nana.

The books depict, either factually or fictionally, the long journey my grandparents' generation made at the beginning of the 20th century from Poland (father's side) and Lithuania/Poland/Russian border (it frequently altered, like Berwick-on-Tweed) on my mother's side. Theirs was a journey away from Russian pogroms and from poverty, and at that time, an adventure into the unknown with the hope of a better life and future from very humble beginnings. It is especially relevant at Pesach because, like our escape from Egypt, it was made with much trepidation to a new and unknown land that they hoped would give freedom from religious persecution and an opportunity to provide a better life for their families.

By sheer hard work and persistence they made a success of life in this country, overcoming various setbacks. As with many Jewish families, hard work, family support, and education meant that within three generations university education and professions were the norm.

At Pesach especially I think about my grandparents. As I make the jams, cakes, and meals, I am doing what my grandmother taught me on my frequent stays with her. I grow my own horseradish for maror as they did in their eastern European villages. At the seder table we argue about tunes for the songs – my grandparents' or Frank's – and I even have a few plates that have survived use in the family for over 100 years, and should last a bit longer as long as I can stop the children putting them in the dishwasher!

This year we will have 17 family visitors representing four generations, and the traditions we remember are again being passed down. We enjoy the questions and arguments that bring the occasion alive and will create memories for the future.

Looking around at the family gathered at the seder table gives a wonderful sense of fulfilment, probably even more so than that engendered by our education and careers. It is these memories that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will have of us, and is a legacy from our past to their future.

Shechitah

THE HUMANE METHOD, PRESCRIBED BY JEWISH LAW, BY WHICH ANIMALS ARE SLAUGHTERED FOR FOOD

The Jewish position is that shechitah is humane – cutting the jugular and carotids with a single swift stroke of an extremely sharp knife severs all blood supply to the brain, producing instant unconsciousness, and thereby satisfying the legal definition of stunning. Shechitah is carried out by someone with years of religious and veterinary training which emphasises the welfare of the animal, and contrasts with the mayhem and routine cruelty in non-kosher slaughterhouses. That is why we question the motives of those who attack shechitah while 2.4 million animals are injured by mis-stunning in the UK each year – significantly more than the entire kosher market.

The Scottish Parliament, & Shechitah

Since January shechitah has been raised twice in the Scottish Parliament.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition (and former Justice Minister), Cathy Jamieson submitted a parliamentary question asking "whether [the Scottish Government] considers it acceptable for Scottish sheep to be exported for slaughter without prestunning." SCoJeC briefed the relevant Minister, and the head of the relevant Government department about shechitah and its importance to the Jewish community, and, as a result, the response to the question confirmed that: "Although the slaughter of animals without prestunning does not take place in Scotland, it would be perfectly legal for this method to be used in Scottish slaughterhouses." We also met Cathy Jamieson who told us that she had not realised the impact a ban on slaughter without pre-stunning would have on the Jewish community, and assured us that she had no intention to campaign on this issue.

Unconnected with this question, a petition has been submitted "calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to bring forward legislation to ban the ritual slaughter of animals, through methods such as the shechitah and the dhabiha, and require the stunning of all animals before slaughter." Following intervention by SCoJeC, the petitioner apologised for his use of the offensive term "ritual slaughter", and agreed to change the wording to "animal slaughter without pre-stunning". SCoJeC briefed MSPs before they considered the petition, and encouraged organisations from the Muslim community, the Scottish Inter-Faith Council, and several local interfaith and community organisations to write to the Committee.

MSP's discussion was very measured with no direct criticism of shechitah; on the contrary, reference was made to the Human Rights Act, and emphasised that the concerns of minority faith communities must be taken into account. The matter might have rested there, but, in response to an intervention by MSP Bashir Ahmad, the Committee decided to ask the views of several animal welfare organisations, and to investigate whether, and under what conditions, shechitah and dhabiha are permitted in other European countries.

SCoJeC has been asked to provide additional written evidence before the petition's next hearing on 9 September.

The Aberdeen Shechitah Case

A SUMMARY OF THE TALK GIVEN BY KENNETH COLLINS AT THE ABERDEEN SHABBATON

The Jewish community in Aberdeen was founded in September 1893 after a lot of debate. The small group of Jews had been there for many years but had hesitated to take the step of formalising a community structure. They took the plunge when they appointed the Rev James Littman as shochet and minister, and rented a couple of rooms in an apartment in Marischal Street to be the synagogue. Just days before Rev Littman killed his first bullock for the London kosher market the Swiss voted in a nationwide referendum to ban shechitah. The local branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals persuaded the Procurator Fiscal to charge Rev Littman and Alexander Zamek, the shul chairman, with cruelty. The evidence did not support the charges, and the Magistrate found the case not proven. There was a widespread feeling, both within the Jewish community and beyond, that antisemitic motives had been prominent, and that if Littman had been found guilty then further shechitah in Aberdeen would have been hard to sustain.

The case was important not least because a defeat in Aberdeen might have had led to attempts to ban shechitah in other parts of the UK. Indeed, many of the arguments are, unfortunately, still familiar, as can be seen from the two anti-shechitah initiatives in the Scottish Parliament already this year.

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Scottish Jewish Life on Mars?!

In the last year 43 381 visitors to the SCoJeC website read no fewer than 150 507 articles and documents. These ranged from the online edition of Four Corners, to consultation responses, news stories and much more.

Thanks to some very clever website monitoring software, we know that it's read by people from Scotland to Japan, Iceland to Australia, and Israel to Vietnam and Fiji. Most people find it by searching for "Scottish Jewish community" or a similar phrase. There are however curiosities, such as the person who arrived at our website after doing a Google search for "mars life live city trees picture anomaly pdf"! This seeker after truth was certainly persistent – he or she had to plough through 29 pages of Google search results before our website was listed, and yet whoever it was did so and clicked on the link. (And, in case you're wondering, the link led to Four Corners issue 8! We hope our Martian visitor enjoyed it!!)

More interestingly, 11 visitors arrived at SCoJeC's website via a link from a Saudi Arabian chat group based in Edinburgh. Curiosity aroused, we did some detective work – no easy matter since their website was entirely in Arabic – and discovered they were using our "Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland" to source kosher chickens because they weren't happy with the quality of local halal meat!

If you have internet access, why don't you take a look and tell us what you think of the site? And if you're reading this online, maybe you'd like to tell us how you found out about our website? We may even print the most interesting stories in the next issue of Four Corners!

SCoJeC address change! WEB: www.scojec.org EMAIL: scojec@scojec.org