

All Change for Students!

After fourteen years of dedicated service, the Northern Region student chaplain Rabbi Dovid Cohen and his family are moving to take up a new position in South London. We have been immensely privileged to have had them with in Scotland for so many years and they will be missed by five generations of students and graduates throughout the Region.

Looking ahead, recruiting is already underway for a full-time Chaplaincy couple to continue this work. In the interim, a Fieldworker has been recruited to provide practical support to students throughout Scotland, and the Chaplaincy is working with those local Rabbis who have the necessary background, experience, and qualifications to help with this important work.

If you have any questions, including welfare advice, and requests for home hospitality during the upcoming festivals, please contact

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Welcome to the new year!

Our autumn issue marks the Jewish new year as well as the start of new political and academic years. SCJeC is now in our 10th year, and we have come far further than we might have expected. Much of this issue is devoted to the successful outcome of three Government-funded projects – the publication of *Scotland's Jews*, the first phase of the Outreach project, and the unique Interfaith Pilgrimage. These successes, both within and outwith the Community, have been recognised and given a huge boost by a new three-year grant, and we would be interested to receive suggestions for collaboration work to build on last year's successes.

Shalom to Dundee

MARY BALLANTYNE

Dundee Synagogue has had yet another wonderful get-together, albeit somewhat overshadowed by the departure of one of our families to return to Israel. It will however be a great opportunity for the children to share and be a part of their grandparents' lives, as well as allow the whole family to immerse themselves in their own culture and rejoice in their ethnicity.

Though tinged with sadness at losing Sharon and Susan, Tamara, Ben, and Nathan it was nevertheless a happy occasion, a joyous send-off from the 28 people (including 10 children) in the Shul. The fresh and lovely memories of Tamara's Bat Mitzvah will stay with us for a long time – and what a lovely memory of Dundee Shul it will be for Tamara to take with her to Israel!

To remind our departing friends of their time in Dundee, and to thank them for their contribution to the shul, they were presented with a copy of "Ma Broom's Cookbook" which had been signed by everyone. Some of the recipes may cause a few raised eyebrows in Israel!

We all wish the Levys well, and look forward to the time when they will return to share the High Holidays and services with us. They will be in our thoughts and prayers for a long time to come as we know we will be in theirs.



DUNDEE SAYING SHALOM TO THE LEVYS

ISSUE 19

TISHRI 5769

OCTOBER 2008



The Corners of Scotland

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Please send your comments and contributions to Four Corners

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

(L-R) BEN DANZIG WITH STEPHANIE BRICKMAN AND JO NICHOLSON OF THE YIDDISH SONG PROJECT



EDINBURGH SHUL FESTIVAL Open Day

17th August 2008

DAVID IAN NEVILLE
CO-ORGANISER, JEWISH EDINBURGH GROUP

BELOW: (L-R) BENTSI BITRAM (MANAGER OF THE ALPERT YOUTH MUSIC CENTRE), HILARY RIFKIND (CHAIR, EDINBURGH SYNAGOGUE), ORNA MAGEN (MUSICAL DIRECTOR) AND DAVID IAN NEVILLE



Four years ago we had this crazy idea – we'd open the communal hall up one Sunday during August and welcome Festival performers and visitors to Edinburgh to meet each other and our own community. We'd serve bagels and coffee and tea and luscious lemon cake, and we would share some of the magic of Edinburgh's glorious festivals.

Every year we wonder if there will be many shows with a Jewish cultural interest. Then, having identified relevant shows or events, we ask if they would like to take part in our Open Day. Given how busy the Festival is and how hard performers have to work to get audiences and keep their shows going, our next worry is will they all still be able to turn up on the Sunday?

Well, four years on, and we've had four fantastic Festival Open Days! Most performers who have agreed to come along have turned up, and many unarranged have dropped in on the day. We've had world class entertainers playing on our modest little stage, and enjoying the hospitality and the chance to meet with other performers and us locals!



AN ENSEMBLE FROM THE LAVI YOUTH WIND BAND PLAYING CHASSIDIC MUSIC

One of the great ingredients of the Open Day is that unexpected element – spontaneity. And this year it was there in abundance. Just before doors opened at eleven I had the usual uneasy feeling: surveying the tables of freshly prepared open bagels and checking my running order of performers for the twentieth time, I thought what if no one comes? It was at that very moment one of our front door team called to say there was a coach outside full of teenagers with assorted musical instruments.

Within minutes the hall filled up with forty members of the Lavi Youth Wind Band from Jerusalem with their musical director and producers. We had been expecting only a few of the band to come along and play – it was after all a free day for the band and they had plans to explore Edinburgh. But they all decided to come along and it was great! Soon they were joined by performers and producers from a diverse range of theatre companies. The party had started on a high and the momentum continued throughout the day.

The line-up of Festival companies and performers included the Lavi Youth Wind Band of Jerusalem, The Yiddish Song Project, theatre company Conflict Relief, storyteller and musician Chana Sophia Yaffe, singer Bremner Duthie, comedian Ivor Dembina, singer/songwriter Daniel Cainer, and the spectacular Aluminium Show.

The aim of the Open Day has always been to bring performers and audiences together, welcoming artistes of all faiths and none to share their interest in Jewish culture or events in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, and, once again, this year's event was a great success.

Scotland's Jews

Available Now!

from SCoJeC,
price £6.00
(inc. p&p)





SCoJeC

awarded £100,000

SCoJeC has been awarded £100,000 by the Scottish Government to develop an ambitious three-year programme of new and established projects both within the Jewish Community and to promote good community relations in Scotland.

The projects include:

- the continued publication of *MEMO*, a weekly digest of information of relevance to ethnic minority communities, which we publish in partnership with BEMIS, the ethnic minority umbrella organisation;
- extending and developing the Outreach project (see p6), aimed at contacting and involving isolated Jewish individuals in rural Scotland;
- spreading the positive messages of the recent very successful Scottish Interfaith Pilgrimage (see p5), and the development of future such activities;
- developing a Scottish version of the *Jewish Way of Life Exhibition* to inform schools about Judaism.

Commenting on the award, SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski said: "This excellent result underlines the commitment of the new Scottish Government to continuing the "One Scotland" initiative, and shows the trust that SCoJeC has earned by consistently delivering on its undertakings."

SCoJeC Chair Walter Sneader also welcomed the award, noting that "SCoJeC has built up a remarkable working relationship with the Scottish Parliament and Government that is the envy of many other communities around the world."

We are now considering the detailed implementation of these projects, and would like to hear from organisations and individuals who are interested in working with us to further the Outreach, Community Relations, and Education strands.

Jewish Care

CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF Continuous Care in the Community

2008 has been an extra special year for Jewish Care Scotland, with lots of events being held to celebrate 150 years of continuous care in the community.

The party kicked off with a re-enactment of Jews arriving in Scotland in 1858. On the rain-washed decks of the Tall Ship they were given a warm welcome given by members of the Glasgow Hebrew Philanthropic Society and the Lord Provost and other city officials.

This was followed in May by a Civic Reception hosted by Glasgow City Council in the magnificent setting of the Banqueting Hall of the City Chambers. 150 guests attended, including councillors, Jewish Care Scotland staff, volunteers, and members of the clubs, as well as representatives from other organisations. At the Reception, the book, 'A Caring Community - 150 years of Jewish Care Scotland' by Sharon Barron, was launched.

June was also a busy month. An Anniversary Coffee Evening at

which Social Care Agency volunteers, staff, and guests gathered during Volunteers Week was held at the start of the month. Tributes were paid to volunteers past and present. Hot on its heels, came the Annual Jewish Care Charity Fun Walk from which 150 participants raised record sums for the organisation.

To round off the celebrations, the Provost and Councillors of East Renfrewshire are hosting a dinner in September to commemorate the Anniversary.

Chair Maureen Solomons said: "2008 is proving to be exciting for Jewish Care Scotland. The 150th anniversary launch, our publication, DVD, and civic events are all making the year very special. People in the community have shown great support for us. "I feel we can continue to build on the foundations put down by our predecessors. In that sense the 150th anniversary year has been a time for reflection but it is also very much about today and about looking forward, seeing what's needed, seeing what's possible and ensuring the



150 YEARS ON - THE LAUNCH OF THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AT THE TALL SHIP

organisation stays fit for the job in hand."

Lesley Roles, Chair of the Social Care Agency, added: "It has been a terrific and at times very moving year. We have recognised and celebrated the voluntary heart of Jewish Care Scotland that has sustained its core over these 150 years.

"We help people throughout Scotland, and have 118 volunteers working with the professional staff to deliver a range of social care services that are second to none. Our volunteers are trained and professional in practice, and contribute to every aspect of work undertaken by Jewish Care Scotland."

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL BOOK

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), is currently collating a register of names from people in Scotland whose family members perished in the Holocaust.

The names, together with photographs (where possible) and short histories, will be included in a Memorial Book which will be on permanent display in Scotland. Copies will be distributed to members and will also be used for educational purposes to ensure that those who perished are not forgotten, but will be remembered by future generations.

The Imperial War Museum consider the Memorial Books to be important historical records, and Yad Vashem and other museums have already requested copies of the AJR Memorial Books for their archives.

If you would like more information or to have names of members of your family included in the Scottish Memorial Book please contact either:

AGNES ISAACS: 0141-620 1292

PHILIP MASON: 0131-445 3437

Hoping for Regret

TALYA SILVER

My daughter is the cutest, prettiest, most intelligent, articulate almost-three-year-old on the planet. And of course I'm not biased! She can also be one of the most infuriating. The rhyme, "When she was good, she was very, very good, but when she was bad, she was *horrid*", could have been written just for her.

Her naughtiest activity is beating up her one-year-old brother. One moment they are playing sweetly together, sharing their toys nicely, and the next time I look round he is crying on the floor and she is hovering nearby with a guilty look on her face. We've read the parenting books and we know what to do – it's time for time-out.

"That was NOT nice. You have to stay in your room alone until you're ready to be nice."

"I'm ready be nice, I'm ready be nice. Don't want to be in my room!"

"What do you need to say to your brother?"

"Sorry" she says, smothering him with kisses and hugs, leading to further wails.

Soon, they're playing happily together again – until the next episode.

Watching with a wry smile I certainly have to admit that she has the emotional maturity of a two-year-old. Which is fine for a two-year-old! But, I wonder uncomfortably, how often do I act in similar ways? I never offer insincere apologies for ulterior motives, only to repeat the same offence shortly after. Or do I?

My thoughts wander to Yom Kippur. The holiest day of the year, spent fasting, praying – and beating our breasts for all the terrible things we have done in the past. Five times during the day we say the *vidui*, confession, privately; another five we repeat it as a congregation. The essence of this confession is outlined by Maimonides: "Please, G-d, I have sinned before you; I have done X. I regret it, and I am embarrassed by what I did. I will never do this again." Saying this insincerely, he continues, is equivalent to showering with dirty water; worse than useless. Oops!

The central *mitzvah* of Yom Kippur is *teshuvah*, which is often translated as "repentance", but literally means "return", because it entails going back to our true, pure selves. In our journey through life, we make both good and bad choices. On the Day of Atonement, we stand before G-d, and take stock. Leaving the rose-coloured spectacles at home, we take an honest look at who we are, and compare it to who we could be. If we find ourselves wanting (and who doesn't?) then G-d gives us this special opportunity for a second chance. Through the power of sincere *teshuvah* (true regret, confession, and a firm resolve never to repeat the deed) we can literally rewrite the past. We can change ourselves to such an extent that it is as if we are not the same individuals who did those actions. And G-d responds to that, and wipes away all record of our sins.

People think Yom Kippur is a day of doom and gloom, but there is no more optimistic way to relate to our own negativity. Rather than ignoring our past, we acknowledge it, and through sincere *teshuvah*, free ourselves from repeating the cycle of our mistakes. Like a patient parent, G-d is waiting for us to say sorry so He can forgive us.

Dates of Chagim (festivals) '08

ROSH HASHANAH: *evening 29 Sept
and days 30 Sept and 1 Oct*

TZOM GEDALYAH: *2 Oct*

KOL NIDRE: *evening 8 Oct*

YOM KIPPUR: *9 Oct*

SUCCOT: *Yom Tov evening 13 Oct
and days 14 to 15 Oct*

SUCCOT: *Chol HaMoed 16 to 19 Oct*

HOSHANAH RABBAH: *20 Oct*

SHEMINI ATZERET: *evening 20 Oct
and day 21 Oct*

SIMCHAT TORAH: *evening 21 Oct
and day 22 Oct*

Kindertransport Memories AT THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS SUMMER SCHOOL

HENRY WUGA

During the first weekend of August I was invited by the Society of Friends to their Summer School at Belhaven Hill School at Dunbar, to give a lecture on "Kindertransport – Its History & Causes".

For one weekend my wife and I joined this interesting community of 60 English youngsters, ages 11 to 17, and their teachers, who spent a week in sport, discussions, and workshops. What impressed us most was the discipline of this Quaker group. To make an announcement you simply raised both arms. Silence follows in 30 seconds – and you are dealing with 60 exuberant youngsters!!

Communal meals were eaten at Refectory tables preceded by Grace – 5 minutes of complete silence to say your own prayer. The Epilogue was 30 minutes of silence, possibly with one reading. Lights out was at 10.30. It was a very inspirational experience.

On Sunday morning I gave my lecture in the Sports Hall, speaking for 45 minutes to a most attentive audience of youngsters and teachers, and then answering their very perceptive questions for as long again.

"Would you consider changing your religion under the threat of persecution?"

"How did you integrate into a new country and learn a new language?"

"How did you reconnect with your family after Internment?"

"Do you listen to music composed by anti-Semites?"

He meant Wagner of course. I do, so somebody called out "A black mark for you".

"Did you encounter any anti-Semitism?"

The feedback was good, and after lunch we joined in a beach walk. It was a most satisfying, illuminating, and thoroughly enjoyable few days.



ABOVE: IN THE GARDENS OF THE BAHAI' SHRINE IN HAIFA



MIDDLE: AT THE SUFI CENTRE RUN BY SHEIKH ABDUL AZIZ BUKHARI IN JERUSALEM
LOWER: AT THE 'WESTERN WALL' IN JERUSALEM



Scottish Interfaith Pilgrimage

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI

The Interfaith Pilgrimage we told you about in Four Corners 18 has now taken place – that crazy idea of mine which grew out of a conversation with Rami Ousta, Chief Executive of the ethnic minority umbrella organisation BEMIS. Our intention to increase understanding and friendship between communities in Scotland was enthusiastically endorsed by the Very Rev Dr Finlay Macdonald, Principal Clerk and former Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and by the First Minister, Alex Salmond, who sent a personal letter of support.

More than thirty people from seven different faith communities participated in the very full programme we arranged in discussion with the Jerusalem Peacemakers, Eliyahu Maclean and Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari.

"It almost left no stone unturned in the attempt to present both an interfaith and a political dimension to the conflict from all perspectives, all while simultaneously attempting to gain a sense of spirituality from the pilgrimage sites visited."

Na'eem Raza and Mazhar Khan

The programme included a walking tour of the Old City stopping at the Western Wall, the Al Aksa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; visits to the Baha'i Shrine in Haifa, Christian places of pilgrimage in the Galilee, and Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Centre; meetings with prominent Israeli and Palestinian politicians in the Knesset and the Palestinian capital, Ramallah; prayers at the Great Synagogue, the Al Aksa mosque, and the Scottish Church in Jerusalem; a *Seudah Shlishit* (Shabbat afternoon meal) with Chief Rabbi David Rosen; and a remarkable panel of Jerusalem clerics from several faith traditions.

"We were justifiably proud to note that it was the first time that all these religious leaders had met. They came together because of their interest in our multi-faith pilgrimage and told us of how inspired and encouraged they were to find representatives of seven religions all travelling and learning together."

Fiona and Howard Brodie, members of Glasgow Reform Synagogue

Even if all we have done is to act as a catalyst for such contact between the faith communities in Jerusalem, that would be enough to declare the project a success. But a catalyst is not itself changed by the reaction it facilitates, and the group has changed, and gelled. Its members have formed firm friendships, and have continued to meet since they returned.

Our aim was to develop a better understanding of one another, to demonstrate wherever we went that mutual respect is possible without unanimity, and that it is possible to disagree without coming to blows. In that we had some success – most of the people we met were surprised and impressed by the enterprise itself, by the our diversity and cohesion, and by the sense of common commitment to that purpose. Many, including those with long experience of interfaith and intercommunal work both locally and internationally, said we were unique in their experience, and expressed the hope that we had started a trend.

"Nothing in my 26 years as a Buddhist monk could have prepared me for such a varied and enthralling journey."

Kamburawala Rewatha Thero, who was so affected by the experience, that on his return to Scotland, he enrolled to train as an RE teacher.

There were many practical challenges, such as organising meals so that everyone could eat together, but these served as a reminder that this was an interfaith group, embodying the paradox that it was our very differences that brought us together. Those differences cannot be papered over by sharing platitudinous cups of tea; it is of the nature of religion that each person believes that the others are, in some deep, basic, and perhaps even metaphysically self-deluding way, fundamentally wrong. And yet, as our group demonstrated, it is possible to discuss these very differences with mutual respect; to come better to understand each other's beliefs, even if what everyone believes they are exploring is why the others are wrong.

"The value of the Pilgrimage lies in its boldness and imagination. It was a visit into the unknown. It gives hope and confidence that a Scottish-based group could provide a forum for issues that may arise in Scotland on account of ignorance and prejudice."

Michael Conroy, a Roman Catholic priest

That is indeed part of what we hope to do. Back in Scotland, we now plan to visit a wide range of community organisations to talk about the pilgrimage, and, using knowledge and understanding gained during the trip, we hope to make a positive contribution to the development of good relations between Scotland's many faith communities.



LEADERS OF SIX FAITH COMMUNITIES
AT ST ANDREWS



WITH BENEDICTINE MONKS
ON THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES



AT THE BAHAI' SHRINE IN HAIFA

Jewish?

Jew-ish?

If any of these rings a bell ...

The project was launched with flyers and posters at the SCVO Gathering in Glasgow this summer. Thanks to our Outreach Worker, Sharon Mail, and Vice-Chair Frank House, the flyers are already in many locations in the Highlands. 25,000 more are about to be sent to local libraries across Scotland along with posters and copies of *Scotland's Jews*. They will also be sent to hospitals and local councils, and we are asking other organisations to help spread the word to as many people as possible who could benefit from SCoJeC's advice or assistance.

We know there are more Jewish people out there amongst the lochs and the glens and we want them to know what SCoJeC has to offer. We plan to hold events in the more remote areas of Scotland, so do please let us have your feedback and suggestions.

SCoJeC's outreach project

aims to help Jewish people, particularly in the remoter parts of Scotland, who want to connect with one another and the community. It was inspired by two women who contacted us separately on the same day – they had lived only a mile apart for 20 years, yet each believed she was the only Jewish person within a 50-mile radius.

"I first found SCoJeC through the internet a few years ago" says Esti, an Israeli married to a Scot, who has lived in the West of Scotland since 1999. "They are always happy to answer any e-mail and have the information I am looking for. Thanks to them I learnt of other Jewish people living in the Highlands who have reached out to their roots through this organisation. SCoJeC is a much needed link to Judaism and Jewish culture for Jews all around Scotland."

Candles and challah on Friday night?
Matzah on Passover?

.... Can you hear echoes?

Are you Jewish — or even just Jew-ish — without a Jewish community nearby?

Would you like to know if there are any other Jewish people living in your area?

If so, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities can help. SCoJeC is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. We can provide information about what's going on in Jewish communities around Scotland, and put you in touch with other Jewish people nearby.

Our quarterly magazine, *Four Corners*, is particularly aimed at people living in the remoter parts of Scotland, and we organise events especially for those living outwith the larger communities in the central belt.

We have a lot of experience in dealing with local authorities, health boards, the police, and other public bodies, and would be happy to help you, free of charge, with anything concerning Judaism, from buying Chanukah candles to providing support after an antisemitic incident — or even putting you in touch with the world's only Jewish bagpipe band!

If you want to replant some Jewish roots, contact the SCoJeC Outreach Worker, Sharon Mail.

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