Youth leaders in Glasgow recently took part in an "ACT Now" workshop organised by SCoJeC in association with Strathclyde Police and Maccabi Scotland. "ACT Now" – or "All Communities Together Now" – is part of the national counter-terrorism programme "Prevent", and is intended to involve communities in discussing community safety issues, and police and community responses at times of tension.

"It's an excellent means of raising awareness of sensitive community issues surrounding a terrorist incident," said Sean Burke of Strathclyde Police, who led the session, "and provides participants with the opportunity to discuss them in a safe environment." Sue Faber, the Operations Manager of Maccabi, agreed, saying that it had opened her eyes to many of the difficult decisions faced by the police. That view was echoed by the young people, who said that the session had increased their understanding of the way in which the police deal with threats of terrorism, and was very effective as a means to develop good communications between police and communities.

"ACT Now" is for all age groups, not only teenagers - please contact us if you would like SCoJeC to facilitate an "ACT Now" session for you.





As our AGM approaches,

it's time for the annual stock-take. This issue reports on new initiatives in Dundee and Sukkat Shalom, and our own Young Scot project. But there's a lot more going on: planning a conference with the Roman Catholics; klezmer music in the Highlands; the usual wide range of contacts with Government, collaborations with other communities; and so on.

But our paper about the Jewish Community of Scotland for the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (www.scojec.org/resources/files/sjs.pdf) was unfortunately sensationalised by the media. We reported that numbers are falling, and that antisemitism is rising; they misrepresented that as a causal relationship. So let us be clear: Scotland is still, overall, a welcoming place for Jews to live, but the 30 reported incidents last year were 30 too many. What is worrying is that some people, especially those living outwith the settled Jewish communities, tell us they are fearful of reporting their experiences. We don't know how typical that is, or how much of the iceberg is hidden, but we would be very interested to hear your experiences of being Jewish in Scotland.

Have a good summer!

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Standing Up to Unreason

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI

There's a passage in the Talmud that ought to be fairly simple, because traditionally it is one of the first that children learn, but it has always puzzled me.

In essence the situation is this: if two people have equally good claims to some article, the Talmud says that (subject to various conditions) it should be divided equally between them. So far so good, and logical, and obvious. But what bothers me is what comes next: if one person claims all of it, and the other claims that they should share it, the Talmud points out that half of it is not disputed, and so should be awarded to the first claimant. The only dispute relates to the other half, which they both claim, and that is just like the first case, so it should be divided equally. Thus the person who claimed the lot gets three quarters, and the person who wanted to share gets one quarter.

What makes me uneasy about this is that it seems to discourage compromise by

creating a perverse incentive to overstate one's case. It creates what philosophers and games theorists call a prisoner's dilemma: the parties adjust their claims to take account of what each thinks the other will claim. So even if I think we should share, I am better off if I say it's all mine, just in case you do! But this encourages people to overstate their case, and so militates against justice by penalising the honest and giving a free pass to the dishonest.

We see this effect all around us in a drive to extremism. Consider any moral or political issue on which opinion ranges along a spectrum from all to nothing. The advocates of all or nothing regard everyone in the middle as having sold part of the pass, and claim that, by selling part, they have surrendered the whole pass. That then forces the advocate of the middle ground to the other extreme, in order not to be misrepresented – by either side – as having conceded.

Take the Middle East: most people have no problem seeing rights and wrongs on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. But unfortunately there are those on each side who can see no vestige of good in the other. They misrepresent those who advocate compromise as betraying the cause, and they thereby raise the stakes; in a kind of gladiatorial perversion of Gresham's Law, their bad argument drives out good, and devalues the currency of debate.

So what can we do about it? To borrow another fine phrase, for evil to triumph, all that is necessary is for good people to do nothing. So if we recognise this evil of extremism, we have an obligation to do something. And all we can do is to keep hold of the good currency of reason, stand up to the unreason of the extremists, acknowledge that one's opponents have a right to be wrong, recognise that compromise moderates while victory alienates, and hold firm to a middle course towards agreement, accommodation, understanding, and cooperation. Or, as the Talmud wisely counsels: "If you grasp at too much, you grasp nothing."

Lag b'Omer in St Andrews

MORE THAN 40 STUDENTS FROM GLASGOW, EDINBURGH, AND ST ANDREWS J-SOCS ENJOYED A BARBECUE WITH STUDENT CHAPLAIN GARRY WAYLAND (AND LAMB!)







Everything to do with us

STEPHANIE BRICKMAN LOOKS AT ISRAEL FROM A CONVERT'S PERSPECTIVE

Like most converts to Judaism, or Jews by Choice as some prefer to call us, my conversion has been a long journey and I don't believe it will ever be over. I can't imagine reaching a point where the evolution that began with my first steps on the path to conversion will cease. It hasn't always been a gentle process, my attitudes as a Jew have morphed and swiveled since the journey first began, and none more so than my feelings about Israel.

When I first converted to Judaism I was adamant I wanted nothing to do with Israel. I was making a spiritual choice and that was that. I didn't understand why that should make my soon-to-be-fellow Jews uncomfortable. But uncomfortable they were and in hindsight I see their point. I was critical without knowing much about it, I think deep down I just didn't like the idea of being associated with something so unpopular. My sponsoring rabbi took a lenient view, saying life would sort it out.

How right he was, for as my Jewish life began to unfold, day by day I noticed Israel being treated differently from other nations, held to account more intensely,

STEPHANIE
BRICKMAN IS
A FREELANCE
WRITER AND
SCOTLAND
CORRESPONDENT
FOR THE JEWISH
CHRONICLE.
SHE LIVES IN
EDINBURGH WITH
HER HUSBAND
JOSH AND THEIR
SIX YEAR OLD
DAUGHTER



automatically burdened with guilt. Why should this state be treated so differently? The only answer I found was that it's Jewish. I found myself challenged and held responsible for Israel's actions. No matter how much I repeated "Nothing to do with me, mate!" the rest of the world didn't see it that way. Once I had converted it had everything to do with me, and it had come about simply because I,

like Israel, was now Jewish. Really the Israeli Embassy should consider issuing starter packs for new converts to prepare them for this. They should contain ... a surplus IDF helmet, a Chava Alberstein CD, a copy of the Blue Mountain by Meir Shalev – and maybe a packet of Bamba, just in case.

Sadly, including facts, reasoned arguments, and even direct experience of Israel, in the starter pack will count for nothing. No-one will listen to you anyway; denigrating Israel is the most trendy of causes, impossible to challenge, like apartheid before it. And there, for me, the common ground between Israel and apartheid begins and ends.

It's hard to discuss Israel. Dialogue with non-Jews about this has closed down for many people who just find it too upsetting. Then, when Jews are together, many just feel exhaustion when the topic is raised. But, myself included, we're just going to have to get over that, because, like it or not, it has everything to do with us.

Exhibition at the Parliament

ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO MEDICINE. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

For three days in April, Israeli achievements in Medicine, Science, and Technology were celebrated within the Scottish Parliament building, by an exhibition designed by Scottish Friends of Israel and sponsored by Ken Macintosh MSP. Fifty achievements, illustrated by images and text, were selected for display.

"Israel's Contribution to Medicine, Science, and Technology" would seem to be intrinsically apolitical, innocuous, and informative, but nothing relating to Israel is ever apolitical. Very quickly the exhibition became intensely politicised by the usual adversaries holding a public demonstration against it. With their placards stating "Israel's contribution to science is death and destruction", and a pavement display of miniature coffins, they made the Scottish Friends of Israel exhibition the focus of widespread press attention both here and in Israel.



KEN MACINTOSH MSP WHO SPONSORED THE EXHIBITION IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

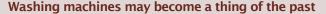
A public petition was submitted to the Parliament, calling for the exhibition to be withdrawn, and for the rules to be changed to prevent any similar exhibition in future. The parliamentary authorities, however, confirmed that the exhibition met all required criteria, and have said that they do not intend to review the rules under which exhibitions are held. They also pointed out that the Parliament has hosted not one, but four, exhibitions that focused on Palestine.

Public access to the exhibition was available only through MSPs. There were twenty two searing comments in the visitors' book, but only two were associated with MSPs, and those have a known record of anti-Israel views. Other criticisms

EXTRACTS FROM TWO OF THE PANELS FROM THE EXHIBITION

Sub-Saharan Africa blooms with Israel's cooperation

Prof Dov Pasternak, former head of Ben Gurion University of the Negev's Institute for Agriculture and Biology, has developed a horticultural production system for farmers with small parcels of land. Irrigation is by a gravity drip irrigation system based on that developed by Israeli farmers in the early years of the State.



Inspired by seeing a bird flying in the rain, Prof Edward Bormashenko from the Department of Physics at the Ariel University Center of Samaria, has created a polymer that mimics the novel water-repellent surface used by birds. He claims that the surface of a bird's wing keeps water and dirt from sticking to it's body. His research into non-stick materials could lead to self-cleaning textiles, with important applications in the shipping, building industries.





were based on accusations of "apartheid" or "ethnic cleansing", and call for boycott of all contacts with Israel. On the other hand, a group of non-Jewish visitors recorded their positive support for the exhibition and for Israel in the book.

In the event, and despite protests, the exhibition was very successful. Perhaps its impact was best summed up by Michael McMahon MSP, who wrote in the comment book, "If opening minds leads to peace between nations, we should welcome all information which can benefit mankind, wherever it comes from. Towards a peaceful settlement in the Middle East."

MYER GREEN (MICKEY)

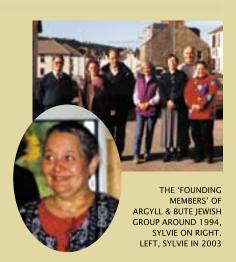
Sylvie McLardy

PETER MCLARDY

Those of you who have come to SCoJeC events in Lochgilphead will, I am sure, all remember Sylvie McLardy, who, sadly, died in April.

Sylvie was born in Carcassonne in 1942, shortly before her parents fled to the relative safety of Axat in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Many of her relatives died in the concentration camps, and, when the family moved back to Paris after the end of the war, her father wanted to give their Jewish heritage a low profile. Sylvie, however, learned to read Hebrew, and, on the High Holy Days, her mother took her to the Synagogue on Rue Copernic, where her uncle, Emil Katzmann, was the Cantor.

We met socially with family in Paris when we were over visiting, and kept in touch with her cousin, Rabbi Francois Garai, in Geneva, who sent me the English translation of the Kaddish. However, Sylvie's two sisters are not practising Jews, and nor are any of the Jewish friends we have over in the USA. I went to Brandies University in Massachusetts, which was a predominantly Jewish campus, and have friends from those days, but again they were not conspicuously practising their faith. So our contact with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities was our first exposure to Jewish folk wanting to make something of their Jewish heritage.



Sylvie was buried on a perfect sunny morning. Our daughter Namaste spread red roses over the woven basket coffin and I planted a camellia branch from our garden beside it. Namaste's eulogy was poignant in its detail, evocative of so many special moments Sylvie shared with us. Sylvie's sister, Eliane, and her cousin, Eli, led us in the Kaddish, the traditional Hebrew prayer, and John read the translation.

We visited Israel on holiday a few years ago and stayed in a Palestinian-run hotel on the Mount of Olives. Sylvie mostly went along with the popular modernist view that leaves God out of the picture, or, at most, a fading backdrop to the modern play of forces. However, in the last months of her illness she came to appreciate that the God who promises in the Torah still delivers. He is on track; it is us who are off the rails.

There are several times in the year when one can clearly see the difference between the different visitors to the Kotel, the Western Wall of the site where both Temples stood. There are some tourists who visit Israel as they would Rome or any other seat of an ancient civilisation. With a camera in hand, a backpack, and an eye to pick up any bargains, they visit with a sense of curiosity, an appreciation for the history, and an attempt to soak up some of the culture.

However, for those with a Jewish connection, it is completely different. There are those who make a special visit as part of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration; there are *Yerushalmim*, Jerusalemites, who practically live there, hiding away in corners all day, reciting prayers and psalms, and studying holy texts. Others make an occasional trip to pray and absorb some holiness.

This difference is especially noticeable on two occasions in the year. On the Festivals, especially on Sukkot, thousands make their way to the Kotel to fulfil the precept of aliyah l'regel, the thrice-yearly pilgrimage to the site of Temple. With the special Priestly Blessing the plaza is full of excited Jews from all walks of life. In ancient days, the Talmud says it was an appropriate occasion on which to bring lost objects found during the year, because the odds were that you could find the owners, and be able to return them. Today, it is very easy to bump into an old friend there!

The other occasion is on Tisha B'Av, the commemoration of the destruction of the Temple, some 2000 years ago. The atmosphere becomes quiet and subdued. Candles are lit as people recite the Kinnot, the special prayers of the day, and some stay, to spend the night by the Kotel. You can walk down towards the southern walls, and see where archaeologists excavated stones, still in place from when they were thrown from the Mount during the Roman rampage.

The difference is clear: for some, it is a relic, a place that was once important to the Jews, that was the crowning glory in an Empire once great but eventually lost in the vicissitudes of time. For others, it is a part of them; it is the source of identity in a profound way.

A midrashic story is told of Jeremiah, the prophet who foretold the first destruction and begged the Jewish people to repent, and his encounter with the Greek philosopher Plato. Returning from exile, he saw the site of the Temple in ruins, and broke down and wept. Plato was passing by, and, seeing him in such a state, enquired who he was. Told Jeremiah was a Jewish sage, Plato asked him why he was crying over wood

and stone. "They say of you that you are a great philosopher," replied Jeremiah, "do you have any questions to which you don't know the answer?" When Jeremiah answered them all, Plato, astonished, asked the source of his knowledge. "These wood and stones", replied Jeremiah.

The Temple is part of who we are. It is at the root of our national identity - our prayers constantly speak about the return to and rebuilding of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the centre of our religious life, as the site of the Temple, our intellectual life, as the home to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court, and our national life, as the seat of the monarchy. The Kabbalists speak about how our souls draw their energy from the upper worlds through the point of the connection that is Jerusalem, and the Midrashim speak about how our souls were created there.

On the festivals, we relive this, and experience the joy it brings. On Tisha b'Av, we remember how far away we sometimes are. In Scotland, we may be a long way physically, but that is no impediment to our heart and soul being always there.

SCOJEC AGM Sun 27 June, 1.30 pm

preceded by lunch

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE,

GIFFNOCK, GLASGOW G46 6UE

Festival Open Day Sunday 22 August Details will be available soon at HTTP://www.ehcong.com/index.html

Jewish Scottish SCRABBLE COMPETITION C. O. R. N. E. R. S. How many points would this score? Dundee Synagogue will be hosting the first competition this autumn and we are looking for other Scottish teams who think they are up for the challenge! Led by teams who think they are up for the challenge! Led by

Dundee Synagogue will be hosting the first compatible this autumn and we are looking for other Scottish teams who think they are up for the challenge! Led by our world class champion, Esther Herman, we will be offering an opportunity to play using both English and Hebrew Scrabble boards. The winning team will keep the cup for a year and we are still looking for a sponsor to give it its name...

CONTACT SHARON LEVY: SANDS.LEVY@BTINTERNET.COM

Sukkat Shalom

Induction of Rabbi Mark Solomon

On Sunday 25th April Sukkat Shalom held an induction ceremony for their first Rabbi, Mark Solomon. Around a hundred members and guests gathered for the ceremony held at St Mark's Unitarian Church. Guests included Amanda Grant, Vice-Chair of Liberal Judaism, Rt Rev Brian Smith, Bishop of Edinburgh, and Gavin Strang MP, as well as clergy from different Christian denominations, and representatives from SCoJeC, the City of Edinburgh and of other faiths.

In a moving ceremony, Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, passed the community's Torah scroll to Rabbi Solomon, and whispered his private words to him before turning to address the congregation. For his induction address Rabbi Solomon took the theme of "travelling", which for him means a monthly journey from his home in London to visit his congregation, as well as another monthly trip to his other congregation in Manchester. He paid tribute to the Orthodox congregation in Edinburgh as follows:

"We Jews began as nomads, and, while yearning for a promised land, have spent much of our history, and exercised much of our creativity, wandering from country to country, sometimes persecuted, but often, as here in Scotland, finding a stable, hospitable home,

and putting down deep roots. I want to pay tribute to the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation that has for so long been an integral part of the religious fabric of this city, and to Rabbi David Rose, who was prevented by another communal engagement from being here today. Sukkat Shalom and many of its members have close ties with our orthodox brethren, and I hope to foster continuing good relations between the two communities."

Much of the service, in Hebrew and English, was conducted by members of the community. A Scottish touch was the tune used for final hymn "Adon Olam", not one of the traditional Hebrew melodies, but one we more commonly use for the Burns song "My love is like a red, red rose".



ABOVE, RABBI DANNY RICH (R) WITH RABBI MARK SOLOMON DURING THE INDUCTION SERVICE

Shabbat Service in Newstead

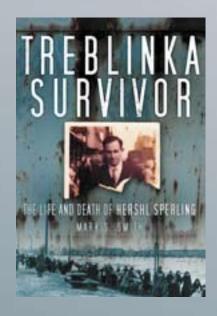
On 22nd May, over 30 people filled the village hall of the tiny village of Newstead in the Scottish Borders, where Sukkat Shalom held a Shabbat Service. This was the third time that such a service had been held there.

Newstead is the site of Trimontium. huge Roman camp and settlement that was occupied during the first and second centuries CE. Donald Gordon, secretary of the Trimontium Trust, joined us for the service, and after kiddush and lunch, gave us a presentation on the history of Trimontium, and led a walk round what remained of the Roman settlements, including the site of an amphitheatre. Could there have been Jews here in the first and second century, perhaps providing goods for the legionaries in this far outpost?

On such a beautiful Shabbat it was easy to imagine the past and to enjoy the present.

GILLIAN RAAB

From Death to Life



It is natural to yearn for information about our own personal history. So in a community that has so many of its roots in Eastern Europe, as refugees either from the pogroms at the turn of the 20th century, or from the Nazi Holocaust, it is not surprising that a capcity crowd turned out in Giffnock to hear Mark Smith talk about his new book, *Treblinka Survivor*.

Smith is the Deputy Business Editor of The Herald, and his family were once members of the small Jewish community in Greenock. His book is an account of his personal

journey in Poland to retrace the tragic life of Hershl Sperling, a Holocaust survivor who made his home in Glasgow. Sperling survived Treblinka, and described Auschwitz as "a walk in the park" by comparison.

For me this was doubly poignant. I only realised as Mark talked that I knew his subject – the Sperlings had lived in the same street as my family, I had gone to school with their son, and I had visited them when they moved close to where I live now, yet I was unaware of the father's suicide. But also I spent much of last weekend listening to the Chief Rabbi of Poland talking about a resurgent community, as people who had hidden their Jewishness – from the Nazis, then the Soviets, then the local Communists – now feel able, indeed compelled, to reclaim their identity. And even more compelling, the stories of how non-Jewish Poles of all ages are working to preserve the Jewish heritage of their country.

So one message is the indomitability of the human spirit, as Polish Jewry literally rises from the ashes. But the other is more practical than theoretical – as Rabbi Rubin pointed out in his vote of thanks, Jewish tradition was originally unwritten, but eventually it was realised that there was no alternative – it must be recorded or it would be lost. Likewise, he said, our generation was brought up with the oral testimony of the survivors, the tatoos on their arms, the tales of horror or the even more deafening silences; we had no need to commit them to writing, but now that generation is no longer with us, we have an obligation to preserve their memories.



AUTHOR MARK SMITH WITH ARTIST ROY PETRIE
IN FRONT OF HIS PAINTING INSPIRED BY THEIR
VISIT TO AUSCHWITZ AND TREBLINKA.

NICOLA LIVINGSTON

Access All Areas

SCOJEC has been awarded a grant of £1830 by Young Scot for a Scotlandwide project under their "Access all Areas" initiative.

Young Scot is a charity that promotes citizenship education, provides information on issues affecting young people in Scotland, and works on various different projects and initiatives in partnership with local organisations. "Access All Areas" is a government-funded project aimed at empowering young people from ethnic minority, refugee, asylum seeker, and faith groups to influence service provision in their local areas, enhance access, and promote inclusion.

The project will involve young people in democratic processes and promoting 'informed participation' in local civic structures. A working group of around a dozen young people, aged 16 to 25, from all of Scotland's Jewish

communities, will plan and deliver a research project on an issue of interest to them as young Jews growing up in Scotland.

The group will be trained in research and consultation techniques, and will be supported by both Young Scot and SCoJeC staff, to help them gather views and opinions from other young people across the community – in this case probably electronically, given the geographical spread. The group will draw their findings together, reaching their own conclusions and recommendations, to share with key policy decision makers, such as government, planners, police, and the media.

It is planned that the group will meet together for training and to devise their questionnaire over two days in September. They will then meet again on two Sundays in early November to assemble their findings in the way they feel will have the best impact, for example, a document, film, presentation etc. Following this, Young Scot will support the group to present their findings to all relevant bodies.

Young People will be encouraged to use this experience to complete Youth Achievement Awards, or as part of school, college, or university requirements. Any young person associated with the Jewish Communities of Scotland, aged between 16 and 25 years, who would like more information about participating in this project should e-mail: projects@scojec.org

in cyber space

SHAPON LEVV

The hub of Jewish life in the Diaspora is very often the synagogue, which links the spiritual sphere of 'Jewishness' with the 'mundane' and sometimes challenging elements that are part of belonging to a minority community. Dundee Synagogue has served us well for many years, but, as is the trend across the UK, the community has dwindled in numbers and the synagogue building has aged, and is in constant need of (expensive) repairs.

This was discussed at our recent AGM. One person, a member of the community for the past 86 years, felt it would be a real shame to lose the synagogue in Dundee. Others agreed, arguing that the unique architecture of the site should be preserved. Others felt the burden of upkeep is too onerous and unevenly distributed amongst a few, and argued that the cost of repairs, insurance, and maintenance is prohibitively high, and that the physical state of the building makes the spiritual experience of attending services unappealing.

A number of options, including relocation within Dundee or to St Andrews, were suggested and we are currently exploring various possibilities and sources of finance. One of the more innovative ideas was to try and build a community presence that does not rely solely on physical entity. However, a number of questions must be asked at the very outset: Can an active community be sustained by virtual means alone or should a virtual presence be seen as a way to enhance and complement the synagogue in Dundee? And in what way can Cyber-Judaism be part of a solution to difficulties experienced by the community in their physical existence?

To answer these questions, we are planning a new web site to tell our unique story and celebrate the rich inheritance of the community and its members, past and present. We hope it will provide a focal point for young people in the community to create and maintain a virtual Jewish local presence, that it will enhance our collaboration with other faith communities across Scotland and beyond, and that it will serve as a beacon of innovative practice and an inspiration to other small communities. Watch this space!

THE SANDYMOUNT REGENERATION PROJECT

HARVEY KAPLAN, ADAPTED FROM SJAC NEWSLETTER: WWW.SJAC.ORG.UK

In the past few months, the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre has been assisting Glasgow City Council Land and Environmental Services, who are producing a heritage trail leaflet for Sandymount Cemetery in Glasgow, including the Christian, Jewish, military, and Muslim sections. In the course of their research, a slim notebook with the label 'Synagogue' was unearthed. Inside is the stamp of "Chevra Poale Zedek – The Workmen's Synagogue, 43 Buchan Street, Gorbals".

Previously, it was thought that the first Jewish burial in Sandymount cemetery (one of nine Jewish burial grounds in the city) was in 1908, but the notebook lists burials in September 1905, starting with the burial of prayer books according to religious custom, and then of Rose Newfield, who died of whooping cough in Belvedere Hospital, aged 1 year 3 months, a year before before the formation of the Glasgow Hebrew Public Burial Society in 1906.

Between 1905 and 1993, over 2,300 burials took place in the Jewish section of Sandymount cemetery. Almost a third of the burials were of babies and infants. The Archives Centre has registers for this cemetery and plans are underway to photograph the surviving headstones. The Sandymount Regeneration Project (www.sandymount.org.uk) has raised a large sum of money to refurbish the Jewish cemetery, re-laying the headstones horizontally just below grass level to allow grass cutting and general maintenance to be carried out. A memorial is planned to honour the children, babies and stillborns, most of whom have no headstone of their own.

