



# יח"ס

## YaCHaS: Israelis together in Scotland

*"a lovely community atmosphere"*

"YaCHaS", SCoJec's Lottery-funded project to connect Israelis in Scotland, has been running for almost a year now, and reached its climax in August with a celebration of Israeli Culture in Edinburgh, attended by more than 140 people from all over Scotland. As one participant said,

"It's not every day I get the chance to see and celebrate Israeli culture, so I was not going to miss this opportunity".

The day began with light refreshments at the Filmhouse before the screening of *Ana Arabia*, the acclaimed 2013 film by Amos Gitai, which explores the coexistence of Jews and Arabs in the Tel Aviv suburb of Jaffa. After the film, *Lamabati*, an Israeli comedy group, entertained the audience with a energetic, fast paced, improvised play that got everyone laughing. This was followed by *The City*, a hip-hop opera by the Incubator Theater Company, which had been controversially cancelled at the Festival Fringe because of anti-Israel protests. This is an electrifying and highly original Film Noir inspired fable, blending rap, hip-hop, beat-boxing, and jazz singing – Humphrey Bogart meets Jay-Z!

The venue was packed with young people and an atmosphere of solidarity filled the room. We also had the pleasure of hosting friends of the Jewish community and Israel at the event who were very keen to show their support and take part. The Israeli artists were noticeably excited to see the warm crowd: "We've not had an easy time here. We are happy to see you all, and we thank you all for embracing us." One woman said: "I can't believe art is suffering because of politics",

and another commented: "I have lived here for many years and have never seen a situation like this; it has brought us together to show our support."

After a kosher buffet, the day ended with everyone joining in singing *Am Israel Chai*, and everyone agreed the event had been a major success. "Such a fantastic day; thank you for organising this," said one participant. Another added: "I've had an amazing day, packed with Israeli art and culture. Thank you for making it happen".

## Rosh Hashanah Message

FROM THE FIRST MINISTER, ALEX SALMOND MSP

"On behalf of the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland, I am delighted to wish you all *'shanah tovah'*,



and to assure you of my continuing appreciation of the Jewish community's important and valuable contribution to making Scotland a stronger and more inclusive society – where all can live, work and worship without fear and in peace.

"I am therefore pleased to assure you that as a Government we are committed to tackling discrimination wherever it occurs and will not tolerate any form of racial or religious prejudice.

"Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are times for remembering, repentance and renewal – remembering the achievements of the past, repenting of the wrongs of the present, and renewing our own plans for a better future.

"As you rest from work and gather together to worship I wish you all *'shanah tovah umetukah'* – a good and sweet new year."

THE FIRST MINISTER WITH (L TO R) EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, CHIEF RABBI EPHRAIM MIRVIS, AND NICOLA LIVINGSTON.



• **Shanah Tovah ! שנה טובה**  
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The  
Scottish Council  
of Jewish  
Communities  
[www.scojec.org](http://www.scojec.org)

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION  
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND



# Two Woks and some Candles

LINDA MARTIN, SCJeC's VOLUNTEER HIGHLAND AMBASSADOR

The problems of "Space" are not limited to the field of Astrophysics. Anyone who has kept a kosher kitchen will know that – despite accepted scientific knowledge – space is NOT limitless and can pose a problem worthy of Einstein. Multiplying by 2, for milk and meat, ought to give the solution, but when you add the parev pans and dishes, the Passover pots and pans and Seder plates, the Kiddush cups, it soon becomes obvious that it doesn't!

Imagine, then living in a caravan, without running water and without electricity, a full day's journey from any kosher shops. Such was my life, when I set out to build a house, and a life, in the Highlands. My solution was based on The Wok – or more precisely, two woks – one red, for meat and one blue, for dairy. Two glass bowls, two sets of cutlery, two lots of crockery, two lots of tea-towels – and I was set up for anything. Blue and white were dairy, anything else was not. Together with a kettle, a baking tray, and a Calor Gas stove, I found myself able to rustle up a meal out of almost anything – even baking challah on a weekly basis!

Meat was in short supply, granted, but I had taken the precaution of making a confit in an enormous Kilner jar to bring with me. The recipe books tell you to refrigerate – but without electricity I had no refrigerator. I didn't die of food poisoning. Fish was more easily come by, and it was not uncommon to find a carrier bag of mackerel hanging on the caravan door, a gift from some passing acquaintance.

The lack of a refrigerator was a problem when it came to the dairy products. At first, I survived on powdered milk, but quickly saw the advantage of an insulated picnic box and freezer blocks, which a neighbour let me replenish each day. I discovered that yoghurt and soft cheese could be made on a hot-water bottle surrounded by feather pillows.

The neighbours were also quick with offers of showers and baths. "The fire is always lit," said one, "so there's plenty of hot water for a bath". Another told me, "Pop in any time in a morning after nine if you are wanting a shower – we'll be at work, but the door's always open." As for washing and sanitation, I had a couple of water containers (one with a tap which sat on the worktop beside the kitchen sink). A spare vacuum flask full of warm water sat on a shelf next to the hand-basin in the bathroom and a Portaloo was nicely accommodated in the shower cubicle. A daily routine was soon established, seeing me make a dash for the facilities at the ferry-boat jetty each morning (never was the blessing "*n'kavim, chalulim*" said with more feeling or regularity), to empty the Portaloo, fill my water containers, and collect fresh freezer blocks.

And before Shabbat – which only arrived at ten or eleven at night – there would be a phone call to my loved ones, then candles lit, Kiddush said; and without electricity, shops, or anything other than the beauty of Creation to surround me, it was, oh, so easy to be *shomer Shabbat*!! Two years later I have all mod cons and a house almost completed ([www.willow-brae.co.uk](http://www.willow-brae.co.uk)), but will never forget the simplicity of living with Two Woks and some Candles.



## Music of the Bible

A wonderful pre-Shabbat event took place in Tobermory, when American Conservative Rabbi Elyssa Auster and her husband Chazzan Matthew Klein, on honeymoon on the Isle of Mull, agreed to take part in a presentation exploring the Music of the Bible.

Psalm singing has a strong tradition in the Hebrides, famous for its Gaelic choirs, and this event, held in the Free Church building, provided an opportunity to hear and compare the similarities and differences between different traditions.

Chazzan Klein explained the background to the Psalms and their traditional melodies, singing examples from both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions. Linda Martin, SCJeC's Highlands and Islands Volunteer Ambassador, presented other melodies, and we also heard Gaelic and English versions of *Hallel* (a series of psalms sung on festive occasions) that highlighted the way in which music can create a different emphasis on the interpretation of the words.

Members of the local Gaelic Choir sang one of the psalms in Gaelic with Chazzan Klein joining in and getting his tongue around the unfamiliar words, much to everyone's delight.

"This was a lovely friendly event, and comparing various uses and presentations of the Psalms was fascinating", said one couple, whilst another enthused, "What a treat. I came without any expectations, and thoroughly enjoyed it and learned so much".







# Unprecedented Increase in ANTISEMITISM

LEFT: L TO R: SUPT GAVIN PHILIPS (HEAD OF SAFER COMMUNITIES DEPT, POLICE SCOTLAND), NICOLA LIVINGSTON, EPHRAIM BOROWSKI AND THE LORD ADVOCATE.  
RIGHT: THE FIRST MINISTER WITH NICOLA LIVINGSTON AND PAUL MORRION.

During August, SCoJeC received reports of more antisemitic incidents than in all of the previous two years, including threatening phone-calls, e-mails, and graffiti on synagogues, as well as harassment and incitement to break the criminal law. After asking to meet us at the beginning of September, the Chief Constable of Police Scotland, Sir Stephen House, wrote, "As Chief Constable, and indeed as a citizen, I am concerned about the recent rise in hate incidents targeted at our Jewish communities. The current situation is completely unacceptable to any decent person."

Hate crime is defined as any crime that is motivated by the victim's perceived membership of a group. Unfortunately the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) has proved right that "Fear of hate crime escalates dramatically in those who share with an immediate victim, the same group identity that has made a victim a target": the level of disquiet and apprehension in the community is unprecedented. People tell us they are worried, depressed, and unable to sleep; they do not feel safe wearing a kippah or Magen David in the street; they avoid colleagues and neighbours to forestall aggressive attempts to draw them into argument about Gaza; several say they no longer feel welcome in Scotland. One mother wrote: "We are scared for our children's safety. We are now confining ourselves to our home more. We have instructed the children not to identify themselves as Jewish to anyone who doesn't already know. We fear the new school year. We fear bringing the children to cheder..." Most tellingly, the person who had previously told our *Being Jewish in Scotland* enquiry that "Scotland is a darn good place to be a Jew", now wrote, "Feel alienated and no longer Scottish first, then Jewish. Feel Jewish only."

It is not SCoJeC's role to express opinions on Middle East politics. It is SCoJeC's role to convey the concerns of the Jewish Community in Scotland, as we have been doing strenuously to the authorities. We continue to stress that antisemitism is not only personal abuse of individual Jews, but also the singling out of Jewish

people, institutions – and the only Jewish country, so that the disproportionate obsession with Israel in Scottish public life contributes to people's fears. 50 of the 260 Members' Motions about countries other than the UK in the current Parliamentary session have been about Israel; the Scottish Government has issued 8 statements about Gaza since July, compared with 4 about Syria since January 2013; all but 1 of the 7 statements ever issued by the Scottish Human Rights Commission about other countries have been to condemn Israel. This all contributes to the atmosphere in which Yvonne Ridley, a former parliamentary candidate for the "Respect" party, can call for Scotland to be "a Zionist-free zone", a barely disguised call to expel Jews from Scotland.

To their credit, the First Minister, the Lord Advocate, and the Chief Constable all responded promptly and unambiguously to our concerns by asking to meet us, and by issuing unequivocal statements.



The First Minister said:



*We will not tolerate any form of racial or religious prejudice, and the full force of the law will be brought down on the perpetrators of any antisemitic incidents in Scotland. All hate crimes are deplorable and have no place in modern Scotland – I support all efforts to stamp out this unacceptable behaviour.*

The Lord Advocate, Frank Mulholland QC, wrote to SCoJeC:



*The Crown Office and procurator Fiscal Service has a zero tolerance approach to any crimes motivated by prejudice and hate. I would like to offer reassurance to your community that where any person has been abused, threatened, targeted, or otherwise subjected to criminal behaviour, then the police will investigate such cases thoroughly, and where there is sufficient evidence to prosecute, Scotland's prosecutors will do so.*

The Chief Constable told us that 38 antisemitic incidents were reported in Scotland in July and August, of which 20 have been recorded as crimes. The police have identified the alleged perpetrators in 14 cases, 8 people have been arrested, 3 more will be reported to the Procurator Fiscal, and a further 3 are likely to be reported. His statement continued:



*Our communities rightly expect that Police Scotland will not tolerate hate crime or any other criminal activity. I can tell you that none of the people who have been abused in Scotland over the past few weeks have been responsible for events in the Middle East. They are simply ordinary Scots people who were abused whilst quietly going about their daily business. Attacking them is **not** lawful protest.*

We continue to reiterate our concern at the disregard some local authorities have shown for the concerns of their own citizens. The hypocrisy of those who claim that flying the Palestinian flag from Council buildings "is not intended to show support for one side or the other in this conflict", was demonstrated when the Disasters Emergency Committee refused to allow its flag to be flown alongside it. What citizens and visitors to Scotland see is the Councils' adoption of a symbol that over these last weeks has been used to harass and intimidate people in shopping centres and outside theatres. We call on political leaders to reject such posturing, which does nothing to bring peace to the Middle East or to help civilians, but which drives a wedge between communities in Scotland and contributes to the sense of insecurity and alienation amongst Jewish people in Scotland, and instead to promote creative initiatives that foster good relations amongst local communities.

*Antisemitism cannot be effectively tackled if the true scale of the problem is not known, so we strongly urge everyone to report all incidents to the police on the **national non-emergency number 101** or use the **Third Party Reporting form** on the SCoJeC website.*



## Gathering the Voices



Scotland has been home to many refugees who sought sanctuary to escape the racism of Nazi-dominated Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, and the *Gathering the Voices* project, which has been working with Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) to collect and record their oral testimonies.

To date, 37 people from a number of different European countries and many walks of life, have been interviewed. Most, but not all, were Jewish, but by accident of birth they were all equally at risk from the racial policies of the Nazis. The interviewees discuss their lives – including their earliest memories of life in Europe, the horrors of Nazism, their experiences of migration, and their gradual integration into Scottish society. These ‘new Scots’ describe their day-to-day lives as they learned about their new home, gained an education, found jobs, married, had children of their own, and put down roots in Scotland.

The survivors’ truly inspirational testimonies can be freely accessed in audio and written form on the internet at [www.gatheringthevoices.com](http://www.gatheringthevoices.com). There are 23 voices already on the site, with more being added, and the website also has links to other sites and resources for primary and secondary school pupils, such as a digital game designed by four recent GCU graduates, and based on an interview with Marion Camrass, who spent part of the war as a political prisoner in Siberia and later as a refugee in Bukhara in Uzbekistan before coming to Scotland.

In addition, *Gathering the Voices* has created a mobile exhibition stand for use in Scottish schools, libraries, and museums, with brief extracts from interviews, photographs, memorabilia, and other historical information, to ensure that these unique testimonies are able to reach a Scottish, and even a worldwide, audience.

If you wish to borrow the exhibition, please email: [gatheringthevoices@gmail.com](mailto:gatheringthevoices@gmail.com)

## “Réjà-vu?”

TALYA SILVER

Terry Pratchett, in one of his humour-filled books, defined the concept of *réjà-vu*, the feeling that you will experience this again in the future. As Yom Kippur approaches, I know exactly what he means. Soon I will be standing before the King of Kings, beating my breast, confessing my sins, and resolving never to commit them again.

And at some point during the day, *déjà-vu* will creep up on me, elbowing aside hunger pangs to vie for attention, and I will remember. I will remember standing here exactly a year ago, confessing the same sins and definitely intending never to repeat them. And I will know, viscerally, inevitably, that this will happen again next year too.

Pratchett didn’t signpost an escape from this dilemma, but the wisest of all men got there already. “Seven times will a righteous man fall and get up,” said King Solomon in *Proverbs*; “seventy” or “many” say the commentators. This is an oft-quoted phrase, but the end of the verse is less well-known: “the wicked will stumble through evil”. Righteous and wicked alike, we all mess up. The wicked avoid the *déjà-vu* by never repenting.

So the *réjà-vu* phenomenon should not surprise. But what can we actually do about it?

Despite the repeated confessions of Yom Kippur, Judaism is not a religion of guilt. *Teshuvah*, repentance, literally return, is an active process that includes asking forgiveness, making restitution, and resolving to act differently in the future.

So, one thing we can’t do is just exploit *réjà-vu* in the Pratchett spirit – “I’ll enjoy myself now and repent later” cancels itself out. (‘Enjoy?’ – I guess it depends on the flavour of your sins!) The *Mishnah* points out that for someone who says, ‘I will sin and repent, and sin and repent’, *teshuvah* doesn’t work. (So, are only genuinely surprised clairvoyants allowed on Yom Kippur?!)

The process of real *teshuvah* enables us to change ourselves so deeply that we are considered not to have sinned; we are no longer the same person who committed the act. Which is all nice and tidy in the mystical realms, but I personally don’t experience it. The Chassidic master, the Ba’al HaTanya, presents a coping strategy for someone overwhelmed with guilt: schedule a (brief) time to spend with the feeling. At the appointed time, feel the pain, regret the act, grieve for the consequences. When guilt nags outside that time, push it away and instead express yourself with positive energy. Overemphasis on the negative is a strategy of the *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination. Yom Kippur comes only once a year.

## Celebrate Chanukah with SCoJeC

Candle lighting, potato latkes, and our renowned kosher buffet. An opportunity to meet others living in the area, and a chance to find out more about SCoJeC’s volunteer training and other projects.

**Alloa** Wed 17 December, 6.30-8.30  
Theatre Bar, Town Hall

**Dalbeattie** Thu 18 December, 6.30-8.30  
Nail Factory – includes an exhibition of the drawings and sculpture of Hannah Frank

## Yom Tov Calendar

**Rosh HaShanah:**

Wed Sept 24 eve, Thu 25 & Fri 26 Sept

**Fast of Gedaliah:**

Sun 28 Sept

**Kol Nidre:**

Fri 3 Oct eve

**Yom Kippur:**

Shabbat 4 Oct

**Succot:**

Wed 8 Oct eve, Thu 9 & Fri 10 Oct

**Chol haMoed:**

Shabbat 11 to Tue 14 Oct

**Hoshannah Rabbah:**

Wed 15 Oct

**Shemini Atzeret:** Wed 15 Oct eve, Thu 16 Oct

**Simchat Torah:**

Thu 16 Oct eve, Fri 17 Oct



# A significant milestone: 400<sup>TH</sup> ISSUE OF MEMO

# MEMO

*"From the first edition in August 2005, MEMO has been an invaluable source of information of particular interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, and has made a significant contribution to informing and empowering Scotland's minority ethnic, religious and cultural communities."*

*I wish you continuing success in the production of MEMO, and welcome its on-going contribution to making Scotland what we want it to be – a safer, stronger and more inclusive society where all can live in peace and realise their potential both as individuals and as members of wider society."*

MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM MSP



*"MEMO is essential Sunday night or Monday morning reading. Immigration and asylum are fast-moving areas of policy and debate. For an organisation like Scottish Refugee Council seeking to track and influence these agendas, MEMO is indispensable. It provides an eagle-eyed and brilliantly helpful synopsis of how asylum and immigration issues have been covered in our parliaments and media over the last week as well as looking ahead to what is coming up."*

GARY CHRISTIE, ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

MEMO started in response to a request from Rami Ousta, Chief Executive of the ethnic minority infrastructure organisation BEMIS, and provides a wide range of information about matters such as immigration and asylum, community relations, equality, and discrimination, in an easily accessible format. From the outset feedback has been uniformly positive, and through the hundreds of minority community organisations on the mailing list, it now reaches thousands of readers.

*"MEMO is a unique partnership between BEMIS Scotland and SCoJeC, which has proven to be an excellent resource for promoting the latest developments and initiatives within race equality settings."*

RAMI OUSTA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BEMIS

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with BEMIS and contribute to its vision of empowering minority communities to engage directly with Scottish civic society. And of course we are very grateful for the Scottish Government funding that makes this possible."

Back issues of MEMO are available at [www.scojec.org/memo/memo.html](http://www.scojec.org/memo/memo.html).

To be added to the mailing list contact [memo@scojec.org](mailto:memo@scojec.org).



## Welcome To Write!

On a bright Sunday morning, a group of strangers arrived at the Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre, not knowing what to expect from SCoJeC's invitation to share their personal experience of immigration as part of Scottish Refugee Week. Everyone was welcomed at the door with a plate of strudel and ushered into the Community Centre to the strains of traditional Jewish music by a live band.

After a short introduction game, the three tutors, Ellen Galford, J David Simons, and Tracey S Rosenberg, led workshops exploring different approaches to storytelling: creative non-fiction, fiction, and poetry. The stories that emerged were fascinating and moving, inspiring conversations that spilled over into a delicious kosher lunch.

One woman told us how her grandfather had run the Jews' Temporary Shelter in London for fifty years – and now, as she works with charities for the homeless in Edinburgh, she thinks of his legacy. Several of the participants talked about the accidents of love, war, or study that had brought them to Scotland. One woman, none of whose family spoke any English, had been evacuated by the British forces from Kosovo in 1999, and "plonked down in Glasgow". An African woman had met a Scotsman and followed him to Edinburgh, but still wasn't sure about whether she wanted to be here or not. Another found herself here after someone had told her about a course in Edinburgh. One participant had escaped from the Nazis as a baby, and another's mother came to Britain on the last train to leave Berlin before the start of the Second World War.

Reflecting on the day, one participant told us *"It was my first experience writing in English. I am grateful for the kindness and hospitality here; we are just strangers and we have been welcomed here greatly."* *"I've been busy with all my work,"* said another. *"I didn't have a chance for two or three years to listen to my heart and express myself and go back over what I've been through."* Many thanks to the Scottish Refugee Council for supporting this event.



# Annual Review: Highlights

## ❖ SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT

We met the leaders of all the political parties, several Government Ministers, and senior civil servants to discuss antisemitism in Scotland, death registration, same sex marriage, the future of the census, and religious observance in schools, amongst other matters. We also responded to formal consultations on these issues as well as charity exemptions from water charges, assisted suicide, local policing, and the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission. In each case we ensured that the range of views in the Community were represented.

## ❖ CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

SCOJeC has worked hard to facilitate an improvement in relations with the Kirk, and we are very grateful to the Chief Rabbi for the audacious speech he gave to this year's General Assembly.

## ❖ ON THE ROAD

We have held a wide range of very successful social and cultural events from Ayr to Inverness and Mull to Midlothian, bringing Jewish people together, promoting a sense of community, and enabling us to hear people's views and disseminate information.

## ❖ HELPING COMMUNAL COMPLIANCE

SCOJeC continues its umbrella role, enabling individuals to work for any organisation in the community with a single "Scheme Record" under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme, sponsoring visa applications on behalf of Jewish communal organisations to enable them to employ staff and volunteers from outwith the European Economic Area, and checking the bona fides of proposed marriage officiants for National Records of Scotland.

## ❖ WEBSITE

Interest in our website hugely increased, from 557,400 hits in 2012 to almost 707,000 in 2013, and our new online discussion forum is now up and running.

## ❖ FINANCE

SCOJeC's accounts for 2013 show a total income of £128k, up from £112k in 2012, and expenditure of £134k (2012: £102k), resulting in a deficit of under £6k. Most of this, however, is attributable to grants received in one year and spent in the next, and core activities showed a surplus of £256 on a turnover of £31.5k.

## ❖ THANK YOU ...

We are grateful to the Lottery Fund, Voluntary Action Fund, Forestry Commission Scotland, the Community Trust, and Clarkston and Queens Park Trusts for supporting specific projects and activities, such as our new Jewish volunteering partnership project, on the basis of evidence from our *Being Jewish in Scotland* project.

The following Office-bearers were elected:

**Chair:** Hilary Rifkind (Edinburgh)  
**Vice-Chair:** Micheline Brannan (co-opted)  
**Hon Secretary:** Simon Dover (Chaplaincy)  
**Hon Treasurer:** Walter Hecht (co-opted)  
**Small communities:** Frank House (Highlands)  
 The Glasgow Jewish Representative Council President and the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Management Committee Chair are ex officio members of SCOJeC's Executive.

THE PHOTOS SHOW A SELECTION OF OUR MEETINGS AND EVENTS DURING THE PAST YEAR - LIGHT-HEARTED, SERIOUS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. CLICK ON PIC TO SEE REPORT.



**SCOJeC**

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