

FIRST MINISTER:

"So long as a single person feels they cannot celebrate their Jewish identity, we still have work to do."

When SCoJeC met the First Minister in Bute House in June, she undertook to hear the concerns of the Jewish Community first hand, and lost no time in making good this promise by addressing a capacity crowd of over 300 people in Giffnock immediately after the summer.

She endorsed the former Chief Rabbi Sacks's comment that the Jewish Community of Scotland is "integrated but not assimilated", but acknowledged that the Community is "anxious, worried, scared", as had been clear from the evidence collected by SCoJeC in our recent Government-funded inquiry into *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland*. The First Minister assured the meeting that "I don't want to be the First Minister, or even live in, a country where Jewish people want to leave or hide their identity," and commented that she had been upset to see security guards outside the meeting, adding, "so long as a single person is a victim or feels they cannot celebrate their Jewish identity, we still have work to do."

Acknowledging the rise in antisemitic incidents associated with conflict in the Middle East, she defended the right of back-benchers to criticise Israel in Parliament, but reiterated her Government's support for a two-state solution and for "Israel to exist peacefully". However, she said, "There is nothing that happens in Israel or Palestine that can be justification for antisemitism or any racial or religious hatred. That is a point that has to be made at every level of Scottish society very, very strongly."

The First Minister also distanced the SNP from "the unsavoury and horrible creeds that call themselves nationalism. I believe that if you choose to live in Scotland, it doesn't matter where you're from; it's not about identity but about everyone who lives here sharing the responsibility to make Scotland as good as it can be ... Whatever our divisions of opinion, one thing we can all agree on is that this is your home."

The First Minister also told us she had never been inside a synagogue, so we were delighted to be able to arrange a guided tour of the historic Garnethill Synagogue and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre. The A-listed 'Mother Synagogue of Glasgow,' opened in 1879, was the first purpose built synagogue in Scotland, making it a very appropriate home for the Archives.

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The
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of Jewish
Communities
www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION
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Our project to provide each of the 32 educational authorities in Scotland with their own box of Jewish artefacts has resulted in nearly 200 objects being donated from all over the world! We are still searching for yet more, so if you have any Shabbat candlesticks, havdalah candles or sets, Kiddush cups, tallitot, or gregors that you no longer need, please do let me know!

A booklet will accompany each box, containing the major facts about each object and how to handle it with respect. There will also be a link to a YouTube film with information and suggestions for how to give young people a meaningful experience learning about the artefacts.

Anyone with artefacts to spare please contact me at zoe@scojec.org or on 07504-081 219

Boost your confidence WITH VOLUNTEER TRAINING

- *You can't eat pork, right?*
- *And Friday is your day of rest?*
- *Is it true all Jews are doctors and lawyers?*

Do you get asked these, and many, many more similar questions? When faced with these queries are you able to explain Jewish life interestingly, in a way that people understand and can relate to?

If this is something you can do, or even something you aspire to, why don't you come to the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council Volunteer Training? The course will be held in early 2016, and will focus on the Curriculum for Excellence, Presentation Skills, and Interfaith, as well as time to discuss and develop your knowledge of Jewish beliefs and practices. You'll be offered the chance to get an AQA accreditation for the work you do, and meet other Jewish volunteers in the process. Interactive, informative, and fun, the training will take place in Glasgow on Sunday afternoons in the early months of 2016.

If you're interested contact Zoe Jacobs on zoe@scojec.org or 07504-081 219.

Glow-ing with Success

ZOE JACOBS

After several successful meetings with Education Scotland about the need for good reliable educational resources about Judaism, we have now held our first joint event – a 'Glow Meets' session. 'Glow' is the online resources provision offered to 'educational practitioners' (aka 'teachers') by Education Scotland, and Glow Meets are a series of online meetings between a group of schools and an outside presenter – in this case, us!

Filmed in Giffnock Synagogue, we sat facing a camera that was broadcasting our animated words of wisdom to a whole variety of interested classrooms. Whether it was quite as exciting for them as it was for us we don't know, but it was delightful to be able to interact with children from middle primary school up to early secondary who had watched our introductory presentation, and wanted to ask questions about topics ranging from the kippah and kosher food to what's good or bad about being Jewish in Scotland. This was certainly my favourite bit – giving children the opportunity to ask questions their teachers wouldn't be able to answer and they might not dare to ask.

This was followed by another session solely for practitioners, where the focus was more on how to teach Judaism appropriately, what language to use, and how to approach tricky political topics sensitively. We got instant positive feedback from children and teachers, commenting on how useful the information had been, and how nice it was to be able to speak directly to someone Jewish. We hope to be able to do many more Glow Meets in the future, focusing on different Jewish festivals and life cycle events as they come up.

The video was also saved and will be available on the SCoJeC website.

Resources FOR TALKS ON Judaism

ZOE JACOBS

Ever had to run a session in a school with only 24 hours or so to create a plan, materials, and some idea of how to entertain 30 eager eyes and minds for an hour? Thankfully, I now have an office so full of Jewish artefacts, multicolour foam, and sticky-back-plastic (as they say), that I can usually create something suitably interactive quite quickly – and now, you can use these too!

I aim to ensure that all the sessions I run are positive, memorable, and educational – in that order of importance. I think it is vital that young people come out of the session having enjoyed it, and associating Judaism and Jewish people with something fun and interesting. I'd also like it to be memorable, so when a few weeks later the teacher refers to our visit, the children remember it as a real highlight. And lastly, I would, of course, be quite pleased if they learnt something from it!

But it is time-consuming: thinking of an activity, creating the resources, the plan, ensuring that everything is age-appropriate, and shows Judaism in a positive light. I am therefore building up a bank of session plans and resources, and every week I try to create another session to expand the range of activities, styles of session, age ranges etc – from pharaohs on stick horses (which actually neigh!), to bar mitzvah tie-your-own-tzitzit activities!

If you have been asked to go into a school or youth or adult group to run a session, please do let us know. Please use our bank of resources, which can be taken straight from the plan, or can be used as a springboard for your own ideas. If you do run something slightly different, I'd love to have a copy of your plan so we can further increase the bank of ideas available to volunteers.



How Jewish culture reshaped “SCOTTISHNESS”

The migration of Jews to Scotland over the last century and how they helped transform Scotland's national identity will be the focus of a new study.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow have secured £500,000 funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to examine how the movement of Jews, through natural migration and refugees escaping Nazi persecution, helped change Scottish culture. The three-year study will focus on the migration of Jews to Scotland in the past century and how their new lives in Scotland brought subtle changes to what is commonly termed “Scottishness” and “Jewishness”. The project will highlight the architecture, art, literature, religious institutions, and cultural contributions by Scottish Jews that have made Scotland what it is today.

The principal researchers are Hannah Holtschneider, Senior Lecturer in Jewish Studies at the University of Edinburgh and author of two books about the Holocaust as well as numerous articles on Jewish/non-Jewish relations, and Mia Spiro, Lecturer in Jewish Studies at the University of Glasgow and author of books about Anti-Nazi fiction and the literary use of the supernatural to grapple with oppression, migration, and antisemitism.

They will be working with the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, which houses extensive collections on the history of Jewish religious communities in Scotland since the late nineteenth century up to the present day. The team will study detailed written records and objects that Jewish migrants, and refugees who fled the Nazi regime, brought with them when they migrated to Scotland. Other research materials will include culturally important documents and items that have survived the closures of synagogues and libraries across Scotland over the decades.



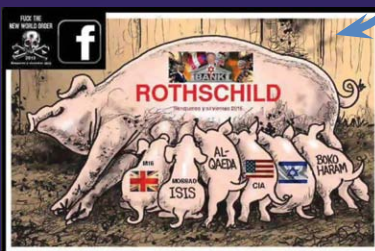
MSP's Antisemitic Message

Scottish National Party MSP Sandra White has apologised after SCoJeC protested to the First Minister and the SNP about her circulating a grotesquely offensive caricature based on traditional antisemitic stereotypes and neo-Nazi imagery.



The graphic superimposed on the pig (original in lower image) is common on American neo-Nazi websites and is blatantly antisemitic, playing to the enduring antisemitic charge that Jews use wealth to control others to go to war on their behalf and control US presidents. The original author, Charles Edward Frith, is a frequent distributor of right-wing conspiracy theories, claiming that Mossad was responsible for 9/11, that Jews killed JFK, and supporting Holocaust deniers.

In our letter, we reminded the First Minister of the findings of our *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland* project, and that she herself acknowledged when she spoke at a packed public meeting in the Glasgow Community (see page 1), that the community is ‘anxious, worried,



scared’. We pointed out that Sandra White is foremost amongst the MSPs responsible for the Parliament’s apparent obsession with Israel: since the last election there have been 65 Members Motions about Israel, most of them strongly condemnatory, compared with only 13 about Syria and 15 about Iraq; she proposed 9 (the highest number of any MSP) and supported 20 of them. When the First Minister was asked about this at the public meeting, she denied that “there is an antisemitic culture in the Scottish Parliament”. Sandra White’s actions make this claim more difficult to sustain.

We reminded the First Minister of her statement when she spoke at the public meeting in Glasgow (see front cover), that “There is nothing that happens in Israel or Palestine that can be justification for antisemitism or any racial or religious hatred. That is a point that has to be made at every level of Scottish society very, very strongly”, and asked her to take clear and unambiguous action, including possible suspension of the party whip.

Sandra White subsequently deleted the offensive message, wrote to SCoJeC apologising for “accidentally retweeting [an] image that I too find repellant and offensive”, and made her apology public. The First Minister, writing as SNP Leader, has also replied, describing the original message as “abhorrent”, and reiterating her support for the Community.

Interfaith Mitzvah TO HELP REFUGEES

In September, as the world took shocked notice of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean, Scotland’s main faith groups came together to support the Government’s willingness to act. SCoJeC, along with the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Muslim Council of Scotland, issued a statement expressing our common concern with the destitute, and urging our own communities to make the migrants welcome.

SCoJeC has also suggested that Mitzvah Day, which falls during Scottish Interfaith Week in November, is an ideal opportunity for the Jewish Community to respond to that call, by collecting food, clothing, and other necessities for the new arrivals, whether in Scotland or still in camps in Europe. Many communal organisations have already responded enthusiastically to our suggestion, and collection points are being set up in shuls and at the Maccabi youth centre in Giffnock.

As our second joint statement later in September said:

“Many of us know that our families too were once strangers in this country that we now proudly call home, and we call on government, local councils, charities, and members of our communities to show genuine leadership at this time of crisis.

Each of our faiths urges us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and we are clear about the need for practical down-to-earth responses. We are encouraging people to donate to support those having to live in the refugee camps and the families who will shortly be arriving.

We believe that it is vital that we do more than simply provide houses – we must help to make homes.”

Please make your Mitzvah count! Join this international and interfaith effort, and help the Jewish Community to help others.



Klezmer News

SCoJeC sponsored *Hens' Khasene*, the CD that Scottish Klezmer band *Celter Schmelter* launched at our volunteer celebration event at Limmud Scotland earlier this year.

MAZAL TOV also to Michael Alpert who was part of our *Klezmer, Baroque, Tartan* tour last year on being awarded the highest US award for folk and traditional arts, a Heritage Fellowship, by the National Endowment for the Arts.



Succot in Inverness

On the third day of Succot, more than 30 members of the Jewish community, and supporters from throughout the Highlands, gathered at Inshes Church near Inverness to learn about the history and traditions of the holiday.

Some of the participants shook the lulav and etrog for the first time since they were children, and Linda Martin, the SCoJeC volunteer Ambassador to the Highlands and Islands, constructed a succah from wood, reeds, and branches – although, despite the weather being sunny, it was judged just a bit too windy to hold the event outdoors. As is now traditional, a delicious Kosher buffet was provided, including fresh seasonal fruit, pastries, cakes and biscuits, gefilte fish, bagels, and an assortment of dips. The event attracted in particular members of the church and other local interfaith groups who were intrigued to learn more about the Feast of Tabernacles, a precursor to their own religious harvest festivals in the autumn season, and the local police even stopped by to introduce themselves, learn a little, and join in in the spirit of celebration.



"Cinders" Wood, (inset circle) who was brought up in London and attended a Catholic School, shook the Lulav and Etrog for the first time in her life. She said she was delighted to be following a tradition her forebears had enjoyed for thousands of years, and couldn't explain the sense of wellbeing that came over her, but she said that "it was wonderful" and she felt "invigorated and revitalised".

Three Faiths Education IN SHETLAND

ZOE JACOBS

As the old phrase goes, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a three-hour delay. I wasn't going that far, only 404 miles according to Google – I was off to Shetland. For three days I was part of a little interfaith trio with representatives of the Christian and Muslim communities.

Over nine sessions in four different schools, our aim was to explain the main beliefs and practises of each of the religions, highlighting also the similarity among the Abrahamic faiths. The session I led focussed on what a Jewish person looks like (though I explained that many Jewish people don't wear a Magen David or kippah all of the time), the importance of Shabbat and the family, and that we believe in one God who asks us to help make the world better. This tied in with the talk about Islam, as many of the concepts overlap. Showing children that Jews and Muslims can be friends is particularly special as it counteracts some of what people hear in the media. My 15-minute slot started with the Magen David, and used stars as a theme throughout, including when Shabbat starts and ends. When explaining to five-year-olds that, a long time ago, everyone used the sun and moon and stars to tell the time, I was asked in a very serious voice, "But how would you know when it was snack time?" Best question of the trip!

I also ran a session for adults attended by ten members of the Shetland Interfaith group, who were incredibly kind throughout our visit – hosting us, feeding us, and taking us around the island, all the while being polite and considerate and yet unendingly warm and welcoming and lively. They were respectful yet questioning, interested and intrigued, and – most of all – willing to humour my youth worker instincts, agreeing to learn to shape challot out of playdough! After a brief overview of my Jewish upbringing and my Scottish Jewish experience, I gave an outline of SCoJeC's work and the *Being Jewish in Scotland* surveys of 2011 and 2014, and then moved onto Shabbat, its history, laws and interpretations, and how it is observed by different Jews.

Shetland is an outstandingly beautiful island, with lovely people. I can't wait to visit again... and make more playdough challot!



Shining out Together

RABBI MARK SOLOMON, EDINBURGH LIBERAL JEWISH COMMUNITY, SUKKAT SHALOM

It's the darkest time of the year: around the winter solstice, when the nights are long and the days short, straddling Rosh Chodesh, when the old moon vanishes and the new crescent moon is just appearing. That's when we light our candles for eight nights and celebrate dedication.

It was a dark time in Jewish history as well, with the small province of Judea caught between the rival kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, and bitterly divided between conservative and assimilationist groups. When the megalomaniac king Antiochus intervened to support the assimilationists with laws banning circumcision and imposing idolatrous worship in the Temple, the Maccabees raised the flag of revolt and led a guerrilla war that achieved great victories. Exactly three years after it had been defiled, on 25 Kislev, the Temple was cleansed and rededicated.

Some scholars believe the date had been chosen originally for the introduction of the cult of Zeus in the Temple, because it was a pagan winter solstice festival, possibly connected with the return of the sun and the kindling of lights. There has long been a scholarly theory that Christmas, too, was adopted from a pagan festival on 25 December (although there are other theories). It is thus possible that the origins of Chanukah and Christmas are linked, and the fact they both fall on the 25th day of the month is no coincidence. The irony is obvious, since Chanukah has recently come to be seen as a sort of Jewish Christmas. The old custom of giving children Chanukah gelt (pocket money) has turned into a gift-giving spree, so that Jewish children – of all ages – don't feel deprived of seasonal presents.

The Talmud recounts a disagreement about how to perform the mitzvah of lamp-lighting in the most splendid way. The conservative School of Shammai said: start with eight lights and subtract one each night, while the School of Hillel reversed the order and said: start with one light and build up to eight, for we should always increase in holiness and never decrease.

For me, starting with a single candle has a powerful message. At times in our lives we may feel alone, powerless and misunderstood. If we can find the courage and strength to shine out in the darkness, we will find another light to join us, and then another, until we are a full menorah, shining brightly against the dark. Some readers might be the only Jews in parts of the country with little or no community. It can take courage to be Jewish on your own. Chanukah tells us we are not alone, although sometimes we need a shamash, a helper, to get us lit up.

CALENDAR

Chanukah:

First candle Sunday 6 Dec

AFTER DARK

to Monday 14 Dec

Last candle Sunday 13 Dec

AFTER DARK

Fast of Tevet:

Tues 22 Dec

Challah-baking in
Edinburgh (below)
and in Glasgow (foot)



Havdalah extravaganza
in Edinburgh (left) and
in Glasgow (below)





Holocaust Educational Trust Reception in Scottish Parliament

THE FIRST MINISTER WITH (CLOCKWISE) THE HOLOCAUST EDUCATIONAL TRUST (HET) AMBASSADORS; KEN MACINTOSH MSP, AMBASSADORS REBECCA QUINN AND GEMMA GRIER, AND KAREN POLLOCK OF HET; HENRY AND INGRID WUGA, WHO ARRIVED IN SCOTLAND WITH THE KINDERTRANSPORT.



Westminster Briefing ON ANTISEMITISM

SCOJeC joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism at Westminster to provide a briefing for Scottish MPs on the nature and extent of antisemitism in Scotland, and the effect it has on the safety and well-being of Jewish people in Scotland, and why most of the respondents to our recent *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry told us that their feelings of security and confidence to go about their daily lives had been shaken.

The meeting, which was attended by more than 15 SNP MPs as well as some of their staff, was also addressed by the Community Security Trust, and the Holocaust Educational Trust. Following introductory briefings about the size, location, and nature of the Jewish Community in Scotland, and the concerns about antisemitism expressed by members of the Community, the meeting

also discussed the impact of events in the Middle East on the Jewish community, and in particular the recent unprecedented spike in antisemitic activity, and the responsibility of politicians to avoid language that can inflame the situation.

SCOJeC was represented by Paul Morron, President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, and an ex officio member of the SCOJeC Executive, who commented: "This was an important meeting which was conducted in a particularly positive atmosphere with a high level of engagement from the MPs."

Commenting after the meeting, Danny Stone, Director of the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation, said, "This was a very good event and there was a phenomenal turn out from SNP MPs to be briefed about modern manifestations of antisemitism, key policy concerns, and the state of antisemitism in Scotland."

The Scottish Holocaust Memorial Day

This year's ceremony will be in Falkirk Town Hall on 27th January. The theme is 'Don't Stand By', recognising people who have helped to save many lives through significant acts of heroism. The speakers will be Prof Mukesh Kapila, who was influential in bringing the situation in Darfur to worldwide attention, and Inge Auerbacher, a survivor of the Terezin concentration camp. For further information on events throughout Scotland, see <http://hmd.org.uk/events/find/Scotland>.

Meeting with Moderator

SCOJeC HELD A VERY PRODUCTIVE AND GOOD-HUMOURED MEETING WITH THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MODERATOR (CENTRE), AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY COUNCIL AND WORLD MISSION COUNCIL, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHURCH'S ACTIVITIES IN ISRAEL.



SCOJeC

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