

Inverness: NEW YEAR, NEW START

Things have come a long way since one person in Inverness told us, forlornly, that she was a "community of one" – there is now a thriving group of more than 30 Jewish people in the area who enthusiastically participate in SCoJeC events.

They have also begun to discuss setting up an informal community, holding occasional Shabbat and Festival services, and joining together for festive kiddushim and meals. The first fruits of this new venture were a series of events around Rosh HaShanah and Sukkot. With financial assistance from the Netherlee and Clarkston Charitable Trust and support from SCoJeC, the group met for a pre-Rosh Hashanah social event at which SCoJeC Voluntary Ambassador for the Highlands and Islands Linda Martin gave an explanatory talk about the meaning, customs, and traditions of Rosh HaShanah.

Some 70 years after the last known religious service in Inverness, a smaller group later met at the home of one of the participants to light candles, make kiddush, and enjoy apples dipped in honey as a symbol of a sweet year to come. On each of the two days of Rosh HaShanah, they gathered again to hold a service at which they blew the shofar, and to enjoy a festive meal.

A fortnight later, the group welcomed visitors from London to celebrate Sukkot with them, complete with the traditional shaking of the lulav and etrog.

The group is exploring ways of fostering Jewish life in Inverness, including by encouraging supermarkets to stock more kosher items, and is planning celebrations for Chanukah and Pesach. For more information please contact Linda Martin linda@scojec.org



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The
Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities
www.scojec.org

THE UMBRELLA REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION
OF ALL THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND



Shabbat
UK

SHABBAT UK 11/12 NOV'16



Top: Students join the Edinburgh Community Challah Bake.

Above: Edinburgh Melavah Malka and musical evening with opera singer and chazzan Samuel de Beck Spitzer.

Right: Glasgow in the pink! Challah baking at Giffnock, with guest speaker Rebbetzin Gila Hackenbroch, formerly of Newton Mearns.

Below: Joint Giffnock and Newton Mearns Havdalah with the Travelling Chassidim and Rabbi Natan Gamedze from Swaziland.



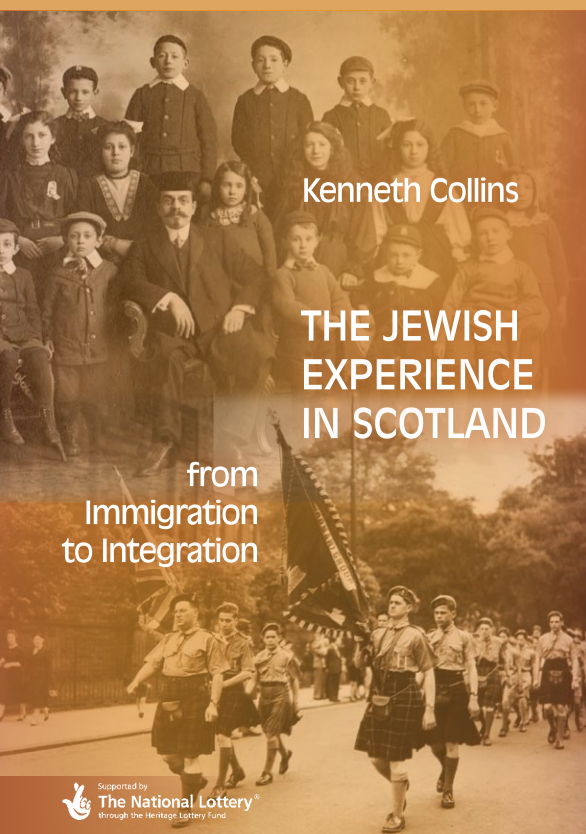
PHOTOS:
RICHARD KAYE



Immigration to Integration

The latest event to mark the bicentenary of Scotland's Jewish community was the launch of a new publication from the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, *The Jewish Experience in Scotland*.

There were events in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, at which Kenneth Collins, Michael Tobias, and Harvey Kaplan spoke about the research behind the book, and also at Beit HaTfutsot Disapora Museum in Tel Aviv. This is part of a much larger project to conduct a ground-breaking demographic and genealogical survey of Scottish Jewry from its very beginnings as a community in the early 19th century. The project also has the support of the International Institute of Jewish Genealogy, whose Chair, Glaswegian Neville Lamdan, has contributed the foreword, and, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, copies will be distributed to every public library in Scotland.



Kenneth Collins

THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN SCOTLAND

from
Immigration
to Integration



Sharing of Faith

Some of the Jewish Community's many contributions to Scottish Interfaith Week.

From top: The First Minister and Communities Secretary meet Scotland's faith leaders.

The First Minister greets Rabbi Moshe Rubin, watched by Church of Scotland Principal Clerk, John Chalmers.

Former Glasgow Jewish Representative Council President Philip Mendelsohn addresses the launch of Interfaith Glasgow, of which he is the first Convener.

SCoJeC's Projects and Outreach Manager, Fiona Frank, with other speakers at Dumfries and Galloway Council's Chaplaincy Conference.



New Dialogue WITH THE KIRK



This summer SCoJeC was approached by the Church of Scotland with a proposal for a joint initiative to explore topics of mutual interest such as our different interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, opportunities for joint social action initiatives, and how to counter antisemitism in Scotland.

The roots of this proposed dialogue go back to May 2014, when the new Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, was invited to address the General Assembly in an attempt to repair the damage done by their report on *The Inheritance of Abraham?*, which caused huge offence in the Jewish Community nationally and internationally, by claiming that the biblical promise of the Holy Land to Abraham had been forfeited. As he left the podium, Chief Rabbi Mirvis and the then Moderator, John Chalmers, joked about "locking up six or eight Ministers and Rabbis in a room, and not letting them out until they reach an agreement".

In its latest proposal, the Church envisages:

a series of concentrated dialogues between members of the two communities. The motivation for this re-energised and focused dialogue is due to the recognition of the damaged relationships arising out of the Church of Scotland's involvement in the Balfour Project conference in 2012 and the publication of the "Inheritance of Abraham?" document in 2013. This shared commitment to dialogue illustrates the will and the inspiration to move on from past misunderstandings towards a lasting friendship built upon shared values, trust and mutual appreciation of the other.

A steering group has now met several times and the plan is to produce a report in time for the 2018 General Assembly, and then go on to develop a programme for further joint action, possibly including publications and a conference.

SCoJeC issued a joint statement with the Church welcoming the initiative, and Rev Richard Frazer, of the Church of Scotland commented:

"We hold a great deal in common as people whose shared faith is rooted in the story of Abraham. That faith inspires us to work together for a better world as well as striving for a deeper understanding and greater mutual respect for one another."

Antisemitism and Hate Crime Reports

The Scottish Government and UK Parliament have both recently published reports on hate crime that flag up many of the same points that emerged from SCoJeC's *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry (www.scojec.org/bjis2_findings.html).

The report of the Scottish Government's Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion in particular noted that:

- ◆ global events, and the way in which these are reported, have an impact on the local community in Scotland;
- ◆ isolation reinforces the vulnerability of people in targeted groups;
- ◆ social media is often seen as a place in which victims can be abused with impunity;
- ◆ education plays an important role in combatting the negative stereotypes that often form a basis for hate crime.

Although the report of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee into Antisemitism in the UK barely mentions Scotland, it does make important points that SCoJeC has repeatedly urged, including that:

- ◆ the "Macpherson definition" – that any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person must be investigated as such – should be applied to antisemitism as to any other form of race hatred;
- ◆ a definition of antisemitism is crucial to being able to tackle it effectively;
- ◆ while criticism of Israel can be legitimate, much political discourse has crossed the line from rational discussion to outright abuse;
- ◆ social media appears to be an "inert host for vast swathes of antisemitic hate speech and abuse";
- ◆ there is a particular problem on university campuses where Jewish students feel threatened, intimidated, and unsafe, and let down by both university authorities and student unions.

We commend the recommendations of these two reports, and urge both Governments to implement them in full so that the Jewish community and other minority communities will feel safe and supported in going about their daily lives.

MEMO 500



MEMO, the weekly bulletin that SCoJeC publishes jointly with the ethnic minority umbrella body BEMIS, to help minority communities in Scotland keep up to date, has received widespread praise and congratulations on reaching its 500th issue.

Angela Constance, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Equalities, wrote:

What a wonderful milestone to reach. MEMO is continuing to ensure Scotland's minority ethnic communities are empowered through the invaluable information it delivers. We want Scotland to be an inclusive and fair country, where people realise their potential both as individuals and as members of wider society, and MEMO contributes to achieving this vision. I wish you continuing success in its future production.

Most small communities lack the resources to keep track of what's going on, so don't comment on developments that might affect them. So in 2005 BEMIS suggested we produce a weekly bulletin to help minority communities engage with the Scottish Parliament and Government, local councils, and other bodies, and we've been doing it ever since!

Since the first issue, MEMO has received widespread praise: recent feedback includes "incredibly comprehensive!", "I find it a really valuable resource", and "Overall an excellent publication". John Wilkes, Chief Executive of the Scottish Refugee Council described it as "a brilliant weekly summary of issues relating to asylum, immigration, race, and other equality issues ... an essential read", and Deputy Chief Constable Ruairaidh Nicolson called it "a very helpful weekly briefing. Its wide and detailed coverage regularly signposts articles that one might otherwise not have heard about".

SCoJeC is committed to promoting equality and developing good community relations, and is immensely proud of being able to assist minority communities to engage more effectively with Scottish civic society.

See www.scojec.org/memo/memo.html to read back issues of MEMO, and contact us at memo@scojec.org if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

A Resource for Everyone

SCoJeC has made its highly regarded daily survey of current issues of interest to the Jewish Community available on our website.

Our *Political Affairs Brief* covers the UK and Devolved Parliaments and Governments, European institutions, and international agencies such as the United Nations, and for eight years was commissioned by the Jewish Leadership Council to circulate to a small consortium of major communal organisations. On the occasion of the 1000th issue, Vivian Wineman, then President of the Board of Deputies, called it "one of the community's hidden gems ... a key tool in our monitoring of issues affecting Jews in Britain, Israel and around the world." and JLC Chief Executive, Simon Johnson told us it "has become an invaluable resource to all of us at the JLC. It means that even though we are working on numerous issues in a fast paced environment, nothing slips through the net."

However, JLC funding unfortunately ceased this summer, and, although we must urgently secure replacement funding, SCoJeC has taken this opportunity to make the bulletins – which many communal organisations have told us they find an invaluable resource – freely available on our website.

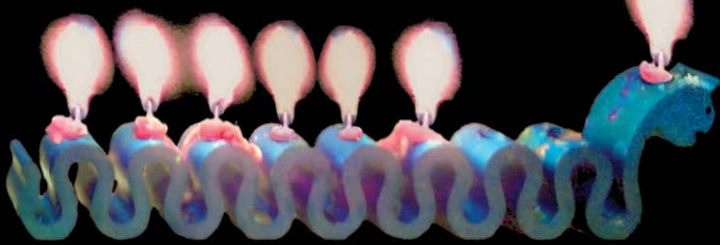
See www.scojec.org/pab/pab.html for back issues of Political Affairs Brief – or to receive each issue as it is published, fill in your contact details at www.scojec.org/pab-subscribe.html

Kosher Beef?

Community stalwart Malcolm Livingstone with his wife Myra after receiving his MBE for services to

the Jewish Community in Glasgow from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace. Malcolm is Chair of the Glasgow Jewish Community Trust, one of SCoJeC's generous supporters, Honorary Life President of Giffnock Synagogue, and Chair of the West of Scotland Kashrut Commission. Were the Beefeaters under their supervision?!





NESSIE CHANUKIAH
FROM A SCOJEC CHANUKAH
EVENT IN INVERNESS.

Don't use the Candles!

TALYA SILVER

The image of Chanukah is that of a beacon of light cutting through the wintry darkness. The glow of victory banishing the darkness of persecution.

Let's act that out. Darken the house, turn off the electric lights, and let the chanukiah be our source of illumination while we eat latkes and play dreidle.

Nope. "These candles are holy and we are not allowed to use them," we sing every night of Chanukah in the *Hanerot Hallalu* prayer right after candlelighting. It's a quote from the *halachah* that forbids reading by the light of the chanukah candles. Looking at them, gazing into the flickering flames, meditating on them – these are all great. Mystical, even. Kabbalah claims that the light of the Chanukah candles is the light from the Garden of Eden, the light that shone in the first week of creation – a light that was not photon emissions from fusion reactions in the sun. (Check it out yourself, first chapter of Genesis: 'Let there be light' was said before 'let there be heavenly bodies'.)

We look at this holy light, but we do not use it.

Holiness is a tricky concept. Some people translate it as 'special', but that just raises the question: special in what way? One useful approach that can differentiate between mundane and holy, *chol* and *kodesh*, is to ask what the thing is for. If its worth is in its result, it is mundane; if it has intrinsic worth, it is holy.

The classic mundane/ holy contrast is weekdays versus Shabbat. The week is the time we work towards our goals – a good week is one filled with achievement. Shabbat is a time when we are free to just be.

People are holy too. Someone who regards other people as a means to an end, manipulating them like tools, is despicable. A human being, in the image of God, has intrinsic worth and dignity. And interestingly, according to some opinions, the highest level of Torah learning is not that which leads to new applications of Jewish law or thought, but which is purely for its own sake, simply the scholar's acquisition of knowledge.

There is great power in that simple chant, "these candles are holy, we do not use them." Flames that have burned through the centuries remind us not to take, not to use, not to exploit. Holiness simply is.

WINTER CALENDAR

- Chanukah from Sat 24 Dec 2016 *first candle after Shabbat*
till Sun 1 Jan 2017 *eight candles after Shabbat*
- Fast of Tevet Sun 8 Jan
- Tu b'Shevat Shabbat 11 Feb *New Year for Trees*
- Fast of Esther Thurs 9 Mar
- Purim Sun 12 March *Megillah after Shabbat*
- Shushan Purim Mon 13 March

Time for Chesed

Rabbi Yossi Bodenheim, who is the Chaplain to Jewish Students in Scotland, presented "Time for Reflection" at the Scottish Parliament in November, on the theme of *chesed*, kindness.

He stressed the importance of Jewish students being able to feel comfortable on campus, and his role in "ensuring their welfare, providing social and educational events, or just being a listening ear – bringing *chesed* to Jewish students". However, he also spoke about "the very opposite of *chesed*" when "Just a couple of weeks ago, ... we held a very successful Friday night dinner attended by around 50 students and, on Shabbat, my wife and I took our four young children for a walk in this beautiful city. As we were walking, a woman pushed my wife aside, grabbed my kippah, threw it on the ground and ran away. That took place less than a mile from here, in front of my young children; you can imagine how distressed they were."

Rabbi Bodenheim, who is also Assistant Rabbi of Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue, told MSPs about *Mitzvah* Day, "when Jewish Communities will be doing *chesed* to others, and I will be encouraging our students to think about practical ways of helping the less fortunate, and to realise that in this world where there is so much uncertainty, it is the *mitzvah* of chesed that joins us together."



Mitzvah Day



The Community turned out in force on Mitzvah Day to help local refugee projects.

In Edinburgh (pictured), people helped the refugee action charity Re-Act sort urgently needed items for refugees in camps across Europe, and in Glasgow people supported the "Refuweegee" project by bringing small items like toys and toiletries to go into welcome packs, and writing 'Letters from locals' to welcome the new arrivals.

Shalom Aberdeen!

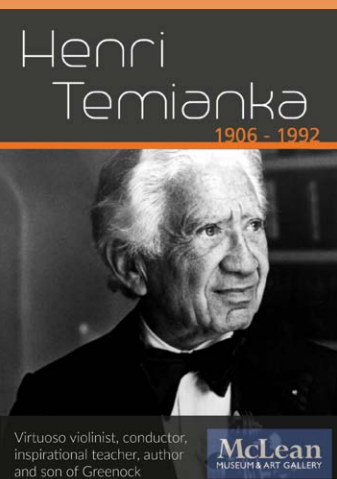
The International Shalom Festival came to Aberdeen in November.

L TO R: COMPERE ITAI SPIEZIAK DANCING WITH ESTHER FINLAY, MEMBER OF MONTROSE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

ABERDEEN JEWISH STUDENTS AND FRIENDS LINE UP WITH FLAGS.

NOOR DAHRI, FOUNDER OF PAKISTAN ISRAEL ALLIANCE.

SION JUDAH AND KELLY HORNE, MEMBERS OF ABERDEEN JEWISH COMMUNITY, DANCING AT THE FESTIVAL.



Virtuoso Violinist Comes Home

110 years after the birth of violinist and conductor Henri Temianka (1906-1992) in Greenock, his son has presented a bronze bust to his home town.

In 1880, the 18 year old Rev Israel Isak Tiemianka came from Ozorkow near Lodz in

Poland to London, where he was employed as a Cantor. Around 1904 he was appointed full time minister for the Jewish congregation in Greenock, where he successfully negotiated for a strip of land in the local cemetery to be allocated for Jewish burials, and in June 1907 he hosted a visit by Chief Rabbi Herman Adler.

His son Henri was born in Greenock on 19 November 1906. The family moved to Rotterdam shortly after, where Israel became a fairly prosperous diamond merchant. Henri's musical talent was recognised at a young age, and, encouraged by his father, he studied violin in Rotterdam, Berlin, Paris, and later Philadelphia, becoming an internationally-known violinist. He returned to Scotland in 1937/8 as concertmaster for the Scottish Orchestra, but after a year moved to California, where he founded the famous Paganini String Quartet and the California Chamber Symphony Orchestra. He was an inspirational teacher and became a visiting professor and guest lecturer at universities throughout America.

His connection with Greenock was rediscovered by chance when a local historian, Viki McDonnell, bought a candelabrum in a local charity shop as a table decoration. She later discovered that it was a menorah, and that led her to the story of the minister of Greenock Synagogue, Henri's father, and to the Temianka family gifting the bust to the McLean Museum in Greenock on 19 November, 110 years to the day after Henri's birth.



SNP MEETS YOUNG 'Scots-Israelis' IN ISRAEL

DEBORAH SHULMAN

In November, a group of SNP politicians visited the region in a bid to look behind the polarised rhetoric in Scotland, and learn more about the realities facing Israelis and Palestinians. Seven young Jewish Scots living in

Israel, myself included, met with Angus Robertson, Deputy Leader of the SNP, Kirsten Oswald, MP for East Renfrewshire, and Paul Monaghan, MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, for an informal chat on the last day of their week-long trip. The visitors conveyed how important this trip was for them – they had taken a whole week away from their constituencies and from Parliament to gain a deeper understanding of Israel and the Palestinian territories.

We discussed a range of controversial issues ranging from Scottish independence to Brexit and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was a great experience being part of a group of respectful, open-minded individuals who genuinely wanted to hear each other's perspectives. The MPs shared their position on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. The SNP supports a two-state solution for two peoples. At the same time, they stressed that they do not support the "boycott, divestment, and sanctions" campaign against Israel.

The conversation was not limited to Israeli-Palestinian relations. The visitors spoke about how impressed they were with Israel's innovative and world-leading high-tech industry. Perhaps if Scotland is to gain independence, which the politicians envision happening soon, they would be interested in learning more from Israel, a young country that has managed to build such a thriving industry.

A couple of the group members shared difficult stories about experiencing antisemitism while growing up in Glasgow, and the visitors expressed genuine concern. I was impressed by the politicians' commitment to fostering diversity and to creating a sense of unity within a tolerant Scotland.

For Scottish Jewish Israelis, often with family spread all over the world, it can sometimes be hard to know where exactly to call home. But after this meeting, I had a sense that maybe one does not need to choose. The visitors stressed that wherever you are living in the world, you can always regard Scotland as home too.





Meetings with Ministers

SCoJeC held very friendly and constructive meetings in November with the Communities and Equalities Secretary, Angela Constance MSP, and the Lord Advocate, James Wolffe QC.

We met Angela Constance immediately after she had spoken in a debate about the recent report of the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice, and Community Cohesion, so we naturally began with that topic. We referred to the findings of SCoJeC's inquiry into *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland*, which revealed increased anxiety about personal safety, and in particular an unprecedented fear of identifying openly as Jewish. We reminded her that when the First Minister met a group of twenty Jewish students last year, she was shocked to hear about Jewish and Israeli students at Scottish universities facing abusive comments from lecturers, even being failed when their identity became known, and some leaving without finishing their courses.

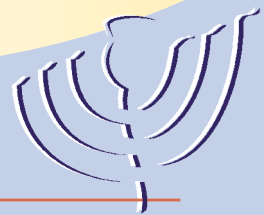
Commenting on the meeting, SCoJeC Chair Micheline Brannan said, "We were delighted with the warm welcome from the Cabinet Secretary, who took particular note of the adverse effect on Jewish students of extreme anti-Zionist campaigning at our universities. We also raised the difficulty of continuing to provide culturally appropriate welfare services for an ageing and declining Jewish population, and she listened sympathetically to our concerns."

When we spoke about our report on *What's Changed about Being Jewish in Scotland* to the Lord Advocate, he was concerned to learn that we are still receiving frequent calls from people reporting antisemitic incidents. He told us that he knew of the excellent relationship we had with his predecessor, Frank Mulholland, and that he planned to continue this, and we expressed our appreciation of the responsiveness of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to our concerns.

We also discussed how the criminal justice system could be improved. The Lord Advocate said that consideration is being given to alternatives to prosecution for hate crimes, particularly in the case of young people whose behaviour may often be the result of poor education, but we expressed misgivings since antisemitism is often politically motivated and quite deliberate.

FROM TOP: COMMUNITIES AND EQUALITIES SECRETARY, ANGELA CONSTANCE (LEFT) WITH SCoJeC CHAIR MICHELINE BRANNAN (STANDING) AND GLASGOW JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL JOINT PRESIDENT NICOLA LIVINGSTON.

THE LORD ADVOCATE, JAMES WOLFFE QC (SECOND LEFT) WITH FORMER GLASGOW JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT PAUL MORRISON, SCoJeC CHAIR MICHELINE BRANNAN, AND SCoJeC DIRECTOR EPHRAIM BOROWSKI.



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Armistice Day

Scenes from the Association of Jewish Ex-Service Men and Women parade to the War Memorial in Newton Mearns on Armistice Day.

Old-New Aberdeen

The Aberdeen Hebrew Congregation has ceased to exist - and is resurgent as the Aberdeen Synagogue and Jewish Community Centre (ASJCC)! The new community needs a new logo, and would welcome suggestions. The closing date for entries is the last night of Chanukah, and there will be a small prize for the winner. Design suggestions should be sent to aberdeensynagogue@gmail.com.

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Help us to help your community!

SCoJeC REALLY NEEDS YOUR GENEROUS ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE ALL OUR WORK.
DONATE AT <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/scojec>

READ OUR REPORT: *What's changed about Being Jewish in Scotland*
AT www.scojec.org/bjis2.html