



# Community Bridges the Tay

For some time, most members of the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community have lived south of the Tay in Fife, where there are also large number of Jewish students and staff in St Andrews University – last Yom Kippur only six people attended the service in Dundee and fifty in St Andrews. Five years ago the community took the decision to reflect this when it rebranded as the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community, and they have now taken the historic step of moving their base to the Chaplaincy Centre at St Andrews University, and selling the shul building in Dundee.

The formal move to St Andrews came in April, when the Principal of the University, Prof Sally Mapstone, and the University Chaplain, joined members of the community, SCoJeC Council, and more than 25 Jewish students and staff, for a short celebratory service of thanksgiving and *hachnasat Sefer Torah*, the celebration welcoming the Torah scrolls to their new home. The scrolls were passed from hand to hand round the room, with everyone including the Principal (far left) participating, before one of the students read the Priestly Benediction from the book of Numbers in one of the scrolls.

After the event, Principal Mapstone said how moved she had been by the occasion, and Emily Michelson (left), who coordinated the event said, "Thank you all for participating and making our *hachnasat Sefer Torah* feel so very communal and celebratory."

Then in June, there was a short and bitter-sweet event in Dundee synagogue to mark its closure. Bill Shackman, one of the community's Trustees, gave a short talk based on a passage of the Talmud that appropriately rules that a community should always build a new synagogue before closing its old one, before we paraded the remaining Sifrei Torah to begin their journey to their new homes in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Paul Spicker, Chair of the Tayside and Fife Jewish Community, reflects:

*The decision to close the shul in Dundee has been prolonged and difficult; the shul has helped to bring a community together, but we have known for years that we could not go on indefinitely. We have tiny numbers of people coming, and no income.*

*Despite everything, Dundee has been a happy place; we have had friendly, welcoming services, and we have kept going for many years despite the odds. The closing ceremony was remarkable, if bitter-sweet. It began with reminiscences from the congregation, beginning with the longest standing members; continued with a Dvar Torah [homily] from Bill Shackman (left), who has been instrumental in developing the community in St Andrews; and continuing with the Minchah service and removing the Torah scrolls from the ark, led by Rabbi David Rose.*

*Many of the community's things are moving to our new facility in St Andrews, where there are two Sifrei Torah, prayer books, and bibles. But there is a great deal we will no longer have room for. One of our central aims is to promote Jewish life in Scotland. One scroll has gone to Edinburgh, for use by Sukat Shalom and Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation; one to Garnethill shul. Our records and war memorial plaque are with the Scottish Jewish Archives. Our chairs, and much of our kitchen equipment, will be going to Aberdeen. We are part of a wider Jewish community too, and we should be able to rely on each other – if we can still help others, we will.*

*The shul now is half empty, and sifrei torah at its heart are now in other places. After the closing ceremony, old and new members helped to clean up the hall. My last act before leaving was to turn off the Ner Tamid [eternal light].*

TOP: EXTERIOR OF THE DUNDEE SHUL BUILDING CENTRE: WELCOMING THE TORAH SCROLLS TO ST ANDREWS; BELOW: CLOSING CEREMONY IN DUNDEE. BOTTOM: SCROLLS LEAVING FOR GARNETHILL AND EDINBURGH.



## Shuls Reprise Opera Success

Both Edinburgh and Garnethill synagogues held spectacular concerts of opera highlights in March, surpassing even the success of last year's events. Garnethill's "Opera with a Twist" (top right) included a cocktail reception, while Edinburgh provided prosecco and a traditional meal of chicken soup and hot salt beef. Both events again attracted many people who had never previously been in a synagogue.



ISSUE 62 • SUMMER 2019 • TAMMUZ 5779



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Communities

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# Times for Reflection

New Student Chaplain Eli Grunewald was invited to present not one but two Times for Reflection – at the Scottish Parliament and at Dumfries and Galloway Council, where the meeting later adopted the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism.

At the Scottish Parliament (top right), Rabbi Grunewald focused on the importance of Time, explaining that counting the Omer, the days between the festivals of Pesach and Shavuot, “helps us realise the importance of every day, every week, every month. It helps us focus on the here and now, and reminds us to use our time well. It is so easy to forget that the moments in which we live become days, months, years.”

In Dumfries, where the local Jewish Community turned out in good numbers (bottom right) to hear him speak, Rabbi Grunewald described the history of anti-Jewish persecution, and said that the horrific attacks on a church in Charlottesville, a synagogue in Pittsburgh, and a mosque in New Zealand show the need for education and empathy. He concluded: “Each of us, especially those in positions of power, have to take a stand against the corrosive power of hate. All it takes for hate to flourish is for good people to do nothing.”

As well as agreeing to include the accepted definition of antisemitism in relevant policies, the Council expressed concern at the rising number of antisemitic hate incidents in the UK, celebrated and expressed support for the Jewish Community in Dumfries and Galloway, and declared that hatred, antisemitism, and discrimination against people for their beliefs, have no place in the community.

The leader of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Elaine Murray said: “I am alarmed at the rise in antisemitism in recent years across the whole of the UK, including four reported incidents in Dumfries alone. As part of the definition, the IHRA provide guidelines, which will also be taken into account, and, where any antisemitic discrimination has been found to have taken place, we will not hesitate to act.”

A Council official added: “We had a wonderful turn-out from the community and I hope we can build on that with engagement on all sorts of issues. I hope this is just the start of a new relationship with our Jewish Community, and that we will all play our part to ensure we build on what we started today.”

If you live in the Dumfries area and would like contact with the local Jewish community, please email [dumfries@scojec.org](mailto:dumfries@scojec.org)



## Summer Calendar

- **Fast of Tammuz:**  
Dawn till nightfall Sun 21 Jul

*The “Three Weeks” between the Fasts of Tammuz and Av are a time of mourning for the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem by the Assyrians in 586BCE and by the Romans in 70CE.*

- **Fast of Av (Tisha b’Av):**  
Dusk on Shabbat 10 Aug till nightfall Sun 11 Aug

- **Rosh HaShanah:**  
Dusk on Sun 29 Sept till nightfall Tues 1 Oct

# The Spirit of Summer

DITZA HOPPENSTEIN

Blue skies, sweltering sunshine, ice lollies as necessities ... Summer has arrived and you can feel the anticipation in the air. The holidays are coming and the expectation of relaxing blissful days and fun exciting trips are tantalising. Stop! Wait! Lower the volume! Lower the mood!

Most people feel joy at the onset of summer, but the Torah tells us this is a period of ever-increasing mourning, starting on the 17th of Tammuz until the 9th of Av. There were many tragedies that happened during this time, the biggest being the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, but we also mourn other tragic events in our history that are not connected to these dates.

How can the Torah command us to mourn, to feel something? Aren’t our emotions spontaneous? There are numerous commandments in the Torah to feel certain emotions – to be happy on festivals, not to be sad on Shabbat, to love others and not to hate them, even in your heart.

Maybe the most difficult to understand is the commandment to ‘love your G-d’ that we recite every day in the Shema. How can you command someone to love? We think of love as a feeling that arises within us, that happens to us, that makes us want to connect with and give to the subject of our love. Or so we suppose. But Judaism teaches that it is the action that leads to the feeling.

The word ‘love’ in Hebrew, *ahavah*, has its root in the word *hav* – ‘to give’. The Torah is teaching us that when we give we love; not when we love we give. Parents love their children far more than children love their parents. Why is this so? It is because parents have given and given infinitely to their children from before they were even born. They are invested in them and therefore love their children intensely. Children don’t give on the same scale to their parents and therefore their love doesn’t arrive at the same intensity.

So, how can we love G-d, give to G-d? The commandments of Torah that affect every moment of a Jew enable us to ‘give’ to G-d and connect to Him, and thereby to love Him. We increase our love for someone or something by learning about it. My husband’s favourite example is whisky (he did marry Scottish after all!). Send someone who doesn’t like whisky (do they exist!?) on a whisky tour across Scotland. As they learn about all the small details and differences, their appreciation for whisky will grow. So learning Torah, about the details of the commandments and about the world that G-d created for us all, increases our love for G-d.

How can G-d command us to feel something? Because actions create feelings. The commandments to feel are accompanied by actions. We mourn even at the height of summer through not listening to music, not buying new clothing, fasting, and more.

Judaism is not just ideas nor is it just physical. We bring down and act out the ideals, and we raise up the physical to the level of the spiritual.

## Judaism in Schools

SCoJeC’s volunteers continue to visit schools around Scotland. Below Joe Goldblatt with classes in (from top) Sound Primary and Anderson High Schools in Lerwick, Shetland, and St Joseph’s Primary School, Edinburgh.





# Five Generations

The Mitchell Library in Glasgow recently hosted a joint event with SCoJeC and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre (SJAC), featuring some of the stories that our Projects and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank was told when she was researching her book, *Candles, Conversions and Class: Five generations of a Scottish Jewish family*.

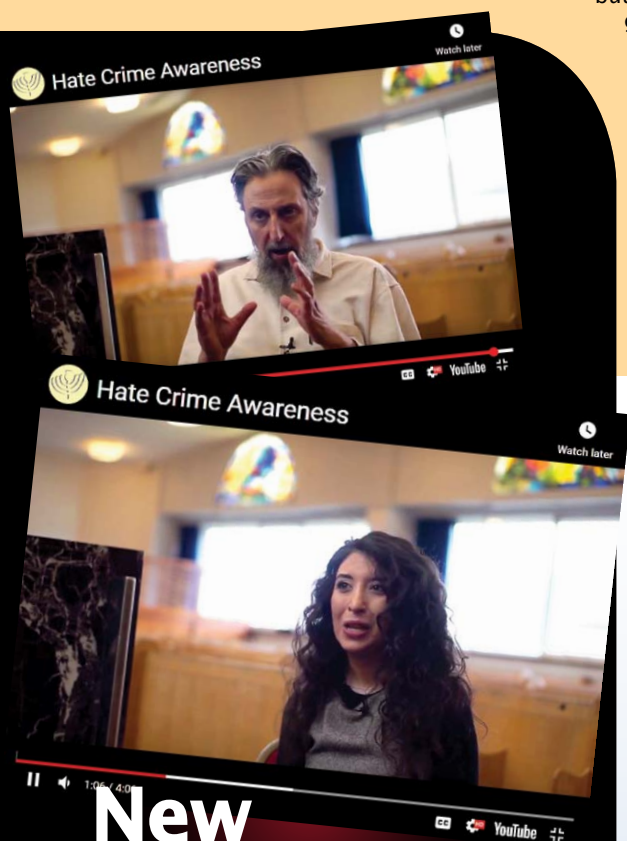
When she set out to study Scottish Jewish identity through oral history, Fiona realised that three of her first subjects happened to be descendants of the nine children of Rabbi Zvi David Hoppenstein and his wife Sophia, who had come to Scotland in the 1880s. That led her to try to track down all the members of this extended family and explore their thoughts and feelings about their Scottish and Jewish identity.

Some of the stories Fiona was told were particularly poignant. One of Zvi David and Sophia's grandsons married a non-Jewish doctor but didn't tell his parents. Nor did he tell his children about their Jewish heritage or that they had grandparents in Scotland, and they only found out when he fell ill and their mother thought his parents should be told he didn't have long to live. The family travelled to

Glasgow from Leicester, but by then the grandmother was housebound in a

fourth floor tenement flat, and the son was in a wheelchair, so all they could do was wave to each other.

"Engrossing and engaging" said one participant. "I loved having the family tree in front of me when hearing the stories" said another. Several of the audience had attended previous SCoJeC events, but many hadn't come across Jewish people or the Jewish community before. They all enjoyed the SCoJeC trademark smoked salmon and cream cheese bagels, and were very interested to see the panels produced by SCoJeC and the SJAC about the history of Jewish immigration to Scotland, and the SJAC book display.



## New Resources FROM SCoJeC AND EIFA

SCoJeC teamed up with the Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA) to produce two short videos raising awareness about hate crime against Jewish and Israeli people in Scotland. These feature SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski and Danielle Bett, Scotland Manager of the Jewish Leadership Council, who is also the Chair of the Scottish Israeli Cultural Association (SICA). The videos are ideal for use in educational situations to encourage students to think about the impact of hate crime, and how to combat it.

The videos are available on the resources page of the SCoJeC website at [www.scojec.org/resources.html](http://www.scojec.org/resources.html)

## Seret INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Seret is the world's only film festival dedicated to bringing Israeli film and television to an international audience.

Seret returned to Scotland following successful screenings last year, this time in collaboration with the Scottish Israeli Cultural Association, and proudly sponsored by the Jewish Leadership Council.

Two films were screened this year – one in Glasgow and one in Edinburgh, in line with popular demand. These were *The Unorthodox* and *The Other Story*, two incredible films exploring the themes of religion and secular life in Israeli society, and how these impact family life as well as politics and culture.

Each film was kicked off by a small reception which gave guests a chance to meet the event organisers as well as Anat Koren, one of Seret's founders, who was glad to come to Scotland to enjoy both screenings and meet audiences. Both films were well received and highly praised by viewers.

Guests included members of the Jewish community, Israelis living in Scotland, local councillors and members of the Scottish Parliament.

The Scottish Israeli Cultural Association looks forward to continuing this wonderful collaboration with Seret and hopes to make this an annual event in Scotland.

The organisers are grateful to Police Scotland for their support in ensuring the events went smoothly and the audiences were able to enjoy the films in safety.







## Stand Up to Racism

Although unable to attend the "Stand Up To Racism" rally because it took place on Shabbat, SCoJeC sent a message of support "endorsing the aspiration of this UN designated day to eliminate all forms of hatred and discrimination."

"We share the concerns of all reasonable people about the increasing levels of racist and xenophobic rhetoric, in politics, society and online – and the consequent normalisation of such dangerous language. We are particularly concerned by assaults on the integrity of minority communities, including on their right to determine their own identity."

"We continue to be concerned by the growing trend of recorded antisemitic incidents as well as other forms of hate crimes across the UK, and hope to continue working with minority communities to ensure that antisemitism along with other forms of racism and religious hatred are understood and addressed, to ensure a united, inclusive and diverse society."

## SCoJeC AGM: "SCoJeC is the Community"

During the past year, SCoJeC has held Council meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, and we completed our round of our affiliated communities by holding our 2019 AGM in the newly refurbished synagogue and community centre in Aberdeen.

Before the formal business, we were honoured to welcome Aberdeen Lord Provost Barney Crockett, who expressed his strong friendship and support for the local community and answered questions from participants. He addressed concerns about antisemitism and in particular

the intimidation directed at a local Jewish businessman, and agreed to support the adoption of the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism by Aberdeen Council.

The main discussion was how the Jewish Community in Scotland and elsewhere is changing. Paul Spicker, Chair of the Tayside and Fife Community, referred to the imminent closure of the Dundee synagogue, which had existed since the 1880s, and the transfer of their activities to the University Chaplaincy in St Andrews which had been inaugurated at the previous SCoJeC Council meeting. He said that most of Jewish life in Britain is locked into an old model that no longer reflects reality – communities are changing and a reorganisation of community life is needed. It is now networks like SCoJeC that make it possible for people to meet and to live a Jewish life wherever they are. SCoJeC has taken huge steps in that direction, and instead of talking about "small communities" we should recognise that SCoJeC *is* the community.

That led to discussion of how SCoJeC can and does support other groups, including in areas like Inverness where there might be significant numbers of Jewish people, the estimated 1000 Israelis in Scotland, minority groups within the community, and Jewish students on Scottish campuses. Some people felt that communal buildings do provide an important focus, but others said that too much effort can go into buildings, and not enough into supporting people, and pointed out that connecting Jewish people and supporting Jewish life throughout Scotland is exactly what SCoJeC has been doing.

The AGM was also delighted to hear about the excellent working relationship that has developed between SCoJeC and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, and the huge contribution made by the JLC's Scottish Public Affairs Manager, Danielle Bett, to the public profile of the community. It went on to approve the formal report and accounts for 2018 – we had had another extremely successful and productive year and almost exactly broke even on a turnover of nearly £87 000. The meeting expressed its thanks to all the growing team of staff and volunteers, and went on to elect the following office-bearers:

**Chair:** Micheline Brannan; **Vice-Chair:** Fiona Brodie; **Secretary:** Simon Dover; **Treasurer:** Philip Mendelsohn



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SCoJeC (SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES) IS  
SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION NO SC029438

## SCoJeC's SUMMER EVENTS

### EDINBURGH GLASGOW

🌟 **Contemporary Dance Performance**

THU 27 JUNE  
SUN 30 JUNE

"Come as you are #Berlin", followed by Klezmer Ceilidh

### GLASGOW

🌟 **Open Dance Workshop**

SUN 30 JUNE

Contemporary, Syrian, Klezmer, and Israeli dance

### ARRAN

🌟 **Summer House Concert**

THU 18 JULY

with Lev Atlas, principal viola of Scottish Opera Orchestra

### SHETLAND

🌟 **'Jewish Book Week' in Shetland! – meet the author:**  
Fiona Frank: *Five generations of a Scottish Jewish Family*

MON 12 AUG  
TUE 13 AUG

Ethel Hofman: *Growing up Jewish on Shetland*

### HADDINGTON

🌟 **Whittingehame Walk**

SUN 1 SEP

Transport provided from Glasgow and Edinburgh

FOR MORE INFO ON ALL THESE EVENTS: [www.scojec.org/events.html](http://www.scojec.org/events.html)

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