



Enlightening Scotland!

Chanukah coincided with the school holidays this year, and SCoJeC held events in Inverness and Linlithgow, where as well as lighting the menorah and serving traditional latkes and sufganiyot (doughnuts), our Projects and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank held focus groups to discuss the *Being Jewish in Scotland 2020* inquiry (see p.4). One participant who has lived near Inverness for many years, and thought she was the only Jewish person in her area, was pleasantly surprised to discover so many others nearby. But the discussion, in the SHIMCA Chinese Centre, wasn't only about being Jewish; it also covered issues of identity more generally, and another participant commented that "by reducing contact you increase the opportunity for prejudice" – neatly encapsulating why SCoJeC works to demystify Judaism and the Jewish Community in Scotland.

Chanukah events were also held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, St Andrews, and Dumfries.



Solidarity with Roma Community

In November, SCoJeC and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council issued a joint statement of support for the Roma Community following the desecration of a memorial to the hundreds of thousands of Roma who were murdered by the Nazis. The first such memorial in Scotland, the Romani Rose Tree Memorial, was planted in Queens Park in Govanhill, Glasgow, the area that is home to the majority of Roma people in Scotland, and where there were also once four synagogues and many kosher shops within a square mile.

The Jewish Community was horrified to hear of the destruction of the Roma Genocide memorial in Govanhill, and shares the disgust of the local community with this act of vandalism. The incident has many resonances for the Jewish Community, not only because of the Holocaust, but because so many were immigrants whose families also settled in this area of Glasgow. We wish to express our support for the Roma people in Scotland. We will always stand against racism and intolerance and we will continue to work with others to build good relations and understanding between Scotland's diverse communities.

We stand with the Roma community because racism is racism, no matter who is the target, and it is the duty of all of us to challenge it, not to leave it to the victims to help themselves while others stand idly by.

Stand Together

KIRSTY ROBSON, SCOTLAND SUPPORT WORKER, HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY TRUST

On January 27, the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, people all around Scotland and the UK will join together to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2020. The theme this year, 'Stand Together', explores how genocidal regimes throughout history have fractured societies by marginalising certain groups, and how these tactics can be challenged by individuals.

More than 10,000 events all around the UK will allow people to learn from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution, and more recent genocides, and see the need for everyone to stand together against prejudice.

The significant milestone that we will collectively mark is made especially poignant by the dwindling number of survivors of the Holocaust who are able to share their testimonies. We will also be marking the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia.

Now more than ever, we must come together and commit ourselves to commemorate and learn about the Holocaust and recognise its contemporary relevance, as the strongest reminder of what can happen when prejudice and hatred go unchallenged. Genocide must still be resisted every day, and even here in the UK, discrimination and the language of hate must be challenged by us all. Intolerance, bigotry, and hatred have no place in Scotland.

All over Scotland, we are remembering. Stand Together!

For information about Holocaust Memorial Day, and educational resources for teaching about the Holocaust, see www.hmd.org.uk



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1



ISSUE 64 • WINTER 2019-20 • SHEVAT 5780



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Remember the Trees

As our secular new year began, the news headlines burned with the fate of the trees of Australia's bushland. By the beginning of January, more than four million hectares had already burned in New South Wales alone and this was not even the start of the 'fire season'. In 2019 some 900,000 hectares burned in the Amazon forest, and in 2018 around 800,000 hectares burned in California.

Rashi said: "The Torah compares humans to trees because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world."

Can we afford to ignore the destruction of so many trees, whether through unplanned conflagrations or deliberate deforestation making way for agricultural monocultures and expanding human habitation? Can we afford to ignore the warnings that we are facing the sixth Great Extinction, the first to be brought about by human action? Must we not recognise that our addiction to fossil fuels, so-called economic growth, and uncontrolled consumerism is leading to global warming with its ensuing flooding, fires, hurricanes, sea level rise, and migrations, not to mention the destruction of insect, animal, and human life? Scientists and environmentalists are becoming increasingly concerned that climate change, which has led to increasing disasters now, may be irreversible. Along with the growing world population, this will leave our children and grandchildren to inherit a world not fit for sustainable life of all kinds.

The ancient Festival of Tu b'Shevat, the New Year of Trees, is a perfect opportunity to think seriously about our connection to the natural world and to renew our Jewish

responsibilities to this world. At Tu b'Shevat we often recall the story of Honi: Honi came upon an old man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit? The man replied, "Seventy years." Honi then asked, "And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?" The man answered, "Perhaps not, but when I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees."

So let's follow the imperative of this story and plant trees, but, more importantly, let our stewardship ensure that the environment in which they will thrive is defended and protected.

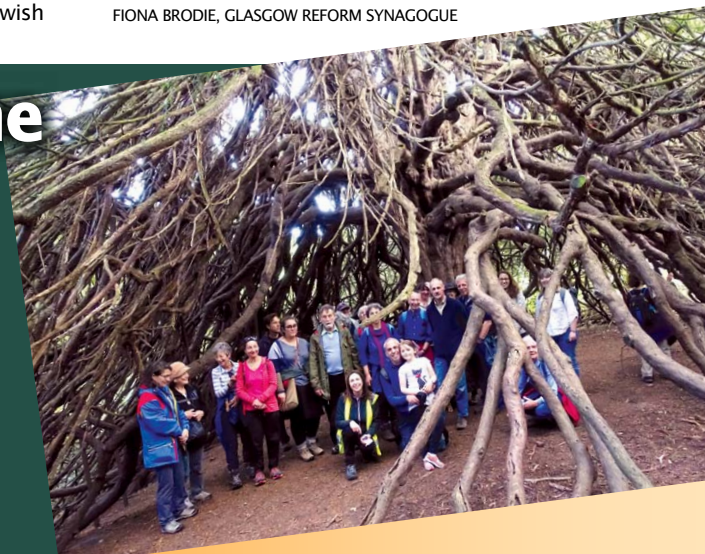
"The Torah is a tree of life to those who hold it tightly, its ways are ways of pleasantness, and its paths are peace." May the generations to come inherit such a world of pleasantness and peace, flourishing with trees and all the wonderful variety of nature that, by acting now, we have preserved for the future.

FIONA BRODIE, GLASGOW REFORM SYNAGOGUE

RETURN TO Whittingehame

Following the very successful visit two years ago to Whittingehame Estate near Haddington, the family home of Lord Arthur James Balfour, to mark the centenary of the 'Balfour Declaration', we were delighted to be able to return for another hike around the nearby Traprain Law with East Lothian Countryside Ranger Richard English, and a visit to the estate.

We are very grateful to the owner, Michael Brander, Lord Balfour's great-nephew, for a very personal tour of the estate, which is not open to the public. This took in the family graves and the arboretum of rare trees, including the spectacular 800-year old 'Whittingehame Yew', and information about the history of the estate, including its time as a farm school for children who escaped from Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport.



Spring Calendar

Tu b'Shevat: Mon 10 Feb

PURIM

Fast of Esther: Mon 9 Mar

Purim: Tue 10 Mar

Megillah Readings: Mon 9 Mar eve

Tues 10 Mar day

Shushan Purim: Wed 11 Mar

PESACH

First Seder: Wed 8 Apr eve

Ode to the Dookers!

HILARY RIFKIND

*Our Dookers have done it – and don't they look great!!
Their effort was awesome, which we all appreciate.
The parade started off to the drums' rousing beat
And wended its way through the packed winding street.
In costumes galore all the Dookers were merry
As they marched to the shore down in Southern Queensferry.
Encouraged and cheered by their band of supporters
Who watched and admired them entering chill waters.
To those who have sponsored our brave hardy foursome
EHC offers thanks – your support is most welcome.
And for those who would still like a chance to donate
The fund is still open – it is never too late!!!*

On New Years Day, Sara Lurie, Eleanor and Eliza Giraldo, and Carol Levstein took part in the 'Loonie Dook' to raise funds for the Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre.



Broadening Horizons

The People's Postcode Trust has made a grant of £15,000 to SCOJeC to support our work to educate Scottish children about Jewish life and culture by taking talks and activities about Judaism to schools and community groups around Scotland. This will include running a new accredited course for volunteers.

For further information and to apply, please contact Joanne Gabbay, SCOJeC's Education Officer: education@scojec.org

SCoJeC on ARRAN

SHARON SHENHAV AND BARB TAUB, ARRAN JEWISH CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

If synergy means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, then that certainly describes the new Arran Jewish Cultural Association! Take the past year: we started with a house concert featuring Lev Atlas enchanting a packed audience with his klezmer violin and stories. Then one of the guests suggested inviting her friend, pianist and musicologist Deborah Nemko, to perform and talk about the music of Dutch composers who had suffered under the Nazis.

So, with support from SCoJeC, the Netherlee & Clarkston Charitable Trust, and the Jewish Music Institute, we hosted Dr Nemko in a recital of pieces that she had collected while visiting Amsterdam on a Fulbright Fellowship in 2015. She had interviewed families of Holocaust survivors there, met Anne Frank's childhood playmate and stepsister Eva Schloss, and discovered many previously unpublished handwritten manuscripts. "Their music is often jazzy," she said, "and sometimes influenced by French and American composers. Although largely unknown, it deserves to be heard."



The audience in Lamlash was riveted as Deborah played these rediscovered works and told the composers' stories. Over refreshments after the recital, audience members agreed it had been a brilliant concert, warmed by the home location, and illuminated by the pianist's stories of the composers' lives and the music we're only now discovering they left behind.

Included in the refreshments were homemade bagels, and several guests begged for recipes and baking tips. Luckily, Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW) was coming up, and this year's theme - 'Eat, Faith, Love' - was a perfect fit for a bagel-baking event supported by SIFW and the Arran Jewish Cultural Association under the auspices of SCoJeC. The session filled up so fast that we had to put it on again! Here's the thing about living on Arran: in the winter, tourists are mostly gone, restaurants and shops are shuttered, and you might think it's really quiet. But instead, friends and neighbours jump in and turn even the most mundane activity into a social event. Soon local bagel bakers were elbow-deep in flour and laughter. While our dough

was rising, we took a break for some traditional Chanukah foods — sufganiyot (jam doughnuts) and latkes (potato pancakes with apple sauce and sour cream). And the bagel baking workshops led to an invitation from Arran High School to teach bagel making and explain Chanukah traditions to the pupils. Student bakers paired up, proudly producing a trayful of bagels each, and took home Chanukah gift bags containing recipes, gelt, and dreidels.

Now the Arran Jewish Cultural Association is already planning more events in the year to come. Interfaith Scotland is sponsoring our film and discussion in the second week of February to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. We are planning more baking experiences, including a challah-making workshop as well as an event at the local church to mark Shavuot and Pentecost which nearly coincide this year. Lev Atlas will return on July 8 for another concert, this time in a larger venue in Brodick. And we'll be hosting a family Klezmer Ceilidh in Whiting Bay in the third week of July.

We encourage anyone who would like to be informed of upcoming events on lovely Arran to join our mailing list by contacting arran@scojec.org and see the listings at www.scojec.org/whats-on.html

Limmud SCOTLAND

The first Limmud Scotland for four years took place in Edinburgh in November, with over 250 participants and more than 40 sessions for all ages, including a children and youth programme coordinated by Sydney Switzer, the UJIA Scotland youthworker.

Jonathan Ornstein of Krakow Jewish Cultural Centre, Jane Ansell of the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre, and Clive Lawton from Limmud, spoke in the plenary session; there was a popular klezmer music, dance, and Yiddish song strand running throughout the day, Israeli dancing, and sessions on Jewish comedy, Jewish immigration, evolution, the Bible, antisemitism and 'anti/sematism', refugees, Israel - and whisky!

SCoJeC arranged a coach from Glasgow, and Fiona Frank, SCoJeC Projects and Outreach Manager, led a session called 'The Only Jew in the Village', which gave participants from as far afield as Orkney an opportunity to discuss the experience of living outwith the organised Jewish communities of Glasgow and Edinburgh - or London, Manchester and Leeds.

SCoJeC also put on a Yiddish song concert and Klezmer ceilidh the evening before Limmud, and our all-star cast of Scottish Klezmer musicians and Yiddish singers finished the concert by joining together in a Yiddish version of Auld Lang Syne. The event was so popular, attracting over 140 people, that the Jewish community centre nearly ran out of chairs!

PHOTOS: EDDY MAHER, GRANT HENDRY-HORNE, AND ANDREW HELLYER



Cleaning Garnethill's Streets

More than 20 members of Garnethill Synagogue were joined by Friends of Garnethill Green Spaces and St Andrew's West Church on a cool, crisp day for a litter-picking session as their contribution to Mitzvah Day in November.



Difference through Dialogue

This year's Faith Leaders Summit was attended by Communities and Local Government Secretary Aileen Campbell, as well as clerical and lay leaders from all Scotland's faith communities.





Time to be Counted

As the next census approaches in early 2021, it's a good time to take stock of what it can tell us about the Jewish Community in Scotland.

We all know that the census can only count the people who tick the "Jewish" box – it has no way of knowing how many people actually are Jewish. We also know that census data do not reflect the actual number of Jewish people in Scotland because the Religion question is optional. In addition, the Scottish census asks about "belonging", when many people, especially in rural areas, have nothing to "belong" to. (In England they ask "What faith are you?") That can make a dramatic difference: in 2001, when the Scottish census also asked about religion of upbringing, 6448 people said they "belong", but a total of 8233 – 27.6% more – answered "Jewish" to at least one of these questions.

The religion of upbringing question was not included in the 2011 census, but a recently published report from National Records of Scotland (NRS) revealed that, in addition to the 5887 people who identified as "belonging" in the Religion questions, 812 people wrote in "Jewish" in response to the Ethnicity question. Of these 219 (27%) did not identify as Jewish in the Religion question.

This is more than just numerically significant. It shows thoughtful and deliberate identification to write in "Jewish" when there was no prompt to do so. This matters because people who regard themselves as Jewish by ethnicity often request specifically Jewish welfare services even when they do not consider that they 'belong'. That is why SCoJeC has argued for a "Jewish" box in 2021, and NRS have now included it in their recommendations.

So when the time comes we would urge everyone who regards themselves as Jewish, whether by background or descent, or culturally, socially, or in any other way, to take this double opportunity to identify so that communal organisations and others such as the NHS and local councils can provide culturally appropriate services for everyone who would like to use them.

"SCoJeC has made a huge difference"

To celebrate the 20th birthday of SCoJeC – and of the Scottish Parliament – we were honoured to welcome the Presiding Officer, the Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP, to address our September Council meeting. He said, "SCoJeC has made a huge difference in the past 20 years. It is a very effective organisation, doing a very difficult job. From the perspective of Parliament it has always been effective, always present, making the views of the Community known, speaking with common sense, balance, and experience ... People trust SCoJeC for its authority and accuracy. Previously, the Jewish community wasn't well known, but it is now!"

SCoJeC has contributed to the Parliament in many ways: organising visits by Chief Rabbis Sacks and Mirvis, offering opportunities for MSPs to visit synagogues and meet the Community, participating in several Cross-Party Groups, facilitating Jewish contributors to Time for Reflection, and organising and participating in many exhibitions and other events. He singled out as unique achievements the celebration of Chanukah with the Rifkind family menorah, and the Jewish Manifesto prepared for the 2016 Scottish election.

Mr Macintosh said he finds the rise in antisemitism internationally "perplexing, disturbing, and extremely worrying", and he commended SCoJeC for speaking out clearly, while at the same time reaching out and keeping doors open for dialogue: "Getting people to talk respectfully to one another rather than to shout is the first step ... SCoJeC's activities are a sign of hope", he concluded, "and SCoJeC brings balance and generally gets a hugely positive response. Thanks to the reputation you've built, the future looks more rosy!"

During the wide-ranging discussion that followed Mr Macintosh's address, he shared concern about the level of aggression in social media, where "the dominant emotion seems to be rage", and about the tribalism of current politics, although "legislation against hate crime has cross-party support – even if expressed in partisan terms!", and he again commended SCoJeC for its work to promote knowledge about Judaism, tackle negative stereotypes and distortion, and break down barriers.

Thanking Mr Macintosh, SCoJeC Vice-Chair Fiona Brodie echoed his words: "Breaking down barriers is what SCoJeC does! Education and engagement go hand in hand, so go out and engage, don't allow yourselves to be stereotyped, and surprise people that you're Jewish!"



Tell us
what
it's like...

Being
Jewish
in
Scotland

SCoJeC wants to hear from YOU about your experience of being Jewish in Scotland. With antisemitism in the news on a daily basis, we want to find out whether the experience of Scotland's Jews reflects these headlines, or whether Scotland is different from the rest of the UK.

So if you are Jewish and have lived in Scotland within the past ten years, please contribute by completing our survey as soon as possible. You'll find a link on the front page of our website www.scojec.org, or you can go direct to www.tinyurl.com/scojecsurvey.

The new survey, supported by Glasgow University's Q-step programme, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, is a follow-up to our two Scottish Government funded inquiries in 2011-12 and 2014-15. Two final year Social Science students, Jordyn Murray and Andrew Hellyer, are working with Projects and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank, who

conducted the original research. Fiona commented: "These inquiries, and in particular the events and activities associated with them, not only inform the representations that we make on behalf of the Jewish Community but also help to build engagement and connection among Jewish people throughout Scotland".

We hope to publish our interim findings in spring 2020 and a longer report, taking into account qualitative data from focus groups around Scotland, later in the year.

See details of our future events, including film, klezmer and Yiddish Open Mic tours:
www.scojec.org/whats-on/scojec/scojec_events.html

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