

Celebrating the Glasgow Community

The Banqueting Hall of Glasgow's City Chambers was the magnificent setting for the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council's 'Celebration of Glasgow Jewry' in February. Speakers included the First Minister, the Chief Rabbi, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and the chair of the Jewish Leadership Council.

Welcoming the guests, President Paul Edlin, said, "Glasgow has a rich and diverse cultural history and we are proud to be a part of it, having been welcomed so warmly over the years. We appreciate the hand of friendship that was extended to us, and as proud Jewish Glaswegians we want to extend the same warm welcome to others."

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said, "I am delighted to offer my support to our Jewish communities, together with Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, in celebration of a culture that is so important to Scotland. Jewish communities have been part of our nation for centuries, and the Scottish Government recognises that the substantial and significant contributions of the Jewish community have helped shape our society, culture, and economy. These values and traditions are an integral part of Scotland's multi-faith and multi-cultural society where everyone regardless of their race, religion, or background should be able to fulfil their potential."



ROYAL RECEPTION AT Buckingham Palace

Amongst the Scots invited by the Prince of Wales to celebrate the UK Jewish community were Debby Taylor of Aberdeen (right), and SCoJeC's Fiona Frank and Ephraim Borowski (below). Noting his "special and precious" connection with the community, and his pride that his grandmother is buried in Jerusalem, Prince Charles said, "This is the least I can do to try to repay, in some small way, the immense blessings the Jewish people have brought to this land and, indeed, to humanity."



ISSUE 65 • PESACH 2020 • NISAN 5780



Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities

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Holocaust Memorial Day Stand Together



Scotland Stands Together

On Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January, the Scottish national ceremony in the Scottish Parliament was addressed by the First Minister, and heard testimony of survivors Janine Webber and Hasan Hasanović to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia.

Commemorative events took place throughout Scotland. The world premiere of *Unforgotten* by Oleg Ponomarev, commissioned by Interfaith Scotland to remember the children of the Holocaust, took place at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. At Saltcoats War Memorial, there was a brief service and a discussion on the theme of 'Stand Together'. In Arran Library, residents honoured the 'righteous among the nations' who endangered themselves and their families to save those they could. There was a small exhibition in Glasgow City Chambers about Jane Haining, a Church of Scotland missionary who helped Jewish children in Budapest.

As the number of Holocaust survivors falls, others must stand together to share their experiences. In Hasan Hasanović's words:

"Janine's story is my story. My story is her story. Now they are your stories. Share them, learn from them."

KIRSTY ROBSON

KIRSTY ROBSON,
SCOTLAND
SUPPORT
WORKER
HMD TRUST.

LEFT:

JANE HAINING
MEMORIAL,
GLASGOW CITY
CHAMBERS.

CANDLE LIGHTING AT
EAST RENFREWSHIRE AND
RENFREWSHIRE EVENT.

INTERFAITH SCOTLAND
CONCERT AT
ROYAL
CONSERVATOIRE.

RIGHT:

CALDERWOOD LODGE AND ST
CLARE'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS.
ARRAN LIBRARY.

SCOTTISH JEWISH
ARCHIVES "TACKLING
HATE TOGETHER"
DIALOGUE EVENT
IN GARNETHILL.

NATIONAL
CEREMONY IN
SCOTTISH
PARLIAMENT.

Freedom and Egg

TALYA SILVER

"You can take our lives, but you'll never take our freedom!" Whether or not William Wallace actually said that, freedom is certainly a popular rallying cry, from Moshe's "let my people go!" to the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence. But – trust a philosopher to burst a bubble – what does freedom actually mean?

As the philosopher Isaiah Berlin pointed out, there's negative liberty, which is 'freedom from' (fear, injustice, persecution) and positive liberty, which is 'freedom to' (travel, make choices, self-actualise). Which is more fundamental and which do we legislate for and how? It's obvious that an individual's 'freedom to' do whatever they want has to be limited if their neighbours are to have 'freedom from' fear and danger. Yet my 'freedom to' sleep when I want also clashes with your 'freedom to' blast music when you choose. So is individual freedom incompatible with society?

My mother always serves a boiled egg in salt water as the first course on Seder night just as her parents did, and I carry on the tradition too. But eggs are normally a symbol of mourning, served at shiva houses – why this custom to eat them on the night we celebrate freedom? There is one other night in the year with a custom to eat a boiled egg – at the meal before the fast of the ninth of Av, which commemorates the destruction of the Temples. Interestingly, Seder always falls on the same day of the week as the night of Tisha b'Av. How can there be a connection between the day of redemption and the day of exile?

The Omer – the 7-week countdown to Sinai and the giving of the Torah – starts on the second day of Pesach. The Torah limits our freedom with legislation about interpersonal interactions and even our own religious expression. But the first day of Pesach is untrammelled freedom. We are revelling in our release, reclining while we sip wine and taste the bread of liberty. We are not yet looking ahead to the curbs on freedom that are necessary for a society.

So a custom was instituted as a hint, as a whisper. Eat an egg today, just as mourners do, because unrestrained freedom will lead to destruction. Be careful!

SPRING CALENDAR

PESACH

Search for chametz:	Tues night 7 April
Burning the chametz:	Wed morning 8 April
First Seder:	Wed night 8 April
Second Seder:	Thurs night 9 April
Yom Tov:	Evening Wed 8 to night Fri 10 April
Chol haMoed (middle days) continue until ...	
Yom Tov:	Evening Tues 14 to night 16 Thurs April

YOM HASHOAH:	Tues 21 April
YOM HAATZMA'UT:	Wed 29 April
LAG B'OMER:	Tue 12 May

SHAVUOT

Yom Tov: Evening Thurs 28 to after Shabbat 30 May

Developing the Negative

Jennie Milne's photography exhibition at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen explores her mother's Polish/Jewish identity, exiled Polish soldiers in Scotland, and families of Israeli victims of terrorism, and movingly illustrates Eli Weisel's comment that "To listen to a witness is to become a witness".



PURIM

Above, Rabbi Rose reads the Megillah in Edinburgh.

Clockwise from top right: Purim parties in Giffnock Synagogue, Garnethill Synagogue, Tayside and Fife in St Andrews University Chaplaincy, Glasgow Reform Synagogue, Aberdeen, Newton Mearns, Edinburgh Synagogue.



Braw Bricht Nichts

SCoJeC held its own Burns Lunch at Mark's Deli in Giffnock (right: Mark himself addressing his haggis).

Giffnock Synagogue held their now traditional Burns Supper (below), where the speakers included Justice Minister Humza Yousaf and former Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale.



"It could never happen here"

MARK GARDNER, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CST

Having grown up in Glasgow, I'm proud to work with SCoJeC against antisemitism, joining their regular meetings with Scottish Government and Police Scotland in my role as lead spokesperson and Deputy Chief Executive of the Community Security Trust. But even so, I admit that I can never quite shake the feeling that "it could never happen here".

At CST, our mission is to protect every Jewish community. We strive to do this in meaningful partnership, because security depends on everybody playing their part. In Scotland, we have had some utterly dedicated security volunteers, but I see how little support they receive compared to many others – and I think much of that is because Scottish Jews assume "it could never happen here".

Obviously terrorism is exceptionally rare – let's be very clear about that – but it could still "happen here". 2019 gave three dramatic examples.

On Yom Kippur, the shul in Halle, Germany, was attacked by a terrorist, who tried and failed to shoot the door open. The congregants had followed the simple security instruction of shutting the door behind them. This saved many lives inside the shul, but the terrorist killed two people outside.

On the last day of Pesach, a terrorist attacked the synagogue in Poway, California, killing one congregant and wounding others, including the rabbi. Both terrorists boasted of their attacks to a global network that includes British (and Scottish) neo-Nazis. The German terrorist even spoke English as he broadcast his attack live on the internet.

Here in the UK, the most serious recent attack on a shul was in Exeter in 2018, against Britain's third oldest synagogue. An arsonist tried to burn it down, and was only partly able to break windows that had been strengthened by the shul, with CST advice and funding help.

All those attacks were against small communities that happened to be the nearest shuls to their attackers. So, attacks are very rare, but Scotland is no magical exception. Nazis and Jihadis attack whatever is local to them and share the footage online for others to copy.

So, I'm very sorry, but "it can happen here" and you do need to take security seriously. You need to support your local CST team. We need you to report antisemitism and suspicious behaviour. At the very least, we need you to close the door, just as you would at home.



Security Fund Launched

IN GARNETHILL

When the Scottish Government announced new funding for security at places of worship, SCoJeC was delighted to arrange for Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf and Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell to launch it in Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow. (Below, with Student Chaplain Aharon Lemberger (right) and SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski, left)

The Communities Secretary said: "We are committed to ensuring that our communities in Scotland feel free to practice their religion where they feel safe and that all places of worship should be places of peace and sanctuary."



Tu b'Shvat in the Snow

SCoJeC held an early Tu B'Shvat tree planting and Fruit Seder at the home of Richard and Barbara Ossias near Inverness, coinciding with Holocaust Memorial Day.

The weather was perfect, with a sprinkle of snow on the ground. Richard spoke about members of his family who had perished in the Holocaust or managed to escape from the Nazis – and how the planting of new trees feels like a message of hope for the future.

Rolf Schmidt, Chair of Inverness Interfaith, said "I felt privileged to be able to take part in this event. Sharing our culture helps to remove our differences."

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SCoJeC (SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES) IS
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For details of our future events, including
Yiddish Open Mic tour of Aberdeen,
Edinburgh, and Glasgow in May, see

www.scojec.org/events.html

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