

A Rainbow for LaG b'Omer

When LaG b'Omer comes around, SCoJeC likes to celebrate in style! In past years we've held large-scale outdoor events with archery competitions and exploration, but with that out of the question, we decided on a different kind of gala event.

So we brought together, although not literally, five internationally known Klezmer musicians from their own living rooms – in the East Neuk of Fife, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the USA – for a Rainbow Klezmer Kabaret, with the proceeds being shared between the musicians and Scottish NHS charities. First up came flute player extraordinaire Adrienne Greenbaum, Professor of Flute at Mount Holyoak College in Boston, followed by internationally known Klezmer musician, singer, songwriter, scholar, and educator Michael Alpert. They were followed by Klezmer and Scottish fiddle player and teacher Gica Loening, and accordionist Phil Alexander, who leads Klezmer/Jazz fusion band Moishe's Bagel. Finally Lev Atlas, principal viola of the Scottish Opera Orchestra and Senior Lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, played and shared memories about his musical life growing up in Rostov on Don.

The music ranged from lively dance tunes – horas, freylekhs, and sirbas – to a haunting doyna, with traditional and original songs in Yiddish, English, and a mix of the two, including a heartfelt rendition in Scots of Matt Armour's beautiful song *Generations of Change*, and a *Lockdown Waltz* composed by Gica in Klezmer style – and all were assembled in our Zoom room along with our large, varied, and international, audience.

"I really admire and appreciate your current efforts to enhance and broaden the sense of Jewish community and identity in Scotland, and making connections beyond our shores. It now feels like a far bigger and more welcoming tent than it did!"

"I loved the astonishing brilliance of the performers – I was blown away! The 'fireside/kitchen' feel gave it a warmth and intimacy you don't usually get with audiences over 100!"

"I'd like to say thank you for all the effort and imagination that SCoJeC is putting into improving our lives and bringing us together (virtually) at this time. It is making a real difference."



TOP RIGHT CLOCKWISE: GICA LOENING, LEV ATLAS, PHIL ALEXANDER, MICHAEL ALPERT, ADRIANNE GREENBAUM.



A Hartsikn Dank Alemen!

A HEARTY THANK YOU TO EVERYONE!

Three hours of Yiddish stories, songs and poems – 20 performers being streamed into more than 100 homes across ten countries – all through the medium of Zoom – and another first for SCoJeC!

Before the coronavirus lockdown, we were planning a three-city tour by Vivi, Tami, and Arturo of the Yiddish Open Mic Café, a monthly Yiddish-language event in London, along with other Yiddishists. Then when it became clear that the tour wasn't going to happen, we realised that a virtual Yiddish Open Mic would open up the possibility of involving a far wider group of performers, and a far wider audience, than was originally envisaged. And so it turned out.

There was a great atmosphere in the polyglot 'chat' alongside the event itself, with people commenting and conversing in Yiddish, Hebrew, transliterations of both, and Spanish, as well as English! We were also delighted to be able to wish a hearty mazeltov to Edinburgh-based poet David Bleiman, whose poem *The Trebbler's Tale*, written in Scots-Yiddish, recently won first prize in the annual Sangschaw competition of the Scots Language Association. SCoJeC was proud to host the world premiere performance (as David described it!) of this hitherto unpublished work, and to publish the poem for the first time on our website.

We were honoured to be able to dedicate this event to the memory of the renowned Glasgow actor and Yiddish speaker Ida Schuster Berkeley ז"ל who had sadly passed away the week before. Ida's career began in the 1940s, when she worked with the Avrom Greenbaum Players and the celebrated Unity Theatre, an icon of Red Clydeside. Those who knew her, however slightly, will never forget her acute intelligence, her wit, her elegance, and her charisma. She was a unique character whose memory will remain with us for ever.



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Aberdeen Shul

AT 75!

Aberdeen Synagogue, in the centre of the city, is in a 200 year old Grade B listed Georgian terraced house, which this year is celebrating 75 years since it became the shul. For the last 5 years it has been undergoing major renovations, and the community thought they were nearing the end of this massive undertaking until, in February, it was found that the roof was unsafe.

The cost of these unplanned major repairs far exceeded what the community could afford, but they did not want to close the Synagogue so set out to raise the £40,000 needed. Donations and interest-free loans raised £25,000 but this still left a funding gap of £15,000 – and then lockdown happened!

That's when SCoJeC stepped in, pleased to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Synagogue and help the Roof Appeal by organising a series of talks by authors with Scottish Jewish connections.

Prof Nathan Abrams (top right) of Bangor University in Wales started the ball rolling with his talk, *75 years of Dee Street*, about the history of the Aberdeen Jewish Community. He drew on stories and documents from current and former members of the community, reports in old newspapers, court reports, and census documents.

Many of the audience had personal connections with the community; the father of one participant led services in the synagogue many years earlier, another had lived in the flat above the synagogue when he studied in Aberdeen in the 1960s, and a third remembered many Seder nights in the Aberdeen community when she lived there over 40 years ago.

Author J David Simons had planned to be out of the country in May – but that wasn't to be, and SCoJeC was able to track him down in Glasgow, happy to discuss his *Glasgow to Galilee* trilogy which touches on his relationship with Scottishness and Jewishness, and with community, identity, and conflict. David's other claim to fame is that in 2012 he was the speaker at the first Jewish event in over 50 years to be held in Inverness, where his grandfather had once been the rabbi.

The third speaker was Ethel Hofman, who spoke about her childhood in Shetland, her career as a cookery writer and teacher, and her great sense of the Jewish values of respect, tolerance, and kindness. She said she tried to communicate these values, which came from her mother and from all the assorted "aunts, uncles, and grannies" that surrounded her in Shetland during what she remembers as an "idyllic childhood".

Thanks to many generous donations including Harvey Freeman who very kindly offered to match other donations – and more! – in honour of his grandparents Louis and Freda, the roof appeal has met its target.

The Aberdeen Jewish community are extremely grateful to everyone who has enabled these urgent repairs to be carried out, and for the fantastic support of SCoJeC and the authors who kindly donated their time and enthusiasm. They are currently working on plans for other fundraising events to enable them to repay their kind creditors – so watch this space!



the world in our ZOOM-ROOM

When lockdown began, SCoJeC had financial support from Interfaith Scotland to cover the cost of a large Zoom room. We held a groundbreaking Virtual Klezmer and Yiddish Song concert (with over 630 people registered), author talks, a Klezmer Kabaret, a weekly Art Club (see page 3) and regular Zoom tutorials. We have also shared the space with many other communal organisations – including the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre's evening with Sir Malcolm Rifkind, above, in conversation with his son, journalist Hugo Rifkind.

VE DAY

The cause of good against evil

VE Day, on 8 May, marked the 75th anniversary of "Victory in Europe Day", when Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender ended World War II in Europe. We also remember the sacrifice of all those who served in the armed forces, and particularly those who gave their lives to save this country from Nazi tyranny.

This year, SCoJeC particularly remembered Jack Leslie Zamansky from Glasgow, who was killed in action on 23 March 1943, at the age of 26. One of five children, Jack was a member of the Jewish Scouts, and later of the Jewish Institute. He married Lena Katlov in 1936, and they had two daughters. At the outbreak of the war he joined the 5th Battalion of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, and fought in North Africa and Sicily. He died at Enfidaville, Tunisia, and is buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery there.

His widow received a moving message from the non-Jewish Chaplain of his battalion:

"By moonlight that night I buried him near the place where he fell, in the sure and certain hope that in him the promise of Israel might be fulfilled. We were all so sorry to lose him, as we had the highest possible regard for his many fine qualities – his willingness to help, his cheerfulness, his courage and his devotion to duty. ... his stage talents were fully used and greatly enjoyed by all who heard him – including Their Majesties the King and Queen and the Princesses. Through your great sorrow you can be justly proud of your husband, in that he sacrificed his life in the cause of good against evil. We hope and pray that his and many other sacrifices may be the means by which a sweeter and better world will emerge from this chaos."

With thanks to Barbara Kliner and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre for their research and photographs.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO
NETHERLEE & CLARKSTON CHARITABLE TRUST
FOR GENEROUSLY SUPPORTING
OUR EVENTS



A Good Heart

RABBI MOSHE RUBIN OF GIFFNOCK
SYNAGOGUE, SENIOR RABBI IN SCOTLAND

I was recently sent a picture of the first day back at primary school after the lockdown, and there, sitting at the children's desks, were pupils – all in their 90s. There is humour and sadness, laughing and crying, worry and hope. The word that we keep on hearing is "unprecedented" times – and never a truer word was said.

In making decisions about how and when to end the lockdown, how and when to reopen the schools, how and when to reopen the economy, and how and when to support the many who are suffering economically due to the lockdown, the country's leaders are debating and deciding the wellbeing of literally every person in the country – what an incredible task.

In the great book of the Talmud, *The Ethics of the Fathers*, the sage Rabbi Yochanan asked his students, "What is the most virtuous path in life that one should choose?" One responded, "a good eye"; the second said a good friend; the third said a good neighbour; and the fourth said always paying attention to the consequences of your actions. A fifth, Rabbi Eleazar, replied, "A good heart," and Rabbi Yochanan responded that that was the most pertinent answer, as it encapsulates all the other answers.

A good heart means being a supportive neighbour and a caring friend, and having a generous eye towards the other. Throughout this crisis, what has kept the country going is the good heart: the dedication of the key workers, the amazing voluntary work that is taking place in communities, the Thursday night clapping for the National Health Service, the sweet drawings of rainbows by the children, the home-schooling parents, the ingenuity of our teachers – it goes on and on.

Now, as we come out of lockdown, as the full scale of the challenges comes to light, that good heart will be tested. I bless all of you with our prophet Moses' blessing. May it be Gd's will that He rest His divine presence in the work of your hands.

This is a slightly edited version of Rabbi Rubin's Time for Reflection which opened proceedings in the Scottish Parliament on 9th June 2020.



SUMMER CALENDAR

Fast of Tammuz: Dawn till nightfall Thu 9 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 Babylonians in 586BCE and by the Romans in 70CE.

Fast of Av (Tisha b'Av): Dusk on Wed 29 Jul till nightfall Thu 20 Jul

Festival of Av: (the "Jewish Valentine's Day"!) Wed 5 Aug

Rosh HaShanah: Dusk on Fri 18 Sept till nightfall Sun 20 Sept

SCoJeC Virtual Arts Club

To provide a bit of relief from lockdown, isolation, and social distancing, SCoJeC's latest venture, an online Jewish Art Club, has been providing an opportunity to think about Jewish art and culture in Scotland every Thursday morning since the end of March. Presenters have included Dianne Gardner, Curator at the Maclaurin Gallery in Ayr, and Mia Spiro from Glasgow University, who discussed two Festivals of Jewish Art – *Cultural Connections* held in 2014, and the 1951 Glasgow Festival of Jewish Art.

Guest speakers from the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum in London discussed the work of Josef Herman and Jankel Adler, as well as the huge exhibition *Artists of Our Allies*, held at the Scottish National Gallery in May 1941. Deborah Haase, curator of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre (SJAC), gave a fascinating talk on the life of Vienna-born artist Hilda Goldwag who studied design in Vienna before moving to Glasgow in 1938 to escape Nazi Europe, and worked as a freelance designer and illustrator. Photographer Judah Passow spoke about the story behind his exhibition *Scots Jews*. Edward Green spoke about his life in art, and SCoJeC's Projects and Outreach Manager Fiona Frank discussed the art and life of her aunt, Hannah Frank (1908–2008), and the project to keep her legacy alive.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JEWISH INSTITUTE PLAYERS PERFORMING *THE DYBBUK* (WITH IDA SCHUSTER, FRONT); GEORGE HIM, ILLUSTRATION FROM *THE FOOTBALL'S REVOLT*; HILDA GOLDWAG, *CECILE*; JUDAH PASSOW, *THE WHISKY DISTILLER*; JOSEF HERMAN, *REFUGEES*; HANNAH FRANK, *A LOOK THAT'S FASTENED TO THE GROUND*; JANKEL ADLER, *MOTHER AND CHILD*; FELIKS TOPOLSKI, *HERR BATTLER*.

DESECRATION OF Roma Memorial

The Romani Rose Tree Memorial in Queens Park in Glasgow was the first memorial in Scotland to the memory of the hundreds of thousands of Roma who were murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust, and was planted by members of the Romano Lav last year with a plaque to mark the Roma Genocide Memorial Day. The memorial was restored after being destroyed last November, and has now been desecrated again.

SCoJeC and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council have issued a joint statement of support and solidarity with the Roma Community:

We are appalled and saddened to see the Glasgow Roma Holocaust Memorial destroyed again. This is a memorial to thousands of innocent people who were murdered in the Holocaust, and its repeated destruction is unforgivable.

Just last year, with support of diverse people all over Glasgow, the Roma community rebuilt their memorial following its destruction on November. To target the Roma community again in this way is unacceptable – we must come together not only to show solidarity, but to take action against the perpetrators and support the Roma community at this time.

We applaud Romano Lav for its strength and determination, and we will continue to work with others to build friendship and understanding amongst Scotland's diverse communities.



Another Milestone for "an incredibly useful resource"

SCoJeC's Political Affairs Digest (PAD), was launched in 2008 and has now reached the significant milestone of its 2000th issue. It provides information almost daily about political activity relevant to the Jewish community, in the UK and Scottish Parliaments, the other devolved administrations, Europe and the UN, covering antisemitism, community relations, shechitah, Israel – and more. The archive is also clearly highly valued, so that it is consistently one of the most popular sections of our website, with around 20,000 hits per month.

To subscribe, visit: www.scojec.org/pad-subscribe.html

We are particularly proud and delighted to have received the congratulations and good wishes from many sections of this widely representative readership:



"The Scottish Government would like to congratulate SCoJeC on the publication of the 2000th issue of the Political

Affairs Digest. The Digest plays an important role in keeping people in Scotland regularly informed of the political activity which is particularly relevant during these rapidly changing times."

Aileen Campbell MSP,
Scottish Government Secretary for
Communities & Local Government



"A great one stop summary for all governmental activity relevant to the Jewish Community."

Marie van der Zyl, President,
Board of Deputies



"An incredibly useful resource. PAD provides a daily summary covering relevant issues, and is a com-

prehensive source of information which has become a go-to for many, the JLC included."

Jonathan Goldstein, Chair,
Jewish Leadership Council



"PAD has long been a staple of CST's public affairs monitoring. Without a doubt it has greatly

contributed to communal political intelligence and know-how during a critical period for our Jewish community, and will continue to do so."

David Delew MBA, Chief Executive, CST



"PAD distills down pages of information into need-to-know facts, and in our fast-moving world that is incredibly valuable."

Danny Stone MBE, Chief Executive,
Antisemitism Policy Trust



"Dozens of e-bulletins land in my in-box, but SCoJeC's PAD is one that I always open and read. At a

glance, I can see everything that's going on in the ever-complex, always changing machinery of Government – it makes me feel much more confidently informed than I would otherwise be."

Tim Robertson, Chief Executive,
Anne Frank Trust UK

STOP PRESS

**SCoJeC's online AGM in June
elected a new Executive:**

Chair: Alan Kay
Vice Chair: Mark Taylor
Hon Treas: Philip Mendelsohn
Hon Sec: Nicola Livingston

**FOR INFO REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC
including communal support, welfare services, and online activities:**

www.scojec.org/lockdown.html

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SCoJeC joins YouTube

SCoJeC has extended our engagement in social media with a new YouTube channel! Our videos are wide-ranging, and include klezmer, talks by authors Nathan Abrams, J David Simons, and Ethel Hofman, presentations to our virtual Jewish Art Club, discussions about antisemitism, and a range of educational material, soon to include a new series of "5-minute Judaism" presentations for use in schools and community groups which are currently under production by SCoJeC's Volunteer Ambassadors.

**See our videos
and subscribe to the channel:
www.youtube.com/c/scojec**

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Representing, connecting, and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

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