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MESSAGE FROM THE First Minister

THE RT HON NICOLA STURGEON MSP

On behalf of the Scottish Government, I send my best wishes to Jewish communities in Scotland and across the world as they prepare to mark Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

I am delighted that celebrations this year will be significantly different to last year. The vaccination programme has allowed us to make progress in easing restrictions. It will enable friends and families to gather in homes and in synagogues once again to celebrate these important occasions in a way we have not seen for some time.

The sacrifices that our faith communities have made over the last 18 months, with restrictions on worship and the ability to gather to celebrate, have been exceptionally challenging. I remain grateful to our Jewish communities for these sacrifices and for the positive way in which you have supported communities across Scotland during these challenging times. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help to protect our health service, help suppress the spread of the virus and support those most in need.

While we are undoubtedly moving with increased optimism towards a brighter year ahead, I know the Jewish Community, like all of Scotland's faith and belief communities, will continue to play an important role as we enter the challenging recovery phase of the pandemic. I look forward to continuing to work with you in building the fairer and more inclusive Scotland we all want.

I hope that the year ahead brings happiness and joy to our Jewish Communities – **SHANAH TOVAH.**

*That speaks
N.S.*



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Scottish Council
of Jewish
Communities

www.SCoJeC.org

REPRESENTING, CONNECTING, AND SUPPORTING
JEWISH PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND



Jewish Manifesto FOR SCOTLAND

In advance of the recent Scottish Parliament elections, SCoJeC, together with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, the Board of Deputies, and the Jewish Leadership Council, compiled a *Jewish Manifesto for Scotland* to inform existing and prospective members of the Scottish Parliament and other public representatives about the concerns of the Scottish Jewish community.

Although there is no single 'Jewish view' on many political issues, there is a great deal of unanimity on many of the issues that directly affect the community, and we sought to represent that consensus in the Manifesto. In particular, the Manifesto is informed by SCoJeC's *Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiries, as well as two more informal surveys that we conducted during the Coronavirus pandemic. These findings show that Jewish people in Scotland, including those who are not religiously observant, value and rely on an infrastructure that is culturally sensitive and faith specific, in which they can feel confident to express their identity in safety, but that their confidence has been badly shaken by recent spikes in antisemitic incidents, especially on social media.

The Manifesto was sent to the candidates from the main parties contesting the elections, and we asked candidates to sign up to the 'Ten Commitments' below. The leaders of the SNP, Conservatives, Labour, and LibDems responded with video messages of support. To read the



Ten Commitments for Scotland

- 1 Promote and enhance community safety**, by working closely with minority communities to oppose all forms of prejudice, hatred, and discrimination; supporting initiatives that foster resilience; and funding appropriate security measures.
- 2 Combat antisemitism in all its forms**, wherever it appears. Adopt, promote, and implement the full International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism.
- 3 Promote good relations, understanding, and cooperation** between all of Scotland's communities, and support interfaith and inter-communal activities and initiatives that promote working together to achieve community cohesion.
- 4 Support efforts to remember, educate about, and understand the Holocaust**, to confront those who seek to deny or downplay it, and strive to prevent any further genocide.
- 5 Promote initiatives that unite communities**; act responsibly when making statements about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; oppose boycotts, and support a two-state solution that affirms Israel's right to peace and security alongside a viable Palestinian state.
- 6 Promote respect for religious observance**, including Kosher and Halal meat, religious clothing, circumcision, and flexible working to accommodate Shabbat and holy day observance.
- 7 Ensure that all public services are fully equipped to provide appropriate support for people of different backgrounds**, including providing religiously and culturally specific services, protecting schools of religious character ethos, and supporting heritage and cultural institutions.
- 8 Recognise that not all communities equate to geographical neighbourhoods**, and that localism can therefore discriminate against minority communities; and promote measures that foster support for communities through a combination of national and local networks and initiatives.
- 9 Assist young people to appreciate the diversity of Scottish society** through accurate, accessible, and age-appropriate materials about diverse faiths and cultures; to enable them to express their identity in their own terms, and to understand and report discrimination.
- 10 Support and include faith communities in relation to welcoming refugees, addressing poverty and other social ills, tackling climate change**, and ensuring a strong legacy following the Glasgow-hosted COP26.



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youtube.com/c/scojec



of antisemitic incidents that would normally be expected during this period. 11 of these incidents were recorded in Scotland.

This Jew-hatred changes over time, but it never disappears. It did not end with the Holocaust, nor with the creation of Israel. This is why CST works in close partnership with shuls, schools, and Jewish organisations throughout the United Kingdom.

The antisemitic reactions to the conflict came in many forms. School children and university students felt it from those they had thought were their friends. Cars bearing Palestinian flags were aggressively driven through Jewish neighbourhoods, including in Glasgow, where in some cases antisemitic abuse was shouted and Jewish people were targeted in the street.

Demonstrations have included Jihadi battle cries against Jews. In the UK in the first 6 months of this year, there has been an almost 50% increase in antisemitic incidents compared to this time last year. In recent months, CST has given numerous reports to the police that have led to arrests and prosecutions for antisemitic behaviour.

This was thanks to information reported to us by Jewish members of the public, as well as our own specialist research work. This side of CST's protection goes largely unseen, whereas our physical security is much more obvious. Both sides of CST's work depend upon you playing your part: the security and the research. So please, keep reporting antisemitism to CST, and keep supporting us in our security work. We will continue to always work in partnership with our communities.

May all of you and your families and friends have a sweet new year.

The Month of Hate

MARK GARDNER CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CST

This Rosh Hashanah, we will hope and pray for a better year ahead, one in which Jewish communities around Scotland are able to lead Jewish lives to the full. The volunteers and staff of CST, the Community Security Trust, will do everything we can to help ensure that antisemitism does not interfere with all our Jewish lives. We do this all year, every year. We do it with your help and cooperation. We thank you.

Earlier this year, many British Jews saw the sad extent to which antisemitism is still a problem. During the recent Israel-Gaza conflict, CST recorded 628 antisemitic hate incidents from 8 May to 7 June 2021, the highest number we have ever recorded in any month-long period, and roughly four times the number

Scottish Jewish Climate Network

As COP26, the international climate conference "uniting the world to tackle climate change", planned for Glasgow this coming November, draws nearer, SCoJeC's Scottish Jewish Climate Network hosted a panel of experts to discuss the position held by Judaism and other faiths on climate change, and how we can actively engage in making a difference.

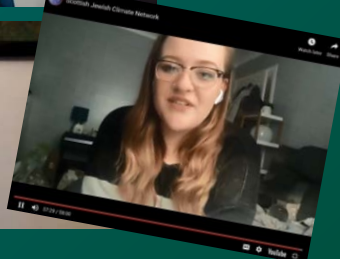
Satya Dunning, Project Officer at Interfaith Glasgow, began by explaining the critical importance of COP26, and how Interfaith Glasgow is engaging with international climate initiatives to work in preparation for the conference.

The manager of Eco-Congregation Scotland, Glasgow City Councillor Stephen Curran, followed with a presentation about how, even during the pandemic, we can actively make a difference as individuals and communities. This is a support network for more than 500 Scottish churches committed to addressing climate change and conservation, that is now extending its work to other faith groups. He went on to highlight current interfaith initiatives, and discussed some of the challenges faced by communities and individuals in their journeys to become more eco-conscious.

Rabbi David Mason and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, both of whom were born in Scotland, continued the discussion. David Mason is Rabbi at Muswell Hill Synagogue and Executive member of the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue, and Jonathan Wittenberg is the Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism UK, and Rabbi at New North London Synagogue. They shared their views on how to prepare for COP26 - by keeping up to date on how to get involved, opening homes to conference participants, and how to take part where possible.

Explaining why faith communities should be making an effort to become more eco aware, Rabbi Wittenberg said that "huge numbers of the earth's population belong to a faith community - it's estimated at about 80%" - and that they should come together to make change. Rabbi Mason also paid tribute to Chief Rabbi Mirvis who has taken a strong and positive lead in supporting the work of Eco Synagogue.

THE PANEL, TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE: RABBI DAVID MASON, COUNCILLOR STEPHEN CURRAN, RABBI JONATHAN WITTENBERG, SATYA DUNNING. CHAIRED BY, FAR RIGHT, KIRSTY ROBSON, SCoJeC PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



Yet Again

Seventy-five years after the world resolved *Never Again*, atrocities are happening again, and SCOJeC joined with *Yet Again* to hear from a panel of experts about the issues facing Uyghur people in China today. The event was chaired by Olivia Marks-Woldman OBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, who commented that “when we think of the ways the Holocaust has resonance today ... perhaps one of the most stark resonances is the persecution of the Uyghur Muslims in China”.

The main speaker was Rahima Mahmut, a Uyghur singer, human rights activist, and translator, who is the UK Project Director of the World Uyghur Congress, and an advisor to the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. Rahima spoke movingly about her own experience and her connections to the community still in Xingjiang. She referred to evidence and witness testimony that had led many to the conclusion that China is committing genocide against the Uyghur people. Inside so-called ‘re-education camps’, which are in many ways reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps, they face starvation, torture, murder, widespread rape, slave labour, forced sterilisation, abortion, and organ harvesting. She said of an ex-Chinese police officer who confirmed many of the details bravely reported by witnesses: “His voice ... I couldn’t get rid of it up until now. I may be the only person who heard his voice not distorted by translation.” She also said the last time she spoke to her brother was in 2017, when he told her to “Leave us in God’s hands and we will leave you in God’s hands.”

Other speakers were Michael Polak, a barrister specialising in human rights and international law and Chair of Lawyers for Uyghur Rights, and Kirsten Oswald, MP for East Renfrewshire, who has frequently spoken out about the plight of the Uyghurs in Westminster, who talked about well-known brands that may have Uyghur slave labour in their supply chains.

SCOJeC’s new Projects and Community Development Manager, Kirsty Robson, who is one of the leaders of *Yet Again* thanked us for highlighting the plight of the Uyghurs, which the Board of Deputies has spoken out about strongly. As Olivia Marks-Woldman concluded, “we’re all driven by empathy ... Knowledge and empathy inspires action”.

Back to Shul!

DAVID STRANG

I became a shul goer very late in life. I had a wartime barmitzvah in South Portland Street shul in the Gorbals. It was 1943, George VI was on the throne, and bombs were dropping a mile away. But in my younger days, shul was a means of not going to school on Yom Tov. On the same principle, during my national service in the Royal Navy, I applied for permission to go to shul on Shabbos. I got away with this until my conscience started to bother me since I was stationed in Lossiemouth (the riviera of the north) and the nearest shul was in Aberdeen some 70 miles away.

Fifty years later I became a regular shul-goer after my mother passed away. I had retired from work and enjoyed the friendship of the regulars.

There isn’t much to say about shul during the pandemic because there wasn’t any – perhaps because it was too difficult to untangle your mask from your tefillin! Then things opened up a bit, and we could apply for one of fifty places allowed on Shabbos. I’ve been lucky enough to get a seat – perhaps they reckoned that at 90 years old it won’t be for long, so they should let me have it.

We’re spaced out so far that we can’t see one another, but by the time the Torah comes out one can hear the gasping of breath from the masked faces. There is no conversation because your nearest congregant is eighteen seats away. It’s not much fun but I’m looking forward to kiddush in a few weeks time when restrictions are lifted – I do miss my Shabbos kichel.

But soon it will be all change again. Over the years, Glasgow shuls have come and gone – mostly gone, due to a shrinking Jewish Community. So what are we left with? One shul in the West End that houses the Archives Centre, a brilliant place to go if you want to learn all about your ancestors, and three in the Southside. Two have just merged but haven’t yet decided which – if either – to operate out of. Will it be a nice peaceful integration? Just wait till the fights over seating start, and someone finds his tallis has been moved to the back row ...

From Mourning to Celebration

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI

As I write, the Jewish calendar feels becalmed between the melancholy of the ‘Three Weeks’ of mourning for the destruction of both the First and Second Temples on the 9th of Av and the frenetic Festival season starting with Rosh haShanah and finishing three weeks later on Simchat Torah. There is an obvious connection – the fast of Tisha b’Av recalls not just the loss of a building but of the services and ceremonies that took place there, of which the most significant was the High Priest’s service of atonement for the entire Jewish nation on Yom Kippur.

There’s another connection too. Less than a week after Tisha b’Av is the minor festival of Tu b’Av, when the Talmud tells us that the young women of Jerusalem would go out in borrowed white dresses – borrowed so that no-one could see who was well-off and who couldn’t afford a dress of her own, so no-one would feel hurt or humiliated by her appearance – hoping to attract a marriage partner by personal qualities alone.

Tu b’Av was the beginning of the grape harvest, which ended on Yom Kippur, and both dates were marked by similar matchmaking. Odd as it might seem today, the Talmud says “there were no happier days in Israel than Tu b’Av and Yom Kippur”. Some people see an analogy between the matchmaking of Tu b’Av and the reconciliation we pray for on Yom Kippur. Others see the contrast between the darkness of Tisha b’Av and the joy of Tu b’Av in terms, as we say at the Pesach Seder, of our collective deliverance “from grief to happiness, from mourning to celebration, from darkness to great light, from captivity to redemption”.

The last year and a half truly have been a time of darkness, captivity, and sadly for many of grief and mourning. Last Rosh haShanah many of us managed to hold services – of a kind! Some on Zoom, some in shifts, some in parallel, pared back to the bare minimum, with limited numbers, sitting apart, wearing masks. This year, as we gradually move to an uneasy ‘new normal’, there is room for positivity, even looking back on this darkest of years.

Many communities will begin the first service of Rosh haShanah with a 13th century prayer that is sadly again very relevant – and so I wish you all: **“May the old year go and take its plagues with it; may the new year begin and bring only blessings!”**

Festival Calendar

Rosh HaShanah	● Mon evening 6 to Wed night 8 Sep
Fast of Gedaliah	● Thu 9 Sep
Kol Nidrei	● Wed evening 15 Sep
Yom Kippur	● Wed evening to Thu night 15-16 Sep
Succot	● Mon evening 20 to Wed night 22 Sep
Chol HaMoed	● Wed night 22 to Mon 27 Sep
Hoshanah Rabbah	● Mon 27 Sept
Shemini Atzeret	● Mon evening 27 to Wed night 29 Sep
Simchat Torah	● Sun night 28 Nov to Mon 6 Dec

OLD SHULS LIVE ON...

Some of the stained glass from the former Netherlee and Clarkston Hebrew Congregation, now displayed in Giffnock Synagogue. SCOJeC is grateful to the Charitable Trust established when the shul closed for support for our events programme.



Representing Jewish Scotland

DANIELLE BETT (FAR RIGHT WITH SCoJEC CHAIR NICOLA LIVINGSTON AND DIRECTOR EPHRAIM BOROWSKI)

After almost three and a half years as the JLC Scotland Manager, it feels strange no longer to be working with the Scottish Jewish community. It's become an integral part of who I am.

I want first and foremost to thank SCoJEC and the Glasgow Jewish Rep Council for embracing me into their team. I so enjoyed working with these representative organisations and am forever in awe of all the incredible work that is done by this community. I am particularly grateful that SCoJEC includes a representative of Israelis living in Scotland on their Council and in their work. Listening to diverse voices in our community is what will shape our future.

In my work with SCoJEC over the past few years, interfaith and cross-communal work is one of the elements I am most proud of. I have seen a community that wants to hear and work with different voices – be it refugees, other religions, LGBTQ people, and more. I am inspired by the amount of reach that SCoJEC has, not only geographically but in terms of diversity, and I hope this continues to grow. We've made progress in interfaith spaces, working with unions, local councils, cross party groups, and with leading non-profit bodies such as the Scottish Refugee Council. There's so much to be proud of and I often feel that bigger communities should learn from us, not vice versa.

Much of our work is focused on fighting antisemitism. It often feels like a never-ending battle, where victories are rarely advertised and losses are front page news. The communal leadership in Scotland fights hard against anti-Jewish racism and ensures our voices are heard. We cannot fight racism alone, and what is particularly inspiring is the work that's done helping other minorities, speaking out against anti-Muslim hate, fighting all forms of racism. There's always more to be done, but I hope that the collaborative approach to working together continues, and despite headlines I truly believe Scotland is a good place to be Jewish.

I'm so grateful to the community for welcoming me into this role and supporting me throughout. I would be remiss not to highlight the hard work and mentorship of Ephraim Borowski. From day one, Ephraim helped me learn about the community, government, parliament beyond. He is someone our political leaders listen to, and he helped me become a credible voice in Scottish politics, and I thank him for being a friend to diverse Jewish people and an ally to those who needed it most.

Working with the Community has been an honour, and I hope you will continue to see me as a friend and ally.



Baking Bread Together & Sharing Shabbat

As part of our commitment to advancing understanding between the Jewish Community and other communities, we joined Interfaith Glasgow to host a cultural exchange with their Weekend Club. This seeks to build bridges with 'new Scots', and tackle the social isolation often experienced by people from refugee backgrounds by helping newcomers to get to know Scotland better, build social connections, and practise speaking English in relaxed settings.

The event was on the theme of baking, and marked the end of Pesach and a return to ordinary bread after a week of only matzah. It focused on the importance of bread in different cultures, and ways in which food can bring people together, by providing an opportunity to swap recipes and discuss different types of bread from their own cultures. Participants also spoke about the food they keep in their store cupboards, and tested their knowledge in a quiz on the theme of bread.

The challah-baking demonstration was an international collaboration – Barb joined us from her temporary home in Italy to show how to mix and knead the dough; then Sharon, in Israel, showed us how to shape three different styles of challah, and finally Margalit, in Scotland, showed the finished loaves.

We then had a demonstration of how to bake Matlooh by Djamila and two of her colleagues from Glasgow's Soul Food Sisters, a team of migrant women who have created a vibrant, female-led collective. They showed how to mix the dough for this traditional Algerian bread, test for consistency, and bake directly on the stove until fluffy and ready to eat.

The event ended with the children using bread to create edible art, while the adults shared their thoughts and reflections. One commented, "It was lovely seeing the various types of bread from different places, and I learned how different cultures have very similar attitudes towards the importance of bread."

Our second event with Interfaith Glasgow's Weekend Club involved crafting activities and quizzes around the theme of rest, with guests from three different faiths discussing what the Sabbath means to them.

Rabbi Rose of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation began by describing the Jewish Shabbat, saying "For many of us, Shabbat means simply being with others and with our communities." He answered questions from the audience about Shabbat meals and services, and how Shabbat is an opportunity for the community to come together.

Noorah Al-Gailani, Curator of Islamic Civilisations at Glasgow Museums, agreed. She spoke about the Muslim perspective of rest, reflecting on her own family from Iraq, on how communities come together, and how worship can take many different forms: "Worship and study can be one and the same thing; a lot of theological study is often done during these times", something many Jewish people would also identify with.

Sister Isabel Smyth, Secretary of the Committee for Interreligious Dialogue for the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference, and a founder of the Scottish Interfaith Council, said people could take 'sabbath moments' throughout the week to ground themselves: "It's not the day itself that is holy, it is the rest. It makes us feel that we are loved."

The speakers then joined in a general discussion led by volunteers from Interfaith Glasgow while other participants shared their favourite restful activities, and their opinions on why resting is important. Rabbi Rose and Noorah both like to read books and sleep when they have some down time, and Sister Isabel said that she goes to a park to read her favourite poetry.

For info about the Weekend Club see Interfaith Glasgow:
<https://interfaithglasgow.org/weekend-club/>

With thanks to the Joint Distribution Committee's
Tikkun in Action fund for their support
of SCoJEC's event programme.

Recipes for challah and matlooh are available at
www.scojec.org/baking-together.html



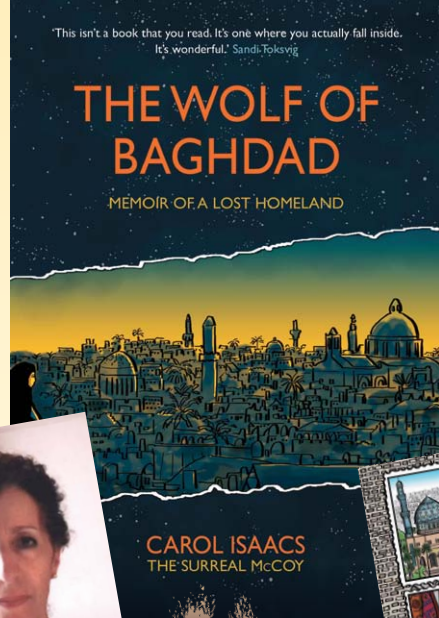
From Auschwitz to Ambleside

Acclaimed children's writer Tom Palmer joined SCoJeC to speak about his most recent book *After the War: From Auschwitz to Ambleside*, which was inspired by the true story of the Windermere Boys, around 300 children liberated from Nazi concentration camps, who were brought to the Lake District to begin new lives.

Tom's book tells the story of three boys, Yossi, Leo, and Mordecai, who arrived in the Lake District in the summer of 1945, after surviving the horrors of the concentration camps. He described how he had researched the subject until he felt confident in sharing the true horrors of their experience, linking in with the Lake District Holocaust Project and framing his writing with their guidance on the best ways to approach this difficult subject. Tom talked to people in the Lake District who remember growing up in the same industrial housing barracks as the children, and his research also took him to Poland and the Netherlands.

Tom commented that while we learn about the Holocaust and the experiences of victims and survivors, we do not often hear about their lives before these terrible events, so young people may not identify with the victims as real people like themselves. To avoid this pitfall, Tom included scenes from the boys' pre-war adolescence. This creates a constant tension for his characters who are unable to escape flashbacks to the concentration camps in spite of their new safe lives in the Lake District.

One participant told us, "The talk by Tom Palmer was extremely interesting and informative. It was good to see how a writer approaches a book like this and I think not only will the book make schoolchildren better understand the events of the Holocaust, but make them think more about the plight of refugees today."



The Wolf of Baghdad

In the 1940s, over a third of Baghdad's population was Jewish but within a decade nearly all of Iraq's 150,000 Jews had fled. Many of those who remained were murdered, but some escaped in the 1970s. It is thought that only three Jewish people remain.

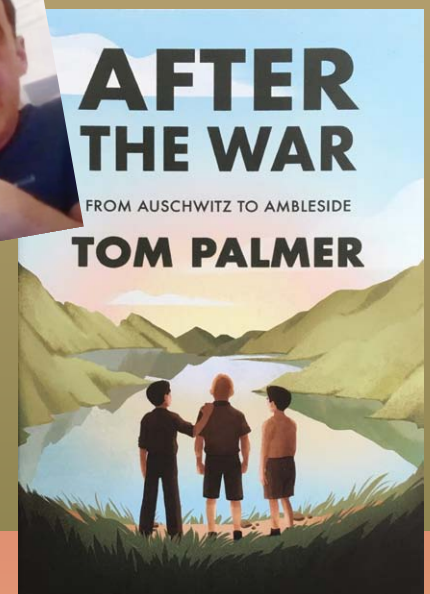
Musician and cartoonist Carol Isaacs joined SCoJeC to talk about her graphic novel, *The Wolf of Baghdad*, which she describes as a memoir of a lost homeland, a wordless narrative by an author homesick for a home she has never visited.

She highlighted the many contributions of the Iraqi Jewish community to art, poetry, and music, and spoke about how she began to use art as a means of connecting with her family history, and her desire to visit Iraq. "There's nothing left of my family in Iraq to see" she told us, "but I'd love to go and just open up a dialogue."

Edwin Shuker, outgoing Vice President of the Board of Deputies, who is an activist on the issue of Jews from Arab countries, thanked Carol for raising awareness about the Iraqi Jewish community, and other participants commented on the importance of keeping traditions alive by sharing information about these lost communities and their culture.



TOM
SHOWING A
PHOTO OF THE TEMPORARY
BARRACKS ON LAKE
WINDERMERE, BUILT FOR
WARTIME AEROPLANE
ENGINEERS, WHERE THE
CHILDREN WERE HOUSED ON
THEIR ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND.



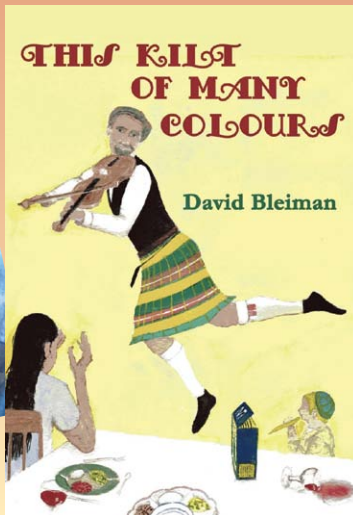
This Kilt of Many Colours

More than a year after SCoJeC hosted the world premiere of David Bleiman's prize-winning Scots-Yiddish macaronic poem, *The Trebbler's Tale*, which won the Scots Language Society Sangschaw prize, we were delighted to welcome him back to discuss his new volume of poems in the same vein, *This Kilt of Many Colours*.

David told us that he took up writing poetry after he retired as a full-time Trade Union official in Edinburgh, and that this short collection is a personal account and celebration of his own heritage and the diversity of modern Scotland in the context of the common human experience of migration and multilingualism. As well as reflecting on his Scottish identity and his Jewish roots, his poems also draw in several generations of his family: his grandparents who emigrated from Vienna to Cape Town (a recording of his grandmother singing Schubert and Strauss in Vienna in 1935 was a memorable contribution to one of our lockdown coffee mornings). We were honoured to welcome his mother to this event, and his son who now lives in Spain contributed another strand to the *mixer-maxter* of a complex multicultural and multilingual identity.

After reading and explaining the thinking behind his poems, David was joined by another Edinburgh poet, Ellen Galford, author of *The Dyke and the Dybbuk* and *The Fires of Bride*, who talked about her experiences of being brought up hearing Yiddish in New York but only learning to speak it in Edinburgh, and both speakers then went on to answer questions from the audience, particularly about what motivates them to write, how people develop emotional ties to languages, and how Scots-Yiddish lends itself to expressing emotion.

You can watch a recording of the event at www.scojec.org/kilt.html





Our well-attended

2021 AGM was opened by Chair Alan Kay thanking Council, staff, and volunteers "for the extraordinary amount of work that they have put in during an extraordinary year". He said the Community as a whole, and SCoJeC in particular, had risen to the challenges of a pandemic that has had huge impact on people's lives and caused huge heartache and distress. More recently an enormous flare-up of violence in Middle-East and a significant rise in antisemitism have intensified communal worry and stress. He commented that the bile and vitriol have been the worst he could remember, and that antisemitism is becoming normalised within British society.

On a more positive note, SCoJeC responded quickly to the pandemic by moving our many events online, and had approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Deputies, which has enabled us to make progress towards appointing a salaried Chief Executive.

Treasurer Philip Mendelsohn presented our formal Annual Report and Accounts, which show a successful year during which we were able to increase our level of activity. However, he expressed concern that future funding is not secure, so it is impossible to predict our position after our current Scottish Government funding ends in September.

Following discussions and a contested election, the following new Office-Bearers were elected:

Chair: Nicola Livingston **Vice Chair:** Gillian Raab
Treasurer: Philip Mendelsohn **Secretary:** Fiona Brodie

A Message from SCoJeC's New Chair:

NICOLA LIVINGSTON

SCoJeC's purpose is to *Represent, Support, and Connect Jewish people in Scotland*, and having been elected as Chair, I am very much looking forward to working with the other Office Bearers, Executive, and Council to take this work forward.

Despite the ups and downs of the global pandemic that have made life hard for everyone, SCoJeC's core work has continued on all fronts. Huge thanks to our Director, Ephraim Borowski and the team of people who have run our community development work – we have managed not only to keep the show on the road, but have significantly increased our reach.

Early on, as the world locked down, it became clear that there was an increasing need for us to develop online activities to help people feel less isolated, and ensure that Government advice and regulations were communicated as widely as possible. As this publication shows, we have succeeded in running an innovative and varied programme, and now, as Covid restrictions ease, plans are in place to develop a variety of hybrid and in-person events. These events are not only fun, and often educational, they also help us make contact with a wide range of Jewish people – those who are unaffiliated, scattered in all 'four corners' of Scotland, as well as those in the settled communities. In turn, this allows us to hear about what aspects of Jewish life are going well, as well as any concerns they may have.

SCoJeC has become established as the single point of contact that speaks on behalf of the Jewish communities in Scotland – geographical and thematic. Meeting people, online or in person, allows us to gather information and represent the diverse range of opinions at the meetings we attend with policy makers and decision takers, and consultations we participate in. This has been especially important during the pandemic, when our Director participated in weekly briefings with officials to ensure that the Scottish Government was aware of the effect of the ever-changing regulations on Jewish people and Jewish religious practice.

I must also acknowledge the progress made by the outgoing Chair, Alan Kay, and Vice Chair, Mark Taylor, towards recruiting the first ever paid CEO for SCoJeC. We are continuing to work with the Board of Deputies on this, and once all the components are in place, I am hopeful that that significant progress will be made.

Looking forward, we are keen to get new people on board, representing the full range of diverse voices across the community. This will help us focus on the interests and concerns of a wider range of people as we (hopefully) move closer to a safe, post-covid world.

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◆ Forthcoming Events:

Look out for our varied programme including an interfaith tree planting, panel discussions on sectarianism in football, and evenings of music and culture.

SEE DETAILS OF WHATS ON

www.scojec.org/events.html

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