



January – February 2020

Late Items

After all the material for this Etrog was assembled we received the following two items.

News about antisemitic attacks in Monsey, New York, and of graffiti desecrating synagogues in London. Our editor has added her response to these events in the [Chanukah section](#).

And finally we have just heard that Woody Zollinger has spent the last few days in the Sick Kids hospital, a place all too familiar to his parents Stewart and Helen. But the good news is that he is responding well to treatment there. Our prayers will go out for his return to Refuah Shlema, the good health he has had recently. You can see him and his [Dad attending Raffi's baby naming](#).

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Shalom**
Edinburgh Liberal
Jewish Community

**Scottish Charity
Number
SC 035678**

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Diary

On your mobile: check the diary on our [web page](#) rather than here.

January 2020			
Fri 3	6:00 pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	Marchmont St. Giles
Fri 10	7:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service	St Marks Unitarian Church
Fri 17	6:00 pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	Marchmont St. Giles
Fri 24	7:00 pm	Supper and Songs	St Marks Unitarian Church
Sat 25	11:00 am	Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon	St Marks Unitarian Church
Sat 25	3:00 pm	Tea and Talmud	St Marks Unitarian Church
Sun 26	2:30 pm	Discussion Group	St Marks Unitarian Church
Fri 31	6:00 pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service	Marchmont St. Giles
February 2020			
Fri 7	7:00 pm	Tu B'Shvat seder	Marchmont St. Giles
Fri 14	7:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service	St Marks Unitarian Church
Sun 16	3:00 pm	Annual General Meeting	St Marks Unitarian Church
Fri 21	6:00 pm	Kabbalat Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Danny Rich, CEO of Liberal Judaism	Marchmont St. Giles
Sat 29	11:00 am	Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Mark Solomon	St Marks Unitarian Church
Sat 29	3:00 pm	Tea and Talmud	St Marks Unitarian Church

Nick's Last Word from the Chair

This is my last Word from the Chair before I step down at this year's AGM in February. For once I've not had to think too hard about what I want to write. It seems appropriate both to reflect on what has happened over the last three years and to look forward to the next number of years – I'm not sure what is an appropriate number, but 'a few' anyway.



The first thing I want to say is that it has been an honour to have served as Chair. I think I've said before that it does involve a fair bit of work, and sometimes it can be a bit hard to reply to e-mails when you really want to watch the football on the TV, or to go out in the middle of winter to represent our community at whatever event happens to be on. However such feelings are more than outweighed by the positive responses I receive, both from within the community and outwith it. I still get a buzz when chatting with members who say things like "aren't we lucky to have a community like ours" and the same applies when visitors say the same thing (they do replace 'we' and 'ours' with 'you' and 'yours' though!). What do I think we have achieved over the last three years? The thing that always comes first to my mind is the relocation from Columcille to St Mark's for our Shabbat and erev Shabbat services. That was done essentially for financial reasons, and while it has certainly been good that we have reduced our costs, we have been welcomed by our hosts and we feel at home at St Mark's, whatever the service or event we are holding.

Much of the rest of the activity over the last three years, I would suggest, has been 'more of the same'. That's not to say things haven't changed – I was really taken by something that Clive Lawton said at the recent Limmud; he said words to the effect that if you want things to stay the same, you've got to actively do something to make sure that is what happens. And I think that's what we have done. We've done things like hold meditative services, had two cheder Head Teachers, established our tu b'shvat seder as an interfaith event and held our fundraising event. I've even established a formal agenda for our Council meetings. None of these is what you might call spectacular, but as I've said before, I'm not sure we want radical change. What I think we have had is evolution within the confines of the Sukkat Shalom ethos.

And that brings me onto what this evolution might look like in the coming years. One of the things I am proud of is having led the move to St Mark's, and trying to reduce our costs and so balance our books. For the first two years I thought we were on track, but this last year it has become apparent that we need to do more. We rely on donations to help meet our costs, and if these go down, we are always going to struggle. I think that our budget, and in particular fundraising, is something that we have to seriously address in the coming years.

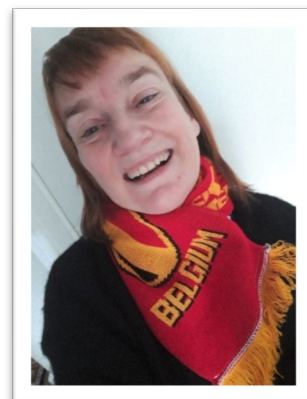
The other area I think we need to consider is general community involvement. I'm usually pretty positive about this and if you look at those involved in all that we do, not just those on Council but also things like running services, running cheder and interfaith involvement, there are a lot of us who do help out. As a percentage of our community, I suspect that we have as high a level of involvement as many if not most other communities. However, I think we need to be mindful that there are a number of us who have been instrumental in helping run our community for a good number of years. It's great that we have such dedicated members, but we need to make sure that we have people coming through to take over at the appropriate time. The fact that we don't have anyone to take over as Chair feels indicative of this point. I have no doubt that we will continue to thrive as a community until such time as someone does stand for this position, but it's not a good sign that no-one has, so far, come forward.

I'd like to conclude by thanking everyone who has been involved in the running of our community over the last three years, and particularly those who have helped me during my time as Chair. But my biggest thanks go to my wife, Kate. The tangible signs that you see are the cakes that Kate bakes for our various meals, but without the help and support that Kate has provided, and which you don't see, I wouldn't have been able to do nearly as much as I have done over the last three years.

Nick Silk

Welcome to new member Stephanie Mitchell

Stephanie made her exodus from Brussels last year, arriving in Edinburgh on 19 April just in time to go straight to the Sukkat Shalom seder. After 17 years in Brussels working in the European Parliament and the European Commission, she moved to Scotland to join the newish (and topical) Scottish Government Directorate for International Trade and Investment in the field of customs and cross border trade.



Stephanie was born in Lytham St Annes, but her family emigrated to the US when she was five, setting a transnational pattern that has characterised her life to date. After graduating from Cornell

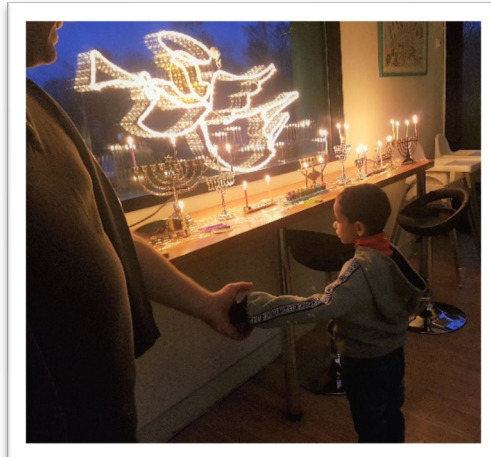
University and Law School in law and Chinese, Stephanie lived for some years in Beijing and Hong Kong, joining the Jewish communities in both cities. Like Sukkat Shalom, her Hong Kong community had no synagogue of its own, meeting in a room in the American Club on the 45th floor of a skyscraper – a far cry from St Mark's. It has been important to Stephanie to be a member of a Jewish community wherever she's lived and she describes these communities as 'roots away from roots'.

Stephanie was an early member of her English language Liberal Jewish community in Brussels where she organised a Rosh Chodesh women's group. (The English Language shul resulted from a split from the French shul – good to know that ancient traditions are being maintained!) Stephanie has very much appreciated the warm and welcoming atmosphere at Sukkat Shalom and was interested to hear about the Jewish Cultural Centre plans, saying that such a potentially 'visible' project would be unthinkable in Belgium. Since the 2014 murder of four people in Brussels at the Jewish Museum of Belgium, Jewish communities there combine a low profile and high security. Stephanie described the armed police, armoured door and airlock at the entrance to her former shul. Stephanie has known Edinburgh since childhood through visits to her aunt and she is now enjoying living here. Her priorities when she arrived were to find a shul, a harp teacher and a cat sitter – all of which she swiftly did. On St Andrew's Day, unable to resist the draw of another language, she downloaded the duolingo Gaelic app. At work, she has joined the Faith and Belief Network and the Race and Equality Network where, at an alternative Burns Night she'll be reading Eishet Chayil – 'A Woman of Valour.' She is also accommodating dual football allegiances with the help of a Scotland/Belgium scarf. We'll just have to take her word for it that it says Scotland at the other end.

Sue Bard

Hanukkah 2020

With Hanukkah falling so late this year, we were not able to share our celebrations with our cheder kids' party (see below) as we usually do.



But some of us got

together on the first night to light our first candles, watched over as usual by the Marchmont St Giles Angel, eat latkes and doughnuts, and play a few dreidl games.

It is a mitzvah to display Hanukkiah at windows at a time of day when they're likely to be seen by passersby. Public displays of Hanukkiah have now become commonplace, even in reticent Britain, though it has also always been acknowledged that 'in times of danger' they may be lit where they are not visible to others. Being visible is not a cause of antisemitism and neither is invisibility a remedy. Let's hope we find the courage to remain visible, open and also challenging in the face of attack.

Our hearts go out to the individuals, families and communities suffering from the appalling antisemitic attacks that have occurred in recent months including during Hanukkah. In Monsey, New York, five people were stabbed in a horrific and avowedly antisemitic attack by a lone assailant on the seventh night of Hanukkah, at a party in the house of a rabbi. Two of those attacked are still in a critical condition in hospital.

This was not an isolated event in this area, home to large numbers of Hasidic and ultra-orthodox Jewish families, and follows the November stabbing of a man in the same neighbourhood on his way to shul. Elsewhere in the US, in Jersey City, New Jersey, five people (including the two assailants) were killed and three wounded at a kosher grocery in a shooting fuelled by both antisemitism and anti-law enforcement beliefs.

Nearer home, on the final night of Hanukkah, Star of David signs and the numbers 9/11 were spray-painted onto South Hampstead Synagogue and nearby shops in the Hampstead and Belsize Park area of North London. The numbers may refer to an antisemitic conspiracy theory that Jews were responsible for the 9/11 terror attack, and/or

is a reference to Kristallnacht, the violent pogrom carried out against Jews throughout Nazi Germany on 9 November 1938, during which the windows of synagogues, Jewish homes, businesses, hospitals and schools were smashed, the buildings ransacked and thousands of Jews dispatched to concentration camps. We can't do better than to quote the words of the statement released by South Hampstead Synagogue:

"As a community, we regret the rise of hate speech in society. Social media is polluted with xenophobia, Islamophobia, homophobia, misogyny, racism and antisemitism. Sadly, these things are connected. This is a time for people of all backgrounds – of all faiths and of none – to stand united and show our determination that we do not tolerate prejudice, hate and division – on our streets or online."

Sunday 26th January Community Quiz

Everybody Welcome!

Come and pit your wits in our Community Quiz. Make up a team of 8 or let us find you a friendly group to join forces with.

Venue: Community Centre 4a Salisbury Road, Sunday 26th January 2020. Note Early Start: 5.00pm

£15 (£8 for Students), light supper and refreshments included. To book your place contact Betsy: brdorfman@yahoo.com or 07913 681 317

News from our cheder

Our youngest class, Kita Aleph, started the term with some challah baking. Children had the opportunity to roll the dough and experiment with making a plaited loaf.



Kita Aleph crafts so far have included making a nameplate in the form of a Sefer Torah breastplate and rolling paper to make a scroll. We have also been learning Heads Shoulders Knees and Toes in Hebrew with the actions, learning how to draw a 7 pointed star while discussing Genesis and having storytelling from Noah and the Flood to the

Lorax, the curious Dr Seuss character who speaks for the trees, written decades ago, yet deforestation is ever present!

Despite not lighting any Chanukiahs as the festival had not yet begun we managed to have a heartwarming get-together; *'we had a great time and the food was amazing'* said one child!



We enjoyed dreidel game and songs, biscuit decorating, a Chanukah maths trick to add up the candles required for the festival and many more delicious delights including latkes laced with apple sauce and other toppings. As the sun set on the cold and windy day, we made Havdalah together with Rabbi Mark leading us.

Rebecca Wober

Holocaust Memorial day 27th January 2020

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2020 marks 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. There will be several events taking place in Edinburgh to commemorate HMD.

Monday 27th January 10 to 10.30am at the war memorial outside the City Chambers, High Street ([link](#))

Official City of Edinburgh Commemoration organised by Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue, with contributions from the Lord Provost and representatives from the Jewish Community.

Tuesday 28th January 10.30 am -12.10pm at Trinity Academy Craighall Ave, Edinburgh EH6 4RT ([map](#))

Edinburgh Interfaith event when pupils will reflect on their visit to Auschwitz organised by the Holocaust Memorial Trust. The main speakers will be Holocaust survivor Janine Webber, and Hassan Hasonvic, a survivor of the Srebrenica genocide. Bios are below.

www.hmd.org.uk/resource/janine-webber/

www.hmd.org.uk/resource/hasan-hasanovic/

Places will be limited: to book, contact info@eifa.org.uk



**HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1**

An Evening with Lejla – Standing Together

Monday 27 January, 6 – 7pm, at the Reference Library, Edinburgh Central Library, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EG

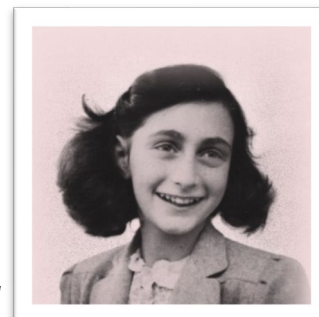
As well as the 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, HMD also commemorates the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia. Lejla, aged 26 and from Manchester, left Bosnia as a baby when she was adopted by two British journalists who had followed her birth mother's tragic story of being held in a concentration camp and raped until she became pregnant. Lejla now works with 'War Child' and regularly speaks at their global conference on ending sexual violence in conflict. Her story has been featured in many news outlets and she uses this to raise awareness around the atrocities of war. Lejla also works with 'Remembering Srebrenica' to organise the annual memorial event to commemorate the Srebrenica massacre, which started on this day in 1995.

To book your place click [here](#). For more information on HMD visit

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

Film Anne Frank: Parallel Stories

Anne Frank would have been 90 on 12 June 2019. On her 13th birthday in 1942, one month before her family went into hiding, she was given a diary that she kept for just over two years before she was deported to Auschwitz and then to Bergen-Belsen where she died. This year, Holocaust Memorial Day is being marked by screenings in many places in Scotland of *Anne Frank : Parallel Stories*, a new film retelling Anne Frank's life. It is guided by actress Helen Mirren, both through the pages of Anne's diary, and through the testimonies of five women who, as young girls, were also deported to concentration camps but survived the Holocaust.



Showings

Edinburgh, Picturehouse Cameo, 6pm 27th January

Edinburgh, Vue Omni, 6:30pm 27th January

Glasgow, Everyman Glasgow, 6.15pm 28th January

Greenock, Waterfront Cinema, 7.45pm 27th January

Dunoon, Studio Cinema Dunoon, 7.45pm 27th January

Stirling, Macrobert Arts Centre, 7.30pm 28th January

Dundee, Dundee Contemporary Arts, 6.15pm 27th January

Perth, Perth Playhouse, 7.30pm 28th January

Aberfeldy, Birks Cinema, 8.15pm 27th January

Miriam's showing at the Royal Scottish Academy: don't miss it!

Congratulations to our own Miriam Vickers, whose painting *Roif, Uig, Isle of Lewis* has been selected by The Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour (RSW) for its Open Annual Exhibition, showing at the Lower Galleries, Royal Scottish Academy, The Mound, Edinburgh from 30th December 2019 – 30th January 2020.

Reflections on Jewish Orthodoxy in Scotland

By Hannah Holtschneider

Published by Edinburgh University Press 2019

The recent launch of Hannah Holtschneider's book ***Jewish Orthodoxy in Scotland: Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches and Religious Leadership*** was a celebration of the multi-faceted joint Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow Project *Jewish Lives, Scottish Spaces – Jewish migration to Scotland 1880-1950* of which this book is part. Phil Alexander (ethnomusicologist and post-doctoral Research Fellow on the project) played music composed by two Jewish cantors who were 1920s



immigrants from Vitebsk to Glasgow and Ellen Galford (writer and poet) read three poems, commissioned for the special issue of SHOFAR, an Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies, on *Narrative Spaces at the Margins of British Jewish Culture*. One of them is printed below. We had a tantalising clip of *Points of Arrival: five short films about Jewish migration to Scotland* and heard the story of *Jewish Edinburgh on Foot*, a walking tour of Edinburgh's Jewish history, devised by four members of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society – the Lit – that Salis Daiches, in his day, addressed annually. (You too can follow *Jewish Edinburgh on Foot*: see notes at the end of this piece.)

Jewish Orthodoxy in Scotland is an academic monograph that unlike many such publications is a fascinating, well written read with the potential for wide appeal. It embodies the spirit of the project of which it's a part both in its location in the broad context of migration history and transnationalism and by the warmth and empathy of the author's biographical approach to her subject matter through the figure of Salis Daiches, who was himself part of the huge wave of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the UK that occurred between 1860 and 1914.

During his ministry in Edinburgh lasting from 1919 until his death in 1945, Salis Daiches managed to unite the very different Jewish communities of established, acculturated British Jews and the recently arrived and much larger numbers of East European immigrants – a situation that characterised most Jewish communities in Britain at that time. Coming from a position of Modern Orthodoxy, he held passionately to the concept of *torah im derech erez* that accommodates the synthesis of torah with the secular world – an approach that he practised and promoted with courage throughout his life.

He was committed to his Edinburgh community but was also a well-known and influential public figure in Scotland (where he was known informally as the Chief Rabbi) and nationally, in the Jewish Orthodox world where, until the 1930s, when other preoccupations took over, arguments raged around the role of the Chief Rabbi vis a vis ‘provincial’ (as they were and continue to be called) congregations. Salis Daiches believed that the centralisation of power and control in London sapped local congregations of vigour and argued persistently, but unsuccessfully for a Scottish Beit Din with real powers.

However, he owes his wider fame to his son, distinguished scholar and literary critic, David Daiches, whose vivid 1957 memoir, *Two Worlds* about his Scottish/Jewish childhood and youth, and the subsequent 1997 edition with its additional section about his father, introduced Salis Daiches to a wider audience. I don’t know whether *Jewish Orthodoxy in Scotland* would or could have been written had *Two Worlds* not existed. In the event, the latter, as well as being a source of information, also became part of its theoretical framework, in that Holtschneider interestingly suggests *Two Worlds* and *Jewish Edinburgh on Foot* as complementary *lieux de memoires* – that is, creators of collective Jewish memories of times and places that have eluded, resisted or been denied memorialisation. Such an approach invites the same active, imaginative engagement from the reader/participant that Holtschneider has employed as a researcher and writer, and it is this that makes the history come alive and relate so strongly to the present.

This book had personal resonance for me. It made me reflect on my own experience of growing up in London, the grandchild of four East European Jewish immigrant grandparents in an extended family all of whom were members of orthodox Federation of Synagogues or United Synagogues. It made me think about my long absence as an adult from any involvement in Jewish communal life and on my return to Judaism through Sukkat Shalom, Edinburgh’s Liberal Jewish Community, leading to thoughts about the similarities between Salis Daiches and Rabbi Israel Isidor Mattuck, the UK’s first Liberal Jewish rabbi. Born within three years and 50 km of each other in the province of Vilna in

Lithuania, both of them managed to accommodate and synthesise exceptional levels of secular and religious scholarship and were not averse to a good argument. Both were people of action and practice, committed to their congregations, embracing their host cultures and with a pioneering commitment to interfaith work. Both opened their own homes to Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe. Both probably contributed to their own relatively early deaths with their ceaseless work. Had they ever met (maybe they did) they would of course have had plenty to disagree about, but I like to think that they'd have listened to each other and that something of their legacy lives on in the work in progress that is the Scottish Jewish Cultural Centre.

Sue Bard

Order the book on a SPECIAL HALF PRICE DISCOUNT with code HH19 from edinburghuniversitypress.com

Get the special issue of SHOFAR *Narrative Spaces at the Margins of British Jewish Culture(s)* at <https://www.eurospanbookstore.com/shofar-37-3.html>

Watch *Points of Arrival: 5 short films about Jewish migration to Scotland* at <http://jewishmigrationtoscotland.is.ed.ac.uk/index.php/outputs/>

Download the walking tour, *Jewish Edinburgh on Foot* at <http://www.curiousedinburgh.org/jewish-history-tour/>

Baby naming for Raffi

On Saturday 23rd November Raffi Cooper was given his Hebrew name (Raphael ben Yonathan v Esther) and grandparents. A warm welcome to Sukkat Shalom for all the family.

We could not resist including this picture of Woody Zollinger with his Dad Stewart who were at the service to welcome Raffi.



Mixed Marriage a poem by Ellen Galford

My half-Irish-Catholic
half Orange Protestant
entirely atheistical
Glaswegian beloved
is deeply allergic to strawberries, cinnamon,
and all forms of theological doctrine.
She never puts her foot into a church
except for weddings, funerals, early music,
and her weekly class in Scottish Country Dancing.

My half-Irish-Catholic
half Orange Protestant
entirely atheistical
Glaswegian beloved
would not let a Hail Mary pass her lips
but is word-perfect in the Yiddish formulae
for deflecting Ayn-Hore , the Evil Eye
and knows, far better than I do,
where to find the candles for my parents' yahrtzeits .

My half-Irish-Catholic
Half Orange Protestant
entirely atheistical
Glaswegian beloved
is always up for a good domestic spat
over the best route to Scottish independence
or whose turn it is to clean the bathroom sink,
and then it's Talmudists versus Jesuits
dancing on heads of pins
and splitting hairs at forty paces
and Heaven only knows which team will win.

Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community

When Rabbi Mark came to visit us towards the end of November, he dedicated part of his sermon to the subject of domestic violence. This was because we had been asked by Jewish Women's Aid to do so to mark the International Day for Eliminating Violence Against Women on 25th November. As Rabbi Mark said during his sermon, domestic violence isn't exclusively committed against women, but it is certainly the most the most prevalent form of domestic abuse.

Since not everyone was at the service, I believe it is important that we highlight this. What is below is a direct copy of the information sent to us by Jewish Women's Aid.

- One in four women will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime
- One in five women will experience sexual violence or abuse in her lifetime
- The Jewish community is no different
- Jewish Women's Aid is here to help

If you are affected by domestic violence or abuse, or sexual violence or assault, Jewish Women's Aid is here to help you. We will give you free and completely confidential specialised support, advocacy and advice. Go to www.jwa.org.uk or contact Jewish Women's Aid at

- Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 801 0500 and clientsupport@jwa.org.uk
- Sexual Violence Support Line: 0808 801 0656 and dina@jwa.org.uk

Nick Silk

A Meal of Many Faiths

Miriam Vickers represented Sukkat Shalom at a lively and tasty Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group meal celebrating Scottish Interfaith Week and attended by more than 30 women of different faiths.



Jewish Care Scotland

Did you know JCS have a Community Team?

If you are looking for advice or information about what services and support are out there JCS's Community Workers are at the end of the phone. Vicki is our Community Worker for Edinburgh and is available to offer information, advice and support about a range of issues. We aim to make sure everyone has access to services most suited to their needs and provide personalised support through the process. Speak to Vicki (right) on 0141 620 1800



If you want to find out more about the Community Team and our work please get in touch with Lynsey, our Community Team Manager on the phone number above or at lynseya@jcarescot.org.uk

(Jewish Care Scotland Office Hours are Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm)

Ottolenghi, eat your heart out!

It was an unusual dining-out experience to be wandering round a deserted industrial estate in Leith on a dark, rainy and windswept November night looking for our Syrian supper and then to stumble on it in the 'Flavour and Haver Cook School' - an oasis of light, warmth, friendliness and delicious cooking smells. The Cook School, which was opened by Prue Leith in 2018, is one of many projects run by the charity Cyrenians whose main aim is 'delivering sustainable solutions for homelessness'. The Syrian Supper Club raises funds for the Cook School and at the same time gives employment to two Syrian refugees.

When we arrived, husband and wife, Qays and Noura, were putting the finishing touches to what can only be called our banquet. They arrived in Scotland from Syria two years ago under the UK Government's Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme. In Syria, Kays was an accountant and Noura a primary school teacher, but here, they are putting their cookery skills to work. On this occasion, we were the beneficiaries, sitting down to bite-sized, melt in the mouth cheese pies; maqluba, a spectacular layered rice and vegetable dish; fattah (toasted flatbread) with roasted vegetables; smokily seductive

babganoush, tabbouleh laden with herbs; hummus just as it should be; rich red beetroot salad and to finish, flaky walnut baclava.



Some people in our group expressed an interest in volunteering at the Cook School. If you want to find out more, you can contact Pam Timms: PamelaTimms@cyrenians.scot To find out more about the Cyrenians and the extensive work they do, go to their website www.cyrenians.scot. Noura and Kays also run cookery workshops on request, where you can learn to make these amazing dishes. A group of eight would be needed. If you're interested, get in touch through contact@eljic.org

Sue Bard

The Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum:

A Beacon of Hope for Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

In October 2019, I had the privilege and honour of addressing nearly 100 academics, government leaders, media and others at the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum conference and the inaugural meeting of the Honorary Board of Advisors for this organisation. In addition to delivering the keynote speech I was also appointed as an honorary Vice Chair of the Advisory Board of the Museum. I used this opportunity to promote a future partnership between the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum and the new Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre.



During my speech I described the revered Chinese consul general in Vienna, Austria as a righteous individual because he went against official orders and processed and approved over 10,000 visas to enable Jews to escape from Nazi persecution and find refuge in Shanghai in 1938. Ho Feng – Shan is recorded, along with 20,000 others in the

Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, as a righteous person. He is one of only two Chinese persons to be recognized in this memorial.

In 1938 in Evian, France, the League of Nations convened a meeting with 32 countries attending. Regrettably, none of the countries agreed to open their borders to receive Jewish refugees. Only the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica along with Shanghai, China agreed to welcome the Jews. Because the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica were too far to travel for refuge, most of the Jewish people sought refuge in Shanghai, which was more accessible by rail or boat. They were immediately accepted, welcomed and treated with respect by the Chinese people.

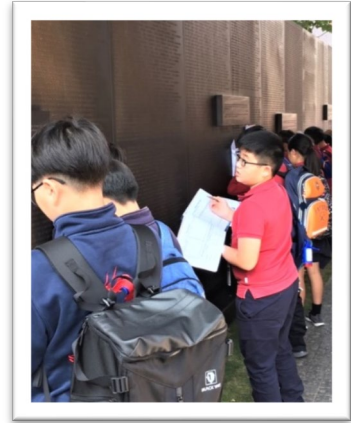
When I asked the director of the museum, over lunch, why the Jews were so admired he said that the Chinese had read about the Jewish people and saw them as hard working, good business leaders, skilled professionals in medicine, law, accounting and other fields and most of all they were people who were honourable, honest and ethical. Therefore, the Chinese people were very pleased indeed to welcome them to Shanghai. When the Japanese invaded China, a Jewish ghetto was created and still the Jewish people continued to work and assimilate with the Chinese people until the end of the war. Eventually, most of the Jewish refugees relocated to America or Israel and only a few remained behind to tell their story to others in Shanghai and the rest, as has happened to Jews many times, took their stories with them.



In 2007, the Shanghai government approved funding for transforming the former site of the Ohel Moshe synagogue into a Jewish Refugee Museum to tell the story of these brave and courageous people and their generous hosts, the Shanghai people. The small but impeccably curated museum tells their story eloquently from the efforts of Ho Feng – Shan

to their individual life stories in Shanghai and beyond. In 2020, the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum will expand to five times its current size. The purpose of this expansion is to tell the story of the Jews and their Chinese hosts in an even deeper and more meaningful manner through more oral histories and state of the art technology.

Whilst touring the museum, I noted that there were dozens of school children reading the names of the 13,000 refugees on the memorial wall and also a group of adult men who were followers of Islam and wished to learn more about the Jewish people. The blending of these two groups at the historic crossroads of the museum filled me with awe for the potential opportunities for this organisation to promote tolerance, peace and acceptance, one guest at a time. In 2019 over 100,000 people visited the museum from America, Israel, Europe and China.



In my role as Vice Chair of Edinburgh Jewish Dialogue I plan to promote the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum in Europe and North America and also seek ways for the new Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre to find ways to collaborate with our Chinese museum colleagues to bring future exhibitions to Edinburgh. To find out more about the Museum visit [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Jewish_Refugees_Museum)

Joe Goldblatt

Sukkat Shalom Contacts

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