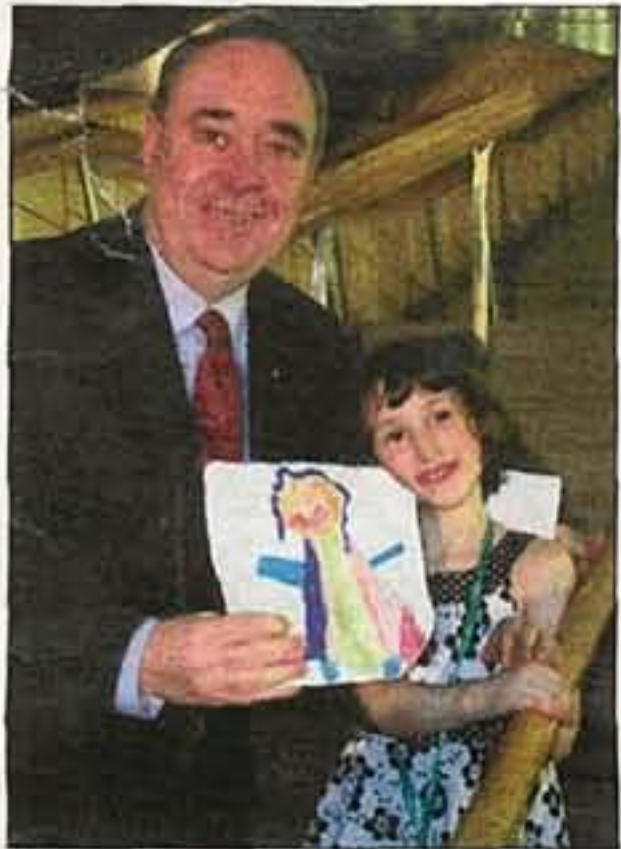


NEW YORKER JUDAH PUTS SCOTTISH COMMUNITY IN THE PICTURE

Jewish photo exhibition launched in Parliament



MUTUAL ADMIRATION: Eilie Berlow-Jackson presents First Minister Alex Salmond with a painting



FROM FAR AND WIDE: Hilary Franklin, from Yell in the far north of Scotland, with SCoJeC projects and outreach manager Fiona Frank



ENJOYING THEMSELVES: From left, Paul Slater, Carole Lovatt, Honorary Consul of Israel in Scotland Stanley Lovatt, Mark Cohen, Doreen Cohen and Rochelle Pinder



IN THE PICTURE: First Minister Alex Salmond admires one of the photographs

BY SHARON MAIL

A NEW photographic exhibition on Scottish Jewish life proved to be a vote winner when it was launched on Tuesday night.

The exhibition, 'Scots Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future', was unveiled at the Scottish Parliament Garden Lobby.

The project was the brainchild of producer Michael Mail while the photographs were the work of award-winning international photojournalist Judah Passow.

The project was part-funded by Creative Scotland and backed by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities. It was also sponsored by a number of individual donors.

The launch was hosted by former Culture Minister Linda Fabiani MSP.

Among those present were First Minister Alex Salmond, MSPs, Honorary Consul of Israel in Scotland Stanley Lovatt, various faith religious leaders and communal representatives.

Local band Klezmer performed.

Glasgow-born Mr Mail, who now lives in London, obtained a law degree from Strathclyde University before studying at

The Jewish story of integration

the Hebrew University and obtaining a Masters Degree in Jewish Studies from Brandeis University, Massachusetts.

He is currently development director at the British Friends of the Hebrew University. He is also the author of two novels.

Michael told the *Jewish Telegraph*: "My experience in America and Israel was that people didn't know that there was a big Jewish community in Scotland.

"I wanted to do something about that, partly as a reflection of the fact that the community was in decline, but doing its best to hold itself together.

"In 2012, I saw examples of Judah's work and realised that he had the artistry, skill and sensitivity to capture the community.

"Judah has done just that and created a memorable piece of work. There's a real feeling of it being physically in Scotland and Judah has very effectively shown a sense of place. He goes beyond simple reportage and conveys shapes and representations.

"It was also our intention to have the photos published and we are delighted that Blooms-



UNANIMOUS VOTE OF APPROVAL: From left: SCoJeC director Ephraim Borowski and chairman Hilary Rifkind, First Minister Alex Salmond, exhibition photographer Judah Passow and producer Michael Mail and launch sponsor Linda Fabiani MSP

bury will be producing a fine arts book for this autumn."

American-born Judah, who now lives in London, is a multi-award winning press photographer for his coverage of the Middle East conflict. He is also a frequent lecturer in photojournalism at British Universities.

While undertaking 'No Place Like Home', a year-long study of all facets of the British Jewish community, which opened in 2012, Judah spent two weeks in Scotland.

Judah said: "One of the reasons I was so keen to do this project was the experience I had on 'No Place Like Home'. Out of the whole project, the time spent in Glasgow was the most informative.

"I was completely knocked out by it. It wasn't like any other community I visited. When Michael contacted me, I knew that there would be plenty of material to work with.

"The exhibition is being showcased here at the Parliament for a week and will tour Scotland. It is also going to the prestigious Weill Gallery in New York as part of the city's Scotland Week in April.

"It's where I grew up, so I am really looking forward to that."

Before officially launching the exhibition, the First Minister was presented with a painting by Eilie Berlow-Jackson from Glasgow, whose family features in the photographs.

Mr Salmond, who spoke of his pride that there has never been any antisemitic legislation in Scotland, said: "The Jewish story of integration without assimilation is evident in the photos I've seen.

"Among them are the making of haggis by Doreen Cohen — I've never tasted kosher haggis."

Doreen, who was present, responded by promising to make some for him.

Mr Salmond continued: "There's a sheep farmer in Loch Gilphead tending her flock. The

exhibition is a tribute to the skill of Judah as a photographer.

"I'm glad that the project has been supported by Creative Scotland and SCoJeC and it is fitting that it is on display in the Scottish Parliament first."

Mr Mail said: "Judah's photos are bold, intimate and evocative, each containing a creative drama that draws the viewer in. It's a diverse community and I hope the images challenge some stereotypes and confirm some others."

SCoJeC director Ephraim Borowski said: "I spend a great deal of time at this building, representing the interests of the Jewish people in Scotland.

"Through our Being Jewish in Scotland project, we gained an incredible insight into what 300 people across Scotland said was important to them.

"We recently held a Chanukah party in Inverness which, remarkably, was attended by 30 people. That and the rest of the work we are doing is with the assistance of the Scottish Government and above all, we are grateful for their support."

Commenting afterwards on the exhibition, Linda Fabiani said: "I absolutely love it and look forward to having a longer look when it is in New York. I'm very surprised by the wide range of subjects."

The most northerly subject of the exhibition is Hilary Franklin, who said: "Judah visited me on the island of Yell, where I've lived for eight years. He spent most of the day with us and I am happy to be included in it."

Cameron Buchanan MSP commented: "I've really enjoyed the exhibition, which is excellent and enjoyed the music of the klezmer band. It's lovely to see such a rich mix of people here."

Jamie McGrigor MSP added: "It's so nice to see such a big gathering of people here in the Parliament. It feels like a family evening."