

UJC - OPENING HIGHLIGHTS AUTUMN TERM 2009



Birmingham & West Midlands

Mix Your Own Drinks Party - in informal social at our home during Birmingham Freshers Week attended by 80+ students both old and new.

Yom Kippur - student Minchah and Neilah service followed by Breakfast organised in conjunction with JSoc and attended by more than 120 students.

Simchat Torah - our Student Hakofot and buffet supper held this year for the first time in a specially erected marquee in the garden of Birmingham Hillel House attracted about 300 very merry students.

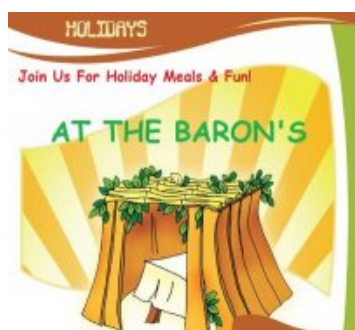
Coventry University - through the University's Chaplaincy I organised a Bagel lunch. This was the first Jewish event at Coventry University for over 10 years. It was attended by 6 members of the newly formed J-Soc as well as a number of Jewish members of staff plus chaplains and other members of staff of the University.

Hospitality - 200 for Shabbat and Yom Tov meals, plus 120 for the 2 events that took place at home (1st night Succot Oneg and Mix Your Own Drinks Party).

Bristol

Freshers BBQ - we hosted a Fresher's BBQ in our Sukkah. It was a great opportunity for new students to meet other students at Bristol Uni. The event was very successful and we had many students hanging out till late at night. We also had students from other campuses such as UWE attended this event. Towards the end of the evening we held a raffle for a digital camera which got lots of students coming. Over 25 students came to the graduation BBQ, which was appealing to a wide range of students.

We held several holiday meals at our house and in our sukkah during the busy High Holiday season.



We also advertised Simchat Torah dancing where students gathered at our local synagogue for hakofot, dancing and a great Kiddush meal.

Mezuzah making workshop - on October 13th we ran one of a series of creative Judaism workshops focused on hands-on experience with Jewish living. Students painted their own ceramic mezuzahs which were then sent out for glazing. They will receive them shortly and be able to put them up around campus at the doorpost to their halls and flats. We also had a discussion on the purpose and significance of a Mezuzah together with some delicious pizza. We also featured a short video clip on how to place a mezuzah on the doorpost and gave handouts with information on this.

Time Out - we began a new series of discussions during lunch time this term. Students join us for some delicious Pizza & Falafel every Monday from 1-2pm at the Ark & Dove where we will delve into intriguing subjects of interest. Every other week we will have an open forum (questions and discussions) on whatever subject students are interested in.

Cambridge

We had 31 people crammed in the Succah first night sukkot, the schach blew off during Shabbat so the 25 people for Sunday lunch ate indoors. There were 140 at Jsoc on first Friday night 'massive'.



One of the orthodox students lives at the end of the road where the shul is, and rang me demanding to know how he could make an eiruv out of the whole road so he could carry to shul!

We had a BBQ last night and around 50 people attended and it seemed like everyone had a great time.

Leeds

We had a great first night in our Succah – lovely atmosphere and about 20 students – the succah was beautifully decorated. On Sunday afternoon there was meant to be a succah crawl (but most succot had collapsed due to the weather) instead we organized a visit to the city hospital to visit the Jewish patients – followed by minchah and a really great one on one learning programme.

Unity in the Hut – despite the “challenging” weather we were miraculously able to Host Unity in a Hut. The Leeds University Christian Chaplaincy, the executive office at the University Unions and the Leeds Jsoc committee were invited. We served hot soup, bagels and salad. The event was great success, bringing together different people. It gave the chaplains and the union exec officers a real insight to the Jewish Festival of Succot. The theme for Succot is personal and national unity and I spoke about this. The event generated friendship and understanding. This is the first time we have done this event and in the future we intend to invite other religious groups.



Dear Alan,

Thank you so very much for your hospitality this lunchtime. I find able fellowship is frequently the best form of communication. So thank you to you and your household (and GOD) for the opportunity to feast!

Shalom.

Cecil

Revd Cecil White

Universities Chaplaincy in Leeds

We had a great Shmini Atzeres/Simchas Torah in Hyde Park. We hosted 25 girls on Friday night for the Neshai Chayil meal, and 30 guys for the Chatanim meal (which we managed to have in our succah!).

On Simchat Torah night – there were 100-150 in Hillel – great atmosphere and mix of students and on Simchat Torah day we have over 70 for lunch.

London

The highlights so far has been fresher fares in London almost every day for three weeks!! On one of the days, we had fares on 5 different campuses.

Approx 80 students turned up for sukkah oneg staying till well after 1am. Managed to get around 44 students at one time into our 12 X 10 foot sukkah. Invited guest speaker, who spoke at the early our of 11:15pm to students in dining room (as everyone couldn't get into sukkah!).



Nottingham

Our Breaking the fast with Ben & Jerry's was very popular, when it got to the ice cream the students were so full from soup, garlic bread, lasagne, pizza and salad (as well as chocolate brownies and biscuits that were waiting as soon as the students walked through the door) that they didn't have very much appetite left for ice cream. Don't worry it didn't go to waste! Food is for the body what prayers are for the soul-what a way to end the day!

Our Succot party advertised as 'Friday night Festive Feast,' is definitely a highlight not just this term but from all the time we have been in Nottingham. We hoped it would be our biggest Friday night yet not quite envisioning we would end up with 120 people!

We had enough food down to the last bowl of chicken soup, it really was a miracle especially as we can't buy kosher chickens in Nottingham and didn't get them until Thursday.

Yochanan did four rounds of Kiddish and Hamotzi in our Succah, some people ate in the Succah and the rest in a marquee or as we referred to it a tent like Avraham Avinus-especially as it was the first night of Succot and he was the first Ushpizin.

We had very positive feedback including someone being overheard saying 'I love being Jewish!'

Our Simchat Torah party definitely had Simcha at the scene with lots of singing and dancing...not to mention alcohol. It really united everyone and was thoroughly enjoyed-well most people have fragmented recollections!

Oxford

Over sukkot we had about 40 people total in our sukkah.

One of the highlights for me has been our involvement with Brookes so far. We had a large number of students come to us for their first Friday night and also enjoyed hosting a BBQ at Brookes's campus. Brookes students are coming regularly to events at Oxford. We are also having a weekly Lunch and Learn.

Last week was the first Friday night at Oxford 107 students came to the OJC for dinner. We hosted 30 students for Simchat Torah Day and the dancing and hakafot was very hamish. Some of the more unique contacts that we have had with students have been through one on one interactions and getting to know students who wouldn't otherwise attend JSOC events.

All and all we're excited about the term!

Scotland & the North-East

It has been a very hectic few weeks, for example, last week I flew from London to Aberdeen, flying from there to Newcastle, going from Newcastle to Glasgow, then to Edinburgh then back to London within 48 hours.

So far things have gone well; we had a Rosh Hashanah meal for 40 in Edinburgh and also had BBQs in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Also, See article for Jewish Telegraph below:

CHAPLAINCY WILL BE FAMILY AFFAIR

RABBI Garry Wayland is hoping to get to know as many students as possible as he begins his role as northern region Jewish students' chaplain.

Rabbi Wayland said: "I've already been to all the Scottish campuses and I am going to Durham next week.

"As a former Durham J-Soc chairman, it will be like a bit of a homecoming for me when I go there. I've found each campus to be unique in its own way. I've met some wonderful students and started building connections with the J-Socs."

Asked if he felt daunted as his region stretches from Aberdeen to Durham, he said: "Every job has its own challenges and all the chaplains face different ones. I viewed the geography as one of mine, but it was something I was aware of in advance.

"I will be working with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities to try and help get the students and communities to get involved and interact with each other, which would be mutually beneficial."

The chaplain and his wife, Suzanne, who are both from Essex, will be kept busy.

Rabbi Wayland added: "We're very much going to be doing the job as a family.

"My wife has been very proactive in Jewish education and Outreach work. We will have an open house and are looking forward to welcoming students from near and far into our home. Once we get settled in, we'd like visit other J-Socs as a family."

On the subject of more isolated students, the chaplain said: "My job is to support the students, but not to take any particular stance as far as issues on Israel are concerned.

"Most Jewish students are not readily proactive in promoting Israel in a time of peace. Where there are problems, I will try and make sure that they don't feel threatened and vulnerable and support them where necessary.

"It's important that it doesn't affect them on a day-to-day basis — it can be very uncomfortable feeling that people are against you and actively doing something about it."

With the new session started, the J-Socs are already busy running events. St Andrews has nearly 200 members on its database and recently had 60 people attending a Friday night dinner.

Dundee shul members went to St Andrews for neilah and the society is holding regular events. Durham University J-Soc enjoyed a highly successful inaugural Simchat Torah fresher and re-fresher barbecue.

The burgeoning society managed to attract around 50 people, including 35 freshers.



COVERING THE TERRITORY: New northern region student chaplain Rabbi Garry Wayland