

PRESS RELEASE



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Emancipation Day launch strengthens links between Scotland and Jamaica

A number of Jamaican athletes as well as the Jamaican Minister of Tourism, Hon Wykeham McNeill and the Jamaican High Commissioner, Mrs Aloun Assamba were present at the launch of Flag Up Scotland Jamaica on August 1st, Jamaica's Emancipation Day. The event was hosted at the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce where a full house of guests were welcomed by the President of the Chamber Mr Vic Emery. The meeting was chaired by Sir Geoff Palmer who is a Jamaican professor at Heriot-Watt University.

Project Director David Pott mentioned that Jamaica is the nation outside Scotland with the highest percentage of people with Scottish surnames and that there are many Scottish place names in Jamaica. The first Scots in Jamaica were prisoners of war who would have worked alongside Africans in the sugar plantations, but later Scots themselves were involved as plantation owners, overseers and in other trades related to the slave economy.

A more positive link was the participation of Glasgow born Rev William McGhie who assisted with the design of the Jamaican flag by including the saltire. William McGhie's son John spoke about his father and explained the circumstances of his father's involvement in the flag design.

Flag Up Scotland Jamaica is already in the process of encouraging links between schools in the two nations. In the light of both consanguinity and Jamaica's significant contribution to the growth of the Scottish economy during the Industrial Revolution, the project will campaign for Jamaica to gain the status of a Priority Country for the Scottish Government alongside USA, Canada and China.



In a Jamaican response to the launch of the project, the Minister of Tourism highlighted his Scottish name and welcomed the possibilities of closer links between the nations. The High Commissioner (left) alluded to the exploitative features of Scotland's engagement with Jamaica in the past but invited businesses in Scotland to come and do business to benefit both nations.

In a response from the Scottish perspective, Margaret Curran, MP for Glasgow East said, "It is important that we celebrate the link between our two countries. I was fascinated to learn of the link with Eastbank Academy in the East End of Glasgow and hope that this connection will continue to flourish"

There followed a rendition in patois of Robert Burns famous poem *Tam O'Shanter* by Graham Campbell, a Jamaican community activist in Glasgow, followed by the song "All is not Lost" from folk singer Yvonne Lyon which can be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_sWX2Rn-io

The event concluded with David Pott pinning a Flag Up Scotland badge on the Minister of Tourism's lapel (right) and with everyone sharing in the Flag Up Scotland Jamaica declaration of intent which is added below.



FLAG UP SCOTLAND JAMAICA DECLARATION

All: We come together as people from Scotland and Jamaica recognising the links between our two nations and desiring to foster a closer relationship at this significant time in our histories.

We unite under these two flags which have the same St Andrew's Cross. As a Scotsman partnered with Jamaicans to create the Jamaican flag, we stand in partnership to create a new future for both our nations.

We will seek to foster relationships through giving and receiving hospitality.

We will seek to forge bonds between communities and institutions in our two nations, such as by twinning schools from places that share the same name.

We will seek ways to foster business links to increase prosperity in both nations.

We will consult and work together to repair the damage created by slavery and its legacies.

Scottish: Jamaica, Land we Love, may you flourish!

Jamaicans: Scotland the Brave, may you flourish!



Members of the Jamaican Commonwealth Games team and Scottish folk singer Yvonne Lyon celebrate the launch with the flags.

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For more information on Flag Up Scotland Jamaica visit:
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Photos by Fiona Anderson and Yvonne Lyon