



# **Jewish Country Houses**

## **Objects, Networks, People**

Report of Activities: 2019

## Funding

Activities during the 2018-19 academic year were funded by a University of Oxford Knowledge-Exchange Fellowship (and 2 KEF extensions) held by Prof. Abigail Green in partnership with the National Trust and the AEPJ.

In addition, the Centre des Monuments Nationaux made a generous contribution to towards the costs of hosting a conference at Villa Kerylos in May 2019.

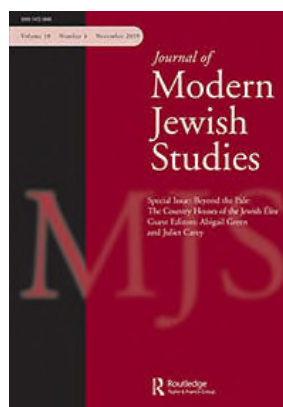
Supplementary funding was awarded to:

- the Gottlieb Leitner heritage trail developed in partnership with J-Trails (KE Seed Fund)
- the 'Strawberry Hill after Walpole' exhibition project, developed in partnership with Strawberry Hill House (Heritage Seed Fund)
- H el ene Binet Photography project in partnership with Urkultur (Brasenose College Research Fund, Creative Industries Seed Fund, Business Engagement and Partnerships Seed Fund).

All this has enabled us to maintain momentum during the gap between applying for AHRC funding (August 2018) and the start date of the AHRC grant (October 2019). Going forward, the structure of reports will relate more closely to the structure of the AHRC grant, but activities in 2018-19 were more diffuse, and the structure of this report will reflect that.

## Publications

**Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, Special issue (November 2019)**  
eds Abigail Green, David Rechter and Juliet Carey



It is great to have a publication to herald the launch of this AHRC project, with contributions by AG/JC, TS and Oliver Cox. Many thanks are due to David Rechter for his tireless work in bringing this special issue into print.

### **Jewish Country Houses: the Lure of the Land**

An illustrated book proposal was submitted to publishers in September. National Trust Cultural Publishing would like to be involved in publishing the book and discussions are ongoing.

# Conferences



## 'The Jewish Country House II' (May 2019, Villa Kerylos)

This international workshop was hosted by the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, and organised by AG, SD and TS in partnership with Bernard le Magoarou and Jenny Lebard.

There were 30 participants in total, including members of the JCH core group and steering committee, 5 scholars from France and the US, and a further 16 heritage professionals.

This event was the centrepiece of our activities in 2018-19. It served:

- to set the intellectual agenda for the project through presentations on its 3 key core dimensions: Houses (JC); Collecting Strand (SD and TS); Politics and Philanthropy Strand (JG and AG), and through a French panel which allowed us to forge new connections, notably with Cyril Grange (CNRS, now a member of the advisory committee) and Henri Lavagne (Insitut de France, contributing to the JCH volume).

- to launch the pan-European network, website and heritage route we are developing with the AEPJ, and to consult with properties about what this should look like (through a dedicated workshop session, see Appendix 2).
- to build on the achievements of The JCH I by extending the range and depth of our network in the UK (Trent Park); within France, through collaboration with the CMN, involvement of the Musée Nissim de Camondo; and throughout Europe, with presentations by representatives of the Chateau de Seneffe (Belgium), Villa Montesca (Italy), Villa Varda (Italy), Villas Stiassni and Tugendhat (Czech Republic).
- to showcase achievements within the NT so far, through presentations highlighting new curatorial directions (Hughenden), new research (Upton), and volunteer training (Marcus Roberts).
- to reinforce connections to European Jewish heritage organisations and practitioners, notably the Jewish Museum Berlin, urKultur, and the AEPJ.

### ***For more details see Conference Programme (Appendix 1)***

The workshop was widely felt to be a huge success, underlining the importance of involving European partners as hosts and stakeholders in the project: for this reason, we have accepted offers to hold events in partnership with the Musée Nissim de Camondo, Villa Montesca and the National Heritage Institute (Czech Republic) going forward.

We are grateful to Hannah Kershaw and Claire Philips for the vital administrative support they provided.

## Jewish Stories and the National Heritage, Polesden Lacey (December 2019)



Erno Goldfinger playing with his daughter in the house at 2 Willow Rd that he designed. ©National Trust Images.

This workshop was the first event organised as part of the collecting strand and aimed to explore the range of different Jewish stories found across heritage sites in Britain and Europe. The workshop was free and all 50 spaces were taken; 26 of the attendees were NT employees, including national specialists and staff from other core NT properties who were not presenting (Hughenden, Monk's House, Upton). The other 24 attendees were made up of academics (7, including the core group) and heritage professionals (11) including representatives from non-NT properties with a Jewish dimension (Strawberry Hill, Bletchley Park), Jewish heritage practitioners (Willesden Cemetery House of Life project) and two curators from the National Gallery.

The event was sponsored by the National Trust and brought NT staff into conversation with curators working outside the NT framework. It served:

- to identify new collaborators within the NT who might contribute to future events or were working on properties with Jewish stories: these included the Birmingham back-to-backs, 2 Willow Road and several properties with complex histories of antisemitism and/or Nazi contacts during the 1930s (Polesden Lacey, Mount Stuart, Ormesby Hall)
- to encourage and mentor research by NT staff in this area. Here the contributions from properties like Polesden, Willow Road and Ormesby Hall, as well as the curator for the South-West, were particularly welcome. Perhaps it is unsurprising that the most detailed feedback we have comes from the properties with challenging histories. Victoria Bevan (Polesden) wrote to thank the organisers for “giving us all the impetus to think more deeply about our Jewish stories. It was a really thought-provoking and interesting day for me, particularly the keynote speech.” Neil Watt (Mount Stuart) likewise admitted it was the first time he had been asked to think about the Londonderry family in this way, but that it was important that “Mount Stuart illustrated its commitment to exploring all of our multifaceted histories.”
- to re-conceptualise the place of Jewish histories and their inter-connections within the national heritage. Here, the presence of participants from beyond the NT was particularly valuable. Particular highlights were (1) the keynote lecture by Professor David Feldman (Birkbeck), which addressed the urgent issue of antisemitism and heritage, demonstrating the deep roots of anxieties about Jewish wealth and influence within British political life, and providing an important context for understanding Jewish investments in cultural philanthropy and patterns of assimilation. (2) the presentation by Hester Abrams on Willesden cemetery. As Jonathan Wallis (Ormesby Hall) commented, “this seminar has opened my eyes to a host of possible stories and connections which may lie just under the surface”. For him, a key insight was the recognition that how “we talk about Jewish History is important within today’s society”.

The day concluded with a tour of Polesden Lacey by Victoria Bevan, pointing out those aspects of the interiors overseen by the Jewish designers Charles Mèwes and Arthur Davis. Overall, the workshop succeeded in raising awareness of the project within the NT- especially at a time when we think ahead to the forthcoming workshops in 2020- and allowed us to find new connections with heritage partners.

Some of these presentations will hopefully feed into the two workshops in Paris and London this year, and we are planning a group visit to Willesden cemetery. Marcus Roberts will likely continue to work with the Back-to-Backs, and other useful connections were made.

We are grateful to Hannah Kershaw and Briony Truscott for their help in organising and managing the day, and to the staff at Polesden for hosting us.

***For more details see Polesden Programme (Appendix 4); workshop evaluation (Appendix 5)***

## AHRC Collecting Strand events

TS, SD and BT have begun working with the NT, the Musée Camondo, the V&A and the CMN to organise these events, which will be a key focus for activity in 2020.



## National Trust Partnership

Collaboration continued apace during 2019.

- A meeting at Mottisfont brought together members of the JCH team with relevant NT curators, house managers

and members of the national research team. The transformative impact of volunteer training (by Marcus Roberts) and UK Jewish Heritage Day participation on the level of engagement within individual properties was very exciting to see.

- Further volunteer training, with a site-specific session at Mottisfont Abbey, and a further session at Osterley open to NT staff nationally, with a particular focus on the theme of Jewish collecting. This attracted additional participation from Gunnersbury Park (beyond the NT), and allowed us to identify some new Jewish stories, notably in the Birmingham back-to-backs.
- Ongoing NT participation in the UK Jewish Heritage Days/European Days of Jewish Culture in September 2020, which also featured the Salomons Estate, Townhill Park House, the V&A and Worth Park. NT properties are committed to ongoing participation for the duration of the grant.
- Further relevant properties identified: (i) Lindisfarne Castle (Sir Edward de Stein) (ii) Clandon Park with (now largely destroyed) collections of Jewish interest formed by Hannah Gubbay and Lady Swaythling. In addition, the workshop at Polesden Lacey has drawn attention to the existence of several properties with difficult, Nazi-sympathising histories during the 1930s: a subject not directly relevant to our project, but one we hope the NT will continue to explore.
- NT participation at the workshops held at Villa Kerylos and Polesden Lacy prompted new research by NT staff into the Jewish stories attached to NT places. It was great to support research in French archives conducted by Dr. Celia Hughes of Upton (into the Bearsteds'

riviera villa). We are keen to involve Dr. Hughes in future events.

- AG, SD and TS presented the JCH project to the NT plenary conference, which visited Upton House in September 2019. This has proved an excellent way of generating greater interest in the project among senior NT curators. Going forward we hope that Sally-Anne Huxtable's presence on the steering committee will strengthen this interest.



## Strawberry Hill House Partnership

The focus of the partnership this year has been developing the concept for a major exhibition on the history of the house after Walpole, including its Jewish owners.

This is now scheduled for 2022 with the working title "Three Ladies of Strawberry Hill". Silvia Davoli began work on this project with the support of the Oxford Heritage Seed Fund and continued to develop it until the start of the AHRC project, when the project was finally approved by the Trustees. A part-time secondment will enable her to continue to progress the project, and write the catalogue.

There is some possibility of collaboration with the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire of Geneva (MAH), which has informally agreed to lend to the exhibition a considerable number of outstanding works of art that once belonged to Geraldine Stern, Lady Michelham, one of the exhibition's heroines.



## AEPJ Partnership

Assumpció Hosta, Chairman and Founder of the AEPJ, attended the Kerylos Workshop. Waddesdon Manor have now formally joined the AEPJ, and will serve as a link between the AEPJ and the JCH Project. Kim Hallett, Director of Tours and Marketing at WM, attended the AEPJ Incubator at Bucharest in October 2019, and made useful contacts there. Our **Palaces, Villas and Country Houses** route is one of 3 thematic routes, and impresses because of its broad appeal and well-developed offer. There may also be potential for cross-fertilisation with national routes like *Visit Jewish Italy*.

The AEPJ are now developing a new website as part of the redeveloped, Council of Europe accredited Jewish Cultural Route. The website is being designed with the needs of the JCH project in mind. Briony Truscott, our project administrator, has begun to gather material from Phase 1 Properties (i.e. NT Properties, Salomons Estate, Strawberry Hill House, the Château de Seneffe, the Musée Nissim de Camondo, the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, Villa Stiassni, Villa Tugendhat, Villa Varda.) The message of this route will be broadly as follows:

*"All over Europe, palaces, villas and country houses with Jewish stories illuminate the transformative impact of Jewish emancipation on modern European politics, society and culture. Many have extraordinary art collections and gardens. Some were stages for lavish entertaining, others provided inspiration to the European avant garde. All were beloved homes that bear witness to the triumphs - and tragedy - of the Jewish past. Discover some of the most spectacular, intriguing and beautiful."*



WADDESDON

## Waddesdon Manor Partnership

Juliet Carey, Senior Curator at Waddesdon, is a member of the core project team and also co-editor of the book, 'The Lure of the Land', so has been very closely involved in all aspects of the project. Waddesdon staff also attended the conference at Villa Kerylos in May (see above), and have been involved in several of the NT workshops.

As stated above, Waddesdon has joined the AEPJ to act as the representative for the project, and Kim Hallett attended the incubator in Bucharest, which she found very interesting and useful in terms of making contacts, and ideas for the creation of joint marketing opportunities across the network.

The project is also bearing fruit directly on the ground for visitors in very encouraging ways. Discussions have taken place with Marcus Roberts about creating a specific tour for Jewish audiences for Waddesdon. We have run monthly Jewish Heritage tours of the house for the public, led by our Guides, exploring Waddesdon's Jewish history, and plan to continue these in future. In April we organised a 'Matza Hike', coinciding with the festival, using the new Waddesdon Greenway walking path, with free Manor grounds admission for participants as a means of raising awareness and encouraging engagement, and we plan to continue this kind of event, which is usually marketed through social media and the website.

We have also been working on the project to digitise Baron Ferdinand's writings, which forms part of the grant, and will be one of the key research resources. In December we hosted a visit from Florian

Medici, a partner from the Chateau de Seneffe to demonstrate some of the digital resources he has been developing there.

During the year, and thanks to an initiative from Lord Rothschild, one of the rooms in the Manor which explores Waddesdon's Jewish context was re-displayed and re-titled 'The James and Dorothy de Rothschild Room' as a means of emphasising the family's contribution to the history of the State of Israel and its role in Jewish philanthropy, which has helped to illuminate this aspect of Waddesdon's story for visitors. We have also been involved in preliminary discussions about involvement in the 2021 Year of Jewish Archives, which is being supported by the Rothschild Foundation (Europe) and we hope that there will be possibilities for collaboration through this with the project. Finally, Waddesdon is also participating in the H el ene Binet photography project.

## UK Partnerships

We have continued to build connections with JCH museums beyond the NT, notably Bletchley Park (represented at Polesden Lacey), Gunnersbury Park (represented at Osterley and Polesden Lacey), and Trent Park (represented at Kerylos). We are also collaborating with the Salomons Estate, which will be a focus for research by AG and TS; AG has begun to support Salomons in attempts to reactivate the online catalogue and digital archive created by an earlier AHRC project. Salomons and Townhill Park House both participated in the Jewish heritage days this year.

We have also begun to support the work of a number of local/grassroots heritage initiatives:

- Worth Park: TS has facilitated the research of Elizabeth Steven into the history of Worth Park, and the copy of Louisa de Rothschild's dress being made by the Worth Park Historic Costume

Group will be completed in time for the opening of the new Visitor Centre (04/2020). The Visitor Centre participated in the UK Jewish Heritage Days, with very positive feedback.

- Woking/ Everydaymuslim: a heritage trail focusing on Gottlieb Leitner and the Shah Jahan Mosque at Woking, bringing together important new research by SD and MR, has facilitated collaboration with Tharik Hussain, who developed Britain's first Muslim Heritage Trails at Woking. SD, AG and MR attended the official launch of the Muslim Heritage Trails, and Tharik presented his project alongside JC and MR at a conference on 'Religious Heritage in a Diverse Europe' at the University of Groningen, in a panel the organiser found inspirational. MR also presented his work on Leitner to a packed session at Limmud, in 12/2019.

- National Heritage Institute (Czech Republic): Villa Stiassni has undertaken to host our final heritage event, and will find additional funding to cover accommodation and catering. The Institute is also a sponsor of the Hélène Binet photography project.
- urKultur, international arts consultancy: AG and JC are now collaborating with Ruth Ur of urKultur to commission a new body of work by prize-winning architectural photographer Hélène Binet. This project has attracted significant seed funding within Oxford, as well as sponsorship from individual properties, including the Montefiore Endowment. AG and RU are now exploring the possibility of pioneering museum animations around JCH stories, with seed-funding applications pending.
- Villa Montesca: have offered to host an event, and we hope to confirm this very shortly.

## European Partnerships

The Kerylos workshop has inaugurated a number of closer collaborations with heritage partners in continental Europe.

- Berlin Jewish Museum: we are keen to pursue closer collaboration, but this awaits the arrival of the new director.
- Château de Senefte: Assistant Curator Florian Medici attended the December 2019 event at Polesden Lacey, and presented his innovative animations also to staff at Waddesdon Manor.
- Musée Nissim de Camondo: acting as co-host for our June 2020 conference. This will allow us to refresh our ties with the CMN, where there have been changes of personnel.





# The Jewish Country House II:

## La Grande bourgeoisie juive à la campagne – réseaux, familles, patrimoine

Programme Day 1

Monday, 13 May 2019

Villa Kérylos, Rue Gustave Eiffel, 06310 Beaulieu-sur-Mer

9:00 – 19:30

9:00 Registration/ Coffee and Tea

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9:30 Welcome

**Bernard Le Magoarou** Centre des Monuments Nationaux previous director of Villa Kerylos and **Jenny Lebard** Centre des Monuments Nationaux

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9:45 “Jewish” Country Houses – Objects, Networks, People

*Chair: Claire Pascolini-Campbell, The National Trust*

**Juliet Carey**, Waddesdon Manor: “Jewish country houses in Britain and Europe”

**Abigail Green**, University of Oxford, **Jaclyn Granick**, Cardiff University: “The International Jewish Aristocracy: Politics, Family Ties, and Philanthropy”

**Tom Stammers**, University of Durham, and **Silvia Davoli**, Strawberry Hill House: “European collecting culture and the Jewish country house”

Commentator: **Eliyahu Stern**, Yale University

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11:30 Tour of Villa Kerylos

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12:30 Lunch

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14:00 La Grande bourgeoisie juive à la campagne en France

**Cyril Grange**, CNRS, “Christian Lazard, châtelain, notable local et exploitant agricole à La Queue les Yvelines (1925-1942)”.

**Henri Lavagne**, Membre de l’Institut, “La Villa Kerylos de Théodore Reinach: villa grecque ou villa du fondateur de l’Union libérale Israélite?”.

**Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy**, Université de Lille, “La bourgeoisie juive sur la Riviera”.



Commentator: **Leora Auslander**, University of Chicago.

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**15:45 Break**

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**16.00 Assumpció Hosta**, AEPJ, European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage, “Presentation of the European Days of Jewish Culture and the European Routes of Jewish Heritage”

**16.10 Fabrizio Boldrini**,-Franchetti Hallgarten Foundation, “Villa Montesca: why a Jewish residence in Città di Castello, Centre of Italy”

**16.20-**

**16.40 Q&A**

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**Dinner**

**19.00 Carole Weisweiler**, her life at Villa Santo Sospir

**19.30 Dinner at Villa Kerylos**

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## Programme Day 2

Tuesday, 14 May 2019

Villa Kérylos, Rue Gustave Eiffel, 06310 Beaulieu-sur-Mer

9:00 – 16:00

### 9:00 Heritage

*Chair: Oliver Cox, University of Oxford*

#### Historic Jewish Houses

**Silvia Piovesana**, Villa Varda, Italy

**Sylvie Legrand-Rossi**, Musée Camondo, France: “Le musée Nissim de Camondo ou la ‘reconstruction d’une demeure artistique du XVIIIe siècle’”

**Celia Hughes**, Upton House, UK “Upton House and the Bearsted’s Riviera villa”

**Florian Medici**, Château de Seneffe, Belgium: “Patrimoine et intimité. La famille Philippson au Château de Seneffe (1909-1952)”

**Petr Svoboda**, Villa Stiassni, Czech Republic: “Jewish Villas in Czechoslovakia, exemplified by the Villa Tuendhat and Stissini in Brno, Czech Rep”

#### Sharing best practices

**Robert Bandy**, Hughenden Manor, National Trust: “Working with Disraeli, Hughenden and a Jewish Heritage”.

**Marcus Roberts**, J-Trails: “Communicating Our Research to the Public”.

**Ruth Ur**, UrKultur: “Wannsee Train Station: A gateway to German history”

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11:00 **Departure visit to villa Ephrussi de Rothschild**

11:30 **Guided Tour of Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild**

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12:30 **Lunch**

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14:15 **Jewish Country Houses: Next Steps**

*Chair: Oliver Cox, University of Oxford*

14.15 **Abigail Green & Tom Stammers** introduce the AHRC project

14.25 **Pippa Shirley**, Waddesdon Manor, talks about Waddesdon Manor’s role in the network



**14.35 Oliver Cox** summarize the key dimensions of AEPJ

**14.45-15.45**

**We will break up into small groups of 7 (see list of the groups and division of the participants at the end of the program) and discuss the following questions:**

- How might this research project help in the telling of Jewish stories about/in historic houses?
- What would you like the network to do? How then would the AEPJ website support these activities?
- What are the other possibilities for European collaboration a) between heritage professionals and academics b) across national borders?

**Each group should develop an individual response after each question which will be discussed collectively**

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**15.45 Final remarks and conclusion**

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#### **Other Participants:**

Armelle Baudel, Centre des Monuments Nationaux  
Helen Fry, Trent Park Museum Trust  
Aubrey Pomerance, Jewish Museum, Berlin  
Daniel Spanke, Villa Liebermann, Wannsee  
Alice Legé, Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens / Università degli Studi di Milano  
Rachel Jacobs, Waddesdon Manor  
Bruno Henry Rousseau, Villa Rothschild Ephrussi

#### **Discussion Groups for the Final Session**

(1) Silvia Davoli, Sylvie Legrand-Rossi, Henri Lavagne, Claire Pascolini-Campbell, Pauline Prévost-Marcilhacy (Rapporteur for the group), Bernard Le Magoarou

(2) Tom Stammers, Jenny Lebard (Rapp), Bruno Henry Rousseau, Leora Auslander, Assumpcio Hosta, Florian Medici.

(3) Juliet Carey, Petr Svoboda, Celia Hughes, Marcus Roberts, Elli Stern, Aubrey Pomerance (Rapp)

(4) Abigail Green, Pippa Shirley (Rapp), Ruth Ur, Silvia P, Helen Fry

(5) Jaclyn Granick, Cyril Grange, Rachel Jacobs (Rapp), Alice Legé, Rob Bandy, Armelle Baudel, Daniel Spanke