

# Jewish Country Houses

## A Resource Pack for UK Heritage Professionals



Arts and  
Humanities  
Research Council

'Jewish Country Houses: Objects, Networks, People' is a research project led by the University of Oxford and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council



# Resources

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# Jewish Country Houses in the UK



## Project partners and National Trust properties



**Hughenden Manor**  
(Benjamin Disraeli)

**Ightham Mote**  
(Frieda Cohen)

**Lindisfarne Castle**  
(Edward de Stein)

**Monks House**  
(Leonard Woolf)

**Nymans** (*above left*)  
(Ludwig Messels, Messels family)



**Strawberry Hill House**  
(Lady Waldegrave, Stern family)

**Upton House** (*left*)  
(Lord and Lady Bearstead)

**Waddesdon Manor**  
(Ferdinand de Rothschild, Rothschild family)

# The 'best of the rest' Jewish Country Houses (UK)



## Bletchley Park

(Herbert Samuel Leon MP, code-breaking)

Sir Samuel Leon MP was a liberal politician and a committed Rationalist – a typically Jewish combination, more common in continental Europe. He is buried at Willesden Jewish Cemetery, and members of the Leon family continued to marry into families like the Raphaels and Montefiores over several generations.

<https://bletchleypark.org.uk/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert\\_Leon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Leon)



## East Cliff Lodge and the Montefiore Synagogue and Mausoleum, Ramsgate

(Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore, international Jewish leaders)

Montefiore was a stockbroker and financier who made his fortune during the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath, facilitated by his friendship with his brother-in-law Nathan Rothschild. East Cliff Lodge, his country house in Ramsgate, was remodelled after his death, and served as home to several generations of the Sebag-Montefiore family. The Gatehouse and Italianate glasshouses (which predate the Crystal Palace) still survive, as do the remarkable Montefiore Synagogue and the Mausoleum in which Sir Moses and his wife Judith are buried.



Sir Moses was the lay leader of Anglo-Jewry for over 50 years and the preeminent Jewish figure of the 19th century: an international Jewish leader who met and negotiated with rulers like Tsar Nicholas I and the Sultan of Morocco. His wife Judith accompanied him on all his foreign missions until her death, and helped to publicise his activities through her pioneering travel writing. By his death at the age of 100, Sir Moses was celebrated both as a globally active humanitarian and, in the Jewish world, as an icon of emancipation and religious observance (quite an unusual combination). He is best known now as the 'founder' of modern Jerusalem, and his attachment to the Holy Land is explicitly evoked at Ramsgate by the Mausoleum, which is modelled on the Tomb of Rachel – a site restored by Sir Moses at Judith's request. Sir Moses' commitment to higher Torah learning was perpetuated in the Lady Judith Montefiore Theological College, which he established in his wife's memory. While the college itself is no more, the Montefiore Kollel has been revived in London by the Montefiore Endowment, where it continues to promote Sir Moses' distinctive vision of Jewish observance in a quintessentially English key.

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

<https://italianateglasshouse.co.uk/>

<http://www.jtrails.org.uk/trails/ramsgate/places-of-interest>



## Highclere Castle

(Almina Wombwell, 5<sup>th</sup> Countess of Carnarvon).

Almina was believed to be the illegitimate daughter of Alfred de Rothschild, a member of the French branch of the Jewish banking dynasty. As his heiress she secured entry into the most exclusive social circles – into which she eventually married.

<https://www.highclerecastle.co.uk/>

<https://forward.com/culture/190898/the-secret-jewish-history-of-downton-abbey/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/sep/15/lady-almina-downton-carnarvon-review>



## Highdown Gardens

(Sir Frederick and Lady Alice Stern)

A scion of the international banking family, Stern was a philanthropist and passionate horticulturalist, who left his famous gardens to Worthing, where they are still open to the public. Alice was a popular society hostess, and Frederick collaborated closely with other enthusiastic country house gardeners like the Messels and the Rothschilds.

<http://highdowngardens.co.uk/>



## Houghton Hall

(Sybil Sassoon, heiress)



The Sassoons were a Baghdadi Jewish family. Sibyl did not convert, but led her children to think that she had done so. Her money renewed this famous house.

<https://www.houghtonhall.com/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houghton\\_Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houghton_Hall)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sybil\\_Cholmondeley,\\_Marchioness\\_of\\_Cholmondeley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sybil_Cholmondeley,_Marchioness_of_Cholmondeley)



## Port Lympne

(Sir Philip Sassoon, liberal MP, art-collector and social host)

As a young man, he was one of only 25 Jewish undergraduates at Oxford, but was still invited to join the Bullingdon Club. The word most commonly used by Sassoon's contemporaries to describe him was 'oriental', an exotic stereotype he embraced here. But this should be set against his other country house at Trent Park, which had a very different character (see below).

<https://www.aspinallfoundation.org/port-lympne/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port\\_Lympne\\_Mansion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Lympne_Mansion)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_Sassoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Sassoon)



## Salomons Estate

(David Salmons MP, first Jewish Lord Mayor; David Lionel Goldsmid-Stern-Salomons, inventor)

The property includes a small museum, curated by Vera Salomons, the last surviving member of this family, which speaks powerfully to the Salomons' Jewish commitments: it includes religious vestments from a private prayer room, a piece of the 'wailing wall' given to David Salomons by the artist David Roberts, and a signed photograph of Sir Moses Montefiore, a close relative. The early garages and Scientific Theatre remind us that Jewish country house owners were often at the forefront of technological innovation.



<https://www.salomons-estate.com/about-us/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Salomons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Salomons)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Lionel\\_Goldsmid-Stern-Salomons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lionel_Goldsmid-Stern-Salomons)



## Stokesay Court

(Sir Philip Montefiore Magnus-Allcroft)

Born into a distinguished and active Jewish family, he was the author of several popular but well-researched biographies and gained national recognition for his work on Gladstone. After his church marriage into the Allcroft family in 1943, his habits became that of an Anglican squire.

<https://stokesaycourt.com/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/13/garden/13atonement.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_Magnus-Allcroft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Magnus-Allcroft)



## Townhill Park House

(Lord Swaythling, Montagu family)

The Swaythlings were leading Jewish financiers and liberal politicians. Samuel Montagu, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Swaythling, a liberal politician and MP for the East End was a strictly observant Jew who founded the Orthodox Federation of Synagogues to cater for the influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the 1880s and 1890s. His son, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Swaythling, was also a President of the Federation of Synagogues. He used to serve his shooting guests kosher pheasant – and send their less kosher hunting spoils home with them when they left. Townhill was not the only Jewish country house in this area; Samuel Montagu owned nearby South Stoneham House too.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Townhill\\_Park\\_House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Townhill_Park_House)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Montagu,\\_2nd\\_Baron\\_Swaythling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Montagu,_2nd_Baron_Swaythling)



## Trent Park

(Philip Sassoon, politician; Jewish listeners of World War II)



Trent Park was the quintessential English country house of the interwar era – its classic English style in striking contrast to Sassoon’s other property at Port Lympne.

<http://trentparkmuseum.org.uk/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trent\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trent_Park)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_Sassoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Sassoon)



## Worth Park (Sir Francis Abraham Montefiore, Communal leader and Zionist)

This grand property belonged to successive generations of the Montefiore family, and was repeatedly rebuilt. Abraham Montefiore originally purchased a timber framed farmhouse at Park Farm, Worth, c1816, which was inherited by his eldest son Joseph Mayer Montefiore in 1824. The farm was held in trust by his mother, Henrietta Rothschild until Joseph reached the age of majority in 1837. On January 11th 1847, the now much extended farmhouse suffered a devastating fire that destroyed the whole property and its contents. A new brick Worth Park House was built between 1850 - 1856 on the footprint of the old house. In 1880 Joseph Mayer Montefiore died leaving his estate to his widow, Henrietta Sichel. Between 1882 -1886 she had the old house demolished and a new house in the Italianate style built. In June 1888 the betrothal was announced between Henrietta’s son, Sir Francis Montefiore, and Marianne von Gutmann, daughter of a Viennese iron baron. They were married at her home in Baden, but the marriage failed after only a year. Sir Francis died childless.

The Worth Park History Society are engaged in researching the history of this little-known property and a Visitor Centre is in the making. The Pulham Gardens were recently restored with HLF funding. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzeZiinIrbE> for a video of the restored gardens.

# The 'best of the rest' Jewish Country Houses (Europe)



## Belgium

**Château de Seneffe** (Franz Philippson, German born businessman, very active in international Jewish philanthropy, advised the Belgian government on post-war reconstruction in the 1920s)

<https://chateaudeseneffe.be/fr>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château\\_de\\_Seneffe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_de_Seneffe)

**Museum van Buuren** (David and Alice van Buuren, private banker and his wife whose art deco villa was conceived as a total work of art.)

<https://www.museumvanbuuren.be/en/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum\\_David\\_and\\_Alice\\_van\\_Buuren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_David_and_Alice_van_Buuren)



## Czech Republic

**Villa Stiassni** (Alfred Stiassni and family, industrialist – textiles)

<https://www.vila-stiassni.cz/en>

**Villa Tugendhat** (Fritz Tugendhat and family, industrialist – textiles)

<http://www.tugendhat.eu/en/>



## France

**Chateau de Champs** (Louis Cahen d'Anvers, banker, and family)

<http://www.chateau-champs-sur-marne.fr/en/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau\\_de\\_Champs-sur-Marne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Champs-sur-Marne)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Cahen\\_d%27Anvers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Cahen_d%27Anvers)

**Villa Kerylos** (Theodore Reinach, archaeologist and politician)

<http://www.villakerylos.fr/en/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa\\_Kerylos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_Kerylos)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9odore\\_Reinach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9odore_Reinach)

**Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild** (Beatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild, heiress, banker's wife, collector)

<http://www.villa-ephrussi.com/en>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa\\_Ephrussi\\_de\\_Rothschild](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_Ephrussi_de_Rothschild)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%A9atrice\\_Ephrussi\\_de\\_Rothschild](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%A9atrice_Ephrussi_de_Rothschild)





## Germany

**Schloss Freienwalde** (Walter Rathenau, Foreign Minister, aesthete and businessman)

<http://www.schloss-freienwalde.de/>

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schloss\\_Freienwalde](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schloss_Freienwalde)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walther\\_Rathenau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walther_Rathenau)

**Villa Liebermann** (Max Liebermann, painter, a relative of Rathenau's)

<http://www.liebermann-villa.de/start.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liebermann\\_Villa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liebermann_Villa)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max\\_Liebermann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Liebermann)



## Italy

**Castello di Torre Alfina** (Edoardo Cahen d'Anvers, banker)

<http://www.castellotorrealfina.com/home/>

**Villa Montesca** (Leopoldo Franchetti, publicist politician & Alice Hallgarten Franchetti, educationalist)

<http://www.montesca.eu/en/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopoldo\\_Franchetti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopoldo_Franchetti)

<http://www.enciclopediadelledonne.it/biografie/alice-hallgarten-franchetti/>

**Villa Pignatelli** (Carl Mayer von Rothschild, banker)

<http://www.polomusealecampania.beniculturali.it/index.php/il-museo-pignatelli>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa\\_Pignatelli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_Pignatelli)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_Mayer\\_von\\_Rothschild](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Mayer_von_Rothschild)

**Castello Sonnino** (Sidney Sonnino, liberal politician, Prime Minister)

<http://www.castellosonnino.it/>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castello\\_Sonnino](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castello_Sonnino)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Sonnino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Sonnino)

**Villa Ottolenghi** (currently for sale, fascinating piece of Italian fascist architecture)

<https://kateblackwoodrealestate.com/Villa-Ottolenghi-Aqui-Terme>

## Timeline – Anglo-Jewish history in context

1656	Readmission of Jews to Britain
1753	Jew Bill
1781-3	Joseph II creates a new framework for Jewish life in the Habsburg Empire. Toleration patents issued in the Habsburg Empire, extended religious freedom to Jews (but with limitations, and regional variations)
1782	The Berlin Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) is in full swing. Publication of <i>Divre Shalom ve-emet</i> (Words of Peace and Truth) by Naphtali Herz Wessely, a disciple of the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. The tract aimed to encourage Central European Jewry to accept this development. Meanwhile, Jewish salonnières like Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin are the epicentre of social and cultural life in the Prussian capital.
1789	The French Revolution begins
1790/1	Emancipation of the Jews of France by the National Assembly, followed by other countries under French influence
1798	Nathan Rothschild moves to England, where he founds the British branch of the international Jewish banking dynasty.
1806	The Prussian defeat at Jena marked the beginning of the end for the era of Jewish salonnières like Rahel Levin, as German nationalism and Prussian High Society acquire explicitly anti-Jewish dimensions.
1815	Congress of Vienna. Jewish emancipation is overturned with the defeat of Napoleon and the return of the old order. Italian Jews return to the Ghettos, but things are not quite as they were. German Jews lobby to maintain their rights in Vienna, but in practice this does not happen. In England, Nathan Rothschild seizes the moment and makes his fortune in the upheavals of the final Napoleonic years.
1819	Hep Hep riots in Germany. The first pogroms come as a shock to Jews.
1826	University College London established by Goldsmid, Rothschild in collaboration with other dissenters.
1827	Tsar Nicholas I introduces conscription for Jews (25 years of military service).
1827	Moses Montefiore makes the first of 7 pilgrimages to Jerusalem.
1828	Repeal of the Test & Corporation act
1829	Catholic Emancipation
1830	Revolutions across Europe.
1832	The Great Reform Act is a step back for Jews as it includes a requirement that MPs swear an oath on the Old and New Testaments.

- 1830s Jewish emancipation is rejected several times in the Lords, but accepted in the Commons.
- 1835 David Salomons (Salomons Estate) becomes the first Jewish Sheriff of the City of London
- 1835 The Board of Deputies of British Jews is given a formal constitution and revived as a communal institution to strengthen the campaign for Jewish emancipation.
- 1837 Queen Victoria knights Moses Montefiore – then a Sheriff of the City of London – when she attends a grand City dinner to mark her accession to the throne. He is not the first, but she is aware it is unusual.
- 1839 Montefiore makes his 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Palestine, with money to relieve Jewish victims of the earthquake in the Galilee. He meets with Mehmed Ali of Egypt and seeks to rent land for Jewish settlement there. The initiative is welcomed by Christian Zionists like Lord Shaftesbury.
- 1840 The Damascus Affair. Sir Moses Montefiore, President of the Board of Deputies, and Adolphe Crémieux, President of the French Consistoire Israélite, travel to Egypt to intervene on behalf of Jews in Damascus falsely accused of ritual murder by the French Consul with the support of local Ottoman officials. The incident becomes a major international cause célèbre. Montefiore and Crémieux eventually obtain the release of surviving Jewish prisoners. Montefiore travels to Constantinople, meets the Sultan, and obtains a document that appears (to British readers) to represent the emancipation of Ottoman Jews, although in reality it merely confirms their protection under sharia law.
- 1840 West London Synagogue of British Jews – a Reform synagogue - is established mostly by members of the Goldsmid, Mocatta and Montefiore families. Sir Moses will never speak to his brother Horatio again, and a bitter divide opens up within the Anglo-Jewish community. Yet the WLS is much less theologically radical than some currents of reform Judaism that are emerging in Germany, which reject circumcision and even celebrate the Sabbath to Sunday. Services are shorter, the distinction between Sephardic and Ashkenazic practice is eliminated and the second days of festivals are not observed. The focus is on gentrification and social acceptance.
- 1841 Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, emancipation campaigner, becomes the first Jewish baronet.
- 1844 Abolition of the traditional Jewish communal body (Kahal) in Russia.
- 1846 Moses Montefiore travels to Russia to plead the cause of Russian Jews before Tsar Nicholas I, in person. He tours the Pale of Settlement and Poland, meeting both Russian maskilim, who support the government's modernisation efforts, and traditional Jewish leaders.
- 1847 Lionel de Rothschild elected to parliament. He cannot take his seat.
- 1848 Revolutions across Europe, prompt a wave of anti-Jewish violence from Alsace to the Habsburg lands, but legislation is passed in favour of civil and religious equality, and the election of Jewish men to parliamentary assemblies across Europe, even in countries like Germany and Habsburg Austria where they are not

yet emancipated. Adolphe Crémieux (France) and Leone Pincherle (Venice) become the first Jewish ministers in Europe. In Vienna, Dr. Adolf Fischhof emerges as a key revolutionary leader and leads the Corpus Christi procession to the altar of Vienna Cathedral in this capacity. The Jews of Piedmont are emancipated from above and retain their rights even though the revolution fails elsewhere.

- 1849/50 Political exiles flee to London, including Karl Marx, the parents of both Sir Alfred Zimmern and Lucien Wolf, and the future German liberal leaders Eduard Lasker and Ludwig Bamberger. The latter becomes a Parisian banker. His Bischoffsheim banking relatives will eventually buy large houses in Britain and become members of the Prince of Wales set. Bamberger himself acquired a Villa in Interlaken, and his brother's brother-in-law Maurice Hirsch became a leading figure in the world of international Jewish philanthropy.
- 1851 David Salomons is elected MP for Greenwich. He tries to take his seat – omitting the Christian phrases from the oath – but is eventually ejected from the House and fined for voting illegally. The bench from which he was removed is on display at Salomons Estate.
- 1854-6 The Crimean War causes famine in Palestine, prompting large scale relief efforts coordinated by Sir Moses Montefiore. He raises around £20,000 from Jews and Christians across the British Empire and in North America on behalf of starving Jews in the Holy Land. Montefiore travels to Jerusalem in 1855 to disburse the money, returning in 1857 when he decides to build a windmill and almshouses outside the Old City of Jerusalem. By this time, the French Rothschilds have become actively involved in supporting Jewish institutions in Jerusalem (hospitals, schools).
- 1855 David Salomons becomes the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London
- 1856 Ottoman Jews – like Ottoman Christians – are emancipated as part of the Crimean peace
- 1856` Publication of Hamagid, the first Hebrew language Jewish newspaper in Eastern Europe.
- 1858 Emancipation of British Jews: Lionel de Rothschild can at last take his seat in the House of Commons. Others follow.
- 1858-9 The Mortara Affair. A Jewish child in Bologna – then part of the Papal States - is 'kidnapped' by the Papal authorities to be raised as a Catholic, because he has been secretly baptised by a former family servant. The incident becomes a major cause célèbre, playing well with anti-Catholic, pro-Italian British audiences, and generating much public support for Italian Unification (which happens in 1859-60). The emancipation of Italian Jews follows.
- 1859 The Jewish Board of Guardians is established as a framework for poor relief and social care.
- 1860 The Alliance Israelite Universelle is established in Paris as a response to the Mortara Affair, headed by Adolphe Crémieux. It is an international secular Jewish organisation, with a broadly French republican agenda, which lobbies for Jewish rights abroad.

- 1860s This decade sees the emancipation of Jews in Italy, the Habsburg Empire and Germany in parallel with the unification of Italy (1859/60) and Germany (1866/71), and the establishment of a Dual Monarchy in Austria-Hungary (1867). These developments are clearly linked to political liberalism and new, national forms of statehood.
- 1864 Sir Moses Montefiore visits Morocco, meets with the Sultan and obtains a document similar to that he had obtained from the Ottoman Sultan in 1840. The visit has a destabilising effect on Muslim-Jewish relations in Morocco, but is widely acclaimed across the Jewish world.
- 1865 Ludwig Messel arrives in Britain.
- 1866 Prince Karl of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen becomes King of Romania, but the emergence of the Romanian nation state is marked by anti-Jewish violence and legislation, as liberal and conservative politicians weaponise antisemitism to cement the ties that bind the duchies of Wallachia and Moldavia (which has seen massive Jewish immigration from Habsburg Galicia in particular in the past few decades). An international outcry and constant lobbying by organisations like the Alliance Israélite have no effect, nor does the visit of Sir Moses Montefiore in 1867.
- 1871 The Anglo-Jewish Association is established as a British branch of the Alliance Israélite, led by the liberal MP Sir Francis Goldsmid. As a member of the reform WLS, Goldsmid was excluded from the Board of Deputies of British Jews. For Goldsmid, the AJA represented an alternative to the Board of Deputies, still dominated by Montefiore though ostensibly led by his nephew Joseph Mayer Montefiore of Worth Park. Like its French parent organisation, it attracted more reform-minded and secular Jews: men like German-born Ludwig Messel.
- 1873 The Great Depression coincides with the rise of new forms of antisemitism in Germany and Austria in particular.
- 1874 Broomhill, the home of Sir David Lionel Salomons, becomes the first house in the UK to use electricity for domestic purposes.
- 1875 Sir Moses Montefiore makes his last visit to Jerusalem. He is now 90.
- 1878 The Congress of Berlin coincides with anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish-born Benjamin Disraeli, now Prime-Minister, for his pro-Ottoman policy.
- For the first time, an international congress leads to a treaty whereby the Great Powers attempt to impose civil and political equality for Jews on the emerging nation states of the Balkans: Romania, and Serbia. This follows a massive international Jewish lobbying effort, with Bismarck's Jewish banker playing a key role as intermediary. It proves impossible to enforce, but is greeted at the time as a triumph. An elderly Sir Moses Montefiore meets and congratulates Benjamin Disraeli at the train station on his return.
- 1879-81 The Berlin Antisemitism conflict divides liberal public opinion, after the German historian and liberal politician Heinrich von Treitschke writes an article attacking Jewish immigrants to Germany and coining the famous phrase: 'The Jews are our misfortune'. His intervention coincides with the birth of more modern and popular forms of political antisemitism in Germany. Another liberal historian, Theodor Mommsen, attacks Treitschke's position, but nowadays we would also

find his views distinctly antisemitic. A pamphlet war follows, and the liberal party splits (over this, and other issues).

- 1879 Laurence Oliphant, the British explorer and Christian Zionist, sets out for Palestine to promote Jewish settlement. His initiative speaks to a powerful current of Christian Zionism among Evangelicals and nonconformists in Victorian England.
- 1881-4 A wave of pogroms in Russia prompts mass public outrage internationally, and the birth of the political Zionist movement among Jews in Russia itself. These early Zionists (the *Chovevei Zion*) take Sir Moses Montefiore as their symbol and use prints of Montefiore as a fundraising mechanism. Montefiore and his nephew Haim Guedalla are supportive of Zionism, but it is very much a fringe phenomenon in the Jewish world at this stage. Jews in Britain lobby on behalf of their Russian coreligionists and hold a Grand Public Meeting at the Mansion House (inspired by earlier meetings held over the Damascus Affair, and in support of the Holy Land Famine Relief Fund during the Crimean War) to draw attention to their plight and raise money for the victims. Ludwig Messel gives £200.
- 1882-1905 The pogroms are conventionally seen as marking the beginning of a new era of large scale Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe to England. From the 1880s to c.1920 some 140,000 Jews migrate to Britain. The Jewish population increases from 46,000 in 1880 to c.250,000 1919. The immigrants settle mostly in industrial areas and introduce a different, more overtly foreign style of Jewish life to the UK, reflected in the emergence of Yiddish and Hebrew newspapers. Anglo-Jewish leaders – the Rothschilds, Montefiores, Montagus, Goldsmids et al – devote time, money and energy to initiatives designed to promote the social and cultural integration and Anglicisation of the immigrants.
- 1885 Lord Rothschild becomes the first Jewish peer.
- 1887 Samuel Montagu founds the orthodox Federation of Synagogues to cater to the mass influx of Jews from Eastern Europe.
- 1894-1906 The Dreyfus Affair divides France and becomes an international cause célèbre. For Theodore Herzl, covering the story in Paris for the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, the virulence and scale of anti-Jewish feeling it evoked proved that emancipation and integration were a chimera for Jews. He later attributed his embrace of Zionism to this experience. The Reinachs – one of whom built Villa Kerylos – were central figures in the fight to clear Alfred Dreyfus' name.
- 1895 Karl Lueger, leader and founder of the anti-Semitic Christian Social party, is elected Mayor of Vienna, but only takes office in 1897 because Emperor Franz Josef resisted the appointment for two years. Lueger remains in post until his death in 1910. During these years, Hitler – then living as a down-and-out in Vienna – forms his antisemitic worldview.
- 1897 First Zionist Congress, held in Basle/Basel.
- 1899 The English Zionist Federation displaces the homegrown British *Chovevei Zion* movement led by Colonel Albert Goldsmid and other members of 'the Cousinhood'. Sir Francis Abraham Montefiore of Worth Park serves on both bodies.

- 1902 Claude Goldsmid Montefiore and the suffrage campaigner and social activist Lily Montagu found Liberal Judaism, a more theologically radical form of reform movement than that to be found at WLS. Lily's social and religious radicalism is in stark contrast to her father Samuel Montagu's orthodoxy.
- 1902 Theodore Herzl publishes *Altneuland* (The Old New Land), a utopian Zionist novel.
- 1903 The Kishinev pogrom generates an international outcry, although the death toll remains relatively low and the scale of the violence much less than in later waves of pogroms during 1905 and World War One.
- 1903 The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an influential antisemitic forgery, is published in Russia. It draws on earlier writings that disseminate antisemitic conspiracy, like the Book of the Kahal (published by Brafman, a Jewish convert to Russian Orthodoxy in 1869) and *The Conquest of the World by the Jews* (published in 1878 by Osman Bey, aka the Englishman Frederick Millingen, who converted successively to both Islam and Russian Orthodoxy).
- 1905 Revolution in Russia. Jews like Maxim Vinaver enter the Duma, where he becomes a leading figure in the liberal Kadet party. The revolution is associated with massive anti-Jewish violence, and the pogrom death toll escalates dramatically. The Anglo-Jewish activist and liberal political journalist Lucien Wolf is at the centre of British support for the opponents of Tsarist autocracy. A young Isaiah Berlin is among those who flee Russia after 1905 fails.
- 1905 Aliens Act. This dramatically restricts Jewish immigration to Britain, in the wake of anti-(Jewish) foreigner agitation.
- 1906 Election of a liberal government led by Asquith and Lloyd George, which sees wide-ranging social reform, now understood as marking the birth of the welfare state.
- 1907 Royal Dutch Shell is formally established, building on Marcus Samuel's brilliant achievements in developing the family business.
- 1907 The English-born Jewish freemason and anticlerical Ernesto Nathan, a disciple of Mazzini, is elected Mayor of Rome. He is the target of Catholic antisemitic attacks.
- 1909 The liberal MP Herbert Samuel, nephew of Samuel Montagu (Lord Swaythling) becomes the first Jewish member of the British cabinet. He is joined by Rufus Isaacs (1912) and his cousin Edwin Montagu (1914). All three are implicated in the Marconi Scandal (1912), which is a focus for antisemitic agitation but not remotely comparable with the Dreyfus Affair in scale or political importance.
- 1910 Luigi Luzzatti, freemason, and Italian Jewish liberal politician becomes Prime Minister of Italy. He is known for his humanitarian activity on behalf of Armenians and Russian Jews.
- 1914 Britain enters the war. Lucien Wolf, the cosmopolitan but British born son of a Habsburg Jewish 1848er, loses his job on the *Daily Graphic* because he is seen as a German sympathiser.
- 1915 Sir David Lionel Goldsmid Stern Salomons' only son dies heroically at Gallipoli.

- 1916 German Military High Command announce a census of Jewish soldiers. Almost 100,000 Jews served in the German army during the war, but rumours persisted about their lack of patriotism and low enlistment numbers.
- 1914-18 On the Eastern Front, the war has a devastating effect on Jewish life in Eastern Europe, thousands dead, hundreds of thousands uprooted, their homes - and sometimes their towns - destroyed; intense and widespread antisemitism.
- 1917, Feb The Tsar is overthrown.
- 1917, Aug An official Jewish battalion is formed in the British Army: it is a controversial initiative, resisted by assimilated Jewish politicians like Edwin Montagu, but designed to address the fact that many Jews in Britain are Russians and not liable to conscription.
- 1917, Oct Bolshevik Revolution. Trotsky emerges as the most high-profile Jewish revolutionary in the civil war that follows.
- 1917, Nov The Balfour Declaration. Her Majesty's Government declares its support for the establishment of 'a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine', with the proviso that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.' This commitment takes the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild, commemorated at Waddesdon. It divides the Cousinhood. In the Cabinet, Herbert Samuel is a leading force behind this move, but Edwin Montagu fiercely opposes it. Lionel David Rothschild, Sir Philip Magnus and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Swaythling establish the anti-Zionist League of British Jews, with the support of Lucien Woolf and Claude Montefiore.
- 1918 The German Revolution. Collapse of the Habsburg Empire.
- 1919 Numerous Jewish organisations from all over the world, both Zionist and anti-Zionist, send delegations to the Paris Peace Conference. Lucien Woolf plays a key role in securing the Minorities Treaties, which are designed to protect 'national' minorities like the Jews in the new nation states of post-Habsburg and post-Tsarist Eastern Europe. They prove ineffectual.
- 1920 The League of Nations is established. Two Fabian Society pamphlets written by Leonard Woolf are among the inspirations behind this initiative.
- 1920 Herbert Samuel, a well-known Zionist, is appointed High Commissioner for Palestine. His appointment comes a year before that of Rufus Isaacs as Viceroy of India.
- 1922 The British mandate in Palestine is formally established.
- 1922 Walter Rathenau, the industrialist, aesthete and political liberal, becomes German Foreign Minister and negotiates the Rapallo Pact with the USSR, building on the secret German-Soviet collaboration of 1921. Right wing forces, including the (still obscure) NSDAP claim he is part of a 'Jewish Communist conspiracy'. He is assassinated in a right-wing terrorist attack on 4 June 1922, a seminal event in the history of the Weimar Republic.
- 1922, Oct Mussolini leads the march on Rome and seizes power in Italy



1924	Johnson-Reed Immigration Act restricts the immigration of certain national and cultural groups to the US, including eastern European Jews
1925-6	Lily Montagu helps found and becomes president of the World Union of Progressive Judaism
1925	Britain rejoins the Gold Standard at a rate that is too high, causing severe hardship
1926	The General Strike
1929	Stock market crash
1931	Britain is forced to leave the Gold Standard
1931	Herbert Samuel returns to the Home Office as leader of the liberal party in coalition with Labour. Rufus Isaacs is the only other liberal minister in the cabinet, prompting antisemitic reflections among some liberal politicians.
1933	Hitler comes to power. At this point there are about 523,000 Jews living in Germany. Some 37-38,000 emigrate immediately, usually to neighbouring European countries (in due course most will be killed by the Nazis). The Central British Fund for German Jewry (later World Jewish Relief) is established with the support of leading Anglo-Jewish families.
1935, Sept	The Nuremberg racial laws are passed
1936	A Jewish Socialist Léon Blum, becomes Prime Minister of France at the head of the Popular Front government.
1936	The 'Battle of Cable Street', a clash between the British Union of Fascists and various antifascist forces that occurred when the BUF attempted to march through the heart of the Jewish East End.
1936	Lord Bearsted leads a mission to the US to raise money for German Jews meeting President Roosevelt
1936-9	The Arab Revolt, a nationalist uprising in British mandate Palestine
1938	Anschluss with Austria: Hitler's arrives to great acclaim. The prelude to war begins.
1938, July	The Evian conference convened by President Franklin D. Roosevelt fails to address the refugee crisis in a meaningful way.
1938, Nov 38,000	Kristallnacht. The 2-day German pogrom sends shockwaves across the world. Jews leave Germany and Austria in 1938. Maud Russell of Mottisfont travels to Germany, and succeeds in rescuing seven of her relatives.
1939	Kindertransport. 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland arrive in the UK. They are often the only members of their families to survive the Holocaust. Lord Bearsted and Lionel de Rothschild are key figures in this initiative. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Edward de Stein of Lindisfarne Castle was also active in trying to rescue European Jews, even though the family was now Anglican. Altogether, 77,000 Jews leave Germany and Austria in 1939.
1939, May	Parliament approves a White Paper restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 a year for 5 years, stipulating that any increase thereafter must be

approved by the Arab majority. Restrictions are also placed on the right of Jews to buy land from Arabs.

- 1939, Sept Altogether 282,000 Jews have left Germany, and 117,000 have left annexed Austria. Of these some 95,00 emigrate to the US, 60,000 to Palestine, 40,000 to Britain and about 75,000 to Central and S. America. 202,000 Jews remain in Germany and 57,000 in Austria when war breaks out.
- 1941-45 Six million European Jews are systematically murdered by the Nazis, about two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe gone – many of the rest leave Europe never to return.
- 1948 Britain withdraws from Palestine, heralding the war of Israeli Independence. The State of Israel is established. 700,000 Palestinian Arabs flee or are expelled from their homes.

## **Antisemitism, Jews, and Heritage**

David Feldman (Birkbeck College, University of London, and Director, the Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism)

### **Heritage**

We constantly reconsider and rewrite our history. As times change so too our interest in the past broadens in some respects, it narrows in others. In the last four decades, Britain's ethnic and religious make up has become more diverse than ever before. The emergence of Britain as a more multicultural society registers today in our relationship to its past.

We have become multicultural in two senses of the term. First, there is population. Today roughly 14 per cent of the population has a minority background but in some parts of the country the figure is much higher. In London it is around 40 per cent. Second, multiculturalism is also a policy that welcomes and embraces diversity. In this second sense multiculturalism is controversial. But whether we support it or not, this sort of multiculturalism raises questions: what counts as integration? And how do the majority and minority populations regard one another? Debate over multiculturalism today also raises new questions about the past. We are now more interested than we used to be in the history of ethnic and religious minorities, how they made their way in British society, their impact on culture and how the majority have responded to their presence.

Prejudice against Jews is one part of the history of the Jewish minority in Britain and, in significant respects, it is a history which continues to the present. Between Spring 2016 and the general election in December 2019 election antisemitism has been close to the centre of political debate in Britain. As I write, in March 2020, the Labour Party remains under investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission over allegations of antisemitism. In what follows I begin by considering the Labour Party's problems with antisemitism and ask what they can tell us about the history of antisemitism more broadly. In this way the present provides a helpful starting point from which we can reconsider the past.

## **Antisemitism now**

When journalists, commentators, politicians and Jewish leaders write about antisemitism they often reach for a metaphor to convey their repugnance and the danger they think the prejudice holds. Very often they tell us that antisemitism is a *virus* or a *poison* which threatens the health of society. The Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis and Jeremy Corbyn have disagreed bitterly on the subject of the Labour Party and antisemitism but on one point they are united: both characterise antisemitism as “a poison”. Mirvis’s predecessor, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, prefers to conceive antisemitism as “a virus” and so too does the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. These examples could be multiplied several fold. The metaphors are pervasive but are they helpful? If we examine the evidence from recent public opinion surveys we have to conclude that they are not.

The number of thorough-going, ideologically committed antisemites in Britain amount to a tiny minority within the adult population. In 2017 Jewish Policy Research (JPR) estimated that 2.4 per cent of British adults combine open dislike of Jews with developed negative ideas about them. In general, as JPR’s survey demonstrated, attitudes to Jews are positive and broadly similar to views about Christians and Hindus. It is Muslims not Jews who are most likely to attract unfavourable opinions.

However, the number of antisemites is not the same thing as the more diffuse presence of antisemitic ideas and prejudices. According to the same survey, 30 per cent of British adults will assent to one or two antisemitic statements. For example, they will endorse the idea that Jews think they are better than other people or that Jews get rich at the expense of others or that Jews have too much power in Britain. In contrast to the small number of antisemites in the country, the diffusion of antisemitic attitudes reaches almost a third of the population.

The idea that antisemitism is like a poison or a virus suggests that it is an alien presence, introduced from outside and which erupts within otherwise healthy bodies. The evidence from the JPR survey suggests something else: namely, that the chief problem we face today is not the thoroughgoing antisemitism displayed by a small number of aberrant racists but widespread negative and stereotypical ideas about Jews,

that have accumulated over centuries, which are embedded deeply within our culture and are there to be drawn on by individuals, knowingly or not.

Surveys undertaken by YouGov in 2017 and 2019 find these sorts of negative ideas about Jews are as widely spread among Labour as among Conservative voters. Why, then, in recent years has there been so much talk about antisemitism in Labour? Since Labour supporters are not more prone than others to antisemitic ideas, we should ask why it is that among Labour members and supporters diffuse and latent antisemitic attitudes have been activated and brought to the surface.

For the most part, Labour party members and supporters do not speak ill of Jews because they are committed antisemites but because they have come to associate Jews with some of the key issues they most care about: the legacy of colonialism and the operation of power within capitalist society. In the former case this happens on account of debate over Israel/Palestine. On the political left, Israel – the Jewish state - is widely conceived as a late expression of colonialism. The way in which the injustice suffered by Palestinians can lead people across the political spectrum, but especially Labour supporters, to draw on antisemitic ideas is illustrated by the findings of a 2019 YouGov survey. Here a strikingly large portion of Conservative voters – 18 per cent - agreed that “Israel can get away with anything because its supporters control the media”, but this figure was higher still - 25 per cent - among Labour voters. In other words, when Israel becomes the topic of conversation some people, but Labour supporters more than others, draw on the store of antisemitic stereotypes and narratives that subsists within our culture: in this case, the hoary idea, at least 150 years old, that Jews control the media.

In the case of anti-capitalism, intentionally or not, the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership fed a longstanding tendency on the left to understand capitalism as a conspiracy; a corrupt system shaped by the machinations of a self-serving elite. Labour’s key slogan, “For the many not the few” was taken up by people drawn to conspiratorial thinking. At this point Jews become vulnerable. Some Labour members and supporters have drawn on the reservoir of antisemitic stereotypes and narratives in which Jews appear as the personification of finance capital and as the hidden hand pulling the levers of power. For these reasons, when political debate has turned to Israel

and to the casualties of capitalism, the antisemitic attitudes latent within British culture have become active.

### **Antisemitism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries**

This account of how antisemitism works in the present can help us to think about the past in Britain. It should mean that we attend not only to a handful of prominent, ideologically or politically committed antisemites, such as the writer Hilaire Belloc and the politician Sir Oswald Mosely, but also to the far more widespread prejudices about Jews that subsisted within British culture. This will help us understand better the sorts of prejudices wealthy Jews encountered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; not least, those Jews who purchased country houses.

The coupling of Jews and money recurs in culture and politics in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pictures and pamphlets, scholarly texts and the yellow press, derided Jews by underscoring their allegedly grubby and narrow pursuit of money. At the same time, the worlds of finance, commerce and capitalism were appraised negatively, even rendered illegitimate in the eyes of some, by their association with Jews. In 1878 the British weekly magazine *The Truth*, owned by the Liberal politician Henry Labouchère, took the marriage of Hannah de Rothschild to Lord Rosebery as an opportunity to ponder the question, “When it is incidentally said of a Jew that he is a Jew, what is meant?” He answered, “They are essentially speculative, their fondness for making money is only equalled by their love of spending it, and their mania to gamble with it.”

This evaluation was not inherently negative but the commonplace idea that there was a Jewish type and that this type was notable for its love of money could easily turn to denigration. From Anthony Trollope’s novels to the social investigations of the Fabian couple Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Jews in the late nineteenth century were portrayed as the embodiment of the profit motive, growing rich from lending at interest, exploiting the labour of others, as avaricious, as flashy *nouveaux riches*, as shallow materialists and, most dangerous of all, as a hidden and corrupt power, using wealth to subvert national policy to further their own gain.

These images circulated widely in Britain, as in Europe, and in the world colonised by Europeans. They were a protean resource. They were not the exclusive possession of either the political right or the left or of any social class. In 1891 *The Labour Leader*, newspaper of Keir Hardie's Independent Labour Party, told its readers "Wherever there is trouble in Europe, wherever rumours of war circulate and men's minds are distraught with fear of change and calamity, you may be sure that a hook-nosed Rothschild is at his games somewhere near the region of the disturbances." This idea was put to work by radicals and socialists who opposed Britain's imperial expansion. They viewed empire as a perversion of patriotism and a policy designed to line the pockets of Jewish financiers who were the hidden hand directing government.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the idea that the British war in South Africa was being fought on behalf of Jews was commonplace among its radical opponents. This simplified critique of empire most appealed to radicals and the Left at beginning of the twentieth century. John Burns, a trade unionist and Liberal politician, told the House of Commons "wherever we go in this matter [the war in South Africa] we see the same thing. Wherever we examine there is the financial Jew operating, directing inspiring the agencies that led to this war." The best known analysis along this line was made by the economist and journalist John Atkinson Hobson. The war, he argued, was being fought under the cloak of patriotism in the interests of financiers among whom "the foreign Jew must be taken as the leading type." Hobson had gone to South Africa as correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*. The Jews there, he wrote to his editor, C.P. Scott, were "the veriest scum of Europe." The war was being fought for men "most of whom are foreigners by origin, whose trade is finance, and whose trade interests are not chiefly British." Johannesburg was "the new Jerusalem".

But these ideas about the Jews' character, their love of money and desire for power did not have a single home. Jews were, indeed, over-represented among the very wealthy in Edwardian Britain: above all, among the very wealthy who were not landowners. In the early twentieth century as many as 20 per cent of non-landed millionaires were Jews; some made their money in banking, others on the stock exchange and others, such as the Randlords who made fortunes from gold and diamond mining in South Africa, from ventures tied closely to imperial expansion. These figures were just one sign of a much wider development: the rise of the plutocracy in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

But they were a notably visible sign. For the scandal-mongering, right-wing journalist, Arnold White, their prominence in finance and their supposed political influence was “a danger to the Empire” and a degrading influence “on bad smart society”. In 1885 another journalist, Thomas Escott, noticed “English society, once ruled by an aristocracy, is now dominated by a plutocracy. And this plutocracy is to a large extent Hebraic in composition.” While this comment was benign by 1908 he reflected, “the incorporation of the Hebrews into the most august parts of the social fabric has been paid for at a certain moral price.” Lord Northcliffe, the proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, translated moral disdain into social snobbery. He told his editor to keep Jews out of the newspaper’s society column: “What with the Ecksteins, Sassoons, and Mosenthals, we shall soon have to set the column in Yiddish.”

This prejudice against wealthy Jews who were socially or politically prominent was mobilised in a series of allegations about corruption that rocked the Liberal government in Edwardian Britain, the important being the Marconi scandal which broke in 1912. It was now Conservatives, who had supported the war in South Africa and had once been accused of being the Jews’ dupes, who now drew on antisemitic stereotypes to assist their attack on the Liberal government.

The background to the scandal was that, after the British government decided to construct a chain of 18 wireless stations linking different parts of the Empire, the Post Office had made an agreement with the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company to erect the first six. The deal had to be postponed, however, on account of rumours of “insider trading” by government ministers in Marconi shares. A Jewish minister and his family were involved but so too were a Welshman and a Scot. Nevertheless, some of the government’s enemies highlighted the Jewish dimension of the scandal. *Witness* expressed concern at the “the vast and increasing domination of this gifted Asiatic tribe.” One of its journalists, F. Hugh O’Donnell, presented a vision of England “Twenty Years After”: “The Jew Kings were come but the Parliament of England as gone. I was pointed out a Jew King of opium, a Jew king of railways, a Jew king of petrol and a Jew King of silver....Canaan on Thames was indeed a Promised Land.”

Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, the idea of a malign and conspiratorial Jewish power became widespread, almost “common sense”, on the political right. Winston Churchill, the Minister for War in the government, was the politician



responsible for British intervention in the Russian civil war. He illustrates the extent of belief in the connection between Jews, conspiracy and Bolshevism. He also demonstrates how the veneration of some Jews could go hand in hand with the demonization of others. In a speech at Sunderland in January 1920, Churchill denounced Bolshevism as a “Jewish movement”. The following month he published a full page article titled “Zionism versus Bolshevism” in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*. The article invoked the Jews’ distinctive features and pondered their historical significance: “Some people like Jews and some do not: but no thoughtful man can doubt the fact that they are beyond all question the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world”. Churchill believed race was a key factor shaping human history: “the conflict between good and evil which proceeds unceasingly in the breast of man nowhere reaches such an intensity as in the Jewish race”, he asserted. He believed mankind owed to Jews not only the gospel of Christ – “the most precious possession of mankind” – but also ‘another system of morals and philosophy, as malevolent as Christianity was benevolent’. This was a “world-wide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality” and was growing steadily: “the adherents of this sinister confederacy are mostly men reared up among the unhappy populations where Jews are persecuted on account of their race”.

### **Jewish heritage**

British Jews were not silent. On the contrary, in a political and cultural environment that could be hostile, as well as sometimes admiring, presenting a positive image of Jews and Judaism was a priority for many. Above all, this was the case for those who regarded themselves as British Jews’ public representatives: communal leaders as well some intellectuals, journalists and clergy. One of the ways in which they undertook this work was through exhibitions which presented Judaism and Jewish history in Britain to the public and to relate all three to Britain’s national story. In short, through the creation of a sense of Jewish heritage in Britain.

In this regard, the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition of 1887 was a landmark event. Devised as part of the celebrations of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee, the exhibition

was held at the Royal Albert Hall, occupying four rooms on the first floor. The organising committee was 120 strong but the exhibition was shaped by a quartet: Isidore Spielmann, who originally came up with the idea for the exhibition, Frederic Moccatta, Joseph Jacobs and Lucien Wolf. Spielmann and Moccatta were well connected to the cousinhood, the elite of Anglo-Jewry: the former had trained as an engineer but devoted much of his time to exhibiting British art and became joint secretary of the Art Collections Fund, the latter was a philanthropist. Joseph Jacobs was a polymath and communal activist with interests ranging from Darwinian evolution to folk-lore, and Lucien Wolf was a prolific journalist and avid historian; together the two men compiled the exhibition catalogue.

We can detect three key themes in the exhibition this team devised: history, religion and aesthetics. Each had an important role to play defending the reputation of British Jews. Visitors to the exhibition encountered hundreds of portraits of Anglo-Jewish celebrities, historical artefacts recording Jewish life in the Middle Ages before their expulsion in 1290, as well as more recent events such as the admission of the first Jew to parliament in 1858. At the same time, a great deal of space was given over to the objects used in religious worship and ceremonies.

The intended messages were clear. Jews had been in the country for centuries, their expulsion created an unfortunate interregnum but Jews were now well integrated. Jews, moreover, were a religious minority: in other words they did not constitute a nation within a nation. Their worship was conducted with, and decorated by, beautiful objects. This reflected a fine aesthetic sensibility which belied the idea that getting money was the Jews' only passion. The *Jewish Chronicle* proposed that non-Jewish visitors would be surprised by the fact "the Exhibition is in so large degree an art exhibition." Moreover, the newspaper hoped that the exhibition highlighted those aspects of British culture which promoted an affinity with Jews and Judaism: namely, "For the great mass of men and women in this country anything biblical has a charm which nothing can lessen or destroy." Spielmann later reflected that the exhibition, "showed to the outside world, which appeared to regard Jewish worship and all things Jewish as a kind of close freemasonry or secret society, what Judaism really is and what the people really are".

As with the idea of heritage more generally, conceptions of Jewish heritage do not stand still. They have changed over time as the needs and norms of the moment have also

altered. In 1951, Anglo-Jewry contributed an exhibition on “Jewish Contributions to British Trade and Industry” as part of the forward-looking Festival of Britain of the same year. Here the organisers emphasised the modern and democratic qualities of Jewish contributions, fitting in perfectly with the Festival’s over-arching theme. They highlighted the Jewish contribution to clothing the masses through Burtons tailoring, how Jews literally catered to the masses through the Lyons corner houses and had contributed to modern industry, for example, through the Shell oil company, created by Marcus Samuel, in 1907.

From the late 1980s, however, Jewish heritage has changed still more radically. With the democratization of history, and with the advance of the practice of writing history from below, the experience and heritage of humble Jewish immigrants, largely ignored by previous generations, has moved centre stage. This has been a necessary correction to what had gone before but, in the process, much else has been pushed to the margins. This means a renewed and critical focus on the Jewish Country House is especially significant and welcome.

### **Conclusion: Lord Balcarres and the reservoir**

One afternoon in 1900 Lord Balcarres was invited by Alfred Rothschild and Lord Rosebery to a Mayfair party which the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, would also attend. “The number of Jews in this palace was past belief”, he recorded, “I have studied the anti-Semite question with some attention always hoping to stem an ignoble movement; but when confronted by the herd of Ickleheimers and Puppenbergs, Raphaels and Sassoons, and the rest of the breed, my emotions gain the better of logic.” Balcarres complaint is a familiar one: Jews, their morals and manners, were degrading high society. But, as he wrote, he was not an ideologically committed antisemite. In fact, together with Isidore Spielmann, Balcarres created the National Art Collections Fund. The two men worked together over many years to acquire great works of art for the nation, including the Rokeby “Venus and Cupid” by Velazquez, which was in danger of being taken out of the country. Evidently, Balcarres could use an antisemitic prejudice at one moment and set it aside at another. If we are to understand the way antisemitism has worked in British society, culture and politics we need to be able to grasp its changeable and situational significance for individuals.

It has become a cliché to think of antisemitism as virus. A strange disease that erupts in different times and places creating antisemites. But in Britain, for the most part, the problem is not ideological antisemitism but ideas about Jews that have accumulated over centuries. We are not faced with significant numbers of committed, ideological antisemites; people who have been poisoned or caught a contagion which possess them. Instead we see people reaching for antisemitic ideas at a particular moment to provide a simple and, apparently, persuasive account of a particular problem they care about. If this is the case, then rather than conceive antisemitism as a virus we will do better to think of it as a deep reservoir of stereotypes and narratives, one which is replenished over time and one that can be dipped into with ease.

David Feldman

## Putting it into action: Waldegrave and Stern at Strawberry Hill

Strawberry Hill was built by the writer and collector Horace Walpole between 1751 and 1776 and is generally considered as the first example of genuine Gothic revival in England. The Strawberry Hill Trust was formed in August 2002 with a mission to restore Horace Walpole's Gothic villa and open it to a wider public. The Trust has secured over £10 million in funding to restore the building and garden. The House is open to public since 2010.

The current interpretation of the house is clearly very much focused on Walpole and his neo-Gothic literary and artistic achievements, as well as on his interest in national history and his endeavours as British antiquarian. The presence of successive owners has been largely overlooked.

### *A new exhibition*

The Trust has therefore planned a new exhibition 'Women of Strawberry Hill. Collecting, fashion and power' that will shed new light on the history of Strawberry Hill in the years following the death of its creator Horace Walpole. It will focus on the lives of three extraordinary women who owned Strawberry Hill between 1796 and 1923 – the sculptress Anne Seymour Damer; Lady Frances Waldegrave and Lady Michelham.

Architectural features, as well as some of the works of art these women collected, remain in place as visible reminders of the impact of their lives on Strawberry Hill. Despite this, their biographies and the ways they redecorated and used Strawberry Hill, have never been systematically researched or included in the official interpretation of the house.

**Anne Seymour Damer (1748-1828).** Anne Damer was Horace Walpole's first cousin. He was her guardian and encouraged Anne's interest in sculpture. During the period 1784–1818, Damer exhibited 32 works as an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy. Her work, primarily busts in Neoclassical style, developed from early wax sculptures to technically complex works in terracotta, bronze and marble. When he died in 1797, Walpole left his villa to her, who settled there until the 1810s. At Strawberry Hill she established her own studio and performed amatorial theatrical performances. A number of sources have named Damer as being involved in lesbian relationships, particularly relating to her close friendship with Mary Berry.

**Lady Frances Waldegrave (1821-1879).** Lady Frances Waldegrave was the daughter of the popular Jewish tenor John Braham (1774-1856), the first English male singer to command a European reputation. Braham's Jewishness remained a prominent feature of his career until his marriage, in 1816, to a Catholic woman, Lady Waldegrave's mother. Lady Frances Waldegrave inherited Strawberry Hill House through marriage to John Waldegrave. Following John's death in 1840, Lady Waldegrave went on to marry his brother, thereby maintaining her link with the House and title of Countess Waldegrave. After George's death in 1846, Lady Waldegrave was left a substantial income, and ten years later, in 1856 after her third marriage, she put her ambitions to secure Strawberry Hill House's future and expanded the House. Marrying again in 1863, this time to Liberal Minister under Palmerston and Gladstone, Chichester Fortescue, Lady Waldegrave became a renowned political hostess, entertaining at Strawberry Hill the Liberal establishment. Her artistic interests were multiple: one of the very first British collectors to acquire Italian Early

Old Masters, at the same time she was very active on the contemporary art market promoting the work of artists such as James Sant, James Tissot and Edward Lear.

**Lord and Lady Michelham.** The Strawberry Hill Sterns were the English branch of a large Jewish family of merchant bankers which, like the Rothschilds, had originated in Frankfurt. In 1844 Herman, together with his brother David, moved to London where he co-founded the Stern Brothers Bank. In 1883 Herman purchased Strawberry Hill, however, he died three years later without having ever really inhabited the Villa. It is under his ambitious son, Herbert, that Strawberry Hill shined again. While Herbert married relatively late and a much younger, non-Jewish woman, Aimée Geraldine Bradshaw (1882-1927); his sister Laura, more traditionally, married into a notable family of Jewish bankers, the Salomons (see above, Salomons Estate, Tunbridge Wells). A member of King Edward VII's inner circle of Jewish friends, in 1905 Herbert was raised to the peerage as Baron Michelham of Hellingly. With Lord and Lady Michelham Strawberry Hill was transformed in the perfect venue for a series of highly fashionable and cosmopolitan social events embellished by Lady Michelham's grand collection of art. The latter was created under the constant guidance of the famous Jewish art dealers Duveen Brothers and distributed between Strawberry Hill and the other Stern's residences in London and Paris.

### **Collaboration with Oxford University – The Jewish Country House and AEPJ**

#### ***Jewish Stories at Strawberry Hill***

Much of the information about 18th-century Twickenham's Jewish residents comes to us from the correspondence of Horace Walpole, no one would have ever suspected that one hundred years later even Strawberry Hill would have had a 'Jewish story' to tell.

It is thanks to the involvement with the Jewish Country Houses project that since 2017 a new narrative - built around the figures of Lady Waldegrave and Lord and Lady Michelham - has started to be included within the interpretation of the House. Research on their biographies and the distinct phases of their ownership of the Villa was started thanks to ad hoc events, such as the "Story Telling Day" organised in 2018 for the European Day of Jewish Culture and in collaboration with the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ). Volunteers and the public were shown archival materials and records with a particular focus on Lady Waldegrave and Geraldine Stern, Lady Michelham. Eventually Dr Marcus Roberts, historian specialised in Jewish History, was invited in order to historically and culturally contextualise the biographies of Lady Waldegrave and Lord and Lady Michelham. As a first step, Lady Waldegrave and the Stern's profiles have been included together with Walpole's in our Museum official website and new research into their occupation of the house has been developed thanks to the involvement of the Museum archivist and our education department.

See <https://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/the-house/history/lady-waldergrave/> and <https://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/the-house/history/the-sterns-and-the-michelhams/>

#### ***The Exhibition and the Jewish Country Houses Project***

While Anne Damer was not Jewish, Lady Waldegrave was the Christian daughter of a Jewish father who proudly invoked her origins, and Lady Michelham married into the Sterns, an international Jewish banking family. Thanks to the Waldegrave and Stern case studies, it will be possible to address – within the exhibition – some of the core themes researched by the Jewish Country Houses Project. The exhibition will also demonstrate the ways in which thinking about Jewishness informs our understanding of individuals of Jewish heritage (like Lady Waldegrave) and families that were far from religiously observant (like the Sterns), even if Jewishness was only one among many important factors that shaped their place in the world.

- 1) **Finance.** Stern was a Jewish banking dynasty with bank branches in all the principal European's capitals, the family structure largely reflected this geographical distribution. There were connections with other houses in the UK too, such as the Salomons Estate (Broomhill).
- 2) **Philanthropy.** The Sterns were important philanthropists, funding the Quadriga on the Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner and contributing towards the acquisition of the famous Rokeby Venus for the National Gallery. During the First World War Sterns bought the Hotel Astoria in Paris for use as a British hospital, and established and maintained a convalescent home for officers at Cimiez. Vera Salomons, a close relative, would later become actively involved in Jewish philanthropy in Palestine.
- 3) **The international Jewish élite and European networks.** Lady Waldegrave travelled extensively to France and Italy supported by her operatic family's international network and she became the favourite hostess of the exiled Orleans family in England, exercising, albeit informally, a diplomatic function. The Sterns were by definition a pan-European family, and Geraldine's dynamic life and entourage between London, Paris, the south of France and Italy very much reflect this dimension.
- 4) **Salonnières.** Lady Waldegrave and Lady Michelham were very popular political hostesses, using their femininity to create informal political circles where alliances and major political decisions were taken. Lady Waldegrave political salons were highly inclusive (she regularly invited, along with politicians, artists, actors and writers) and cosmopolitan, characteristics that resonate particularly well with the biographies described in Bilski and Braun's book *Jewish Women and Their Salons*. Parties and events organised by the Sterns at Strawberry Hill were, above all, part of a strategy to assimilate with Edwardian high society but never renouncing to the cosmopolitan dimension which was so distinctive of these Jewish business dynasties. Lady Michelham was in charge of these events' choreography that often-included avant-gardist performances. For example, in 1912 Anna Pavlova was invited by Lady Michelham to perform at Strawberry Hill.
- 5) **Anti-Semitism.** Lady Waldegrave was always open about the Jewish part of her identity and proud of it, for that reason all her life she endured anti-Semitic attacks, which undoubtedly defined her political actions and social strategies. Geraldine Stern may not have been such a target, but hers was an era in which antisemitic conspiracy theories flourished – and particularly targeted the world of international Jewish finance into which she married.
- 6) **Gender and collecting.** Frances Waldegrave and Geraldine Stern were both collectors of old masters and dealt directly with famous art dealers of their time, a domain which was usually male-oriented.
- 7) **Jewish Art dealing.** The Duveen brothers' long-lasting relationship with Lady Michelham, a nouveau riche wanting to assimilate herself into the upper echelons of British society, but also a cosmopolitan Lady, would constitute a model for Duveen's future business relations with rich American collectors.
- 8) **New Tastes.** Lady Waldegrave was pioneering in establishing a taste for Italian primitives in England and at the same time, she was very active in the contemporary art world. While the Sterns' taste was quite traditional and strategically shaped by the Duveen brothers as a tool of cultural assimilation, Geraldine expressed her originality by promoting modern artists such as Giovanni Boldini and Federico Beltran Masses.

## Suggested Reading

### Anglo-Jewish History

**For a basic, user-friendly overview of Anglo-Jewish history see:**

Marcus Roberts, *The Story of England's Jews. The First Thousand Years* (2007).

Available for pdf download:

<http://jtrails.org.uk/about/history-of-english-jews>

#### **Key texts:**

Chaim Bermant, *The Cousinhood* (New York: Macmillan, 1971)

Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social relations and political culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994)

Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore. Jewish Hero, Imperial Liberator* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010)

William D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (1996)

William D. Rubinstein et al, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2011)

Anne Summers, *Christian and Jewish Women in Britain, 1880-1940: Living with Difference*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)

#### **Memoirs and fiction**

Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*

Ruth Sebag-Montefiore, *A Family Patchwork. Five Generations of an Anglo-Jewish Family* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987)

C.P. Snow, *The Conscience of the Rich*. Volume of his 'Strangers and Brothers' series set in the world of the Anglo-Jewish aristocracy during the interwar period.



# Jewish History and the Country House

## ***Introductory: Jewish Heritage and multiculturalism in the UK***

Tony Kushner, 'Heritage and Ethnicity: an introduction' in Kushner (ed), *The Jewish Heritage in British History. Englishness and Jewishness* (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2006) 1-28. There are other interesting contributions in this volume, but this is a brilliant way into the subject, if now a little dated.

## ***How Jewish is Jewish? Jewish stories, Jew(ish) houses***

Articles collected in the November 2019 Special Issue of the Journal of Modern Jewish Studies produced in the context of this project and edited by Abigail Green, David Rechter & Juliet Carey: *Beyond the Pale – the Country Houses of the Jewish Elite*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cmjs20/18/4?nav=tocList>

Benjamin Braude, 'The Heine-Disraeli syndrome among the Palgraves of Victorian England', in Todd Endelman (ed). *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1987). Suggestive discussion of how those of Jewish descent, like Disraeli and the Palgraves, continued to engage with their Jewish origins and ancestry.

Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990). The standard work. Can be supplemented by his pan-European study of the same phenomenon: *Leaving the Jewish Fold: Conversion and Radical Assimilation in Modern Jewish History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)

William D. Rubinstein, 'The secret life of Leopold Amery', *Historical Research* 73 (2000), 175-196. Fascinating account of how Amery kept his Habsburg Jewish background a secret – a useful counterpoint to Braude.

## ***Jewish emancipation in England***

M. C. N. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain: the Question of the Admission of the Jews to Parliament 1828-1860* (London: Associated University Presses, 1982). Tedious, but definitely the classic account of this topic.

## ***Town & Country – different styles of Jewish living***

### Suggested reading on the Jewish haute bourgeoisie:

Luisa Levi d'Ancona, 'Paths of Jewish integration: upper middle class families in 19<sup>th</sup> century France, Italy and England', Dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Cambridge, 2004. Worth looking up, because the subject matter is of such direct relevance to the Cousinhood.

Werner E. Mosse, *The German-Jewish economic elite 1820-1935. A socio-cultural profile* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

### Suggested reading on Jewish country house life:

Peter Stansky, *Sassoon: The world of Philip and Sibyl* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2003). Suggestive, but quite brief.

### ***The European Jewish elite – a cosmopolitan, interrelated network***

A lacuna in the literature our project will seek to fill, but currently something of an emerging field.

Chaeran L. Freeze, *A Jewish Woman of Distinction. The Life and Diaries of Zinaida Poliakova* (Brandeis University Press, 2019)

### ***Financiers, Businessmen***

Niall Ferguson, *The World's Banker. A History of the House of Rothschild* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998). Far too long, but still probably the best overall introduction to these people and their world.

Werner E. Mosse, *The German-Jewish economic elite 1820-1935. A socio-cultural profile* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

Derek Penslar, *Shylock's Children. Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Not as relevant as it sounds to the study of the Anglo-Jewish elite, since the focus is more continental, but still the standard introduction to this topic.

### ***Heiresses, Salonnières, Women***

Emily Bilski, *Jewish Women and their Salons: the Power of Conversation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

Deborah Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Groundbreaking study of the Jewish salonnières in Berlin c.1800, opened up a whole new field.

Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: the Roles and Representation of Women* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1995). The same might be said of this, though it is shorter and more conceptual.

Anne Summers, *Christian and Jewish Women in Britain, 1880-1940: Living with Difference*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). At last, the gendering of Anglo-Jewish history begins.

### ***The mostly liberal politics of the Jewish elites***

Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). The standard work, thorough but dull.

Paula Hyman, 'Was there a "Jewish politics" in Western and Central Europe?' in Zvi Gitelman, ed., *The Quest for Utopia: Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions through the Ages* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992). I am presently trying to open up this field, but this provides some kind of an introduction to the issues.

Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). The standard overview of modern Jewish politics, preoccupied above all with socialism and Zionism, Eastern Europe and North America.

### ***Jews and the European Avantgarde – patrons, artists, writers***

Abigail Gillman, *Viennese Jewish Modernism: Freud, Hofmansthal, Beer-Hoffman and Schnitzler* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009) [although not in our project...]

Elana Shapira, *Style and Seduction: Jewish Patrons, Architecture and Design in fin-de-siecle Vienna* (Brandeis University Press, 2016)

Emily Bilski, *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture, 1890-1918* (University of California Press, 1999)

Rose Carol Washton Long, Matthew Baigell, Milly Heyd (eds.) *Jewish Dimensions in Modern Visual Culture: Antisemitism, Assimilation, Affirmation* (Brandeis University Press, 2010)

Carol Zemel, *Looking Jewish: Visual Culture and the Modern Diaspora* (Indiana University Press, 2012)

Mark Gelber, Sami Sjoberg, *Jewish Aspects in Avant-Garde: Between Rebellion and Revelation* (De Gruyter, 2017)

### ***'Jewish' collecting***

A lacuna our project will seek to fill.

### ***Jewish philanthropy and activism, at home and abroad***

Luisa Levi d'Ancona, 'Paths of Jewish integration: upper middle class families in 19<sup>th</sup> century France, Italy and England', Dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Cambridge, 2004

Rainer Liedtke, *Jewish welfare in Hamburg and Manchester c.1850-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998). Useful introduction to the urban context, very important for many of the cousinhood. The comparative perspective is helpful.

Abigail Green, 'Spirituality, tradition and gender: Judith Montefiore, the very Model of Modern Jewish Womanhood', *History of European Ideas* 40 (2014).

Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore. Jewish Hero, Imperial Liberator* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010). Especially relevant to the theme of philanthropy, but in fact an excellent general introduction to the Jewish 19<sup>th</sup> century from a suitably elite, Anglo-Jewish perspective.

Abigail Green, 'Religious Internationalisms', in Glenda Sluga, Sunil Amrith and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalism; a Twentieth Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). General overview, focusing on the Jewish case, from c.1840-1948.

### ***Zionism, Anti-Zionism, Palestine***

#### **Suggested reading on Philosemitism:**

Donald Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism. Lord Shaftesbury and evangelical support for a Jewish homeland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Excellent, but rather detailed study of this issue. Good for those interested in Christian theology and, rather differently, for those with no understanding of it.

Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (London: Collins, 1978). Gives a very good introduction to the engagement of Jewish elites with early Zionist activity in Palestine.

Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005). Edward Said meets E.P. Thompson, good on popular culture especially and takes it up to the Mandate era.

#### **On Zionism:**

David Engel, *Zionism* (London: Routledge, 2008). Like Stanislawski a useful, pithy, general introduction.

Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Stephan Wendehorst, *British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State (1936-1956)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) Too long, but more pertinent.

### ***Antisemitism in British Society***

Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society (1876-1939)* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979). Opened up this field.

Antony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: a History of Anti-Semitism in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

William D. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism. Admiration and Support in the English-speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999). Takes the contrary view in a rather polemical way, as ever, but a useful counterpoint, worth reading especially in conjunction with work on philanthropy.