



Jewish Country Houses

Report of Activities 2023

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Overview

This has been another busy and productive year for all members of the Jewish Country Houses project, as our focus begins to shift more clearly from research towards publication, public engagement and impact. Many thanks are due to our tireless project administrator, Briony Truscott for making all this possible.

Our mobile exhibition, *Country Houses, Jewish Homes* has now been displayed in four different venues: outside in the gardens of Gunnersbury Park and Hughenden Manor, and inside at Crawley Museum (with additional material of local interest) and Ightham Mote in Kent. The dress produced by the Worth Park Historic Costume Group was also displayed in Crawley. At Ightham Mote, our exhibition provided the backdrop for a pioneering display that highlighted the hidden Jewish history of this property, supplemented by specially commissioned installation by sculptor Anish Kapoor and composer Brian Elias. The public response has been extraordinarily positive and huge congratulations are due to the National Trust's Amanda-Jane Doran for her inspiring work on this project.



The exhibition at Ightham Mote

A programme of JCH visits and online lectures organised by Jewish Renaissance testifies to the growing public interest in our work. We have also made good progress towards other outputs. Our flagship book, *Jewish Country*

Houses (eds. Juliet Carey and Abigail Green), is now with the publishers; two further volumes edited by Silvia Davoli and Tom Stammers are now relatively close to completion; and a fourth – on *Jewish Business Dynasties*, edited by Jaclyn Granick, Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah and Rebecca Kobrin – is well under way.



The conference group in Brno, May

With the support of The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), 2023 has been the year in which all members of the project team have thought more explicitly about how the Holocaust impacted Jewish country houses, about Jewish country houses as sites of Holocaust history and memory, and about the almost complete erasure of that heritage in eastern Europe.

This path-breaking work has been led by Jaclyn Granick. It has resulted in a three-day conference in Brno, Czech Republic – held in partnership with the National Heritage Institute NPÚ Czech Republic; a National Trust training day at the Wiener Library in London; a programme of related site-specific training, and a series of presentations to the National Trust Curators' Conference in Bristol.

In other ways too, the project continues to attract interest from a broader network of researchers: Sietske van der Veen has now completed her thesis, which includes a survey of Dutch Jewish country houses; two members of our group of affiliated graduate students are now in the final stages of their theses, and two more have started work this year in Oxford and Durham.

Finally, we are fortunate to have secured a further two years' funding to secure the legacy of this project. In short, there is every reason to believe it will continue to go from strength to strength.

Funding applications

Our application to the University of Oxford's John Fell Fund for "Beyond Jewish Country Houses" was successful. This grant will enable us to continue our impact and engagement work with existing partners; hold a conference on "Jews, Liberalism and the Land" at Villa Montesca in Italy in 2025; to launch a further wave of activity around Jewish Antiquity Collecting through two exploratory workshops and a conference; and to make new grant applications.

A further grant from the Martin J. Gross Family Foundation will support publication of both volumes emanating from the Collecting and Material Culture strand of the project: *Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market c.1860-1940: Negotiating Cultural Modernity* and *The Contours of Jewish Collecting: Art and Identity in Europe, 1860-1940*.

Research

PI **Abigail Green's** efforts have focused on securing the John Fell Award; on supporting the work of Co-I Jaclyn Granick on the conference at Brno; and on editing our flagship book project, *Jewish Country Houses*, which was submitted to Profile Books in October 2023. In this context she has led the writing of the introduction (a team effort), co-written a chapter on the Salomons Estate (with Tom

Stammers), and an American Postscript (with Juliet Carey), translated two essays, and completed a short overview of sites of interest in Europe. She continues to produce high-profile book reviews and shorter pieces related to the project and also presented the project at the National Trust Cultural Heritage conference in Bristol, and at the Wiener Library training day.

With the support of Briony Truscott and Tom Stammers, Abigail also compiled a Historic Report for presentation to the City of London by Bevis Marks Synagogue, to support the application for a new Conservation Area that would better protect this Grade 1 listed building from further loss of light resulting from the construction of tall buildings in the surrounding area.

In 2023, **Co-I Jaclyn Granick** co-wrote with Tom Stammers and delivered a paper on "Philanthropy, Jewishness, and Cultural Heritage, 1850-1950: The Activism of the British Cousinhood in the Round," both for Modern Jewish history seminar of the Masaryk Institute and Czech Academy of Sciences in February and for the Jewish Renaissance and the Lyons Learning Project in May. Jaclyn also attended a Symposium on Jews and Citizenship at the Katz Centre for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in March, where she circulated a draft of this paper and discussed civic activism across political lines.

Jaclyn did the bulk of curating and convening two large-scale JCH events related to the Holocaust in 2023: our conference in Brno and our National Trust Training Day at the Wiener Library (see below). After our conference in Brno, Jaclyn presented the project and the ways it is connected to the Holocaust to the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies. At the NT Training Day, she presented a paper on European Holocaust Memory and Jewish Country Houses.

Jaclyn has continued to work towards her second monograph, *Jewish Women, Human Rights*, visiting archives at Swarthmore, LSE,

and Southampton, and giving new research papers at the conference of the British and Irish Association for Jewish Studies in July and at the Association for Jewish Studies in December. New understandings developed within the project of the relevance of social class to Jewish history, and of the multidimensional nature of Jewish philanthropy inform this book project at all levels. Elite Jewish women of the Jewish Country House will be present in the book explicitly through a chapter on the “salon,” but also across every other chapter, helping us think differently about the possibilities of Jewish women’s activism and the origins of human rights. Her work on Holocaust, heritage, and memory within the project will also support the long 20th century timeframe of the book.

Co-I Tom Stammers has used his research leave to work on the two volumes he is co-editing with Silvia Davoli: *Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market c.1860-1940: Negotiating Cultural Modernity* (which will appear with Bloomsbury) and *The Contours of Jewish Collecting: Art and Identity in Europe, 1860-1940* (which will appear with Harvey Miller/Brepols). For the two books he has been working on longer historiographical essays around the theme of Jewish collections and collecting. He is also working on a new monograph looking at the construction of the Jewish heritage in early twentieth-century Britain by foregrounding the work of different kinds of historic sites, preservation societies, works of art and collections (local, national and imperial). To do this research, Tom has worked in archives across Britain (including UCL, Kew, London Metropolitan Archives, Whitechapel Art Gallery, Tate Britain, The Royal Academy, Palestine Exploration Fund, Southampton Special Collections, Birmingham) as well as in Europe (at the Ets Haim and Biblioteca Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam) and in the United States (at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, and Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati).

Tom has also presented the project with Silvia Davoli at a heritage conference in Trieste in September 2023 and together they have developed a new collaboration around Jewish stories with the V&A. They are starting to plan ahead for the new strand based around Jewish collectors of archaeology and antiquities. Tom has developed an ERC grant application on Hebraism and Hellenism with his colleague in Classics, Nora Goldsmidt, in Durham.

Project Researcher and Curator Juliet Carey has completed editorial work, with Abigail Green, on *Jewish Country Houses*. She has written the chapter on Waddesdon Manor, and (with Abigail) the American Postscript, for which she travelled to the US to visit Oheka Castle, Fallingwater and the Untermeyer gardens. Her ongoing work has included preparing for the Hélène Binet and Pablo Bronstein JCH exhibitions at Waddesdon.

Project Researcher and Curator Silvia Davoli is now working three days a week as Curator of Strawberry Hill House. This sits well with her on-going commitments to the project. As part of her editing of the volumes *Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market c.1860-1940: Negotiating Cultural Modernity* and *The Contours of Jewish Collecting: Art and Identity in Europe, 1860-1940* and her research on the Stern family, who resided at Strawberry Hill between 1800 and 1900, Silvia has begun to conduct further research on Jewish collectors and dealers with a particular interest in non-classical archaeology, specifically Byzantine but also from the Far East. This theme also relates to her research on Gottlieb Leitner.

Together with Luisa Levi d'Ancona, Silvia has undertaken the compilation of case studies concerning Italian Jewish country houses, with a particular emphasis on cultural and socio-economic philanthropy as the primary selection criteria. Specifically, this research has delved into the noteworthy instances of the Franchetti and Hirschel de Minerbi families.

In September 2023, Luisa, Silvia, and Tom Stammers were invited by the University of

Trieste to present part of the JCH project and in particular their research on Jewish collecting and Italian cultural philanthropy within the framework of the [SPAZIDENTITA Project](#) - a European project dedicated to the formation of national spaces and symbolism during and after the unification of Italy.

As for Silvia's research on Dr. Gottlieb Leitner, a Hungarian linguist whose collection of Gandharan Art was formed in India and displayed at his home in Woking, the article she co-authored with Dr Marcus Roberts is now completed and ready for submission to peer-reviewed journals, specifically targeting Nineteenth Century Studies. Silvia is currently completing a survey of documentation at the British Library related to the India Office, preparing for a study mission to Lahore scheduled for June 2024.

Project Researcher Luisa Levi d'Ancona Modena focused her research on the Villa Mayer paper she presented in Brno at the conference on JCH and the Holocaust. She then researched and presented a paper on Jewish collecting in Italy at the conference in Trieste. She has written since an article on the latter to be published in the volume edited by Silvia Davoli and Thomas Stammers, and is conducting research on Jewish country houses in Italy, in Israeli and Italian archives.

Affiliated Researchers

We have now gathered a small group of affiliated researchers. **Dr. Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah**, now Assistant Professor in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Groningen, has been awarded a Veni grant from the Dutch Research Fund for the project ['Optimising Orientalism? Rethinking the Global Jewish Elite'](#).

Cyril Grange continued in 2023 his work on the spoliation of the assets of the upper-class Jewish families of Paris between 1940 and 1944. In particular, he looked at what happened to the Jewish country houses of

these families, most of which housed high-ranking German officers and their staff.

John Hilary delivered the 2023 summer lecture of the Leo Baeck Institute, London, on the theme of 'German Jews, English Gentry: The Messel Family and the Cultural Expression of a Changing Identity'. In addition to completing his essay for the collection coming out of the project's 2022 Paris conference, he has submitted the text of a new book on the German-Jewish art collectors of Edwardian Britain for publication.

Dr. Alice Legé has recently been appointed Head of Curatorial at the Montmartre Museum, Paris, and co-curated the exhibition "The Jews, the Medici, and the Ghetto of Florence" at Palazzo Pitti. The exhibition catalogue adds to a series of publications interweaving art history and Jewish studies. Focused on provenance research, Alice's latest article delves into the rediscovery of Renoir's portrait of Irene Cahen d'Anvers in Germany in 1946.

Dr. Mia Kuritzén Löwengart (Uppsala University) has presented preliminary results of her work on Jewish country houses in Sweden at the European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC) in Gothenburg, and has written a draft for an article (for the *Journal of Scandinavian Jewish Studies*). She has also initiated a collaboration with the Jewish Museum in Stockholm, relating to their project "Traces of Jewish life in Värmland".

Sietske van der Veen, Postdoctoral Researcher in Jewish History at the University of Amsterdam, completed her dissertation which includes a chapter on Dutch Jewish country houses. She will defend her dissertation in a public ceremony at Utrecht University in May 2024. Currently she is working on an article for an international journal about Jewish country houses in the Netherlands (1870-1940).

Supporting the Work of Doctoral Students

The JCH project now acts as a focus for a small group of doctoral students: **Cynthia Cheloff**, now editing her final draft; CDA student **Isobel Muir** submitted her thesis in January on Jewish collectors and donors at the National Gallery London (co-supervised by Tom and Susannah Avery Quash).

Friederike Schwelle is entering the final stretch of her thesis on Jewish histories of Egyptology and excavation in Britain and Germany, in a CDA with the Egyptian Exploration Society).

Matilda Eriksson (AHRC-funded CDA with the Liebermann-Villa Berlin) is now in the second year of her project comparing the histories of the rural retreats created by Max Liebermann and his Swedish friend Anders Zorn.

Colette Bellingham-Kennedy (AHRC-funded CDA at Waddesdon), with a focus on the history of photography is also now in her 2nd year).

This academic year, we welcome **Charlotte Canizo**, who has just begun an AHRC-funded CDA in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust, and **Constance Booker** who will be starting her doctoral work on plutocratic taste around 1900 under Tom's supervision, funded by the Northern Bridge consortium. It is very exciting to see a new generation of scholars embrace different aspects of our research agenda.

Project Events

In May, we convened a three-day international conference in Brno, Czechia, in partnership with the Czech National Heritage Institute, “**Jewish Country Houses and the Holocaust in History and Memory.**” It was supported by the Conference for Material Claims against Germany as part of our educator training grant.



Workshop at the Brno conference, May

Sited at the heart of Europe, this conference was an opportunity to bring together houses and research from across all of Europe—we heard presentations on, and/or had representatives from, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Ukraine, by academic researchers and heritage professionals. It was also an opportunity to reflect deeply on the 20th century history of Jewish country houses, their people, their communities, and their memory. Second and third generation survivors were present to discuss their activism around their families and former properties.

We visited the Brno synagogue and three once-Jewish villas appropriated during the Holocaust which now collectively are the tourist crown jewel of the city of Brno, and saw a live performance on one family's

experience of the Holocaust in connection with Brno. Fuller conference reports can be read [here](#) and [here](#).

In November, we reprised the Brno theme but adjusted it as a National Trust training day, "Teaching the Holocaust through Jewish Country Houses." With 50 attendees from across the NT, from volunteers to senior curators, from North Ireland to London, we trained a diverse group of heritage educators on ways to think about the Holocaust in a British country house context.

We held this event at the Wiener Holocaust Library, a setting new to most of the participants but central to all Holocaust research and memory in the UK, and were warmly welcomed by its director, Dr Toby Simpson, who spoke to us about the Wiener Library's own connections to the subject at hand. JCH project leaders and Daria Martin (Oxford) provided the rest of the day's content reflecting on Britain's unique relationship to the Holocaust and what it feels like to be a British Jew after the Holocaust.



Training Day at the Wiener Library, London

This training day featured a workshop in which participants discussed encountering and teaching the Holocaust in a supportive space, and many seemed newly transformed or determined afterwards to return to their houses and collections with new eyes and fresh ideas.

Publications

Jewish Country Houses, eds. Juliet Carey and Abigail Green, Profile Books/National Trust (UK), and Brandeis University Press (US). In press.

Abigail Green, "The Complicated Heritage of the Jewish Country House: Transcending Traditional Heritage Categories", in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Religion and Heritage in Contemporary Europe* eds. Todd H. Weir and Lieke Wijnia, (Bloomsbury Academic: London) 77-87.

Abigail Green, "Belonging to No Nation". *London Review of Books* 02/03/2023 (Review of Jessica M. Marglin, *The Shamama Case: Contesting Citizenship Across the Mediterranean*).

Abigail Green, "The (Railroad) Baron" *Jewish Review of Books*, Winter 2023 (Review of Mathias Lehmann, *Baron Maurice de Hirsch and the Jewish Nineteenth Century*)

Jaclyn Granick, Review of Laura Hobson Faure. *A "Jewish Marshall Plan."* Indiana University Press, 2022. In *AJS Review* 47, no. 2 (2023)

Tom Stammers, "Othering the Ex-Libris: Israel Solomons (1860-1923) and the Invention of the Jewish Bookplate," in *Where Words and Images Meet*. Ludmilla Jordanova and Florence Grant (Bloomsbury Visual Arts: London), 37-50

Tom Stammers, "Patriarch's Society", *Apollo*, CXCVII (717), (2023), 146-55

Tom Stammers, "The Club for Unconventional and International Women who were Ahead of their Time", exhibition review for *Apollo* website, 26 October 2023

Work with Project Partners

National Trust

This year our partnership with the National Trust has gone from strength to strength, with the support of Nicola Froggatt and Lucy Porten. It is testimony to this achievement that Abigail Green and Juliet Carey were asked to present the project to the National Trust conference in Bristol 'Curating our Cultural Heritage: 2023 and Beyond', and that Ruth Ur – who had been a keynote speaker at our conference in Brno – was invited to present her work inspired by the famous photograph of a menorah taken opposite the Nazi Party headquarters in Kiel in this context.

Five National Trust curators joined us in Brno, and many more were able to attend a training day as part of our programme "Teaching the Holocaust through the Jewish Country House" at the Wiener Library.

Ightham Mote was the first of our NT partner houses to show the mobile exhibition. Amanda-Jane Doran, Collections and House Manager reports:

"The Jewish Country House project offered us an important opportunity to investigate the hidden Jewish heritage at Ightham Mote. We uncovered a surprising and multi layered narrative spanning the 19th and 20th centuries, which featured significant Jewish genealogical research and Nazi refugee stories. Ightham Mote's family history appealed on a personal level to our visitors and dovetailed perfectly with the big historical narrative written by Abigail Green and Marcus Roberts. The response we had from our visitors was very moving, it was a real learning experience for them. We arranged musical events over several days focussing on Jewish composers, including Brian Elias, who opened the exhibition and contributed to performances and talks. Jewish cultural and religious groups made many visits and as a result the connections between them were reinforced".

Strawberry Hill House

Plans include the opening of the exhibition dedicated to the work of photographer H  l  ne Binet in September 2024, accompanied by the mobile exhibition "Country Houses, Jewish Homes". September will also see Strawberry Hill House host a visit by AEPJ members during their ERJH Incubator.

Waddesdon Manor

The project to digitise Ferdinand de Rothschild's writings and to make this material available to the public with editorial commentary is back on track after delays caused by reduced resources and changes to the programme at Waddesdon. The material has been digitised and the plan is now being finalised for an external scholar to edit 'Reminiscences'; Colette Warbrick is setting up arrangements for the necessary functionality and, with short introductory texts about the main documents from Juliet Carey, the website can still be launched in June as originally scheduled.

Planning for the Waddesdon leg of the H  l  ne Binet exhibition, the exhibition of Pablo Bronstein's drawings and Waddesdon's iteration of the JCH mobile exhibition - all for 2025 - is now in train.

AEPJ

Phase 1 of the "Palaces, Villas and Country Houses" route is complete, and we hope to expand the route to include a more complete range of properties in 2024.

We are excited to be hosting the Jewish Cultural Routes incubator in September 2024. This will be an opportunity to showcase the work of the project in Waddesdon and at Strawberry Hill, and to consolidate our partnership for the future. Plans for this exciting event are already underway.

Work with UK Heritage Organisations

J-Trails

Marcus Roberts led a training session for staff and volunteers at Ightham Mote and Gunnersbury House, and gave a talk at the national training day at the Weiner Library. He also acted as consultant for the National Trust's podcast episode on the Cedar Children on [National Trust Podcast: The Cedar Children on Apple Podcasts](#).



Training session at Ightham Mote

Victoria & Albert Museum

Tom and Silvia have embarked on a new collaboration with David Feldman, Christopher Wilk, Alice Minter, Oliver Cox and Simon Spier related to Jewish collections and connections at the V&A. The aim is to engage curators from across museum departments, as well as in institutions elsewhere in London, to join with academic researchers in exploring the intersections between Jewish individuals, and Jewish history, and the development of the V&A. They are currently planning a symposium in November 2024 entitled 'The V&A and its Jewish Heritage: Objects and Stories', which will act as a sequel to the book launch of the flagship Jewish Country Houses publication the night before. We hope that the symposium will engage new audiences and also lead to a short, illustrated publication.

Holocaust Educational Trust

We are delighted that Charlotte Canizo has now begun work on her PhD which will explore the role of the child in Jewish humanitarianism in Britain and France from 1903 to 1948. She is co-supervised by Dr Jenny Carson.

Crawley Museum / Worth Park History Society

This year saw the planting of a JCH cedar tree at the restored gardens of Worth Park, in Crawley, West Sussex which was recently restored as a historic garden where a Jewish country house once stood.

The Worth Park History Society has been studying the history of the site and works closely with the Jewish Country Houses project. The Society sewed a costume for the Jewish Country Houses exhibition which was displayed at Crawley Museum in April-May 2023.



The JCH cedar tree at Worth Park

Work with Heritage Organisations across Europe

Liebermann-Villa

We are working with Dr. Lucy Wasensteiner, the director of the Liebermann-Villa on a number of different projects, including a CDA based at the Villa. Lucy has contributed a case study chapter to *Jewish Country Houses*, and presented at the conference in Brno in May. The Villa was a focus for the H el ene Binet photography project and will be a venue for the associated photography exhibition in 2025.

Museo Ebraico di Roma

Ongoing collaboration includes an international conference on Jewish archaeological collecting to be held in 2026 between Rome and Oxford in collaboration with Hertziana, the Warburg Institute, and the Freud Museum in London. This collaboration builds on the work done by the Museo Ebraico in partnership with the Museo Barracco di Roma on the figure of Jewish archaeologist Ludwig Pollak.

National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic (Villa Stiassni)

The National Heritage Institute hosted our conference in Brno in May 2023, and is a sponsor of the H el ene Binet photography project. Plans are now underway to show the exhibition in Brno and Prague.

UrKultur

Ruth Ur was a keynote speaker on the subject of engaging memory through art at the Brno conference, and again at the National Trust curators' conference in Bristol.

Villa Montesca

A formal agreement has been reached with the Fondazione La Montesca, the former residence of Leopoldo Franchetti and his wife Alice Hallgarten. The villa now serves as a centre for

the promotion of studies and research around primary and secondary education, inspired by Montessori's activities which were sponsored and supported by the Franchettis. Within the framework of the JCH project, and in partnership with Professor Tobias Brinkmann Penn State University, we will organize the international conference on "Jews, Liberalism, and the Land," scheduled for June 11-13, 2025.