



Jewish Country Houses

Objects, Networks, People

Report of Activities: 2021

www.jch.history.ox.ac.uk

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Overview

2021 has been another action-packed year for the Jewish Country Houses project. Half-way through our AHRC funding, we are well on the way to achieving key outputs: a digital exhibition on “The Unexpected Jewish Past of Strawberry Hill House” is now online; Phase I of our “Palaces, Villas and Country Houses” route has been integrated into the Council of Europe accredited “European Routes of Jewish Culture”; the mobile JCH exhibition is entering the final design stage; and we can now confirm that our flagship book project, *Jewish Country Houses*, will be published by Profile Books/National Trust in the UK, and by Brandeis University Press in the US.

It is exciting to see this work generating publicity for the project: Abigail spoke to Radio 4 *Sunday* about our work with Historic England; the *Times of Israel* published a feature-length article on the JCH route in September; and the German-language magazine *Aufbau* is currently finalising an entire issue devoted to the project, which will appear early in 2022.



Above: the online heritage route in partnership with the AEPJ

Project research is now well underway, with some exciting publications in the pipeline. In 2022, a special issue of the *Journal of the History of Collections*, edited by Tom Stammers and John Hilary, will showcase some of the work now emerging through the Collecting Culture strand of the

project. A special issue of the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* edited by Jaclyn Granick and Abigail Green, also scheduled for 2022, initiates the work of the Politics and Philanthropy strand, with a particular focus on gender. As our work progresses, the potential for cross-fertilisation between these different strands is becoming clearer, and new avenues for research such as hunting have begun to emerge.

Ultimately, however, the great strength of the Jewish Country Houses project lies in the dynamic interaction between university researchers and the heritage sector. Here the pandemic continues to pose significant challenges, but we are working hard to renew our collaboration with key heritage partners and a JCH visit to Berlin in early November underlined the benefits of doing this in person. We have now held one major conference (on Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market) virtually, but we remain focused on trying to hold future project events in situ.

Funding

A further generous donation from the Martin J. Gross Family Foundation towards our flagship book publication *Jewish Country Houses* (eds. Juliet Carey and Abigail Green) has enabled us to secure publishers in both the UK and the US. We are enormously grateful to the Foundation for their enthusiastic support of this project, and on-going commitment to it.

As in previous years we were able to supplement AHRC funding within Oxford through: (1) a University of Oxford Knowledge-Exchange Seed Grant (£3,985.00) to support “Teaching the Holocaust through the Jewish Country House” in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust and J-Trails and (2) a University of Oxford Knowledge-Exchange Innovation Fund Grant (£5,000) in partnership with urKultur for “Artists to Fill the Gap: Commemorating Walter Rathenau in a Jewish Country House”. We are now

seeking additional funding for this collaboration, which will focus on an artistic intervention at Schloss Freienwalde near Berlin.

An award from the Claims Conference has now been confirmed. This grant - for "Teaching the Holocaust through the Jewish Country House" - will support (1) an event in Brno currently scheduled for March 2023 entitled "The Jewish Country House and the Holocaust in History and Memory", which did not form part of our original AHRC funded programme of events (2) volunteer training in UK properties and (3) additional administrative support over an 18-month period.

Once again, project researchers have made 3 further successful applications for AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award funding: (1) *Jewish Subjectivity and Material Self-fashioning: Ferdinand de Rothschild's Waddesdon Manor* (Oxford/Waddesdon) (2) *Private actors, public memory and provenance research: Contextualising the Liebermann-Villa Berlin* (Oxford/Liebermann-Villa, currently being advertised) and (3) *Setting the Holocaust in Context: British Jewish Humanitarianism in the 20th century* (Cardiff/Holocaust Educational Trust, currently being advertised).

Research

This was the second full year of our AHRC funded research project.

As PI, *Abigail Green's* efforts have focused on editing our flagship book project with Juliet Carey; on finalising the content of the Mobile Exhibition in collaboration with *Marcus Roberts* (J-Trails) and *Tate Greenhalgh* (NT); on supervising a pilot teacher-training project in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust; and on developing the 'Palaces, Villas and Country Houses' route, with the support of project administrator *Briony Truscott*.

Abigail has been working collaboratively with *Marcus Roberts* (J-Trails) on the question of land, aristocratic status and Jewish emancipation in Britain. Together they presented "A Jewish Landed Interest?" at an online workshop entitled *The British Aristocracy in the Modern World*, organised by Christopher Ridgeway and Miles Taylor at the Humboldt University in Berlin.

Abigail has also been working on Vera Salomons. A co-authored article on Vera Salomons and the Kotel is now forthcoming (see Publications). Together with Chris Jones, she has also written an entry on Vera for the Jewish Women's Archive. She continues to produce book reviews and shorter pieces related to the project.

Abigail and Co-I *Tom Stammers* have been working collaboratively on several projects. Together they are developing a journal article provisionally entitled "Hunting with Dogs: a Jewish Past-time", which they presented to "Hunting and the Country House", an interdisciplinary research seminar organised through the Encounter Network. This is an under-studied area, which is central to our topic, and we are keen to work it up into a publication.

Additionally, Abigail and Tom have delivered joint research presentations on 'Jewish Country Houses, Collections and National Memory' to the Oxford Jewish Congregation, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, the Association of Jewish Refugees, Belmont Synagogue, the Oxford branch of the National Trust, and the B'nai B'rith UK Jewish Heritage Days.

This year *Tom Stammers* began planning for the book that he intends to work on during his research leave in 2022-23. It will be focused on the cultural lives of the Cousinhood, looking at major Jewish families in early twentieth-century Britain, including the Monds, the Samuels and the Montagus. He has begun identifying relevant material in public and private ownership, and making contacts with

relevant libraries, archives, houses and museums.

Tom also co-edited a *Journal of the History of Collections* special issue with John Hilary (see Publications), and contributed an article on the Mond. The issue includes eight contributions from scholars affiliated to the project in Britain and in Europe, dealing with diverse Jewish collectors like the Kann brothers, Felix Bamberger, Ernest Cassel and the Sterns of Strawberry Hill (from Silvia Davoli). It is due to appear in the first few months of 2022.

During the year, he was asked to present his research in several national and international settings, including a lecture on Jewish collectors for a course run by the Victoria & Albert Museum Academy, and a keynote on the Mond family for the conference 'Collection, Modernism and Social Identity' organised by the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin in September.

He organised a panel on 'Jewish Visual Culture in Modern Europe (1840-1940)' as part of the Association for Art History in April 2021. It featured five papers and attracted substantial discussion, including two offers from publishers to help convert the papers into a published volume.

At Durham University, Tom Stammers co-organised a lecture series on 'Race, Religion and Difference in the Nineteenth Century' with David Feldman (Birkbeck) and Ella Dzelzainis (Newcastle) which has featured papers on Jewish topics.

Co-I *Jaclyn Granick* formally started her AHRC funded work on the project in September 2021. One of her first tasks is to finish editing and writing the introduction for the Special Issue in the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* on "Gendering Jewish Inter/Nationalism" which now has a JCH component, and she is leading the organising of the Jewish Business Dynasties conference. She was also awarded funding to supervise a collaborative doctoral award PhD student on the subject of British Jewish

humanitarianism in the 20th century, which will centrally include the Holocaust and the role of Jewish country houses and families. She gave a new paper in October launching the Jewish Philanthropy Research Initiative seminar of Temple University's Feinstein Centre and University of Pennsylvania's Katz Center in which she introduced the Jewish Country House project to this research group.

Project Researcher *Silvia Davoli* has been developing the Italian dimension of the project. Working in collaboration with Luisa Levi d'Ancona, plans are in development to further develop the Italian case study: in particular, to publish a book on the Italian Jewish Country Houses and to organise two conferences, one on Jews, Liberalism, and the Land at the Villa Montesca in 2023 and one in Rome, at the Museo Ebraico the same year, on Jewish collectors of classical and non-classical archeology.

Silvia has recently completed an essay on the Stern family for the forthcoming special issue dedicated to German Jewish collectors in England edited by Dr Stammers for the *Journal of the History of Collections*. While searching for the article, she found new material on Ernesta Hirschel Stern held by a family member. These are new photographic materials this time relating to Ernesta's mother, Clementina de Minerbi, and the Hirschel de Minerbi's country house at Precenicco in Friuli Venezia Giulia; a photographic memoir on the Empress Eugenie and albums of Parisian portraits drawn by Ernesta, an amateur artist as well as a photographer.

The exhibition 'The Unexpected Jewish Past of Strawberry Hill', for the European Days of Jewish Culture continues to be available [online](#) on the Strawberry Hill House & Garden museum's website. Concomitantly Dr Davoli has also organized a small in-focus exhibition set up in the Holbein Chamber at Strawberry Hill on John Braham, Lady Waldegrave's father.

As archives began to reopen, Dr Davoli was able to resume her visits to the archives in Paris (College de France and BNF) and Cambridge (The Churchill Archives Centre) and to collect new primary sources on Leitner.

Juliet Carey published an article on the project for Royal Oak [journal](#) with a related report on their website. With Abigail Green she finalised arrangements with our publishers, Profile and Brandeis University Press, and began the process of editing the case study chapters for *Jewish Country Houses*. Juliet also scoped the archival sources that she will consult from January 2022 in preparation for her own chapter for the JCH book.

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 working on a mapping project; *John Hilary* has published *From Refugees to Royalty: the remarkable story of the Messel family of Nymans* and worked with Tom Stammers on the 'Bildung beyond Borders' special issue, co-writing the introduction and contributing an article on the Hirsch collections; *Dr. Alice Legé* is working on a case study chapter for *Jewish Country Houses*; *Dr. Luisa Levi d'Ancona Modena* is working with Silva Davoli on the Italian dimension of the project, writing a case study chapter, and has contributed articles to both the "Bildung beyond Borders" and "Gendering Jewish Inter/Nationalism" special issues; *Dr. Mia Kuritzén Löwengart* (Uppsala University) has begun to develop a Swedish dimension to the project, building on the research project she is leading on "Jewish Economic Activity and Stockholm's Transformation into a Modern Capital, 1860s-1920s".

Supporting the Work of Doctoral Students

The JCH project now acts as a focus for a small group of doctoral students: *Cynthia*

Cheloff, now entering her 3rd year; *Colette Bellingham-Kennedy* (AHRC-funded CDA at Waddesdon) and *Isobel Muir* (AHRC-funded CDA at the National Gallery) now entering their second year; and *Sietske van der Veen* (Utrecht) who will be visiting Oxford as an affiliated student next year.

Friederike Schwelle has begun her PhD at Durham under the supervision of Tom Stammers, and is currently applying for funding with the support of the Egyptian Exploration Society, which has substantial archives and collections.

In addition, Abigail Green and Tom Stammers worked with Oliver Cox (Oxford), Ewald Frie (Tübingen) and Daniel Menning (Tübingen) to organise and lead a series of research workshops for graduate students/ECRs based at the Universities of Durham, Tübingen and Oxford entitled *Historic Houses in European Context*.

Project Events



Tom Stammers and Silvia Davoli organised two workshops related to 'Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market (1850-1930)'. These workshops took place online and were divided between September and December, with a mixture of closed panels and keynotes that were streamed to a bigger audience. The December event was prefaced by a series of public online talks organised in association with London Art Week over three nights: Charles Dellheim presented his new book 'Belonging and Betrayal' on Jewish dealers, Jean Strouse discussed her work on the Wertheimer family's portraits by John Singer Sargent, and there was a roundtable on the heritage

of Jewish dealers in London. Each event attracted between 250-350 attendees and video recordings will be available to all via London Art Week's YouTube channel.

Seminar Activity

The *Jewish Country Houses Remote Seminar* continued in a more limited form, with occasional meetings intended to promote discussion among a more specialist audience. In December 2021, we hosted an online talk by Professor Cyril Grange, CNRS-Sorbonne Université: 'Jewish Country Houses in France (1890-1939): mapping and typology'. Professor Grange has been a long-standing and invaluable supporter of the project, for which we would like to extend our thanks.

Publications

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

Generous support from the Martin J. Gross Family Foundation has enabled us to secure publishers in both the UK and the US. Individual authors have begun to submit case study chapters, and editorial work is now well under way. Hélène Binet was able to complete the photography of several UK houses in 2021 (Hughenden, Nymans, Strawberry Hill), and Villa Montesca in Italy. In November, Abigail Green and Juliet Carey accompanied her to Berlin, where she photographed Schloss Freienwalde, the Rathenau tomb, and the Liebermann-Villa. We would like to thank Dr. Reinhard Schmook for his warm hospitality at Schloss Freienwalde, and to congratulate Hélène on her Royal Academy exhibition *Light Lines*, which opened in October 2021. Her involvement in the project is hugely exciting.

'Bildung Beyond Borders: German-Jewish Collectors Outside Germany, 1870-1940', Journal of the History of

Collections 2022, 34:3, eds. Tom Stammers and John Hilary.

Tom Stammers: **'Alfred Mond, Lord Melchett (1868-1938): Renewing a collecting legacy'** in 'Bildung Beyond Borders: German-Jewish Collectors Outside Germany, 1870-1940', Journal of the History of Collections 2022, 34:3.

Silvia Davoli: **"I shall now go on selling as I can to these people": Joseph Duveen and the making of the Stern-Michelham collection'** in 'Bildung Beyond Borders: German-Jewish Collectors Outside Germany, 1870-1940', Journal of the History of Collections 2022, 34:3.

Abigail Green and Peter Bergamin, **"Vera Salomons and the Kotel: Reading International Jewish History through a Jewish Country House"**, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 2022.

Hélène Binet Photography Project

With Abigail Green and Juliet Carey, Hélène Binet made progress on her photography campaigns, with visits to Hughenden, Nymans and Strawberry Hill in the UK, to Villa Montesca in Italy, and to Berlin, where she photographed Villa Liebermann, Schloss Freienwalde, and the Rathenau Mausoleum.

Exhibitions of Hélène's photography are being planned for Strawberry Hill House (Autumn 2024), Villa Liebermann (Spring 2025) and Waddesdon Manor (2025)

National Trust Partnership

We are now in the process of renewing our partnership work with the National Trust, in ways that reflect the severe and on-going challenges posed by COVID-19 in the heritage sector. This period has allowed us to identify several additional National Trust properties relevant to our work: Ascott, Clandon Park, Croft Castle, Ightham Mote, Box Hill, Highdown Hill and Wicken Fen.



In October we held an NT away day at Oxford (above), which allowed us to reconnect with property curators and staff. This was a great success, and we are particularly grateful to Rebecca Abrams for taking our NT friends and colleagues on a guided tour of some of the Ashmolean's Jewish treasures. A Trusted Source article on "Jewish Stories at our Places" produced by Abigail Green speaks to the broader range of experiences and stories now captured by the project, including Highdown's Jewish cockneys, Hannah Gubbay's Sephardic heritage, and Waddesdon's Cedar Boys and Girls. Going forward, we hope in particular to develop the Holocaust dimension of this work.

Strawberry Hill House Partnership

In March 2021 the online exhibition 'The Unexpected Past of Strawberry Hill' <https://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/the-unexpected-jewish-past-of-strawberry-hill-house/> was inaugurated, followed, in September, by a public lecture on Lady Waldegrave to celebrate the European Days of Jewish Culture. This lecture was delivered by Nino Strachey, a descendant of Lady Waldegrave who is currently writing a book on her ancestor. In conjunction with the lecture we also had a small in-focus exhibition set up in the Holbein Chamber displaying Lady Waldegrave's father, John Braham's, coat of arms and some of his 19th century portraits. In June 2021, H el ene Binet photographed the house for *Jewish Country Houses*.

Waddesdon Manor Partnership

The closure of the house for part of the season limited what could be done in terms of physical engagement and events, and uncertainty caused by the pandemic made planning difficult. However, Waddesdon was able to benefit from the programme of on-line seminars and workshop, including the Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market conference. Pippa Shirley collaborated with the Jewish Museum, London, on an on-line tour of the Manor, with a focus on its Jewish history, for the Museum's Friends. With the Holocaust Education Trust, our archivists and education department worked to deliver training sessions for teachers. Waddesdon continued to represent the project at the AEPJ, including attendance at on-line events at the AGM.

The 'Digital Ferdinand' project continues: Colette Warbrick oversaw the digitization of Ferdinand de Rothschild's writings and discussion is now taking place about how to move forward with the editorial process following delays arising from the pandemic and staff changes. Colette Bellingham-Kennedy has made significant progress on her Ph.D. (under the supervision of Abigail Green, Geoff Batchen and Juliet Carey). Her work is opening up new understanding of the photographic collections and is already suggesting future possibilities for interpretation and exhibition. We are delighted that this project has now been awarded AHRC funding.

H el ene Binet's photography of Waddesdon will restart in the Spring. We have plans for the display of her work and are also in discussion with Pablo Bronstein about a site-specific drawings commission for 2025.

AEPJ Partnership

Phase 1 of the "Palaces, Villas and Country Houses" online heritage route is complete, and we are now working on expanding the route to include a more complete range of

properties. In September 2021, the route was the focus of a long feature article in The Times of Israel.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/medieval-manors-to-german-villas-jewish-homes-tell-stories-of-royalty-tragedy/>

UK Partners and Collaborations

Holocaust Educational Trust

Working with J-Trails, NT properties and the Holocaust Educational Trust, this project set out to reclaim the Holocaust stories associated with the “Jewish country house”, and to empower teachers to engage with these local stories in their classrooms, as Britain’s relationship to the Holocaust is often overlooked in the school curriculum, as is the impact of the Holocaust on British Jews. This was achieved through a series of dedicated study units (delivered via zoom), and through site visits at Nymans and Waddesdon Manor (below). The project aimed to remind teachers that antisemitism is as much a part of British history as that of any other country, and to demonstrate the relevance of Holocaust history in locally specific, British contexts.



38 teachers and educators signed up to participate, and our evaluation of the pilot, fully detailed in our report to the funder, helped us consider possible reshaping of the format and future funding opportunities and collaborations.

We have, in particular, developed a close partnership with Dr Jenny Carson, education officer and head of teacher training at the Holocaust Educational Trust. She will be co-supervising the CDA student based at Cardiff under Jaclyn Granick’s lead

supervision, providing the student with skills and networks from the heritage and education world, and the opportunity to feed new research directly into education resources in the UK.

National Gallery

The collaborative doctoral partnership with the National Gallery continues to go very well, and doctoral student Isobel Muir has uncovered some very interesting new material.

Historic England

Our partnership with Historic England prompted [an article in the Jewish Chronicle](#) in September 2021, timed to coincide with the UK Jewish Heritage Days, and a feature on Radio 4’s *Sunday* programme.

Victoria & Albert Museum

The Gilbert Collection at the Victoria & Albert continues to work with us closely, after sponsoring the two workshops on Jewish dealers in September and December. Alice Minter offered members of the project the chance for a private tour of the V&A to explore objects linked to Jewish actors and stories. Tom Stammers also gave a lecture on Jewish collecting to a course organised by the V&A Academy.

Smaller Museums and Heritage Initiatives

Hamish McGillivray has now completed his work on *Highdown Gardens* (Worthing), and in July the JCH team organised a collective visit to the new Visitor Centre. We remain in close contact with the Worth Park History Society, and we continue to work closely with Chris Jones at Salomons Estate, but COVID-19 has made it difficult to build on our contacts with *Bletchley Park* and *Gunnersbury Park*. We hope the situation will ease enough for us to renew these contacts in 2022.

The jch.history.ox.ac.uk website has emerged as a useful forum for engaging with local heritage initiatives and publicising their work. In 2021, the website

featured a collection of Stories, exploring little-known and often intriguing aspects of many Jewish country houses, their owners and families. During the year, the site has 4,000 users who carried out a total of 5,800 sessions. 55% of users were based in the UK, and 17% in the US; users in France, Germany, Israel, and Italy were also represented. The twitter feed (@JCHJewishHouses) now has over 570 followers, and tweets saw a monthly average of 20.7k impressions in the period July – December 2021.

European Partnerships

“Lost Houses” Digital exhibition curated by Silvia Davoli and Tom Stammers in partnership with Dr. Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah

This project has been postponed for a year, and we plan to pick it up in 2022.

Château de Seneffe, Belgium



We are delighted that the Château de Seneffe (above) will now host the conference “Jewish Business Dynasties: Family, Power, Vulnerability” in October 2022, organised by Abigail Green, Jaclyn Granick, Professor Chris McKenna (Oxford) and Professor Rebecca Kobrin (Columbia).

Centre des Monuments Nationaux

We continue to work with the Château de Champs on preparations for “Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste” (now scheduled for June 2022), and are delighted that the Château has joined the Palaces, Villas and Country Houses route.

Liebermann-Villa

We are now working with Dr. Lucy Wasensteiner, the director of the Liebermann-Villa on a number a different projects. Lucy is contributing a case study chapter to *Jewish Country Houses*, and the Villa has become a focus for the Hélène Binet photography project. An exhibition drawing on her work on Freienwalde, Nymans and the Rathenau Tomb as well as her photographs of the Villa is now planned for Spring 2025. In addition, we have obtained funding for a CDA based at the Villa exploring issues related to private/public memory and provenance research.

Museo Ebraico di Roma

The Jewish Museum in Rome is funding a researcher, Gaia Fiorentino, to carry out some research on Italian Jewish country houses in the Lazio region and in Rome. The Museum is working with Silvia Davoli on plans for an international conference dedicated to Jewish collecting of classical and non-classical archaeology, to be held in Rome in 2024.

Musée Nissim de Camondo

We continue to work together on preparations for “Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste” (now scheduled for June 2022).

National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic (Villa Stiassni)

The National Heritage Institute is a sponsor of the Hélène Binet photography project, which will include photography of the Villa Tugendhat. The National Heritage Institute has supported our application to the Claims Conference and is working to secure further funding to cover catering and accommodation for the “Jewish Country House and the Holocaust in History and Memory” event scheduled for March 2023.

UrKultur

We are enormously grateful to urKultur for initiating our collaboration with H el ene Binet. In November, Ruth Ur accompanied us to Schloss Freienwalde, and we are now developing a new project timed to coincide with the centenary of Walter Rathenau's assassination in 2022.

Villa Montesca

H el ene Binet photographed Villa Montesca in June 2021, and we are now exploring further avenues for academic collaboration, with a focus on Jews, Liberalism and the Land.