

# *W*ESTMINSTER QUARTERLY

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**Jews in the Tower of London**

**Sir Moses Montefiore**

**‘Rogue Hero’**

**The Umbrella Man**

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## Westminster Welcomes New Members & Friends



*Photograph of Kent House by Chris Rees*

**Please note that for our online edition we do not include Lifecycle and New Member Updates**



With Leah and I expecting a baby any moment, I'm inspired by some brilliant health-care workers. They are extraordinarily stretched, rushing from person to person to give crucial care. They are confronting almost unimaginable pressures and stresses. Increasingly dictates and guidelines come from on high that they know are not in the interests of the patients. So they defy those dictates and work even harder for the sake of life, care and people. On top of this, they are working so hard in an egregiously unequal, unfair society. As they rush from person to person they see the needs and sufferings born out of poverty, but cannot tend to them all. Then, as they return late at the end of the day, exhausted, they don't always return to decent surroundings themselves. They are not immediately sufficiently rewarded for their hard, life-giving work.

The brilliant health care workers that I am inspired by, right now, are the two midwives for the Israelites, Shifra and Puah, confronting all that, and acting as they do in Egypt, assisting in the birth of Moses, and making possible the whole *Pesach* story that we celebrate now.

How did they do it? What motivated them in such circumstances, and what was their reward? How can we emulate them?

*Vatiryena ha'meyaladot et ha'Elohim, v'lo asu ka'asher diber aleyhen melekh mitzrayim va't'chayena et hayeladim.* (Exodus 1.17)

'The midwives feared the Ultimate, so they didn't do as the King of Egypt had dictated to them: they gave life to those boys.'

This attribute of being 'God-fearing' - having *Yirat ha'Elohim* - motivates Shifra and Puah. We hear this again a few verses later, along with something about their

reward. In verses 20-21, 'the Ultimate made it good for the midwives and the people strove and became very mighty; this was because the midwives feared the Ultimate - He made houses for them'.

The Ultimate made houses for them! This is a striking detail - that the Divine suddenly seems to turn into the efficient architect and builder that Leah and I have so lacked this last year and a half. What do we make of this reward, and what does it really mean to be 'God-fearing'?

Rabbi Chizkuni in 13<sup>th</sup> century France teaches that *batim* - houses - means, with just one letter different, *banim*, - children. They feared the Ultimate; they brought life; so the reward fits the act, and is more life, maybe simply all the lives they helped to bring to birth.

This suggestion that their reward is children, points to what it really means to fear the Ultimate, here, and in the *Torah*. It means to care for human life. The word often translated as 'fear' truly suggests reverence or awe, and to have reverence for the Ultimate is to live with concern for what's important, specifically to care for life and the dignity of others. When the forces of Amalek are described as lacking *yira* - this reverence - they are being described as persecuting the vulnerable, the young and the old - more fragile lives. A lack of reverence for the Ultimate, in us or others, allows people to be degraded, lives to be lost and ignored. To have this reverence is to fight, passionately, peacefully and actively for the forces of life against those of death and indignity. Let us be God-fearing in enacting profound respect for life.

Additionally, we learn from Shifra and Puah that to be God-fearing is actually to be *brave*, brave enough to resist more immediate fears, threats and tensions in order to pursue what's important. The term 'God-fearing' might be useful if we remember that to have this attribute is to achieve the opposite of fear; to be brave. Rabbi Ibn Ezra in 12<sup>th</sup> century Spain says that God was good for the midwives because they clearly didn't fear the King of Egypt, but instead they feared the Ultimate. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Chasidic Rebbe, the *Mei Hashiloach*, commenting on the verses regarding the midwives, distinguished between fear of flesh and blood and this reverence for the Ultimate,

saying that the former makes us unsettled or anxious, but *Yirat Hashem* can give a *yashiv ha'daat*, a settled mind. He compares having this reverence and consequent settledness to the Biblical blessing (of Zevulun) that one should be like a boat on the shore. In the face of tides and waves, we can sit and act in a sense of what's right.

Let each of us be brave enough to consider what's important in life and act on it. Drop everything to care for another. Join our *Chesed* team, our care team here, telephoning a new parent, or visiting someone unwell. Join our Justice team here to contribute to a world in which those who work for life are fairly recognised and rewarded. Drop everything to care for another. Be brave enough to consider what's important in life and to act on it.

We, the Jewish people, are a counter-culture. We find strength and companionship in standing up for what's important in the face of everyday pressures and fears that could pull us away. Our heroes, as our *Torah* so movingly suggests, are not the mightiest or the wealthiest. They are those who save lives, give life and nurture life in the face of difficulty. This is so easy to miss because it tends to happen privately. But in our *Torah*, at the beginning of Exodus, initially no-one is named, not even the King of Egypt, or the daughter from the tribe of Levi who met a man from that tribe, and had a child (the future Moses), but our heroes are named, our heroines, Shifra and Puah.

They are brave enough to keep on choosing life. Rashi, the 11<sup>th</sup> century French commentator says the houses which they are rewarded with are the greatest dynasties, the legacies of priesthood and kingship, because we, the Jewish people, owe it all to them, all of our lives. Let us be brave enough to emulate and recognise them.

Happy *Pesach*.

**Rabbi Benji Stanley**

## Sir Moses Montefiore Benign Imperialist (1784-1884)



Portrait by George Richmond

What had begun during the reign of George III, with the building of some fine synagogues - Plymouth and Exeter being examples - Jews were becoming increasingly prominent in British society, reaching new heights under Queen Victoria. The galaxy of Jewish stars included household names like Disraeli, Sassoon and Rothschild. Others excelled as authors, Israel Zangwill and Lily Montagu, to mention but two, and also as architects - one of the most famous being David Mocatta - and in the visual arts, Solomon Alexander Hart and Simeon Solomon.

The impression that Victorian Britain was totally accepting of its Jewish population is, of course, a distortion of reality; there was anti-Semitism. *The Illustrated London News* ran Joseph Pennell's series that was blatantly anti-Jewish, but the magazine also championed the right of Jews to be Members of Parliament. It is generally agreed that the most outstanding Jew of the age was Sir Moses Montefiore, because of his philanthropic works and his enormous diplomatic influence.

Moses Montefiore was of Italian-Sephardic ancestry. He was born in Livorno, Tuscany, in 1784. His grandfather had emigrated to England and had established himself as a

successful businessman. It was Moses' uncle, Moses Mocatta, who invited him to settle in England and who secured the young man's position as a broker on the London Exchange. Montefiore regarded the divide between Sephardim and Ashkenazim as unimportant in terms of peoplehood; to him the Jewish People were one. So it was not surprising that he married Judith Cohen, sister-in-law of Nathan Meyer Rothschild. This proved to be a marriage of like minds, since Judith, an accomplished musician, linguist and writer, and most importantly, a philanthropist, shared her husband's keen interest in charitable works. Aside from mutual interests, the union was greatly beneficial to Montefiore because the Rothschild connection helped to make his fortune before the age of forty, when he retired from the Stock Exchange to devote the rest of his life to championing the rights of poor, oppressed Jews.

Judaism does not regard wealth as an evil *per se*, it is how money is used that is most important, and Montefiore exemplified the constructed use of assets to promote worthwhile causes. At home, he was active on the domestic scene, becoming in 1837 Sheriff of the City of London, the second Jew to be so honoured. In the same year he was knighted and became a baronet in 1846. In the following year, he became High Sheriff of Kent.

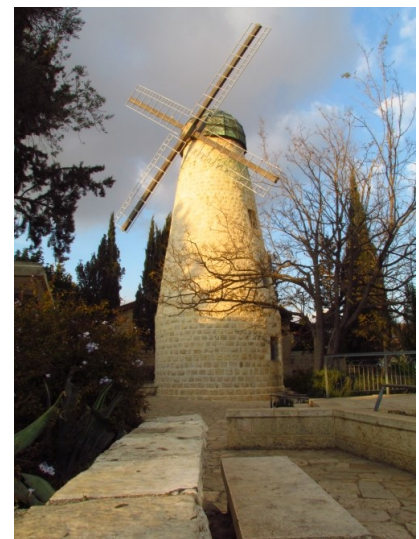
### Montefiore exemplified the constructed use of assets to promote worthwhile causes

Montefiore was somewhat lax in religious matters in his early life but became increasingly observant, partly because of his many visits to Palestine and probably because of his witnessing the destitution of Jews in Russia and the Ottoman Empire. He used his considerable influence in helping to establish the nascent representative voice of British Jewry - later to become The Board of Deputies of British Jews. In the 1830s the reputation of the Board was greatly enhanced when Sir Moses became its

President. Following the Marriage Act of 1866, Parliament recognised the President of the Board as the authority for certifying the Marriage Secretaries of synagogues. Sir Moses is credited with being instrumental in drawing up the first constitution of the Board.

As the representative body of Anglo-Jewry the Board became known abroad and this helped significantly in voicing concerns about the plight of Jews in countries that denied them civil rights. It is worth mentioning that during Sir Moses' tenure as President of the Board, finally stepping down in 1874, he vigorously opposed progressive movements in Judaism, calling on the Chief Rabbi to excommunicate those who established Reform communities. It is ironic that his great-nephew, Claude Joseph Goldsmid Montefiore was a member of the Anglo-Jewish elite who founded Liberal Judaism in Britain!

Montefiore took a very keen interest in the welfare of Jews living in Ottoman Palestine. He acquired land to encourage Jews to become self-sufficient, inspiring the foundation of several agricultural settlements. For many of us who have visited Israel, the windmill in Yemin Moshe is a reminder of Sir Moses' presence in that land: his spirit endures to this day. In 1860 he built the first Jewish residential settlement and almshouses outside the old walls of Jerusalem. Today it is known as Mishkenot Sha'ananim, which became the model for future Jewish communities.



Montefiore intended Mishkenot Sha'ananim to be a new type of self-sufficient, sanitary settlement where Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews lived together. Later on, Montefiore established adjacent neighbourhoods south of Jaffa Road, the Ohel Moshe neighbourhood for Sephardi Jews and the Mazkeret Moshe neighbourhood for Ashkenazi Jews who had distinctly different traditions and languages.

Like the pioneering work of Charles Booth and Joseph Rowntree on social conditions in England, Sir Moses conducted five censuses of the *Yishuv* (Jewish community) in Palestine to assemble data on individuals, biographies, social status, family structure, origin and degree of poverty. In all, Sir Moses made seven trips to Palestine, in which Lady Montefiore accompanied him on five occasions, making his final journey to the Holy Land at the age of ninety-one.

Sir Moses' love of Zion, the spiritual home of Jews, raises an important question: Was he a Zionist? Did he promote Zionist ideas long before the movement became established? His values as a benign imperialist opposed political Zionism. He feared, like many Jews after him, that adherence to Jewish nationalism would create doubts about Jews' allegiance to their own countries, but he also wanted to distinguish between Jews and Israelites. Yes, he fully supported Jews living in Palestine, but the idea that he wanted a Jewish Homeland is debatable.

Perhaps Sir Moses' greatest achievement was on the diplomatic front. He had no official position in diplomatic circles, but through his network of contacts in the Levant, he was able to secure interviews with prominent leaders.

In 1840 a group of Syrian Jews were accused of ritual murder. Sir Moses led a deputation from the Jewish communities of England and France to offer a defence against the charges. He pleaded the case of the accused before Mehemet Ali, the *de facto* ruler of Egypt, and secured the prisoners' release. After the hearing, he went to Constantinople for an audience with the Sultan and obtained a *firman* (decree) that gave Jews the same rights as other aliens living in the Ottoman Empire.



Portrait c.1840 by Solomon Alexander Hart

Montefiore was like a Victorian Henry Kissinger, travelling the world, employing shuttlecock diplomacy long before it became famous, to respond when diaspora Jewry needed a defender.

It was in 1846 that the Russian government invited Sir Moses to visit Russia to discuss the Jewish situation. The main thrust of the Tsarist regime was to hasten the assimilation of Jews into Russian society. If the authorities thought they could use Montefiore to further their cause, they were proved very much mistaken. While there he went to towns and villages where Jews lived, compiling details of their lives. Most lived in dire poverty, existing with the threat of expulsions, economic sanctions, forced conversion, and were ever fearful of the next *pogrom*. Sir Moses did persuade the Russian government to abandon its plans for forced conversion and assimilation of Jews. Although Jews experienced nothing

comparable with the level of emancipation that was taking place in Germany and Britain, nevertheless due to the efforts of Montefiore their economic position did improve.

When Bismarck said of Disraeli at the Congress of Berlin, in 1878: *Der alte Jude, das ist der Mann* (*The old Jew, he is the man*), those very words could be applied to Sir Moses Montefiore. An exceptional man, an ambassador for Jewish emancipation, and a benign imperialist to boot! He believed in spreading civil rights to Jews, and by implication to those who were oppressed.

The British Empire, much reviled by the Woke generation, was the solid ground on which Montefiore stood, and through the *aegis* of enlightened imperialism, progress in changing attitudes to minorities could be achieved. Although Montefiore's life was dedicated to championing the rights of Jews living under oppressive regimes, his endeavours would have spoken to many other peoples who were denied civil rights.

Sir Moses Montefiore was proud of his adopted country, and the Anglo-Jewish population owe him a debt of gratitude. He died, aged one hundred, at Ramsgate, where, as testimony to his devout life, stands his private synagogue, designed by David Mocatta.

### Peter Beyfus



Montefiore Synagogue, Ramsgate

## Rebecca Solomon (1832-1886)



*A Young Teacher* 1861

In November 2022, a notice appeared in the Press stating that this Pre-Raphaelite painting, worth £314,880, was at risk of leaving the UK unless a buyer could be found to save the work for the nation. There was nothing particularly unusual about the announcement – until, on investigation, it appeared that this valuable painting was by a relatively unknown woman, Rebecca Solomon. The reviewing committee made its recommendation on the grounds that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune, because it was of outstanding significance for the study of women artists, and Jewish art in nineteenth century Britain, as well as the history of art and Empire.

The Solomon family came to England, probably from Holland, in the late eighteenth century and established a successful manufacturing business. As one of the first Jewish families to be accepted in London's Bishopsgate neighbourhood, Meyer and Kate Levy Solomon were wealthy, which gave them social status. Within London's close-knit Jewish community, they determined to maintain their Jewish heritage while, at the same time, becoming part of fashionable society. That Meyer Solomon was the first Jew to be honoured with the Freedom of the City of London is a measure of their success.

The couple had eight children, of whom Rebecca was the seventh. Two of her

brothers, Abraham, the eldest, and Simeon, the youngest, were also artists. Rebecca Solomon studied at the Spitalfields School of Design with Pre-Raphaelite artists. Her success as a professional painter was remarkable in the mid-nineteenth century, a time when women artists were the exception rather than the rule. However, the fact that she was among the first Jewish women artists, if not *the* first, makes her career and artwork even more important. While her artistic style conformed to the most popular art of the time - scenes from everyday life, known as genre paintings - she used her visual images to draw attention to ethnic, gender, and class prejudice in Victorian England, and the injustice existing between the lives of the rich and the poor.



*The Appointment* 1861

Like many women artists, Rebecca Solomon has been overshadowed in art history by the male artists who were her contemporaries. In her case, what is more tragic is that no photograph exists that could show us what she even looked like. Even worse, in my opinion, is the fact that the highly respected *Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* gives her one measly paragraph at the end of a long article on her artist brothers!

However, despite living in the shadows of these two, her relationship with each of them, especially with Simeon, was strong. She shared studios with them at different points in her career, and she socialized in their circles of artist

friends. George du Maurier and his wife were regular guests at the Solomons' *conversaciones* and Rebecca in turn attended the du Mauriers' dinner parties. She was also friends with Agnes 'Aggie' MacDonald who later married Edward Poynter, future President of the Royal Academy.

Rebecca exhibited almost annually at the Royal Academy for seventeen years, and she participated in other exhibitions such as those held at the British Institution and the Dudley Gallery. She was active in social causes, and she was so well-known among her contemporary female artists that she joined thirty-seven of them in a petition in 1895 to get the Royal Academy to open their classes to women. Despite what amounted to a potentially lucrative artistic career however, Rebecca has been largely forgotten. Very few of her works are in public collections, and they come up for auction only rarely. Her most notable paintings are *The Governess* (1854) and *The Young Teacher* (1861)

As Simeon's immediate elder sister, Rebecca may have had a hand in influencing his interest in Hebrew and in Jewish subject matter, and after the death of Abraham, these two siblings developed a closer relationship both personally and professionally. The opening of the Dudley Gallery in 1865, with Simeon on the Administrative Committee, had provided Rebecca with another major venue at which to exhibit her watercolours.

Although female artists such as Rebecca Solomon were traditionally excluded by the art community, social and economic change in the later nineteenth century allowed for a small number of women artists to thrive. This enabled a few figures from this under-represented sector to be successful, including Rebecca. Those fortunate female artists who were able to exhibit, sometimes used their platform to campaign for acceptance in wider society, and Rebecca was actively engaged with social reform acts that involved women's rights.

Not only did Rebecca seek to change the attitudes regarding the ideals of womanhood in the working world, but she also refused to comply with what was expected of her as a young woman. She

never married, although her middle-class upbringing would have made her eligible for an acceptable proposal, and her family's association with the other influential families such as the Rossettis would have provided her with the ability to secure a respectable suitor.

## no periodicals reported her death or published any obituary

Rebecca's life came to a tragic end in November 1886, from injuries sustained after being run over by a hansom cab on Euston Road. Strangely, it appears that no periodicals reported her death or published any obituary. Although only fifty-four years old, her art production had diminished and much of her earlier artwork remained unsold. Sadly, most of her work is unaccounted for and is frequently only recorded in the form of engravings made for publications such as the *Illustrated London News*. Nevertheless, the art she produced from the mid-1850's and through the 1870's demonstrates not only her involvement with the various art styles and burgeoning social movements of that period, but also a warmth and understanding that reflects her Jewish identity.



*Love's Labours Lost* 1859

Claire Connick

## The Story of Matzah



In the East End of London, at No. 31 Widegate Street, stands what is believed to be the oldest shop in London. It was established in 1710 and was formerly owned by the Levy Brothers who made matzahs for Passover. Above the shop front are four figures carved into the brickwork. They are in the process of baking matzahs.

As well as the Biblical background to eating matzah, there are religious symbolic reasons. Because of its association with the release of the Jews from slavery, matzah is associated with redemption and freedom. It is sometimes called *lechem oni* or 'poor man's bread', reminding the eater to be humble even though he is no longer a slave. The omission of leaven or yeast, which represent pride and corruption, represents the Jews' attempt to live their lives in a godly manner.

The matzah that we eat at Passover is, according to Ashkenazi tradition, limited to plain matzah made from flour and water. The flour may be whole grain or refined grain, but must be made from one of five grains: wheat, spelt, barley, rye or oats. Some Sephardic communities allow matzah to be made with eggs and/or fruit juice to be used throughout the holiday.

Most recipes for baking matzah at home involve just plain flour and water. This is the only time that flour is used during Passover. Because time is important in the baking (eighteen minutes), the oven should be heated to a very high temperature. The dough is rolled out very thinly and then pricked with a fork, cooked until it develops dark spots and then set aside to become very crisp.

Yemenite and Iraqi Jews traditionally make a form of soft matzah which looks like Greek pita or a tortilla. Soft matzah is made only by hand, and generally with *shemurah* flour. From the time that the wheat is taken to the mill to be ground, *shemurah* flour is kept under careful supervision. The grinding, packing, and transporting of the wheat from the mill to the bakery is closely watched to ensure that the ground wheat does not come into contact with water or other moisture, and all of the utensils used for processing the wheat must be clean and dry. The wheat is not baked on the same day on which it was ground, for it is still warm from the processing and would therefore ferment and become *chametz* (not kosher for *Pesach*) more rapidly. It is watched while it is being kneaded to ensure that this is not done near an oven or open window which is exposed to the sun, lest the dough become hot and ferment quickly.



*the dough is placed over a long pole to be transported to the oven*

In England in the sixteenth century, when there should have been no Jews in the country, a Bristol woman, Beatriz Fernandes, baked matzahs for the whole Bristol Jewish community of secret Jews. There are several stories of Jews in the concentration camps smuggling in wheat to bake matzahs secretly under the noses of the Nazi guards. Even in the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews held concealed Seders, baking matzahs clandestinely, usually in the cellars of deserted houses.

Thus from Biblical times to the present day, Jews have maintained their tradition of eating matzah at the Seder and for seven days afterwards. The simple biscuit of flour and water represents the Jewish search for freedom and the celebration of release from slavery.

Philippa Bernard

## Jews in the Tower of London



*From the margin of the manuscript The Rochester Chronicle of 1355, illustrating the expulsion of the Jews from England*

The Tower of London, the most popular tourist destination in England and an iconic World Heritage Site, is the best example of 'hidden' Jewish history in the UK. Jewish Blood Money paid for much of the thirteenth century fabric of the castle. The Jewish story of England probably started at the Tower, the Jews of England were administered from there, it was a place of protection, business and employment. Jews even worshipped at the Tower. It was also a site of great suffering and mass martyrdom for many hundreds of Jews. In 1278 alone, 600 Jews were imprisoned in the Tower and 269 Jews were hanged over a period of six months - two and half times as many non-Jews as were executed at the Tower in the subsequent four centuries!

The Tower of London is also one of the most substantial standing remains of medieval England's Jewish history. From the mid twelfth-century to the expulsion of Anglo-Jewry in 1290, it was both a place of imprisonment and of refuge for hundreds of Jews.

In Philippa Bernard's book, *Mithras to Mormon*, she states that one of the first settlements of the Jews in London was within the Liberties of the Tower. The Liberty was the length of an arrow's flight from the Tower wall. It constituted a small neighbourhood which included Tower Hill as well as the Tower and it allowed the Jews, as Royal Wards under the protection of the King, to live there

while other citizens had no such privilege. The area was defined, some time after 1200, to provide an open area around the Tower to ensure its defensibility.

The Constable of the Tower had sole authority to arrest and imprison London Jewry, and in addition, Jews arrested elsewhere in the country were normally transferred to the Tower. Yet, the Constable was also charged with protecting the city's Jews during pogroms, and the Jewish community even helped to defend the castle from a siege by rebel barons in 1267.

It is easy to see the medieval Jewish history of England as one of constant exploitation by the Crown, and frequent pogroms committed by rebel barons and the wider population. But there were Jewish prisoners in the Tower who were accused of having Christian accomplices - something that was not treated as anything unusual. London, unlike most capital cities of Europe, never had a ghetto and Christians often entered London's Jewish district to do business with the Jews. Fines were frequently handed out for this by the Tower authorities. In one court case over a debt, a Jewish woman even sided with her Christian neighbour instead of with her Jewish friend. The anti-Jewish riots and violence that led to many Jews hiding in the Tower were almost always instigated by outsiders, not the Jews' neighbours, who instead tried to protect them. There was even one Jewish person, Jurnet, who worked at the Tower - the only unconverted Jew known to have done so in the Middle Ages.

Based in London, Jurnet seems to have been a relatively respected figure in the community. He was repeatedly called



*The St Thomas's Tower, built by Edward I from taxes paid by Jews like Jurnet*

upon in court by other Jews, whether as a witness, an attorney, or to stand bail. He was involved in some moneylending and had links with the Tower from an early period. Two charters relating to his purchase of a house in St Botolph's Parish, East Smithfield, in 1271-72 were witnessed by Ralph de Andebury, sub-Constable of the Tower. He also held houses just north of Colechurch Street, St Olave's Parish. However, his early relationship with the site was not a wholly positive one. In October 1273, Jurnet was being held at the Tower for a debt of twelve marks which he owed to the King, and for selling a debt. He was eventually pardoned and released. He was once again in conflict with the law in June 1279, when the Constable of the Tower was ordered to arrest him for attacking a Christian. The two parties later reached an agreement that he would pay one mark in compensation.

A court case in 1281 describes how Jurnet was attacked in the street. He and two other Jews had been carrying the body of Josce of Guildford on a cart through the street of Southwark. Josce had been murdered while travelling from Dartford to Plumstead and his body was presumably being brought to London for burial in the city's Jewish cemetery, the only such cemetery in Britain. They were stopped by the bailiff of Southwark, who demanded a toll of two shillings for every cart carrying dead Jews through the streets. They refused to pay, saying that the King had excused England's Jews from tolls. The bailiff's men attacked them, overturned the cart, and took a piece of clothing for the toll. The case was brought to court and, because the bailiff was unable to produce any charter proving his right to the toll, he and his men were imprisoned. Although the record does not specify what Jurnet's exact duties at the Tower were, this case suggests that he may have had some responsibility for burying the dead.

Another person associated with the history of the Jews in the Tower, was Henry of Winchester, a convert from Judaism. Henry III himself participated in the conversion, giving his own name to the new convert and knighting him. The King granted him a large stipend of twelve pence a day for life. In contrast,



the male residents of the *Domus Conversorum*, a house for converted Jews, received just ten pence a week. Henry was employed at the Exchequer of the Jews as a notary clerk, writing Hebrew inscriptions. He also bought and sold debts - often collaborating with a Jew called Moses de Clare - and traded in wool. He probably resided in Durngate, a suburb around the north-east gate of Winchester.

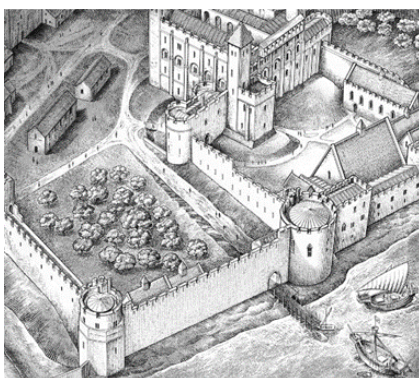
In 1278, Sir Henry was twice arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of coin-clipping, the practice (featured in the *Quarterly* of April 2021) of illegally cutting the edges off coins to melt down and sell or make new ones. He had been travelling around England buying up a huge amount of silver suspected to have come from clippings. However, the evidence suggests that this was part of an undercover operation by the Crown to gather evidence for putting coin-clippers on trial. A court case from 1279 records that his arrest in Bury St Edmunds in March 1278 had interrupted the 'special business' that he was then on for the King.

In August 1278, the King ordered Anthony Bek, Constable of the Tower of London, to assign a suitable house at the Tower to Sir Henry and his household that he could use for as long as Bek required it for him to do his service to the King. The timing of this order suggests it was related to Sir Henry's investigation of coin-clipping - perhaps storing the clipped coins and other evidence at the Tower - or interrogating the Jews already held prisoner there.

Edward I tried to give Sir Henry the right to testify in the coin-clipping trials that followed in early 1279, but Thomas de Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, complained that a convert should not have the power of life and death over Christians. The Bishop then threatened to resign, so Edward backed down.

Sir Henry fell from grace in July 1279, when he was arrested and accused of buying the goods of Jews executed in the coin-clipping trials - including clothes, furs, Christian and Hebrew books, copper lamps, and silk girdles - to sell in England and overseas.

Another Jew was Licoricia of Winchester, who was featured in the *Quarterly* of July



*The inner ward of the Tower in the 1240s, when Licoricia was first imprisoned there*

2019. On the death of her husband David, Licoricia was imprisoned in the Tower until the death duty owed to the King could be paid. For Jews, this tax was one third of the whole estate. Licoricia paid the crown 5,000 marks, most of which was sent directly to the Exchequer for the construction of Westminster Abbey - one of the largest sums put into the project. As a result of this exchange, she formed a working relationship with Henry III, calling on his support for reclaiming debts owed to her. Henry also allowed her to take on David's business affairs and freedom from any further taxes, for twenty-five marks a year.

Licoricia and her Christian maid Alice were found murdered at Licoricia's home in Winchester in 1277. A jury found three initial suspects (Roger le Scurre, Adam le Soller and John le Sclatiere) innocent of both murders and named Ralph le Seller, who had conveniently left the city, as the most likely culprit.

Most dramatically, the Tower of London was the principal place of imprisonment and execution for medieval Jews. For the majority of alleged crimes, Jews would be taken to the Tower from wherever they lived - in London or the rest of England - though they might be temporarily held in other royal castles. Undoubtedly the Tower would have stirred fear in the hearts of medieval Anglo-Jews, particularly in the last half of the thirteenth century, when mass executions of Jews took place.

The Tower was the scene of individual imprisonment, group imprisonment, and mass imprisonment for Jews. Jewish prisoners would be kept in many locations

in the Tower. Up to the reign of Henry III, prisoners may have been kept in the White Tower itself, though these were usually high-status prisoners (a purpose-built prison house is also mentioned in the twelfth century). However, after the building project of the 1270s, most would be confined in other locations (particularly the bastions) in the Inner Ward of the Tower. The middle and upper floors of the White Tower were certainly used as a prison for hostages in 1249 and could have been used for this purpose at other times too, though after the additional walls and towers were built, imprisonment was mostly in these areas. During the mass imprisonment of 1278 Jews were kept in the former Elephant House, a house '40 feet long and 20 feet deep for our Elephant' built in 1255. There is also a tradition that Jews were kept in the sub-crypt of the White Tower.

One of the most heart-rending incidents of the mass imprisonment of the Jews of Lincoln was the allegation of ritual murder, when Little Hugh of Lincoln was discovered dead. There was a delay of some weeks, and then the Bishop of Lincoln was found to be directly involved. He needed money to finance a major building programme. His brother was a retainer of the King, who happened to be just outside Lincoln at the time and also needed money to have his son pronounced King of Sicily. The boy was declared a victim of the Jews, who were forced to pay huge sums of money in retribution.



Edward I, who later expelled all Jews from England, made a vast fortune after hundreds of Jews were executed for coinage crimes.

**Claire Connick**

## 'Rogue Hero'



The old joke goes that, 'Famous British Jewish Soldiers' is one of the shortest books in print. This is not far from the truth.

For most Jews in the United Kingdom since World War Two and the National Service era, joining the British military has not been a favoured career choice. Exceptions do exist – I am one of at least five Jews currently serving in his Brigade - and Westminster Synagogue boasts three active members of His Majesty's armed forces.

Three generations ago almost every British-Jewish family had members who were 'doing their bit' during the war or shortly afterwards. Jews of those times tended to serve in less elite, less class-driven units, however.

A regiment that turned class and racial prejudices on their heads was the Special Air Service (SAS) that was formed in North Africa in WW2. Viewers of the recent BBC TV series 'Rogue Heroes' and those who are familiar with the SAS will know that its members were selected exclusively on their resourcefulness, and physical and mental toughness.

Even the officer corps of the SAS was comparatively free of the class-based nepotism that was rife in some other British army units. For these reasons, a young Jewish officer called Johnny Wiseman was able to join and thrive in the SAS. He ultimately earned the Military Cross - Britain's second highest award for exemplary gallantry during active operations - as well as the French *Croix de Guerre*.

In some ways, Wiseman's story is similar to that of many other middle-class Britons, called to serve their country during the war. After St Paul's School and then Cambridge, where he studied languages, he worked in the family business that had been founded by his father, Max. He attempted to join the RAF at the outbreak of war but was rebuffed and joined a fairly obscure Territorial Army regiment that had been mobilised, the North Somerset Yeomanry, as a trooper.

Wiseman was sent to North Africa with his regiment, where he fought against the Vichy French. Due to his education and knowledge of languages, he was put forward for officer training in Cairo and was ultimately given a commission in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. When he heard that David Stirling was forming the SAS, Wiseman sought out the commanding officer and asked to join.

After training with the SAS at Karbit, in Egypt, Wiseman was involved in many of the early operations in North Africa, attacking enemy airfields and columns. When the Italian campaign opened, he was given command of a section of the Special Raiding Squadron in Sicily. Wiseman's section scaled the cliffs of *Cape Murro di Porco* on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1943 assaulting a coastal battery defending the beaches where the main Allied force would be landed. They killed, captured or wounded forty of the enemy and, incredibly, suffered no casualties themselves.

In October 1943, Wiseman was the only survivor after a stray German artillery shell killed seventeen of his men in a direct hit on their truck during the Battle of Termoli. Extraordinarily, he was probably saved by the fact that he was leaning out of the window at the exact time the shell hit.

By the time of the Normandy landings, Wiseman had reached the rank of Captain. He was given command of 1 Troop, A Squadron, 1 SAS which took part in Operation Houndsworth in June '44. Assisted by the French Maquis, 1 Troop conducted operations behind the German lines near Dijon, disrupting the

reinforcement of German forces in Normandy.

Promoted again, Major Wiseman took command of the SAS HQ Squadron upon returning to England in autumn 1944 and rejoined the family business after the war.

The then Lieutenant Wiseman's MC citation reads as follows: *For the attack on the Coastal Battery 183239 on Cape Moro Di Porco on 10 July 1943 Lieut John Wiseman D,C,L,I, had command of the leading section of the forward Troop. While the Battery was under fire from our mortars, by clever use of ground he lead [sic] his section to the outskirts of the position without being detected and made his way through the wire. Immediately the mortar fire finished he went straight in achieving complete surprise, killing, capturing and wounding 40 of the enemy. By his good leadership and control he achieved this without sustaining a single casualty to his Section. Although the darkness of the night made control difficult he maintained complete command and the information which he sent back was invaluable to the proper conduct of the operation.*

John Martin Wiseman MC died on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2005. His Military Cross and his oral history are held in the Jewish Military Museum, London.

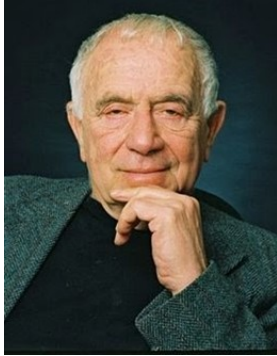
### Robert Sandler

#### Editorial Note

This Officer's Service Dress Peaked Cap of Major John Martin Wiseman MC went to auction in November 2022, at an estimated £3,000 - £5,000. It sold for £16,000!



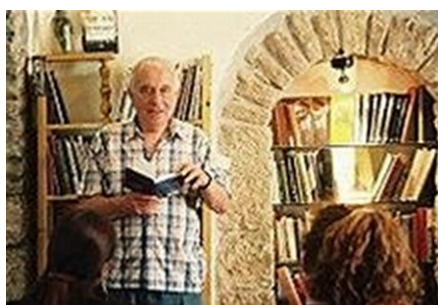
## Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000)



'I grew up in a very religious household... so the prayers, the language of prayer itself became a kind of natural language to me'. These are the words of one of the great Israeli poets of modern times. Amichai was in fact one of the first to write in colloquial Hebrew. He was born and brought up in Germany, speaking both German and Hebrew - his given name was Ludwig Pfeuffer. When his family realised in the 1930s what was happening to the Jews in their home country, his father took them to Palestine, to Petah Tikva; Yehuda was eleven years old.

When the family, having changed their name to Amichai, moved to Jerusalem, Yehuda attended a religious school. He was a member of the *Palmach*, part of the fighting force of the *Haganah*, defending Palestine during the British Mandate. When war broke out in 1939, however, he joined the British Army, perhaps to do his part in defending the Jews of Germany. He also fought in the Negev in the Palestine War.

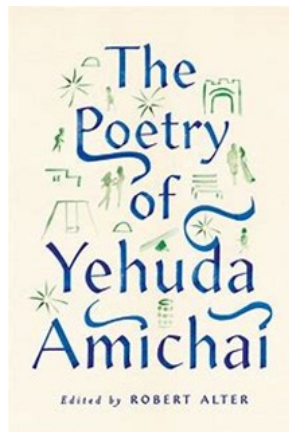
After leaving the military, Yehuda went to the Hebrew University, studying Torah



and Hebrew literature. In 1955, he published his first book of poetry *Now and In Other Days* and in 1963 his first novel *Not of This Time, Not of This Place*. It is semi-autobiographical, about a young Israeli, born in Germany, who returns to his birthplace, trying to find an explanation for the Holocaust.

Yehuda spent some time in America, as Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and at New York University, returning to Jerusalem to teach literature in an Israeli seminar for teachers. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature on more than one occasion, and at one of the prize-giving events in Oslo he was invited by Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, to read some of his poems. One was *God Has Pity on Kindergarten children*. The poem is inscribed on a wall in the Rabin Museum in Tel Aviv. It starts:-

*God has Pity on Kindergarten children  
He pities school children - less.  
But adults he pities not at all.*



Most of Amichai's poetry reflects the world in which he lives, the effect on him of his Jewish background and the philosophical issues which have influenced his life. Although he was brought up as an orthodox Jew, which is certainly evident in much of his poetry, he sometimes struggles to accept Biblical teaching in view of the tragedies of modern life. He uses the imagery of today to illustrate religious teaching, for example God as a mechanic mending a car, which represents the world. He has a gift for understanding the Jewish child. In *Sabbath Lie*, he tells his father, who

has asked why he wasn't in synagogue on the Sabbath, 'I went to another synagogue'.

The poem ends:-

*And since then the lie has been good and sweet on my tongue  
And since then I always go to another synagogue.  
And my father returned the lie when he died:  
'I've gone to another life.'*

Yehuda's poems have been translated into many languages, some into English by Ted Hughes - though it is said that much is lost in translation from the original Hebrew - and some have been set to music. He himself says that he found his love of poetry in an anthology of modern British poems he came across while in the British Army, but many other influences are evident. He became known as 'the poet who plays with words'. He uses the Hebrew language from ancient times to the present day, with wit and irony, making it do what he wants it to do, in poetry and in prose.

Amichai was married twice, firstly to Tamar Horn and later to Chana Sokolov. He had in all, two sons and one daughter. His love of Israel and for the Jewish life come through clearly in almost all his poetry, which should be known more widely for its lyrical beauty and depth of meaning.



*President Moshe Katsav laying a wreath on Amichai's casket in Jerusalem on September 24, 2000*

**Philippa Bernard**

## Jews in the Home Guard



Scene from the TV series

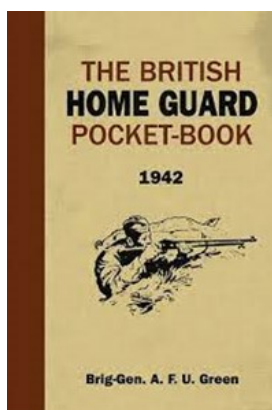
Thanks to the brilliant comedy series *Dad's Army*, the Home Guard of World War II has been viewed as a rather charming collection of gentlemen, too old (or too young) to fight, and too inefficient to defend their country in time of trouble.

In fact, in face of the very real danger of a German invasion, these makeshift soldiers had the responsibility of keeping England safe and secure, a responsibility they fulfilled with courage and determination. It was Winston Churchill who, in spite of opposition from the regular army, insisted that some form of home defence force or citizen's militia should be raised from people who were ineligible to enlist in the regular forces but wished to serve their country. Some local organisations were already forming a loose association of an amateur military nature, such as the 'Legion of Frontiersmen' in Essex.

The national Press was demanding that citizens should be permitted to buy arms privately and start work on defence methods, communications and weapon training. *The Sunday Pictorial* asked if the government had considered training golfers in rifle shooting to eliminate stray parachutists. In May 1940 Anthony Eden, Minister for War, called on men between the ages of 17 and 65 years in Britain, who were not in military service but wished to defend their country against an invasion, to enrol in the LDV at their local police station. 250,000 volunteers tried to sign up in the first seven days, and by July this had increased to 1.5 million. They were originally called Local Defence Volunteers or LDV.

A more systematic training programme for the volunteers was set up at Osterley Park, organised by a Canadian Jew, Bert (Yank) Levy. He had served with irregular forces in several parts of the world in the 1920s and 1930s, most notably in the Spanish Civil War, and had written pamphlets on guerrilla warfare.

Nevertheless, in spite of the obviously essential role of a defence force for Britain, another problem that was encountered as the LDV was organised, was a definition of the role the organisation was to play. Initially, in the eyes of the War Office and the army, the LDV was to act as 'an armed police constabulary', which, in the event of an invasion, was to man roadblocks, observe German troop movements, convey information to the regular forces and guard places of strategic or tactical importance. The War Office believed that the LDV would act best in such a passive role because of its lack of training, weapons and proper equipment. Such a role clashed with the expectations of LDV commanders and members who believed that the organisation would be best suited to an active role of hunting down and killing parachutists, and fifth columnists (traitors), as well as attacking and harassing German forces.



'In the popular mind it was the twin terrors of Nazi paratrooper and Fifth Columnist traitors which were the Home Guard's nemesis, its natural enemy. Notwithstanding that the Home Guard actually spent most of its time preparing to defend 'nodal points' against tank attack, operating anti-aircraft artillery or locating unexploded bombs,' one newspaper said.

The clash led to morale problems and even more complaints to the press and the War Office from LDV members who were opposed, as they saw it, to the government's leaving them defenceless and placing them in a non-combatant role. In one Home Counties unit, for instance, of the 1,000 men signed up, only 645 had rifles. The others were expected to use iron bars, pitchforks and garden tools!

Complaints about the role of the LDV, and continuing problems encountered by the War Office in its attempts to clothe and arm the LDV, led the government to respond to public pressure in August, redefining the role of the LDV to include delaying and obstructing German forces through any means possible. The Home Office and MI5 assembled an 'Invasion List', a list of around 1,000 persons whose 'recent conduct or words indicated that they were likely to assist the enemy' and who would be apprehended by the police in the event of an invasion.

Winston Churchill was appointed Prime Minister in May 1940 and discussed the role of the LDV, concluding that it was partly the group's name which led to such low morale. It was changed to Home Guard, and by the end of that year was established into 1,200 battalions, 5,000 companies and 25,000 platoons, an enormous number of civilians (men only) remaining after the military services were established.

The founding of the Home Guard made it possible for many Jews to play an active part in the defence of their country. Many were of course already in the armed services, but some were in reserved occupations, tailors perhaps - who turned to making uniforms - or doctors or schoolteachers. For them the Home Guard was the ideal opportunity to repay a little of the gratitude they felt towards England, not only for giving their families sanctuary in earlier times, but also for fighting an enemy which aimed to destroy them altogether.

One young man, who had gone up to Cambridge before the war started, wrote later, 'Marching and drilling may have been suitable for the Jewish Lads' Brigade but we belonged to *Habonim*. Such physical exercise as we did was to



*Home Guard Battle Dress  
Field Uniform*

do with games and rambling and camping. There was a sort of uniform but a blue shirt and appropriate shorts (or blouse and skirt) did not provide the same robotic anonymity as did army khaki. On the other hand, I had to do my bit in the war.'

Many Jewish families had moved voluntarily to the suburbs and the countryside, apart from those who were evacuated by the government out of the cities to avoid the bombs. Those who formed new communities in the Home Counties often preferred to form Home Guard battalions amongst their friends and families. This often did a great deal to introduce Jewish people to those who might never have met a Jew before. Some found themselves faced with anti-Semitic feelings amongst their new neighbours, particularly those Jews coming from Germany. But the majority welcomed the opportunity to show that Jews were not the strange unknown folk they might have imagined, and many friendships were formed amongst these citizen-soldiers which continued long after the war ended.

Once the atrocities committed in German-occupied Europe were known, sympathy from English people helped to welcome Jewish people to non-Jewish neighbourhoods, particularly when these new arrivals were quick to join in the move to defend England from invasion by the enemy.

Orthodox Jews found certain problems if they joined the Home Guard that they

had not encountered before. Parades on *Shabbat*, for example, could mean non-attendance - against orders. But usually a way could be found around such difficulties; doing an extra night-time attendance, for example, or arranging Sabbath Services to commence later in the day. Many Jewish families, unable to obtain kosher meat, had turned vegetarian for the duration, or kept their own chickens. Some, for instance, never having come face to face with a farmer, found that a friendly fellow member of the local Home Guard battalion, could provide butter and eggs - in very short supply - in return for a new pair of trousers, or a few home lessons for his son!

## **It brought out all the neighbours who thought it was indeed a bomb explosion!**

In my own family, living in the small community of Amersham in Buckinghamshire, for instance, where there was a flourishing Jewish presence, mostly composed of refugees from Germany and Holland - musicians, writers, lawyers, etc. - several of the men joined the Home Guard. They accepted their new form of leisure activity with excitement. Not only could they contribute to the welfare of their adopted country, but they learned new skills: how to clean a rifle, put up a tent, build a bonfire or establish field communications.

Night manoeuvres added some spice to their somewhat boring existence and many found pleasure in the countryside

about them. I remember my father coming home at six o'clock one morning after being out training all night. In true *Dad's Army* fashion he proudly carried his Sten Gun (a heavy machine gun) into the lounge where there was a glass-topped coffee table. Yawning loudly he plonked it down on the table where it cracked the glass with a noise like thunder. It brought out all the neighbours who thought it was indeed a bomb explosion!

However, in spite of the lighter side of Amersham's Home Guard existence, the men were serious in their care for the civilians in their charge. On one occasion a wounded enemy aircraft did land in the fields outside the town. The Home Guard were on the spot instantly, dragged the pilot out of the burning aircraft, and kept him prisoner until the police and regular army arrived. As it happened, he was only too pleased to leave the war behind, stayed on to help a local farmer and settled down happily with a local girl. But the Amersham Home Guard won a commendation for their prompt actions.

After the war the Home Guard was disbanded, but many of those who served in it kept their friendships, proud of what they had achieved, and told their grandchildren stories - often much embroidered - of how they helped to win the war.

### **Philippa Bernard**



*Home Guard Soldiers in a  
Blockhouse*

## The Ghetto



*The Venice Ghetto*

The word 'ghetto' was originally applied to an iron foundry or metal-working factory. Before the first Jewish ghetto was established - believed to be that of Venice in 1516 – the enclosed place where Jews lived was usually known as the Jewish quarter, *Judengasse* in German and the equivalent in other languages. During the Middle Ages, Jews in cities were often confined to a small area, sometimes enclosed within a wall or fence, with locked gates, where they had to remain at night and where Christians were not allowed to intrude. Within the ghetto, Jews maintained their houses, shops, synagogues and schools and had to wear a distinctive sign, sometimes a yellow star or an image of a *sefer torah*.

The first closed area for Jews, before the word ghetto came into the universal language, was the *mellah*, a walled quarter of Morocco. From the beginning of the fifteenth century, Jews were confined in the cities of North Africa, with a fortified gateway in the wall. The first was in the city of Fez which held the largest and one of the oldest Jewish communities in Morocco, present since the city's foundation in the late eighth or early ninth century. Since that time a Jewish community was concentrated in



*The Prague Ghetto*

the neighbourhood known as *Foundouk el-Yhoudi* (hotel/warehouse of the Jew) near Bab Guissa in the northeast of the city. Usually, the Jewish quarter was situated near the royal palace or the residence of the governor in order to protect its inhabitants from recurring riots. In contrast, rural *mellahs* were separate villages inhabited solely by the Jews.

In 1276 the Sultan had founded Fes el-Jdid, a new fortified administrative city to house the troops and the royal palace. The city included a southern district which was initially inhabited by Muslim garrisons, later disbanded. It was this name which was later retained as the name of the subsequent Jewish quarter in the area. Afterwards, the name came to be associated by analogy with similar districts that were later created in other cities such as Marrakesh. The name *mellah* (salt in Arabic) thus originally had no negative connotation. Nonetheless, over generations a number of legends and popular etymologies came to explain the origin of the word as a 'salted, cursed ground' or a place where the Jews were forced to 'salt' the heads of decapitated rebels.

However, the term 'ghetto' was not in general use until the sixteenth century, when the Catholic Church introduced strong restrictions on Christians, who were forbidden to work for Jews or to mix with them. In the Ottoman Empire Jews were more welcome, but for Christianity they were subject to conversion, which would, it was believed, augur in the Second Coming of Christ.

In the larger Jewish quarters, such as that in Frankfurt or Prague, the community was almost a self-governing autonomy with its own rules, taxes and institutional structures, the synagogue playing the role of Town Hall, and the religious leaders were the judges, teachers and police. The members of that community were cared for from the cradle to the grave, enjoying health, education and burial rights. To maintain law and order in the outer world - Jews were often the object of criminal violence - the local government

welcomed the existence of closed communal spaces, which the Jews approved to keep themselves safe.

In 1744 Italian Jewish communities began using the word 'ghetto' – a corruption of Venetian slang – before other nations borrowed the term. It was not used generally in England until the late 1800s. In fact England has never had a ghetto as such, though there were recognised Jewish Quarters in most of the larger cities. They were never enclosed; Christians were never forbidden to live within them, and Jews could live where they wished, though there were certain restrictions on owning property, as for instance within the City of London. Here the Jewish quarter stretched from London Wall, south to Gresham Street, and to include the main thoroughfare Old Jewry (formerly Jewry Street).



*The Frankfurt Ghetto*

In Frankfurt, the trading guilds put pressure on the town authorities to expel the Jewish community, fearing competition, but the city bore the title of the Free Imperial City of Frankfurt, and was a leading European trading centre so it needed the commercial interests of the Jews to maintain its position. The first major member of the house of Rothschild - Meyer Amstel Rothschild - was born in the ghetto, his descendants spreading out across the world to form the greatest financial dynasty ever known.

Not only was there a formidable trading community living and working in the Frankfurt *Judengasse*, but it was an important part of the world of books, setting up publishing houses offering important works on spiritual subjects, the *Kabbalah*, the *Talmud* and Biblical history.

In Italy the ghettos were forming in Rome and Florence as well as Venice, where the name originated. There was a constant drive, in such a Catholic dominated country, to convert the inhabitants of the ghettos, strongly resisted by their inhabitants, who resorted to abstruse Biblical and Messianic mysticism to thwart the persuaders. They did their best to encourage their communities to maintain Jewish tradition by means of the schools, synagogues and their own councils.

When the Emperor Napoleon sent his army into Italy in 1797 most of the ghettos were liberated, the fences and gates pulled down under the instruction: 'Remove that mark of separation between the Jewish Citizens and the other Citizens where no mark should exist.' The emancipation of the Jews of Europe, both in practical terms and intellectually, militated towards the disappearance of the ghetto.

In America, with a huge influx of Jews into the cities - particularly from Germany - the idea of the ghetto gained considerable disapproval. Israel Zangwill's book, *Children of the Ghetto*, brought to light a new concept of a people shut off from the outer world, even though most of the new immigrants preferred to keep themselves to themselves.



*The Warsaw Ghetto*

But the disappearance of the ghetto was to be short-lived. In the States, particularly in the South, the segregation of black people was compared to that of the Jews, and with the coming of Nazism in Europe a new type of ghetto arose. The Germans felt that a return to the ghetto would be intolerable. They wanted the Jews out altogether; they might even

assemble a defensive force to fight their oppressors. In 1938, Reinhard Heydrich, then Chief of Police and Gestapo, said, 'From a police point of view, a ghetto, in the form of a completely segregated district with only Jews, is not possible. We would have no control over a ghetto where the Jew gets together with the whole of his Jewish tribe. It would be a permanent hide-out for criminals and, first of all, a source of epidemics and the like.'



*Forced labour in a clothing factory. Lodz ghetto, 1941*

The exceptions were the Polish ghettos. On October 12, 1940, the Germans decreed the establishment of a ghetto in Warsaw. The ruling required all Jewish residents of Warsaw to move into a designated area, which German authorities sealed off from the rest of the city. The population of the ghetto, increased by Jews compelled to move in from nearby towns, was estimated to be over 400,000 Jews. The inhabitants suffered severely from starvation, exposure, and infectious disease. At least 7,000 Jews died fighting or in hiding in the ghetto, while the SS and police sent another 7,000 to the Treblinka killing centre.

Warsaw was the exception, in that it is known for its resistance. The uprising started on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1943 when the people refused to surrender to the police commander SS-Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop, who ordered the burning of the ghetto, block by block, ending on 16<sup>th</sup> May. A total of 13,000 Jews were killed, about half of them burnt alive or suffocated. The uprising was the largest single revolt by Jews during World War II. The Jews knew they couldn't win and that their survival was unlikely. Marek Edelman, a commander of the Jewish

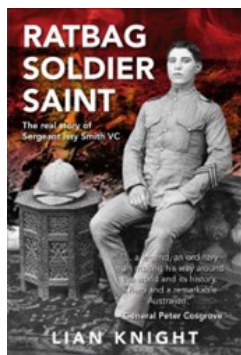
force, said their inspiration to fight was 'not to allow the Germans to pick the time and place of our deaths'. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the uprising was 'one of the most significant occurrences in the history of the Jewish people'. The ghetto Jews held out for several weeks until a far superior fire power overwhelmed them. The Germans then burnt the ghetto to the ground.

Also in Poland, the Germans set up a similar ghetto in Lodz, the industrial town that had a high Jewish population. This was turned into a 'working' ghetto, producing textiles and other goods for the German army. Those too frail to work were 'moved' into the death camps. Not all the inhabitants of the Lodz ghetto were Jewish; there was also quite a high proportion of Romas, criminals, and those too frail to work, such as children, the elderly and the sick. Food was almost unobtainable (mostly potato peelings or left-over animal fodder). A banner over the ghetto read 'Work is our only path.'

The term 'ghetto' has come to mean any area where a group of like-minded people come together to live, sometimes in relative contentment, to learn and thrive, sometimes in terrible circumstances ruled over by a despotic overlord. But the early Jewish ghettos were places of sanctuary for an oppressed people. In modern times the ghetto itself has become no more than a group resting place, such as Soweto in South Africa. It has come to represent poor housing, slum buildings, homes for criminals, but the old Jewish ghettos were simply where minority groups, especially Jews, could keep their traditions, live with friends and keep away from the outside world.

**Philippa Bernard**

## Issy Smith 1890-1940



*Biography written by his granddaughter and published by Hybrid in 2022*

'Ratbag, soldier, saint' . . . Such is one description of the Australian Jewish soldier who won the VC during World War I for 'most conspicuous bravery'. Born Ishroulch Shmeilowitz (some records say Israel Smilovitch) in Egypt to Orthodox Jewish parents, the young boy stowed away on a ship travelling to England at the age of eleven, to live in the East End of London. He spoke no English, but he did speak Turkish, French, German and Yiddish, earning a few pennies as a fish delivery boy while attending school in Commercial Road.

In 1904, still only fourteen, he joined the Manchester Regiment of the British Army where the recruiting officer, unable to cope with such a name, registered him as Issy Smith. The name stuck. He served for eight years, being posted first to South Africa and then to India where, now a corporal, he marched in the Delhi Durbar Parade, being awarded the Delhi Durbar Medal, one of only sixteen non-commissioned officers to do so. He was a skilful boxer while in the army, winning the British Army's Middleweight Championship in 1911. He also added an Indian dialect and some Swahili to his list of languages. He was discharged in 1912 and went to Australia.



When war broke out in 1914, Issy was recalled to the army, and rejoined the 1st Manchester Regiment stationed in India. The Regiment sailed to France, where it participated in battles at Givenchy and Neuve Chapelle, sustaining heavy casualties. Issy himself was incapacitated for a time by poison gas.

On 24<sup>th</sup> April his Brigade was ordered up to the Ypres sector where the situation east of the Ypres Canal had become very critical. Leaving its billets at L'Épinette in the afternoon the battalion marched almost twenty-four miles to Boeschepe, which was reached just before midnight. They moved off again at 6.00 am the following day.



In a later interview with the press, Issy said 'about eleven in the morning we halted in a field for a rest. A German airplane came overhead and dropped bombs on us. We were ordered to run for cover and leave everything behind us. When we went to look for cover I suddenly remembered that I had left my cigarettes behind. I went back to get them and had gone a short distance when a *Jack Johnson* dropped amongst my platoon and killed or wounded about fourteen of them'. A *Jack Johnson* was the largest shell used by the Germans. When it exploded it made a shell crater about twenty feet deep. It was called the 'Ypres Express,' because it was like an express train as it tore through the air emitting a dense cloud of black smoke when it exploded.

At 12.30 the battalion moved out of its position and attacked over a distance of about 1,600 yards, coming under very heavy artillery, machine-gun and rifle fire. It lost many men but succeeded in reaching within seventy yards of the enemy trenches.

Issy was in the leading platoon in the charge with No. 1 Company. Lieutenant Robinson, his platoon commander, was wounded and Issy bandaged him up with a field dressing. Sergeant Rooke took over command of the platoon but was shot through the liver and was quite helpless. Smith at once ran to his rescue, put him on his back and carried him through a terrific hail of shrapnel, rifle and machine-gun fire to the Ypres road.

At that moment Lieutenant W. M. Shipster, who had been bringing up reserve ammunition for a machine-gun, came upon Rooke and Issy Smith, saying that he would bring assistance. He had only gone a few yards when he himself was shot through the leg. Issy rolled down a slight hillside, reached the Lieutenant and after bandaging his wounds carried him to where Rooke lay, all the time under heavy enemy fire. He then moved Rooke a few yards forward, then Shipster a few yards and so on until he reached the forward positions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Suffolk Regiment.

Lieutenant Priestley of the Suffolks came out of the trenches and assisted Shipster in the final few yards. Issy then helped Rooke onto a stretcher and took him to the Suffolk's first aid post where, in his own words 'dead exhausted, I fell down, not able to move. An officer gave me a flask and said there is brandy in this, take a drop and it will revive you. I said that I would not. I was a teetotalter and intended to remain one no matter what happened. But I was dreadfully weak. I rested for an hour then went back to my company to learn that Lieutenant Robinson was missing; afterwards I went out to look for him but couldn't find him. There were a lot of our wounded lying about'. Issy was awarded the Victoria Cross.



*The Victoria Cross*



His citation read:- *For most conspicuous bravery on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1915 near Ypres, when he left his Company on his own initiative and went well forward towards the enemy's positions to assist a severely wounded man, whom he carried a distance of 250 yards into safety, while exposed the whole time to heavy machine gun and rifle fire. Subsequently Corporal Smith displayed great gallantry, when the casualties were very heavy, in voluntarily assisting to bring in many more wounded men throughout the day, and attending to them with the greatest devotion to duty, regardless of personal risk.* He was sent to Dublin to recover from his wounds.

When serving in Mesopotamia as a sergeant he received the Tsarist medal of St George (4<sup>th</sup> class) for rescuing Russian soldiers. He was present at the fall of Baghdad and of Jerusalem. He was also awarded the *Croix de Guerre*. His awards were used by the War Office to improve recruitment; when he later revisited his old school he was given a gold watch and chain by the boys.



*The Tsarist medal of St. George and The Croix de Guerre*



Anti-Semitism was rife in England after the war, much of it due to confusion between 'foreigners' and Germans. When Issy visited Leeds, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported, he was insulted by the Grand Restaurant, which refused to serve him because he was Jewish — 'not the first time the management of this restaurant has acted in this manner'. Sergeant Smith was in Yorkshire on what turned out to be a highly successful recruiting campaign.

He was demobilised in 1918 and returned to London. King George V gave a grand garden party in 1920 for war heroes, to which Issy was invited, along with some of those who had fought in the Indian Mutiny, Yorke's Drift and the Relief of General Gordon.



*Issy attending an Anzac Day parade in 1927*

Issy now found himself in considerable difficulties. He had no money and was forced to sell his medals for the paltry sum of £20. They were recovered, however, by the Jewish Historical Society, urged by the wife of the then Chief Rabbi, and returned to their rightful owner. Issy tried several jobs to earn a living wage – including joining a theatrical group.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February 1919, Issy Smith, giving his name as Israel Shlimovitz, otherwise Smith, married Elsie Porteous Collingwood McKechnie, a tailoress of London and Melbourne, at Camberwell Registry Office, London. The marriage was later solemnized according to Jewish tradition, but his parents, who had remained in Egypt, disowned him for marrying a Gentile. In 1925 the Smith family, including daughter Olive, returned to Australia and, in 1928, Issy became Melbourne manager for British International Pictures. In 1930 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace and regularly sat on the City Court bench.



*Maurice Smith wearing his father's medals at a remembrance parade*

At the 1931 Federal election he unsuccessfully contested the seat of

Melbourne as a United Australia Party candidate. He became an important figure in the Jewish community. During the Depression years, he was very generous to those in dire circumstances – often to the detriment of his family, to whom he was devoted. In 1934, when his son Maurice was born, he was working as a commercial traveller for the Dunlop Rubber Co. and three years later he joined the head-office staff of the Civil Aviation Board; in 1938 he moved to Essendon Aerodrome where he became well-known.

Issy Smith died of coronary thrombosis in September 1940. He was buried in the Jewish section of Fawkner Cemetery in Melbourne. In 1990 the family sold his Victoria Cross for £30,000.



Following representations from the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, Communities Secretary Eric Pickles announced in September 2013 that the plan to memorialise British-born First World War Victoria Cross medal holders by laying commemorative paving stones in their home towns would be extended to include Smith, despite the fact that he was born in Egypt.



*Memorial to Issy Smith in Ropewalk Gardens, London E1.*

**Philippa Bernard**

## Ruth Bourne (1926 - )



Jewish people seem to have a propensity for puzzles, exercises of the mind, exploration of brainteasers. Many of the greatest chess masters have been Jewish, as have a high proportion of Nobel Prize winners. Perhaps that is why the team at Bletchley Park, where English codebreakers worked, were Jewish - among them Ruth Bourne.

When I visited Bletchley some years ago I was shown round by a charming Jewish woman, an ex- Wren, who was not only well-versed in what had happened at that highly-secret location, but had actually taken part in the fight to prevent the Germans from finding out English plans for the conduct of the war. Ruth was one of the 'Women of Bletchley'.

She was born Ruth June Henry, in 1926 and went to London University, specialising in languages. She joined the WRNS (Women's Royal Naval Service) at the age of seventeen, as a trainee, and shortly afterwards was asked if she would like to join the SDX. 'What's SDX?' she asked. 'SD is Special Duties, and X, we can't tell you,' was the reply. She signed the Official Secrets Act and was told that she would be working on something so special that she could never reveal what she did, that she would have no social or private life and there would be no way that she could ever leave.

In 1937, when it was becoming clear that in Europe and America there existed considerable tension between governments, and preparations were being put in hand for a possible war, the Chief of MI6, Admiral Hugh Sinclair, began to place the nation on a war-

footing and to expand staff numbers. These were to be 'men of the professor type', primarily drawn from Oxford and Cambridge. However, as the cryptic analytic work became increasingly mechanized, many more staff were needed.

The government had taken over Bletchley Park, once the country home of the wealthy Sir Herbert Leon and his family. Sir Herbert, from a Jewish family, had fought in World War I and was Liberal MP for Buckingham. Women were first brought into Bletchley Park after being approached at university or because of trusted family connections; debutantes were especially valued, as they were considered the most trustworthy due to their upper class backgrounds. However, the personnel needs of Bletchley Park continued to grow. The heads of Bletchley Park next looked for women who were linguists, mathematicians, and even crossword experts. In 1942 the *Daily Telegraph* hosted a competition where a cryptic crossword was to be solved within twelve minutes. Winners were approached by the military and some were recruited to work at Bletchley Park, as these individuals were thought to have strong lateral thinking skills, important for codebreaking. The majority of these women came from middle-class backgrounds and some held degrees in mathematics, physics and engineering. One woman said later 'Our work was so secret that we did not pay income tax; this annoyed my bank manager when I was unable to tell him what I did!'



*Women at Bletchley Park*

The work at Bletchley was largely based on code-breaking, especially those codes used by the German Enigma machine. The machine was a cipher device developed and used to protect commercial, diplomatic, and military

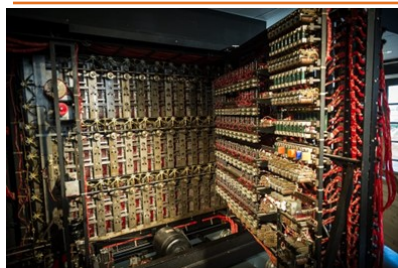
communication. It was employed extensively by Nazi Germany during World War II, but the method had been broken by Polish operators in the early 1930s. The Enigma codes were considered so secure that they were used to encipher the most top-secret messages. However they were becoming more sophisticated as the war proceeded, and were changed every day. It was Alan Turing, the brilliant young Cambridge mathematician, who first worked out a method of breaking them, and who invented the 'bombe' which was used at Bletchley to discover German military plans.



*An Enigma machine*

The Bombe was a complicated electrical device that replicated the action of several Enigma machines wired together. A standard German Enigma employed, at any one time, a set of three rotors, each of which could be set in any of 26 positions. The standard British bombe contained 36 Enigma equivalents, each with three drums wired to produce the same scrambling effect as the Enigma rotors. Before computers were in general use, the bombe could do the work of many human operators, covering all the possibilities of the wording of the German messages, and thus enable the code-breakers to analyse the results even when they were frequently changed. One of the most fortunate events in the history of the code-breakers was when a U-boat was captured almost intact and its logbooks examined. This gave Bletchley a glimpse into how many of the Enigma machines operated and helped to break down the German coding system, hitherto believed to be almost impregnable.

The majority of the women recruited had no previous experience of bombe operation and were going into the job totally ignorant of what it entailed. The



*The code-breaker at Bletchley Park*

workers were only shown a few machines for training purposes on recruitment and told not to ask any questions. The role itself included 'preparing the machines each day, turning the drums on the front and plugging up the boards at the back according to settings laid out in a menu'. While Ruth was a checker she would be in charge of waiting for information to come through as 'confirmed'. When this happened she would then have to make a call to report the stop on the code menu which would be checked by other members of Bletchley.

Ruth's job meant that she was on her feet all day and there was little time for breaks. There was a term 'mustard', that meant the workers at Bletchley Park were told what they were going to do without any discussion or choice of their own. From the very first day of her work as a bombe operator to when her time at Bletchley ended, Ruth did what she was told on demand. Despite the little amount of freedom the workers had at Bletchley, she says herself that it was very satisfying to know that they were helping to win the war. Her work as a bombe operator began in early 1944 and continued until the end of the war in 1945.



*Ruth with Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip*

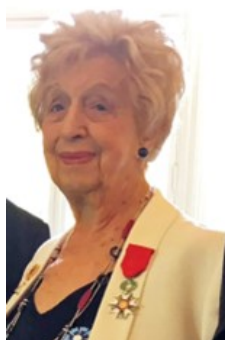
Ruth was closely involved with the work on the bombe though she was not able to reveal any of this until long after the war was over. Even then all workers at Bletchley were told to continue to keep it a

close secret. Ruth described what it was like when the news finally broke saying that 'you got so used to not talking to anyone' that even after they were allowed to disclose their roles she still would not talk about her experience in depth.

Bletchley Park's code-breakers are credited by historians with shortening the war by two years. Asked if she realised the importance of her work at the time, Ruth said, 'No, not at all.' The then 18-year-old was almost completely in the dark. 'We were only ever told, after we had signed the Official Secrets Act, and gone through a lot of other palaver, that "We are breaking German codes". That's a five-word sentence and that's all I ever knew. We didn't know about Enigma. We didn't know anything about how the Bombe worked or how it related to the Enigma machine. It was literally drummed into us that we must be accurate otherwise a lot of very important work by very clever people would be ruined. So we had to be very alert.'

## the workers at Bletchley Park were told what they were going to do without any discussion

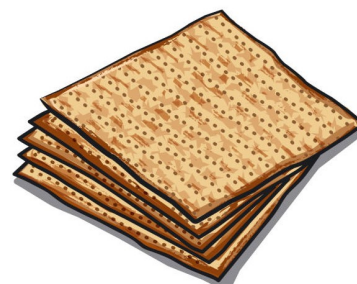
Ruth, now ninety-six, is very proud of her service at Bletchley Park. She continues to give lectures on her work there, including the twenty years she spent as a guide, showing visitors around. In 2018 she received the *Legion d'Honneur* from a grateful French government.



*Wearing her Legion d'Honneur*

**Philippa Bernard**

## Amusement Arcade



During Pesach, Morrie took his lunch to eat outside in the park. He sat down on a bench and began eating his matzah.

A little while later, a blind man came by and sat down next to him. Feeling generous, Morrie gave him one of his matzahs.

The blind man ran his hand over the matzah for a few minutes, looked puzzled, and finally exclaimed, 'Who wrote this rubbish?'



### Pesach warning

Just in time for this year's Passover, a group of leading medical people has published data indicating that *Seder* participants should NOT partake of both chopped liver and charoses.

It is indicated that this combination can lead to Charoses of the Liver.

## The Umbrella Man Arnold Fulton (1931-2022)



Fulton was a Holocaust survivor who escaped the Warsaw ghetto and became known as the Umbrella King.

When the British weather turned out to be less than beautiful, Queen Elizabeth II was regularly seen holding one of Arnold Fulton's iconic birdcage-shape clear umbrellas, with a trim to match her outfit.

Arnold Frucht was born in Czestochowa, southwest Poland, in 1931. His father, Jakub, was a master tailor and an anglophile, who grew up reading Charles Dickens and Sherlock Holmes in Polish. His mother, Cyrtula, was a socialite, who collected crystal and fine rugs and stubbornly refused to emigrate as Hitler rose to power in Germany.

In September 1939 the Nazis invaded. The young Frucht, his parents and his older sister, Sonja, were confined in the ghetto. For a while, Arnold's father managed to save his family from being sent to a concentration camp, with the help of a German general for whom he made suits. In early 1943 he managed to smuggle first Sonja, and later his son, out of the ghetto, promising that he and their mother would follow.

A Polish woman shaved the boy's dark hair, took him to Warsaw by train and left him in a flat with Sonja and seven other escaped Jews. The Frucht parents never joined their children; they were caught trying to flee the ghetto - and shot.

Jurek Igra, a cousin of Arnold's mother, who was a member of the Polish underground, took charge of the boy and got him false papers in the name of Adam

Filipczak. For more than a year, Igra moved Arnold to different hiding places in Warsaw – including the room of a prostitute, Anka, who was secretly working for the resistance and was later executed.

The twelve-year old boy was hiding under her bed while she entertained German officers a few inches above his head. Bits of straw cascaded from the mattress, but Frucht could not sneeze or cough, knowing that if he made the slightest sound, it would be disastrous. One hiding place was betrayed by a neighbour, and the Jews hid in a loft when the Gestapo raided it. On another occasion Frucht and his sister were briefly reunited, in a flat owned by a Polish couple who used it to breed rabbits for their food and fur - and to hide Jews.

Frucht wrote in his memoirs that when a Nazi officer arrived one day, he dropped to his knees and kissed the officer's jackboots in desperation. The officer turned and left.

In August 1944, as the Red Army advanced from the east, the Polish resistance staged the Warsaw uprising. Hitler responded by ordering the city's destruction. Frucht took refuge in a Catholic church, and was then spirited back to Czestochowa, where he was delivered to a Catholic monastery. He embraced Catholicism and was baptised. Nine months later, after Germany's surrender, Sonja found him there. She had by then married Igra.

Frucht briefly lived with the couple in Katowice until a British rabbi, Solomon Schonfeld, arranged for him and many other Jewish orphans to start a new life in London. In April 1946, Arnold and 125 others sailed from the Baltic port of Gdynia. He lived in a boarding house while attending Avigdor High School in north



*The young Fulton working on mechanical designs, which included a machine for plucking chickens*

London, which Rabbi Schonfeld had helped to establish.

Aged seventeen, Arnold changed his surname to Fulton. He enrolled at Northampton Polytechnic in Islington, now known as City, University of London, to study mechanical engineering. He also abandoned Catholicism, and after earning a Higher National Certificate he took a job with a Jewish firm in Golders Green, called the Hermes Machine Tool Company. There he did well, designing special purpose machines.

When the founder of Hermes Machine Tool Company died in 1955, the business collapsed, so Fulton went to see his sister and her husband who were then living in Sweden. Jurek Igra was making umbrellas, which fascinated Fulton and when he returned to London, he rented a tiny house in Whitechapel, and with the help of one employee, he started his own umbrella business. At the time, there were seventy-five other umbrella manufacturers in Britain – his was the smallest.

### **It rained that weekend, the umbrellas sold out and the buyer ordered five dozen more**

He started by making colourful umbrellas, and a buyer at Selfridges reluctantly agreed one Friday to take twenty-four of them. It rained that weekend, the umbrellas sold out and the buyer ordered five dozen more. That was the trigger that set Arnold on the path to success.

He mechanised production, and later moved it first to Taiwan, then to China. Endlessly inventive, he branched into folding umbrellas, fashionable umbrellas, and umbrellas that opened and closed at the click of a button and did not turn inside out in storms. He pioneered the transparent dome-shaped umbrella called the Birdcage in the 1960s. It was spotted by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and adopted by her as her umbrella of choice, as it protected her from the rain while allowing her to be seen. But like many fashion items, sales of the Birdcage declined, and by the late 70s, sales were so slow that Fulton decided to stop making it.

When he ceased production of that line, he was telephoned by an equerry to the Queen Mother who said she was dismayed she could no longer buy them. So Fulton relaunched the Birdcage, 'And in doing so, we tailored them to the Queen Mother and made the shaft slightly thicker so that it could be used more like a walking stick. We also made the cover the size that she wanted,' Fulton said. Queen Elizabeth II also used the Birdcage, and Fulton had a Royal Warrant from The Queen Mother. He also had one from Queen Elizabeth II, and was later invited to meet her at Buckingham Palace.

## he was telephoned by an equerry to the Queen Mother who said she was dismayed she could no longer buy them

His efforts to produce a bulletproof umbrella were less successful, but by the 1980s he was selling millions of products a year and in 1985 moved his company to London's Docklands. He bought a plot for £650,000 and sold it in 2008 for many times that sum.

Fulton bought himself a Rolls-Royce, took up flying and raised three sons in Finchley with his wife, Colette, a Belgian Jew whom he had married in 1959. Two sons, Ashley and Craig, both run their own property companies. Nigel runs Fulton Umbrellas, his father having finally retired in 2006.



*He moved his company into Docklands*



*Fulton with his son, Nigel*

Arnold returned to Czestochowa only once, in 1997, and it was an unhappy experience. Outside his family's old flat he and his sons were accosted by the woman who now lived there. 'You Jews think you can come back and claim your property. Well, you can't!' she shouted. At the site of the city's old Synagogue two drunks chased them, yelling, 'What Hitler started, we'll finish.' Arnold said he was transported back to his childhood. 'I once again felt the cold hand of fear take a firm grip of me,' he wrote. 'It was a very dark moment.' Fulton did not regard himself as religious but became a member of the Kinloss Synagogue in Finchley.



*Queen Elizabeth II had umbrellas to match her outfits*

Arnold Fulton, was born on July 17, 1931. He died on October 6, 2022, aged 91

### Claire Connick

## UNLAWFUL KILLINGS



HER HONOUR  
WENDY JOSEPH QC

*Unlawful Killings*  
by  
Wendy Joseph QC

Doubleday 2022

This is a really absorbing, and at the same time, informative book. The author became a Judge in 2007, and moved to the Old Bailey in 2012. When she arrived there, she was the sole woman among sixteen judges, and only the third woman to hold a permanent position in that place. She retired in 2022. She is a very talented writer - observant, succinct, compassionate and with a sense of humour. Wendy Joseph describes how cases unfold, and shows exactly what it is like to be a Judge in a murder trial. Unlike many High Court Judges, she is very down-to-earth. She says the bench can be a lonely place.

We are taken through six imaginary trials - imaginary, but each one an amalgam of those which have confronted Wendy Joseph over the years. Before each trial, the author weaves a story about the likelihood of the circumstances leading to the murder which has been committed. The reader is clearly shown what is likely to have caused the crime. She explains in detail the workings of the Central Criminal Court and it is as if we are seated in the public gallery.

Wendy Joseph now mentors young people, from a variety of backgrounds, who hope for a career in the Law - and she is especially interested in helping women. She says, 'Every day in the UK, lives are suddenly, brutally, wickedly taken away. Victims are shot or stabbed. Less often they are strangled or suffocated or beaten to death. Rarely they are poisoned, pushed off high buildings, drowned or set alight. Then there are many who are killed by dangerous drivers, or corporate negligence. There are a lot of ways you can kill someone. I know, because I've seen most of them at close quarters'.

**Claire Connick**



While we appreciate the interest that our readers show in the *Quarterly*, we are concerned about the problems of mailing it. The Synagogue Staff are a little troubled by the heavy task of transporting it to the post office. It has been decided that a more modern method of despatch could be indicated. The Synagogue Executive is therefore in the process of ordering the installation of a Drone Point on the roof of Kent House. A new staff member, Flo Laprio, has been recruited for the task. All staff are being instructed in the intricacies of the mechanics. We shall shortly be explaining how you will receive your copy in the future.

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*Jane Nissen writes:*

I did immensely enjoy this latest volume! Once again beautifully produced and full of interest - the articles on Herschel Grynszpan (fascinating), Irving Berlin (I was singing along) and of course your very interesting piece on Disraeli. So much that I didn't know about him - that he abolished public execution, for one thing. He certainly was a multi-talented man - a successful author as well as a politician. (I was a reader for John Murray ages ago - delighted to find that he had been encouraged by the original JM.)

The Fromm piece is most interesting - I am currently doing a Yale course on Zoom with daughter Dinah and a couple of others on the Hebrew Bible, and this of course relates.

Editors: **Philippa Bernard and Claire Connick**

Please submit letters and articles for the Westminster Synagogue Quarterly to the Synagogue office or e-mail to [editor@westminstersynagogue.org](mailto:editor@westminstersynagogue.org)

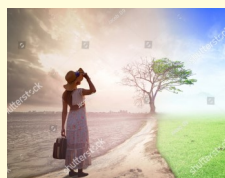
**LIFE AND I**

**I never thought then  
That life would change  
Things came back with familiar regularity  
School days and holidays  
Days of work and lazy days  
Death was unreal, life was eternal**

**Had I not have had to say goodbye...  
Had I not rebelled, had I not refused, had I not sinned  
Had I not loved, had I not suffered beyond suffering  
Had I not fought, had I not lost  
Had I not tried, had I not failed  
Had I not doubted, had I not been humbled  
Had I not trusted, had I not yielded**

**Had I not related to life-death interlocked cycle  
Through a spiritual dimension, a relentless quest  
Had I not learnt, had I not expiated  
My experience would have been ephemeral  
My understanding immature  
I would have been today as I was then on my tenth birthday  
When death was unreal  
When life was eternal**

**Colette Littman**





## Planning Your Diary

### Seder Night

Wednesday April 5

### Pesach 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Thursday April 6

### Pesach Last day

Wednesday April 12

### Erev Shavuot

Thursday May 25

### Shavuot

Friday May 26

### Erev Rosh

### Hashana

Friday September 15

### Rosh Hashana

Saturday September 16

### Kol Nidre

Sunday September 24

### Yom Kippur

Monday September 25

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