



*The Rape of Dinah by Sebastian Ricci*

**Dinah - daughter of Jacob and Leah**

**The Ace of Spies**

**A Jew Among the Zulus**

**Leslie Howard - Matinée Idol**



On March 27<sup>th</sup>, nearly four months ago, we were able to invite you back into our beautiful home, Kent House, for a Saturday morning service, for the first time in well over a year. As thirty of you filtered in, still distancing, and we talked and welcomed each other back, I was moved to find how much this place, and this return, means to you. This affected me because I felt how important this community is to you; the memories, joyful moments, pivotal times in your lives, the conversations, the feeling of being part of a congregation, and the future that we have found here. Over the last months it has been a privilege to welcome back people who have loved the Synagogue for years, arriving as if for the first time. We welcome those who are new to the Sanctuary, having already found inspiration in our community as new members but without having been able, until now, to be with us in person. We continue to grow in numbers, and in the quality of our relationship and Judaism within our community.

Rabbi Maimonides, the twelfth century philosopher, physician and giant of Jewish thought and practice, teaches that there are two needs for which we can sell our most sacred object, a *Torah* Scroll. One is essentially to pay for a Hebrew teacher! We want the skills and passion to grapple with the life-long emotional involvement with Judaism, inspiring learning and discussion, so that the *Torah* is relevant to us. The second need is equally powerful for me; you can sell a *Sefer Torah* to finance a wedding! So, we see that the relationships that support us, giving us joy and growth, are of the

greatest importance.

I am proud to be part of a community - Westminster Synagogue - that prizes Jewish learning and relationships, together with inspiring Services. More than a year ago, when the pandemic struck, we were one of the Jewish organisations to respond with Jewish learning, launching *Wisdom for Times of Difficulty and Uncertainty*. Our adult learning programme, along with *Education For All Ages*, goes from strength to strength, with a team led by Valery Rees, and our Director of Community, Yael Roberts, ensuring that there is at least one adult learning gathering a week (with weekly *Torah* portion classes, thematic discussions, and always a chance to learn in our Friday night services).

**As we gradually return to normality, we realise that, not only have we survived, but we have thrived - putting learning and relationships at the heart of all we do.**

When it comes to relationships, we have become even closer over the last year - further 'wed' to each other - when we could have been fragmented by distance. We have seen a cadre of new leaders coming forward, along with an array of energetic teams, focusing on *Chesed* (loving-kindness within the community), justice beyond the community, Festivals, the development of *Bnei Mitzvah*, the singing in our Services (*Chulyot*), and adult learning.

We have also seen many of you caring for each other more than ever before, and we have welcomed a part-time head of *Chesed* to train, arrange, and support more of you to help each other. We are becoming a community of *Torat Chesed*, in which our encounters with each other help us to learn and grow, and in which our studies draw us closer to each other.

Thank God, we didn't even need to sell a *Torah* Scroll to achieve all of this!

This last year has tested our resilience. Already the pandemic has compelled us to change so much of what we do, as individuals and as a community. In May there was the outbreak of frightening violence and hostility in Israel. This brought an increase in anti-Semitism on social media and in London too. I truly believe that we most effectively overcome such tests of resilience by working together. At Westminster Synagogue, nurturing Judaism is not a distraction from the suffering and pain in the world. It shows that with kindness, and the building of hope, we and the world can change. As we gradually return to normality, we realise that, not only have we survived, but we have thrived - putting learning and relationships at the heart of all we do.

This community means the world to so many of us.

**Rabbi Benji Stanley**



## Herod the King



*Slaughter of the Innocents  
by Raphael*

The name Herod appears frequently in both the Old and the New Testaments - either as Herod the King, Herod the Great or Herod I. He should not be confused with his son, usually known as Herod Antipas. Much of our knowledge of Herod comes from the great Jewish historian, Josephus, in his book *The Wars of the Jews*. He explains how Herod's father, Antipater, was granted Roman citizenship by Julius Caesar and made procurator of Judaea - by then a Roman province. Antipater was by origin an Edomite who converted to Judaism, a man of considerable wealth and influence, who was in good standing with the powerful magnates of Rome.

One of his first acts was to appoint his two sons, Phasael and Herod, to control the country; Phasael as Governor of Jerusalem and Herod as Governor of Galilee. He was later made the Tetrarch, ruling a quarter of the Province. The High Priest of the country was Hyrcanus II, strongly supported by Herod, and when Hyrcanus's nephew Antigonus, helped by the Parthians, attempted to overcome his uncle, Herod fled to Rome to ask for help. In 37 BCE he was appointed King of Judea and returned there to depose Antigonus. He was thirty-six years old.

Herod is believed to have been married at least eight times. His first wife, Doris, from Jerusalem, was the mother of his son Antipas. They were married before Herod became King, but soon after, he fell deeply in love with Mariamne, a Hasmonean princess, known for her great beauty. He divorced Doris and married Mariamne but she was to bring him nothing but tragedy. She bore him five children, but his bitter jealousy and fear of his throne being

usurped by any of them, caused him to take a terrible vengeance on many of Mariamne's family. He killed both her grandfather Hyrcanus, whom he accused of treachery, and her brother Jonathan, who had been made a High Priest as a young man and who was much beloved by the people of Judaea.

Herod's sister Salome conceived a plan to rid Herod of Mariamne by accusing her of adultery. Always subject to fits of jealousy, Herod had her killed, only to be filled with remorse. Josephus, always inclined to over-exaggeration, says, 'In his sickness of mind, he talked to her as if she were still alive, until time revealed to him the terrible truth, and filled his heart with grief as passionate as his love had been while she lived'.

After the death of Julius Caesar, conflict in Rome between Octavian and Mark Antony, led to Herod's difficulties with Cleopatra of Egypt, Antony's mistress. She took much of Herod's lands, but these were restored to him by Octavian after he had overcome Antony at the battle of Actium.

Now renamed Augustus Caesar, and Emperor of Rome, Octavian was visited more than once by Herod, who was close to the ruling clique in Rome, and was granted not only more territory bordering Palestine, but also the rich Cyprus copper mines, making him one of the wealthiest monarchs of the Middle East.

Herod's immense building projects in Palestine are among his most memorable achievements. The construction of the Temple Mount has been closely examined by contemporary commentators, as well as by more recent archaeologists. The Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism, which regards it as the place where God's divine presence is manifested more than anywhere else, and is the direction towards which Jews turn during prayer. Due to its extreme sanctity, many Jews will not walk on the Mount itself - to avoid unintentionally entering the area where the Holy of Holies stood - since according to the Rabbis, some aspect of the divine presence is still present at the site. It was from the Holy of Holies that the High Priest communicated directly with God.

Around 19 BCE, Herod further expanded the Mount and rebuilt the temple. He strengthened the Mount's natural plateau by enclosing the area with four massive retaining walls. This resulted in a large flat expanse which today forms the eastern section of the Old City of Jerusalem. The southern section of the western flank is revealed and contains what is known as the Western Wall. The retaining walls on these two sides descend many metres below ground level. The ambitious project, which involved the employment of 10,000 workers, more than doubled the size of the Temple.

Herod levelled the area by cutting away rock on the northwest side and raising the sloping ground to the south. A basilica, called by Josephus the *Royal Stoa*, was constructed on the southern end of the expanded platform, which provided a focus for the city's commercial and legal transactions.

**no one uncircumcised  
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penalty**

Hoping to gain more support from the Jews who were suspicious both of his Jewish inheritance and of his character and behaviour, Herod put into effect a complete reconstruction of the Second Temple, in order to have 'a capital city worthy of his dignity and grandeur'. The rebuilding, was carried out according to Jewish law, by the priests - working as masons, bricklayers etc., while temple services continued. This was not to be a new Temple, but a refurbishing and rebuilding of the one constructed in 516 BCE, after the destruction of Solomon's Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

In the western wall was the main gate, the *Gate of Coponius*; it was decorated with the golden eagle as a sign that the Temple had been placed under the protection of Rome. Anyone was allowed to enter the outer area, which was therefore called the Court of the Gentiles.

The actual Temple was enclosed by a balustrade, and at the entrances to it





*The Brazen Sea*

were notices, warning that foreigners had freedom of access, provided they did not go beyond it. This went all around the central edifice and no one uncircumcised could cross without incurring the death penalty.

Fourteen steps led through another gate to the Court of the Women, where the poor-boxes were. Another fifteen steps led up to the famous *Gate of Nicanor*; this led through the Court of the Men to that of the priests, which had in its centre the altar for the burnt offerings and to the left of it a large basin, or laver, called the Brazen Sea. It rested upon twelve bulls cast in bronze.

More steps led up to the actual temple - a comparatively small building. A curtain, embroidered with a map of the known world, concealed from view what lay beyond, and no one except the priest on duty was allowed to go further. Here stood the golden altar at which incense was offered; next to it were the seven-branched candlestick and the table with the twelve loaves of shewbread, which were replaced by fresh ones every Sabbath. Beyond it, behind another large curtain, lay the Holy of Holies, which only the High Priest was allowed to enter - and then only on the Day of Atonement.

A stone designated the place where once the Ark of the Covenant had stood. The great outer court, thirty-five acres across, still exists as Al-Haram al-Sharif, the Muslim Holy Place on Temple Mount, crowned by the Golden Dome.

But the renewed Temple was not the only monument that Herod left to his descendants. He constructed massive fortresses, cities, palaces and structures in

other towns in the Middle East - Beirut, Damascus, Antioch and Rhodes. In Palestine he was responsible for the port of Caesarea, Haifa, which became the capital under Roman rule, the fortress of Masada and the palace at Herodium where scholars believe he was buried.

He developed a system of supplying water to Jerusalem, extracted asphalt from the Dead Sea for use in building ships, and left his mark on cities and towns through his kingdom. He also created sports arenas, hippodromes and amphitheatres, deciding to pay for the Olympic Games of 12 BCE. He journeyed to Olympia for the games that summer and presided over them as president. According to Josephus he was himself a considerable athlete.

Herod died in Jericho in 4 BCE (the date is still subject to debate) - some believe by his own hand - leaving his sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas and Philip to squabble over his six wills. The Emperor in Rome - Palestine was still a subject nation - decided the outcome. He made Archelaus ethnarch (ruler) over Edom, Judaea and Samaria; Antipas tetrarch over Galilee and Perea and Philip tetrarch over the other smaller provinces.



The character of King Herod was vilified during his life and he is still the subject of much hatred since. He quarrelled with the Sadducees who doubted the validity of his Judaism, with all his family, many of whom he slaughtered and with several of the Imperial leaders in Rome. There is no doubt that he suffered through most of his life from a form of mental illness, leading to cruelty and depravity. Towards the end he was in constant pain from what has

variously been ascribed to chronic kidney disease or arteriosclerosis. Even allowing for contemporary attitudes to royal behaviour, Herod was a man of unbelievable cruelty and amoral attitudes. He was responsible for the murder of at least two wives, three sons and many of his relatives, rivals and servants.

Herod is particularly associated with the Slaughter of the Innocents, in which he, fearful of the prophecy that Jesus Christ would be King of the Jews, killed all boys under two years of age.

In the New Testament, according to Matthew - the only Gospel to record the event - the Magi visit Jerusalem to seek guidance as to where the King of the Jews has been born; King Herod directs them to Bethlehem and asks them to return to him and report, but they are warned in a dream and do not do so. He gives orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity.

This is followed by a reference to the book of Jeremiah: *Then what was said through the Prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled. A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.*

The event is supposed to have happened shortly before Herod's death, when he was already mentally and physically disordered. Many scholars do not believe the story, preferring to see it as a myth or legend, or possibly an attempt to blacken Herod's name even further. The deeds he committed during his life make it perfectly possible to credit the account. It has been the subject of many paintings and still forms a part of Christian teachings.

**Philippa Bernard**

## David Caminer OBE Computer pioneer (1915-2008)

In our April 2017 issue we featured the story of J Lyons and Co. Ltd. and touched very briefly on the company's enormous early computer called LEO - its name derived from Lyons Electronic Office - which has been certified by the Guinness World Records as the world's first business computer. Included in its technology was a weather forecast, enabling the company to save wasting time on deliveries of fresh products and to calculate the costs of Lyons' weekly bakery distribution run - a task previously carried out by hand by accounts clerks. The machine could quickly be reconfigured to perform different tasks by loading a new program; something that sounds quite normal today but was totally astonishing in 1951.

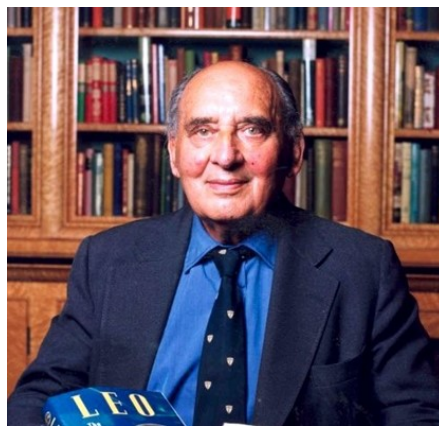
The man with the brilliant mind who was responsible for what *The Economist* called 'the first dedicated business machine to operate on the stored program principle' was David Caminer. He has been called the world's first corporate electronic systems analyst and the world's first software engineer. When the modern electronic computer was invented in the last years of the second world war, it was seen as a technology that could help in scientific and technical computations.

Caminer was born David Treisman on June 26, 1915, in Hackney. His father, a tailor, was killed in World War I, when David was three, and his mother married Felix Caminer, changing David's surname. He went to Sloane School, Fulham, and was a keen rugby player in his earlier years. He joined Lyons as a management trainee in 1936.

He was passionate about cricket (he was a member of the MCC), football (Chelsea) and rugby union. David played rugby for Lyons before the war. Later, when their Centaurs Rugby Club was formed, he immediately became a non-playing member. He was also an opera lover. He and his wife Jackie were still going to concerts, plays and sporting events until his final illness. Though not a man of strong religious beliefs, David had a high



regard for the traditions of the Jewish community, to which he was greatly committed. He took an active part in the battles against Oswald Mosley in the 1930s and 40s, culminating in his appearance as a platform speaker at a rally in Trafalgar Square in 1943. He continued to have a lively and trenchant view of politics. In later years, he took an active role in his local Labour party and spearheaded the Anti-Apartheid Movement, personally welcoming Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he visited Richmond-upon-Thames, where David lived.



During the war, David served with the Green Howards, in North Africa. He was wounded at Mareth, Tunisia in 1943, losing a leg. He returned to civilian life by going back to his pre-war job with J Lyons, where he was appointed manager of the influential systems analysis office.

In addition to running the tea shops, Lyons catered large events like tennis at Wimbledon and garden parties at Windsor Castle; it also operated hotels, laundries, and ice cream, confectionery and meat pie companies. And, of course, tea plantations. As a result, the company required exceptionally efficient office support. So it was only natural it would look at the

'electronic brains' that scientists in the United States were developing for scientific and military purposes as a way to streamline its own empire. Caminer's role was finding ways to retain traditional clerical rigour while hugely increasing the speed of the company's logistics and finances.

Lyons sent employees to the United States to study office automation. American experts said they should go to the University of Cambridge, where Maurice Wilkes was developing an early computer.

The Lyons men realised that such a machine could be used to solve the problems of keeping track of Lyons' multiple activities in the catering and food processing world.

Lyons made a deal to help finance Dr. Wilkes's work - in return for his assistance in building a computer for the company. As work on the hardware progressed, Caminer drew up a flow chart to show how the different job requirements related to each other. The charts became the basis of the computer code.

The finished LEO, which had less than 100,000th the power of a current PC, could calculate an employee's pay in 1.5 seconds, a job that took an experienced clerk eight minutes. Its success led Lyons to set up a computer subsidiary that later developed two more generations of LEO, the last with transistors, rather than the noisy vacuum tubes used in the first two models.

LEO performed its first calculation in November 1951, running a program to evaluate costs, prices and margins of that week's baked output. At that moment, Lyons was years ahead of IBM and the other computer giants that eventually overtook it.

## ...like hearing that Pizza Hut had developed a new generation of microprocessor

'Americans can't believe this' Paul Ceruzzi, a computer historian and a curator at the National Air and Space Museum in America, is quoted as saying at the time. 'They think you're making it up!' That a food conglomerate did this does seem almost unbelievable. *New Scientist* said in 2001, 'In today's terms it would be like hearing that Pizza Hut had developed a new generation of microprocessor, or McDonald's had invented the Internet'.

As Caminer himself pointed out, the LEO story highlights important characteristics of the history of innovation in computing technology, including the complex roles of government funding and university research; the frequent failure of technically advanced products to enjoy commercial success; the importance for commercial success in business computing of firm-level capabilities in related technologies; and the interaction between organisational and technological change in the adoption of business computing systems.

David retired in 1980, then set up the Leo Foundation and spearheaded the 2001 conference at the London Guildhall to celebrate the running of the world's first business application on a computer fifty years earlier. In retirement Caminer wrote extensively on the history of the LEO computer. He co-edited a book of reminiscences obtained from the participants, *User-Driven Innovation* (1996). He was appointed OBE in 1980, and in 2006 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Middlesex University for his contribution to business computer applications. He was the principal author of *Leo: The Incredible Story of the World's First Business Computer* (1998).

David Caminer married Jackie Lewis in 1945; they had a son and two daughters. He died in 2008 aged 92.

**Claire Connick**

## Moses Analysed A Personal View

Moses' speech impediment shows that he had an emotional conflict - probably from a very early age. He must have been told everything about his miraculous survival on the Nile, by his mother and by Miriam, his sister. Similarly, he must have known that he was a Hebrew and not an Egyptian and must have felt emotionally bonded both to his birth-family and to Pharaoh's daughter. I believe that he had to dissimulate, even to lie, encouraged by his mother throughout his infancy, his youth and early manhood.

His life must have been one of constant emotional stress, torn between two radically opposed realities; between his love for his mother - the embodiment of utter helplessness - and his loyalty to Pharaoh's daughter - the symbol of absolute power - to whom he owed his survival and privileged existence. These two women dominated his life - two women, poles apart, exerting on him diametrically opposed emotional influences.

## his life was fraught with danger from the very beginning

Moses could have rejected his Hebrew ancestry. He could have embraced the Egyptian religion, and worshipped Egyptian gods; instead, he remained faithful to his forefathers' beliefs. He must have had a sense of solidarity with the Hebrew slaves. What affected them would have affected him; the injustices meted out to them must have pained, him especially as he was not a part of their fate.

To be in constant control of himself and of his emotions must have been extremely difficult and, to my way of thinking, the cause of his stammer.

Moses reaches breaking point when he sees an Egyptian maltreating a Hebrew slave and takes sides. He rejects his secure existence and escapes into the wilderness.

The 'wilderness' in this context, is not a barren stretch of land but an inward state of 'being'. Moses transcends the limitations of the human mind that cannot comprehend infinity.

I perceive Moses' 'wilderness' as an out-of-time space, one between the limited known and the infinity of the unknown, the state of 'being' which is prior to one's birth - a space wilderness of which we know nothing, a transcendental 'space' where Moses is detached from the realities of life on earth, a space filled with God's radiance, where Moses encounters Him.

It is very difficult to make mention of such a 'space' when speaking of a time prior to life, as the words we use apply to life only. However, I believe there is a kind of timeless space where the human soul is close to God. This is the space Moses went to - a human subconscious experience.

No other mystics reach the level of spiritual perception attained by Moses. He goes back to Eternity where he encounters the everlasting God - a moment Judaism has made timeless.

It is obvious to me that Moses was spared the fate of the Hebrew newborn male, in order to fulfil a special destiny. To that end, he had to know that he was a Hebrew and not an Egyptian.

So his life was fraught with danger from the very beginning - the child who needed protection had to protect his loved ones.

**Colette Littman**



## Dinah - Daughter of Jacob and Leah



*The Seduction of Dinah by Tissot*

The Biblical account of the two daughters of Laban had repercussions in the later history of Dinah, the only daughter born to Jacob whose name we know. Laban's daughters, Leah, the elder, who had 'tender eyes' and Rachel who was 'beautiful and well favoured'. Both married Jacob, though Laban was guilty at their marriage of passing off his elder daughter as Rachel, whom Jacob loved dearly. Leah was able to bear six sons before giving birth to a daughter, whom she called Dinah, meaning 'judged'.

Joseph and Dinah, with their family, lived in Shechem, a very ancient Canaanite commercial centre in the middle of vital trade routes through the region. It lay in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, and the inhabitants were varied in origin with different beliefs, religions and customs, representing the early community of Israel. Dinah visited the women of the region, so it seems clear that there was considerable rapport between the Israelites and the local people. Abraham had built an altar there, as God had instructed.

The leader of the inhabitants of Shechem was Hamor, from the clan of the Hivites, whose son Shechem - named after the

city - met Dinah and raped her. The story of the rape of Dinah - the Bible uses the phrase 'defiled' - is interpreted differently by later commentators.

It is certainly the case that Shechem fell in love with Dinah and asked Jacob if he might marry her. Some scholars say that rape can only be applied to married or betrothed women, and that Shechem's action was rather a seduction. Jacob and his sons' real objection to such a marriage was that the prospective bridegroom had not been circumcised, and such 'intermarriage' was wrong, 'a reproach unto us.'

The suggestion is then made to Shechem and his father that all the men of Shechem should be circumcised, and this seemed to please them. It was agreed; and the young man is described as being 'more honourable than all the house of his father.' The Israelites are welcomed into the city, with proposals to marry with the Shechemites, and to exchange goods and cattle as allies.

## The city was destroyed and all the women, children, cattle and possessions were taken

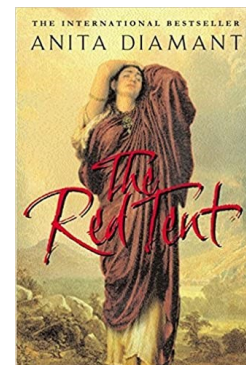
However, the story goes on to tell of the vengeance taken by Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, three days later, when all the men of Shechem, including Hamor and Shechem himself, were slaughtered; Dinah being snatched back into her family. The city was destroyed and all the women, children, cattle and possessions were taken.

Jacob reproaches his sons for their actions, which they justify as a reaction to their sister being treated as a prostitute. The question of the rape has intrigued commentators to this day. Shechem's action is followed by his clearly expressed love and affection for Dinah. Some Midrashic rabbis blame her for venturing out to visit the local women, others say that Jacob is at fault, as he took his whole household - in particular his sons - to meet his brother Esau. But the Midrash asks: 'Where was Dinah?' and answers that he had locked

her in a chest, saying: 'So that Esau should not see her and take her from me.'

God told him: 'You withheld Dinah from your brother, and, due to her good attributes, she could have reformed him. Since you did not want to give her to Esau, who was circumcised, you are punished through her being taken by one who was uncircumcised.'

The majority of women depicted in the Old Testament are noted for their courage, their intelligence, their beauty or their integrity, often detailed at length as their stories untold. But Dinah remains a mystery. One would like to know more of her character; why did Shechem fall in love with her? Clearly she was attractive in appearance or he would not have noticed her. She was an important woman, part of a large family clearly loved by her brothers and her father. Perhaps, had she lived in an era when women were of greater value, we might have more information. As it is we are left unsatisfied, anxious to know more.



The story of Dinah is told at length in the novel *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant, which goes into much detail about the role of women in Biblical times. This is of course a work of fiction, and the author employs ideas and formulations which, as far as we know, have no basis in history. But it is an easy read and holds the attention. The mystery of Jacob's daughter will continue to intrigue those who want to know more about our ancestors and what the Bible has to say about them.

**Philippa Bernard**

## Gunnersbury Park Former Rothschild Home



The Rothschild family has left its mark on some of the grandest houses in England but one of its more modest homes, equally charming and now a Rothschild Museum, is Gunnersbury Park in Ealing. The original house and park can be dated back to the eleventh century. It was the distinguished lawyer and politician, Sir John Maynard, who in 1663 acquired Gunnersbury House, a Palladian mansion designed by John Webb, the pupil and son-in-law of Inigo Jones.

In the following centuries, the house and park went through several owners until it was bought by Princess Amelia, daughter of George II. Amelia was proposed as the bride of Frederick the Great of Prussia, but his father refused to allow the match and Amelia never married. She used Gunnersbury as her country home and she redesigned the grounds.

In 1801, a new purchaser of the estate, John Morley, never lived at Gunnersbury but sold it off in thirteen parcels of land, eventually acquired in two parts each with its own house. The larger was known as Gunnersbury Park and the smaller as Gunnersbury House.

It was in 1835 that Gunnersbury Park was bought by Nathan Mayer Rothschild, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Rothschild, the third son of the original financier Mayer Amschel Rothschild. It was Nathan who established the English banking house and was once known as the richest man on earth. He did not live long enough to enjoy Gunnersbury, but the family acquired the smaller house and extended the whole estate to include a large lake, a gothic folly and an orangery, as well as

modernising the house, installing gas lighting and lavatories.

Gunnersbury was passed down, first to Nathan's son Lionel and then to his grandson Leopold de Rothschild. Leopold greatly improved and extended the grounds, laying out a Japanese garden, a heath garden and an Italian garden. The house was an important venue on the social scene, and the philanthropic Leopold built a local hospital, new houses and schools.

When Leopold died in 1925, his widow sold the estate of some 200 acres to Ealing Borough Council, on the condition that it was to be used only for leisure and recreation. It was reopened in 1926 by Neville Chamberlain and the house was converted into exhibition space for local history and archaeology, an art gallery and a costume display. It became the Gunnersbury Park Museum, shared between the Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing.



The museum was in the large Mansion of Gunnersbury Park, using the ornate staterooms as a setting to display objects connected with the heritage of Ealing and Hounslow. A series of changing exhibits tells the story of the people and places of the two boroughs from prehistory to the present day. The social history of the area is depicted through artwork, photographs, and objects from everyday life. Collections cover archaeology, transport, games and toys, historic costumes, domestic equipment, communications, maps, local businesses, and wartime memories.

Some of the most popular objects on show include seventeenth century Hounslow Swords, a pair of early nineteenth century carriages owned by the Rothschild family,

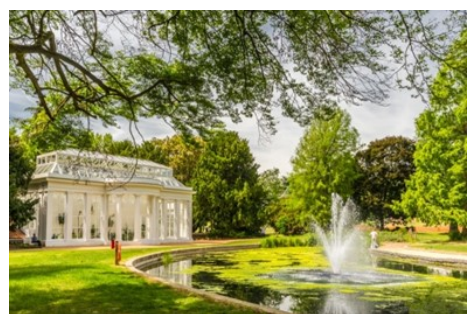
and an 1804 Stanhope printing press. There are many pieces which belonged to the Rothschilds, including the original picture of a Rothschild wedding, a copy of which appeared on the cover of the *Westminster Quarterly*, January 2021.

One unexpected collection is the South Asian Archive, with recordings of South Asian residents of the area telling their stories, plus items of clothing, photographs, and documents showing how South Asians came to Ealing and Hounslow, and how they lived. Recorded interviews cover topics like immigration, race relations, establishing places of worship, work, and local entertainment.



The historic mansion itself forms part of the museum exhibits. The Victorian kitchens have been restored to show what life was like for those who worked 'below stairs' during the house's nineteenth century heyday. The kitchens include a pastry room, butchery, chef's office, and scullery in addition to the main kitchen area.

Although the grounds are currently open to the public, sadly the house and museum must remain closed for the time being.



*The Orangery and Horseshoe Pond*

**Philippa Bernard**



## Jenny Joseph (1932-2018)



Not many people know the name of the Jewish poet Jenny Joseph, but her most famous poem, *Warning*, usually brings a smile of recognition to their faces:

When I am an old woman I shall wear  
purple  
With a red hat that doesn't go, and  
doesn't suit me,  
And I shall spend my pension  
On brandy and summer gloves  
And satin sandals,  
And say we've no money for butter.

Jenny Joseph's family can be traced back to the eighteenth century in this country. She was born in Birmingham, but her ancestors on the Joseph side come from Sunderland where they were among the earliest Jewish families to settle there. Hyam Joseph had come over from Holland to the thriving port in about 1785, and with his wife Hannah, joined the newly formed Jewish congregation, founded in about 1768. His brother, Jacob, was its first Rabbi. Hyam's grandson, Morris, had a small jeweller's shop and was a much respected member of the Synagogue and a Mason; he and his wife Jenny (after whom the poet was named) moved to Birmingham, where their son Louis was born.

Louis married Florence Cotton, from another Jewish family, and they took a house in Edgbaston, a prosperous part of the city, with their three children, Antoinette, Jenny and Michael. When Jenny was two, the family moved to Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire, where Louis opened an antique shop. The Josephs were not perhaps wealthy, but certainly comfortably off. They bought a large house on the outskirts of the town and a few years later new neighbours

arrived, who turned out to be Enid Blyton, the children's author, and her family. The Joseph family were not religious Jews, nor did Jenny in later years practise Judaism, though she always acknowledged her roots.

When war broke out in 1939 Louis decided to move his family to the West Country, where they took a house near Poole, and Jenny - with her sister Antoinette - went to boarding school. Badminton School, evacuated from Bristol to Lynmouth, was one of the leading girls' schools in the country, and Jenny had an excellent education, with opportunities for acting, music and writing.

She loved the surrounding Devon countryside and the gifts of the natural world. While still at school she went to Switzerland, learning to speak fluent French, and on her return to England she won a scholarship to St. Hilda's College, where she read English and began writing poetry. Some of her poems were published in university magazines and she gave a reading at the National Book League in London. She was the Senior Scholar of her year and gained her degree in 1953. Without any qualifications or experience, but anxious to earn a career by her writing, she first took a secretarial course and was then offered a job as a junior reporter on the Bedford Times, moving on to the Oxford Mail.

Hoping for a more worthwhile - and better paid - position she went in 1957 to South Africa to work for the journal *Drum*. The editor at that time was Sylvester Stein and the paper was targeted partly at black Africans. *Drum's* proprietor, Jim Bailey, was being leant on by the *apartheid* government and he in turn tried to rein in his editor. Fatefully, also in 1957, when Althea Gibson became the first black person to win the Women's Singles title at Wimbledon, Stein prepared a cover showing the champion embracing the white runner-up, Darlene Hard. Bailey ordered the picture to be spiked. Stein resigned and left the country. Jenny, too, was in trouble for her anti-*apartheid* beliefs, and went to Johannesburg to teach Indian children English. Finally ordered to leave South Africa, she

tried to find out the true reason for her banishment, travelling to Rhodesia to avoid imprisonment. Later she published an amusing, if distressing, account of the situation. 'The Honourable the Minister of the Interior has after due consideration of all the circumstances, deemed Miss Joseph to be unsuited to the requirements of the Union on economic grounds or on account of standard or habits of life, in terms of the powers vested in him by Section 4(1) (a) of Act No. 22 of 1913 as amended'. She returned to London.

In 1961 Jenny met Charles (Tony) Coles, and they married in London. He inherited a small pub in Shepherds Bush, The Greyhound, and for a few years Jenny became a landlord's wife. She had three children, but life seemed to lack purpose and she started writing poetry again. Tony's experiences while working in a care home amused her. The result was *Warning*, written in 1961, the poem that made her name. It was first published in *The Listener*. She never liked the poem, feeling that she had just tossed it off for fun, not to be taken too seriously. Talking about it later she said, 'To have your work swim away from you, to have it treated virtually as *anon*, is the most privileging thing a writer can have happen to them. It is the biggest tribute you can be paid.' However, the poem became a firm favourite, voted Britain's favourite modern poem in a BBC poll in 2006, beating Auden's *Stop All the Clocks*, and Dylan Thomas's *Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night*. It appeared on towels, mugs and birthday cakes, and in America a group of women of a certain age founded the Red Hat Society, meeting for fun when they all wore red hats. The poem appears in *The Oxford Book of 20th Century Verse*, edited by Philip Larkin.



*The Red Hat Society*

Short of money as usual, Jenny, whose marriage was increasingly unhappy, started teaching literature for the Workers Educational Association - the WEA - to adults wanting further education, who had been denied university. When her marriage broke up she moved first of all to Acton to the aptly-named Poet's Corner, and then to Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire, always preferring the countryside to town life. Here she continued to write poetry, looking out from her window to her crowded fragrant garden. It inspired a book, *Led By The Nose*, in which she describes the smells arising from the flowers and herbs outside. 'What glimmers still in my dusk are the silvery tessellated-centred stars of Astrantia, sweet after rain, and everywhere the soft and almost hypnotic lamps of Oenothera, the Evening Primrose.'



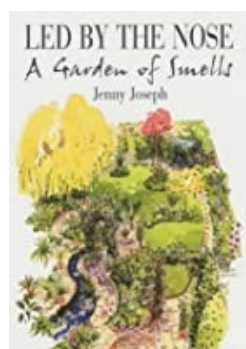
Jenny's poetry was by now becoming better known. Her colourful, quirky language and choice of unusual subjects attracted those who might not normally enjoy modern verse. *The Times*, in its obituary, said, 'She writes poems full of mist and reason, poems strange in what they say but plain in the way they say it, poems rooted in an English tradition of passionate but quiet exactness, careful craftsmanship, an honest exploration of the human heart, and statement after statement that nags at the memory.'

She was much in demand at literary festivals, reading her poems and broadcasting on the radio. Her first anthology, *The Unlooked-for Season*, published in 1960, received a Gregory

Award for young poets, and in 1974 *Rose in the Afternoon*, won the Cholmondeley Award. It included *Warning*. Jenny wrote several books for young children - both reading books and poetry - and a work of fiction, *Persephone*, won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. She considered it her best book but it was not universally popular. It is a piece made up of many stories, using poetry, narrative, parody and many other kinds of writing. It follows the myth of Persephone retelling the Greek story of spring and winter, of good and evil.

Most of Jenny's work is a melange of the practical outside world, experienced by everyone, and a strong perception of a non-materialistic belief. Her interests range far and wide, from language, philosophy, light and weather, to growing vegetables and meeting people. She was known as a brilliant conversationalist, sometimes too much so, as those who interviewed her often said. For someone who relied so much on what she could see around her, it was a tragedy for her to lose her eyesight. She went on writing until she was no longer able to do so. Her last poetry collection, *Nothing like Love*, was published in 2009, though she went on writing for several more years. Her final home was with her daughter in Wales where she died in 2018.

Jenny Joseph won many awards for her poetry and was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She published nearly twenty volumes of poetry and prose, and her work was always marked by a personal if unusual sense of humour, an awareness of the natural world around her and a strong, if sometimes critical, love of her fellow human beings.



**Philippa Bernard**

## Amusement Arcade

Two couples went on safari. One day while their wives were in the lodge having tea, the men, Izzy and Morrie, went for a walk in the bush.

As they were passing under a huge tree, a large hairy animal dropped from a branch and buried its teeth in Morrie's neck.

'Aaarrgh!' He yelled, 'what is it?'

'How should I know?' said Izzy 'You're the furrier!'



Two middle-aged Jews who were at school together meet in the street outside the Savoy Hotel.

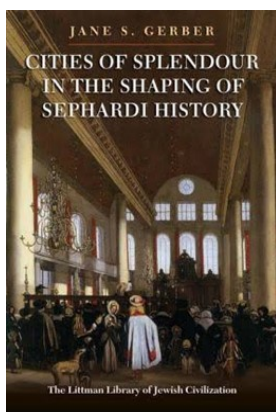
One is wearing beautifully tailored clothes and is about to get into his Rolls Royce. The other one is in rags, unshaven - a beggar.

'Hey Nathan! Remember me?' cries the beggar. 'It's Solly, your old school-friend. Do me a favour and give me £10 for a bed.'

'Sure, sure' says Nathan, putting his arm round him. 'Bring it over in the morning and I'll take a look at it.'







*Cities of Splendour in the Shaping of Sephardi History*

by Jane S. Gerber

Littman Library of Jewish Civilization in association with Liverpool University Press,

The author of this book has set herself a challenging theme: to trace the importance of seven particular locations in the development of Jewish life as experienced by successive generations of Sephardi Jews. Her story runs from Cordova in the golden age of Andalusia from the mid-tenth to the mid-twelfth centuries, to Toledo in the two centuries that follow; she then jumps to the settlement of communities in Safed in the sixteenth century who flourished for a while, in relative prosperity, developing traditions of mystical contemplation. This is followed by chapters on Venice, on Istanbul and Salonica taken together, and finally Amsterdam. From Amsterdam we see the beginnings of Jewish engagement in the Americas and negotiations for the return of Jews to England and the foundation of the synagogue at Bevis Marks.

This approach entails some overlap, which can be confusing, and a great deal of compression, though this is relieved to some extent by highlighting the careers of a number of individual community leaders at each stage, and by attempting to convey the flavour of life as it differed from one place to another, as well as drawing attention to some of the continuities that communities carried with them in what was invariably a distressing migration. It certainly reminds us of the plight of migrants today.

While Ashkenazi Jews are mentioned from time to time, theirs was considered to be a very different way of life, and the focus is always on Jews from Sepharad – to the virtual exclusion from the book, it must be said, of that third important

group of Mizrahi or Babylonian Jews whose presence in the Middle East and North Africa appears scarcely to intersect with Sepharad apart from the cultural influence of Arabic culture at the very outset.

It might even be said that the real theme of the book is the indelible experience of life in Al-Andalus in a period of rich cultural exchange between Moslems, Christians and Jews. At first real, later remembered, then romanticised, that ‘experience’ was what Sephardi Jews took with them wherever they went. Gerber rightly emphasizes the poetry of this period, though the examples quoted are mainly secular, at a time when devotional poetry of great intensity was at its height, finding a valued place in our own current liturgy as well as medieval Spanish rites.

As with contemporary Arabic verse, the secular poems are often concerned with wine. This may be a metaphor, for the abandon to be found in surrender to the divine, though Gerber generally takes it at face value, and perhaps misses some of the subtleties. For example, she quotes a poem by Dunash ibn Labrat celebrating a feast in idyllic gardens on p. 32, but she makes us wait five pages before we learn that that poem has a second half, with a complete reversal of tone lamenting the loss of spiritual power. Gerber is reluctant to accord this second half equal value. She has also made some minor errors of transcription in these early poems, which is disappointing, though not a grave fault.



*El Tránsito Synagogue, Toledo*

If the physical charms of Cordova seem to predominate over considerations of

spiritual life, it may in part be a reflection of the kinds of evidence available to the historian - though a more nuanced reading of Labrat suggests otherwise - and the religious poetry of Ibn Gabirol could have provided rich material worth more than the very brief mention it is given. But Gerber’s reading of the situation, emphasising the physical delights of life in the caliphate of Cordova, ties in with the fact that there were fewer restrictions on Jews holding land and engaging in agriculture than at most other times. She also finds in the shared culture of this period, when Christians, Jews and Muslims lived in close contact with one another, an explanation for the tendency of these Jews to carry with them into exile a sense of cultural superiority and a preoccupation with questions of nobility and status.

**in times of difficulty, through court intrigue, plague, war, or economic contraction, these prominent courtiers could as easily fall from favour**

This is an interesting phenomenon in itself, though one imagines it applies more to the leaders among the exiled groups than to the majority, whose lives were a struggle against poverty no matter where they found themselves. Of those leaders, she observes time and again how the very successes of those eminent few who found a place at court often inadvertently caused the downfall of whole communities when they fell from grace.

Since Jews were often restricted to activities concerned with money-lending and certain kinds of trade, they could be of great use to rulers in need of revenue. In times of expansion and stability this could lead to wealth and favour. But in times of difficulty, through court intrigue, plague, war, or economic contraction, these prominent courtiers could as easily fall from favour, and the whole

community could find themselves punished or expelled.

A further route to court was through the practice of medicine, though here again political intrigues could bring danger and death, though at least one family provided four generations of court physicians to the Ottoman emperors.

Another theme that emerges across the successive waves of emigration is the fundamentally different experience of the Portuguese community. Portugal was at first an integral part of Al-Andalus but later went its own way. How many of us nowadays, while speaking of the ‘Spanish and Portuguese’ synagogue or Sephardim in general, are aware of the vast difference in outlook between the Spanish Jews who fled persecution as penniless refugees but still loyal to their Jewish roots and those who fled from Portugal after being forced to convert, remaining as hidden Jews, but with an entitlement to operate in a Christian world provided their Jewishness remained hidden? Most refugees from the kingdom of Portugal were *conversos* – forced to convert in 1497 and for a long time prevented from leaving. Of those that did leave - then or later - some remained as *conversos*, aware of their Jewish roots and living alongside Spanish Jews, but without any knowledge of Jewish law or practice, while some chose to find their way back to Judaism but in ways that required extra support.

The divisions between different Jewish groups in each of the locations discussed tend to dominate over instances of unity, even though those did take place too, especially in terms of charitable support

and provision of education. But co-operation is not as consistent a theme as one might have liked - dissensions between different groups are clearly nothing new! Another observation which may have contemporary relevance is that communities seem to prosper in times of economic expansion – to which they abundantly contribute – but to experience a real downturn in their situation when their host communities enter periods of economic or governmental decline.



*Jews & Muslims playing dice*

A word about the illustrations, which are grouped together in the middle of the book: they have been carefully chosen to reflect the history that unfolds in the text. Some are perhaps familiar - the El Tránsito Synagogue of Toledo which echoes the Alhambra and the synagogues of Venice. Others are less familiar, such as an anti-Jewish tale in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of 1280, or two



*Micrography: carpet page in Mudéjar style.*

illustrations from a manual of Games compiled for Alfonso the Wise, from around the same period, one showing Jews and Muslims playing dice, the other showing a Jew and a Christian playing chess, with what may be the first illustration of *kibitzing*! Curiously the Muslims and the Christians look very alike, though the Jews are distinctive.

An early example of micrography, from Burgos, 1260, is very lovely, and the later illustrations from Amsterdam are discussed in relation to growing Christian interest in Jewish customs that had developed alongside their interest in the Hebrew origins of the bible - as well as the fact that Rembrandt lived right opposite the Portuguese Chief Rabbi Saul Morteira.

This is the kind of book that leaves one wanting to know more - and glimpses of more are given, in the short biographies of interesting characters, especially the women (e.g. Doña Gracia Mendes Nasi, and the elusive poet, Kasmunah, also known as Qasmunah), and brief excursions into the history of printing or trade. It rests on a substantial bed of scholarship, though not surprisingly, given the historic and geographic scope of the book, most of the material is drawn from secondary literature, rather than from original documents or archives. The bibliography is extensive, and enough guidance is given to pursue questions more deeply in other works. Meanwhile, as an exploration of the dynamics of diaspora over an extended period, it has much to commend it.



*A Jew & a Christian playing chess*

**Valery Rees**



## Leslie Howard (1893-1943)

### The Matinée Idol who became a War Hero



He was the quintessential member of the English upper-class. So I wonder how many people knew that Leslie Howard was in fact Leslie Steiner, 'a nice Jewish boy', the son of a Hungarian Jew - Frederick 'Frank' Steiner - and an English Jewess of German descent - Lillian Blumberg. The Blumbergs had been in England since 1834 when Howard's great-grandfather Ludwig, a wealthy Jewish merchant, arrived from East Prussia. Lillian and Frank were married at West London Synagogue.

Influenced by his mother, Howard had a thoroughly British upbringing. He was sent to Bolland's Preparatory School in Dulwich. A multi-talented boy, he first began writing while at prep-school. One Christmas term, a play written by Leslie - in Latin, of all things - was performed by the school.

From Bolland's, he went to Dulwich College, where he also excelled at polo, tennis and cricket. However, he did not go on to University but instead worked as a bank clerk until the outbreak of World War I, when he went into the army, joining the 20<sup>th</sup> Hussars at Bethune, where he was wounded. Suffering from shellshock, he resigned his commission a few weeks before the start of the battle of the Somme in 1916.

When he returned to England, he decided to become an actor and soon

became quite famous for various roles on the West End stage. In the 1920s he enjoyed success on Broadway, too, but it wasn't until the 1930s, when he went to Hollywood that he found his *métier* - becoming the personification of the insouciant, elegant English gentleman on the silver screen, notably in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934) and *The Petrified Forest* (1936). This latter play created a strong friendship with Humphrey Bogart, with whom he made both stage and film versions. The friendship was such that Bogart named his daughter Leslie.

It was Howard who insisted that Humphrey Bogart get the role of Duke Mantee in *The Petrified Forest*, a role that he had played in the stage production. When Howard heard that the studio was intending to cast Edward G Robinson in the role played originally by Bogart, he sent a message to Jack Warner telling him that if they cast Robinson, he, Howard, would not be in the film.

**quoted as saying he  
didn't chase women -  
but couldn't always be  
bothered to run away!**

In 1916 Howard married Ruth Martin, by whom he had two children - the actor Ronald, who appeared with him in *Pimpernel Smith*, and Leslie Ruth who appeared with him in *The First of the Few*. At the age of seventeen Leslie Ruth married Robert Dale-Harris, a chartered accountant. They lived in Toronto, Canada, with three children. In 1960 she published a biography of Howard - *A Quite Remarkable Father*.

As with many in his profession, the temptation to stray was strong. He was a serial womaniser and is quoted as saying he didn't chase women - but couldn't always be bothered to run away!

He was always falling in love. He reportedly had affairs with Tallulah Bankhead, with Merle Oberon and with the Spanish actress Conchita Montenegro who was married to a senior

member of the far-right Falangist party. Despite being warned that she was a German agent, Howard also began an affair with a certain Baroness von Podewils, who was in charge of the beauty salon at his hotel. There were also rumours of liaisons with Norma Shearer and Myrna Loy.

On February 24th 1920, he changed his name from Leslie Howard Steiner to Leslie Howard by deed poll, and it would appear that others in the family did the same.

Leslie was the eldest of five, his sister Irene was a casting director, and his brother Arthur was also an actor and was the father of actor Alan. His sister Doris (who changed her surname to Stainer) founded the Hurst Lodge School in Sunningdale, Berkshire in 1945 and remained its headmistress until the 1970s. His brother Jimmy seems to have stayed away from the profession.

Howard fell in love with Violette Cunnington in 1938 while working on *Pygmalion*. She was secretary to Gabriel Pascal who was producing the film; she became Howard's secretary and lover, and they travelled to the United States, living together while he was filming *Gone with the Wind* and *Intermezzo*. His wife and daughter joined him in Hollywood before production ended on the two films - which must have made his arrangement with Cunnington somewhat uncomfortable for everyone!



Some persuasion had been needed to get Howard to join the cast of *Gone With The Wind*. He said the Ashley Wilks was too weak a character. In order to get him to agree, Selznick had to promised that he

could be associate producer, and would star in *Intermezzo!*

With war clouds gathering over England, and after completing *Gone with the Wind*, Howard decided that he must return to Britain to 'do his bit'. He sacrificed his royalties, bought himself out of his contract and offered his services to the British government. They promptly accepted, asking him to make broadcasts to neutral America. Isolationism was especially strong among America's women, so, it was reasoned, who better to change their minds and get them to join the war effort than a matinée idol?

He made propaganda films for the Ministry of Information, and proceeded to produce documentaries, devoting all his energy on behalf of the war effort. He wrote articles, made radio broadcasts and generally aided propaganda for the British war effort. On his own initiative, he also directed and starred in a number of 'patriotic' films including *The First of the Few* - the story of RJ Mitchell, the inventor of the Spitfire, which bolstered morale during the Battle of Britain. His most effective propaganda film was *Pimpernel Smith*, a reworking of the *Scarlet Pimpernel* story set in Vichy France and was about freeing young Jewish refugees from the Nazis. The film ridiculed the Nazis and was said to have infuriated Goebbels, not least because Howard was well known in Germany; *Gone with the Wind* was Hitler's favourite film.

When he returned to London with his wife and daughter, Violette soon followed. She had minor roles in two of Howard's films, under the stage name of Suzanne Clair. She died of pneumonia in her early thirties in 1942, just six months before Howard's death.

In the winter of 1939, during the enforced blackout, Howard was involved in a car accident in which his jaw was fractured, three front teeth broken, and his forehead and chest were injured.

In May 1943 the British Council sent him to Spain and Portugal to bolster pro-British opinion in countries which were neutral, but where fascists were very active. Indeed, he was so effective



*Monument to Howard and his companions in Galicia, Spain*

as a propagandist, that the traitorous broadcaster William Joyce (better known as Lord Haw-Haw) began regularly to single him out for mockery in his 'Germany Calling' broadcasts, saying that Howard should 'stick to acting'.

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 1943 he left Lisbon for London, on the final stage of his trip - but he never arrived. The plane in which he was travelling was shot down by German fighters over the Bay of Biscay, even though the airliner was known to be a civilian plane on a scheduled flight. Was it a mistake? Rumours soon began to circulate that the Luftwaffe had targeted the plane because they believed that Churchill was on it.

There are several other theories as to why his plane was shot down. One was that his manager, who was accompanying him, was Churchill because he looked quite like him - a bald, pudgy man who smoked big cigars. The British prime minister was indeed supposed to be returning to the UK from Lisbon that day on a later flight. But it doesn't seem likely that agents from the *Abwehr*, German military intelligence, could have confused the two flights - not least because Churchill would not have taken an unescorted scheduled flight at that stage in the war.

Adding to the mystery, Foreign Office files relating to the flight are still classified, which has led to speculation that Bletchley Park may have intercepted Luftwaffe plans to attack the civilian plane, but had not warned the airline, in order to avoid arousing

German suspicions that their Enigma coding machines had been deciphered.

One possibility that can surely be ruled out is that Howard had been targeted and killed in order to demoralise Britain. This is because he wasn't supposed to be flying that day - but the day after.

Impatient to get home to see his family, he had pulled strings to get on the flight at the last minute, and a seven-year-old boy and his companion were asked to vacate their seats. That boy was one Derek Partridge, now a retired broadcaster and voice artist aged eighty-eight. 'We were on the plane waiting for take-off,' Partridge recalls. 'Some crew members came to the door and asked us if we would please vacate our seats because two VIPs needed to travel urgently. We were escorted back to the terminal. From there I remember watching the plane taking off.'

All seventeen passengers and crew were killed, and Partridge still cannot quite believe how lucky he was that Leslie Howard took his place. 'He saved my life that day.'

The loss of this quintessentially English and - perhaps much less obviously - Jewish, film star was widely mourned. He was just fifty years old.

### Claire Connick



*With Vivien Leigh in GWTW*



## Leslie Hore-Belisha (1893-1957)



Although we are reminded of Baron Leslie Hore-Belisha every time we see the glowing orange Belisha beacon at the side of the road, the distinguished politician was responsible for a much greater change to the British way of life.

Leslie Belisha was born Isaac Leslie, the only son of a Sephardi Jewish insurance broker, Jacob Belisha and his wife Elizabeth, from a Moroccan family who had settled in London. Jacob died when his son was a baby, and his wife married again. Her husband was Sir Charles Adair Hore and the young child took his stepfather's name, as Leslie Hore-Belisha. He was educated at the Jewish House (Polack's) in Clifton College, where he was not popular, his fellow pupils finding him quarrelsome (good manners were not his strong suit). After a period of study at Heidelberg and then at the Sorbonne in Paris, he returned to join St. John's College, Oxford.

When war broke out in 1914, Hore-Belisha enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers and saw service on the battlefield. He was mentioned in despatches 'For gallant conduct and distinguished services rendered'. He attained the rank of major and was invalided out with malaria in 1918. He returned to Oxford.

Ambitious for political honours even as a young man, and a formidable public

speaker, he was elected President of the Oxford Union. He was one of few Jews to have held the office at that time, though he was preceded a few years earlier by Leonard Stein - later a Founder member of Westminster Synagogue.

On leaving Oxford Hore-Belisha was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple and set his sights on a political career. He had been something of a radical at university and in 1922 stood as a Liberal for Plymouth Devonport, which he lost, though he won the seat the following year, setting a tradition for Liberals in the West Country which continued for many years. He became chairman of the National Liberal Party and Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade.

He also started writing for the press and as a professional journalist managed to support himself while waiting for more substantial honours at the House of Commons. His somewhat ebullient nature and frequent self-publicising did not always endear him to his Liberal colleagues at a time when the party held out little hope of forming a government. Nevertheless he worked tirelessly for the workers in his constituency, particularly in the dockyards, and he increased his majority at the 1929 election.

### he never gained the popularity he considered his due

When the National Government was formed in 1931 under Ramsay MacDonald, he allied himself with Sir John Simon who became Home Secretary. Hore-Belisha was appointed Financial Secretary to the Treasury and although he was efficient and very hard-working, he never gained the popularity he considered his due. However, it was when he was appointed Minister of Transport in 1934 that he came into his own, turning the rather dull and boring post into an important career advancement and a vital part of government work. It was at this time



wide supremacy in private transport, becoming a feature of middle-class life, though motoring had not yet acquired all the rules and regulations that have since followed. After being nearly knocked down by a speeding car in Camden Town, Hore-Belisha introduced the 30 mph speed limit to town driving. It had been removed a few years earlier, probably to gain popularity among the new generation of drivers, and because it was universally ignored. The two road organisations, the AA and the RAC, had fought in the courts for their members' rights to avoid speed traps, and 'the Englishman's freedom of the highway' was considered by many to be inalienable. As road casualties increased, however, the limit was brought back into law.

Another of the new Minister's actions was to rewrite the Highway Code. He introduced the idea of a special crossing for pedestrians, signalled by the now familiar orange globe above a striped pole, named after him. The beacons were accompanied by metal studs across the road, and later black and white stripes were painted on the road, invoking the name 'zebra crossings'. Apart from the saving of many lives, the beacons ensured a lasting mortality for the Minister of Transport. When he retired from Parliament he was made vice-president of the Pedestrians' Association.

Hore-Belisha also introduced a Driving Test to Britain. A voluntary driving test was introduced in England in 1935.

There were no test centres and examiners would meet candidates at a pre-arranged spot, like a park or railway station. The compulsory driving test was introduced on 1st June 1935, for all drivers who started driving on or after 1st of April 1934.

Having succeeded so publicly at the Ministry of Transport, Hore-Belisha was made Secretary of State for War by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. It was a debatable appointment as he was a National Liberal rather than a Conservative and was accused of 'warmongering'. Indeed his Jewish background called his loyalties into question, and he was nicknamed 'Horeb-Elisha' in the gutter press.

He got in touch with Basil Liddell Hart, Defence Correspondent for *The Times* and a distinguished British soldier, military historian and military theorist. With Liddell Hart's backing, he was determined to reform the fighting quality and the living conditions of the soldiers, in spite of the objections of the army's leaders. He introduced battle dress, improved the food and modernised barracks. Having seen battle himself, he knew how important it was to revise officer career status, staff training and facilitate talent. He made enlistment more attractive and was prepared to fight the entrenched obsolescence of Britain's fighting forces. Married men were allowed to live with their families.



*Basil Liddell Hart*

The relationship with Liddell Hart was not at all to the liking of the General Staff; the Minister sacked Field Marshall Cyril Deverell as well as several other high ranking officers, and appointed Lord Gort as Chief of the Imperial General Staff. But



the Munich crisis of 1938 called into question his control of the army - and his resignation was demanded. When he recommended an increase in the numbers of the Territorial Army, the military leaders fought back, unwilling to spend their finances on 'part-time soldiers'. The Military Training Act was set up in May, the first peacetime conscription law in Britain, soon to be followed, when war broke out, by the National Service Act.

Hore-Belisha was finally dismissed in January 1940. There was no doubt that his Jewish background played some part in his relations with the military. Oswald Mosely called him 'a Jewish warmonger', and when France fell, the Chief of Staff to the BEF, Henry Pownall, wrote in his diary about Hore-Belisha and Lord Gort, '... you couldn't expect two such utterly different people to get on - a great gentleman, and an obscure, shallow-brained charlatan, political Jewboy.'

It was also said that the King, George VI, had put pressure on the government as Hore-Belisha had supported Edward VIII in the Abdication Crisis.

When Winston Churchill was appointed Prime Minister, Hore-Belisha hoped to rebuild his career, but he was an



*Plaque at Stafford Place, London*

unpopular choice for ministerial promotion, and resigned from the National Liberals; at the 1945 General Election he was defeated by Michael Foot, the Labour candidate. He eventually joined the Conservative Party, but was never able to regain a seat in Parliament.

He was elected to Westminster City Council and in 1954 was created Baron Hore-Belisha, of Devonport in the county of Devon. In 1944 at the age of fifty-one, he married Cynthia Elliot - they had no children and after his death the barony ceased to exist.

He served for some years as an elder of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation and represented it at the Board of Deputies.

Lord Hore-Belisha died suddenly in France in 1957. He was buried privately at Hoop Lane, next to the grave of his mother. The funeral was conducted under the auspices of the West London Synagogue, though according to the Sephardi tradition. His tombstone accordingly is flat, as is the Sephardi custom.



**Philippa Bernard**



## A Jew Among the Zulus



*Shaka, King of the Zulus*

Many *Westminster Quarterly* readers would have seen the 1964 epic film *Zulu*, featuring the Battle of Rorke's Drift, in which 150 British soldiers, a number of whom were sick and wounded, withstood 4,000 Zulu *impi*. The battle raged between 22 and 23 January 1879, one of a number of engagements in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879.

It was fifty years earlier that one, Shaka Zulu, died, the man responsible for welding the Zulu nation into a formidable fighting machine. He was a military genius, who used brutal methods to produce an army without parallel among the native peoples of Natal. Speed was central to his tactics. Footwear was abandoned to increase the rapid running of his warriors; the soles of their feet having been hardened by running on thorns daily.

To achieve peak fitness, Zulu warriors ran fifty miles a day. The traditional weapon, the *assagai*, a slender spear used for hurling at the enemy, was replaced by the *iklwa*, a spear with a shorter shaft and a broader blade, a lethal weapon in fighting at close quarters. To protect his men, Shaka increased the size of the shield, the *ishlangu*, to six feet tall by three feet wide; and the wooden frame was covered with cowhide, a third of an inch wide.

A further innovation was the improvement of the supply chain. Food,

water, and general military supplies maintained the vitality of the *impis*.

Shaka's greatest initiative was the so-called 'Bull Formation'. His warriors would meet the enemy head on, and then arc to form left and right flanks, which would encircle the opposing force, using the effective thrusting spear to achieve victory. These battle stratagems led to the defeat of the surrounding tribes and the emergence of a Zulu Empire. The legacy of Shaka's military strategies was used by the Zulus to successfully defeat the British at the Battle of Isandlwana.

What, you may reasonably ask, is this brief reference to colonial history at all relevant to Jewish personage? The short answer is a great deal, because the information we have of the life and times of Shaka Zulu come from, principally, two sources: Dr Henry Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs, the latter being a Jewish trader.



Nathaniel Isaacs was born in the very English city of Canterbury in 1808. He lost his father at an early age, and his mother sent him to stay with her brother, Saul Solomon, a merchant at Jamestown, St Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean, where Napoleon had recently died. A few years later, in 1825, the Royal Navy brig *Mary* delivered cargo to St Helena, and the captain, Lieutenant King, took a liking to young Nathaniel and managed to persuade his guardian to allow the youth to journey to the Cape Colony. The *Mary* arrived in Cape Town in August 1825, and then went along the coast to Port Natal (later to be renamed Durban, to become South Africa's second largest city), where they found Francis Farewell, an East India merchant, and Henry Fynn, a physician; the men had not been heard from for over a year. It is in Natal that the

extraordinary story of Isaacs' relationship with the Zulus begins.

Isaacs' journals of his life in Natal, living among the Zulus, are of significance because of the details of Zulu society and culture, and the two Kings he got to know: Shaka and Dingane. The first volume of his published work *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* covers the period 1825-1828. He explored the interior of Natal, no doubt assessing the likelihood of furthering his trading interests. Isaacs became acquainted with the Zulu chief, Shaka, who permitted the white explorers to sojourn in the royal kraal. During his stay he noted the tribal customs of Zulus, commenting on the tyrannical rule of Shaka, giving graphic details of the ruler's bloodthirstiness. He also records fighting alongside the Zulus in their expedition against a Swazi tribe; Isaacs was wounded. He was given the name *Tamboosa*, meaning 'brave warrior'. His service to Shaka was rewarded by being granted land in the interior of Natal and a stretch of the coast. In fact, Isaacs, the adventurer and trader, was given the title of Principal Chief of Natal; so, in effect, he became a Zulu chieftain, probably the only Jew to have been given such an honour.

## Those who worked on his estates were dissuaded from working on *Shabbat*

Isaacs was first and foremost a businessman. He saw the potential of opening up Natal to trade, particularly in ivory and arrowroot. Those who worked on his estates were dissuaded from working on *Shabbat*. Some sources suggest he fathered illegitimate children, and was involved in trading slaves and guns, but such claims are difficult to substantiate. Isaacs, in describing Shaka's behaviour, says the King bathed and then would rub his body with raw meat. According to Isaacs, Shaka reputedly slaughtered thousands of his people because they did not show sufficient grief for the death of the King's mother, Nandi. It is important to note that exaggeration and sensationalism are likely to

encourage people to buy a book, so we need to be cautious about how much of Isaacs' account is trustworthy.

In 1828, Isaacs returned to St Helena where he met an American, Captain Page, who was on his way to Natal. Since Isaacs had some knowledge of the territory and native people, it made sense for Page to persuade him to accompany him. Isaacs was happy to manage the cargo owner's trade, arranging the sale of merchandise at ports of call *en route* to Natal. He arrived in Port Natal in 1830, and was warmly received by friends. It was during this second visit that Dingane, half-brother of Shaka, was now King; Shaka, who had become increasingly deranged, was assassinated in 1828. It was under Dingane that the situation for white settlers became more dangerous.

Isaacs gave up the land gifted to him by Shaka, and left Natal in 1844. He settled in Sierra Leone where he established a successful business. A decade later he was accused by Sir Arthur Kennedy, Governor of the colony, of slave-trading. However, the evidence for this accusation - written documents - was lost at sea in 1854; and the English courts were unable to proceed with a prosecution without corroboration of Sir Arthur Kennedy's charge. Whatever the truth, Isaacs left Sierra Leone in a hurry, presumably to avoid arrest!

So what happened to this intrepid adventurer? Soon after 1854 he returned to England, settling in Egremont near Liverpool where he died on 26 January 1872, aged 64. He is buried in the Jewish cemetery in Canterbury, the city from which he hailed.

As was mentioned earlier, it is difficult to tease out fact from fiction in Isaacs' writings; and the same is true of Dr Henry Fynn's accounts. Both men became fluent Zulu speakers and, no doubt, witnessed a fair degree of brutality during the reign of Shaka. Isaacs' decision to embed himself in kwa-Bulawayo, Shaka's capital, was an opportunity to extend his business interests, and, perhaps, to further the cause of British Imperialism. What we can be far more certain about is Shaka's military reforms that were to prove such a threat to the Cape Colony.

**Peter Beyfus**

## Dedication of a new *Torah* Mantle

When our Congregation began, our *Torah* mantles were designed by our founding Rabbi, Harold Reinhart, and the fine antique fabrics employed by the ecclesiastical embroiderers who executed his designs were sourced by his wife, Flora.

Since those early days, other Scrolls have been added and new covers produced for them. A beautiful *Shabbat* mantle created by Trisha Brummer for our Czech Scroll was donated in memory of their daughter, and in celebration of their Diamond Wedding, by Ralph & Inge Ehrmann in 2015.

On the last day of *Pesach* this year, a glorious new mantle for the Pilgrim Festivals was inaugurated at a moving ceremony during the *Shabbat* Service. It was donated by Matthew and Angelina Linsey, in honour of their children, Amelie and Daniel, who were so tragically killed in Sri Lanka in 2019. Designed by Angelina and created in Israel, by Jeanette Kuvim Oren, the new mantle for the Czech Scroll, is full of symbols and meaning. It is quite unlike any other of our *Torah* mantles and is colourful, joyous and uplifting.



*The mantle is made of quilted silk with the names of Amelie and Daniel included in Hebrew in the branches of a tree.*

*The central embroidery is a quotation from the Priestly Blessing. This benediction is also reproduced on the inside of the mantle.*

*A river flows upwards, and in it are flowers, and three pebbles on which are written the Hebrew words for love, purity and kindness.*

*At the top of the mantle is a moon, surrounded by eight stars and two birds - ten symbols making a Minyan*

During the Service, the Linsey's eldest son David, speaking by Zoom from Singapore, talked of his decision to suspend his studies and start the Amelie & Daniel Foundation. He said the Foundation has two main purposes; to bring his siblings' values of love and care to the fore and to help to prevent other families from a similar terrible experience. The Foundation has formed partnerships with leading medical teams from McGill and Imperial Universities; its mission to reform the emergency response system in Sri Lanka and to set an emergency care standard for the entire region. One of the first actions of the Foundation has been to donate a ventilator to the main teaching hospital in Colombo.

David expressed the gratitude of his family for the support they had received from our community and said that the Scroll cover was their small way of saying thank you to Amelie and Daniel for their example, and to Westminster Synagogue, its *Rabbonim*, executive and members for being there when they were needed.



*The Priestly blessing and the dedication on the inside of the mantle*



## Sidney Reilly Ace of Spies



In 1895 there arrived in London from Poland a bearded Jew, speaking little English, who gave his name as Shlomo Georgievitch Rosenblum. His father, Hersch ben Jakov, was a minor landowner and contractor who was involved with the Jewish emancipation movement in Bedzin, his home town, then part of Russia.

Rosenblum's origins still intrigue spy-catchers. At different times in his life he claimed to be the son of an Irish merchant seaman, an Irish clergyman, or an aristocratic landowner connected to the court of Emperor Alexander III of Russia. Some accounts say he was born in Odessa, the son of a rich merchant, others that his father was a doctor, or that he was illegitimate, his father unknown. What is certain is that in the course of his life he was involved in espionage for several powers, that he was an adventurer and a supreme romantic.

Four years after his arrival here, Shlomo became Sidney George Reilly, with a British passport to match, though he never took British nationality, an extraordinary feat which must have involved friends in high places. He was master of several languages, including French, Russian, Polish, German and English. The story of the man who was known as 'The Ace of Spies' includes many unsavoury episodes, including bigamy, theft and even murder, though he is believed to be the man upon whom Ian Fleming based his hero James Bond.

Reilly married at least four times, though he never bothered to divorce one wife before taking another. He must have had some claim to an attractive personality, as all his wives were beautiful intelligent women.

The first was Margaret Thomas. She was the young wife of the extremely wealthy, but elderly, magnate Hugh Thomas. This tycoon updated his will in 1898, making Margaret his sole inheritor. Just a week later, he was found dead in his hotel room. A young doctor named T. W. Andrew, who had been staying in the adjacent room, declared that Thomas had died of natural causes. In fact, there was no doctor under that name registered in England at that time and witnesses' descriptions of Dr. Andrew matched that of Reilly. A funeral was quickly held for the wealthy magnate, without an autopsy. Margaret married Reilly two weeks after the burial of her former husband.

Reilly's somewhat dubious commercial activities enabled him to gain access to several political powers, especially in the Far East, where at the time of the Russo-Japanese war he was directing operations for his business, M.A. Ginsburg & Co., in Port Arthur, China. He was able to supply information to both participants in the war, playing off one side against the other, and being well paid by both. His command of Russian, when he moved to St. Petersburg, helped in his espionage work at a time when Russia was in turmoil, and again he faced both ways, assisting the Imperial Court at the same time as he appeared to be a defender of the revolutionary underground.

His British passport enabled him to travel unhindered wherever he wished. He learned to fly, joining the Imperial All-Russian Aero Club, became a Freemason, and formed a considerable collection of books and art - mainly on Napoleon - all of which helped him to build a wide circle of influential acquaintances particularly from the wealthy intelligentsia.

Reilly's next port of call was New York. His finances (or rather his wife's) made trans-continental travel perfectly possible. In the States he set himself up as an arms contractor, making a fortune in the

process, particularly in connection with his Russian background. He supplied armaments to the German Army as well as the Russian. In 1904 he married his second 'wife', a Russian woman with whom he had two children, but after six years he found another, also Russian, the former wife of a tsarist naval official. The fourth marriage was to a British actress, Nellie Burton, who took the stage name of Pepita Bobadilla.



*Nelly Burton - 'Pepita Bobadilla'*

When World War I broke out Reilly returned to England, joined the Royal Flying Corps and served the Allied Powers through the war, being awarded the Military Cross in 1919. During hostilities and for some time after he became an agent of the British Secret Service, code number ST1. He had been marked down as early as 1909 as counter-espionage material and became a paid informant for the *émigré* intelligence network of William Melville, superintendent of Scotland Yard's Special Branch. (Melville later set up a special section of the British Secret Service Bureau, founded in 1909.) Working for Melville, he was now a formal agent, at least until 1922.

In his book about Reilly, *Ace of Spies*, Robert Bruce Lockhart says, 'Reilly was dropped by plane many times behind the German lines; sometimes in Belgium, sometimes in Germany, sometimes disguised as a peasant, sometimes as a German officer or soldier, when he usually carried forged papers to indicate he had

been wounded and was on sick-leave from the front. In this way he was able to move throughout Germany with complete freedom.'

One of his earliest exploits in his new-found career was, as usual, highly sensational. He was deputed to try to contact an oil entrepreneur called William D'Arcy, who had succeeded in obtaining oil rights in Southern Persia. The British government was determined to find and buy sufficient oil for the British Navy, at a time when petroleum was beginning to be the most efficient fuel for British ships. Reilly located D'Arcy at Cannes in the south of France and approached him in disguise. Dressed as a Catholic priest, Reilly gate-crashed the private discussions on board the Rothschild yacht on the pretext of collecting donations for a religious charity. He then secretly informed D'Arcy that the British could give him a better financial deal. D'Arcy promptly terminated negotiations with the Rothschilds and returned to London to meet with the British Admiralty. Although the extent of Reilly's involvement in this particular incident is uncertain, it has been verified that he stayed after the incident in the French Riviera on the Côte d'Azur, a location very near the Rothschild yacht.



*Robert Bruce Lockhart*

During his association with Melville and the Secret Service, Reilly was a leading protagonist after the war in what was later named the Lockhart Plot. This was a far-fetched attempt to overthrow Lenin's Bolshevik revolution. Robert Bruce Lockhart was described by *The Guardian* as 'a colourful thirty-year-old who had been appointed by Prime Minister David

Lloyd George as Britain's unofficial envoy to the Bolshevik regime. Lockhart was a headstrong adventurer and *bon viveur* who often went off-piste in defiance of London'. He was later to write the biography of Sidney Reilly who had been co-opted into the affair. Starting with an invasion of the Russian fleet at Archangel, the plot had little hope of succeeding. Lockhart apparently wanted to prevent Russia from re-joining the war on the German side. But the Cheka, the Russian secret police, were well aware of his activities and the plot came to nothing.

The infamous Zinoviev letter was another of Reilly's involvements in international politics. The letter sent to the *Daily Mail* in 1924 purported to come from Grigory Zinoviev, head of the Soviet Third International, encouraging British people to rise up against capitalism in this country. It lost Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Party the 1924 election, though it is now considered to have been a forgery. It was delivered to the newspaper by Sidney Reilly.

This involvement in anti-Bolshevik activities led to Reilly taking an active part in trying to overthrow the revolutionary plans of Lenin and the other Russian leaders, joining the *League to Combat the Third International*. He was not in favour of a total overthrow of the new regime, wishing rather to introduce a practical outcome rather than an ideological one. He went back to Russia in 1925 and was detained by the Soviet police after crossing the border from Finland. One of his co-conspirators there described him, 'The first impression of [Sidney Reilly] is unpleasant. His dark eyes expressed something biting and cruel; his lower lip drooped deeply and was too slick - the neat black hair, the demonstratively elegant suit. ... Everything in his manner expressed something haughtily indifferent to his surroundings'. Reilly was captured by the secret police, on the direct orders of Stalin, and sent to the Lubyanka Prison. After interrogation, he is then believed to have been executed by the authorities and buried in Moscow.

Such an air of intrigue surrounds the life of this extraordinary adventurer that

many stories about him are hardly believable. Christopher Andrews, in *Her Majesty's Secret Service*, published in 1985, called him 'the dominating figure in the mythology of modern British espionage, wielding more power, authority and influence than any other spy.' Other commentators have said he was an expert assassin 'by poisoning, stabbing, shooting and throttling,' and possessed eleven passports and a wife to go with each. He was viewed by many as a thorough-going rascal, by others as a courageous swashbuckling hero. He was certainly a double agent, a man who was prepared to act for any who would pay him well, and one whose principal loyalty was to himself.

Several books have been published about Sidney Reilly, and in 1983 a television miniseries, *Reilly, Ace of Spies*, dramatised his life and adventures. The programme won the 1984 BAFTA TV Award. Reilly was portrayed by actor Sam Neill who was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for his performance. Appropriately the background music was Shostakovich's *The Gadfly*.



*Sam Neill as Reilly*

Ian Fleming's knowledge of Reilly, which supposedly led to the character of James Bond, was a result of the author's friendship with Bruce Lockhart, but Reilly does not seem to have had the debonair romanticism of Bond. Fleming himself denied it - 'James Bond is just a piece of nonsense I dreamed up. He's not a Sidney Reilly, you know.'

**Philippa Bernard**



In our issue of January 2021, we ran an article by Robert Sandler about his son Isaac who has Down's Syndrome. Robert wrote how pleased he was that after initial difficulties, Isaac was making such progress in his Bar Mitzvah class. He must have been twice as pleased – as were those of us who were taking part in the Annual General Meeting on Zoom – when Isaac read a beautifully prepared piece about his approaching Bar Mitzvah and how he wanted all the congregation to be there. What a huge success story for our Teachers and our classes!

Contrary to her report in the issue of April 2019, Valery Rees is delighted to have received information that there are still Jews in Mauritius - a small but flourishing community, receiving encouragement and support also from South Africa. Anyone visiting who may wish to make contact with them could approach Owen Griffiths the Congregation President - [owen@bioculturegroup.com](mailto:owen@bioculturegroup.com)



*Philip Sober writes:-*

I read your article on the subject of The Woman In Gold with great interest, as we met members of the Altmann family at the Neue Gallery in New York some years ago. This gallery is where the painting is now displayed, having been acquired by the Lauder family. We had lunch with the Altmann cousins who told us that the lawyer, Schoenberg (who incidentally was related to the composer) had continued with the action despite Maria wanting to give up. He pursued the case single-mindedly and mortgaged his house to fund the action - putting himself at risk. In return, he got a very high percentage of the proceeds of the sale price, but without his efforts the painting would probably still be in Vienna!

*Ruth Abrams writes:-*

I am really surprised there is a book review of a Shlomo Sand book in the latest *Westminster Quarterly* - you should read this:-

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-why-david-duke-louis-farrakhan-and-the-assad-regime-all-love-shlomo-sand-1.6673617> . Shlomo Sand is admired by all the craziest anti-Semites; David Icke, David Duke, George Galloway... The reviewer did a good job of rebutting Sand's preposterous claims, however, given what a nut job Shlomo Sand is, I am just surprised it was in the magazine at all, without any "trigger warning".

*Peter Beyfus writes:-*

Ruth Abrams' comments have been noted. It is perfectly reasonable to review any book that is published, irrespective of content. I did read Esther Solomon's article in *Haaretz*. She has been criticised, by some readers as lacking objectivity, being an apologist for Zionism and for accusing Sand of giving some degree of credence to those she identifies as anti-Semites. My purpose in writing a critique of Sand's book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, was simply to examine the historical basis for his claims. He is neither an historian of ancient Jewish history nor a geneticist. I presented counter-arguments to Sand's thesis regarding the myth of the Jewish People, and in so doing revealed bias and conclusions that do not stand up to close scrutiny.

*And on the article about Jewish Cartoonists in the April issue, Helen Rothfeder writes:-*

Whilst I was working for the Zionist Federation in Rex House, Harry Blacker would occasionally come to the building and if it was lunch-time he would venture into the canteen. It was always enjoyable to sit with him and listen to his many anecdotes of the 'Mittel East'. I particularly remember on one occasion he said he was always concerned that whilst giving a talk he might possibly not recall a certain joke. Ready for such an eventuality he took out of his jacket a rather crumpled sheet of paper on which was written the punch line of 200 jokes. He was proud to say that he had never needed it!

## What is man

**'What is man and the son of man...'**

**Man, a primary existence God's breath animates**

**Man, who combines two contrasting dimensions**

**Yes man, God's handful of dust**

**Dust from the earth, evolving, recycled, recycling Earth**

**Earth, water, rock, soil, dust, Man**

**Man, who combines the terminal and the eternal**

**The ephemeral and the lasting, the tangible and the abstract**

**The physical and the spiritual**

**Man, who reveals the existence of God**

**Man, who reveals the reality of the soul**

**Man, who speaks of peace, of justice, of freedom, of kindness**

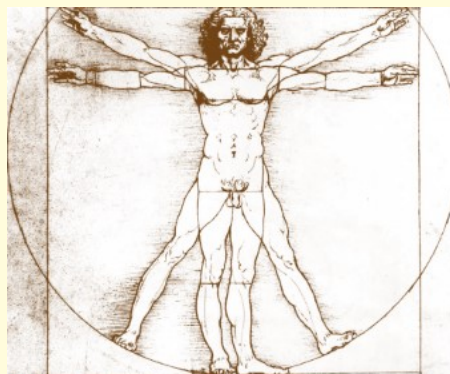
**Man, who forgives, who recognises the sanctity of life**

**Man is crowned with glory**

**And yet man is created little lower than the angels**

**The pure, unalloyed angels**

**Colette Littman**







# Westminster Quarterly

## Planning Your Diary

### Erev Rosh Hashana

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September

### Rosh Hashana

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September

### Kol Nidre

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September

### Yom Kippur

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September

### Erev Sukkot

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September

### Sukkot

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September

### Erev Simchat Torah

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September

### Simchat Torah

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September

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Please send letters, articles, photographs or other items of interest for publication in the Westminster Synagogue Quarterly directly to the Synagogue office or e-mail to [editor@westminstersynagogue.org](mailto:editor@westminstersynagogue.org)

