

W ESTMINSTER QUARTERLY

Volume XI No.4

October 2020



*The Great Synagogue, London on the occasion of the Royal visit 1809.
Print by Thomas Rowlandson in 'The Microcosm of London'*

The Great Synagogue, London

The Dark Lady

Leonard Woolf

The Disobedient Diplomat



We begin a new Jewish year, but this time, as we do so, we need to acknowledge what has been lost. As a community we have cared for each other beautifully and adapted strongly, using technology for Services and learning, and good old-fashioned phone calls to see how we're all doing. Yet, however well we do as a community, we know, if we are honest, that still something is not right.

We can learn from Abraham, our ancestor, to confront loss honestly. In the Talmud we are told that the morning Amidah, a key act of spiritual practice, was established by Abraham: 'Abraham fixed the morning Amidah, as it says in the Torah, (*Genesis 19*) *Abraham rose in the morning to the place in which he had stood,*' and it continues, '*and there is no standing other than prayer...*'

So, what was Abraham doing in that act of standing, and what can we learn from him about the posture we are to cultivate every day from early in the morning onwards? *He rose in the morning to the place in which he had stood.* He had stood there one chapter and one day earlier when he had heard that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah might be destroyed. Then he stood up to the Divine, if one can say such a thing, demanding: 'Should the Judge of all the earth not do justice? Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?' and then, with the most polite *chutzpah*, he negotiates God down, to agree that if there are just ten innocent people, the cities will not be destroyed. We may bring this act of standing to our lives and spiritual practice. To stand up for justice, and for others, to relate to - and to speak

truth to – power; even to Ultimate power.

That is the moment that Abraham *had* stood exactly here previously. In fact, in the actual moment that we are told established the Amidah, - in *Genesis 19,27-29: Abraham rose in the morning to the place that he had stood when he had faced up to the Eternal. Now he looked down to face the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and behold smoke rose from the earth like the smoke of an oven, and so the cities of the plain were destroyed.*

The posture that we learn to inculcate every day, at the beginning of the day, is one of looking honestly out to the very face of the earth. It is one of looking at loss; of looking at the loss of that which you had passionately stood up for the day earlier and still you have the courage and resilience to stand there again, firmly and open-eyed. It is one of looking at pain and destruction. We are to stand up in the world and look out, each asking '*What have I lost? What have others lost? Can I look at that loss, and sympathetically hear it, can I affirm my presence in this world in the face of it?*'

We need to look at the loss that we feel - and that others feel

I had been avoiding checking for a long time but when I finally did so, at the time of writing this message, there had been much loss. More than 822 thousand lives had been taken by this pandemic. Just a few days ago on *Yom Kippur* we may have felt these words especially keenly: 'People of faith have passed away who were strong in good works; valiant, they stood in the breach, turning away calamity'.

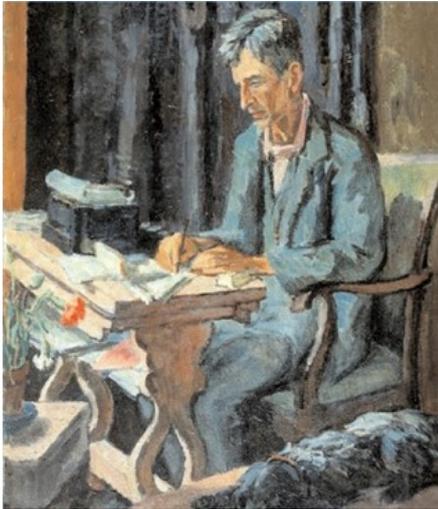
We may look at our own sense of loss too: the things we miss, the things we want; our loss of confidence in ourselves and in authority, and the things we took for granted; our lack of physical gathering together in our beautiful *shul*

for now ; the loss of any immediate return to normalcy, as we continue to manage these losses together. We need to look at the loss that we feel - and that others feel. Otherwise we bury our heads in the sand - and there is no Jewish spiritual practice that is to cultivate this. Otherwise we just breed our fear and anxiety.

We can look out honestly at this earth, and pay attention to pain and destruction, for it is only with this act that we can also find that other posture of decisive, effective action. I have to be honest - *we* have to be honest- it is the very basis of our daily, lived Judaism, two feet planted, and open-eyed. We have adapted and supported each other tremendously and we will continue to do so.

Rabbi Benji Stanley

Leonard Woolf (1880-1969)



Portrait by Vanessa Bell

Leonard Woolf, a British political theorist, author, publisher and civil servant, was one of many men whose wives are better known than they are themselves. Virginia Woolf was perhaps the best known of that eccentric group of writers and artists who are usually referred to as the Bloomsbury Group, or even the Bloomsberries. But in spite of the fact that Virginia was indisputably anti-Semitic, she married a Jew who adored her, and who never attempted to deny his Judaism.

Leonard Woolf was born in 1880 into a cultured liberal Jewish family. His parents, Sidney and Marie, had ten children, of whom Leonard was the third. He grew up in a comfortable, intelligent family, described in the first volume of his autobiography, *Sowing*. He was sent to St. Paul's School, and won a classical scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was the first Jew to be elected to the Apostles, the intellectual society of the University, founded in 1820. The Apostles were later to include the spies Guy Burgess, Donald MacLean, and Kim Philby.

At Cambridge Leonard flourished, well suited to the slightly effete, highly intelligent atmosphere of the twenties, quickly making friends in spite of his rather shy, retiring nature. He found himself at one with some of those who were to form the Bloomsbury Group, among them writers, poets and artists,

including Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell and Thoby Stephen, the brother of Vanessa (who married Clive) and Virginia. Many of his friends from his Cambridge days remained close to him to the end of their lives, including such distinguished figures as George Moore, John Maynard Keynes, George Trevelyan and E.M. Forster. Leonard himself, having been awarded his BA, decided to stay on for another year to take the Civil Service examinations. At about this time he was visited in his rooms by Thoby Stephen's sisters, Vanessa and Virginia. He described the visit as slightly awkward, none of the group socially at ease.

Coming down from University, Leonard would have liked to be a writer. However, he was offered a Cadetship in the Civil Service in Ceylon and decided to take it. Arriving in Colombo, Leonard found himself in a very different world from that of Cambridge, and indeed from his home territory of Kensington. He was sent up country to the small town of Jaffna, taking with him a manservant, his fox terrier Charles and seventy volumes of the works of Voltaire. He acquitted himself well in the Service and gained a promotion, but was increasingly anxious to see London again. He was due a year's leave and in the summer of 1911 he sailed for England. There he made new friends, such as Rupert Brooke, Bertrand Russell and Goldie Lowes Dickinson. Virginia looked, he wrote later, 'even more beautiful than ever'.



Virginia Woolf

Virginia Stephen had had a troubled life. Her mother died when she was thirteen. She never went to school, teaching herself what she felt she needed to know, her step-sister also died suddenly; she was cared for by her brothers and her terminally ill

father, Leslie. When he died Virginia was much disturbed, her state of mind not helped by the death of her brother, Thoby. She turned to writing as a release, working on her first novel, *The Voyage Out*. Leonard visited her at the house she rented at Firlie in Sussex, and found himself in close touch with the Stephen family and their friends. He too was writing, about his experiences in Ceylon (*The Village in the Jungle*), some poetry, and hundreds of letters, to Lytton Strachey and to many of his former Cambridge friends. He moved into the house in Brunswick Square occupied by Vanessa and Clive and their children, together with Maynard Keynes, Duncan Grant, Adrian (Virginia's younger brother) and Virginia herself.

Leonard was also writing a diary, partly written in code to hide it from prying eyes, but a few months after arriving back in England he wrote, 'Bloomsbury really came into existence and I fell in love with Virginia.' He wrote poems about her, and was very concerned about his forthcoming return to Ceylon. He wrote to her, 'I never realised how much I loved you until we talked about my going back to Ceylon. After that I could think of nothing else but you.' He proposed but Vanessa advised against the match unless her sister was in love, telling her not to worry about his Jewishness. Virginia's mental state was not good, and Leonard was worried both about her and about his return to Ceylon. Finally he sent in his resignation from the Civil Service. Virginia seemed uncertain about their future together. 'Possibly your being a Jew comes in at this point. You seem so foreign. And then I am fearfully unstable.'

A few weeks later she suddenly told him she loved him and they should be married. The wedding was at St. Pancras Registry Office. Not one member of his family was invited. Virginia frequently referred to him, particularly within her own family, as the 'penniless Jew' which he certainly was. In spite of his intellectual intelligence and his education, he still could not feel at home in the Bloomsbury circle. Virginia made no attempt to hide her contempt of Jews; marrying one was part of her rebellion against convention within her circle. Discussing sex, as all the Bloomsburys did quite openly, they

seemed to have achieved some way of living happily together which suited them both, though Leonard worried constantly about Virginia's mental health. They were both busy writing and Virginia's novel *The Voyage Out* was accepted for publication, as was Leonard's *The Village in the Jungle*. He was also involved with socialist thinkers, particularly Beatrice and Sidney Webb and the Fabian Society, contributing to the *Co-operative News* and other left-wing journals. When war broke out he was rejected for military service on health grounds, joining the Labour Party, and writing for the *New Statesman*. He also completed another novel *The Wise Virgins*, in which he decries the values - and vulgarity - of families such as his own, and the snobbish, overcritical ideas of Virginia's.

Her health was deteriorating again; she ate little, deluded about the people around her, and on a high programme of drugs. One night she took an overdose, and after the doctors brought her round Leonard was at his wits' end as to how to cope. Suicide being a crime, the patient could be certified, and he was horrified at the thought. For a while they borrowed a friend's house at East Grinstead where Virginia could recover.



Hogarth House

In London, the Woolfs had taken a house in Richmond - Hogarth House - and it was from here that together they set up in 1917 the Hogarth Press, publishing a series of well-designed hand printed books. The couple bought a hand press and taught themselves how to use it. The press was set up in the dining room of Hogarth House lending its name to the publishing company they founded. Their publications included works by Vita

Sackville West, the first edition of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and the Hogarth Shakespeare. The press is still a valuable part of English literary publishing.

In 1919 the Woolfs bought Monks House in the village of Rodmell outside Lewes. It was on the river Ouse, without electricity or mains drainage, and Leonard became an almost-full-time gardener. He was now editor of the *International Review* and literary editor of *The Nation*. Much of the time he had left he spent looking after Virginia, whose mental health was very variable.

Leonard was appalled by the growing fascism in Europe, and when war broke out they left the London house altogether and stayed at Rodmell. Leonard joined the local Fire Service. The house was in direct line of German bombers on their way to or from London; unexploded bombs landed on the river banks. Virginia said, 'I don't want to die yet.'

At the beginning of 1941 she seemed frail, walking through the water meadows and returning wet and ill. At the end of March she left the house for a walk and Leonard found two letters, one to him and one to Vanessa. She wrote, 'I feel certain I am going mad again.' She said that she was hearing voices and could not concentrate. He ran out of the house and searched the garden and the banks of the river.

Virginia was nowhere to be found, but he was sure she was dead, probably by drowning as she had always promised. Not for three terrible weeks did he find her body, caught in the reeds of the river some way from the house.

In the weeks after Virginia's death, Leonard shunned the company of most of his friends. One friend, who had worked at the Hogarth Press and was a writer herself, was Alice Ritchie, who was now dying of cancer and whom he visited in hospital. Her sister was an artist, always known as Trekkie after the South African meaning of 'trek' as determination. She contributed many illustrations for the Hogarth books. She was married to Ian Parsons who worked for Chatto and Windus which eventually took over the Hogarth Press.

Leonard moved back to London and shared the Parsons' house. He was very

attached to Trekkie and they became lovers, Leonard finding a peace of mind that he had never enjoyed with Virginia. She was Leonard's companion on his travels to France, Greece, Israel, and his memorable return to Ceylon in 1960.

Leonard visited Israel on only one occasion. He was politically an anti-Zionist, but loved the country. A very English Jew, he wrote about 'those unshaven, long-haired Orthodox Jews, who fill me with despair.' But his Jewish background later encouraged him to realise the peril Israel was in and wrote in the last volume of the autobiography that the situation in 1967 was 'so appalling and delicate that no one ought to say anything to incite either side to further violence.'



Trekkie

Trekkie made the last part of his life a very happy one. 'To know you and love you has been the best thing in life,' he wrote. He continued writing, producing five volumes of autobiography, which form a remarkable picture of England and its literary, political and social life in the first half of the twentieth century. His work helped to lay the foundations of the policy of the League of Nations and the United Nations and of the welfare state.

Leonard Woolf died in 1969 at his beloved Monks House. He left the house to Trekkie and it is now owned by the National Trust and open to the public.

Philippa Bernard

The Dark Lady



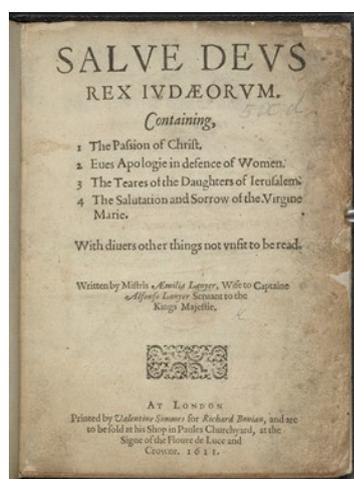
Portrait by Nicholas Hillyard

On 27th January this year the *Daily Mail* published a review of a most startling book. John Hudson's *Shakespeare's Dark Lady* maintains that Shakespeare's greatest works were written by a Jewish woman from a family of Venetian musicians living in London! In 1611 Emilia Lanier published *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (*Hail God, King of the Jews*), said to be the first book of poetry published in England by a woman). Hudson maintains that she is a credible candidate for the 'dark lady' referred to in Shakespeare's sonnets.

Emilia was born in London in 1569 to the Bassano family of musicians. They were believed to be of Jewish extraction, possibly the reason for their departure from Italy at a time of anti-Jewish feeling. They had come to England in 1539 where they were welcomed to the Court of Henry VIII and appointed as court musicians. Emilia was the daughter of Baptista Bassano, who married an English woman, Margaret Johnson. Emilia was baptised at the parish church of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate. She seems to have been well educated, under the care of Susan, Dowager Duchess of Kent, an intelligent woman who moved in court circles and was in touch with Humanist and Protestant learning. The Duchess insisted that women should receive as comprehensive an education as did men. Emilia was taught Latin, History and Theology and much attention was paid to her reading. It is known that she read the works of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ovid and Agrippa, as well English writers such as Edmund Spenser and Chaucer.

In 1558 Queen Elizabeth I attained the throne and brought to her Court a considerable standard of culture, herself a woman of high intelligence, interested in literature, music and art. The Bassano family continued as musicians to Elizabeth's Court, and Emilia herself was a royal favourite. Much of what we know about her comes from notes made by Simon Forman, the physician and Court Astrologer whom Emilia visited frequently. His notebooks were the first casebooks kept by an English medical practitioner, and he notes that Emilia was ambitious, anxious to make her way into the aristocratic circles of Elizabethan England.

The Queen's first cousin was Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, the son of Mary Boleyn; he held several royal posts, eventually appointed Lord Chamberlain of the Household. Emilia became his mistress, to be kept in considerable luxury, until she became pregnant and was married off to a cousin, Alfonso Lanier, of another family of court musicians from Rouen. They were married at St. Botolph's. However, Emilia seems to have been happier with Carey than with Lanier. Simon Forman noted that 'the nobleman that is dead hath loved her well and kept her and did maintain her long, but her husband dealt hardly with her and spent and consumed her goods, and she is now in debt.' She named her son after his father, Henry, and subsequently had a daughter, Odillya, who died in infancy.



Emilia's book of poetry was the first by a woman seeking a patron. The volume consists of a series of poems to individual

patrons, all women, two short prose dedications, the title poem on Christ's Passion (viewed entirely from a female perspective), and the first country-house poem printed in English, *The Description of Cooke-ham*. It would be fair to describe *Salve Deus* as the first feminist publication in England: all of its dedicatees are women, the poem on the Passion specifically argues the virtues of women as opposed to the vices of men, and the author's own style and method shows no influence of masculine lines of thought or dependence. She advocates and praises female virtue and Christian piety, and reflects a desire for an idealised classless world. It is hardly surprising that the book has also been deemed radical in its outlook.

It is of interest, and perhaps a tribute to her literary skill, that the book was published in 1611, the same year as the King James version of the Bible; John Donne's *First Anniversary*; several printings and reprintings of quarto plays by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe; George Chapman's translation of Homer's *Iliad*; and the first collected edition of Edmund Spenser's works.

Alfonso Lanier died in 1613, and impoverished by her husband's extravagance, Emilia opened a school for the children of the nobility (though few families of consequence lived in the district). She rented premises in St. Giles-in-the-Fields (St. Giles Church is known as the Poets' Church) but was soon unable to pay the rent and was arrested. The school quickly found itself with few pupils and had to be closed.

After her son's marriage Emilia tried to provide for his children, particularly to educate them in music. She was involved in several more court cases, suing her brother-in-law for monies from her late husband's estate. She eventually received her due, and is noted as a 'pensioner', that is someone in receipt of a regular income. She died in 1645 and is buried in St. James's Church, Clerkenwell.

The theory that Emilia Lanier was the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's Sonnets derives mainly from A.L. Rowse's book *Shakespeare's Sonnets - the Problem*

Solved. Rowse believed she was Shakespeare's mistress and he used his investigation of Simon Forman's diaries to put forward his theory. The first of the Dark Lady sonnets (No. 127) starts:

**In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:**

The general supposition at the time was that Englishwomen were usually fair, and that darkness of hair and skin was unusual and unappreciated. Clearly Emilia's heritage of Italian/Jewish ancestry would incline towards her being dark, though commentators who interpret this as being of African descent may be exaggerating. Sonnet 130 emphasises the quality of the lady's colouring:

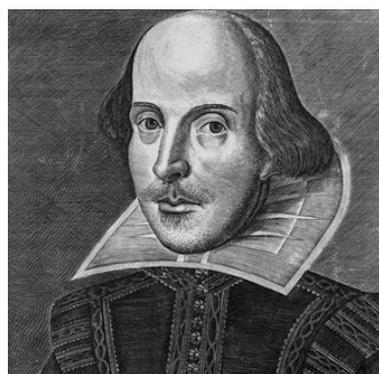
**My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.**

The strongly sexual allusions to this dark beauty reinforce the idea that dark passion was a feature of Shakespeare's poetic writing, but do not necessarily mean either that he had ever met Emilia (never proved) or that he was writing of a real figure at all. His 'dark lady' was almost unattainable, and their relationship wounded him greatly. However, the conventions of the Elizabethan court leaned towards the mystical, dream-like vision of love and beauty, so the practical possibilities of Shakespeare knowing or even having met Emilia are by no means essential to the theory. In the sonnets, music is often mentioned, again encouraging Rowse (and others) to believe Emilia's ancestry could fit the picture.

When it comes to the belief that Emilia actually wrote Shakespeare's plays, the theory is perhaps even shakier. Rowse certainly inclined to this idea, as have others before and after him. Many names have been suggested - Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, Marlowe, Francis

Bacon and several others, all based on the theory that an ordinary commoner could not have had the learning, wit or experience to have done so. A long and fascinating article in the American journal, *The Atlantic* by Elizabeth Winkler, comes down strongly in favour of a woman as the mysterious author, and that woman, she suggests, was Emilia Lanier. It is certainly true that Shakespeare's women are strong, attractive, independent and worldly - a faithful description of Emilia herself.

Modern scholarship has proved that women were indeed involved in the Elizabethan theatre, even though they could not appear on the stage. They are known to have financed drama, taken part in the direction and staging and to have been widely read in the background research. Their greatest drawback was that they had to remain anonymous.



The names of other women have been put forward as candidates: Mary Sidney, Countess of Bedford and sister of Sir Philip, was an obvious choice. Virginia Woolf believed the idea was ridiculous. She suggests that 'it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare'. Nevertheless Winkler rightly comments that although we know a great deal about Shakespeare - his home life, his career as an actor, his financial status - nowhere do we find much about him as a writer.

The theory of Emilia as the feminine Shakespeare has validity enough for The Globe to put on in 2018 the play *Emilia* by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm, in which Emilia is portrayed not only as Shakespeare's mistress from whom he 'borrowed' much of his work but as the attractive, scholarly,

feisty Elizabethan woman we know her to have been.

The story of Emilia Lanier has all the qualities of a first-rate thriller. Her mysterious background, her brilliant command of literary ideas, her association with the greatest writer of all time, all point to an urgent need for more research. Was she Jewish? If so, this must add to Rowse's theory, for the author of the plays knows much about Jewish tradition and at a time when there should have been no Jews in England, he (or she) sympathises even with the villain Shylock in his predicament - *If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh?* Other plays show evidence of a knowledge of Judaism. *Midsummer Night's Dream* draws from a passage in the Talmud about marriage vows; spoken Hebrew is mixed into the nonsense language of *All's Well That Ends Well*. It is intriguing to remember the story of Roderigo Lopez, the London Jew who was accused of plotting to poison the Queen and executed in 1594. Perhaps Emilia knew of the affair and used it in as the background for *The Merchant of Venice*, first published in the same year.

What still remains to be discovered? Future scholars may yet solve the mystery. Shakespeareans will not welcome proof of Emilia's work, but the canon of English literature can only be enhanced by a new Elizabethan genius.

Philippa Bernard

Charlotte Salomon (1917-1943)



The Jewish Museum of London recently mounted an exhibition of the works of Charlotte Salomon, including the massive *Life? or Theatre?* The paintings of this gifted and tormented artist are still relatively unknown, mainly because they do not appear on the international art market. The reason is that her whole archive belongs to the protective *Charlotte Salomon Foundation*, which is based at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam.

Charlotte's life was a strange one. Her father, Albert, was a prosperous surgeon in Berlin. Her mother, Franziska, was a sensitive and troubled woman with a dark mental past who committed suicide - after several previous attempts - when Charlotte was only eight years old. The family told the little girl that her mother had died from influenza.

In 1930 Albert Salomon was married again, this time to an opera singer named Paula Lindberg. She brought into Charlotte's life many acquaintances from the musical world of Berlin and a strong Jewish practice that resulted in her confirmation at a synagogue. Charlotte became very fond of Paula, who organised singing lessons for her stepdaughter. Her teacher was Alfred Wolfsohn, Paula's accompanist, a very charismatic man on whom Charlotte developed a huge crush.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Charlotte's father lost his job and began practising at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. Paula Salomon's opera career also came to an end and she began singing for the newly formed Jewish Cultural Association (the *Kulturbund*), while Charlotte, at around age sixteen,

dropped out of school and began drawing on her own. In 1936 she was admitted to the famous State Art Academy in Berlin which allowed only 1.5 percent of the school intake to be Jews. There she received conventional but excellent training and probably observed modern art at the Nazis' famous Degenerate Art Show in 1938. She also attended the *Kulturbund's* many outstanding performances for Jewish audiences, where she learned to see art as a source of morale and as a means of self-expression, when little of that was allowed. She studied painting there for two years, but by the summer of 1938 the anti-Semitic policy of Hitler's Third Reich meant that it was too dangerous for her to continue attending the college and she did not return, despite winning a prize.



Self portrait

Charlotte's father was briefly interned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp in November 1938, after *Kristallnacht*, and on his release, the Salomon family decided to leave Germany. Charlotte, then aged twenty, was sent to stay in France with her maternal grandparents. They lived in a cottage in the grounds of a luxurious villa, *L'Ermitage*, which no longer exists. It was owned by a wealthy American, Otilie Moore, who went on to shelter a number of Jewish children. Then Charlotte and her grandparents left *L'Ermitage* and went to live in an apartment in Nice. Shortly after the outbreak of war in September 1939, Charlotte's grandmother took her own life. She had stockpiled barbiturates for when the German army arrived, but when she was denied access to her medication, she instead tried and failed to hang herself and eventually succeeded by throwing herself out of a window.

It was then that poor Charlotte learned that her mother's side of the family, the Grünwalds, were all subject to terrible

depression and that indeed her mother had not died of 'flu but had committed suicide. That is when her grandfather unveiled the real story of her mother, and also that her aunt, her great-grandmother, her great-uncle and her grandmother's nephew had all killed themselves. What a profoundly devastating effect all this must have had on the vulnerable young woman.

In May 1940 France's Vichy government imprisoned German nationals as France's enemies and sent Charlotte and her grandfather to the concentration camp of Gurs in the Pyrenees, where Charlotte watched many artists produce works, under wretched conditions. Released after a few months, they returned to the Villefranche home of Otilie Moore, to whom Charlotte dedicated the artwork she was about to begin. She was, hardly surprisingly, facing a nervous breakdown but was fortunate to have been put in the care of a Dr. Moridis who counselled her through her depression and advised her to paint. He became a trusted friend. Supporting herself by painting greeting cards and portraits for Otilie Moore, she eventually moved away from her grandfather and in 1941 began creating her enormous autobiographical masterpiece in Saint Jean Cap Ferrat, where an innkeeper remembered her humming tunes while painting.



Dreaming of her mother

Charlotte rented a room in the pension *La Belle Aurore* in Saint Jean Cap Ferrat and there she commenced the haunting and extraordinary work. This massive artwork tells the story of her Berlin Jewish family from World War I up to the day in 1941 when she decided to

paint her life rather than to take it, then sat down by the Mediterranean 'and saw deep into the heart of mankind'. Whilst in the South of France, Charlotte married Alexander Nager, like herself, a German Jewish refugee .



She began her series of 769 paintings by stating that she was driven by 'the question: whether to take my own life or undertake something wildly unusual'. In the space of two years, she painted over one thousand gouaches. She edited the paintings, re-arranged them, and added texts, captions, and overlays. As the innkeeper had said, she had a habit of humming songs to herself while painting.

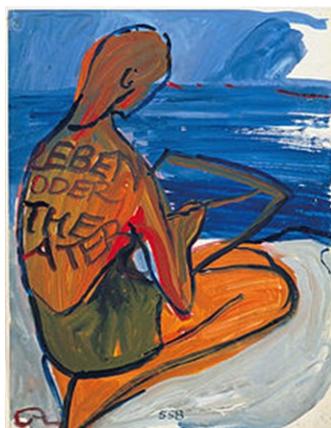
The entire work was a slightly fantastic autobiography preserving the main events of her life - her mother's death, studying art in the shadow of the Third Reich, her relationship with her grandparents - but she altered all the names and employed a strong element of fantasy and some humour. She also added notes about appropriate music to increase the dramatic effect, and she called this work *Ein Singspiel*, or lyrical drama.

A large part of *Life? or Theatre?* is about her obsession with one Amadeus Daberlohn, a voice teacher whom she had met through her stepmother, who she called Paulinka Bimbam (Charlotte gave all her characters humorous, often punning, pseudonyms). These sections are honest and compelling accounts of her passionate relationship with Amadeus Daberlohn (alias Alfred Wolfsohn) – the one person who took her artistic work seriously. One cannot know if Charlotte's

version of her relationship with Wolfsohn corresponds with reality, but he was undoubtedly her first love.

Amongst the items in this epic work, Charlotte recalls that spending a night in a crowded train is preferable to spending one night with her grandfather: 'I'd rather have ten more nights like this, than a single one alone with him'. In 2015, a stunning letter of thirty-five pages, which had been kept secret for decades, was released by a Parisian publisher. It reveals the possibility of sexual abuse by her detested grandfather. Also in the letter is the startling revelation that she murdered him by lacing an omelette with the barbiturates which her grandmother had been collecting in order to commit suicide.

The way she tells her story is full of tragedy, but the telling also reveals her sly humour and wit. The series begins with highly detailed and multi-layered images of the life and relationship between her mother and father. As the story unfolds, the style gets broader and more expressionistic. The last 'chapters' are almost violent in their expression, as if she is aware of her impending fate and can hardly wait to write and paint the details of her story as the Gestapo close in on her life.



In 1943, as the Nazis intensified their search for Jews living in the South of France, Charlotte handed the work - addressed to Otilie Moore - to her friend Dr. Moridis. She inscribed Otilie's name at the top, and told the doctor, 'Keep this safe, it is my whole life'. In October of 1943, not long after handing this

monumental work to Dr. Moridis, Charlotte and her husband, Alexander, were dragged from their house and transported by rail from Nice to the Nazi 'processing centre' at Drancy near Paris. Charlotte was twenty-six and was five months pregnant. She was supposed to be forgotten, erased from history, along with the millions of Jews murdered in the 1940s, but before she was put on a train to her death she had set down everything about herself, her family and her world. So the monumental work remains as witness to her life.

Otilie Moore only received the package when she returned to Europe in 1947. She passed it on to Albert and Paula Salomon, who had survived the war, hiding in Holland. They donated it to the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. Albert eventually resumed his career as a physician and Paula became a distinguished teacher of voice, though never again a singer. Charlotte's lover Alfred Wolfsohn had fled to England where he, too, trained singers.

Some of her work is very dreamlike and reminiscent of Chagall, while occasionally Van Gogh comes to mind. It does not take a psychiatrist to read Charlotte's tormented life experience in her paintings and yet there is something so uplifting in her vibrant palette that seems to override the sadness of her subject.

Since 1992 a primary school in Berlin has borne the name of Charlotte Salomon and in 2006 a street in Berlin-Rummelsburg was named after her. On April 21, 2012 a Stolperstein in front of her former residential house in Berlin-Charlottenburg, Wielandstrasse 15, was dedicated to her and a Memorial Plaque on the facade of the building commemorates this extraordinary artist.



Claire Connick

The Rivonia Trial



Lilliesleaf Farm Museum

On 11th July 1963 a laundry van came slowly up the drive of Lilliesleaf Farm, a smallholding in the suburb of Rivonia, a few miles outside Johannesburg. It pulled up by the farmhouse. The rear doors opened and out leapt several burly policemen with dogs. There was a meeting taking place inside the farmhouse but one of the participants glanced out of the window. 'Its the police,' he yelled. Chaos ensued as the participants tried to get away. But it was too late. The building was surrounded and they were all taken into custody.

For the feared South African Security Branch, it was a triumph. At a stroke, they had caught the top echelon of the ANC and the South African Communist Party red-handed in the course of planning a sabotage campaign, and had collected enough evidence to identify the entire leadership - including Nelson Mandela - and send them all to the gallows. The government and the Nationalist press were cock-a-hoop. It was a chance to show the world the forces South Africa was up against, and to demonstrate the independence of the South African judicial system. But more than that, it was a chance to get rid of several people who had long been a thorn in the government's side. For the defendants it was a chance to expose the evils of *apartheid* to the watching world, on a platform which the apparatus of state security was powerless to silence.

The 'Rivonia Trial', as it came to be known, began on the 9th October 1963. It was a pivotal moment in South African history. What is not well known is the extent of Jewish involvement in the trial. The Prosecutor, six of the thirteen arrested after the raid and three of the

defence team were Jews.

Looking back as Jews, we can see that it also presented a dilemma for the South African Jewish Community. Prior to the trial there was a telling moment which is recounted by the leader of the defence team, Joel Joffe (later Baron Joffe) in his book *The State vs Nelson Mandela*. Joffe had attended a meeting with the prosecutor, Dr Percy Yutar, at the offices of the Security police. After the meeting Yutar took Joffe aside and said that it was quite remarkable that he had been working on the case for a month and hadn't heard a single anti-Semitic word from the police. Joffe responded that he didn't think this remarkable, and that the police would hardly make anti-Semitic remarks in the presence of a Jewish collaborator. At which, as Joffe recounts, Yutar bridled and said, 'if you were a policeman, Joffe, wouldn't it make you anti-Semitic to have people like Bernstein and Goldberg going round stirring up the Bantu?'. Many in the Nationalist government were virulently anti-Semitic and a number of its senior members including the Prime Minister had been imprisoned during the war for Nazi activities. How could the Jewish community and individual Jews give such people their support?



Joel Joffe

Implicit in what Yutar was saying was the threat that South African Jews should take care not to be overtly critical of the government or support revolutionary causes. Throughout the *apartheid* regime the Board of Deputies maintained a neutral and non-political position. Even though many prominent rabbis spoke out from the pulpit, the Jewish community's feeling of vulnerability was always a constraint. Yutar's response to Joffe

indicated not just political or social embarrassment but an overriding concern for the well-being of the Jewish community, even if that was at the expense of other people in South Africa.



Percy Yutar

The trial lasted until June 1964. All the defendants were charged with sabotage, conspiracy and furthering the objectives of communism. Although these charges carried the possibility of a death sentence, this was not mandatory as it was for treason. All the defendants pleaded not guilty. The defence case was that the unjust political conditions in South Africa forced them to undertake the actions which they did because there were no other means of bringing about political change.

There were many dramatic moments. One of these came early on when Yutar announced that all charges against Bob Hepple (a human rights lawyer) would be dropped, because he had agreed to become a witness for the prosecution. He was released, but to the embarrassment of the prosecution he immediately fled the country. However, the prosecution produced another star witness - a disaffected ANC member called Bruno Mtolo who had been to meetings and had received training as a saboteur. He was able to identify Goldberg, Mandela and many others.

Perhaps the crucial point came towards the end of the trial when the defence had to present its witnesses. Mandela indicated that he would not submit to cross-examination but instead would make a statement from the witness box, as was his right under the law. Both leading Counsel Bram Fischer and trial attorney Joel Joffe advised against this. However, Mandela, Sisulu and the others were insistent. They were not prepared to pass up this opportunity to bring their cause to the attention of the world, in order as Joffe said: ... to explain

precisely what they had been aiming to do and why ... and to nail what they regarded as slanders and distortions made against them by the prosecution.

This tactic had its risks. It meant that what Mandela said would carry little formal weight as evidence. When Bram Fischer rose to announce to the court that Nelson Mandela would be making a statement and not submitting to cross-examination Yutar, was wrong-footed. He had been preparing to cross-examine Mandela for weeks and saw this as a crucial moment of his prosecution. It had not occurred to him that Mandela might slip from his (and the state's) control in this way.



Nelson Mandela

In his speech Mandela dealt with the evidence against him and his colleagues. All attempts, he said, to find a political solution were rebuffed. Despite all the wrongs done to the black people, despite all the violence, Mandela offered an olive branch. These were his concluding words:

I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Mandela's speech, and the calm and reasoned manner in which it was delivered, had a huge effect on those who heard it. Joffe describes it thus:

He sat down in a moment of profound silence, the kind of silence that I remember only in climactic moments in the theatre before the applause thunders out. Here in court there was no applause. He had spoken for two hours, and for perhaps thirty seconds there was silence. From the public benches one could hear people release their breath with a deep



Justice de Wet

sigh as the moment of tension passed. Some women in the gallery burst into tears.

The trial judge was Justice Quartus de Wet. He was regarded by the defence attorneys as a fair and independently-minded man, who would brook no political interference in his court. Nevertheless, he had all the prejudices of his race and background. De Wet found that there was no case against Kantor and he was immediately discharged. Rusty Bernstein was found not guilty of the charges. The remaining defendants were found guilty. They had reason to expect the death penalty. The South African government demanded it, despite international opinion and the eloquent arguments of the defence attorneys. Sentence was passed on the 12th June 1964. De Wet's remarks were short and to the point:

The crime of which the accused have been convicted, that is the main crime, the crime of conspiracy, is in essence one of high treason. The State has decided not to charge the crime in this form. Bearing this in mind, and giving the matter very serious consideration, I have decided not to impose the supreme penalty which in a case like this would usually be the proper penalty for the crime. But consistent with my duty, that is the only leniency which I can show. The sentence in the case of all



Detectives in the living room of Lilliesleaf Farm

the accused will be one of life imprisonment.

There was pandemonium in the court as the defendants and the spectators realised that lives were to be spared. There was a wonderful moment when Denis Goldberg's elderly mother who was hard of hearing shouted to her son, 'What is happening, what did he say?' And Goldberg, who was about to begin a life-time prison sentence, shouted back, 'Its life Mom, and life is wonderful!'

What lessons does the Rivonia Trial hold for us as Jews? One of the overarching concerns of the Torah and the teachings of the Prophets is for equality and justice for all people in the land of Israel, not just the Jews. The concern of the prosecutor, Dr Yutar, was to do what was necessary to preserve the safety and well-being of the South African Jewish Community - a tiny minority of the population. He believed this was more important than to uphold the cause of justice and freedom for all.

Although many of the Jews involved in the trial did not practise as Jews, the tenets of their religion ran deep inside them. They were prepared to fight to uphold these despite the fearsome risks for themselves and their families. Ultimately, they were proved right. The safety which Dr. Yutar strove for was illusory. Twenty-five years later, the country was on the brink of a bloody revolution and the white community, including the Jewish community within it, were in grave danger. Had it not been for the efforts of the Jewish defendants and the stalwart defence team at the Rivonia trial, there may have been no Mandela to rescue South Africa and there may well have been no peaceful democratic transition of power.

Jeremy Solnick

Cecil Roth (1899-1970)



In a tribute to Cecil Roth after his death, the Oxford Chabad Society called him one of the greatest Jewish historians of the twentieth century, a recognized expert in Jewish art and a fine educator. In any review of Anglo-Jewish historical writing, Roth's name will be one of the first to be recalled, not only for his vast output, ranging from books on Italian Jewry to his seminal work on the Jews of England, but also for his meticulous examination of Jewish archives all over the world, and his editorship of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, which was published in 1971, shortly after his death.

Cecil Roth, one of four sons, was born in 1899 to Joseph and Etty Roth in Dalston, London. Both parents were descended from rabbinic families in Poland. Joseph engaged a tutor, Rabbi Moshe Vilenski, to teach his four children: David, Daniel, Leon, and Cecil. Joseph was a manufacturer of builders' supplies, and he and his wife were anxious that their children should receive a good Jewish education as well as a secular one. The boys learned Hebrew from the Geniza scholar Jacob Mann, and attended the City of London School. Both Cecil and Leon fought in the First World War, before being awarded scholarships to university; Leon went on to become a distinguished philosopher.

At Merton College, Oxford, Cecil took with him a good enough knowledge of Latin, both for later research and to enable him to acquire fluency in several

romance languages, in particular Italian. He read history and obtained a First and then a D.Phil. He conscientiously refused to sit examinations on the Sabbath or Jewish festivals; this then involved missing one or even two papers, but did not affect his success.

Always interested in Italian history, his thesis, his first published work, was *The Last Florentine Republic*. He was later to write *The History of the Jews in Italy*. Whilst working on his doctoral thesis in Italy he had established friendships and good contacts both within the Jewish community and in academic circles, and had realised the significance of ritual *objets d'art*. He had also developed a capacity to speak engagingly in public. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and began to specialise in Jewish studies, an interest from his childhood.

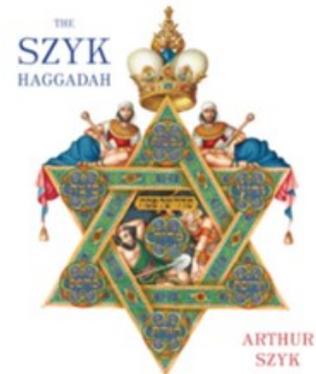
In 1928 he married Irene Davis, the daughter of a property developer, and was able to earn a living as a freelance writer. Pursuing his interest in Jewish history, he published books on the Spanish Inquisition, the Marranos, and a life of Menasseh Ben Israel, as well as many articles in learned journals, and a new edition of the *Haggadah*, with illustrations by the artist Alfred Rutherford, of the Rothenstein family, published by the Soncino Press.

In 1939 Oxford University created for him a special Readership in Post-Biblical Jewish Studies. He and Irene made their home in the city, entertaining and mentoring Jewish students. He acted as a father-figure through the changing face of Oxford Jewry, due to the war-time arrival of new waves of undergraduates. It became a provincial community that remains atypical, because of the great distinction of some of the professional academics who maintain various degrees of involvement in its Synagogue-centred activities. Together with Irene, he afforded an unofficial, and for that very reason most valuable, chaplaincy service to the increasing number of Jewish students at Oxford, for whom he kept open house on Saturday afternoons. The warmth of the Roths' hospitality, offered in a gracious home decorated with Jewish

and Italian art, a library containing valuable Hebrew manuscripts and printed books and the chance of encountering leading Jewish scholars from all over the world, meant a great deal to the young men and women at the University.

In 1941 he published his *History of the Jews in England*, still regarded as the standard work on the subject, though it does not, of course, cover the history of the Holocaust. It has been reprinted many times.

Roth's interest in art and book illustration led him to collaborate on another *Haggadah*, this time the famous Szyk *Haggadah*, an elaborate edition of the book, illustrated by the Polish-Jewish artist Arthur Szyk. Roth had, in fact, made a particular study of illuminated medieval *Haggadot*, and formed his own fine collection of illuminated *Ketubbot*, ritual silver, rare books and manuscripts - now shared between Leeds University and the Beth Tzedec Synagogue in Toronto.



Roth travelled extensively, both to America and to Israel, where his brother Leon held a Chair in Philosophy. Recognition of Cecil's scholarly ability beyond the Jewish community led to his having contributed, in 1932, a chapter entitled 'The Jews in the Middle Ages' to vol. 7 of *The Cambridge Medieval History* - its inclusion there itself constituting a landmark in twentieth century historiography.

In 1958 Roth exercised his interest in antiquities and early manuscripts by publishing *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Historical Approach*. He had always liked



Rutherston's Haggadah

historical detection and the book called for a new investigation into the discovery, in which the author identified the Qumran sect with the Zealots rather than the Essenes, causing scholarly debate for some years to come. He had become interested in the Jewish Historical Society of England, the oldest historical and learned society of its kind in Europe, founded in 1893 by the foremost Anglo-Jewish scholars and communal leaders of the day. Roth became President of the Society, in the footsteps of Lucien Wolf, F.D. Mocatta, Israel Zangwill, and Sir Isaiah Berlin. In a book of essays - *Remember the Days* - published by the Society in his honour in 1966, the Foreword by V.D. Lipman notes that Roth served as President for longer than anyone else and 'presided over notable events in the Society's history such as the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, and the celebration of the Tercentenary of the Resettlement'.

In 1964 Roth retired from the University but not from his work on Jewish history, for he was appointed the following year to the post of visiting Professor at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. With his usual habit of taking on increasingly heavy workloads, he also undertook what was probably his most lasting legacy, the Editorship of the newly founded *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, a vast work of some sixteen volumes, still the greatest reference work on Jewish scholarship. He had already edited a new version of the *Magna Bibliotheca Anglo-Judaica*, the great bibliography of Anglo-Jewish history, published under the auspices of

the Jewish Historical Society, and later revised into three volumes.

The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* involved a huge amount of work, with close attention to detail. Roth planned the allocation of space, edited the contributions from other scholars and wrote much of it himself. It replaced the old *Jewish Encyclopaedia* of 1905, long out of date, and covers wide areas of the Jewish world and civilization, including Jewish history of all ages, culture, language, scripture, and religious teachings, with articles by Israeli, American and European professional subject specialists. Roth did not live to see it published, though he had finished the editing and proofing before he died.

Cecil Roth was also much in demand for lecture tours on the many Jewish subjects in which he excelled, travelling, usually with Irene, all across the world, revealing to his audiences a scope of Jewish scholarship then hardly known outside academic circles. He had the facility to explain to non-scholarly, popular groups what had hitherto been confined to university or rabbinical organisations, and was perhaps more welcome in America and Israel than in Britain.

Cecil and Irene moved to Jerusalem to enable him to continue working for the University there, but he became involved in a contretemps with a Rabbi who accused him of alleging that Moses had never existed. He had in fact been

remarking on the proposition by other scholars of the doubt of Moses' existence, insisting himself that there was no such doubt. He was pursued and denigrated for the accusation and suffered a heart attack, standing down from his academic position.

Roth was able to continue with his work on the *Encyclopaedia* and was appointed to a post at the City University of New York.

In 1969 the Italian government made him Commander of the Order of Merit for services to Italian culture. He died in Jerusalem in 1970, leaving a vast legacy of articles, books, art and antiquities, as well as the opinion of much of the Western world that he had been one of the greatest of Jewish historians. In 1982 Irene published her own memoir of her husband, *Cecil Roth: Historian without Tears*. In its obituary, the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote, 'His aesthetic sensitivity not only made him a discriminating art collector, but it was he who put Jewish art on the map of Jewish scholarship, and revealed it as an important source for the study of Jewish history. His love for and vast knowledge of Jewish liturgy in its many facets, also sprang from a mixture of religious and aesthetic motives.'

Philippa Bernard



Cecil Roth in his study at Oxford

The Extraordinary Story of the Elephant Abul-Abbas



A picture of Abul-Abbas from eleventh century Spain

I was intrigued, as I'm sure many of our readers were, by the mention in Peter Beyfus's article about Charlemagne and the Jews (*Westminster Quarterly*, April 2020), of an elephant brought back by Isaac the Jew to his master, Charlemagne, as a gift from Haroun al-Rashid. How, I wondered, could a medieval Jew have travelled from Baghdad to Aachen (then part of France) accompanied by such a huge beast? Which route did he take? How did he feed the animal? But I suppose if Hannibal could cross the Alps with thirty-seven elephants nearly a thousand years before, then an enterprising Jew might try it with just one.

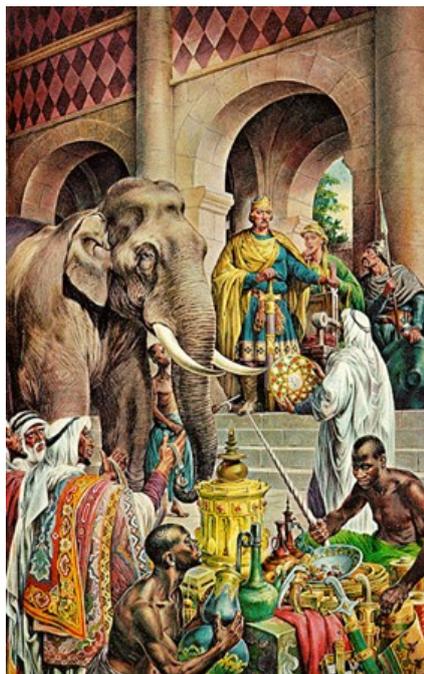
Isaac was born in the eighth century CE in Narbonne in southern France, a centre of Jewish learning. He came from a distinguished family. His father was an important figure in Jewish affairs, and his mother was a daughter of the poet Eleazar ben Kalir. Isaac himself was a prominent merchant, experienced in trading with Eastern nations, and soon attracted the notice of Charlemagne, who sent him on a mission to Baghdad to visit the Caliph, Haroun al-Rashid, the fifth Abbasid Caliph. His instructions were to bring back some treasures from the East.

Isaac set out in 797, accompanied by two other diplomats, Lantfroi and Sigismond.

He reached Baghdad and executed his business affairs with the Caliph. Haroun al-Rashid then entrusted a most precious gift for Isaac to bring back to Charlemagne, an elephant called Abul-Abbas, meaning in Arabic 'Son of the Lion', expressing strength and courage. It seems that Isaac's two companions perished before they could set off on the return journey, so it was left to Isaac to escort the elephant back alone.

It was a long and perilous journey. He started by following the merchants' route down to Egypt and then travelled westward along the Egyptian coast and into what is today Tunisia and Algeria, then known as Ifriqiya (Africa). Here he is thought to have received assistance from the Governor Ibrahim ibn al-Aghlab, appointed by Haroun al-Rashid. The next stage in the journey was to cross the Mediterranean, so he and his companion travelled to Kairouan, an important city - now in Tunisia. Jews were among the original settlers of Kairouan, and the community had played an important role in Jewish history, a world centre of Talmudic and Halachic scholarship, where Isaac would surely have felt at home.

They crossed the Mediterranean and landed in Genoa in October 801. Unable to continue the journey northward in winter, they moved on to the small



Charlemagne and Abul-Abbas

Piedmontese town of Vercelli, ready to cross the Alps when spring came. It took Hannibal just sixteen days to reach Italy with his much larger train, but Isaac and Abul-Abbas took nearly three months to reach Charlemagne's court in Aachen.

Abul-Abbas was exhibited as 'a marvel from the East' according to later accounts. Some indicate that when Abul-Abbas arrived, it was marched through various towns in Germany, including Speyer, Strasburg, Verdun, Augsburg, and Paderborn, to the astonishment of onlookers, as an ostentatious display of the emperor's might, and was eventually housed in Augsburg in what is now southern Bavaria. It later travelled with Charlemagne on his route into France.

some historians have assumed that the animal was a 'war elephant'

As this was a military expedition, some historians have assumed that the animal was a 'war elephant', an elephant that is trained and guided by humans for combat. The war elephant's main use was to charge the enemy, breaking their ranks and instilling terror.

Some added details about the elephant's death, stating it was in its forties and already suffering from rheumatism when it accompanied Charlemagne in the campaign across the Rhine heading to Friesland. According to these sources, in a spell of bad weather, Abul-Abbas developed a case of pneumonia. His keepers were able to transport the beast as far as Münster, where it collapsed and died.

Several later speculative reports about Abul-Abbas have called it a 'white' elephant for which there appears to be no proof, nor is it certain whether he was an Indian or an African elephant. Nevertheless there is no doubt that Isaac the Jew will go down in history as the only Jewish traveller known to have accompanied an elephant from Baghdad to Aachen.

Philippa Bernard

The Disobedient Diplomat Feng-Shan Ho



Feng-Shan Ho was born on 10th September 1901 in Yiyang, Hunan Province, China. His father died when Ho was seven years old. A diligent and hard-working student, he managed to enter the Yali School in the provincial capital of Changsha and later Yale-in-China University. He attended the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in 1929 and received his doctorate in political economics in 1932.

It was only after his death that the extent of this diplomat's success in saving Jewish lives became known, when evidence of survivors who had benefited from Ho's aid began to reach Yad Vashem.

In 1935, Ho started his diplomatic career within the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of China. His first posting was in Turkey. He was appointed First Secretary at the Chinese legation in Vienna in 1937. When Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938, and the legation was turned into a Consulate, Ho was assigned the post of Consul-General.

After *Kristallnacht* in 1938, the situation became rapidly more difficult for the almost 200,000 Austrian Jews. The only way for them to escape the Nazi threat was to leave Europe. But in order to leave, they had to provide proof of permission of entry elsewhere -

usually a visa from a foreign nation, or a valid boat ticket. This was difficult, however, because at the 1938 Évian Conference, thirty-one countries - which included Canada, Australia, and New Zealand - refused to accept Jewish immigrants. The only country willing to accept Jews was the Dominican Republic, which offered to accept up to 100,000 refugees.

For humanitarian reasons and acting against the orders of his superior, Chen Jie, the Chinese ambassador to Berlin, Ho started to provide visas to Shanghai to anyone who asked, even if they wished to travel elsewhere. Part of Shanghai at this time was still under the control of the Republic of China after the occupation by the Japanese during the second Sino-Japanese War.

Twelve hundred visas were issued by Ho in only the first three months of his holding office as Consul-General. In direct contravention of the instructions of his Superior, Ho continued to provide these visas until he was ordered to return to China in May 1940. The exact number of visas given by Ho to Jewish refugees is unknown. What is known is that he issued his 200th visa in June 1938, and signed the 1906th visa on 27th October 1938. How many Jews were saved through his actions is unknown, but given that Ho issued nearly 2,000 visas just during his first six months in his post, the number may well be in the thousands.

Many of those helped by Ho did indeed reach Shanghai, either by boat from Italy or overland via the Soviet Union. Many others made use of their visas to reach other destinations, including the Philippines and what was then Palestine. The parents of the Secretary-General of the World Jewish Congress and Vice Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, Dr. Israel Singer, were able to travel to Cuba because of these visas.

One story is told by Lilith-Sylvia Doron, who escaped to Israel. She had met Ho accidentally, as both watched Hitler entering Vienna, on 11th March 1938 - a time when physical assaults were being waged by the Nazis against the city's Jews. She said 'Ho, who knew my family, accompanied me home. He

claimed that, thanks to his diplomatic status, the Nazis would not dare harm us as long as he remained in our home. So he continued to visit our house on a permanent basis to protect us.'

After his retirement in 1973, the government of Taiwan denied Ho a pension on the grounds, common then, that he had been subpoenaed and refused to cooperate with Diplomatic Services, and had not properly accounted for a small sum in an embassy expense account. These charges are now widely believed to have been politically motivated.

Feng-Shan Ho died on 28th September 1997 in San Francisco, at the age of ninety-six. He was survived by his daughter Manli Ho, and by his son, Monto Ho who died in 2013. Monto was a Chinese-American professor of microbiology, virology, and infectious diseases. A strange echo of the past in today's Corvid 19 epidemic.

Ho's actions were finally recognized, posthumously, when he was awarded the title Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem at a ceremony in 2001. In 2015, his daughter represented her father to receive a meritorious certificate for his diplomatic services - presented - amazingly - by the Chinese government, with the participation of representatives from Israel!



Statue of Dr Feng-Shan Ho at the Jewish Refugees Museum in Shanghai

Claire Connick

Judith Hart Levy (1706-1803)



*Mrs Judith Levy
The Rich Jewess usually called
The Queen of Richmond Green*

When the first Ashkenazi congregation was founded in London in 1690, it was largely established and paid for by Moses Hart, a wealthy Jew from Breslau and son of a Rabbi. He was one of the ‘Twelve Jew Brokers’ permitted to become members of the Royal Exchange. His brother, Aaron Hart, was regarded as the principal Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jews in London during his time as the Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, though the term Chief Rabbi was not used until the occupancy of Solomon Hirschell.

Although Moses Hart was a careful businessman and kept close control over his financial affairs, he also ventured on the lottery and won a considerable sum to add to his wealth. State lotteries began in this country as early as the 1690s and were established by the Bank of England. Moses Hart married Prudence Heilbuth, a daughter of Samuel Heilbuth, one of the early members of the Great Synagogue, and sister-in-law of Benjamin Levy, one of the wealthiest Jews in England. They bought a large house in Isleworth, an area that was becoming popular with London Jews anxious to move out into the country. Moses Hart then moved to

a handsome house, Herring Court, overlooking the river at Richmond and adopted Elias Levy as his ward.

Moses’ daughter, Judith, was born in 1706, the second of six children. Her mother was also a wealthy woman in her own right. Samuel Levy was a leading member of the Great Synagogue of London, having three children, of whom the youngest, Elias, was a child when he was left an orphan in 1704. In his will, his father expressed the desire that the boy should be brought up ‘in some profession in the Jewish learning, whether as a Rabby or a Physitian’. He was to live with his great-uncle, Jacob Heilbuth, with his own servant to attend on him, and a certain Rabbi Moses was to be paid £25 annually for four years for teaching him; subsequently he was to be sent abroad to complete his education. Matters did not work out quite as Benjamin Levy had planned: but Elias had a thorough Jewish education.

He was attracted by the bright eyes and brighter prospects of his cousin, Judith Hart, Moses’s second daughter. It was a brilliant match; for her father is said to have invested Elias’s property in South Sea Stock, and to have sold out before the ‘Bubble’. From both sides, therefore, the marriage was a desirable one, and it took place in 1727.

Judith was an astute businesswoman, helping in her husband’s affairs, as many Jewish women did, and insisting on acting as his clerk and personal secretary to save money. Her dowry on marriage had been £10,000 with an annual income of £500, and at her father’s death she was to inherit £6,000 per year. However, soon after her marriage she went to her Father and demanded more money, as she discovered that her sisters’ dowries had been larger.

The couple’s first home was in Bishopsgate Street in the city; they then took a large house in Wellclose Street in Whitechapel. Judith and Elias had two children, Benjamin and Isabella, but Elias died in 1750 followed six years later by Judith’s father, leaving her a very wealthy woman, with an active

concern in her husband’s business as a diamond merchant. Judith’s son Benjamin also died young, so her daughter Isabella would eventually come into a large fortune. She married into the English aristocracy as a result of the matchmaking efforts of a friend of her mother, the Duchess of Northumberland, who lived at Syon House where Judith was often invited to dine.

Sadly Isabella too died a few years after the marriage, and Judith, bereft of most of her family, moved into Albermarle Street, with very few Jewish neighbours and hardly any of her family nearby. She now felt that with few loved ones around her she had no need to be as thrifty as she had been, and began spending her large fortune more lavishly, investing in a large carriage and horses and furnishing her house as more fitting for a person of wealth and good taste. She does not seem to have had a very attractive personality, with few friends, believing that all who came in contact with her were after her money. She had little connection with the Jewish community or the Synagogue her father had founded.

However, she kept in close touch with her mother and sisters and spent much of her time at the big house her father had bought in Richmond, or at the small house she owned there in Maids of Honour Row. She was a colourful personality and in her lifetime saw the rise of the Jewish Community in England, watching it grow from a few hundred in number to many thousands. When the Great Synagogue was rebuilt in 1790 she handsomely assisted the project to the extent of donating £4,000.

Judith lived to a great age but was unhappy in the last fifty years of her life, spent as a widow and an eccentric recluse. She achieved local recognition by her good works and eccentricities, and was generally known in Richmond as The Queen of Richmond Green. Judith Hart Levy died at the remarkable age of ninety-seven in 1803.

Lewis Rosenberg Surfboard pioneer

We are familiar with many areas of sport where Jews have been famous – ‘Kid’ Berg, boxing; Harold Abrahams, running; Angela Buxton, tennis; Stirling Moss racing; and his sister Pat, horse riding; Mark Spitz, swimming; Yossi Benayoun and Ricky George, football; Ali Bacher and Ray Philips, cricket - to name but a few - but who knew that four Jewish lads from the East End of London would start a craze for surfing in the United Kingdom?

Lewis Rosenberg had been inspired after watching a film of surfers standing on their boards in Australia and decided that he, too, should experience surfing. The East End is a long way from Bondi Beach, but in the summer of 1929 Lewis and three of his friends, Harry Rochlin and Fred and Ben Elvey, decided to try out this strange new sport. Lewis carved a seven-foot wooden surfboard from balsa wood, and the boys took it in turns to keep their balance on it, teetering above the waves of Holywell Bay, in Cornwall. The boys, all in their twenties, had been riding their four-foot long wooden body boards in the West Country and the Channel Islands for quite a while, but this was something entirely different.

However, not only did they try to teach themselves how to surf standing on their board, but they also filmed their exploits - and the soundless black-and-white film, recorded on fragile 9.5mm stock, on one of the first home movie cameras, captures their excitement. It is almost incredible that these first British surfers were capable of filming from the surfer's angle, with rudimentary equipment, while riding waves. A small segment of the film appeared in a BBC4 documentary *Sea Fever* in May 2010.

The footage was passed on to Lewis Rosenberg's daughter, Sue Clamp, who kept it in her attic until suddenly rediscovering it and handing it over to the Museum of British Surfing in Braunton, North Devon. Peter Robinson, the founder of the Museum, said: ‘When Sue visited one of our exhibitions and told us



the family had film of surfing exploits on a wooden longboard in the late twenties, we were totally blown away. We took the reels of fragile 9.5mm stock to the local film archive for them to be preserved and transferred to digital tape ... It was only then we realised just how special this film is. It is a national treasure, as it shows the earliest recorded footage of surfing in Britain. We knew that belly-boarding was happening at this time but this film is very significant. Lewis and his friends appear to have seen standing-up surfing on a newsreel from Australia and just thought that they would like to have a go at that. He was a highly inventive man. Not only did he create a surfboard with no references to draw from, but he also created a waterproof cover for his camera and actually took it out on the water. This has changed how the surfing community view their history.’

Included in the video is an interview with Harry Rochlin, who died, age ninety-six, in 2007. The film shows the friends smiling and posing for the camera. At the beach they lie flat on the surfboard, and attempt to ride the waves standing, often falling and splashing back into the sea. It is thought to be the first time that surfers are recorded standing up in this Country

In the interview, Rochlin says ‘We swam out and when the waves came in, my friend Lewis tried to stand on the board, like they did in Australia. After a lot of practice, we managed to do it. It was incredible. It really brings back memories. It was really thrilling, to be able to stand on the board and go on to the beach.’

Barbara Steinberg, Harry Rochlin's great-niece, said she remembered him and Lewis Rosenberg, whom she called Uncle Lew, talking about their holidays in

Cornwall. ‘They were great friends when they were young; they came from very poor families, so they had to be quite creative about their holidays. Uncle Harry told me about their trips to Cornwall, they went camping there, went roller-skating and cycling. They even made their own tents. He mentioned surfing too, but I never realised that was unusual. They were ahead of their time. They would buy their food from farmers and he mentioned that they would tell the farmer they were Jewish when he tried to sell them meat - they only bought milk produce or vegetables.’

Sadly, the group's surfing fun was cut short by the Second World War, and the seven-foot board which had been lovingly shaped from solid piece of wood was stolen from Lewis's home in London. It is highly unlikely that the thief would have known it was a treasured surfboard - a remarkable piece of history.



These photographs are all stills from the film - hence the rather poor quality of reproduction.

Claire Connick

Oliver Cromwell and the Jewish Question



Elsewhere in this edition of the *Westminster Quarterly* we write about the distinguished Jewish historian, Cecil Roth, and mention his interest in Jewish historical detection. We had not realised, when that article was written, that one of Roth's greatest discoveries was his solution to the old mystery of the apparently missing confirmation of the readmission of the Jews to England.

In 1655 the Jews returned to England, then a Commonwealth, under the governance of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, but nothing in the English records of the time has ever confirmed this. Why not?

The expulsion of the Jews by Edward I in 1290 did not mean that all those of Jewish extraction vanished completely from this country. Officially there were no Jews in England after 1290, but during this time, often called the Middle Period of Anglo-Jewish history, we do know that Jewish life, secret and very discreet, did continue. Physicians, merchants and traders with Jewish names appear in documents or in court records. The *Domus Conversorum* or House of Converts, existed in Chancery Lane for converted Jews. Marranos, the Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, worshipped in secret unknown to the authorities. Queen Elizabeth had a Jewish doctor, Roderigo Lopez, whose trial for attempting to poison the Queen is fully documented. Even Shakespeare, whose Shylock is one of the best-known Jewish characters in English literature, must have known or come across some Jews to be able to build such a vivid character.

To understand the circumstances which led to the Readmission of the Jews, we

need to examine the political and religious background of the Country at large. Christianity, as the Puritan movement of that time understood it, was based to a very large extent on the Old Testament scriptures. Many of the clergy of the seventeenth century spoke and wrote Hebrew fluently. There was a strong inclination for the more radical branches of Christianity - Lutherans, Presbyterians, Calvinists, Sabbatarians - to obey the Old Testament to the letter, using Old Testament names for their children, and invoking the wrath of the God of the Hebrew Bible on sinners and wrong-doers. Thus a Puritan fundamentalist return to the Bible would inevitably encourage a warmer more tolerant attitude towards the Jews, the people of ancient Israel. Some adherents went rather too far, being accused of Judaistic practices by circumcising their sons and celebrating the Sabbath day on Saturday. Some were even imprisoned for this, and two Arians died at the stake for refusing to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. They were the last two Englishmen to be burned at the stake purely for their religious beliefs. Others claimed to lead Englishmen back to the Promised Land, and one poor deluded farmer declared himself king of Israel, able to divide the sea to cross over into his kingdom. The atmosphere in England towards the Jewish people had certainly become more favourable.

Several suggestions were made public, asking for the Jews to be allowed to worship freely in London, including a pamphlet published by Edward Nicholas, *An Apology for the honourable nation of the Jews, and all the Sons of Israel*, blaming England's neglect of the Jews for all her tribulations. Roth even suggests that it might have been written by Menasseh ben Israel as a form of propaganda.

What is quite clear is that a spirit of general religious toleration was becoming more evident, and the old medieval attitudes of hatred and suspicion towards those who had crucified Jesus, was diminishing. It is true that this more tolerant view of religious practice was partly due to the hope that if Jews were readmitted they would be available for

conversion. It was the purpose of many of the missionary sects of Christianity to bring unbelievers into the fold and this could hardly be done if they were not within reach. Another aspect of this leaning towards toleration was the possibility that if all religions were free to worship in this country, then not only Jews, but also those outside the mainstream Church of England - the non-Conformists - would be at liberty to follow their own ideas and practices. Puritanism was growing rapidly, perhaps in contrast to the excesses of Stuart control of the church (the Divine Right of Kings), just as in the political sphere, Cromwell's Roundheads had cast out the leadership of the crown. The Civil War, like the Russian Revolution, was the great leveller, the movement in which all men were to be equal, all religions tolerated. Except of course that some religions were more equal than others. There was now no national church, no monarch to be the head of it, and no religious leaders to press for the elimination of religious minorities.

Everything now seemed to revolve around Cromwell himself. The Dutch War was largely based on mercantile considerations, and Jews seemed to bring prosperity wherever they went. Cromwell was desperately anxious to improve England's trade. Many of the most prosperous merchants in the City of London were of Jewish origin and had links with entrepreneurs in Europe and as far afield as the West Indies, and these could provide a very useful network of spies and informers or 'intelligencers' as they were known.



Menasseh ben Israel was originally warned not to come to London from Amsterdam himself to deliver his petition

requesting that Jews be allowed to return to England. It was too dangerous as England was at war with Holland. But he sent an emissary, Manuel Dormido, together with Menasseh's own son, Samuel Soeiro. Dormido's petition for the Readmission was referred to a small committee set up for the purpose, but it was turned down, and Dormido suggested that Menasseh must come himself. He agreed, and arrived in London in September 1655, just before the Jewish Holy Days, which were actually celebrated openly in London.

He asked, in his famous petition, for a place to live and to worship. His reasons for coming to England, he said, were to seek freedom to pray, to bring Jews back into England so that the Messiah might come, to bring prosperity to the English people through financial expertise, and finally to enjoy the respect and affection of a country he had always admired. A further more practical note asked that all discriminatory laws should be repealed; that synagogues and cemeteries should be permitted; that Jews should be allowed to trade freely, and they should govern themselves, subject only to the laws of England, which they would of course obey.

Cromwell now proposed that 'the Jews may be admitted into this nation to trade and traffic and dwell among us as providence shall give occasion.' Parliament was unsure, and appointed a sub-committee (as it usually does) to handle the matter. This in turn rustled up several of the Protector's most trusted political allies. Their discussion revolved around two proposals: whether it was lawful to admit the Jews, and if so, under what terms. The legal question was easily resolved, and the answer made it very clear to that - and all subsequent - generations how the Jews came back to England. There was no law which forbade the return. The Expulsion of 1290 was an act of royal prerogative and related only to those immediately concerned, not their descendants or any other Jews wishing to live in this country. The banishment, therefore, was a total misconception of English law.

Rumours flew as to what exact shape the

negotiations should take. One declared that the Jews were attempting to buy their way in; they would provide £500,000 (an enormous sum in those days) in return for which they would get St. Paul's Cathedral to convert into a synagogue, and the Bodleian Library at Oxford for offices from which to conduct their affairs. Some say the offer was turned down, others that Cromwell asked for £800,000 or that they demanded to be granted the City of London!



Silver Salver Bearing the 'Arms of the Tribe of Judah' - said to have been presented to Oliver Cromwell by Menasseh ben Israel (owned by Sir Samuel Montagu)

Although an acceptance by Cromwell of the petition seemed to be imminent, the Council dragged its feet, as Menasseh stayed on in London, by now depressed by the delay. In the early months of 1656 nothing seemed to be happening. Roth suggests that Cromwell had forgotten all about it, but on 25th June it was again drawn to the Council's attention. There appears to be no confirmation as to whether or not it was accepted. This is the mystery which so intrigued Cecil Roth. July passed with no apparent decision, but then Menasseh returned to Amsterdam telling the Dutch authorities that all was now well and asking for a Torah scroll for the newly founded Synagogue of London, together with a suggestion for a Rabbi to minister to the new congregation.

Why then, asks Roth, is there no reference to the favourable decision in the Order Book? Did Cromwell take it upon himself to allow the readmission of the Jews? Why was there no official record? Roth contacted the Public Record Office

to look at the Order Book of the Council of State for 25th June 1656. To his amazement he discovered, what no one had previously realised, that the pages of the Order Book for that date were missing. It now seems certain that the petition was actually granted on that day but the written record was destroyed. If, as seems likely, Cromwell confirmed the decision in writing to Menasseh, then he would surely have taken it back with him to Amsterdam.

Roth describes fully the appearance of the Order Book without its vital missing pages. 'It is out of the question,' he writes, 'that they were removed for some casual and incidental reason ... the text has been cut off by a knife, one might say ferociously (or else hurriedly), in a jagged line, leaving a wide and unsightly margin which makes the gap brutally obvious.'

Roth's investigations could go no further. The rest is supposition. It seems unlikely that the Jews striving for recognition had anything to do with the desecration of the Order Book, nor that those opposing them could achieve much by it. Perhaps something totally unrelated had happened in Council that day. It would seem that no copies were kept, all matters being of course recorded by hand.

Once Cromwell died in 1658 anti-Jewish attitudes again broke out. Tracts and pamphlets showed a virulently hostile tendency, the Lord Mayor complained about the number of Jews in the city, and there were demands for all Jews to be banished from the country. Jews began once again to go into hiding and to worship in secret. Their saviour, strangely enough, was Charles II, who seems to have been genuinely in favour of retaining his Jewish subjects. After further attempts to banish them, countered by petitions from the Jews to remain, the Privy Council issued an assurance *in writing* that His Majesty's Jewish subjects would not be disturbed and that they might enjoy the same favours as they had before 'as long as they demean themselves peaceably and quietly with due obedience to His Majesty's laws and without scandal to his Government.'

Philippa Bernard

Removing the Mystique of Buying Art

Collecting art can seem to be an intimidating prospect but the art world and artists are more approachable than you might think and there are more avenues than ever before which allow the process of buying or collecting art to be less elusive and more enjoyable. This article is about removing the mystique from sourcing and looking at contemporary art and some pointers on how to start your own collection - my main focus being on young and/or emerging artists.

In my work as an independent art consultant and curator, I source and commission work in various mediums including photography and sculpture for private buyers and interior designers; I also curate selling exhibitions at private clubs, offices and other venues and I am always on the lookout for new places to showcase the work of young artists and put them on the radar.

As a buyer, you are nurturing a creative process and supporting a living artist's career. The best starting point is to look at as much art as possible and in as many different venues as possible, educating yourself as you go along, trusting your own instinct and taste, and putting aside the notion that you are making an investment – buying from living artists is not a commodity but an act of putting faith in an artist and relishing the work they create. It may be satisfying to see the value increase but it is never guaranteed.

Now is actually an optimal time to explore and buy art. Take the time to visit all the options we would have in regular/non-Covid times, including art fairs, making studio visits especially during Open Studio weeks or weekends, checking out art college degree shows and even something obvious like the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition where the entire display is for sale, join gallery and museum mailing lists, many of these are now online.

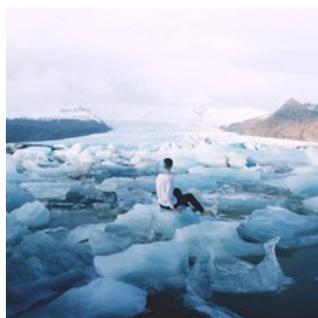
The internet and social media bring art and artists right into our lives in a variety of

ways. A really easy way to start, and the most immediate, is with Instagram. Every artist has an Instagram account. You can view their work and direct message to buy. You can also find out about talks and interviews they might be taking part in with other artists, galleries, institutions and major art collectors

If you don't know any artists and want to make a start, an excellent way of doing so and also actually supporting them in what could otherwise be an impossible time in terms of exposure and sales is via a growing number of initiatives started for and by artists where you can dip in and see paintings, prints, watercolours, sculptures, photography, ceramics, textiles and so on.

An excellent and affordable one is *#artistsupportpledge*, or at *artistsupportpledge.com*. Started by British artist, Matthew Burrows, new studies, sketches and finished or 'resolved' pieces of work are posted on Instagram on a daily basis with an absolute maximum price of £200. Established, as well as lesser known artists are taking part. Every time an artist sells £1000's worth, they themselves pledge to buy a work equivalent to 20% from another participating artist they admire, thereby supporting each other. Incredibly over £20 million has already been generated! And works sell fast!

It is a truly fantastic opportunity to follow your taste and instinct as well as supporting the global artist community during Covid-19. And don't be shy, if you like a work of a particular artist but it has sold, message them, ask them what else they are working on or are posting next, start a conversation.



Interstellar//Awoken by Simon McCheung

Some of the artists I work with feature here, Anna Louise Felstead is one of them. Technically highly proficient she works fast and creates cityscapes as well as portraits and takes commissions too, including watercolour portraits of your house or favourite place; Simon McCheung uses photography to produce striking images which comment on sustainability, climate change and our place in both urban and wild environments.



Tower Bridge by Anna-Louise Felstead

If you are feeling intrepid and like the idea of commissioned work with an element of surprise, check out 'Lockdown Commission' at *subjectmatterart.com* – for just £150 a small selection of photographers, textile and mixed media artists will create a work based on information you provide them with and you will have a unique personalised artwork by rising artists who believe in 'breaking down stereotypes, transparency in pricing, challenging art world elitism and inspiring new art buyers'. They have been online since 2011 but their voices are more pertinent now than ever.

Another initiative, Project Papyrophilia, is a platform for works on paper only. It is a continuous online exhibition with a maximum price of £250, set up by artist Xavier Ellis, who also runs the Charlie Smith London Gallery. Go to *#projectpapyrophilia* on Instagram or online to Project Papyrophilia, or *charliesmithlondon.com*. The mix of works by both rising and established artists, and including world-renowned artists, is refreshing, helps to remove some of the barriers between known and emerging artists.

More artists are also doing it for themselves at *The V-Art Show* - basically

The Shofar

We are all familiar with the sound of the *Shofar* blown on the High Holy Days in the Synagogue, but we may not be aware of some of the conditions that attach to the appearance of the ram's horn and to the performance of the *Shofar* blower - the *Ba'al Tekiah* - who must be of 'blameless character and conspicuous devotion'.

This ancient musical instrument recalls the *Akeda*, when Abraham saved his son Isaac by sacrificing a ram caught in the thicket. It is first mentioned in the Bible in Exodus 19; the blast of a *Shofar* emanating from the thick cloud on Mount Sinai makes the Israelites tremble in awe. The *Shofar* could in fact be the horn of any kosher animal, except a cow - because of the association with the golden calf - but it must be curved, symbolic of man's readiness to bow in submission to God. Like the modern bugle, it has no way of altering the pitch; the sound is varied by the lips of the blower, and it is not an easy instrument to control. It is held towards the right with the wider end upward.

In Biblical times the *Shofar* was blown on the occasion of the New Moon and the Jubilee Year. It was also used in war, for signalling and alerting the troops or announcing victory. It was blown when Joshua conquered Jericho. At one time it was blown on *Shabbat* but this was later forbidden in Orthodox Synagogues, as it involved the *Ba'al Tekiah* in 'work' on the Sabbath. It is often blown in times of trouble and it may be heard - in Progressive congregations - during the course of the present pandemic. We hear it on *Rosh Hashanah* and marking the end of *Yom Kippur*.

There are three distinct sounds blown on the *Shofar*: *tekiah* (the long single blast), *shevarim* (three broken sounds) and *tekiah gedolah* (the 'great sound' - a blast to be as long as the blower can make it). In the synagogue a blessing is said before the *Shofar* is blown. It has now become a traditional emblem for the Jewish religion across the world.



an Open Studios on Zoom which enables us to enter, and chat to various artists in their studios about their work. removing any formality and allowing for candour and direct engagement.

Some whose work may appeal are sculptor Mark Beattie, digital and mixed media artist Michael Wallner, photographers Gina Soden, and Roy's People, printmaker Matt Jukes and painters Caroline Banks, Alex McIntyre and Sarah Needham.

In regular/non-Covid times, an actual visit to an artist's studio is perhaps the most pleasurable and rewarding part along the art collecting path. Engaging with the artists, joining them on their journey and supporting their career is an important aspect of art collecting, making it an altogether more personal and meaningful experience. Artists enjoy meeting art buyers, talking about their work and sharing their knowledge

Degree shows, for example at Central Saint Martins, the Royal College of Art, and Goldsmiths, are also worth checking out if you have the time - you may discover the next Hirst, Hockney or Kapoor.

There are other options such as The Art Car Boot Fair, a semi-open air art market held at different venues a couple of times a year where artists literally pitch up in their cars and offer their time and their work, often for charity. Internationally known highly experimental Rob and Nick Carter, a husband and wife team, are usually there as well as Ryan Callanan, known as RYCA with his mash up of modern pop cultural motifs in the form of prints and sculptures.

Art Fairs operate on many levels - from the high end Frieze Fair to The Affordable Art Fair and The Other Art Fair. At The Other Art Fair, artists exhibit their own work themselves, again a wonderful and gentle way to discover new work and meet new artists directly. There is greater transparency now with prices being made visible online, this is encouraging and again serves to de-mystify the art world.

There are plenty of podcasts and online newspapers and magazines if you want to learn more - *Talk Art* is one of these and *The Art Newspaper* is a respected source,

and do check *Artnet*; on Instagram there are art critics to follow as well as curators and artists' champions such as *#thegreatwomenartists*, also on podcast.

New small independent galleries have popped up in big numbers in recent years. Hopefully these galleries will survive. They too have taken to hosting an increased number of talks and interviews online and on Instagram which are easy to access as well.

Alternatively, buying small works or limited edition prints by established living artists will not necessarily break the bank if you want to go down that route, and they can perhaps more easily be sold on if you decide to switch pieces around at any point. You can pick up a small work or print by David Hockney or by David Shrigley and still feel very connected with the contemporary art scene.



The National Theatre by Michael Wallner

TV programmes such as *Portrait Artist of the Year* and *Landscape Artist of the Year* are a good way to observe artists at work - Christabel Blackburn, latest winner of the Portrait Artist of the Year Award is one to watch. *Grayson Perry's Art Club*, on TV every Monday evening is an invigorating look at what he considers to be art and is most encouraging, opening our eyes and minds, again breaking the stigma of what makes so called good art.

Do contact me for any names of galleries, artists or if you have any more questions, I would be more than happy to share. orit@oritschreiber.com

Orit Schreiber

In June this year, just too late for inclusion in the July issue of this magazine, we learned that Rabbi Benji had been selected to be one of Hadar's Jewish Wisdom Fellows. www.hadar.org

Designed for Jewish Professionals, the Fellowship offers those who have been chosen, the opportunity to embark on a 'learning and thought development project dedicated to wrestling with the questions currently confronting the Jewish community and the world.' Hadar state that they received over 270 nominations for this prestigious fellowship and that from these, they have 'selected an outstanding cohort of professionals who represent a diverse background, age range, and have a wide reach within the many corners of the Jewish communal field.'



Rabbi Benji declared himself to be very excited about being able to join this elite group of Jewish professionals from around the world. He said that he looked forward to bringing the learning back to Westminster Synagogue and beyond. We congratulate him on the appointment – which also brings great kudos to our community.

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From Michael Benson in Israel

I must begin by stressing how much I enjoy reading the Westminster Quarterly in far away Beer Sheba where I've been living since 1964. There's always something new and interesting – and the latest edition is no exception! The article about the Beasts of the Bible was indeed most informative but I would like to add two comments.

Philippa mentioned insects, locusts etc. 'which may not sound very attractive to the modern Jew'. Indeed I personally don't find them attractive. And there is also a problem to identify which kinds are actually kosher. However, for centuries, Jews of Morocco, Algeria and Yemen maintained the tradition of feasting on the desert locust - *Schistocerca gregaria* - while the Jews of Europe ceased consuming them. From a Jewish Law perspective, locusts have the same standing as fish. They do not require kosher slaughter and are considered pareve - neither meat nor milk. While Yemenite Jews unequivocally deem desert locusts kosher, the tradition concerning migratory locusts is more ambiguous. The tradition of eating locusts is dying out, partly because locust swarms reach Israel less frequently, thanks to international efforts, and partly because Israeli Jews have embraced Western cultural food norms

But it may be that locusts are not just dangerous plagues! Elifelet is a quiet farming community of 614 people in the hills north of the Sea of Galilee. This *moshav* in northern Israel has the rare distinction of being home to Hargol FoodTech and the world's largest commercial grasshopper farm. The company is forging ahead to expand production to meet burgeoning demand. Once mature and ready to harvest, the locusts are frozen. The cold kills the invertebrates painlessly. The company will market both whole locusts, which will be roughly a third of Hargol's output, and neutral protein powder for food manufacturers. More details can, of course; be found on Google!

My second comment is about how much we care for our animals. Jewish Law states very clearly that *it is forbidden to eat before we've fed our animals*. There are lots of sources and here are just two:

The Talmud, *Tractate Brachot 40a* - 'as Rav Yehuda said: One is prohibited from eating before feeding his animals, as it is stated: "And I will give grass in your fields for your animals" and only then: "And you shall eat and be satisfied" (*Deuteronomy 11:15*).' In the verse, preparation of food for one's cattle precedes preparation of one's own food. Consequently, it is considered part of the preparation for one's own meal.

Rambam *Laws of Slaves Ch. 9 Law 8* - 'The sages of old were in the habit of sharing with the slave every dish they ate, and they fed the cattle as well as the slaves before they themselves sat down to eat'

Thanks again for all the interesting articles. I'm already looking forward to the next edition.

EXPERIENCING PASSOVER 2020

I know only a few questions as relevant,
Only a few as important, as spiritually related
Yes a few as moving, as timeless
As the question Jews ask on Passover night
A question which defines them
A question which resonates through their generations
A Jewish mystical bond which makes them One People
'Why is this night different from all other nights?'
A night beyond the reality of Time
A night experienced every year as if for the first time

Magic is not exclusive to childhood
Magic, a world beyond the usual pattern of life
A world I experienced on Passover 2020
On Corona Passover, I touched a screen
A magic screen through which I transcended isolation
A small magical surface thanks to which I celebrated with other families
A magic link which took me all the way to Jerusalem
Jerusalem the end of the great journey
The great Messianic Jewish journey
A journey through countries, continents, a journey through Time
A journey Moses started in Egypt that very night
A night forever different from all other nights

Colette Littman





Planning Your Diary

Erev Sukkot

Friday 2nd October

Sukkot

Saturday 3rd October

Erev Simchat Torah

Friday 9th October

Simchat Torah

Saturday 10th October

Hanukkah first night

Thursday 10th December

Hanukkah last night

Friday 18th December

Contacting the Synagogue

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| RABBI | Rabbi Benji Stanley | rabbibenji@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7584 3953 Ext 107 |
| CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE | Michele Raba | chairman@westminstersynagogue.org |
| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Gary Sakol | gary@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7584 3953 Ext 103 |
| EDUCATION | Yael Roberts | yael@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7584 3953 Ext 108 |
| EVENTS & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER | Jon Zecharia | jon@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7584 3953 Ext 104 |
| KIDDUSHIM | Hilary Ashleigh | hilary@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7584 3953 Ext 101 |
| MITZVOT | Niklas von Mehren | mitzvot@westminstersynagogue.org |
| MEMBERSHIP | Darcy Goldstein | membership@westminstersynagogue.org |
| LIFECYCLE ENQUIRIES | Maya Kay - PA to the Rabbinic Team | maya@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7854 3953 Ext 106 |
| CZECH SCROLLS MUSEUM | Jeffrey Ohrenstein | info@memorialscrollstrust.org T: 020 7584 3740 |
| GENERAL ENQUIRIES | Nivi Chatterjee Duari | admin@westminstersynagogue.org T: 020 7584 3953 Ext 100 |

EMERGENCIES

Monday to Friday:
In the first instance, please call the Synagogue Office: 020 7052 9710

Evenings and weekends:
please call +4420 7052 9710. Leave a message and a member of staff will promptly return your call.

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

