

# **“JEWISH COUNTRY HOUSES” AND THE HOLOCAUST**

## **LOCAL STORIES, JEWISH STORIES, HOLOCAUST STORIES**

### **Resource Pack**

© Abigail Green/the Jewish Country Houses Project

### **Contents**

<b>Precursors</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Refugee Schools</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Nazis, Jews and the British Aristocracy</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Rescuing Friends and Family</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Kindertransport Histories</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Listening-in to the Holocaust</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Rescue, Rehabilitation and Zionism</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Anglo-Jewish History: Reading</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Anglo-Jewish History: A Timeline</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Case Study: Ena and Harro Bruck, children of Irene and Wolfgang Bruck-Messel</b>	<b>21</b>



[www.jch.history.ox.ac.uk](http://www.jch.history.ox.ac.uk)

[www.het.org.uk](http://www.het.org.uk)



The Cedar Boys, Waddesdon Manor (© Helga Brown)



Bracelet sent from Lina Seligman (née Messel) to her mother, made from plaited hair of her three daughters  
(photo: John Hilary)



In 1945, Anthony de Rothschild helped persuade the British government to agree to the 'temporary admission to this country of about 1000 Jewish orphan children from the camps of Buchenwald and Belsen.' 700 child survivors were brought to the Calgarth Estate in Windermere, and Anthony's de Rothschild's own estate, Ascott, was home to refugees during the war



One of the 'secret listeners' at Trent Park, whose job was to record the private conversations of German prisoners of war



Stoatley Rough, Surrey

## 1. PRECURSORS

The role of leading British Jews in refugee work and attempts to coordinate the rescue of German Jews and the support of Holocaust survivors grew out of a longer history of Jewish philanthropic activism at home and abroad. These houses speak to that deeper history.

### Shoyswell Manor, Etchingham, Sussex

This was the home of Isaac and Lina Seligman (sister of Ludwig Messel of Nymans). The Seligmans were leading figures in the world of Jewish charity, and international Jewish relief – actively raising funds for the Russian Jews and Isaac was a prominent member of the Anglo-Jewish Association. During World War One, Shoyswell housed non-Jewish refugees from Belgium. In old age, Isaac gifted Shoyswell to the Achei Brith/Shield of Abraham Association, for use as a Convalescent Home. The Order of Achei Brith engaged in helping Jewish refugees who had fled to Britain to escape religious persecution in Central and Eastern Europe.

<http://shalomsussex.co.uk/the-seligmans-at-shoyswell-manor/>

### Highdown Gardens, Worthing, Sussex

Sir Frederick and Lady Sibyl Stern of Highdown Gardens, were actively involved in many different Anglo-Jewish charities, including the Jewish War Memorial, the Jewish School for Deaf Children, the Jews College and the Anglo-Jewish Association, which focused on international Jewish relief. From 1921 onwards, the Oxford and St. George's Clubs of Stepney, in London, arranged camping holidays at Highdown for Jewish teenagers from the London East End. We know that in 1938, they were joined by "a small party of German-Jewish boys".

**The Jewish Chronicle**

Save this record and choose the information you want to add to your family tree Save record

**OXFORD AND ST. GEORGE'S:** For the twentieth successive year, the Boys' Clubs will be under canvas at Goring, Sussex. The camp site, which is ideally placed, is used by kind permission of Major and Mrs. F. C. Stern.

**Nearly 400 at Goring**

The camp will be divided as follows: July 20th-29th, "1922 Club," about 120 boys, 13-15½ years; July 29th-August 7th, "1914 Club," nearly 150 boys, 15½-19 years; August 8th-17th, "1931 Club," 50 boys, 11-13 years.

To the last section will be added a contingent from the Norwood Orphanage, numbering about forty, and this, together with a small party of German-Jewish boys, will bring the camp total to nearly 400. The Warden of the Settlement, Mr. B. L. Q. Henriques, will be Camp Commandant, the Quartermasters will be Dennis Fay and Myer Sopel, and the Adjutants Bernard Prins, Mark Guter, and Alec Segal. Under the charge of Mrs. Henriques, about 150 members of the Oxford and St. George's Girls' and Mothers' Clubs will be under canvas at Steyning, Sussex.

**THE WEST CENTRAL JEWISH LADS':** The Club is again holding its camp at Norton Green, Isle of Wight, from July 29th to August 7th. The officers will be Mr. H. R. Samson, Camp Commandant, assisted by Mr. R. Kaufman

The testimony of a former maid, Dolly Tow, suggests that the Sterns were also active supporters of the Kindertransport – but it is helpful to understand that engagement as part of a longer history of community engagement and philanthropic activism, at home and abroad.

<https://highdowngardens.co.uk/our-story/an-incredible-history/>

Oral Histories of Highdown: opens with the testimony of Dolly Tow and a discussion of the Kindertransport (about 2 minutes in) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-xB1Nnc9Lc>

## 2. REFUGEE SCHOOLS

---

Country houses that became schools for German-Jewish refugees in the 1930s tell a different kind of Jewish and Holocaust story. Bunce Court exemplifies a school led by German Jews for German-Jewish refugees, but Stoalety Rough tells a broader story of collaboration across the faith divide, although the Jewish background of Marjorie Vernon reminds us that many British people with Jewish heritage demonstrated their residual Jewish commitments through financial and practical support for Jewish refugees.

**Suggested Reading:** Hildegard Feidel-Mertz and Andrea Hammel, "Integration and Formation of Identity: Exile Schools in Great Britain", *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume 23, No. 1, Fall 2004, pp 71-84

### Bunce Court, Otterden, Kent/ Trench Hall, Shropshire

In 1933, Anna Essinger rents, and later purchases, Bunce Court in Otterden and transplants the non-denominational private boarding school she had been running in Schloss Herrlingen (a south German castle) there, after discovering that her Jewish pupils could not take the German school leaving certificate after the Nazis came to power. She arrived with 70 Jewish pupils, the school was named New Herrlingen, after the original German institution, and retained a strong German and (secular) Jewish culture. Throughout the 1930s, it provided a refuge for German Jewish children, including many who came over with the Kindertransport, and for German Jewish teachers. During the War, the school evacuated to Trench Hall in Shropshire, but relations between the locals and these "German" newcomers were not always easy. The painter Frank Auerbach was among the children educated here.

Back in Germany, Schloss Herrlingen was confiscated by the Nazis, and part of it was eventually given over to Field Marshall Rommel – here he bid farewell to his family before being taken to commit suicide after his role in the plot to assassinate Hitler in July 1944.

The parallel stories of refuge and expropriation speak powerfully to different aspects of Jewish Country House history, and the entanglement between continental and British Jewish histories. The museum in Herrlingen now commemorates both aspects of the Schloss's history during the Nazi period.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunce\\_Court\\_School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunce_Court_School)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2003/jul/18/schools.uk1>

<https://www.thejc.com/lifestyle/features/revealed-the-wartime-school-that-saved-lives-1.26405>

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/nostalgia/2018/12/01/kindertransport-the-shropshire-school-with-a-remarkable-history/>

## **Stoatley Rough, Surrey**

This house was originally built for Arthur Lewis Leon, a stockbroker and local liberal politician, who was a close relative of Herbert Samuel MP, the first Jewish cabinet minister in Britain. His daughter Marjorie Vernon, who was not Jewish, made the house available to Quaker relief efforts after her mother's death in 1933. Marjorie remained active as a governor of Stoatley Rough School, which was established here for German refugee children and led by Dr. Hilde Lion, a Jewish academic who had been dismissed from her position as director of an academy for women's studies in Berlin.

A contemporary film of the school can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2L8GX-U7Y>

<https://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/hmd2019/>

<https://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/the-stoatley-rough-school-historical-trust/the-stoatley-rough-school-reunions/1934-the-founding-of-stoatley-rough-school/>

## **3. NAZIS, JEWS AND THE BRITISH ARISTOCRACY**

---

### **Mount Stewart, Northern Ireland**

Antisemitism was rife among the British aristocracy during the 1930s, even though many Jews married into aristocratic families. Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland speaks to this complex history. The 7<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Londonderry was a proponent of appeasement and admirer of the Third Reich, who hosted Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop for four days in 1936. Ribbentrop gave his hosts a white ceramic figurine of an SS flag-bearer that is still displayed on a mantelpiece in this National Trust property. Later, figurines like this would be made in Dachau.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/ulster-aristocrat-who-welcomed-hitlers-nazi-henchman-to-co-down-31391148.html>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/18/figurines-dachau-nazis-love-porcelain--porzellan-manufaktur-allach-himmler-hitler>  
<http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1220314>

Interestingly, however, his daughter Lady Helen had married into a well-known Anglo-Jewish family only a year earlier. Her sister, Lady Margaret, likewise shocked the family when she married her father's pilot, the engineer Alan Muntz, who also came from a Jewish background. The collection at Mount Stewart includes this haunting image, painted by Margaret, of Jewish refugees arriving in New York, and speaks to her very different political orientation.

<http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1221392>

### 3. RESCUING FRIENDS AND FAMILY

---

Even British families of German-Jewish origin who were well-established in this country and no longer actively Jewish retained an awareness of their Jewish heritage and agonised about the fate of friends and family abroad. All lost relatives in the Holocaust, as did families like the Rothschilds who had been settled in England for over a century.

#### Mottisfont Abbey

Mottisfont was the home of Maud Russell, née Nelke, the daughter of a German-Jewish stockbroker called Paul Nelke, who moved to London in the 1880s. After Kristallnacht in 1938, Maud travelled to Germany herself in an effort to rescue her Jewish relatives from the Nazis. Seven relatives were safely settled in England by the time the war broke out; almost all those who remained in Germany died.

**Optional Reading:** Maud Russell, *A Constant Heart: The War Diaries of Maud Russell, 1938-45* (2017) – on Mottisfont, and also a vivid primary source for British attitudes towards the situation from one determined to try and raise awareness.

<https://www.thejc.com/maud-russell-family-history-1.438007>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont>

#### Nymans

Ludwig Messel, who bought and redeveloped Nymans, was the brother of Berlin architect Alfred Messel, who designed many landmark sites in the city, including the Pergamon Museum and the Wertheim department store. Despite the strains of the First World War, which were particularly devastating for Ludwig, the English and German families remained in touch. The English Messels married into Christian high society, but retained an awareness of their Jewish origins. Rudolph Messel, a socialist and pacifist, was actively involved in promoting and supporting a settlement established in Colombia by the War Resisters' International for Jewish and other refugees fleeing fascism. All three of Alfred Messel's children had been baptised and brought up as Protestants, but his daughter Irene had four Jewish grandparents and was consequently persecuted by the Nazis as a "full Jew." She had visited Nymans in her youth, and her English cousins acted together as sponsors to enable her and her husband Wolfgang to flee Germany. Wolfgang's parents and sister Vera remained in Germany, where they chose to commit suicide as a family in 1942 rather than face separation and deportation to the death camps in the East.

**Optional Reading:** John Hilary, *From Refugees to Royalty. The Remarkable story of the Messel Family of Nymans* (London: Peter Owen, 2021)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred\\_Messel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Messel)

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans/features/nymans-house->

## 4. KINDERTRANSPORT HISTORIES

---

The Kindertransport was an initiative that attracted considerable support from non-Jews, including most famously Sir Nicholas Winton (who was himself of Jewish heritage), but also grew out of the deeper tradition of international Jewish relief in which leading families like the Rothschilds, the Sterns and the Bearsteds had long been engaged.

### Optional Reading:

Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* (2000)

Judith Baumel-Schwartz, *Never Look Back: The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-45* (2012)

Julie Summers, *Our Invited Guests: The Secret Life of Britain's Country Houses, 1939-45* (2018) on the wartime histories of Upton and Waddesdon but not necessarily with reference to the Jewish dimension.

### Upton House, Warwickshire

Upton House was home to Lord and Lady Bearsteds, who were pillars of the London Jewish community and actively involved in many different kinds of social and cultural philanthropy – both Jewish and non-Jewish. In January 1936 he travelled to the US with Sir Herbert Samuel and Simon Marks (of Marks & Spencer) to seek funding for a proposed emigration plan to rescue German Jews. The mission informed the groundwork for what eventually became the Kindertransport. Lord Bearsted was one of the largest financial backers of the Kindertransport, and key documents related to the organisation and finance of this initiative remain at Upton. Bearsted also sponsored individual refugees, like the sculptor Artur Lowenthal.

Upton is a National Trust property, and some of these stories have featured in recent exhibitions.

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/2015/march-2015/academics-research-to-form-part-of-major-new-exhibition.php>

Lord Bearsted's role in German Jewish relief was also foregrounded in the Upton instalment of the NT podcast series: *Ten Places: Europe and us*, which you can enjoy here:

<https://www.royal-oak.org/2020/09/15/national-trust-podcast-of-the-week-september-14-2020/>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/upton-house-and-gardens>

### Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire

Waddesdon Manor was built by German born, Austrian bred Ferdinand de Rothschild, and became the home of Dorothy and James de Rothschild who were key players in the world of international Jewish relief: active promoters of the Balfour Declaration and deeply involved in efforts to help European Jews escape persecution through the Jewish Colonization Association, which established Jewish settlements. Many different members of the Rothschild family were involved in efforts to help Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, and the family at Waddesdon

were no exception. 30 Kinder found refuge in the village of Waddesdon, where they were known as the Cedar Boys and Girls. A memorial can be found in the grounds of Waddesdon. Rothschilds were better placed to flee Nazi Europe than most Jews, but they too had family who died in the camps.

<https://www.migrationmuseum.org/100imagesgallery/cedar-boys/>  
<https://waddesdon.org.uk/>

**Optional Reading:** Geoffrey Hartmann, *A Scholar's Tale* (Yale, 2009), for his childhood which was partly spent here.

## 5. LISTENING-IN TO THE HOLOCAUST

---

**Optional Reading:** John Martin Robinson, *Requisitioned: The British Country House and the Second World War* (2014)

### Bletchley Park

In 1883, Bletchley Park became the home of the liberal MP Sir Herbert Leon, who redeveloped the house in an extraordinarily eclectic mixture of architectural styles. After the death of Sir Herbert and his wife Fanny, the British government appropriated the mansion first as a site for the Government Code and Cypher School and then, famously, the centre of the wartime code-breaking operation. Many of the Jewish decoders at Bletchley had family connections with Germany and other European countries overrun by the Nazis, and knew the threat Hitler posed to their relatives and other Jews. Some of the decoders read distressing messages relating to the Holocaust, such as the transport of the Jews from Rhodes in 1944 'for the final solution' and the last futile attempt of Jews to flee to Palestine in 1942, which led to the torpedoing of the Struma and the loss of 769 Rumanian lives: a humanitarian disaster covered up by both the British and Turkish authorities.

Walter Eytan (an Oxford Don) set up a Zionist Society at Bletchley. On one poignant night, in early 1944, his team intercepted a message from a German vessel in the Aegean, saying they were transporting Jews from Rhodes or Cos for Piraeus "zur Endlosung" ("for the final solution"); he had not heard this expression before but he wrote that he instinctively knew what it meant; he never forgot it. Walter later initiated the search for the notorious war criminal Adolph Eichmann, when he was running the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

<http://www.jtrails.org.uk/trails/bletchley-park/history?page=4>  
<https://bletchleypark.org.uk/>

### Trent Park

Sir Philip Sassoon (1888-1939) acquired Trent Park, a Victorian mansion near Enfield, in 1912; he commissioned Philip Tilden (1887-1956) to rebuild it between 1925-31. This 'dream of another world' incorporated elements salvaged from Devonshire House and other historic houses, alongside interiors designed by Rex Whistler (1905-44), filled with Georgian furniture and the eighteenth-century paintings known as conversation pieces, which Sassoon had helped to make fashionable. Its unobtrusive rooms and restrained style, the proximity to London that it

shared with so many Jewish country houses, and even its luxurious qualities created a kind of stage: first for Sassoon himself, and later for His Majesty's Government when it repurposed the property to house top-ranking Nazi prisoners during the Second World War. Put at their ease by the country house setting, the Nazi Generals relaxed and were encouraged to talk about the war effort with which they had been involved. Everything in the house was bugged from attic to cellar, and underground the basement was full of secret listeners - most of them German-speaking central European Jewish refugees. Only once the war had ended did Trent Park's Jewish listeners emerge from hiding - when the British forced the 98 Nazi generals still housed there to watch newsreel footage of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen in what had once been Philip Sassoon's games room.

**Optional Reading:** Helen Fry, *The Walls Have Ears: The Greatest Intelligence Operation of World War Two* (2019)

<https://www.trentparkhouse.org.uk/>

## 6. RESCUE, REHABILITATION AND ZIONISM

---

### Ascott House

An influential banker, and a great lover of art, Anthony de Rothschild (1887-1961) was also an underappreciated philanthropist. In 1940, he sold more than 100 fine gold and silver objects from the Rothschild collections in order to raise funds to maintain the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief (CBF). After the war, in May 1945, he worked with Otto Schieff to persuade the British government to agree to the 'temporary admission to this country of about 1000 Jewish orphan children from the camps of Buchenwald and Belsen.' In the end, fundraising by the Fund enabled 700 child survivors to be brought to the Calgarth Estate in Windermere, under the co-ordination of Leonard Montefiore. Anthony de Rothschild's own estate, Ascott, was home to refugees during the war, and provided a shelter to London synagogue artefacts salvaged from the Blitz. His wife Yvonne (1899-1977) was also campaigner on behalf of women and children refugees; she came from the Paris Jewish family, the Cahen d'Anvers, which was devastated by the Holocaust. Other members of the English Rothschild family opened their estates to refugees, including Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury (where four worked on the gardens), and Miriam Rothschild at Ashton Wold, an estate which was also used by the Red Cross as a convalescent home for military personnel.

<https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/about/international-art/standing-salt/>

<https://www.worldjewishrelief.org/about-us/the-boys>

[https://rothschildfostertrust.com/miriam\\_rothschild/introduction/](https://rothschildfostertrust.com/miriam_rothschild/introduction/)

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ascott>

### Bosham

Sigmund Gestetner was a hugely successful industrialist, who took the firm founded by his Hungarian-born father (who had invented the cylograph) and turned it into a global operation. He and his Swiss wife Henny Gestetner were passionate Zionists – a likely explanation for the fact that their philanthropy and services to British industry were never formally recognised by the British government. Sigmund was President of the Jewish National Fund and active in the

Joint Palestine Appeal, working closely with Chaim Weizmann. He was associated with the Aliyah Bet effort, helping to bring Jews from concentration camps, partisans and those who had survived the Holocaust in hiding to Israel during 1945-1948. The Gestetners established a training kibbutz for the Habonim Zionist youth movement on their estate at Bosham, in Sussex. This attracted mostly British Jews but also some Kinder, such as Steven Mendelsson who later recalled meeting key Zionist leaders like David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir when they came over to England to negotiate with the government in 1948. Both Steven and Liesel Lowi emigrated to the newly founded State of Israel, but Steven later returned to the UK.

<https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/RefugeeVoices/Steven-Mendelsson>

<https://en.calameo.com/read/002372988278a8e7b145e>

Palace House Stable at Newmarket is the oldest racing establishment in the world. Purchased by Mayer de Rothschild in the mid-19th century, it helped to bring the town back into fashion as a training centre for race horses. The property was redeveloped by his nephew Leopold de Rothschild as The Rothschild Yard and Stables, and then passed to Anthony de Rothschild (the owner of Ascott House) who, as we have seen, was very active in efforts to rescue Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. 25 refugees were housed here during the war.

<https://family.rothschildarchive.org/estates/65-palace-house>

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/project-to-share-stories-of-newmarkets-ww2-jewish-refugees>

### Weir Courtney

Weir Courtney in the village of Lingfield was the weekend home of Sir Benjamin Drage, who owned a successful furniture business and who was a founding member of Golders' Green synagogue. In 1939, Drage had already called in the newspapers for something to be done to help refugee children. In 1945, he agreed to make Weir Courtney available rent-free to the CBF, in order to provide a space for child refugees. Nine of the youngest Windermere children were initially transferred to Weir Courtney, where other Holocaust survivor children joined them. Here the children were under the care of Alice Goldberger, another German Jewish refugee who had previously run a centre for underprivileged children in Berlin. In 1948, the project relocated to the urban location of Isleworth, although the new premises were named 'Lingfield House' to retain the tie with the village. It was here that psychoanalyst Anna Freud carried out seminal research into the impact of trauma on children. Some of the Lingfield children were reunited with their families; others were fostered in Britain; others eventually relocated to Israel.

**Optional Reading:** Rebecca Clifford, *Survivors: Children's Lives after the Holocaust* (2020)

<https://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/themes/subjects/refugees/weircourtney/>  
<https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/orphans-holocaust-children-stories-survivors-lake-district-uk/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/78/a3011978.shtml>

## ANGLO-JEWISH HISTORY: READING

For an accessible, user-friendly overview of Anglo-Jewish history see: Marcus Roberts, *The Story of England's Jews. The First Thousand Years* (2007).

Available for pdf download: <http://www.jtrails.org.uk/about/history-of-english-jews>

### Key texts:

Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

William D. Rubinstein et al, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2011)

Tom Lawson and Andy Pearce (Eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Britain and the Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)

Chaim Berman, *The Cousinhood* (New York: Macmillan, 1971)

Anne Summers, *Christian and Jewish Women in Britain, 1880-1940: Living with Difference.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)

Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). The standard work, thorough but dull.

Stephan Wendehorst, *British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State* (1936-1956) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) Too long, but more pertinent.

Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society (1876-1939)* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979). Opened up this field.

Antony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: a History of Anti-Semitism in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

William D. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism. Admiration and Support in the English-speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999). Takes the contrary view in a rather polemical way, but a useful counterpoint, worth reading especially in conjunction with work on philanthropy.

Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990). The standard work. Can be supplemented by his pan-European study of the same phenomenon: *Leaving the Jewish Fold: Conversion and Radical Assimilation in Modern Jewish History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)

Tom Lawson & Andy Pearce, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Britain and the Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2020)

### Memoirs and fiction

Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*

C.P. Snow, *The Conscience of the Rich*. Volume of his 'Strangers and Brothers' series set in the world of the Anglo-Jewish aristocracy during the interwar period.

## TIMELINE – ANGLO-JEWISH HISTORY IN CONTEXT

1656	Readmission of Jews to Britain
1753	Jewish Naturalisation Act ('Jew Bill')
1781-3	Joseph II creates a new framework for Jewish life in the Habsburg Empire. Toleration patents issued in the Habsburg Empire, extended religious freedom to Jews (but with limitations, and regional variations)
1782	The Berlin Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) is in full swing. Publication of <i>Divre Shalom ve-emet</i> (Words of Peace and Truth) by Naphtali Herz Wessely, a disciple of the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. The tract aimed to encourage Central European Jewry to accept this development. Meanwhile, Jewish salonniers like Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin are the epicentre of social and cultural life in the Prussian capital.
1789	The French Revolution begins
1790/1	Emancipation of the Jews of France by the National Assembly, followed by other countries under French influence
1798	Nathan Rothschild moves to England, where he founds the British branch of the international Jewish banking dynasty.
1806	The Prussian defeat at Jena marked the beginning of the end for the era of Jewish salonniers like Rahel Levin, as German nationalism and Prussian High Society acquire explicitly anti-Jewish dimensions.
1815	Congress of Vienna. Jewish emancipation is overturned with the defeat of Napoleon and the return of the old order. Italian Jews return to the Ghettos, but things are not quite as they were. German Jews lobby to maintain their rights in Vienna, but in practice this does not happen. In England, Nathan Rothschild seizes the moment and makes his fortune in the upheavals of the final Napoleonic years.
1819	Hep Hep riots in Germany. The first pogroms come as a shock to Jews.
1826	University College London established by Goldsmid, Rothschild in collaboration with other dissenters.
1827	Tsar Nicholas I introduces conscription for Jews (25 years of military service).
1827	Moses Montefiore makes the first of 7 pilgrimages to Jerusalem.
1828	Repeal of the Test & Corporation act
1829	Catholic Emancipation
1830	Revolutions across Europe.
1832	The Great Reform Act is a step back for Jews as it includes a requirement that MPs swear an oath on the Old and New Testaments.
1830s	Jewish emancipation is rejected several times in the Lords, but accepted in the Commons.

- 1835 David Salomons (Salomons Estate) becomes the first Jewish Sheriff of the City of London
- 1835 The Board of Deputies of British Jews is given a formal constitution and revived as a communal institution to strengthen the campaign for Jewish emancipation.
- 1837 Queen Victoria knights Moses Montefiore – then a Sheriff of the City of London – when she attends a grand City dinner to mark her accession to the throne. He is not the first, but she is aware it is unusual.
- 1839 Montefiore makes his 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Palestine, with money to relieve Jewish victims of the earthquake in the Galilee. He meets with Mehmed Ali of Egypt and seeks to rent land for Jewish settlement there. The initiative is welcomed by Christian Zionists like Lord Shaftesbury.
- 1840 The Damascus Affair. Sir Moses Montefiore, President of the Board of Deputies, and Adolphe Crémieux, President of the French Consistoire Israélite, travel to Egypt to intervene on behalf of Jews in Damascus falsely accused of ritual murder by the French Consul with the support of local Ottoman officials. The incident becomes a major international cause célèbre. Montefiore and Crémieux eventually obtain the release of surviving Jewish prisoners. Montefiore travels to Constantinople, meets the Sultan, and obtains a document that appears (to British readers) to represent the emancipation of Ottoman Jews, although in reality it merely confirms their protection under sharia law.
- 1840 West London Synagogue of British Jews – a Reform synagogue - is established mostly by members of the Goldsmid, Mocatta and Montefiore families. Sir Moses will never speak to his brother Horatio again, and a bitter divide opens up within the Anglo-Jewish community. Yet the WLS is much less theologically radical than some currents of reform Judaism that are emerging in Germany, which reject circumcision and even celebrate the Sabbath to Sunday. Services are shorter, the distinction between Sephardic and Ashkenazic practice is eliminated and the second days of festivals are not observed. The focus is on gentrification and social acceptance.
- 1841 Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, emancipation campaigner, becomes the first Jewish baronet.
- 1844 Abolition of the traditional Jewish communal body (Kahal) in Russia.
- 1846 Moses Montefiore travels to Russia to plead the cause of Russian Jews before Tsar Nicholas I, in person. He tours the Pale of Settlement and Poland, meeting both Russian maskilim, who support the government's modernisation efforts, and traditional Jewish leaders.
- 1847 Lionel de Rothschild elected to parliament. He cannot take his seat.
- 1848 Revolutions across Europe, prompt a wave of anti-Jewish violence from Alsace to the Habsburg lands, but legislation is passed in favour of civil and religious equality, and the election of Jewish men to parliamentary assemblies across Europe, even in countries like Germany and Habsburg Austria where they are not yet emancipated. Adolphe Crémieux (France) and Leone Pincherle (Venice) become the first Jewish ministers in Europe. In Vienna, Dr. Adolf Fischhof emerges as a key revolutionary

- leader and leads the Corpus Christi procession to the altar of Vienna Cathedral in this capacity. The Jews of Piedmont are emancipated from above and retain their rights even though the revolution fails elsewhere.
- 1849/50 Political exiles flee to London, including Karl Marx, the parents of both Sir Alfred Zimmern and Lucien Wolf, and the future German liberal leaders Eduard Lasker and Ludwig Bamberger. The latter becomes a Parisian banker. His Bischoffsheim banking relatives will eventually buy large houses in Britain and become members of the Prince of Wales set.
- 1851 David Salomons is elected MP for Greenwich. He tries to take his seat – omitting the Christian phrases from the oath – but is eventually ejected from the House and fined for voting illegally. The bench from which he was removed is on display at Salomons Estate.
- 1854-6 The Crimean War causes famine in Palestine, prompting large scale relief efforts coordinated by Sir Moses Montefiore. He raises around £20,000 from Jews and Christians across the British Empire and in North America on behalf of starving Jews in the Holy Land. Montefiore travels to Jerusalem in 1855 to disburse the money, returning in 1857 when he decides to build a windmill and almshouses outside the Old City of Jerusalem. By this time, the French Rothschilds have become actively involved in supporting Jewish institutions in Jerusalem (hospitals, schools).
- 1855 David Salomons becomes the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London
- 1856 Ottoman Jews – like Ottoman Christians – are emancipated as part of the Crimean peace
- 1856` Publication of *Hamagid*, the first Hebrew language Jewish newspaper in Eastern Europe.
- 1858 Emancipation of British Jews: Lionel de Rothschild can at last take his seat in the House of Commons. Others follow.
- 1858-9 The Mortara Affair. A Jewish child in Bologna – then part of the Papal States - is ‘kidnapped’ by the Papal authorities to be raised as a Catholic, because he has been secretly baptised by a former family servant. The incident becomes a major cause célèbre, playing well with anti-Catholic, pro-Italian British audiences, and generating much public support for Italian Unification (which happens in 1859-60). The emancipation of Italian Jews follows.
- 1859 The Jewish Board of Guardians is established as a framework for poor relief and social care.
- 1860 The Alliance Israelite Universelle is established in Paris as a response to the Mortara Affair, headed by Adolphe Crémieux. It is an international secular Jewish organisation, with a broadly French republican agenda, which lobbies for Jewish rights abroad.
- 1860s This decade sees the emancipation of Jews in Italy, the Habsburg Empire and Germany in parallel with the unification of Italy (1859/60) and Germany (1866/71), and the establishment of a Dual Monarchy in Austria-Hungary (1867). These

- developments are clearly linked to political liberalism and new, national forms of statehood.
- 1864 Sir Moses Montefiore visits Morocco, meets with the Sultan and obtains a document similar to that he had obtained from the Ottoman Sultan in 1840. The visit has a destabilising effect on Muslim-Jewish relations in Morocco, but is widely acclaimed across the Jewish world.
- 1865 Ludwig Messel arrives in Britain.
- 1866 Prince Karl of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen becomes King of Romania, but the emergence of the Romanian nation state is marked by anti-Jewish violence and legislation, as liberal and conservative politicians weaponise antisemitism to cement the ties that bind the duchies of Wallachia and Moldavia (which has seen massive Jewish immigration from Habsburg Galicia in particular in the past few decades). An international outcry and constant lobbying by organisations like the Alliance Israélite have no effect, nor does the visit of Sir Moses Montefiore in 1867.
- 1871 The Anglo-Jewish Association is established as a British branch of the Alliance Israélite, led by the liberal MP Sir Francis Goldsmid. As a member of the reform WLS, Goldsmid was excluded from the Board of Deputies of British Jews. For Goldsmid, the AJA represented an alternative to the Board of Deputies, still dominated by Montefiore though ostensibly led by his nephew Joseph Mayer Montefiore of Worth Park. Like its French parent organisation, it attracted more reform-minded and secular Jews: men like German-born Ludwig Messel.
- 1873 The Great Depression coincides with the rise of new forms of antisemitism in Germany and Austria in particular.
- 1878 The Congress of Berlin coincides with anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish-born Benjamin Disraeli, now Prime-Minister, for his pro-Ottoman policy.
- For the first time, an international congress leads to a treaty whereby the Great Powers attempt to impose civil and political equality for Jews on the emerging nation states of the Balkans: Romania, and Serbia. This follows a massive international Jewish lobbying effort, with Bismarck's Jewish banker playing a key role as intermediary. It proves impossible to enforce, but is greeted at the time as a triumph. An elderly Sir Moses Montefiore meets and congratulates Benjamin Disraeli at the train station on his return.
- 1875 Sir Moses Montefiore makes his last visit to Jerusalem. He is now 90.
- 1879-81 The Berlin Antisemitism conflict divides liberal public opinion, after the German historian and liberal politician Heinrich von Treitschke writes an article attacking Jewish immigrants to Germany and coining the famous phrase: 'The Jews are our misfortune'. His intervention coincides with the birth of more modern and popular forms of political antisemitism in Germany. Another liberal historian, Theodor Mommsen, attacks Treitschke's position, but nowadays we would also find his views distinctly antisemitic. A pamphlet war follows, and the liberal party splits (over this, and other issues).

- 1879 Laurence Oliphant, the British explorer and Christian Zionist, sets out for Palestine to promote Jewish settlement. His initiative speaks to a powerful current of Christian Zionism among Evangelicals and nonconformists in Victorian England.
- 1881-4 A wave of pogroms in Russia prompts mass public outrage internationally, and the birth of the political Zionist movement among Jews in Russia itself. These early Zionists (the *Chovevei Zion*) take Sir Moses Montefiore as their symbol and use prints of Montefiore as a fundraising mechanism. Montefiore and his nephew Haim Guedalla are supportive of Zionism, but it is very much a fringe phenomenon in the Jewish world at this stage. Jews in Britain lobby on behalf of their Russian coreligionists and hold a Grand Public Meeting at the Mansion House (inspired by earlier meetings held over the Damascus Affair, and in support of the Holy Land Famine Relief Fund during the Crimean War) to draw attention to their plight and raise money for the victims. Ludwig Messel gives £200.
- 1882-1905 The pogroms are conventionally seen as marking the beginning of a new era of large scale Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe to England. From the 1880s to c.1920 some 140,000 Jews migrate to Britain. The Jewish population increases from 46,000 in 1880 to c.250,000 1919. The immigrants settle mostly in industrial areas and introduce a different, more overtly foreign style of Jewish life to the UK, reflected in the emergence of Yiddish and Hebrew newspapers. Anglo-Jewish leaders – the Rothschilds, Montefiores, Montagus, Goldsmids et al – devote time, money and energy to initiatives designed to promote the social and cultural integration and Anglicisation of the immigrants.
- 1885 Lord Rothschild becomes the first Jewish peer.
- 1887 Samuel Montagu founds the orthodox Federation of Synagogues to cater to the mass influx of Jews from Eastern Europe.
- 1894-1906 The Dreyfus Affair divides France and becomes an international cause célèbre. For Theodore Herzl, covering the story in Paris for the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, the virulence and scale of anti-Jewish feeling it evoked proved that emancipation and integration were a chimera for Jews. He later attributed his embrace of Zionism to this experience. The Reinachs – one of whom built Villa Kerylos – were central figures in the fight to clear Alfred Dreyfus' name.
- 1895 Karl Lueger, leader and founder of the anti-Semitic Christian Social party, is elected Mayor of Vienna, but only takes office in 1897 because Emperor Franz Josef resisted the appointment for two years. Lueger remains in post until his death in 1910. During these years, Hitler – then living as a down-and-out in Vienna – forms his antisemitic worldview.
- 1897 First Zionist Congress, held in Basle/Basel.
- 1899 The English Zionist Federation displaces the homegrown British *Chovevei Zion* movement led by Colonel Albert Goldsmid and other members of 'the Cousinhood'. Sir Francis Abraham Montefiore of Worth Park serves on both bodies.
- 1902 Claude Goldsmid Montefiore and the suffrage campaigner and social activist Lily Montagu found Liberal Judaism, a more theologically radical form of reform

- movement than that to be found at WLS. Lily's social and religious radicalism is in stark contrast to her father Samuel Montagu's orthodoxy.
- 1902 Theodore Herzl publishes *Altneuland* (The Old New Land), a utopian Zionist novel.
- 1903 The Kishinev pogrom generates an international outcry, although the death toll remains relatively low and the scale of the violence much less than in later waves of pogroms during 1905 and World War One.
- 1903 The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an influential antisemitic forgery, is published in Russia. It draws on earlier writings that disseminate antisemitic conspirationism, like the Book of the Kahal (published by Brafman, a Jewish convert to Russian Orthodoxy in 1869) and *The Conquest of the World by the Jews* (published in 1878 by Osman Bey, aka the Englishman Frederick Millingen, who converted successively to both Islam and Russian Orthodoxy).
- 1905 Revolution in Russia. Jews like Maxim Vinaver enter the Duma, where he becomes a leading figure in the liberal Kadet party. The revolution is associated with massive anti-Jewish violence, and the pogrom death toll escalates dramatically. The Anglo-Jewish activist and liberal political journalist Lucien Wolf is at the centre of British support for the opponents of Tsarist autocracy. A young Isaiah Berlin is among those who flee Russia after 1905 fails.
- 1905 Aliens Act. This dramatically restricts Jewish immigration to Britain, in the wake of anti-(Jewish) foreigner agitation.
- 1906 Election of a liberal government led by Asquith and Lloyd George, which sees wide-ranging social reform, now understood as marking the birth of the welfare state.
- 1907 Royal Dutch Shell is formally established, building on Marcus Samuel's brilliant achievements in developing the family business.
- 1907 The English-born Jewish freemason and anticlerical Ernesto Nathan, a disciple of Mazzini, is elected Mayor of Rome. He is the target of Catholic antisemitic attacks.
- 1909 The liberal MP Herbert Samuel, nephew of Samuel Montagu (Lord Swaythling) becomes the first Jewish member of the British cabinet. He is joined by Rufus Isaacs (1912) and his cousin Edwin Montagu (1914). All three are implicated in the Marconi Scandal (1912), which is a focus for antisemitic agitation but not remotely comparable with the Dreyfus Affair in scale or political importance.
- 1910 Luigi Luzzatti, freemason, and Italian Jewish liberal politician becomes Prime Minister of Italy. He is known for his humanitarian activity on behalf of Armenians and Russian Jews.
- 1914 Britain enters the war. Lucien Wolf, the cosmopolitan but British born son of a Habsburg Jewish 1848er, loses his job on the *Daily Graphic* because he is seen as a German sympathiser.
- 1915 Sir David Lionel Goldsmid Stern Salomons' only son dies heroically at Gallipoli.
- 1916 German Military High Command announce a census of Jewish soldiers. Almost 100,000 Jews served in the German army during the war, but rumours persisted about their lack of patriotism and low enlistment numbers.

1914-18	On the Eastern Front, the war has a devastating effect on Jewish life in Eastern Europe, thousands dead, hundreds of thousands uprooted, their homes - and sometimes their towns - destroyed; intense and widespread antisemitism.
1917, Feb	The Tsar is overthrown.
1917, Aug	An official Jewish battalion is formed in the British Army: it is a controversial initiative, resisted by assimilated Jewish politicians like Edwin Montagu, but designed to address the fact that many Jews in Britain are Russians and not liable to conscription.
1917, Oct	Bolshevik Revolution. Trotsky emerges as the most high-profile Jewish revolutionary in the civil war that follows.
1917, Nov	The Balfour Declaration. Her Majesty's Government declares its support for the establishment of 'a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine', with the proviso that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.' This commitment takes the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild, commemorated at Waddesdon. It divides the Cousinhood. In the Cabinet, Herbert Samuel is a leading force behind this move, but Edwin Montagu fiercely opposes it. Lionel David Rothschild, Sir Philip Magnus and the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lord Swaythling establish the anti-Zionist League of British Jews, with the support of Lucien Woolf and Claude Montefiore.
1918	The German Revolution. Collapse of the Habsburg Empire.
1919	Numerous Jewish organisations from all over the world, both Zionist and anti-Zionist, send delegations to the Paris Peace Conference. Lucien Woolf plays a key role in securing the Minorities Treaties, which are designed to protect 'national' minorities like the Jews in the new nation states of post-Habsburg and post-Tsarist Eastern Europe. They prove ineffectual.
1920	The League of Nations is established. Two Fabian Society pamphlets written by Leonard Woolf are among the inspirations behind this initiative.
1920	Herbert Samuel, a well-known Zionist, is appointed High Commissioner for Palestine. His appointment comes a year before that of Rufus Isaacs as Viceroy of India.
1922	The British mandate in Palestine is formally established.
1922	Walter Rathenau, the industrialist, aesthete and political liberal, becomes German Foreign Minister and negotiates the Rapallo Pact with the USSR, building on the secret German-Soviet collaboration of 1921. Right wing forces, including the (still obscure) NSDAP claim he is part of a 'Jewish Communist conspiracy'. He is assassinated in a right-wing terrorist attack on 4 June 1922, a seminal event in the history of the Weimar Republic.
1922, Oct	Mussolini leads the march on Rome and seizes power in Italy
1924	Johnson-Reed Immigration Act restricts the immigration of certain national and cultural groups to the US, including eastern European Jews

1925-6	Lily Montagu helps found and becomes president of the World Union of Progressive Judaism
1925	Britain rejoins the Gold Standard at a rate that is too high, causing severe hardship
1926	The General Strike
1929	Stock market crash.
1931	Britain is forced to leave the Gold Standard
1931	Herbert Samuel returns to the Home Office as leader of the liberal party in coalition with Labour. Rufus Isaacs is the only other liberal minister in the cabinet, prompting antisemitic reflections among some liberal politicians.
1933	Hitler comes to power. At this point there are about 523,000 Jews living in Germany. Some 37-38,000 emigrate immediately, usually to neighbouring European countries (in due course most will be killed by the Nazis). The Central British Fund for German Jewry (later World Jewish Relief) is established with the support of leading Anglo-Jewish families.
1935, Sept	The Nuremberg racial laws are passed
1936	A Jewish Socialist Léon Blum, becomes Prime Minister of France at the head of the Popular Front government.
1936	The 'Battle of Cable Street', a clash between the British Union of Fascists and various antifascist forces that occurred when the BUF attempted to march through the heart of the Jewish East End.
1936	Lord Bearsted leads a mission to the US to raise money for German Jews meeting President Roosevelt
1936-9	The Arab Revolt, a nationalist uprising in British mandate Palestine
1938	Anschluss with Austria: Hitler's arrives to great acclaim. The prelude to war begins.
1938, July	The Evian conference convened by President Franklin D. Roosevelt fails to address the refugee crisis in a meaningful way.
1938, Nov	Kristallnacht. The 2 day German pogrom sends shockwaves across the world. 38,000 Jews leave Germany and Austria in 1938. Maud Russell of Mottisfont travels to Germany, and succeeds in rescuing seven of her relatives.
1939	Kindertransport. 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland arrive in the UK. They are often the only members of their families to survive the Holocaust. Lord Bearsted and Lionel de Rothschild are key figures in this initiative. Altogether, 77,000 Jews leave Germany and Austria in 1939.
1939, May	Parliament approves a White Paper restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 a year for 5 years, stipulating that any increase thereafter must be approved by the Arab majority. Restrictions are also placed on the right of Jews to buy land from Arabs.
1939, Sept	Altogether 282,000 Jews have left Germany, and 117,000 have left annexed Austria.

Of these some 95,00 emigrate to the US, 60,000 to Palestine, 40,000 to Britain and about 75,000 to Central and S. America. 202,000 Jews remain in Germany and 57,000 in Austria when war breaks out.

1941-45      Six million European Jews are systematically murdered by the Nazis, about two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe gone – many of the rest leave Europe never to return.

1948      Britain withdraws from Palestine, heralding the war of Israeli Independence. The State of Israel is established. 700,000 Palestinian Arabs flee or are expelled from their homes.

## One family's story: the Messels of Nymans and their German-Jewish relatives, an exemplary case study

### Ena and Harro Bruck: children of Irene and Wolfgang Bruck-Messel



Ena Karina Bruck, b. Berlin, 22 May 1922, d. London, 26 Feb 2000

Wolf Harro Bruck, b. Berlin, 14 Jun 1926, d. Swansea, 27 Dec 2019

Irene Hedwig Eugenie Messel (1899–1992) was the youngest child of the celebrated German architect Alfred Messel and his wife Elsa, *née* Altmann; Paul Wolfgang Bruck (1898–1981) was the elder of the two children of Dr. Wilhelm and Elisabeth Bruck.<sup>1</sup> Irene and Wolfgang were married on 30 June 1921 and adopted the surname Bruck-Messel, although their two children would be known simply as Bruck. The family lived in Berlin, where Irene's mother Elsa had remained after the death of her husband Alfred in 1909. While Irene and Wolfgang had been brought up as Christians, their parents had come from Jewish heritage and they were thus identified as Jews under the 1935 Nuremberg race laws. Their children Ena and Harro went to school in Berlin but Harro was forced to leave the Herder Schule under new regulations introduced by the Nazi ministry of education in 1938. He went to the American Colony School in Berlin in the autumn of that year; the school's December 1938 newsletter noted that he was keen on sports.

---

<sup>1</sup> The career of Alfred Messel makes up chapter 4 of the book *From Refugees to Royalty: The Remarkable Story of the Messel Family of Nymans*. The tragic fate of Wolfgang's parents and sister is told in chapter 19.

The Bruck-Messel family escaped Berlin shortly before the start of the Second World War with the help of their Messel cousins in England, who acted as personal sponsors for them.<sup>2</sup> The family arrived in Southampton on board the *SS Manhattan* on 21 April 1939, and from there took the train to Ashford in Kent. They settled first in New Romney, which Harro remembered as a sleepy Kent village; the national register for England and Wales taken on 29 September 1939 shows them living there in Mill House, Cannon Street. In March 1940 they moved to Folkestone, where Ena was enrolled in the private school for Jewish pupils run by Dr. Leonore Goldschmidt, who had taken over the building occupied by the Athelstan School and re-established there the institution she had previously run in Berlin. With the German invasion of the Low Countries in May 1940, the school and the children were evacuated to Wales.

The rapid advance of the German military and the fear of an imminent invasion across the Channel led to the internment of all male enemy aliens in Britain, and some female. In recognition of his status as a 'victim of Nazi oppression', Wolfgang had originally been classified in October 1939 at the lowest level of risk (category C) and was thus subject to no restrictions on his movements for the first few months of the war. Such distinctions were suspended under the new circumstances, and Wolfgang was temporarily interned on the Isle of Man along with many other German-Jewish refugees as well as a number of genuine Nazi sympathisers. Harro later recalled his father's good fortune in not being one of those internees picked to travel to Canada in July 1940 on the *SS Arandora Star*, which was torpedoed by the Germans and went down with the loss of 714 lives. Wolfgang's release from internment was eventually authorised on 30 October 1940.

While their father was facing the uncertainties of life as a wartime internee, Ena and Harro Bruck were evacuated to the town of Caerwent in south Wales. Ena was able to take her school certificate in July 1940 at Drayton High School for Girls in Newport, although she and her friend Gertrud (daughter of the Dr. Leonore Goldschmidt mentioned above) had to obtain special permission to enter the town so that they could sit the exam.<sup>3</sup> Harro and two other boys were allowed to attend Nant Coch, part of Drayton High School, as day pupils; according to his classmate Otto Fendrich, the teaching was excellent and they travelled to school each day by 'red and white bus'. In summer 1940, Ena and Harro were sent further inland to Tintern, where

---

<sup>2</sup> Irene had travelled over to England in April 1936 and visited Leonard Messel at Nyman's; she is listed in the ship's manifest for the *SS Europa* leaving Bremen on 2 April and in the Nyman's visitors' book for 9 to 14 April. Leonard's brother-in-law Roy Sambourne noted in his diary for 10 April that he had met at Nyman's 'a little German cousin of Lennie's, hounded out of Germany'.

<sup>3</sup> The memoir of the Dr. Leonore Goldschmidt Schule written by Gertrud in 2005 under her married name of Thompson contains the details; published in abbreviated form in the *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute* for 2005, it is available in full online.

Ena worked in the Williams & Cotton grocery store; as shown in the photograph of him in front of the ruins in the appendix, Harro was billeted with the curator of Tintern Abbey.

Ena continued her schooling up to higher certificate at Lydney Grammar School, just over the English border in the Forest of Dean. She and Gertrud Goldschmidt lived at Danby Lodge with the family of headmaster Jim Burch; in her memoirs, Burch's wife Margery recollected: 'Two German Jewesses were sent to our school for the sake of good training in science.' Margery became close to the girls: 'Ena Bruck, the elder, was shy, a tremendous worker who ultimately qualified as a doctor, practising in London.'<sup>4</sup> With German air raids now targeting Newport, Harro's school of Nant Coch moved further up the Wye valley and joined with the school at Cleddon Hall at Trelleck (the house in which Bertrand Russell was born). In 1943, having taken his school certificate, Harro moved back to live with his parents in London; he always felt that he had lost out on educational opportunities as a result of the war. After a spell in Herne Hill, the family moved north of the river and lived together at 120 Langford Court on Abbey Road, NW8. Wolfgang was naturalised as a British subject in June 1947 along with Harro; Ena received her naturalisation certificate in November 1948.

In 1948, Harro married Brenda Dorothy Allen (1924–2002), whom he had first met in Folkestone in 1940. The couple had three sons: Chris (b. 1950), Alistair (b. 1954) and Paul (b. 1958). Harro had enrolled in evening classes while undertaking factory jobs during the latter part of the war, but was invalided out with a duodenal ulcer in 1944 due to overwork. He studied for two years at Battersea Polytechnic and gained his degree in 1948. Shortly after, he found his metier as a lecturer teaching thermodynamics and other engineering courses, first at Rugby College of Engineering Technology and later at the further education college in Swansea, where he rose to become head of department. He retired in 1991 and continued to live in Swansea. Harro and Brenda celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1998.

Ena qualified as a doctor in 1948 and is listed as a registrar in biochemistry at the West London Hospital in two articles on phenylbutazone therapy published in *The Lancet* in 1953 and 1954. In 1956 she married James Patrick Saville (1911–1999), known as Pat, and took his surname. The couple did not have children, but Pat had a son from a previous marriage.

Wolfgang found employment after the war as a design consultant, working with manufacturing companies in Germany and travelling twice a year to the Frankfurt trade fair; some of his textile designs are today held by the V&A. He was also a proficient artist of floral still-lifes and other subjects; one of his paintings was exhibited at the Ben Uri Gallery's autumn 1945 exhibition of

---

<sup>4</sup> M. Burch (1989) *Old Memories*. Coleford: Douglas McLean, p. 60.

works by contemporary Jewish artists, alongside sculpture by Jacob Epstein and paintings by Alfred Wolmark, Erna Auerbach and Fred Uhlman.<sup>5</sup>

In 1962, Irene managed to reclaim ownership of her mother's summer house in Prien on the Chiemsee in the south of Bavaria; it had been occupied by another family since the war. She and Wolfgang were then able to move into 6 Apsley House on Finchley Road, which would remain their home. Wolfgang died in 1981, aged 83, and Irene in 1992, aged 93. In their memory, their children bought the bench shown below in Kew Gardens, a place they had always loved.



**John Hilary**

**May 2021**

---

<sup>5</sup> Wolfgang also featured in the Ben Uri spring exhibition of 1947.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC APPENDIX

Recorded 30.10.40 Please authorise

RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MALE ENEMY ALIEN EXEMPTION FROM INTERNMENT—REFUGEE Card 3.**

(1) Surname (block capitals) BRUCK **INTERNED (E.C.)** B.B.W.  
 Forenames Paul Wolfgang Israel  
 Alias \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Date and place of birth 9.1.1898 Berlin AGE GP. 2198  
 (3) Nationality German N.B.S 1947 OCC. GP. C. 20

(4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 720038 Home Office reference if known B 24719  
 Special Procedure Card Number if known EX. 6A and 8A

(5) Address prior to Internment Hill House  
New Romney, Kent

(6) Normal occupation Interior Decorator—in Germany

(7) Present Occupation Nil

(8) Name and address of employer \_\_\_\_\_

(9) Decision of Tribunal Exempted Date 11:10:39

(10) Whether exempted from Article 6(A) (Yes or No) YES

(11) Whether desires to be repatriated (Yes or No) NO

[7535] 28717/835 25m 9/39 G & S **704** [OVER]

**Wolfgang's initial exemption from internment and later release**

**FEMALE ENEMY ALIEN EXEMPTION FROM INTERNMENT—REFUGEE**

(1) Surname (block capitals) BRUCK B.B.W.  
 Forenames Irene Hedwig Eugenie Sara  
 Alias \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Date and place of birth 26.4.1899 Berlin AGE GP. 2199  
 (3) Nationality German N.B.S 1947 OCC. GP. D 1

(4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 720039 Home Office reference if known  
 Special Procedure Card Number if known

(5) Address prior to Internment Hill House  
New Romney, Kent

(6) Normal occupation Nil EX. 6A and 8A  
 (7) Present Occupation Nil

(8) Name and address of employer \_\_\_\_\_

(9) Decision of Tribunal Exempted Date 11:10:39

(10) Whether exempted from Article 6(A) (Yes or No) YES

(11) Whether desires to be repatriated (Yes or No) NO

[7535] 28717/835 25m 9/39 G & S **704** [OVER]

**Irene's exemption from internment**

636

FEMALE ENEMY ALIEN EXEMPTION FROM INTERNMENT REFUGEE		
(1) Surname (block capitals)	BRUCK	
Forenames	Ena Karina Sara	
Alias		
(2) Date and place of birth	19.5.1902 Berlin	
(3) Nationality	German	
(4) Police Regn. Cert. No.	720037	Home Office reference if known
(5) Address prior to Internment	Mill House, New Romney, Kent.	Special Procedure Card Number if known
(6) Normal occupation	Nil	
(7) Present Occupation	Nil	
(8) Name and address of employer		
(9) Decision of Tribunal	Exempted	Date 11:10:39
(10) Whether exempted from Article 6(A) (Yes or No)	YES	
(11) Whether desires to be repatriated (Yes or No)	NO	

[7535] 28717/835 25m 9/39 G & S 704

[OVER]

### Ena's exemption from internment

The addition of 'Sara' to Irene and Ena's forenames, and 'Israel' to Wolfgang's, reflects the Nazi decree of August 1938 which required all German Jews with non-Jewish names to add these as designators of their Jewish identity, thereby separating them from the rest of the German people.

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<u>APPEAL DECISION</u>	<u>REFUGEE—MALE</u>	
(1) Surname (block capitals)	BRUCK	
Forenames	Wolf-Harro.	
Alias		
(2) Date and place of birth	14.6.26. Cologne.	
(3) Nationality	German. <i>NFB8-71147</i>	
(4) Police Regn. Cert. No.	857253.	Home Office reference, if known
(5) Address	120, Langford Court, Abbey Road, N.W.8.	Special Procedure Card Number, if known
(6) Normal occupation	Bench Fitter.	
(7) Present Occupation	do.	
(8) Decision of Tribunal	Left subject to 6A & 9A Left subject to 9A Exempt from 6A & 9A	No previous appearance before a Tribunal. Strike out which do not apply.
(9) Decision of Advisory Committee	Exempted from 6A & 9A <i>Left subject to 6A &amp; 9A</i>	Strike out which does not apply.

\*53m (S sorts) 2/40—[8338] 10050/667 30m 4/40 4070 G & S 704

[OVER]

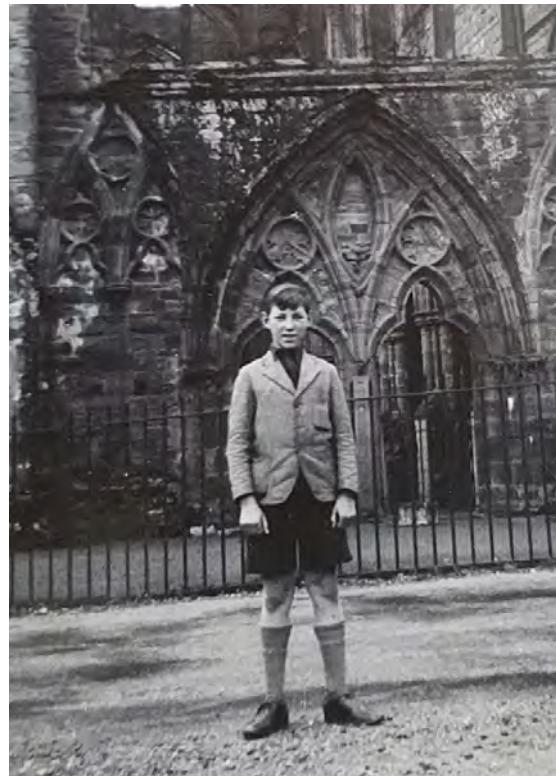
### Harro's later exemption from internment



Irene and Ena in Germany during the 1920s



Wolfgang with Harro and Ena in Germany in the early 1930s



**Harro at Tintern Abbey in 1940**



**Harro at home in Swansea in 2015**