

Institution: University of Oxford		
Unit of Assessment: 28 – History		
Title of case study: Establishing the Jewish Country House as a site of European memory and a significant aspect of modern Jewish history and heritage		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Professor Abigail Green	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Modern European History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2000-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017-31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Green's research has broken with existing paradigms in Jewish history and country house studies, establishing the Jewish Country House (JCH) as a site of European memory and a significant aspect of modern Jewish history and heritage. By identifying and elaborating on the Jewish and antisemitic histories of major properties in Britain, the research has changed how these properties are interpreted for the public, and led to re-evaluation of similar properties across Europe, influencing curatorial and management practices, as well as public understanding of Jewish heritage. The main beneficiaries are the National Trust and other properties/curators, visitors to the properties, and volunteers who received specialist training.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Green has published internationally recognised research on major figures in Anglo-Jewish history and on the contribution of elite Jewish communities to culture and politics in Britain and Europe. Her biography of Sir Moses Montefiore [R5] was a <i>TLS</i> Book of the Year for 2010. Her research on Liberalism and the Jews, and on Jewish Country Houses [R1] has been funded by successive grants from the AHRC. The research has opened up a highly original interdisciplinary agenda at the interface between Country House studies, Jewish history and public engagement with research in those areas. In Country House studies, it focuses on a hitherto unidentified group of country houses (those owned, renewed and/or built by Jews and those of Jewish origin) to (i) recognise the importance of this group as a pan-European phenomenon worthy of study; (ii) challenge existing paradigms of continuity, rootedness and Englishness that underpin Country House studies; (iii) internationalise the field of British Country House studies through a focus on the cosmopolitanism of many Jewish country house owners, and an awareness of the parallels between Jewish country houses in the UK and continental Europe. In Jewish studies, the research is innovative in its focus on the role assumed by Jewish elites in the countryside through their rural estates, rather than on the place of Jews as quintessential members of the urban <i>haute bourgeoisie</i>. This innovation extends to drawing parallels between elite British Jews and their continental counterparts, which call into question assumptions about the distinctiveness and 'Englishness' of the Anglo-Jewish elite. The research also emphasises the non-religious aspects of Jewish material culture within the Jewish heritage sector in the UK and Europe. A major Knowledge Exchange event held in March 2018, bringing scholars together with museum and heritage professionals, acted as a catalyst for further activities aiming at: better understanding the JCH and its importance for Jewish history; situating these houses in a European context; connecting heritage professionals with cutting edge research; and generating a pan-European network of JCH museums and heritage organisations.</p>		

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1.**[Journal Article] Green, Abigail and Juliet Carey (National Trust), 'Beyond the pale: the country houses of the Jewish elite', introduction to a Special Issue of the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* edited by Abigail Green, Juliet Carey, and David Rechter (Sep 2019). DOI: [10.1080/14725886.2019.1667115](https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2019.1667115)
- R2.**[Chapter, available on request] Green, Abigail, 'The West and the rest: Jewish philanthropy and globalization to c.1880', in *Purchasing Power: The Economics of Modern Jewish History* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). ISBN 9780812247305.
- R3.**[Journal Article] Green, Abigail, 'Spirituality, Tradition and Gender: Judith Montefiore, the Very Model of a Modern Jewish Woman', *History of European Ideas* 40(6):747-760 (2014). DOI: [10.1080/01916599.2014.881119](https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2014.881119)
- R4.**[Edited Book, available on request] Green, Abigail, and V. Viane, *Religious Internationals in the Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). ISBN: 9780230319509.
- R5.**[Authored Book, available on request] Green, Abigail, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Belknap Press, 2010). ISBN 9780674048805.

Grant 1: AHRC Fellowship AH/N006631/1, *Liberalism and the Jews: an international history* (PI: Abigail Green), October 2016-March 2018, GBP198,513

Grant 2: AHRC Research Grant AH/S006656/1, *'Jewish' country houses - objects, networks, people* (PI: Abigail Green), October 2019-September 2023, GBP816,319, in partnership with the National Trust, European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ), Waddesdon Manor, and Strawberry Hill House.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Working in partnership with Historic England, the National Trust (NT), Waddesdon Manor and the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ) (through two KE-Fellowships based at the University of Oxford and an AHRC grant), Abigail Green's research has changed curatorial practice at key sites in Britain and Europe, impacting public understanding through changes to visitor experience. This includes her contribution to the development of new approaches to the management of Jewish heritage within the Jewish heritage sector and beyond. This has happened on UK and European levels as described below.

Changing Curatorial Practice and Visitor Experience

(1) In the UK, Green's major AHRC research project **prompted the NT to engage the Jewish histories of its country houses across multiple sites for the first time**, by participating for the first time in the UK Jewish Heritage Days (2018-), and through an on-going programme of volunteer-training and workshops that provide a platform for their staff to interrogate the Jewish and antisemitic histories of NT properties. Green and her team identified 6 NT properties with important Jewish stories (Hughenden, Waddesdon, Upton, Monk's House, Mottisfont Abbey, Nymans) and 1 NT partner property (Strawberry Hill House). Green's project hosted an academic conference attended by relevant curators and house managers in March 2018 (over 60 participants, including 29 heritage professionals), highlighting Jewish histories in their properties. Following this conference, **all 7 key properties committed to arranging events in September 2018 as part of the European Days of Jewish Culture/UK Days of Jewish Heritage, and on an annual basis for the duration of the AHRC grant**. Together with her academic collaborators Green has since compiled a basic resource pack to support UK heritage professionals in the NT and beyond. This was followed by a workshop for 50 people at Polesden Lacey in December 2019, including 26 National Trust employees and 11 other heritage professionals. The Polesden Lacey workshop in particular **encouraged and mentored research by NT curators and other heritage professionals**. 11/12 participants surveyed reported that the workshop would **enrich how they curate the Jewish heritage of their property**, and all (13/13) agreed that the workshop **helped them see the links between the Jewish heritage of their property and contemporary issues and concerns**. One participant from Ormesby Hall commented "this seminar has opened my eyes to a host of possible stories and connections which may lie just under the surface". For him, a key insight was that how "we talk about Jewish History is important within today's society".[E2]

These activities were supported by **an on-going program of targeted, site-specific volunteer training** in individual properties, developed by Green using her research expertise in partnership with J-Trails. The training, which reached approximately 220 volunteers, [E6] was very positively received by the properties. Many reported that it **gave them greater confidence to present and engage visitors with Jewish aspects of the properties**. Waddesdon Manor commented that the “inspirational training has given our guides and house hosts the confidence they lacked to engage with the subject and its broader historical contexts”, while Hughenden Manor agreed that the training was “particularly successful and useful to us” by enabling staff and volunteers “to feel more confident in talking to visitors about Disraeli’s Jewish history”. At Monk’s House the training **stimulated discussion and empowered volunteers to speak about their own Jewish heritage**: “Discussions and debates amongst volunteers were ongoing for many weeks following the workshop ... Furthermore ... volunteers with Jewish heritage ... clearly felt empowered to speak about this to the wider team, where previously it had never been mentioned.” The training **inspired the volunteers and engaged them with the Jewish heritage of these properties**: one volunteer remarked “How interesting was that! Came home wanting to do research and write a paper”. [E1]

Working with heritage professionals and volunteers in this way has **transformed curatorial understanding and visitor experience** at key properties. For example, the exhibition, ‘Disraeli the Other’ at Hughenden (2018) ran for 5 months and reached approximately 8,500 visitors during the Jewish Heritage period alone. The Collections and House Manager at Hughenden stresses that working with the JCH project “gave us both the tools and confidence to undertake a piece of work like this at Hughenden for the first time”. [E3] Staff and volunteers discovered that “an assumed latent knowledge of his Jewishness simply did not exist, and so it became a powerful new story for us”. [E1] At Nymans too, the 2018 display was “the first time we have presented the Jewish story”. [E1] Upton House, meanwhile, reported that the opportunity and support to participate in the Jewish Heritage Days **gave them the confidence to experiment with presentation methods**, trialling a new method of outreach, ‘Upton in a Suitcase’, as part of their Kindertransport display (Sept 2019), which “will inform our ongoing work with local schools, exploring historical and contemporary themes, such as anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Jewish culture, heritage and their links to the region.” [E2]

(2) In Europe too, Green’s work has changed the way curators and administrators understand and interpret their properties. Participation in the original JCH conference in March 2018 **inspired the Centre des Monuments Nationaux (CMN) to commit administrative and financial resources** to promoting better understanding of two key French properties (Villa Kerylos, Château de Champs) by hosting a second JCH conference in May 2019. [E2] This was attended by 30 participants in total (including 16 heritage professionals from 6 European countries), and involved a participatory training workshop session with a focus on difficulties of interpretation in post-Holocaust Europe and the challenges posed by antisemitism. For the Château de Seneffe (Belgium), participating “pushed us to conduct deep and detailed research ... in order to identify a ‘Jewish history’ of the property”, while “participating and the exchange of information allowed us to resituate the history of the Philippson family and ... better understand ... certain choices made at Seneffe.” This new understanding is now **shaping interpretation and visitor experience**: two videos presenting the Philippson era to the general public for the first time are already in development, and the family’s story will be a focus for the new Centre d’Interprétation (2021). [E3]

(3) The 2019 JCH conference launched **a pan-European network of Jewish country houses**. Feedback underlines the importance of this initiative for individual properties: “The network is the strongest side of the project, making it possible to explore properties in a longer story. The network is helping me find new perspectives.” [E2] This network is underpinned by **a digital “Palaces, Villas and Country Houses” route**, devised by Green and based on her research. The AEPJ has built and maintains a website that serves as a portal to the various properties. Bringing together properties in the UK, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic, the JCH route has been incorporated by the AEPJ into the Council of Europe accredited European Routes of Jewish Culture (ERJC). The AEPJ regards the JCH route as “a reference project for our program, because it has a strong academic component... and because it has demonstrated a capacity of transnational work from the beginning.” Aspects of this work have been delayed by

COVID 19, but Phase 1 of the JCH route (incorporating 16 properties that collectively attract between 1 and 2 million visitors) went live in a developmental stage in September 2020, and the ERJC have attracted 10,000 website visits since.[E3] This has clear benefits for participating properties: a news story about the Route published in *The Times* (28/09/2020) prompted several Jewish groups to visit Strawberry Hill House and ask about future Jewish heritage initiatives.[E3]

Changing Public Understanding

In Britain, activities inspired by Green's research **increased public understanding of the Jewish heritage of individual museums**. Around 40,000 visited the interior of Hughenden during the 'Disraeli the Other' exhibition (2018). As the Collections and House Manager at Hughenden reports, "many visitors told our guides that they had no idea that the Disraelis were Jewish, and how remarkable this was ... This is now a fixed part of our narration of Benjamin's life, and regularly draws exclamation from surprised visitors".[E3] At Nymans, meanwhile, the 2018 display about the hair bracelet Irene Messel brought with her from Nazi Germany was a chance for visitors to recollect their own history and **connect with the Messels' Jewish story**: one commented "My name is Irene. I came as a refugee here in 1960 with a similar suitcase". This display **drew out unexpected emotions**. One message read: "Make sure you tell someone that you love them today."[E4] B'nai B'rith UK, the organisers of the UK Jewish Heritage Days, report that **overall these properties formed 20% of programme participants in 2018**, and "were hugely important in attracting wider interest in our programme from both the public (both Jewish and non-Jewish) and from the Jewish and wider media."[E3]

New Policies for Managing and Promoting Jewish Heritage

(1) Green's research **fed into a program of Minor Enhancements to the National Heritage List for England**, implemented by Historic England and still ongoing. Professor Green's "expert research" has enabled Historic England to "**reduce underrepresentation of Jewish heritage on the List through 43 enhancements**", and to "more fully document the history of these listed buildings and registered parks and gardens, to reflect important contributions by or associations with prominent individuals or families of Jewish faith", in ways that reflect HE's commitment "to inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity".[E3]

(2) Based on Green's research, the AEPJ and the B'nai B'rith UK Jewish Heritage Days **integrated Jewish country house museums into their work for the first time**. B'nai B'rith report that this "transformed the scope and reach of our Heritage Days programme by including museums not conventionally understood as sites of Jewish heritage."[E3] The AEPJ confirms: "Without a doubt, it would have been unthinkable for us to work on this type of heritage, and in this way, if it were not for Professor Green."[E3]

In summary, the impact arising from Green's research has been recognised by project partners. For the National Trust, the Jewish Country Houses project serves as an exemplary case study for national programming designed to "provoke people to think differently about history, identity and the world today."[E5] These properties would not have thought of marketing themselves in this way, or considering their museums in this broader context, without the initial impetus from Green's research project.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

E1. JCH project annual report 2018 (produced for sharing outcomes with partners and stakeholders), including:

- Report on activities 2017-18
- Conference pack, March 2018
- AHRC application Pathways to Impact and Case for Support
- First-Year Review feedback from partner properties, Autumn 2018
- B'nai B'rith UK European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2018 questionnaire responses and information on participating properties

- E2.** 'Jewish Country Houses. Objects, Networks, People Report of Activities: 2019'. Annual report produced for sharing outcomes with partners and stakeholders including:
- Polesden Lacey workshop details and feedback
 - Reports from partner properties
 - Villa Kerylos workshop details and feedback
- E3.** 'Jewish Country Houses. Objects, Networks, People Report of Activities: 2020'. Annual report produced for sharing outcomes with partners and stakeholders, including testimonials from:
- Hughenden Manor
 - Château de Seneffe
 - AEPJ
 - Strawberry Hill House
 - B'nai B'rith UK
 - Historic England
 - National Trust
- E4.** Email from House Manager, Nymans (7 November 2020), containing visitor feedback to a display produced for the 2018 European Days of Jewish Culture.
- E5.** National Trust, *Research Priority Areas, 2017-2021* (2018), showcasing the JCH project (p.14) as an example of adopting new perspectives on NT places and collections.
- E6.** Email correspondence with provider of volunteer training to partner properties (November 2020), including attendance figures.