



ISSUE 7 • SUMMER 2023

THE JHASW/CHIDC NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the Jewish History Association of South Wales / Cymdeithas Hanes Iddewig De Cymru

A MESSAGE FROM JHASW/CHIDC:

Greetings from a new Trustee.

Hello. My name is Stephen Waldek and I have the pleasure and honour of being a new Trustee. I am a retired NHS consultant and executive medical director and I continue to work part time in a non-clinical consulting role and as a researcher.

I am first generation British and was born, bred, and educated in Cardiff. My late parents, Fred and Frances Waldek were active members of the Cardiff Community and mother, who died last year aged 100, lived in Cardiff until she was around 93 years old.

As well as being active in the Jewish Community of Cardiff, the family business was based in Porth and, together with my cousin's family—the Hornungs—were part of the group of Jewish immigrants who played a significant role in the economic development of south Wales.

As a Trustee, I hope to bring my professional experience and Cardiff background to help the JHASW/CHIDC grow and move from strength to strength.

I live in Manchester but travel to Cardiff fairly often. I am married to Joan, a professional pianist, and we have 4 children and 9 grandchildren.

Stephen Waldek, Trustee.

PHPlease help!

Do you know anyone with IT programming experience that may be able to help us?

We need to maintain the website we use for our Heritage Trails and the Holocaust Memorial Tablet.

For the technically minded, we are using an older version of PHP with MySQL databases and have been told that we should update the PHP to a newer version. We are being charged an additional monthly maintenance fee until we do this.

The original website was designed by a team of volunteers including Steven Baldwin, Neeraj Sharma and Evaldas Vilkinas, with amendments by Owain Lansdowne and Yang Yang. We are eternally indebted to the ever-patient Simon Gottschalk who then adapted it for Swansea. Simon kindly agreed to help us with IT oversight but he does help many other projects so the time he can spare us is naturally limited.

If you know of anyone who would be willing to help us with our website programming going forward, please contact Mike Hawkins at

heritage.trails@jhasw.org.uk.



Spotlight on:

Trude Owen



A Torah mantle made by Trude Owen for the Cardiff New Synagogue, 1998.

The family of embroidery artist Trude Owen (1926-2003) arrived in Britain in 1939, fleeing Nazi persecution in their former home of Brno, Czechoslovakia. Trude was the youngest daughter of a family of four and her parents had run a machine embroidery factory in Czechoslovakia, the venture having been established by her grandfather. It was a family where, in Owen's own words, "embroidery [had] been around me since my birth". The family relocated to south Wales where Owen's father had the opportunity to set up a factory on the Treforest estate, using four machines sent over from Europe by Owen's grandfather.

The decision to relocate to south Wales was fuelled by an initiative of the South Wales Development Agency who were keen to use the expertise of refugees fleeing the Nazis to bolster the local economy. Indeed, of the 78 companies operating on the Treforest estate in 1939, 49 of them were owned and run by refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe. On leaving school both Trude and her sister joined the family business and, upon the death of their parents, continued to run the business along with Trude's brother-in-law.

It is for her "hobby" of hand embroidery which Trude Owen is best remembered today. Owen was first introduced to the craft by her mother, who was herself a skilled needlewoman. Owen took time off from her work at the factory to attend a ten-week needlework course in gold and ceremonial embroidery at the Royal School of Needlework and subsequently discovered for herself "the attraction of hand embroidery".

Word of Owen's skills as an embroiderer soon spread outside her home of south Wales and, as she remembers it, "luckily, one commission brought another." In all, she made seven Torah curtains in Britain and about ten mantles, as well as "countless" tallit and tefillin bags, challah and Pesach covers. Another two of her Torah mantles were commissioned as a gift for a Synagogue in Nahariya, Israel.

Trude Owen's work is noted for its precision and wonderful embellishments.

Trude Owen passed away in 2003 but her work, kept in synagogues and museums in Britain, Israel and elsewhere, lives on.

By Eifion, JHASW/CHIDC Volunteer.



Trude Owen in her studio, holding one of her embroidered Torah mantles, Cardiff, 1988.

PROJECT UPDATES:

The European Network of Testimony-based Digital Education

This project, delivered in partnership with organisations in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the Netherlands, ended in May this year. It was funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme.

Using the video testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, we developed 10 bilingual (English and Welsh), locally relevant digital Holocaust educational resources for primary and secondary school students and teachers in Wales. All the materials are available on our website and can be downloaded free of charge.

To publicise the new resources and to explain how they can be used in classrooms, we organised seven dissemination events, reaching, in total, 86 teachers and trainee teachers across Wales and southwest England.



Behind the scenes at St. Fagans Museum.

Sharing skills: Enabling communities to preserve their heritage

The aim of the project, which started in October 2022, is to get a wider range of people into the heritage and enable participants to gain skills and experience.

The volunteers continue to work with Cardiff Reform Synagogue historical records (sorting, listing for deposit, digitising and cataloguing for publication on People's Collection Wales).

To enable volunteers to find out more about the heritage organisations in Cardiff and meet with the experts (archivists, museum curators, and librarians), we organised two behind-the-scenes visits in June, to Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives and St Fagans Museum.

The project is funded by the Welsh Government Volunteering Wales Main Grant programme; the grant is administered by Wales Council for Voluntary Action.



Behind the scenes at Cardiff University Special Collections.

Oral History Update June 2023

We have currently completed 54 out of our target of 70 oral history interviews for this current project.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful team of volunteers, both past and present, who have dedicated many hours of their time behind the scenes. The recording of an interview is only the beginning of a long process.

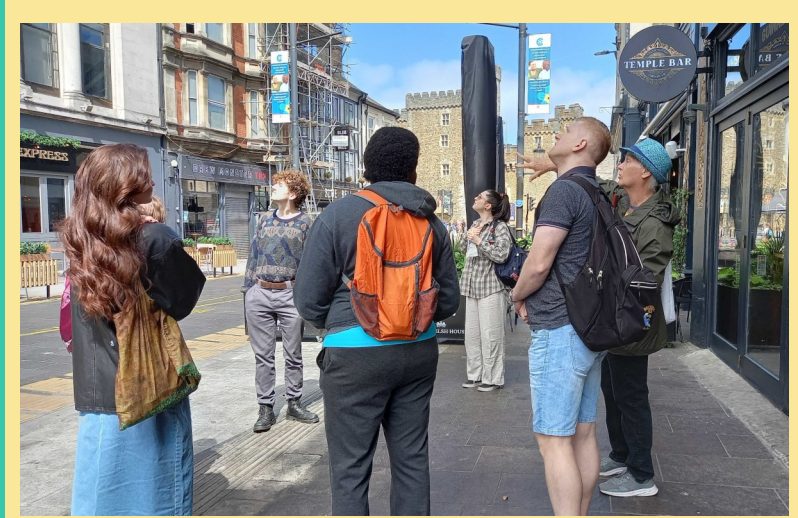
Each of our interviews is then transcribed word for word, ready to be deposited with the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. This takes both attention to detail and a significant amount of time (roughly three weeks for each two-hour interview), and our volunteers have done an outstanding job. During this project, we have recorded over 100 hours of audio, which gives an idea of the incredible commitment from those who give their time freely to help us. Once this is completed, we also have volunteers who check these transcripts for accuracy and edit them, which is another important step in the process. Without our volunteers, it would be impossible to complete this process and grow our archive – so thank you all! If you would like to be one of our final 16 interviewees before the project is completed, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you!

Cardiff heritage walk

In 2021, JHASW/CHDIC created a digital Cardiff Jewish heritage trail. The trail tells the story of Cardiff Jewish communities through nearly fifty different locations.

On 1 June 2023, JHASW/CHDIC arranged a walk in the centre of Cardiff for volunteers, featuring some of the locations mentioned in the online trail. The walk was led by Mike Hawkins who coordinated the digital Cardiff Jewish heritage trail and is also working on the Swansea Jewish heritage trail. The walk focused on the origins and development of the Jewish community in Cardiff as new groups arrived in the city. Afterwards, we finished with a well deserved tea and coffee break!

If you would like ideas of places to visit or to learn more about places important in the story of the Jewish community in Cardiff, please find a link to our [digital heritage trail](#).



Photograph from our walking trail.

Swansea and District Heritage Trail

You may be wondering what has happened to the Swansea and District Heritage Trail that we were hoping to make available earlier this year. It has been delayed because we have been focusing on other projects which have been given priority for the simple reason that they have attracted funding. We would also like to resolve some IT issues first, to avoid any disruption when we do go live. We now hope to launch the Swansea trail in the autumn. We are confident that the trail will be even better than our successful Cardiff trail.

We are grateful to those who have sent us information and images, including Sheila Barth, Ellen Davis, Jessica Davis, David Factor, Lee Freeman, Norma Glass, Louise Howard, Maurice Hyman, Leonard Mars, Annette McFarlane, Philip Pritchard, John Minkes and David Morris. Also John Ashley (Swansea Council), the Egypt Centre, the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Jennifer Harding-Richards (Adviser for RVE/ RSE Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Swansea), Swansea Council Libraries Service, Swansea RFC Memorabilia CIC and West Glamorgan Archive Service. I apologise to those I have left out. The many individual photographers and copyright holders will be credited when the trail is published.

When the Swansea trail has been launched, we will start work on more trails, including ones for Newport and Merthyr. We did not receive any funding for the Swansea trail, but we will be making an appeal to raise some money to help us produce these future trails.

Mike Hawkins (Trail Coordinator).

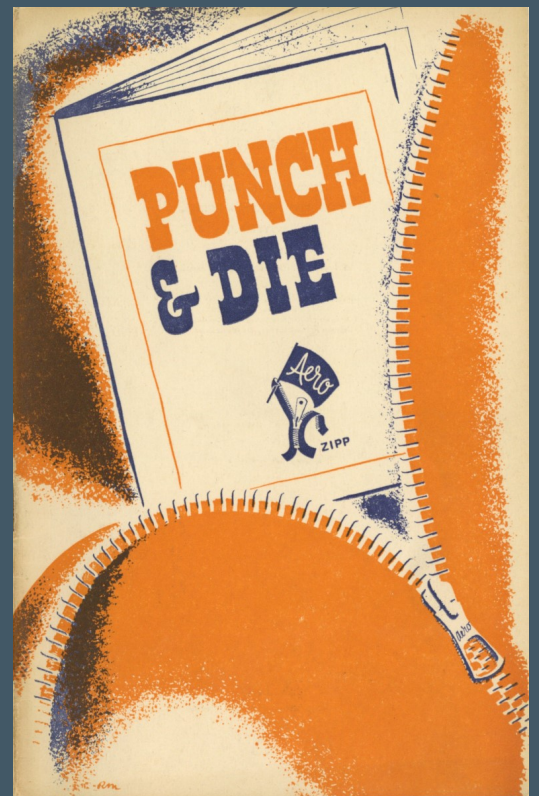


My experience of completing an internship with JHASW/CHIDC

Since our inception, in November 2017, JHASW/CHIDC has offered at least one paid internship per year to Cardiff University students and recent graduates. The internships vary in duration, from a few weeks to a few months, and are supported either by Santander or Welsh Government. These paid opportunities both help the intern to gain skills and knowledge that will enhance their employment prospects and enable us to better preserve more Jewish heritage. Here is a report from Gary, one of our interns.

"I carried out an internship with JHASW/CHIDC from 3 January to 26 May 2023 and gained invaluable experience in doing so. I did the entire internship remotely, working from home, and communicating with staff via Zoom and Slack (our messaging platform). I worked as a Cataloguing Officer under the supervision of Rob, the JHASW/CHIDC Digital Content Manager, initially on records of Cardiff United Synagogue, including their Annual General Meeting reports.

For this, I transferred information from original documents into an Excel spreadsheet, including names, dates and venues etc., and also summarized the contents of each meeting. During this exercise, I learnt how to use Excel, how to find digital locations online, and the general basics of cataloguing. This stood me in good stead for future tasks. I learnt a lot about the Jewish community in Cardiff. My final task – on which I am continuing to work as a volunteer – was to create a digital index for Punch and Die magazine, which was an in-house publication by Aero Zipp Fasteners Limited, a Jewish-run manufacturer on Treforest Industrial Estate, near Pontypridd in south Wales. I found this task particularly fascinating, as I have often wondered how indexes are compiled. For this, I had to skim-read digitised copies of the original magazines, picking out proper nouns such as names, buildings and locations, etc., and then enter them into a spreadsheet. From this I learnt how indexes are compiled, how to organise information in alphabetical order in a spreadsheet, and, of course, a lot about the history of Aero Zipp Fasteners Limited, as well as the individual lives of the employees.



Altogether, I feel I have gained a lot of invaluable experience from my internship, and acquired numerous transferable skills, which could be useful for further employment opportunities, or even personal projects. I am very grateful to Klavdija and the team for inviting me to undertake this internship in the first place, and for providing me with support and guidance throughout."

By Gary Cartwright, JHASW/CHIDC Volunteer.

A THANK YOU!

Through the generosity and help of Mandy Guest and Michelle Davis (Boone), we now have a large collection of Bimahs. These have been invaluable in helping us with the heritage trails and our other projects.

We are still missing numbers 20, 35, 37-39, 46, 69, 82-83, 86, 88-94 and any after 96. If you have any of these that you would be happy to donate to us, please contact us at heritage.trails@jhasw.org.uk.



REMEMBER US!

When people first hear about JHASW/CHIDC's work, we often get told stories about how they, or someone they know, recently had a clear-out and threw out piles of papers or photographs which documented the lives of the Jewish community of south Wales in some way.

If you or someone you know may have such a collection please don't hesitate to reach out to us; we are committed to collecting all south Wales Jewish heritage and we need your help to do it!

SUPPORT US!

Most of the work that we have accomplished so far has been dependent on grants and support from the community. However, we are acutely aware that there is so much to do that does not fall within the remit of these specific projects and without long-term financial support we will not be able to continue our work preserving and sharing the local Jewish heritage in the way it deserves. If you would like to help us with our work by making an online donation please click on the link below!

[**DONATE!**](#)

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