

ISSUE 10 • FEBRUARY 2026

THE JHAW/CHIC NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the Jewish History Association of Wales

Cymdeithas Hanes Iddewig Cymru

MESSAGE FROM JHAW/CHIC:

In the Summer of 2017, a small group of people decided that an association should be formed to preserve the Jewish Heritage of south Wales. The Jewish History Association of South Wales became a charitable organisation in June 2018. In January 2025 we formally changed our remit to cover the whole of the Principality and became the Jewish History Association of Wales.

I and John Minkes were two of the initial Trustees. John acted as our Treasurer, a position he held until January 2026 when one of our current Trustees, Dr. Stephen Waldek, took over this role.

In February, John retired from the Association although he remains a strong and active supporter. Another Trustee who left us in 2025 was Lynda Maddock who continues to help us with one of our projects. We are so grateful for her continuing contribution.

We have welcomed Professor Nathan Abrams and Gaby Koppel to our ranks. This January Martyn Floyd and Jean Golten also joined us.

Like all small charities the issue of fundraising to enable us to continue with our work is challenging. We are most grateful to the bequests given to us by the late Dr. Gerald Goodwin and Irene Silver which are enabling us to research the Jewish contribution to medical services in Wales and the history of Jewish women in Wales. Bequests, grants and donations have enabled us to work with two of our most loyal supports, Laura Henley Harrison and Rob Jones, who act as Project Manager and Digital Content Manager respectively. As well as our own dedicated website, we also active on social media with our Facebook, Instagram and X accounts.

So, from a humble beginning we have grown into a successful and well respected association and long may it continue.

Stanley Soffa BEM,
Chair of Trustees.

IRENE SILVER BEQUEST

We would like to extend our thanks to the Silver family for their generosity.

Irene Silver was born in Cardiff in 1923 and passed away in London in 2025.

Irene shared her memories with us in an oral history interview when she was 99 years old.

She left a bequest that will fund research into the contributions of Welsh-Jewish women in South Wales.

[You can read some of Irene's story in our March 2022 Voices Through Time project update - 'Make Do, Mend...and Lend'](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON: WALTER FISCHER

In 2025, JHAW received a collection of documents, originally belonging to Walter Fisher, from his former neighbour and student. These documents, which charted the Fisher family's life from Vienna to Bolton throughout the war and post-war period, had been recovered from the family home in Bolton after his second wife's passing and kept by the donor's mother, who understood their historical significance. They have now been digitally preserved by the JHAW.

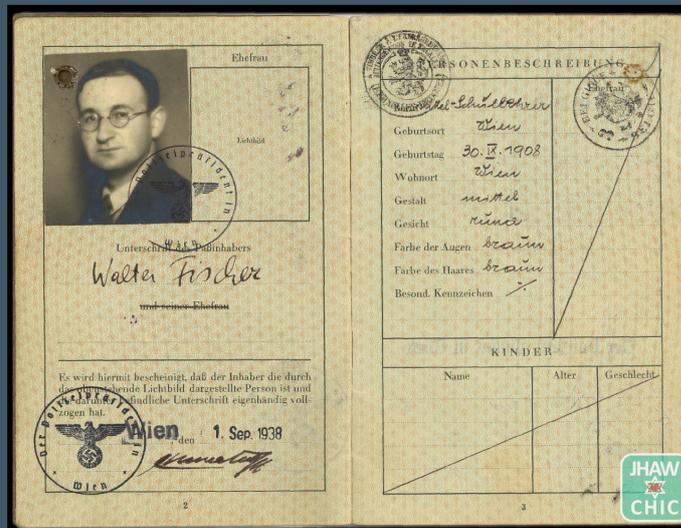
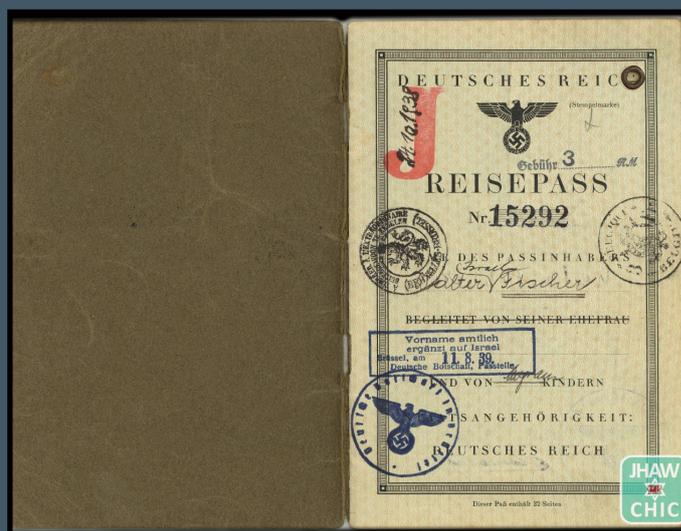
Walter Israel Fisher (formerly Fischer) was born on the 30th of September 1908 in Vienna, Austria, to Malvine and Ludwig Fischer. He was an accomplished pianist and polymath, with a mastery of several languages, including Latin, Greek, French, English, and German. In the wake of the Nazi oppression in Austria, Walter first left for Belgium, where he waited for his permit to move to England to be granted.

Walter came to the UK with his wife, Hedwig Sara Fisher (née Demant), and son, Peter Otto Fisher, in August 1939. He gained employment at Pannal Ash College in Yorkshire as an Assistant Language Master in September of the same year, working until his internment at the Onchan Camp on the Isle of Man in May 1940. After his release from the internment camp in October 1941, Walter secured his appointment as Head of Classics at Ruthin School in North Wales from the beginning of the autumn term of 1942. He lived in Wales with his family until 1954. Little is known of his life in Wales, but a letter of recommendation from the Ruthin School headmaster described him as 'an erudite and very able man and a very thorough and hard-working teacher'.

After leaving Ruthin, Walter moved to Lancashire. He took a role at Bolton School, where he stayed until his retirement. Two years after moving to Lancashire, in 1956, his wife Hedwig passed away, at only 48 years old. Walter later remarried Hanna Kohn in Manchester in December 1957.

After his retirement, Walter moved into a Jewish care home in Manchester, while Hanna stayed in their house in Bolton. Walter passed away in August 1988 at the age of 79. A notice placed in the Manchester Evening News by Walter's family thanked family and friends for the 'cards of condolence, donations to charity and beautiful floral tributes'.

Written by Joanna Zajac



PROJECT UPDATES:

WELSH JEWISH MILITARY PERSONEL

Later this month, we are beginning a project with three volunteer interns from Cardiff University. In past research projects, we found an excellent online resource called 'British Jews in the First World War: We Were There Too'.

While some Welsh-Jewish servicemen and women are listed, our research shows there are still gaps. This project aims to provide them with a list of previously unknown names, histories and images of Welsh-Jewish Rolls of Honour to add to their database.



Harry, Joseph, Samuel & Sydney Clompus, who are listed on the site, opened a picture framing business in Swansea following the war. However, of the 14 names listed on the Aberavon & Port Talbot Roll of Honour, only one appears to be included.

If you have anyone in your family who served in the British armed forces during the First World War, please contact us so that we can ensure their stories are remembered.

Email our project manager:
Laura.henley.harrison@jhawales.org.uk

[You can read about the Clompus family on our Swansea Trail.](#)

ABERGELE HERITAGE TRAIL

Since changing our name to the Jewish History Association of Wales last year, we are pleased to share with you the completion of our first project from North Wales.

The Abergele Heritage Trail was developed with the support of Abergele Town Council and Bangor University.

While Abergele itself is relatively small, it holds an important place within the broader tapestry of Welsh multicultural life, including a modest but significant Jewish presence dating back to the First World War.

Abergele also provided a place of refuge for many Jewish youngsters during the Second World War, going on to become a popular holiday destination for families from large cities such as Manchester and Liverpool in the 1950s and 1960s. Both Jewish residents and visitors to Abergele have contributed to the town's social and economic life, engaging in local business, education, and military activities throughout the years.

[Visit our website to explore our digital Abergele Trail.](#)



Jewish Refugees working on a farm in Abergele.

Image from the collection of Josef Altberg, courtesy of Helen Levy - taken from the book 'Escape to Gwrych Castle' by Andrew Hesketh.

PROJECT UPDATES continued:

LLANDUDNO

Our project to record the history of the Jewish community of Llandudno is progressing well. Many people have been in touch to share their memories and family histories. We have also received some wonderful new images and documents to add to our archives.

Jeremy Robson reached out to us about his childhood memories of Llandudno. Jeremy is the great-grandson of Polish-born Morris Wartski, the founder of the prestigious Wartski jewellers. Originally established in Bangor, the family also operated premises in Llandudno from 1907. Morris's son-in-law, Emanuel Snowman, went on to open a third branch in London in 1911. Today, the London premises still deals in fine jewellery and showcases items made by Fabergé.

Jeremy has kindly allowed us to share one of his poems, taken from his collection 'Chagall's Moon,' and the photograph which inspired it.

A SEASIDE PHOTO

Aged five, splashing in the sea and watching seagulls dive, there was not a cloud in view that August day, the endless sky an undiluted blue.

And time, if he was aware of time, was not a chiming clock that beat the hours down, but his mother's call to high-tea, a story read together on the old settee, and bed.

And there to dream of white-foamed waves and sandcastles, of crabs scuttling across white sands, of pony rides and Punch and Judy shows, of the billowing sails of colourful yachts, and of the elegant pier that seemed to stretch to the horizon, where bands played and you could shy wooden balls at coconuts that never seemed to fall, have your fortune told, and wolf candy floss, waffles and ice-cream to your heart's content.

A few years later and he'd be standing at the edge of the Great Orme cliffs, throwing stones at transparent jellyfish below in revenge for swelling stings that had made him scream Now smugglers and pirates filled his dreams.

And so it went on, the annual visits to his great-grand-parents' Llandudno home where he was born, while the oblivious tide rolled in and out with military precision and the sea raged and calmed, calmed and raged, those idyllic summers rolling him steadily towards adult hurdles more challenging than breaking waves.

Yet he returned there from time to time, if only in his dreams, and once, proudly, with his wife and young family, but the endless summer days he vividly recalled seemed to have become much shorter, the sea more often rough than calm, and there were too many disturbing ghosts around.



PROJECT UPDATES continued continued!:

The Goodwin Memorial Scholarship: The Jewish Medical Heritage of Wales

Funded by the generosity of the Goodwin Family, and facilitated by Bangor University, this postgraduate research scholarship will explore the contributions and experiences of Jewish medical practitioners in Wales from the eighteenth century onwards.

Gerald Goodwin was born Gerhard Guttman in Germany in 1929. The family escaped from Germany due to the rise in antisemitism, and they arrived in the UK in 1938. Gerald's father was a dentist and opened a practice in Porth in the Rhondda Valleys, which still operates under the Goodwin name today. Gerald followed his father and became a dentist.

This led me on a search for the earliest Jewish dentist I could find in Wales, and the answer was a bit surprising.

A newspaper advert from 1804 details a Jeweller by the name of J. Mosely who sold products and equipment to care for your teeth. [You can read more about Jacob Mosely on our Swansea Trail](#)

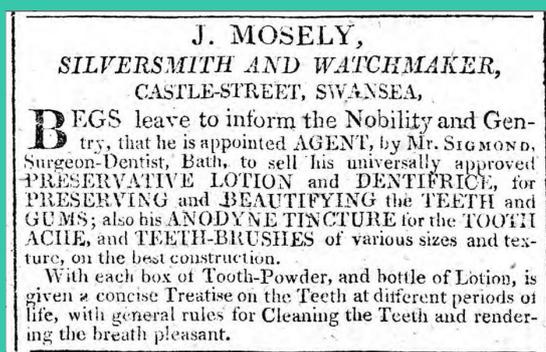


Image credit: *The Cambrian*, 10 March 1804, p. 1.

I wanted to know why jewellers were advertising dental hygiene. During the 1800s, dentistry was largely unregulated. You could have your teeth removed by a local blacksmith using crude tools. Dental surgeons began establishing touring surgeries, often set up in high-street businesses, including tailors and often jewellers, both popular professions for early Jewish immigrants in Wales.

In 1887, Dr Doherty, a dental surgeon from Newport, was visiting Mr Hettich's Jewellers on Queen Street in Cardiff every Thursday. Due to the delicate nature of the jeweller's work, and their use of metals such as gold, which did not react with saliva, they provided the ideal establishment to manufacture the plates required for false teeth. Alongside the surgeons, jewellers were also offering solutions to keep your remaining teeth healthy.



Gold, porcelain and ivory denture set,
1840-1860.

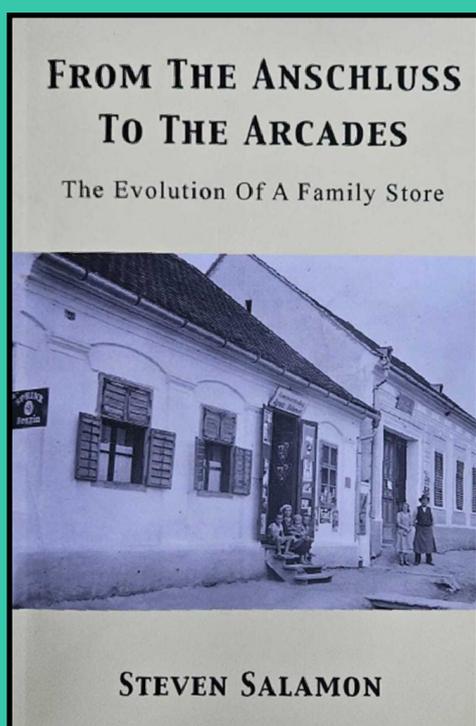
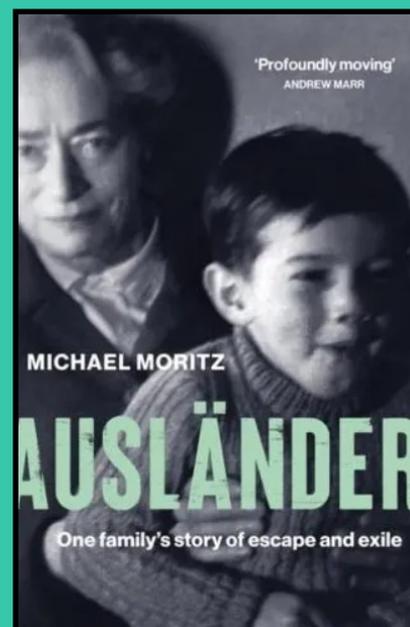
Credit: Whitby, B.J.

The businessmen whose paths crossed in Cardiff

A Silicon valley tycoon and a successful Cardiff deli owner may seem worlds apart, but as two recent memoirs make clear, their origin stories overlap at a significant moment. Both came from families which had found sanctuary from the horrors of Naziism in the Welsh capital - and incidentally both mention or credit JHAW.

In his book 'Ausländer'* venture capitalist Michael Moritz, an early investor in Google, Paypal and Yahoo, weaves together his own memories of growing up in the city, with investigations into his parents' and grandparents' lives in pre-war Germany. He uses the historical background as a platform to explore how a melancholic mood of 'inherited despair' is handed down the generations.

*<https://www.thejc.com/life/books/auslander-review-a-tale-that-supports-the-theory-we-dont-belong-anywhere-x6fg42fc>



There's something a bit more celebratory about 'From the Anschluss to the Arcades'*, by shopkeeper Steven Salamon. The book describes how his family had to abandon their store in the Austrian village of Rohrbach an der Teich, and just like the Moritzes wound up in Cardiff. There they eventually opened a delicatessen that became a lifeline for the city's émigré community, pining as they were for the tastes of home. This book is about survival and identity, and at its heart lies a moving tribute to Steven's father Wally, who founded the current store in the Royal Arcade in the 1980s and put his own name over the door. Among the regular customers were none other than the 'formidable' Doris Moritz and her 'distinguished' professor husband, Alfred - the parents of Michael.

*<https://businessnewswales.com/christmas-at-wallys/>

By Gaby Koppel

OUR PEOPLE: Emily Stanley

A new intern from Swansea University joined us for her work placement in January. Emily has become part of the team very quickly and has been a joy to work with. Here, she shares a little about herself and her background, and we hope she continues to enjoy her experience with us at JHAW.

My experience of completing an internship with JHAW/CHIC

“My name is Emily Stanley and I am completing an internship with the Jewish History Association of Wales (JHAW) as part of my history degree at Swansea University. During my degree, I have studied various periods and places, ranging from Medieval Europe to European empires to the inequalities experienced in Britain during the 20th century. I particularly enjoyed learning about the First World War from a global perspective. There was so much more than just the Western Front!

When I’m not in the library, you can usually find me walking along the beach. The views of Swansea Bay are stunning!

My interest in Jewish history started while I was in secondary school. When I was in Year 13, I had the opportunity to take part in the Holocaust Educational Trust’s ‘Lessons from Auschwitz’ Project. It involved a one day visit to Poland (and a very early flight from Cardiff!) to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. I found this to be a deeply transformative experience. Standing in a place where over a million people were murdered simply for being Jewish was extremely powerful for me. It was a stark reminder of the cruelty that humans can inflict on fellow humans. One of the project’s aims was to humanise the Holocaust. We looked at countless pictures of Jewish people before and during the Holocaust. Even if I can’t remember all their names, their faces stick with me. Individual stories allow us to understand huge events. They make history real. Before going to Auschwitz, I had no idea how many links there are between Wales and the Holocaust. I have always lived in South Wales, but I had never been taught anything about the Jewish communities that have lived in Wales.

When the opportunity came to do an internship as part of my degree, I was put in touch with the JHAW. I have loved every minute researching the Jewish communities of South Wales, engaging with members of the public about the Jewish community in Merthyr Tydfil and learning how to transcribe oral history interviews (which is a lot harder than it looks!). It is a privilege to hear people’s stories and work to preserve them and share them for generations to come.”

Emily Stanley



THANK YOU!

Thank you to our volunteers - without you, we couldn't do the work we do:

Krista - Newsletter, research & transcription

Mike - Research & heritage trails

Jason - Transcription of documents and oral histories

Joanna - Transcription of oral histories and research

Annie - Holocaust educational research

Jane - Research and transcription of oral histories

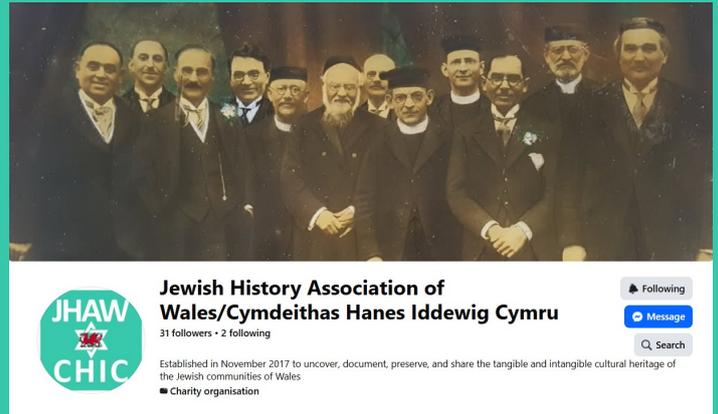
If you would like to volunteer with us, please get in touch.



OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

[The Jewish History Association of Wales/Cymdeithas Hanes Iddewig Cymru now has a Facebook page.](#)

Follow us there for updates on our projects, an early look at newly uncovered materials, and to contribute to our community stories.



REMEMBER US!

When people first hear about JHAW/CHIC'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 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 a donation please get in touch!

