

TALKS

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WILLEDEN JEWISH CEMETERY Thursday 14 October 7.30pm Deborah Cohen • London



Willesden Cemetery, which opened in 1873, is one of London's most prestigious Jewish cemeteries. It is run by the United Synagogue who were fortunate to be awarded a £1.7m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to open Willesden Jewish Cemetery as a place of heritage for the public. The United Synagogue website describes the Cemetery as "a place of great tranquillity, the cemetery charts the development of London's Jewish community over nearly 150 years, with graves and memorials rich in social history and genealogical detail". Tours and since COVID, online presentations, seek to convey this richness to audiences by bringing alive the stories of a sample of those buried in the Cemetery. This will be a first for Deborah presenting to a live audience outside the Cemetery.

Deborah Cohen lives close by the Cemetery and became a volunteer tour guide in 2019. She is a former NHS director, and has not quite stopped working as she chairs a local safeguarding adults board, does some consultancy, and is a Mental Health Act manager. Deborah describes her experience as a tour guide as being on a voyage of discovery, as she learns more and more about the "residents" of the Cemetery, including people who made remarkable contributions to life in the UK and beyond during their lives.

THE SECRET JEWS OF MAJORCA ISLAND Thursday 11 November 7.30pm Dani Rotstein • Majorca



During the Inquisition, the Crypto-Jews or Chuetas publicly professed Catholicism while privately adhering to Judaism. Synagogues were secretly built in private homes. Signs of this "secret" community can still be found today. We will visit the inside of the permanent exhibit in the Jewish Quarter Interpretation Center inaugurated in 2015 as we trace the footsteps of the Jewish Conversos who walked the narrow alleyways of the casco antiguo - or old town. We will learn about the famous failed boat escape of 1688 when 40 Crypto-Jews tried unsuccessfully to flee the Inquisition of the island. We will look for clues and hints that suggest a robust Jewish community that was extinguished over centuries in the fires of the Inquisition. In this new and cutting-edge virtual tour, Dani brings his wealth of Jewish informal education to pull back the curtain on the Spanish island's secret Crypto-Judio and Converso history.

TALKS

Dani Rotstein is a film producer, history-teller, and community organizer living in the Balearic Islands of Spain. Originally from New Jersey, Dani moved to Majorca in 2014 where he learned of the taboo history of the Conversos or Chuetas native to the island. Since then, he has made it his life's passion to continue exploring, uncovering, and sharing this interesting piece of little-known Jewish history. He believes that the revival of modern Jewish life in Spain can be a shining light to the rest of the world.

THE GHETTO: TRAVELLING THROUGH HISTORY Thursday 9 December 7.30pm Bryan Cheyette • University of Reading



"Ghetto" is an extraordinarily complex word which is both a noun and an adjective. It has layers of contrasting meanings accrued over five hundred years and a bewildering array of settings across the globe. It refers to medieval and early modern Jewish history; black experience in the great northern cities of America in the twentieth century; nineteenth-century imaginary ghettos; and our contemporary sense of cities and countries segregated by race and class. What makes "the ghetto" unique is that it is a place full of historical memory. Sometimes memory makes the ghetto "real"; at other times past versions of the ghetto are forgotten. But, from the beginning, ghettos have had a variety of histories and connotations. This talk will show how different ghettos (urban, racial, colonial) travel across time and space.

Bryan Cheyette is Chair in Modern Literature and Culture at the University of Reading, and a Fellow of the English Association. He has authored or edited eleven books, most recently *The Ghetto: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford UP, 2020). He loves to travel and has held visiting positions at Dartmouth College, the University of Michigan, and the University of Pennsylvania, and he also holds fellowships at the universities of Leeds, Southampton and Birkbeck College, London. He is a past book's editor of *The Jewish Quarterly* and writes for the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish Renaissance*. A self-confessed "revieweroholic", he reviews fiction for several British newspapers including the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Times Higher*.



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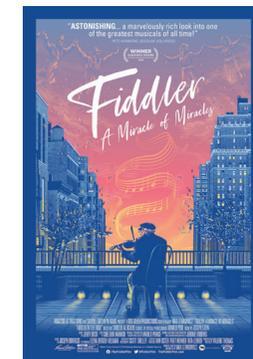
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FILMS & TALKS

Autumn 2021 Programme



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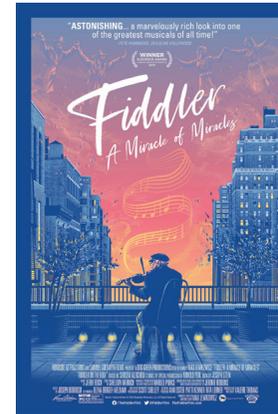
FILMS

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Tel: 0117 962 5852 • www.scottcinemas.co.uk
TICKETS: £5.80/£4.90 conc and students
Films start at 8pm (no ads or trailers).
Open to DAVAR and non-DAVAR members.

FIDDLER: A MIRACLE OF MIRACLES
Wednesday 29 September
USA 2019, 97 mins, English
Director Max Lewkowicz

Max Lewkowicz's richly detailed documentary celebrates the illustrious Broadway show Fiddler on the Roof, the evergreen shtetl-set musical first staged in 1964 with choreography and direction by Jerome Robbins and starring Zero Mostel as Teyve, the milkman.

Contributions from a range of interviewees – including people attached to the original production, such as producer Hal Prince and lyricist Sheldon Harnick, and famous fans of the show, including Fran Lebowitz and Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda – help to structure the history lesson about how Fiddler became a massive international hit. That account is filled out with footage of recent productions from around the world as well as the 1971 film version, starring Chaim Topol and directed by Norman Jewison. What makes this documentary are the organically introduced digressions into, among many other things, the history of the Pale of Settlement, Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem and Marc Chagall. (modified from Leslie Felperin, Guardian)



SARAH'S KEY
Wednesday 27 October
France 2010, 111 mins, French, English
Director Gilles Pacquet-Brenner
featuring Kristin Scott Thomas

Adapted from Tatiana de Rosnay's best-selling novel of the same name, Sarah's Key is an account of research by a journalist into a shameful incident in French history which intertwines with a story of a young Jewish girl from that time period.

'In Paris in 1942 the French police round up 10-year-old Sarah (Mélusine Mayance) and her family. To save her little brother, Sarah locks him in a closet and closely guards the key on her awful journey, which starts at the stifling Vélodrome d'Hiver, where Jews were packed in and



made to wait for transport to the camps. Sixty or so years later, Julia (Kristin Scott Thomas, excellent as always), an American journalist married to a Frenchman, researches an article about that roundup. Because of the article and an accident of real estate, Julia starts to obsess about Sarah and her fate, even as her own comfortable Parisian life begins to crumble' (Rachel Saltz, NY Times)

A CALL TO SPY
Wednesday 24 November
USA 2019, 124 mins, English
Director Lydia Dean Pilcher
featuring Sarah Megan Thomas, Stana Katic, Radhika Apte

A Call to Spy is an historical drama inspired by the true stories of women recruited into England's Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II. Desperate for new recruits, the SOE, created in 1940 after the fall of France and before the US joined the war, decided to train women as spies as it was believed that women could move more freely than men in occupied territories. Vera Atkins, a Romanian Jewish immigrant in London, was the spymistress in charge of the program. The work was extremely dangerous, with all recruits risking death and many were killed or sent to concentration camps. The film follows the stories of Vera Atkins and two recruits: Virginia Hall, an American with a prosthetic leg and Noor Inayat Khan, a Muslim pacifist born of Indian and Russian parents.

A Call to Spy is an engrossing and often thrilling spy drama and a tribute to this courageous and diverse group of women who showed extraordinary bravery and ingenuity. Sarah Megan Thomas (writer, producer and actor) believes that its themes are timeless. "It's about standing up as individuals and taking action for what you believe in."



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