

## The Parkes Institute Lifelong Learning Study Day 2017: 'Jews and Space'



*59 Brick Lane. Currently Brick Lane Mosque, formerly Brick Lane Synagogue and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Huguenot Church*

We will be holding a one-day event on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017 consisting of a series of brief talks by experts from within the Parkes Institute for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations on the exciting topic of 'Jews and Space' with plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion.

Drawing on the very latest research from the Parkes Institute these talks will cover a diverse range of perspectives on the topic of 'Jews and Space'. They will cover ways that particular spaces are claimed or contested and the significance this has for wider perspectives on the field of Jewish/non-Jewish relations. The 'spaces' being considered will range near and far across the world and history itself. The day itself will open up exciting new avenues of knowledge and introduce new ways that we can explore the relationship between Jews and non-Jews.

### Our Current Programme

Professor Tony Kushner – **Constructing a 'Jew murderer' in a rural space.**

Jews in racialized spaces conjures up images of ghettos, whether medieval or modern. It is unusual, therefore, to have a case study where a physical landscape in the countryside was defined and named after a Jew.

In 1734 Jacob Harris was convicted of a triple murder in Ditchling Common, a remote part of the Sussex countryside. He was probably the first Jew in post-readmission Anglo-Jewry to commit homicide and perhaps the only one in the period thereafter to carry out a triple offence. Jacob Harris was hanged and then gibbeted – the last man in Sussex to be subject to this indignity. He remains totally obscure in British Jewish historiography but there remains a strong folk memory of him in Sussex, in the south of England.

It seems almost certain that Jacob (or Hirschel Hirsch) was Jewish, although no contemporary document made that linkage. What is undoubted is that he was either at the time or some time shortly after constructed as a Jew. Yet whilst the published version of his story in Victorian England became increasingly antisemitic, there was also a strong element of identification with Jacob locally: the place of his gibbeting became known, and is still known, as Jacob's Post. His body and then the gibbet post were given magical powers, becoming a place of both repulsion and attraction. This paper thus explores how this remote rural space became one of the few in modern Britain to be named after a 'Jewish rogue'.

Jen Lewis – **Jews in Southampton's Streets**

Danielle Kretzmer-Lockwood – **Jewish Transitions from South Arica to Britain**

Dr Devorah Baum – **Life Writing and the East End**

Utilising published memoirs of Jewish immigrants, this paper will detail the character and nature of life for Jews in London's East End in the first half of the twentieth century.

Professor Joachim Schloer – **"Faith in Residence. Jewish Spatial Practice in the Urban Context"**

The paper is concerned with various forms and aspects of a very specific place: the doorstep. I will explore and discuss points of entry and exit, intermediate and mediating joints that lie between outside and inside: People enter and leave private homes, synagogues, houses of study, but also streets and whole quarters or cities – and so, metaphorically spoken, worlds of belonging – through such places, from private to public and back, and these acts of 'going through' can be regarded as performative acts

of cultural practice, as exercises in liminality which both relate to and create 'social, cultural and political spaces, places and (symbolic) boundaries as they relate to Jews and Jewishness' (Simone Lässig, Miriam Rürup).