

## » Books

» We both love travelling and, wherever we are in the world, we seek out Jewish heritage, synagogues and kosher restaurants and shops. Finding information about all this can be time consuming and rarely can it be found in one book. Amazingly, despite a growing interest in Jewish heritage in London, vibrant cultural centres, Jewish festivals for film, literature and music, no guide book existed about Jewish London to ensure visitors and residents have all the information they need in one easy-to-read format. With our knowledge of the contemporary Jewish community, linked with Rachel's extensive experience as a London Blue Badge specialising in Jewish London, we decided that we must write the book.

Publisher New Holland took us on and then it was all go. No sooner had they said they liked the idea, than we were writing sample chapters, sending in text and having to edit – drastically.

The book includes eight of Rachel's walking tours but also features historic cemeteries, Jewish art and artists, important personalities such as Disraeli and the Rothschilds, areas off the beaten track and suggested days out, together with Holocaust memorials, museums and Judaica. Several sites are little known so we hope the book will encourage a greater number of visitors.

### Refugees

One of the walking tours features Jewish Hampstead. Green open spaces of the Heath, the alleyways and passages with their historic pubs and, of course, the numerous cafés in and around the High Street are what usually comes to mind when you think of Hampstead. But there is also a very different story to tell – that of the Austro-German Jewish refugees who, when fleeing Europe in the inter-war years, did not go to the East End but instead chose to make their new lives in and around NW3 and NW6. Today, an aspirational area, in the 1930s it was shabby and affordable.

Walking through the leafy residential streets, Rachel uncovered wonderful associations with the European émigrés. The seated statue of Freud at the Tavistock Clinic led her on a voyage of discovery not only of the father of psychoanalysis and his family but also that of his sculptor, Oscar Nemon, a Croatian-born artist who arrived in England in 1938. Nemon's work, including several sculptures of Churchill, is found throughout London.

A few doors away from Freud's



■ The Freud Museum is in Maresfield Gardens – but did you also know that a few doors down is the Anna Freud Centre, the clinic established by his daughter Anna

# Yes, we've minded that Jewish gap

Finding there wasn't a guide to their heritage's London links, Rachel Kolsky and Roslyn Rawson penned one

home in Maresfield Gardens, now the Freud Museum, a modest sign indicates the Anna Freud Centre – a child psychology clinic established by his daughter and named in her honour after her death.

Visiting the 1930s modernist National Trust house in Willow Road leads you to the story of Hungarian-born architect Ernő Goldfinger. He arrived in England in the early 1930s and is remembered for his post-war housing tower blocks and inspiring the James Bond villain.

Walking the streets, memories of the many refugees and the Cosmo and Dorice restaurants still resonate and you can still almost hear the German lingua-franca of the day, smell the red cabbage and hear the sizzling of the Wiener schnitzels.

The book also features contemporary Jewish London, including all you need to know about where to eat, shop, stay and pray.

Our previous working lives as a

solicitor in Roslyn's case and librarian in Rachel's, ensured we researched tenaciously. Our many contacts, experts in their fields, the curators who manage the museums and galleries, and the synagogue administrators were generous with their time and knowledge.

Readers have already commented on how wonderful the illustrations are. With more than 200 photos and images, there is a mixture of past and present to put the stories into context.

■ **Jewish London is published by New Holland priced £10.99. For details of Rachel's walking tours and events and for signed copies of the book with dedications, if required, contact [info@golondontours.com](mailto:info@golondontours.com) or [www.golondontours.com](http://www.golondontours.com). You can meet the authors at Waterstones in Hampstead on Wednesday July 18 at 7pm when Rachel will be presenting a virtual tour of Jewish London.**



■ The creator of Freud's statue was a Jewish émigré who also sculpted Churchill

## » Bookseller's Column

Charlotte Colwill, Daunt Books

# A husband's love letter to his dead wife stirs emotions in tune with spring's limbo

Along with mood, apparel and leisure activity, reading preference is one of those things which is heavily reliant on the weather. You are unlikely to find anyone carrying Dostoevsky around in their beach tote and Confessions Of A Shopaholic being enjoyed by a crackling fireplace just seems incongruous.

In general, cold and moody weather encourages reflection and total immersion in a book – whereas hotter climes require fun and flighty tales.

Publishers are fully aware of these seasonal shifts in the reading public's concentration span.

Late spring invariably brings a fresh batch of "light" reads, with their pleasingly bright covers and their happy endings. Likewise, autumn sees booksellers straining under the hefty weight of boxes filled with serious-minded Booker Prize-seeking high literature.

Springtime, then, is a tricky transitional stage and we find our customers scanning the shelves with pained expressions of anxious indecision. Too late and too sunny to pick up that copy of Great Expectations they've been meaning to read since Christmas and too early to in-

dulge in the latest Jilly Cooper, they find themselves in a true pickle. Luckily for them, professional booksellers are here to ponder these difficult questions day and night and can endeavour to shine a light through the dense fog of confusion.

### Bodysurfing

This year, my solution to this seasonal impasse is Francisco Goldman's stunning fictionalised memoir **Say Her Name**. Goldman is a novelist and a teacher of creative writing in the States. After a long life of bachelorhood, he fell for young Mexican writer

Aura Estrada and they were blissfully married for almost two years before she died in a bodysurfing accident in 2007. The book is the story of Aura and of their life together. Although Goldman's tragic story is not unique (he is not the first person to have lost a spouse and written about it), the writing here is so spare and utterly devoid of self-pity or melodrama, that it is compellingly readable and genuinely moving from start to finish. Aura leaps off the page as a fully realised individual without ever being exploited or over-sentimentalised. Goldman is a highly

skilled crafter of narrative and so it is, perhaps surprisingly, truly a pleasure to read. There is, of course, a deep tragedy at the heart of the book, which perhaps makes it unsuitable as poolside fodder but really it is a love letter – one without pretension or drama and ultimately uplifting and affirmative for that reason. For me, it is the perfect spring limbo book because it stirs the soul without making the head work too hard and it has just the right amount of serious emotion to appropriately see off the last of the chilly weather.

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# Growing your own the easy way for time starved Londoners

Ditch any ideas of self-sufficiency, says **Tom Moggach**, and grow easy to tend fruit and veg that will liven up and embellish your meals

» Growing your own grub is back in fashion after a lull since the Good Life vibe of the 1970s. But what's the point if you live in London? Squashed for space and surrounded by shops – surely there are better ways to spend our time?

Rewind a few years and I would have agreed. Endless gardening is tedious – it smacks of outdoor housework. But I've discovered and refined some hassle-free methods to grow food. No matter how small the space, we can harvest tasty ingredients with minimum fuss.

In my new book, *The Urban Kitchen Gardener: Growing And Cooking In The City*, I suggest my favourite edible plants for urban spaces. These range from chillies and strawberries to the less familiar Japanese shiso and Mexican mouse melons. All add magic to meals and are either impossible or expensive to buy.

Along with the plants, I've gathered together top tips for typical urban plots such as balconies, windowsills and rooftops, learnt during my work as a horticultural trainer across London.

*Chillies are a brilliant choice for a sunny windowsill, both productive and decorative. At this time of year, buy a plant from the garden centre*

City gardeners, I believe, have different pressures and priorities. For a start, the lack of space has a dramatic impact on what we grow – we need to ruthlessly prioritise and ditch any dreams of self-sufficiency. It's not feasible or even desirable. There's far too much tempting food on offer in a diverse city like this.

Instead, carefully choose a few favourite edible plants to liven up and embellish your meals. Take salad leaves, for example. Those puffy bags in the supermarkets are pricey, dull and a waste of space.

### Bathtub

Yet it's a wheeze to grow your own mix – I recycle plastic mushroom crates, line and fill with compost, scatter a few seeds and then snip straight into the bowl.

Right now some of my winter salads are starting to flower, such as juicy claytonia, spicy mustards and landcress, along with rainbow chard, hardy lettuce and endive. Some grow in a recycled bathtub alongside rows of sweet carrots, with a few holes drilled for drainage.

Herbs, of course, are an-

other essential. Now is the time to think about basil, for example. Try purple basil or Thai basil if you like Asian food. These should be grown from seed.

Chillies are a brilliant choice for a sunny windowsill, both productive and decorative. At this time of year, you will need to buy a plant from the garden centre.

These harvests, however, are merely a perk. I reckon the most important reason to get growing is to feed our souls. Sounds a bit naff? Well, bear with me.

Everyone benefits from growing a plant or two because it is a soothing, simple process – in stark contrast to hectic city life. There is a genuine primal satisfaction to nurturing plants because it chimes with our distant pasts. Our ancestors grew food. Only in recent years have we lost the skills.

It also changes our outlook on the outside world. I did not grow up gardening, it came much later in life. I never took much notice of the weather and seasons.

But gardening helps us to tune in to the natural environment. I now look out of the window, first thing in the morning, and shape my days accordingly. I buy less, recycle a bit more, eat more fruit and veg and live with a lighter touch. It's a win-win situation – roll up your sleeves and get growing.

■ **The Urban Kitchen Gardener** by Tom Moggach is published by Kyle Books priced £16.99. Photography by Laura Hynd. Visit [www.cityleaf.co.uk](http://www.cityleaf.co.uk). @Tom\_Moggach



■ Tufnell Park resident Mark Ridsdill Smith's vegetable and fruit-laden balcony is featured in *The Edible Balcony* by Alex Mitchell



### ▶ Chili Corn Bread – serves four

This is gorgeous warm from the oven – perhaps with a cup of coffee at breakfast or to refuel after a blast of gardening. Try it spread with butter and honey. The chillies lend a gentle heat but, because they vary in pungency, test first and adjust quantities accordingly. The corn bread will keep for several days.

Olive oil, for greasing  
For the dry ingredients:  
2 mild red chillies (or to taste)  
80g sweetcorn, tinned or thawed from frozen  
100g plain flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
200g coarse polenta or corn meal  
30g light brown sugar  
½ teaspoon ground cumin  
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
½ teaspoon salt

For the wet ingredients:  
300ml soured cream or yoghurt

100ml olive oil  
2 eggs, lightly beaten

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6. Grease a small loaf tin or 20-23cm square cake tin with olive oil. A lining of baking parchment will also help but is not essential.

Deseed and finely chop the chillies, adjusting the quantity to taste. Heat a heavy-based frying pan, with no oil, then dry roast the chillies and sweetcorn until they just begin to char and blacken.

Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Add the chillies, sweetcorn and remaining dry ingredients, then mix thoroughly together. Separate any lumps of sugar with your fingers.

In a separate bowl, briefly whisk together the wet ingredients. Tip this mixture into the dry ingredients and whisk again until combined. Pour into the greased tin and bake for 25-35 minutes, depending on tin size, or until cooked through and golden. Test by inserting a skewer into the centre of the bread, which should emerge clean if the bread is cooked. Allow to cool, then tip out and serve.

Recipe from *The Urban Kitchen Gardener* by Tom Moggach