

Important British treasure saved for Jewish museum London

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The Jewish Museum has successfully raised the funds to secure the 'Lindo lamp', the earliest known English Hanukkah lamp and one of the treasures of British Jewish heritage, ensuring its continued place in the museum's collection.

Image



The Lindo Lamp

The museum has raised grants totalling £282,000 in order to purchase this unique piece of 18th century silver Judaica from its current owners. The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) contributed £145,000 while the independent charity, The Art Fund, and the MLA /V&A Purchase Fund awarded £75,000 and £30,000 respectively, and the remaining funds have now been raised from private sources to secure the future of this outstanding item in the museum's collection

and to prevent it from being removed from the public sphere.

Before being purchased for the collection, the Hanukah lamp was on loan to the Jewish Museum, where it was on display for over 70 years, since the 1930's. It was commissioned from silversmith John Ruslen in 1709 on the marriage of Elias Lindo to Rachel Lopes Ferreira. Elias's father, Isaac Lindo (1638 – 1712), fled from the Inquisition in the Canary Isles and settled in London in 1670. The Lindos became prominent members of the early community of Spanish and Portuguese Jews in London and founder members of Bevis Marks Synagogue, established in 1701. They also distinguished themselves in science and literature, in charitable endowments and as patrons of the arts. The backplate of the Hanukah lamp is chased with the figure of the prophet Elijah fed by the ravens, in a play on Elias' Hebrew name.

The lamp is on display in the gallery, Judaism: A Living Faith, which houses the museum's magnificent collection of Jewish ceremonial art, awarded Designated status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in recognition of its outstanding national importance. The Jewish Museum reopened in March 2010 following an extensive £10 million redevelopment. The expansion has tripled the space at the museum's Camden Town premises, bringing together the collections, displays and activities of its two former sites and creating new education facilities and exhibition galleries with hands-on displays for children and families.

Rickie Burman, Jewish Museum Director, said: "We are delighted to have received these significant donations and are very grateful to all those who have enabled us to secure the future of the Lindo lamp at the Jewish Museum. It is fantastic that this highlight of our Jewish ceremonial art collections can now remain on public view and be enjoyed by the many visitors to our new museum."

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the NHMF, said: "Hanukah lamps are central to Jewish celebrations and the Lindo Lamp is particularly special as it is the first one known to have been made in England. It is witness to the long history of Jewish people in this country and it's wonderful that the National Heritage Memorial Fund has played a part in saving it for future generations."

Stephen Deuchar, Director of The Art Fund, said: "Not only is this lamp historically important, it is also linked to a family who were great patrons of the arts, chiming with The Art Fund's core purpose as an independent charity dedicated to saving works of art for the nation. We are therefore delighted to have helped the Jewish Museum's acquire the Lindo Lamp."

Janet Davies, Head of Regional Liaison & Purchase Grant Fund V&A Museum, said: "Competition for Purchase Grant Fund support is intense but there was no hesitation in wishing to support this acquisition as a very fine piece of 18th century silver smithing of great historical importance and one which has been central to the Jewish Museum's public displays for 76 years."

Notes to editors

The Art Fund

The Art Fund is the UK's leading independent art charity. It offers grants to help UK museums and galleries enrich their collections; campaigns on behalf of museums and their visitors; and promotes the enjoyment of art. It is entirely funded from public donations and has 80,000 members. Since 1903 the charity has helped museums and galleries all over the UK secure 860,000 works of art for their collections. Recent achievements include: helping secure Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* for the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Gallery, London in February 2009 with a grant of £1million; helping secure Anthony d'Offay's collection, ARTIST ROOMS, for Tate and National Galleries of Scotland in February 2008 with a grant of £1million; and running the 'Buy a Brushstroke' public appeal which raised over £550,000 to keep Turner's *Blue Rigi* watercolour in the UK. The Art Fund is a Registered Charity No. 209174

MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund

The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund is a government fund that helps regional museums, record offices and specialist libraries in England and Wales to acquire objects relating to the arts, literature and history. It was established at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 1881 and continues to be part of its nationwide work. The annual grants budget, currently £900,000, is provided by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Each year it considers some 250 applications and awards grants to around 100 organisations, enabling acquisitions of around £4million to go ahead. For more information visit the website: www.vam.ac.uk/purchasegrantfund

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