



ENGLAND AS THE CUSTODIAN OF THE JEWISH PAST

Led by world-renowned scholar

Professor Gary A. Rendsburg

Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History

Distinguished Professor, Rutgers University

August 24 – September 2, 2026

10 Days / 9 Nights

Jewish Historical Seminars

JHS@JewishHistoricalSeminars.com

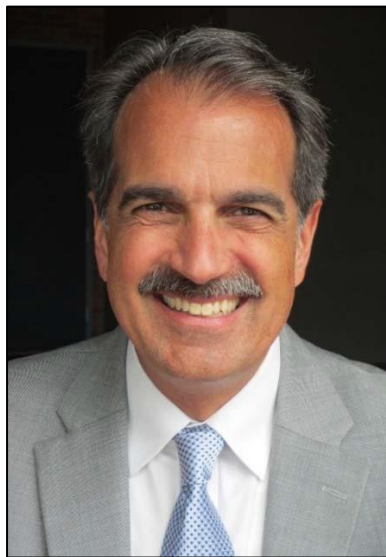
Debbie Zuberi

Scholar-in-Residence Professor Gary A. Rendsburg

Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History
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Gary A. Rendsburg is one of the world's leading experts in the Bible, Jewish history, and Hebrew manuscripts. He has lived in both Oxford and Cambridge and has conducted extensive research both at the Bodleian Library (Oxford) and at the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit of the Cambridge University Library.

In addition, he knows the collections at the British Library and the British Museum well, plus he has visited all the other sites on our itinerary, from Blenheim Palace to Bletchley Park and beyond.



Welcome to England!

Monday, August 24, 2026

Arrival – Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Upon arrival at London Heathrow Airport (LHR), you are transferred as a group to the medieval university town of Oxford. We'll have a short walk, just to orient everyone to the city centre, allowing time for everyone to settle into Oxford's storied Randolph Hotel. In the evening, you'll get to know your fellow travelers, Travel Director, and Scholar-in-Residence over a Welcome Vegetarian Dinner at the Gardeners Arms, Oxford's famous vegetarian pub.

Overnight: Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Meals Included: Welcome Dinner with beer at the Gardeners Arms.

<https://www.thegardenersarms.com/>

<https://www.graduatehotels.com/oxford-uk/>



Tuesday, August 25, 2026

Walking Tour of Oxford

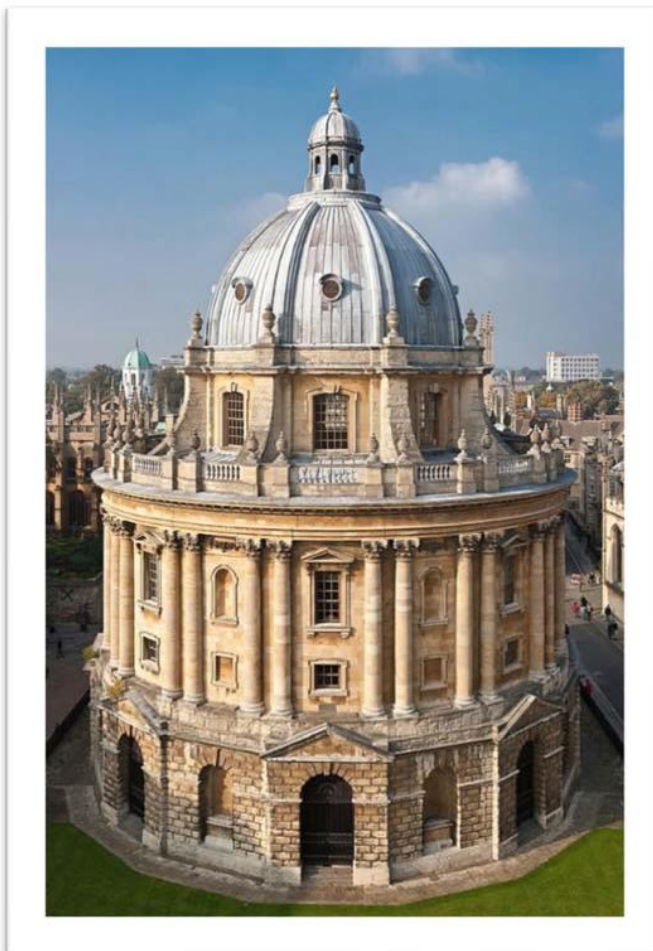
Breakfast at the hotel

Join Gary Rendsburg this morning for a walking tour to discover Oxford. Highlights include: the Bodleian Quad, the Radcliffe Camera, New College, Magdalen College, Oxford Botanic Garden (site of the medieval Jewish cemetery), Dead Man's Walk (along which the medieval Jewish community would convey its dead), and Christ Church College.

Overnight: Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Meals Included: Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner on your own.



Wednesday, August 26, 2026
The Bodleian Library and Merton College Library

Breakfast at the hotel

Today is dedicated to visiting two of Oxford's libraries, starting with a visit to the Bodleian Library. Guided by César Merchán-Hamann, Hebraica curator, we will see its unsurpassed collection of Hebrew manuscripts, including Maimonides's Mishneh Torah bearing the author's signature, Maimonides's handwritten copy of his Commentary on the Mishna, and the exquisite Kennicott Bible, the crown jewel of all medieval manuscripts.

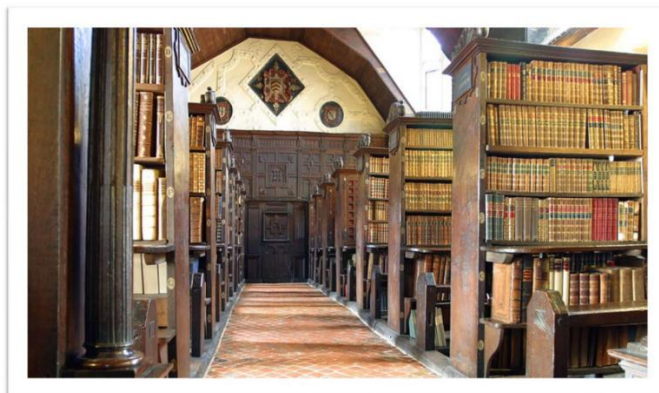
Next we head to Merton College Library for some time to explore the oldest, continuously operating library in the world – not to mention the Jewish connection, since the land was purchased by Walter de Merton from Jacob the Jew in the year 1264.

Later in the day we return to the Bodleian Library for a tour of this most significant of all Oxford buildings, with access to the Divinity School and the Duke Humphrey's Library.

Overnight: Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Meals Included: Breakfast

Lunch and dinner on your own.



Thursday, August 27, 2026
British Museum and British Library (London)

Breakfast at the hotel

After breakfast, journey to London for a visit to the world-famous British Museum, the greatest institution in the world for the study of the ancient past. Marvel at the Rosetta Stone, the Gilgamesh Epic, and numerous other artifacts which inform our knowledge of the ancient Near East.

We then head to the British Library, one of the world's great cultural and educational institutions, home to another great collection of medieval Hebrew manuscripts. The Treasures of the British Library gallery includes the most significant holdings on public display, including Magna Carta, Codex Sinaiticus, and the Golden Haggadah.

Overnight: Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Meals Included: Breakfast

Lunch and dinner on your own.



Friday, August 28, 2026
Blenheim Palace, Churchill's Grave, Yarnton Manor

Breakfast at the hotel

Visit one of the largest private homes in all of Britain and see its exquisite gardens. Blenheim Palace (9 miles north of Oxford) is home to the present 12th Duke of Marlborough, scion of the extensive Spencer-Churchill family. Notable members of the family include Sir Winston Churchill (who in fact, was born at Blenheim Palace), Consuelo Vanderbilt (who married the 9th Duke of Marlborough), and Lady Diana Spencer (later Princess Diana).

Next stop will be a visit to St Martin's Parish Church in Bladon, the burial spot of Winston Churchill.

Our third stop is at Yarnton Manor, a Jacobean estate, which served for forty years as the home to the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, now the Lanier Theological Library and Learning Centre, where Gary and his wife Melissa spend every summer, as their home base for their respective research projects.

Upon return to Oxford, the rest of the day is free until Shabbat services and kosher Shabbat dinner, to be held at the Oxford Jewish Congregation (O.J.C.), a few short blocks from the hotel.

Overnight: Randolph Hotel, Oxford
Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner
Lunch on your own.



Saturday, August 29, 2026

Free Day in Oxford

Breakfast at the hotel

For those who wish to attend Shabbat services, we return to the very welcoming O.J.C., 0.4 miles from our hotel, a short 10-minute walk. Services will be followed by a catered Shabbat lunch in the synagogue.

Afternoon tour of the Ashmolean Museum aimed at the “Jewish journey”.

Overnight: Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Meals Included: Breakfast and Kosher Lunch

Dinner on your own (we will provide guidance for *shomer shabbat* people, especially since the hotel rooms come with mini-fridge).



Sunday, August 30, 2026 Bletchley Park and Cambridge

Breakfast at the hotel

Check-Out: Randolph Hotel, Oxford

Today we head to Bletchley Park, where we will discover firsthand the incredible achievements of Britain's World War II codebreakers, led by Alan Turing (portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch in “The Imitation Game” [2014], which you may wish to watch in advance).

Next grab lunch *al fresco* at Bletchley Park, before we travel to Cambridge, our home for the next three nights.

As we approach Cambridge, we will stop at the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, a moving tribute to the U.S. soldiers who lost their lives during World War II.

Overnight: Hilton Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge

Meals Included: Breakfast

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/stnhchi-hilton-cambridge-city-centre/>



Monday, August 31, 2026

Walking Tour of Cambridge

Breakfast at the hotel

Discover Cambridge this morning on a walking tour with Gary Rendsburg. The highlight is the visit to King's College Chapel, the crown jewel of all Oxbridge buildings.

Meet Prof. Aaron Koller, the Regius Professor of Hebrew, the most prestigious academic position in the field of Jewish studies, established by Henry VIII in 1540, and in fact still partially funded by the crown. Prof. Koller will host us at Gonville and Caius College, founded in 1348, making it the fourth oldest of the Cambridge colleges.

Use the afternoon to explore Cambridge on your own or relax at the hotel.

In the evening we will be hosted by Prof. Koller and his wife Shira Hecht-Koller at their Cambridge home for a kosher dinner.

Overnight: Hilton Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge
Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner



Tuesday, September 1, 2026
Cambridge University Library
(including the Cairo Genizah Collection)

Breakfast at the hotel

The day begins with a visit to the Wren Library at Trinity College Chapel (home to the academic papers of Isaac Newton).

Next we visit the Cambridge University Library, home to the most extensive collection of Cairo Genizah documents in the world. Your group will be privy to an exclusive guided tour led by Prof. Ben Outhwaite, director of the Genizah Research Unit. The array of medieval documents is simply staggering, ranging from documents written by Maimonides in his own hand to Hebrew prayers set to Gregorian chant, written by Johannes of Oppido, an Italian monk who converted to Judaism in 1102.

Later, enjoy afternoon tea and scones at The Orchard in Grantchester, where Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Bertrand Russell, John Maynard Keynes, and Ludwig Wittgenstein would gather during the summers of the early decades of the 20th century. Some of you already may have enjoyed “Grantchester,” the British detective series produced by ITV, set in the village.

Overnight: Hilton Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge
Meals Included: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea
Lunch and dinner on your own.



Wednesday, September 2, 2026
Cheerio, England!

Breakfast at the hotel

Check-Out: Hilton Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge

After breakfast, say a fond farewell to Cambridge and to your newfound friends as you prepare to return home after a memorable holiday.

One group transfer to Central London (for those who wish to extend their stay) and to London Heathrow (for those returning to the U.S. or headed for other destinations) is included. Individual transfers to other London airports and railway stations are available at an additional charge.

Meals Included: Breakfast





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“This blessed plot, this Earth, this realm, this England.”

— William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, Act 2, Scene 1

“Till we have built Jerusalem
In England’s green and pleasant land!”

— William Blake, “And did those feet in ancient time”

* Designed by Melissa A. Rendsburg, Managing Director,
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