

WHAT DOES A JEW LOOK LIKE?

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It is not easy to do justice to this book in so brief a review. It may be a slim volume but it is packed with mini autobiographies, stories and insights from individual Jews. A portrait photograph in an appropriate setting accompanies each account, further illustrating the diversity of the contributors.

Dr Kahn-Harris notes in his introduction that most people in Britain never get the chance to meet 'a real live Jew', and therefore the manner in which Jews are represented publicly often determines the impression non-Jews form. Stock photographs can do a great disservice,



especially if they reinforce stereotypes and prejudice. The vile depictions of Jews in Christian iconography over the centuries, reaching an appalling level in Nazi

Germany, tragically find their way into the sub-conscious of many to this day.

Readers of Common Ground will need no reminding that the Jewish community is diverse in not only appearance, but in religion, politics, culture and so many other aspects of life too. Despite knowing this well myself, I still found the accounts of the contributors in their own words, informative, moving, and inspiring. I have therefore kept this sensitively composed and beautifully produced book on my lounge coffee table where I can access it every so often. I intend to present the book as a gift to a number of friends; however, I hope it reaches beyond those of us who need no convincing of the wondrous gift of diversity within the Jewish communities.

■ Reviewed by The Revd Bruce Thompson