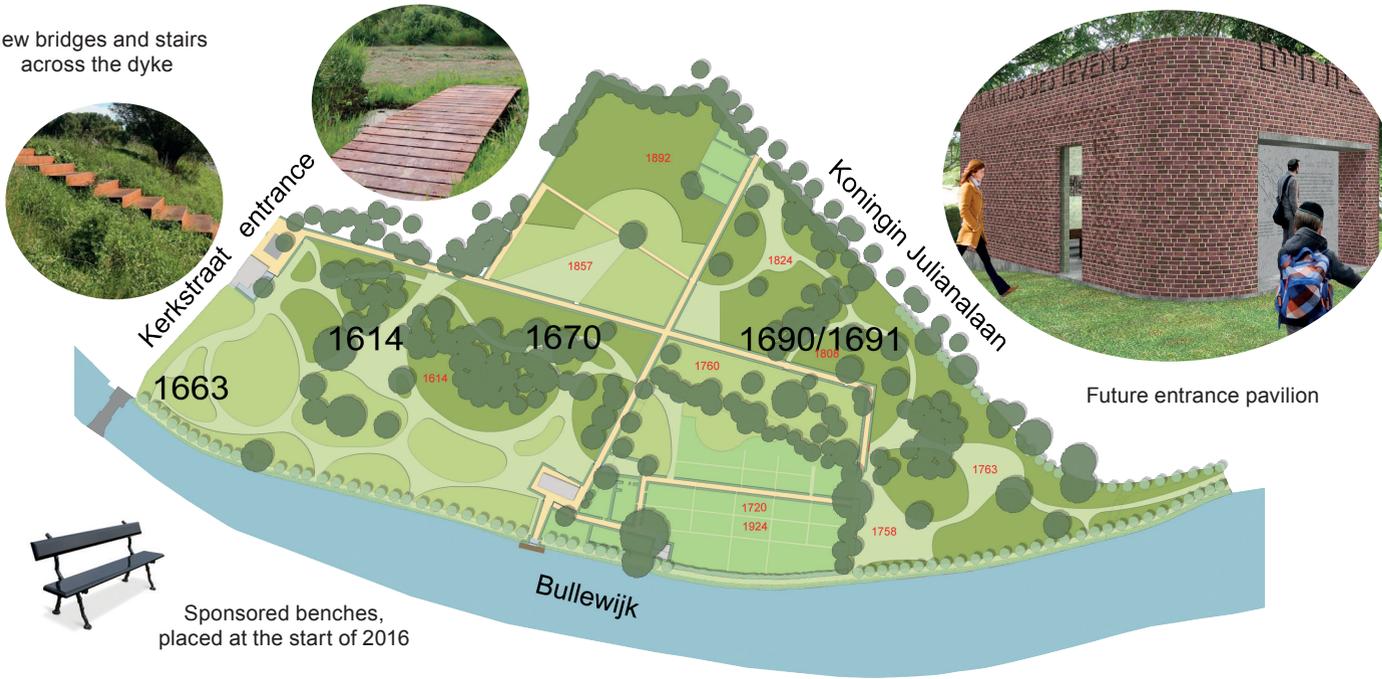


New bridges and stairs across the dyke



  
**Beth Haim**  
*David Henriques de Castrofonds*  

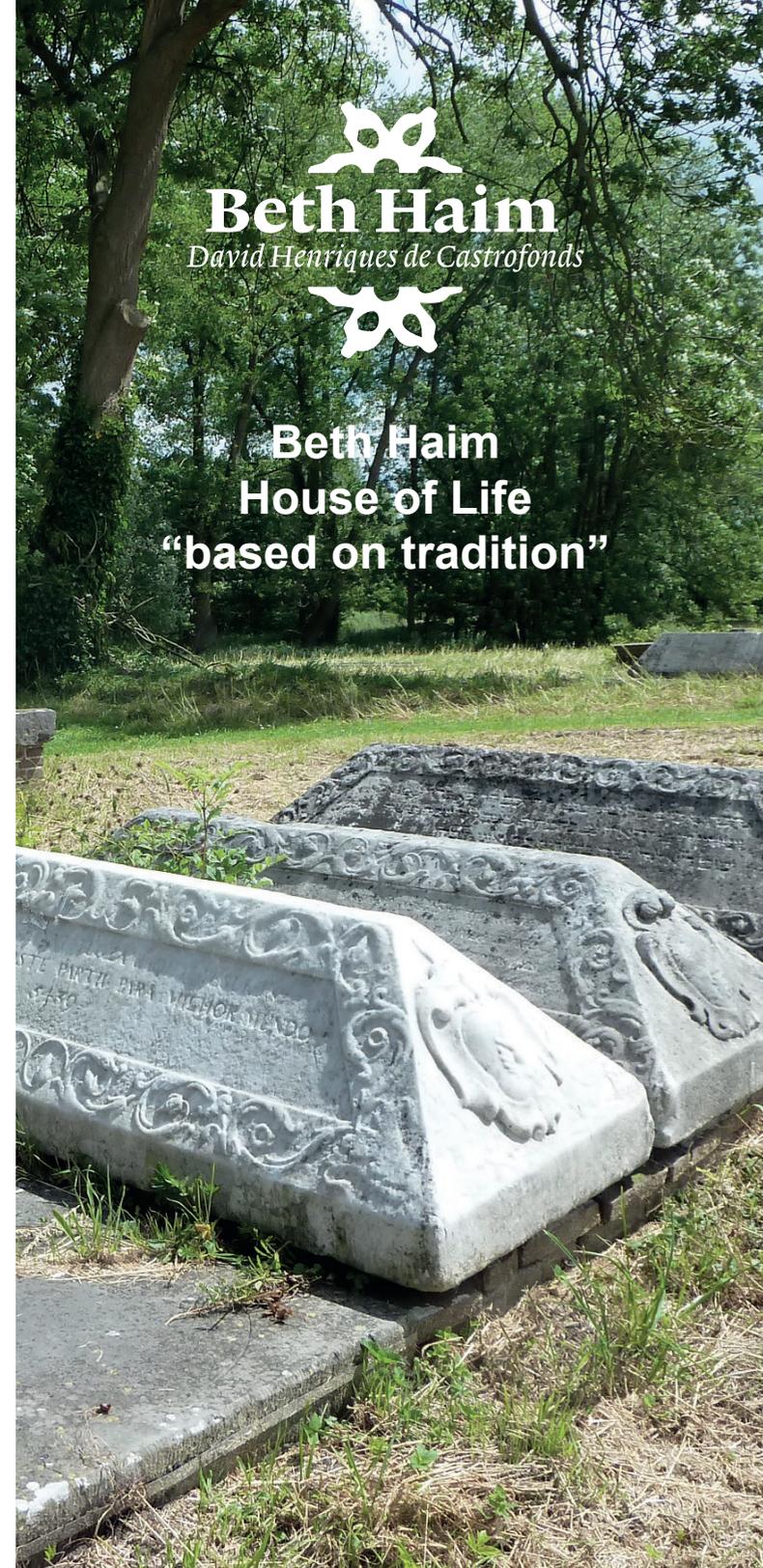

**Beth Haim**  
**House of Life**  
**“based on tradition”**

## New plan “based on tradition”

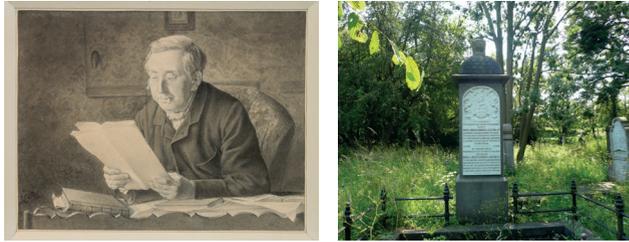
The David Henriques de Castro Fund is charged with maintaining the cemetery, with its unspoiled nature, idyllic location and monumental graves, for generations to come. In 2014, the year of the cemetery’s 400th anniversary, the Castro Fund launched an ambitious plan, aimed at opening up the cemetery and making it accessible to a wide and varied public.

## The oldest Jewish cemetery in the Western hemisphere still in use

The cemetery, with 28,000 graves, is a national monument. Its location, in the middle of the urban agglomeration yet untouched by the encroaching city and modernization makes the cemetery unique. It is the oldest Jewish cemetery in the Western hemisphere still in use. Many famous, and less famous, Portuguese Jews are buried here. Among them, rabbi, printer and publisher Menasse Ben Israel, the parents of philosopher Baruch Spinoza, physician and philanthropist Samuel Sarphati and real estate mogul Maup Caransa. Their graves are marked by a large variety of stones and monuments. The graves with their marble tombstones from the Golden Age are particularly beautiful. The stones not only inform us about the deceased but are wonderful works of art in their own right. Its location, on a tributary of the Amstel river, is particularly charming. The many rare plants and monumental trees lend the grave fields their characteristic appearance.



A unique place  
with special stories



David Henriques de Castro Mzn (1826-1898) played an important part in the cemetery's preservation. Between 1865 and 1892 he uncovered more than 6,000 tombstones. He noted the particulars and the location of the deceased on large cards which have survived. To prevent the stones of the hundred most prominent graves from sinking again, he propped them up by putting up small brick walls. His own grave is adorned by a tombstone designed by sculptor Joseph Mendes da Costa.



An oasis of peace  
in a varied countryside  
with special plants and trees

400 years of  
Portuguese-Jewish history



Samuel Sarphati (1813 - 1866) was a physician to the poor, philanthropist and entrepreneur. He founded the first bread factory in the Netherlands, the Amstel Hotel and the Palace of National Industry which later burned down. He came up with solutions to the great poverty of the time and the diseases that accompanied them. His headstone reads: All of Israel mourned him, referring to the fact that he was very popular in the city of Amsterdam. His wife Abigael Mendes de Leon (1811 - 1864) is buried next to him. The inscriptions on the headstone are in Portuguese.



A museum collection of  
beautifully decorated  
17th century tombstones



Visiting address  
Kerkstraat 10, Ouderkerk aan de Amstel

Postal address  
Postbus 160, 1191 AD Ouderkerk aan de Amstel  
[www.bethhaim.nl](http://www.bethhaim.nl)  
[info@bethhaim.nl](mailto:info@bethhaim.nl)

Opening hours  
Sunday through Friday  
10.00 to 16.00  
The cemetery is closed on Saturdays  
and Jewish holidays

Tours and packages  
Upon request, through [info@bethhaim.nl](mailto:info@bethhaim.nl)

Donate!!  
During the past 400 years, every generation has made an effort to maintain the cemetery to the best of its ability. It is now up to you and to us to pass on this national monument in all its splendor.

Bank account  
IBAN: NL45 RABO 0351 8488 00  
BIC: RABONL2U