

# Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc.

 Member of the JCA Family of Communal Organisations



## NEWSLETTER

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### 1. Archives

#### Received with thanks from:

- Peter Wertheim: NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, presidential documents
- Valerie Stern via Yvonne Meyers: Aleck Stern's papers concerning the Randwick-Coogee Social Club in the 1920s.
- Rabbi Apple: newsletters and reports from communal organisations.
- Harry Leslie: letters concerning his visit to Taiwan as guest of Taiwan P.O.W. Camps Memorial Society.
- Dennis Leonard: family tree of descendants of Blumke from Lida who survived seven husbands - Solomon, Zirmansky, Givnesky (Goldberg), Segalnitzky (Rosenberg), Shilubsky, Goldman, Lazarus.
- Bernard Kellerman: memorabilia of his grandfather, the late "Harry" M. Kellerman
- Yvonne Raymond: history and genealogy of the Selig and Stone families.
- Kingsley Ireland via Gary Luke: family tree of Moses Openheim Levi and Sarah, daughter of Samuel Openheim, and trees of Sarah Elias and Philip Levi and Aaron Goldsmid and Catherine.
- Marcelle Marks: brochures from the Migration Museum in Adelaide, featuring the Tree of Life exhibition about the Jewish community.
- George Denes: negatives from his collection of photographs taken for the Jewish Times/News from 1960 onwards.
- Dennis Leonard: photos of tombstones from Bombala cemetery and obituary of Rachel Goldberg.
- Lew Rischin: update of burials in Southport cemetery, Gold Coast.
- Wendy Cooper: photo of Solomon Marks grave from Cooktown
- Tamara Lowbeer: *Habo Australia Celebrates Sixty Years*
- Family of the late Aaron Aaron:  
*Birth register (1767-1881) of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' congregation, London, Bevis Marks Records, parts II and III (abstracts of marriage-contracts from earliest times until 1901.)*  
*Iconographic study and listing of graves existing in the Jewish cemetery of Faro (CIF).*
- Ruth Rack: *Book of Ruth, memoirs of a child survivor.*

- Margot Salom: *In Sure Dwellings; a journey from expulsion to assimilation.* (This fascinating, self-published book is to be reviewed in the November Journal.)

**Purchased:**

*Making a Difference. A history of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia* by Marlo Newton.

**2. Quarantine Station.**

A researcher, Nathalie Hartog, is interested in family stories connected with the Quarantine Station at Manly. She has found a number of Jewish names on the shipping records in the 1920s and the 1950s and would be interested to speak to families who passed through the station when they migrated to Australia. Her telephone number is 9918 4443.

**3. Jews in Sport – AJHS August Meeting**

The Society meeting in August on *Jews in Sport* was excellent. Unfortunately it clashed with a wedding, a barmitzvah and the rugby league grand final so the attendance was extremely disappointing. The subject matter was not and the small audience was enthralled with Anthony Hughes' presentation on Australian Jewish sporting history as well as John Stark's and Julius Mayer's fascinating journeys to top sporting achievement. We were delighted with Marcelle Jacob's excellent moderating of the panel.

Judy Shapira brought her father's athletics cup won for a ten-mile race. The large silver-plated cup was called the Cohen Cup and Judy's father belonged to the Melbourne Harriers. Judy would be interested in any information about the Harriers and the Cohen who gave his name to the cup. The next journal will feature an article by Anthony Hughes on Harry Cohen.

**4. Edgar Kelson Judean Scouts by Wesley Browne OAM**

On 17 August six ex-members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bondi Judean Scouts entertained their wonderful ex-Scoutmaster, Edgar Kelson, who has just attained the age of ninety.

Edgar Kelson resides in the Montefiore Home in the Eastern suburbs. He does not seek the limelight but hundreds of Jewish boys owe him a great deal as he was not only a wonderful Scoutmaster but also assisted dozens of boys who fled Nazism prior to WW II.

Edgar Kelson arrived in Australia from Germany about 1927. He was a great scout but when war broke out he immediately joined the army as a runner, the lowest rank in the Armed Forces. He sailed to the Middle East and proved to be such a leader during many skirmishes, including Crete, that he was commissioned in the field and was eventually made a Captain in Army Intelligence.

He is a wonderful Australian and was just like a father to all of us. I have enclosed the sincerely felt speech given by Eddie Helfgott at the dinner party held in Edgar's honour:

The First Fleet of Helfgotts entered Port Jackson entered Port Jackson on 22 October 1938, a rainy Saturday morning. The good ship Aorangi berthed at No. 13 Pymont at 9am.

The Helfgott family was met and welcomed to Australia by Edgar Kelson. Edgar is the son of friends of my parents. The Kelsons had preceded us here by several years.

The Kelson family and their friends took us under their wings and made a great contribution to settling us in the new country. They helped us find a place where to live. They introduced us to locals and helped my father find a job. They organised schools for my sister Ruth and for me. And they saw to it for us all to meet people and to settle quickly into the new life.

Edgar was then the Scoutmaster of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bondi (Judean) Scout Group. Much against my will he insisted that I join the movement. And that also helped me tremendously in the early years to integrate into the local scene.

We are forever grateful to the Kelsons.

## **5. Ella Cohen Medallion by Morris Ochert OAM**

A silver medallion of some historical interest has been brought to my attention. It is 1 \_ inches in diameter (about 32 mm). On the obverse it bears the embossed words "The New South Wales Jewish Board of Education" and "Awarded to Ella Cohen for regular attendance 1909 – 5670". On the reverse side is an ornate Menorah.

Careful examination reveals that the numbers "70" were carefully engraved into the surface of the medal, while all else is embossed ie. raised. My theory is that this medal and others were ordered early in 1909 prior to Jewish New Year 5669 and the die maker was told to put that Hebrew date on them. However, the prize-giving would have been late in the year by which time the Hebrew year was 5670, so the Board decided to alter the date. This was done by buffing off the raised "69" and engraving "70" in its place.

The Society's Archivist, Helen Bersten, was able to advise me that Ella Cohen was the daughter of George and Sarah (nee Goldstein) and she married Louis Symons on 3 September 1914 (three weeks after the commencement of WW I). She would have been 15 years old in 1909. Unfortunately our local archives and cemetery register do not make reference to this couple so it can be assumed that they moved away from Brisbane, or from our Community, or perhaps they never came to Brisbane.

It may be of interest that my late father was Honorary Inspector of all schools grouped in the NSW Board of Jewish Education in the decade 1920 –1930.

## **6. Credit facilities**

The Society has applied for credit facilities so that memberships and purchases can be charged to credit cards. The membership forms for 2001 will have a section for you to fill in credit details if you wish.

## **7. The Late Aaron Aaron**

The Society was saddened to hear of the death of Aaron Aaron, the highly respected leader of the Sephardi community. Myer Samra contacted us in regard to the family donating his impressive library to Mandelbaum House and they in turn have passed on to us some items which are more appropriately housed in our collection. Thus we have been able to add to our genealogical resources the registers of Bevis Marks Synagogue and the list of graves existing in the Jewish cemetery of Faro in Portugal [1830-1939] as well as abstracts of ketubot from earliest times until 1901.

## **8. Sol Green – The Legendary Melbourne Bookmaker**

As the newsletter is being typed on Melbourne Cup Day, it is appropriate to recall the success and near misses of the legendary Melbourne bookmaker Sol Green.

Green, a Cockney Jew, arrived in Australia in 1885 aged 17 with sixpence in his pocket. He bought and sold anything and everything around Melbourne until, at 20, he began his first book fielding on the Flat at Flemington. But he suffered heavy losses and was forced to give it up and pencil for other bookies. After a trip back to Britain, he returned in 1891 and within a few years his wizardry for figures and willingness to lay bets of any size made him the biggest bookie in Australia.

At the turn of century Green opened the Melbourne Tattersall's Club near Bourke Street as a fancy betting shop. It was viewed as far more palatial than John Wren's City Tattersall's Club. He also opened a mail order doubles book and advertised nationally offering long odds without limit. In 1907, Green laid Sir Hugh Denison's agent a feature double of £100,000 to £1000 against the stable mates Poseidon and Apologue for the Caulfield-Melbourne Cups double. Both won and the next day Green handed over a certified bank cheque for the full amount. So enormous was Green's business that he lost only £20,000 on the doubles book.

As a horse owner Green claimed his best horse was Gothic (winner of the 1927 and 1928 Newmarket Hcp) but others suggest his 1910 Melbourne Cup winner Comedy King (and subsequent champion sire), or Gladsome that won the Futurity Stakes in 1904 and 1905. During the 1920s Green's horses finished in minor placings in the Melbourne Cup three years in a row, with Strephon winning the VRC Derby and finishing second in the Cup in 1928.

As a breeder, Green bred the 1914 Cup winner Kingsburgh and the 1919 winner Artilleryman.

During the 1930s and 1940s Green became famous for his generosity to numerous charitable causes around Melbourne, including the many hospital appeals to which he gave over £40000 in a period of one week, Food for Britain Appeals and funding appeals for London blitz victims.

Contributions to the newsletter are most welcome and can be sent C/- the Honorary Archivist at Mandelbaum House.

*Bruce Le Bransky*  
*Newsletter Editor*