


# Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc.

 Member of the JCA Family of Communal Organisations



## NEWSLETTER

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1. Thank you to those members of the Society who have commented on the Newsletter and it is good to know that it is being read. It is almost like speaking in the great outdoors where the voice is lost in the atmosphere, because unless there are comments, one cannot gauge the effect of what is being written and transmitted. So many of our members are silent, even when we know they are interested in our activities and our efforts to please them. I heard ONE comment only as to whether we should change the time and venue of our regular talks, and that was not to change! But still there was only a small gathering for Diane Armstrong's talk, and I am sure everyone would have been fascinated by her account of the follow-up of the passengers on the S.S. Derna as they settled in to life in Australia and New Zealand. You really missed a treat if you did not come.

Nor was the letterbox full with members' letters telling of their own family stories and incidents of social history, which I urged you to send in in the last Newsletter. It is really important for future generations to know about us, the way we live, the way we think about our lives as Jews in the Diaspora and the way we relate to Jewish communities elsewhere, especially in Israel. So please take a few moments to write a short note and contribute to our social history project.

A response has come in from Verna Rouvray (hooray!), who writes in part:

" I was so interested in the article about the old Adelaide synagogue. I had tried unsuccessfully some years ago to find it. When I saw the new Synagogue in the suburbs, I thought [the old one] must have been demolished. So was pleased to know it has survived in spite of its present most unsuitable use.

My father and his 3 older siblings were born in Adelaide. I have a book prize my father received for Hebrew reading at the Adelaide Hebrew Sabbath School in October 1897. His brother had his Bar Mitzvah at that Synagogue in November

1897. I should think my grandparents would have been members. My father didn't have a Bar Mitzvah. I think the family had fallen on hard times. They moved to Sydney about 1900 and started a boarding house in Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross. I remember the house being pointed out to me as a child. It had become a branch of the Bank of New South Wales by then. Subsequently the building was demolished but the site is still a Westpac Branch. Dad received another book prize from Fort Street Model Public School; in December 1901 for 1<sup>st</sup> prize in Geometrical deductions in Class Matric 2. My father and his brother had attended Prince Alfred College when they lived in Adelaide. I have a book prize my father received there too.

While I was in Adelaide I visited the Jewish section of the West Terrace cemetery and found my great great grandmother's grave (my paternal grandmother's mother) and the graves of her daughter and grand-daughters, also my grandfather's sister as well as other relations. I also went to a Family History Centre and perused Sadie Pritchard's collection and photocopied any relevant information to people to whom I am related"

Thank you Verna, for a great story. More please from other members.

## 2. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SOCIETY.

As I have already mentioned, Diane Armstrong spoke to us on Sunday afternoon 7<sup>th</sup> July at Mandelbaum House. On Monday night 29<sup>th</sup> July at Moriah College, in the AV Room, the Hans Kimmel Awards were presented. This year's students were absolutely outstanding, in both their presentation and their material. We had been asking for some time that the students be prepared for the oral presentation of their work, by giving them practice with the microphone and in delivery, and that their stories be judiciously shortened so that the evening didn't go on for too long. This has been done, and congratulations to the School and its staff for their efforts. There is surely a career in journalism awaiting some of those students, as they were absolutely a delight to hear, and the whole evening finished by 9.30 pm after fourteen families heard their stories in a lively, accurate and historical way. It really was a treat for the capacity audience.

## 3. POSTAGE AND MAIL.

I wonder if you realise how much of your membership money goes into postage and mail. The Journal, twice yearly, costs us \$2 each copy, which is why we have as many hand-delivered as possible, and we are very grateful to those very worthy members who save us money by delivering Journals in their neighbourhood by hand.

We have recently bought a new printer so that we can print our own meeting notices AND... as so many of you are now on the internet, we can e-mail them to you instead of posting them, saving on paper, postage and time... **IF WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS.**

### 3. PRIVACY POLICY.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc. (The Society) consists of its office and archive collection and maintains a membership list for the distribution of its *Journal, Newsletter* and notices of meetings.

The Society undertakes to maintain the privacy of its members by not disclosing details of members' names, addresses or contact numbers without the permission of its members. The Society does not sell or rent its membership lists and would only disclose contact information to the Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA) for fundraising purposes on a confidential basis because the Society benefits by receiving funding from the JCA. Again, this would only be done with permission of individual members. (Members are reminded that, if you attend a JCA Women's Division function rather than a general JCA function, you may designate to which of the eighteen organisations you wish your donation to go. In this way you are able to direct funds directly to the AJHS. That would be much appreciated.)

Any sensitive or confidential material in the archive collection is marked as such and may not be consulted without the permission of the archivist or the donor. When donations are made to the archives, the donor is asked if there are any special restrictions on the material.

We believe this statement is sufficient for the purposes of the Society as it is a non-profit organisation employing voluntary labour and therefore does not fit the criteria for a fuller privacy policy under the Privacy Act.

### 4. THIS MONTH'S PROFILE. HELEN LORAIN RASKO . O.A.M. J.P.

Committee member Helen Rasko has been a member of the AJHS. for several years now and is a valued member indeed, always ready to assist and help out when the need arises. Helen has had a distinguished career in the general community, and is now Vice-President of the Actors Benevolent Fund, and a consultant to the NSW Schools Talent Project, where she uses her vast experience as a singer of world class. As Helen Lorain she auditioned at age fifteen before Sir Charles Moses at the ABC's Market Street studios, thus launching her professional career. Helen's career has encompassed Royal command performances, singing and compering for Radio Australia, and appearances with such great orchestra leaders as Duke Ellington, Joe Loss, Benny Goodman, Jim Gussey and Tommy Tycho. The great baritone Paul Robeson wrote "Helen Lorain is Australia's best exponent and authority on spirituals."

Helen has recently made a CD, which will retail at \$15, all of which is going to Gene Therapy at the Centenary Institute of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. (Orders can be made by phoning (02) 9327 1973).

Helen has been an honorary guide at the Sydney Jewish Museum for over ten years. Her late husband Bela Rasko was a Holocaust Survivor, and she has two sons, John and David. She is a Past President of Bezalel Jerusalem, a member of WIZO and Temple Emanuel, and of course, of the A.J.H.S. Helen is a typical example of the adage: "If you want something done, ask a busy person!"

Kol Hakavod, Helen.

## 5. ARCHIVAL ACCESSIONS.

Received with thanks from

- Morris Ochert OAM: copies of papers relating to the Toowoomba Jewish community including the deed of sale of the Synagogue land; death certificates of David Ksiensky (David Hyman Karmel) and Henry Spiro (Trustees), will of Henry Spiro, minutes and documents.
- Sydney Schultz: *My Family*, compiled by Herbert Walford, of Andorra. It includes the following families: Abrahams, Aebersold, Alphandry, Asserson, Berryman, Blitz, Brabazon, Brennan, Callan, Corcut, Daggers, Dalglish, Eidam, Elboz, Elton, Fox, Glinsky, Goodman, Harris, Hiller, Hugot, Kensell, Leitner, Lewis, Littauer, Loffel, Levi, Luthi, Moss, Pynt, Rabbits, Rentsch, Segrue, Schultz, Steele, Summers, Tessler, Tuck, Walford, Watson, Wicks, Wingate, Wolff, Wood.
- Janette Rosenthal: JNF and Zionist ephemera.
- Random House (publishers): *Outwitting Hitler* by Marian Pretzel. This is a reprint of his excellent story of survival, originally entitled *By My Own Authority*.
- Rabbi Apple: papers and newsletters.
- Sophie Caplan: newspaper clippings and programs, including 1947 *Bunter Abend* program.
- Morris Ochert: article on Queensland Jewry published in *Multicultural Queensland 2001*.
- Nate Zusman: bound volumes of AJHS Journal Vols 1-13. We are very grateful to Nate for this donation, and we shall continue to have future volumes bound to match.

Purchased: *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities 1945-2000* by Judith Berman.

## 6. ATTENTION ALL PHILATELISTS.

A French writer compiling a book on Judaica in philatelic art is trying to obtain an old envelope with a cancelled stamp from Solomontown in South Australia (now Port Pirie). Anyone who can help is asked to contact our office ([ajhs@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ajhs@ozemail.com.au)) or phone/fax 9518 7596.

## 7. AUSTRALIA VIA KAUNAS AND VLADIVOSTOCK, 1940.

A Queensland researcher is interested to know if any research is being or has been done on the *Haitian* and its passengers who arrived in Brisbane in December 1940. Many were rabbinical students. She is anxious to interview any Jewish passenger or their relatives:

P. Berliner, S. Bloch, S. Davis, C. Gutnick, R. Jofeh, D. and J.M. Klein, M. Moore, J.H. and L.M. Neiman, S. Schechter, B.M., H.T., A.E. and A.A. Silver, N. Wachtfogel.

Dr. Motti Zalkin from Ben-Gurion University will be coming to Sydney in February 2003 to research Lithuanian Jews in the Diaspora.

#### 8. CORRECTIONS.

- In Newsletter 55, it was stated that Edgar Kelson is buried in North Sydney. This is incorrect as he is buried at Rookwood.
- Some errors were made in the list of AJHS office bearers in the latest Journal and Index: We omitted Sophie Caplan's OAM; we omitted Miriam Solomon's name from the Committee. In the Contributor's list, we gave Rabbi Apple the degree of M. Phil. whereas his degree is M. Litt.

#### 9. VOLUNTEERS.

Where would the AJHS be without volunteers to help it run smoothly and consistently? We are lucky to have Helen Bersten, who acts as Archivist, Office Manager and the core person in the organization. We have the computer skills of Joe Ben Mayor every Tuesday, and we soon hope to be able to organise a web site, towards which we would be delighted to receive some help. Also among the regulars is Les Belinfante, who catalogues our serial publications and Sandra Rosen who is cataloguing the hundreds of negatives from George Denes' days as AJN photographer. Both Sandra and Les come regularly on Thursdays. Lisa Marx is our library cataloguer.

Our newest recruit is Zelda Goldstein, who is willing to give us a Tuesday a fortnight even though her week is already very full with voluntary work.

We would like some extra assistance to help type up photo lists, and to photocopy newspaper clippings as well as preserve photos in archival sleeves. Typing tasks would be required for Thursdays, while other tasks could be done on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Please ring Helen if you can help. (9518 7596). Excellent working conditions, great company. Please help ... it is your Society.

#### 12. LITTMAN LIBRARY TITLES AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, established in 1965, publishes scholarly works that explain and perpetuate the Jewish heritage. Following the guidelines laid down by its founder, it publishes works of scholarship that reflect objectivity, fresh research and new insight, and that are as far as possible definitive in their field. The Library also publishes translations of contemporary scholarship originally published in other languages, as well as Hebrew and Aramaic classics so as to make the Jewish religious and literary heritage more accessible to English-speaking readers.

For more information on the Littman Library and full details of all available titles, please visit the website: [www.littman.co.uk](http://www.littman.co.uk)

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13. TOUR (HERE) IN 2003 BY ENGLISH TOUR COMPANY.

An English tour company has been corresponding with the Society discussing a tour of Sydney for February 2003. They would like to take a tour of present day Jewish Sydney and we have suggested a bus tour of the eastern, northern, southern and western areas passing and pointing out synagogues, schools etc with some brief commentary. Is anyone interested in taking this on? We have suggested a charge per head to the Society.

14. GOULBURN AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY. MEMBERS' INTEREST DIRECTORY 2002.

This is a list of members with identifying reference numbers and the family name and time period which they are researching. They have also sent a sheet entitled *Goulburn and District Pioneer Register 1901 -20* for researchers to fill in family details which will be included in a forthcoming publication. Information is required by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002. Please contact us if this refers to you.

15. GREETINGS.

With the Yomim Tovim so nearly upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members and readers -

L'SHANA TOVA ... for Rosh Hashana, G'MAR TOV ...for Yom Kippur,  
CHAG SAMEACH ... for Succoth and Simchat Torah

From the President, Dr. Suzanne Rutland, and the Committee of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc.

JUDITH SHAPIRA.  
Newsletter Editor.

Contributions to the Newsletter are most welcome. They should be sent to the Newsletter Editor, AJHS, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW, 2008. or emailed to [ajhs@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ajhs@ozemail.com.au)