

# Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc.

 Member of the JCA Family of Communal Organisations



## NEWSLETTER

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1. **WELCOME** to the new year and the first newsletter of 2003. I hope that this year will be a fruitful one for the Australian Jewish Historical Society, but it did not get off to a very good start, with a record drought and bushfires all around the nation. Our deepest sympathy and commiserations to our Canberra ACT members who have had a particularly bad time.

### 2. **ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2003.**

At the Annual General Meeting held in December 2002, the following office-bearers of the Society were elected.

President:	Dr. Suzanne Rutland
Vice Presidents:	Sophie Caplan OAM, Judith Shapira
Hon. Treasurer:	Russell Stern
Hon. Secretary:	Jeannette Tsoulos
Committee:	Joe Ben Mayor Helen Bersten (Hon. Archivist) Julius Mayer Helen Rasko OAM Miriam Solomon Nate Zusman

We regret the retirement of Sylvia Rosenblum as Minutes Secretary, and thank her for her efforts on our behalf.

The committee meets at 11 a.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in our room at Mandelbaum House, and it would be appreciated if members did not make phone calls at that time, which interrupt the business of the meeting.

### 3. THE JOURNEYS OF SUZANNE.

During the long university vacation our President, Dr. Suzanne Rutland, made two overseas trips to Conferences. The first was to Los Angeles, to an Association for Jewish Studies Conference attended by some 400 –500 people, where there were 14 parallel sessions! Suzanne's topic was: "*Restitution or Blood Money? The debate on the "Edge of the Diaspora"*".

After returning from the US, Suzanne went to London to a conference held at the Imperial War Museum, entitled *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour- the Post-War Survivor Experience*, where her topic was "*The Unwanted: the Story of Post-War Survivor Migration to the United States.*"

Perhaps we in Sydney will be able to hear one or both of these papers during the year. The Committee is interested in finding new subjects for our general meetings, so if you have any ideas, please let us know. If you are unable to suggest a speaker, still give us the idea and we shall put on our collective thinking caps to see what we can produce.

Incidentally, did you know that the Department of Semitic Studies no longer exists at Sydney University? From this year it has been renamed the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, (with Suzanne as Head) part of one of the four Schools within the Arts Faculty, the School of European, Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Studies. What's in a name?

### 4. FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF 2003.

Our first general meeting of the year will be held on **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March** when Russell Stern (our Treasurer) will speak on *Australian Jewish Soldiers at the Boer War*, a subject he has been researching for some time. It is now over a century since the Boer War finished, and apart from the film *Breaker Morant*, little mention has been made of it compared to other wars. Yet there were many Australians there, including some Jewish ones. Come and hear their interesting story... at Mandelbaum House, 30<sup>th</sup> March at 2 pm.

### 5. PROFILE... NATHAN ZUSMAN (Nate).

The third son in a family of eight boys and girls born between 1908 and 1921, (four of whom are still living), Nate was born in Perth, W.A., and educated at the Perth Modern School, at that time the only public secondary school in WA, requiring a scholarship for entry.

Nate's communal activity began early, as he taught Hebrew school and was heavily involved in the re-forming of the Maccabean Youth Club and its magazine, the *Maccabean*, which is still published in Perth today.

Nate came to Sydney in 1941 in the AIF to train as an Army Intelligence Officer, who had to learn to both read and write Japanese, to translate the

documents captured in the War. After discharge, in 1946 he worked for a short time for the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, then became Secretary of the Jewish National Fund of NSW. He became involved in the dried fruit industry until his retirement in 1965, travelling the world buying and selling cherries and other fruit.

Nate was one of the founders of the Jewish Unity Association, which was the Sydney equivalent of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism in Melbourne. This was a particularly difficult time (ca 1946-7) as the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Public Relations Committee had difficulties in accepting some of the members of Unity and their magazine, for their political views, and Nate was in the thick of it.

He was on the board, and for ten years was Chairman of the Australasian Book Society, which published the first books of many Australian authors. As an ardent Yiddishist, he was President of the Jewish Folk Centre and had a leading role in the establishment of the Yiddish Department and lectureship at Sydney University.

In our Society, Nate saw the difficulties of working in the tiny space at the Great Synagogue. When Mandelbaum House was being built, without any cost to the community, he saw the possibility of our Society having its own rooms in a Jewish centre of learning. Subsequently, he has joined the committee of Mandelbaum House... and we enjoy the enhanced facilities of our own office. For some time Nate was Vice-President of our Society, and very capable too.

In Perth his name is legion, as it should be also in Sydney. He is now living quietly with his partner Doris, in East Lindfield, and we wish him many more years of contentment and rest from his endeavours for the Jewish communities of Australia.

## 6. THE ARCHIVES.

Received with thanks from:

- Sydney Levine OAM: *Biblioweb*, March/June 2002 (Special issue in honour of Dr. Ben Haneman); *How to trace your Ancestors* by Meda Mander; *Caring for our Culture*, (Museums Australia) also *University of Sydney Record* no 1, 1985, special edition to celebrate ...the first women graduates... (includes Gladys Marks and Fanny Cohen) as well as Mr. Levine's collection of anti-Semitic newspaper articles and pamphlets.
- Kerrie Thorley: copy of 1980 map by Bryan Thomas, *Original Colonial Landholders of Sydney 1792-1892*. Jewish names include Charles Nathan, Jacob Marks, Isaac Moss, E. Cohen, Isaac Nicholls, Cooper and Levey, Solomon Levey, Barnett Levey, George Johnston, Esther Julian, Abraham Polack, Isaac Simmons, John Harris.
- Mrs Dorothy Maber per Mrs Leonie Doorey: photo of the grave of Private Maurice Marks from Villers-Bretonneux cemetery in France.

- Margaret Beadman: *Guide to the Battlefields, cemeteries and Memorials of the Gallipoli Peninsula*, published by the Australian War Memorial.
- Morris Forbes OAM: newsclippings and newsletters.
- Sophie Caplan OAM: newsclippings.
- Rabbi Apple AM: *The Jewish Way, Jews and Judaism in Australia* by Raymond Apple. This book, published in 2002 and beautifully illustrated, is a timely outline of Jewish history and lifestyle in today's Australian community.
- Rabbi Apple AM: *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, number 24, 2002, *Voices of a 20<sup>th</sup> Century Nation*. (includes contributions by Amelia Klein and Pauline Rockman about child survivors of the Holocaust).
- Australian Jewish Genealogical Society: *Touring Hill End* by Brian Hodge. The Isaacs family owned the Criterion Hotel (Green Valley) in 1874
- Maria Bond via Verna Rouvray: genealogical documents collected by the late Diana Wright. Names include Levey, Levy, Davis, Benjamin, Hart, Asher, Mordecai, Marks, Ellis, Alexander, Joseph, Solomon, Cohen.

### **Obituary.**

. We were saddened to learn from her nieces, Maria Bond and Jocelyn Booth, of Diana Wright's death. Diana was a descendant of Phillip Levey, brother of Barnett, Solomon and Isaac. She worked for years researching and documenting the Levey family and descendants, most of whom came to Australia and contributed much to early Australian Jewish history.

Diana's book *Our Jewish Connections*, which she donated to our library, has been an invaluable aid to several of our members researching their family tree.

We send our condolences to Diana Wright's family on their loss while we are grateful for their preservation of her valuable genealogical collection

### **Genealogical Society's index of family trees.**

Bernard Freedman of the AJGS has been copying information from family trees held by our Society so that an index of names can be compiled – a gigantic undertaking! He is completing a consolidated surname index of all people born before 1925 on the AHJS list of 200 family trees. When he has finished, a CD of the data bank will be available from AJGS. It will also include a list of resources held by the AJGS as well as the AJHS shelf lists.

### **War Records**

Further to the item in our last newsletter, Margaret Beadman of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra is interested in the names of any Jewish service personnel killed in action in Vietnam.

### **Displaced Persons records**

The National Archives of Australia ([www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)) has recently completed a project of recording names and details of DPs who arrived from 1947 to 1953 by sea or air under the auspices of the International Refugee Organisation. An article on the project is in the December 2002 issue of *Descent*, the Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists. Anyone wishing to provide additional information should contact Kerri Ward at NAA on [kerriw@naa.gov.au](mailto:kerriw@naa.gov.au)

### **Scottish records**

If you have Scottish ancestry, you might be interested in a new research centre which has been opened in Hornsby by Scottish House ([scottishhouse@sydney.net](mailto:scottishhouse@sydney.net)) It is the Australian Scottish Cultural and Information Centre Inc. In their publicity letter to us they listed Isaac as one of the names being searched by Clan Campbell members. You will never know which tartan to wear until you ask them about your Scottish ancestors!

### **Mid Victorian Anglo-Jewry database**

Petra Laidlaw of London ([thompsonlaidlaw@aol.com](mailto:thompsonlaidlaw@aol.com)) is compiling a database of 1851 Anglo-Jewry. She believes the number of Jews in Great Britain in 1851 to have been 30-35,000. Her initial aim to create a database of 3000 names is under way and she aims to extend that by contacting descendants of Anglo Jews who migrated.

We have forms available for providing her with details of your family.

### **AJHS Library**

Members may not be aware that we have a library of about 600 books as well as our archive collection. We are grateful to Lisa Marx who acts as our librarian. Among our books is a special collection dedicated to the late Jill Balkind which relates to American Jewish history, so if you need information about American Jewry, don't hesitate to contact us. Just remember our books are for reference only – not for loan.

**Please remember that we welcome donations to the Library Fund which are tax-deductible.** We use these donations to increase our library collection, so even if you have already renewed your membership, it is not too late to forward a donation. Thank you very much.

### **Index to volume 15**

We welcome to our band of volunteers Diana Encel who will index volume 15 and subsequent volumes of our Journal. We hope she will be so efficient that ultimately you will receive the corresponding index with part 4 of each Journal.

In the meantime, we expect indexes to volume 15 and volume 16 to be printed in 2004.

### **Tasmanian History Launch**

Peter Elias of the Hobart Jewish community has informed us that the book, celebrating the community's history from 1804, will be launched by the Governor of Tasmania on Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm at the Hobart Synagogue. Rabbi John Levi from Melbourne will conduct an historical tour on the same weekend and not in April as mentioned in the Journal.

### **Women's diaries**

An email has been received by an American researcher who is interested in obtaining information about Jewish women's history in 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia. She is particularly interested in diaries which may have been kept or family papers which give an insight into women's attitudes at the time. If you know of such documents, please contact the Hon. Archivist at the Society. ([ajhs@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ajhs@ozemail.com.au)).

### **National Council of Jewish Women**

The National Council of Jewish Women celebrates 80 years this year and is seeking names of Jewish families who were met by members of NCJW when they arrived by ship from Europe from 1929 to 1939. If you know of anyone who fits this criterion, Dinah Danon of NCJW would love to hear from you!

### **7. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Since our last Newsletter (No.58), we have been joined by the following new members. We hope that their membership will be a long, happy and satisfying one:

Mr. Robert and Mrs. Jennifer Gavshon  
Mrs Anna Marks  
Mr Frank Wolf (returning to membership).

Mr Peter Lewis  
Prof. Leslie Stein

*Judith Shapira, Newsletter Editor*

Contributions to the Newsletter are most welcome. They should be sent to the Honorary Archivist, AJHS, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie St., Darlington, NSW 2008.