

Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc.



 Member of the JCA Family of Communal Organisations

NEWSLETTER

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The President and Committee of the Society extend its deepest sympathy to our Honorary Historian, Louise Rosenberg, on the death of her daughter.

1. ARCHIVES

Received with thanks from:

- Sir Asher Joel - *First Citizen, Mayors of Campbelltown since 1832*, by Jeff McGill. Contains pages on Phil Solomon, mayor 1945-50.
- Mr John Rector - issues of *New Citizen*, 1953.
- Professor Alan Crown - typed copies of his chapter "Demography, politics and love of Zion: the Australian Jewish community and the Yishuv, 1850-1948" published in Rubinstein, *Jews in the Seventh Continent*, 1986. Also relevant correspondence.
- Ms Heather Martin - school photo of Yetty Bennett (nee Gobits).
- Ms Helen Bersten - *The Distant Exodus* by Colin Golvan (via the NCJW fete).
- Rabbi Apple - journals and ephemera.
- Dr Gerry Black - his book *JFS. The History of the Jews' Free School, London, since 1732*.
- Beryl Bauld: family trees of Benjamin Baruch and Minna Segall, Lopez family, Hermann family, Herzberg family.
- Dr Leonard Warnock via Rabbi Apple: photographs and memorabilia re the masonic connections of Felix Freeman, Phillip Phillips, and Barnett Phillips. Also a copy of a photo of Caroline Phillips, nee Cohen.

- Kim Phillips: One family's story - the history of the Crabb, Tolano and Phillips families.

Correction: the diaries of the Weingott brothers were donated by Mrs Leveah Hanes.

2. THE AJHS COMMITTEE

The AJHS committee for 1998 is as follows:

Anne Andgel, Helen Bersten, Dennis Bluth, Sophie Caplan, Noni Guthrie, George Keen, Bruce Le Bransky, Ruth Mandelberg, Julius Mayer, Suzanne Rutland, Judith Shapira, Miriam Solomon, Nat Zusman and Sylvia Rosenblum.

The executive and honorary offices are continuing in their positions as from 1997.

All members of the Society are encouraged to become involved in its work and activities. If you have research interest or would like to help in the work of the AJHS please contact the Society.

3. MARRIAGE APPLICATION DOCUMENTS 1878-1920

Microfilm copies of these documents will soon be available at the Society.

The earliest have been filmed and the others are soon to be completed. They relate to marriages at the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for this period. They contain information about the bride and groom which is not available in the marriage register entry, such as Hebrew names and the names of parents and whether parents are living or deceased.

Our thanks to the Great Synagogue for permission to film, to Pascoe's for the filming and to our generous members whose donations enabled us to pay the bill.

4. BALLARAT REGISTER 1857 - 1921

At the AGM on 23 November, an exercise book kept by Nathan Spielvogel, Secretary of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, and continued by Reverend Lenzer, in which are recorded some births, deaths and marriages in the congregation, was handed to Dr Malcolm Turnbull to be given on permanent loan to the Ballarat congregation. This followed an earlier rejection by the Ballarat congregation of the loan offer.

We are given to understand that the register will be housed in a special room of the Jewish Museum of Australia (Melbourne) together with other archives of the Ballarat Congregation. A facsimile, earlier sent to Ballarat and also rejected by them, but retained by the AJHS (Vic), was returned to Sydney at the same time as the original book was lent. A letter book kept by Rabbi Lenzer, during his time as Minister of the congregation was also included in the loan.

The Ballarat register only contains names and dates, no other information. Our member, Lee Simmons of Adaminaby, has done considerable research into compiling lists of births, deaths and marriages from Ballarat and Bendigo.

5. CUMULATIVE INDEX, VOLUMES 10 - 13, 1986 - 1997

This has been compiled by Helen Bersten and will be published this year. An index to newsletters nos 20 - 40, 1991 - 1997 will be completed later in 1998.

6. ABRAHAM MOSES SILVER CUP: BY J.J. COHEN, SILVERSMITH. [FROM ALAN LANDIS]

I have the honour to be the Honorary Valuer/Adviser to the Great Synagogue Jewish Museum and to the Holocaust Museum in Darlinghurst. Often I am called upon to assess items for donation or loan from the above former to the latter institution and to organise repairs, maintenance and cleaning of many of the objects.

Recently I was called upon to assess the condition and re-evaluate an important silver cup. This was no ordinary Kiddush cup; it bears the inscription: *GIFT OF MR ABRAHAM MOSES TO THE SYDNEY SYNAGOGUE THAMUZ 18 5606*, which equates to the secular date of 1845.

Abraham Moses and his wife Rebecca had the honour of having their portraits painted by the pre-eminent artist of their day Richard Read. These are held in the Great Synagogue.

The cup in question has unfortunately received a very hard life. Having been repaired over-zealously on numerous occasions. It is of very primitive manufacture which although I had valued it on a previous occasion over a decade ago, I did not appreciate the significance of one of the hallmarks which is very badly worn.

In Sydney prior to 1850, very few people could have afforded to commission a sterling silver cup for presentation. In addition there were less than twenty silversmiths in Sydney at this time, and two were Jewish: - Henry and John Joel Cohen (no relation, although brothers-in-law). The latter was the maker of this cup. The workshop is illustrated in a facade depicted in Fowles' "Sydney of 1848", the location of which was in George Street, opposite Barrack Street.

Noni Guthrie, a member of this Society wrote a very fine biography of JJ Cohen, her ancestor which appear in Volume X, Part I of the AJHS Journal. I commend it to you.

The cup will be on display in a Shabbat exhibition at the Holocaust Museum in Darlinghurst, from mid January for six months.

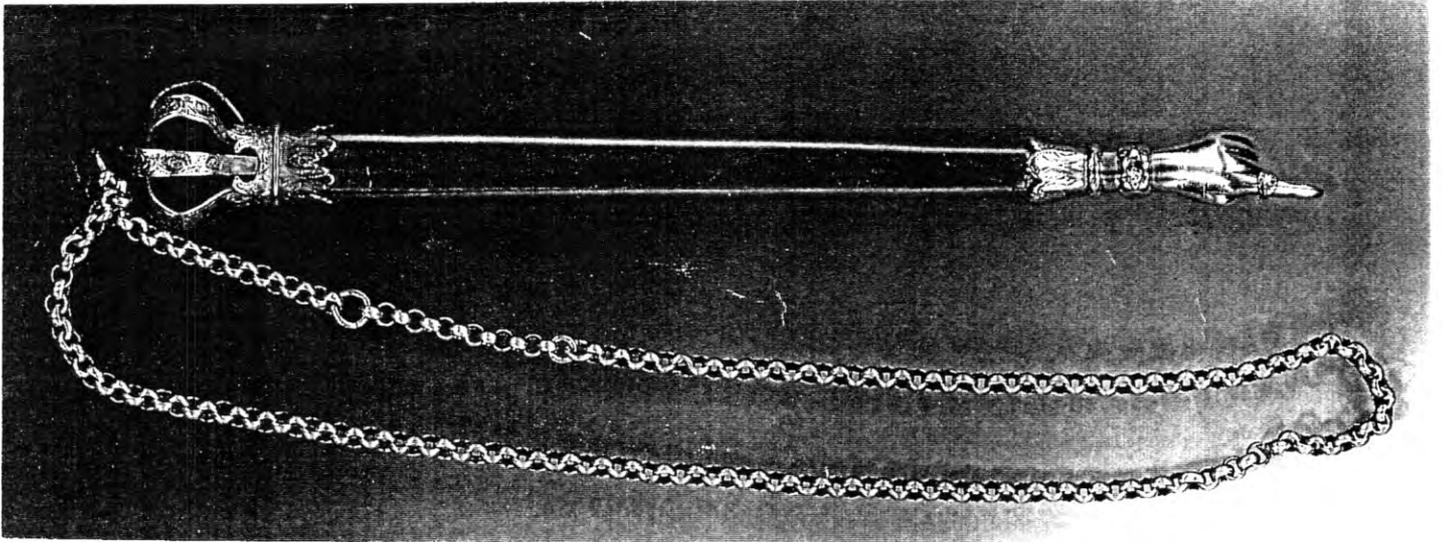
7. A LEFT-HANDED YAD (TORAH POINTING HAND) BY MORRIS OCHERT

This photo shows a silver YAD which has some interesting features. Firstly, it is left-handed! There is no Din (Commandment) or Minhag (a custom, so accepted in a locality or time, that it may almost acquire the force of a Din), which states that a Yad must be right-handed. However, I have not met anyone who has heard of a left-handed Yad. I assume that the smith, when sculpting it from a tiny block of silver, used his left hand as a model while he worked with his right hand. A light-hearted suggestion is that it was made to suit a left-handed Baal K'riah (Torah reader).

Around the forefinger is a gold band set with a single diamond, while around the wrist is a gold bangle, set with three diamonds. It is 22mm long. It is inscribed:

“Presented to the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation by HD Dinte Esq, Vice President, Pesach 5644.”

Thus it was presented in 1884, nineteen years after the Congregation was founded, and two years before the Synagogue was consecrated in 1886.



Appreciation is expressed to the Congregation for permission to reproduce this data.

8. THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS' FREE SCHOOL, LONDON SINCE 1732 BY DR GERRY BLACK

This recently published book has been written by Dr Black, a member of the Council of the Jewish Historical Society of England and a trustee of the Jewish Museum of London.

Between 1890 and 1900 one third of all London's Jewish children passed through its doors such that in 1900 it had more than 4000 pupils. The school provided a refuge and a means of escape from poverty for students many of whom were unable to speak English. Many of its students settled in Australia including Rabbi Freedman of Perth. Its famous headteacher from 1842-1897, Moses Angel, who was also the first editor of the Jewish Chronicle, was the son of Emmanuel "Money" Moses, a felon transported to Van Dieman's Land for 14 years following a sensational Old Bailey trial which included the giving of character references by the Chief Rabbi.

The book is published by Tynsder Publishing PO Box 16039, London NW3 6WL and is available at the price of £ 11 including postage.

9. JEWISH THEATRE

Birgit Lang, a PhD student at the University of Vienna, is seeking people who were involved in any way with Yiddish or English speaking Jewish theatre and also German speaking Jewish theatre. She will be in Sydney for the Diaspora conference in February and March.

10. THE MACQUARIE STREET SYNAGOGUE, JOHN TAWELL AND THE SYDNEY JEWISH COMMUNITY

John Tawell's connection with the Sydney Jewish community is that he owned two properties which were converted into Synagogues. The first was number 4 Bridge Street which had been a girls' orphanage and was bought by Tawell in 1827. It was consequently sold to John William Wallace and rented by the Sydney community from 1837 to 1841 as *Beth Tephila*, the Bridge Street Synagogue.

The second was Tawell's home in Macquarie Street used for the first meeting of the Society of Friends or Quakers in 1835, subsequently used as the Friend's meeting house and rented by the breakaway congregation in 1859 as *Succath David*, the New Synagogue or Macquarie Street Synagogue. (It was never the Baptists' Chapel as formerly described.)

Tawell was hanged for murder in 1845, but the property was not available for purchase until after 1861 because of a long drawn out legal case known as the Great Seal Case.

Tawell had been born in England and became very interested in the Quaker community. He arrived in Australia in 1815 to serve a sentence of fourteen years as the result of a conviction for possession of a forged banknote. His family joined him in 1824 and after gaining his ticket of leave he prospered as a chemist and grocer. In 1831 he took the family back to England, joined the Quakers, but returned to Sydney in 1834 and for the next four years he was a good friend of the Sydney Quaker community. The family again left for England in 1838 where his wife died two years later. From then on, his life took on a criminal turn. He remarried, but also continued a relationship with his mistress, who had been his first wife's nurse. She eventually became a liability and he planned her murder, which he carried out in 1845.

The Great Seal Case was a result of Tawell's property left in trust in 1845 for his second wife and their son. The trust deed was an indenture dated 31 January. He had committed the murder on 1 January and been arrested on 2 January. His trial was not until March. If he was convicted his property would have reverted to the Crown, so he perhaps had hoped to avert this by an earlier statement of intent.

Conflicting rulings were made in England and New South Wales concerning the land owned by Tawell and in 1849, his properties, including Macquarie Street, were sold at public auction, but little money went to the Tawell family. Again there were conflicting legal opinions about the sale and especially about the New South Wales Government's right to grant the land to purchasers. In 1851 the representative of Her Majesty's Treasury instructed the Governor that he was to grant the land to representatives of Tawell's widow and son in Sydney by affixing the Great Seal of the

Colony to the appropriate document. After argument from purchasers, further legal advice was sought but opinion was that the former sale was illegal and in 1853 the Governor was again instructed to seal the document. Further legal argument followed until 1860 when again the instruction was to attach the Great Seal to the documents in question.

At this point, the Premier Cowper, refused to allow the Seal to be affixed arguing in a letter to the Governor Denison, that it was a constitutional matter and that the disposal of lands in the Colony should not be dictated by England but should be under the ruling of the Colonial Government whose representatives had been arguing about the disposal of these lands for many years. Then followed legal arguments about who could use the Great Seal and who could consent to its use.

The Governor said he would go to Cowper's office and affix the seal himself. Cowper threatened to resign. The Governor insisted on collecting the seal and affixing it. Cowper capitulated and resigned. The Governor refused to accept his resignation and finally affixed the Great Seal granting Mrs Tawell the rights to her husband's property through her trustees sixteen years after his death!

In 1863 the Macquarie street building was purchased by David Cohen and Company and rented to the community.

The above information was supplied to the archivist by Mr Ben Furphy from articles in the Royal Australian Historical Society's Journal.

11. CONGRATULATIONS

To Louise Rosenberg who has been honoured with an OAM in the Australia Day Honours for her long and outstanding services to the AJHS.

To Morris Ochert whose 80th birthday occurs in February. Congratulations also to his son David who successfully trained Joyce and Eliza Blair to their gold medal win in the women's lightweight rowing pairs in France in late 1997.

12. SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

Members are asked to pay their membership dues as soon as possible. Members are reminded that the Society is still seeking someone who would be able to assist our Honorary Treasurer in her tasks. We also seek a secretarial assistant.

Donations to the Library of the AJHS are tax deductible.

KEEP AUGUST ^{23.00}~~30.00~~ FREE FOR SOCIETY'S 60th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Bruce Le Bransky (Newsletter Editor)

Contributions to the newsletter are most welcome and should be sent C/- of the Honorary Archivist, Mandelbaum House.