

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL XVII



PART 4

# **AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL**

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. The Victorian Branch of the Society was founded in October 1949. A Branch also exists in Canberra and Western Australia has its own Jewish Historical Society.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal has been published since 1939. From 1988 the production of the Journal has been shared by New South Wales (June edition) and Victoria (November edition).

The Journal is edited and published by an Editorial Committee whose members are:

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Mrs Helen Bersten, OAM, BA, Dip Lib (Honorary Archivist)  
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A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed on the back cover.

The Editors welcome suggestions for articles and manuscripts dealing with any aspect of the history of the Jewish people in Australia. The Journal is national in coverage and deals with the whole sweep of Australian Jewish history from 1788 to the contemporary period.

Material submitted for consideration for publication in the Journal should be presented on a 3.5 inch Macintosh or DOS computer diskette or CD. The data format preferred is Microsoft Word or Microsoft's generic intermediate data format, Rich Text Format (RTF). If you can only supply data as 'text only/ASCII' you must note which platform the data was prepared on (Macintosh/DOS/Windows). The disk should be sent with a double-spaced printout or typescript, and may be accompanied by illustrations. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. No payment can be offered for any contribution. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

For the NSW edition, communication should be sent to The Editor, Associate Professor Dr S.D. Rutland, or Mrs Helen Bersten, Honorary Archivist, AJHS, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW 2008, Australia, from whom information about membership of the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

For the Victorian edition, communications should be sent either to the Editor, Dr Howard Freeman, or to the Honorary Secretary, Ms Rhona Rosenberg, PO Box 608, Carnegie 3163, from whom information about membership of the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

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Front cover: Mandelson's Hotel, Goulburn

ISSN 0819-0615

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*Opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not reflect the official position of the Society.*

## EDITORIAL

**A**nother year has passed and I have just finished editing my fifteenth June issue of the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*. This task has been a labour of love and has brought with it many rewards. I am grateful for the cooperation I have experienced with the Melbourne editors with whom I have worked, beginning with Professor W.D. (Bill) Rubinstein, then Dr Malcolm Turnbull, Dr Rodney Gouttman and now Dr Howard Freedman who is ably assisted by Dr Hilary Rubinstein. This cooperation between the two main Australian Jewish centres has enabled the continuation of the publication twice yearly of a quality journal which continues to investigate the many fascinating aspects of Australian Jewish history. This issue is no different, combining a range of individual stories and personal reflections, with broader researched pieces and covering the history from the wave of free British Jewish settlers who began to arrive after 1828 to the Holocaust survivors and their impact on the community.

The first two articles deal with nineteenth century Jewish history. Colin Choat has produced an interesting study of Lewis Lipman, an early free settler from London who arrived in the colony in 1841 and contributed to the development of both the York Street and Macquarie Street Synagogues. This study draws on Lipman's letter book, which was donated to the Society by Edward Lipman, a grandchild of Lewis Lipman. Mr Forbes has again produced a thoughtful piece, revisiting the history of Goulburn Jewry, which was written by Sydney B. Glass and published in the first two volumes of the Journal in 1940 and 1941. Whilst the Jews of Goulburn contributed to the development of their area and are known by the saying 'as solid as a Goulburn Jew' they did not manage to erect a purpose-built synagogue, unlike many other country Jewish communities, and his article analyses this facet of the community's history.

The next two articles focus on the military history of Australian Jewry. Russell Stern continues his series on Jews of the Boer War, compiling selections from letters of a number of Jewish soldiers

who fought in South Africa. These letters provide an insight into the difficult conditions under which the war was fought and also, at times, into Jewish life in the army and in South Africa. Whilst there has been a lot written about Sir John Monash's contribution during World War II, including a new biography written by Roland Perry, which has been reviewed by Russell Stern in this issue, less has been written about Leonard Keysor, the only Jewish soldier from the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) to be awarded a Victoria Cross (VC). His grand niece, Kiera Lockyer, has researched and written his story, tracing his family's history from their arrival in England until his death in 1951.

Personal reminiscences and family history add to the rich tapestry of our community's history. Peter Lazarus was born in Lida, Lithuania in 1892, migrated to Australia with his family as a child, and lived to be over 100 years old. His sons, Dr Keith Lazarus and Cecil, assisted by other members of the family, tell his story, which is pieced together from scattered notes, audiotapes and oral history.

This year of 2005 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II and the liberation of Europe from Nazi domination. For many of the Jews of Europe, this Liberation came too late, but for those who survived, Australia became one possible destination. In Sydney, the Maccabean Hall was at the centre of the reception of both the pre-war refugees and the post-war survivors. Founded after the First World War as a memorial to the Jewish soldiers who had made the ultimate sacrifice in that war, 'The Macc', as it was called, became a new community centre in the 1920s and 1930s for the assimilated Australian Jews with their strongly Anglo-background. Helen Whitmont (nee Bloom) describes what it was like growing up in the 1930s and 1940s in such a family, highlighting their attitudes to the newcomers. Julie Morris writes about her experiences in the same period, especially with the Jewish Girl Guides, which met at The Macc. Barbara Linz places these personal stories into the broader context, charting the history of The Macc through three main phases: its establishment period of the 1920s; its role in the reception of the refugees and survivors; and its transformation into the Sydney Jewish Museum in the 1990s. This year, the Museum commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of Liberation by producing a video entitled 'Liberation, Life and Lamingtons' produced by South African Jewish film maker, Marc Radomsky, which was launched at a special gathering of survivors and their families held at Moriah College on 17 April 2005. In addition, two special exhibitions for Liberation were launched at the Museum.

At the end of 2004, Rabbi Raymond Apple, AO, RFD, LLB, retired as senior minister of the Great Synagogue after 32 years of

service. He was invited to give the address at a special meeting of this Society held in February 2005, and we have published this address in the journal. Rabbi Apple has made a significant contribution to this Society, including serving as its president. Luckily, his invaluable contribution to our community will continue, as he shares his time between Sydney and Israel.

In addition to his work on the Boer War, Russell Stern has reviewed two biographies of key members of our community — as already mentioned, that of Monash by Roland Perry and of Major-General Paul Cullen by Kevin Baker. Ian Bersten has reviewed the biography of a controversial figure, Egon Kish, who was refused entry into Australia because of his Communist links, and Sophie Caplan has reviewed Diane Armstrong's third book (and first novel) *Winter Journey*. We are sad to note the loss of two members of the Canberra Jewish community — Dr Ronald Mendelsohn and Anne Hoffman, wife of Dr Earle Hoffman, the ACT branch's president.

Once again, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my *Journal* sub-committee without whose assistance this issue could not have been produced. I would like to thank Helen Bersten for all her invaluable assistance both in the sub-editing and in supplying information and photos from our archives. I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating Helen for being awarded an OAM in the 2005 Queen's Birthday List for her services to Australian Jewish history, a richly deserved award. I would also like to thank Judy Shapira for undertaking the final proof reading for this edition of the *Journal*. Judy undertook and completed this Herculean task despite the fact her husband, Miron, was suffering from terminal lung cancer. Miron Shapira passed away on Friday 1 July 2005. On behalf of the entire committee, I extend our deepest sympathies to Judy and her family on their loss.

In December 2004, I stood down as president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc, after serving in that position for eight years, and would like to congratulate my friend and colleague, Mrs Sophie Caplan, OAM, on being elected to that position. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sydney committee and the wonderful team of volunteers I have worked with over the last eight years as president. I acknowledge the financial assistance we receive from the Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA), which enables the Australian Jewish Historical Society's archives in Sydney to function effectively, although its funds are unable to be used for publications.

Suzanne D. Rutland

## LEWIS LIPMAN

*by Colin Choat<sup>1</sup>*

In 1830, the British government introduced a scheme of subsidised or free migration to Australia and in the subsequent ten years more than 65,000 bounty immigrants, as they were called, poured into the country from all parts of Britain, together with 51,000 convicts. The majority settled in New South Wales. Under the bounty scheme settlers could obtain permits to select and be responsible for immigrants, with a bounty being paid to the settler who made such arrangements. It became common practice for British ship owners' agents and colonial merchants to obtain bounty permits and send out emigrants as profitable trading business. Around 1840 the bounty system expanded and was responsible for the arrival of large numbers of immigrants, mostly from Ireland. The demand for labour, however, continued to outstrip supply, particularly after the cessation of transportation. Many of these bounty immigrants were young men trying to make their fortunes in the colonies, or young women looking for husbands. Sydney in 1841 was a bustling town of about 25,000 people. It covered about 2,000 acres in area and boasted about 1,000 buildings. More than 100 ships were registered with Sydney as their home port. Most engaged in whaling or in trade with the Pacific islands, New Zealand and the settlements in other parts of the continent.

One of these young men was a Jewish migrant, Lewis Lipman, who appears to have taken advantage of the bounty scheme to migrate to Australia. On arrival in 1841, he wrote English fluently and spoke and wrote Hebrew<sup>2</sup>. From his letter book, a book containing copies of letters and accounts sent,<sup>3</sup> covering the years 1858 to 1870, it is evident that he had a good knowledge of accounting.

Lipman was to contribute significantly to several Jewish organisations in Sydney. He served as president of the Hebrew Mutual Benefit Society, secretary of the Jewish Denominational School in Sussex Street, Sydney, and performed various roles at the Sydney and Macquarie Street Synagogues prior to the establishment of the Great Synagogue. The Jewish community was small and close-knit



*Lewis Lipman's Letter Book*

and he would have known all of the members who were active in religious life and was related by marriage to many of them. In 1847 he married Sarah Moses and then, following her death, married Sarah Rosetta Levy in 1866. He fathered more than 20 children with his two wives and died in 1894, aged 71 years. He is buried in an unmarked grave in the Old Jewish section of Rookwood cemetery in Sydney. A study of his life story provides a window of understanding into the broader picture of free, British Jewish migration to Australia and the challenges these migrants faced in the early period of colonial life.

Lewis Lipman, was born Lipman Lipman in London, England about 1823. His parents, Joseph Lipman and Rachel Joseph, had married in 1818. The fact that his father, Joseph, remarried, his second wife being Frances Davis, in 1827 implies that Rachel died soon after Lewis's birth. He seems to have received a good education, both Jewish and general, and was awarded a medal<sup>4</sup> inscribed 'Lipman Lipman — Reward of Merit'.

On 5 October 1841 the *William Turner* sailed through the heads of Port Jackson. She had left London and Plymouth 123 days earlier on 4 June 1841 with 197 people on board. Lewis Lipman was one of the passengers. A native of London, he was nineteen years old

and unmarried. According to shipping records he had come to Australia under the sponsorship of Alan Campbell Esq. and had been a carpenter, farm servant and teacher before undertaking the perilous journey half way around the world to Sydney. He had left his father Joseph, sister Martha and other relatives in London to travel to Australia. He was never to see any of them again, and was now about to disembark at Sydney Cove in the British Colony of New South Wales.

What was he thinking, after travelling half way around the world? It was possibly a crisp, sunny Spring day as he scanned the harbour from the deck of the *William Turner* and noted the heavily wooded coastline, the strip of white sand at Farm Cove and the twin tongues of Dawes Point and MacMahons Point poking into the harbour. Was it the kind of day to engender a feeling of optimism about the future? Lewis was met at the quay at the bottom of Pitt Street by a servant of Captain Griffen of Cumberland Street, who had engaged him for a sum of £19 per annum with rations.

Lewis was, however, contracted for employment at Patrick Plains near the present towns of Singleton and Muswellbrook, and soon set out on the journey to that place. His future father-in-law, Abraham Moses, had a brother, Isaac, who lived at Muswellbrook so perhaps there was a connection. Lewis may have known the Moses family in London.

Sarah Moses, his future wife, had arrived from England on 17 March 1840 with her family. They had travelled from England aboard the *Alfred*. She was 16 years old at the time of her arrival. Lewis would have travelled back to Sydney on at least a few occasions to meet her and become engaged to her. He would probably have made the journey from Patrick Plains to Port Stephens by horse or bullock dray and then travelled by sailing ship down the coast to Port Jackson.

Sarah Moses and Lewis Lipman were married on Wednesday 23 June 1847 at the Sydney Synagogue in York Street, with the ceremony performed by Reverend Jacob Isaacs. The *Sydney Morning Herald* on that day reported the weather as 'strong south-westerly breezes during the afternoon, subsequently light southerly airs, clear lovely weather throughout.' As was to become his practice when major events occurred in his life, Lipman inserted a notice in that newspaper on 24 June announcing the marriage: 'On Wednesday, June 23, 1847 at the Synagogue, by the Rev. Jacob Isaacs Mr Lewis Lipman of Muswellbrook, to Sarah, eldest daughter of Mr A. Moses of this city.'

Their first child, Phillip, was born in Muswellbrook on 10 June 1848. Abraham, the Lipman's second child, was also born at

Muswellbrook on 31 December 1849. The Lipmans remained in the Muswellbrook area until about 1850.<sup>5</sup>

By 1850, Sydney was again prosperous after the financial downturn earlier in the decade and a period of drought. Large-scale immigration was taking place, largely fuelled by the lure of gold. In July 1850, the first sod was turned for the first railway in New South Wales from Sydney to Parramatta and, in 1852, a steamship brought the mail from England in about 80 days, compared to a time of about 130 days for a sailing ship. The Lipmans moved to Sydney and on 10 April 1853 Joseph, their third child, was born at 58 Phillip Street.

Phillip Lipman, their first child, died in November 1855, the same year their fourth child, Moss Henry Lipman, was born. Lewis placed the following death notice in the *Maitland Mercury*: 'Phillip, eldest son of Lewis and Sarah, nephew of Isaac Moses of Muswellbrook, at 58 Phillip Street, Sydney aged 6 years 7 months'. This was probably the first of the Lipman children to die. From this point in their life, death was never far from their door. Abraham Moses, father of Sarah, died on 30 June 1858. He was living at Hamilton Lane, off Hunter Street, Sydney at the time of his death.

Lewis was a merchant and importer at the time of the birth of his fifth child, Albert, on 26 August 1856. He operated from 95 Phillip Street, Sydney, the offices of Waugh and Cox. He dealt in many products including window glass, salad oil, pickles, perfumery, fruits, muslins and prints, gold watches, preserved meats, cordials, boots and shoes, cement, scissors, and whisky. He also handled goods sent from London by his uncle, Joshua Joseph. Lewis imported gold watches, candles, preserved meats, and boots and shoes from his uncle's firm. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 11 June 1859 carried an announcement of the death of Lewis' uncle in London on 20 April 1859: 'Mr Joshua Joseph of the firm J. Joseph & Son in 63rd year. Uncle of Lewis Lipman'. (David and Nathan Joseph, Lewis's cousins, were the 'sons' in J. Joseph and Sons.) He also imported from Henry Nathan. Because of the long, often rough, sea voyage the goods often arrived in a damaged or deteriorated condition. This problem meant that Lewis' financial position was very insecure and he experienced periods of insolvency.

Rachel, the sixth child, was born on 31 March 1858. In 1859 Lewis was operating from 26 O'Connell Street. His home and business premises were located close to the Macquarie Street Synagogue and to the wharves. The Lipman's fifth child, Albert, died in 1860 aged three or four years. A daughter, Kate was born on 21 March 1860, however she also died in the same year, perhaps at birth.

Joseph Lipman, Lewis's father also died in 1860 and the *Sydney Morning Herald* carried the following death notice... "on 16/8/1860

Milend Rd, London Mr Joseph Lipman beloved father of Lewis Lipman. 85 years. Less than a year later, Joshua, the eighth child of the Lipmans, was born on 21 May 1861 at the family's home at 199 York Street, Sydney across from the York Street Synagogue.

Samuel Cohen,<sup>6</sup> one of Lewis' acquaintances, died in November 1861. Both men had been involved in the administration of the synagogue. Cohen was a member of the board of York Street Synagogue from 1855 to 1859 and in 1859 a founder and first president of the Macquarie Street Synagogue.<sup>7</sup> Lewis Lipman was honorary secretary of the Macquarie Street Synagogue for a number of years.

Samuel Cohen had arrived in Australia in 1831 and in 1836, he and his brother David, together with Lewis Woolfe Levy<sup>8</sup>, founded the firm of David Cohen and Company in Maitland. The firm acquired stores throughout the Hunter River and New England districts and became a prosperous business. Cohen went on to become an important landowner and businessman. He also served as the member for Morpeth in the Legislative Assembly of NSW<sup>9</sup>. He was the founder of one of the key families of Sydney Jewry, with his son George Judah Cohen, grandson Sir Samuel Cohen and great-grandson, Major-General Paul Cullen playing central roles in both the general and Jewish communities.

Samuel Cohen and Lewis Lipman obviously enjoyed a close working relationship because of their work for the Macquarie Street Synagogue. However, there seems to have been more to their relationship than that, although Cohen was obviously financially much better off than Lewis. On 21 May 1862, six months after the death of Samuel Cohen, Lewis wrote a letter<sup>10</sup> to his uncle Phillip in London and noted that Cohen's wife 'called at my house last week to pay Sarah a visit. She came in her carriage with one of her daughters. After leaving, the daughter stopped a little behind and gave Sarah a small parcel, which contained a gold watch and chain the value of which is £30 to £35. She must have given that for it in Sydney. On the case is engraved "as a token of esteem to Mr Lewis Lipman from Mrs Samuel Cohen April 1862"'.<sup>10</sup>

Lipman also received other tokens of esteem'. In November 1862 he noted, in a letter to his uncle Phillip, that 'I have enclosed the address and my reply, when the silver salver was given to me.' He had previously asked his uncle to purchase the salver in London, to be presented, it seems, to him by someone or some organisation.

Lewis corresponded regularly with his contacts in London with regard to the goods, which he imported. Phillip Joseph, an uncle, had been in Australia and left around 1852.<sup>11</sup> He owned property in Sydney and, in 1862, was to cause Lewis some distress following Lewis' inability to pay an amount due to his uncle, following Lewis's

insolvency. On 21 April, 1862, in the first letter recorded in his surviving letter book,<sup>12</sup> he wrote the following:

My Dear Uncle [Phillip]

I am very much grieved that I did not receive a letter by the *Madras* from you. I am quite satisfied that you have a reason for not writing to me which is in consequence of my unbecoming liberty which I took in keeping you out of your money for your rents for such a considerable time, although in my last letter I promised faithfully to remit you the whole of the amount due to you for your rents out of my commission for the large shipment by the *Strathden* which vessel has not arrived. The *Caroline Coventry* up to the present time has also not arrived.

I have, thank God, managed to remit you by present a draft for £100 on account of your rents, the balance of which I will remit you punctually by the remittance, which I make to my cousins. I must again mention that your money kept my large family from distress but I shall soon, please God, overcome it and I do sincerely hope that you will pardon me for what I have done and for the future you will have no occasion, I hope, to be annoyed with me. I have also sent you a duplicate draft for £18 for my Testimonial. I shall also send my cousins the balance, which I owe them at the same time.

Mr Sharp the butcher called upon me and told me that he would have no objection to lease the houses the same way that Clinton had them or in fact if he could he would buy them out and out. I told him I would write you on the subject and let him know the result altho I can get I think more rent for them if they are not leased. I intend to have them looked over and see what repairs they require inwardly so that they must be given up to me in good order wear and tear allowed according to lease. This I shall do about three months prior to the time being up, or before. You will therefore please let me know your instructions per return of mail.

...The boot and shoe market is dull but I have no doubt that there will be a change for the better on account of the Lachlan Goldfields turning out well. There is a very large quantity of gold coming down weekly from that place which on the average is £40,000 or 10000 ounces and very few people on the diggings.

...We hope you are well and all the family. Sarah is not yet right but no worse. Your old friends send their best respects to you. Ned Davis would like to hear from you; he is always asking me after you and Brett in Parramatta.

This letter gives an indication of the financial difficulties, which Lewis faced. The Lachlan Goldfields referred to in Lewis' letter were in the Lachlan Valley, near Forbes, New South Wales. It is evident that Lewis was in a strained financial situation at this time, and had been declared insolvent.<sup>13</sup> In fact it is likely that he always had trouble 'making ends meet' as he had a large family to keep.

In another letter sent on the same date Lewis wrote:

My dear cousins,

I am in receipt of your letter of February 25th and thank God I find that you are all well. I cannot say we are the same because my wife has not yet quite recovered. You acknowledge my remittance for shipment ex *Naomi* of £388.13.6 with account sales. The goods were mouldy. I saw a small shipment of yours which came out of Scott Henderson & Co. marked SH 1 to 19 and they were very mouldy and fetched very low prices. There must have been a great loss on them.

I do always try and induce the trade to attend and I do in general get a very good attendance and they come for the particular reason that the goods are sold without reserve and in many instances [this] runs them up.

The acceptance per *Strathden* shall meet with [?] as soon as presented for acceptance to me. You may depend that the acceptances shall be duly met as they have been...

In April 1865 Lewis and Sarah still lived at 199 York Street. Sarah was very ill and in fact had been sick for the past twelve months with chronic hepatitis. She died on 8 April 1865. She and Lewis had been married for 18 years and had 8 children together, three of whom predeceased her. The youngest child was just four years old, the oldest fifteen when she died. She was buried at the Devonshire Street Cemetery. The tombstone was transferred to Raphael's Cemetery at Lidcombe in 1901. This cemetery no longer exists.<sup>14</sup>

Lewis was severely affected by her death, although he must have been preparing himself for it for some time. The grim reaper seemed forever to be lurking at his door ready to take off another of his loved ones. He wrote to his cousins in London on 21 April 1865:

I have the painful duty of informing you that almighty has been pleased to take my dear wife from me leaving me with five children to mourn our sad bereavement.

My dear wife died on Saturday the 8 April giving me but very short notice that her time was come. I spoke to her on the

Friday—some four hours before her death—and her reply to me was as usual, that she was about the same. Her lingering and painful illness was occasioned by chronic debility. I had three of the most clever men in the colony but it was all to no avail. She was, God rest her soul, 40 years of age and had, through my friends, one of the largest funerals that ever took place in Sydney. This has been told to me because I never saw it, I was too ill to witness it.

Thank God I am improving in my health but not able to go into any business matters which I know you will excuse. My poor children join with me in sending our kind love to all.<sup>15</sup>

On 21 March 1866 Lewis wrote to his sister from York Street:

I received your letter dated 26th January and was sorry to hear that your eldest son was suffering from ill health, but that thank God, the remaining portion of your family are well. My children are well. I cannot boast of that blessing. I am very miserable, I try and persevere to overpower it and will, if possible, overcome it that is if I can!

I have one daughter. She is named after our poor mother Rachel; my older son's name is Abraham. Another son Joseph after our poor father. Another Moss after uncle Moss. Another Joshua after Uncle Josh. I have lost three (two boys and one girl), their names were Philip, Albert, and Kate.

I perceive you received the £5 safe, God bless you with it. I pray that it may get it in my power to send you more but I cannot do impossibilities. I have a large family also — and things are much worse here than in London.

The name of my poor mother-in-law [probably his step-mother], Aunt Fanny, seemed on your letter to be strange to me. I always mention her name in my correspondence to Uncle Phil but I have never heard her name mentioned to me for a long time past. God bless and kiss her for me. She acted a mother's part to me and I shall never forget it. I shall also think of her, please let me know her address without fail.<sup>16</sup>

Lewis married Sarah Rosetta Levy on 3 May 1866 at the synagogue in Macquarie Street. She had been born in Sydney on 2 January 1846 only 18 months before Lewis married his first wife. Abraham Joseph Levy, Sarah's father, had arrived in Australia about 1830. Lewis had a large family to look after and, on 23 May 1866, was able to write to his uncle Phillip:

My Dear Uncle,

An opportunity came when a daughter of an old Colonial, Mr A J Levy (who kept a Public House next to the Victoria Theatre some years ago), to whom I was introduced, having known her for some considerable time, I popped the question and my answer was in the affirmative.

I am now again married and can safely boast that I have a protector for my children, which has been the means of making me more settled in my mind. My children love her their Aunt, and she at present loves them as a mother. She is a kind creature and I have no doubt will make me a good wife.<sup>17</sup>

On 28 April 1858 Levy was granted a publican's licence at Solomon's Temple, 72 Clarence Street (Corner of Erskine Street). He remained there until 1863 when he moved to the Wynyard Hotel. Lewis Lipman obviously knew Levy, who was involved in the establishment of the synagogue in Macquarie Street in 1859.<sup>18</sup>

Sarah was to bear 13 children by Lewis Lipman, although an early death would be the fate for a number of them. Phillip Joseph, the first of the children of Lewis and Sarah Rosetta, was born in 1867. In 1868 Julia Kate was born but died before she was one year old. David was born on 7 February 1870, followed by Albert in 1872, Edward Arthur in 1873, Rosetta Phoebe in 1875, Juliet in 1877, Alice in 1879, Rebecca in 1880, Ruby in 1881, Montefiore in 1882, Ethel in 1884 and Percy in 1885. At least five of them died before they were five years old and Juliet died in 1897, just three years after her father. His second son from his first marriage, David, was later to marry Eve Simonstein and father seven children with her.<sup>19</sup>

Sarah's mother, who arrived in Sydney in 1833, had been born Catherine Phillips, the daughter of Phillip Phillips, whose brother was Solomon Phillips<sup>20</sup>, part-time minister and reader of the synagogue services in the Bridge Street Synagogue which was set up in rented premises in 1837.<sup>21</sup> Solomon Phillips was the grandfather of artist Emanuel Phillips Fox. When the Macquarie Street Synagogue was formed in 1859, Solomon Phillips returned from Melbourne where he had been living, and took up the position as its minister<sup>22</sup>, working with Lewis Lipman and Samuel Cohen. There were obviously close family ties in the relatively small Jewish community at that time.

Rosetta Phillips (née Moses), Phillip Phillips' wife, was in partnership with Solomon in the firm of R. & S. Phillips, ironmongers and hardware merchants. On her death in 1844, she was buried at the Devonshire Street Cemetery. Her remains and tombstone were relocated to the Old Jewish Section of Rookwood Cemetery in 1901 upon the application of Solomon Levy<sup>23</sup>, the brother of Sarah

Rosetta Lipman (née Levy). The tombstone records one of the earliest death dates in the section.

Lewis Lipman played an active role in the life of the synagogue and the Jewish community, from the time he first moved to Sydney around 1850. The first regular Jewish services in Australia had commenced in 1829 at the home of P. J. Cohen,<sup>24</sup> and in 1832 services were held in rented premises in George Street Sydney. A move was made to larger premises in Bridge Street, (also rented) in 1837, where Solomon Phillips was part-time minister and reader and in 1845 the York Street Synagogue was consecrated. Planning also commenced at that time for a Jewish denominational school, which finally opened in 1855. In 1859 a separatist group established the synagogue in Macquarie Street.<sup>25</sup>

There are a number of hand-written sheets in Lipman's file at the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney, which indicate that he regularly prepared the text (in English and in Hebrew) for tombstones of parishioners who died. Further, the records of the Jewish Denominational School in Sussex Street contain the following tribute written in September 1872:

A well deserved tribute was paid to the secretary, Lewis Lipman, not only for his years of work as a paid official, but for past services performed for the congregation for years previous to his receipt of the small salary now drawn by him and extra services still performed by him beyond his duty as secretary. The state of the records on which this paper is based is the best indication of his worth.

The minutes are very well written, for the most part clearly expressed and ample. His letter book, despite the ravages of time, is perfectly legible, and his collection of inward correspondence, though now incomplete, is excellently preserved.

It is a pity that the treasurers were not as careful in keeping their records for posterity as the secretary. Almost no financial information is now extant.<sup>26</sup>

In 1868 when the Sydney Hebrew school was granted a certificate as a denominational school and moved to 367–9 Sussex Street the school committee included Lewis Lipman and Solomon Phillips.<sup>27</sup>

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 3 September 1883 announced the marriage on 16 August of Joseph, third son of Lewis and his first wife, Sarah Moses, to Rose Ann Pinkstone. The Dean of Sydney married the couple at St Andrews Anglican Cathedral. Joseph's action may not have been an unusual one for the times. In the *Jewish Herald* of 12 December 1879 the editor wrote:

Fortunately in this free country, we suffer from no religious intolerance; we are able to serve God as our Law and conscience bid us; yet it must be admitted that the age and association in which our young grow up are not calculated to foster in them Jewish sentiments, and unless speedy and effective action be taken we are afraid that the wave of worldliness will, if not wash them away from our members, at least engender in them a laxity and indifference towards that most sacred inheritance.<sup>28</sup>

One can only speculate on Lewis Lipman's attitude to his son marrying outside the religion, which was to be so much a part of his life.

Lewis Lipman was always in a state of financial distress, which forced him to keep working, and in 1891, aged 68, he was listed as still working as a pawnbroker at 94 Cooper Street Sydney. He died in Sydney on 8 July 1894, aged 71 years, after suffering from bronchitis for several weeks. During his life he had been a teacher, carpenter, importer, moneylender, commission agent and accountant. His death certificate described him as a retired pawnbroker. When he died he had been married to Sarah Rosetta Levy for 28 years. Sarah Rosetta died in 1911, and her grave has not yet been located.

Lewis Lipman fathered 21 children, and at least 10 predeceased him. It may be said that he was one of the great survivors. He gave much of his time to community and synagogue service and was a Justice of the Peace. He is buried in an unmarked grave in the Old Jewish section of Rookwood Cemetery.

An archive box in the Australian Jewish Historical Society office in Sydney contains what has survived of Lewis Lipman's possessions—a photograph of him, a book containing hand-written copies of his letters from 1862 to 1871, a medal of achievement presented to him before he left England. He grew up without his natural mother; was educated to a high standard, speaking and writing both English and Hebrew; came to Australia without prospects and never saw his immediate family again. He was an active member of the Jewish community in Sydney; held offices in the synagogues and in the Jewish denominational school; carried on business, whilst keeping accurate financial and correspondence records of his business; fathered and cared for a very large family; and suffered the sorrow of experiencing the death of his first wife and many of his children. He is mentioned only sporadically in the publications recording the history of Jewish people in Australia in the nineteenth century, usually as an office-holder of one organization or another, yet he played a major role in the administration of both the Sydney and Macquarie Street Synagogues.



*Lewis Lipman*

In the archive box there are also two cross-stitched bookmarks. One has the words 'I love thee. K.L.' and the other 'Think of me when far away. Florence Kelly, Aug. 20, 1868.' We cannot be sure who

these women were, but it reminds us of the two women who played such an important part in Lewis Lipman's life, Sarah Moses and Sarah Rosetta Levy, his two wives. Sarah Moses was born in London, Sarah Rosetta Levy in Sydney. Both spent their adult life with him, gave birth to his children, suffered the sorrows of the death of many of them, and experienced the poverty and hardship, which he experienced. Unfortunately, there is nothing known about these two women beyond what is recorded in this article, so we can only imagine the detail of their lives. It is the people who leave a trail, such as Lewis Lipman has, around whom stories may be woven.

In Lewis Lipman's letters we catch a glimpse of an intelligent, sensitive and conscientious man, a man of many parts. It is to be hoped that this brief article covering his life and times will highlight his achievements and cement his place in the history of the Jewish people who came to Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century.

#### NOTES

1. The research for this article was carried out primarily by my sister, Doreen Choat, who has spent 30 years researching her family tree.
2. This is evidenced by notes relating to proposed headstone inscriptions for a number of people found in Lewis Lipman's file at the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Sydney.
3. The letter book is a bound book with pre-numbered pages from 1 to 744. The first 50 pages contain statements of account covering the period from 1858 to 1861. Pages 50 to 700 contain copies of letters sent, of both a business and private nature, covering the period from 1862 to 1871. The letter book is now in the custody of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney. The document was donated to the Society by Edward Lipman, a grandchild of Lewis Lipman. The letters provide a unique insight into Lewis Lipman's professional and personal life. A project has been commenced to key the letters into a computer so that they can be more easily accessed.
4. The medal is inscribed "Reward of Merit, Lipman Lipman" and the reverse contains some Hebrew text and has the apparent inscription "Instituted 5559 (1798)" The medal is now in the custody of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney. It was donated to the Society by Edward Lipman, a grandchild of Lewis Lipman.
5. There is a record of a Lewis Lippman (sic) being a licensed spirit merchant in Muswellbrook in 1849. J. S. Levi and G. F.

- J. Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, Adelaide: Rigby 1974, Note 8 to Chapter 18 p 335.
6. See 'Samuel Cohen, an early Settler and a Parliamentarian with a Conscience', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol VI, September 1969, pp 334–343.
  7. Parliament of New South Wales Internet Site, <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/members.nsf/O/DE26777BFDAC872DCA256CBE00078FBD>).
  8. L. W. Levy later became a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the sixth and seventh Parliaments and member of the Legislative Council between 1880–85. (Parliament of New South Wales Internet Site.)
  9. Levi and Bergman, op. cit., pp 250–1.
  10. Letter book described in note 4, above, p. 62.
  11. Ibid., p. 72.
  12. Ibid., p. 40.
  13. Ibid., in note 4, above, page 72. 'I did promise to write home about the misunderstanding between Nathan and I but I thought I would not trouble you with my troubles. I owed him an amount which his agent Spyers proved for and I never was troubled at all. I walked out of the court to the goods satisfaction and pleasure of all my friends which has also given me a very good insight to affairs in general.'
  14. As advised in an email from Terry Newman, Life Member of AJHS, who took a photograph of the tombstone c1969. A list of burials at Raphael's cemetery is available at the AJHS in Sydney.
  15. Letter book described in note 4, above, pages 255/256.
  16. Letter book described in note 4, above, page 344.
  17. Letter book described in note 4, above, pages 352/353.
  18. Helen Bersten, *Jewish Sydney: The First Hundred Years 1788–1888*, Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1988, p.2.
  19. Eve was the daughter of Isidore Simonstein who arrived from Schneidemuhl, Prussia in 1865. Most of the Jewish residents of Schneidemuhl were murdered during the Second World War. A painting of Marcus Simonstein, a brother of Eve, is held by the Australian Jewish Historical Society in its Sydney Office.
  20. See V. Cohen, 'The Reverend Solomon Phillips and his Descendants', *AJHSJ*, Volume I, Part 3, pp73ff.
  21. Levi and Bergman, op. cit., p. 228.
  22. A. S. Ellis, *The Cousins, the Descendants of Solomon and Caroline Phillips*, 1990, p4.

23. *Jewish Cemeteries of Australia—Old Jewish Section Rookwood*, Compact Disc (CD), Australian Jewish Genealogical Society Inc., 2004.
24. Levi and Bergman, op. cit., p. 221.
25. Ibid., Chapter 17.
26. *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Volume III Part 9, pp 414–415. (Part of a long article on the Macquarie Street Synagogue.)
27. Bersten, op. cit., p. 7.
28. See 'Fragments of a Short Life, the Diary of Mondle Emanuel Phillips (1841–1865)' in *AJHSJ*, Vol IX, Pt 5, p.377.

## THE JEWS OF GOULBURN 1835–1881 A REVISION OF THE HISTORY

*Morris Forbes*

### INTRODUCTION

**M**ore than sixty years ago, Sydney B. Glass, a co-founder and the first honorary secretary of this Historical Society, began his contribution in this *Journal* of a series of seven articles, each of them short, entitled 'Jews of Goulburn'. As the writer indicated, the final of the series was to be continued, but nothing followed.<sup>1</sup> That history relating to a prestigious and substantial Jewish rural community of New South Wales extended from the arrival in Goulburn in 1835 of Solomon Moses, thought to have been the first Jewish settler of significance until the year 1854, by which time the gold rushes (of which Goulburn was a southern centre in the colony), were subsiding. Glass covered a period of about twenty years only, formative as they were, so that a period of another twenty years of the communal history was left virtually untouched.

Glass's approach was to condense his account as much as possible, presenting a broad outline of the essential history, much of it devoted to the commercial and other affairs to which the town's Jews contributed in a marked degree. His focus was on the secular life of those Jews. However, the religious affairs of Goulburn Jewry were presented within a brief compass only. This was partly due to the fact that, apart from newspaper accounts, records of their religious activities were almost non-existent. The Cash Book of the Goulburn Hebrew Association, now in this Society's archives, was the only surviving original record.

When Charles MacAlister published his reminiscences in 1907, he remarked that it was then nigh thirty years 'since the last Jewish funeral wound its solemn way to the pretty (Hebrew) cemetery at the foot of Governor's Hill'.<sup>2</sup> From the 1870s, the community experienced a continual decline so that by the turn of the century it was a shadow of its former self. At its peak, this Jewish rural group

could never have risen to the level of the congregations formed in Victoria at Ballarat and Bendigo where the gold rushes were far more spectacular than those in the senior colony.

When Glass's writings on this subject first appeared, they would have been most welcome, as very little research about Goulburn Jewry had been done prior to his contributions. Both Jewish and non-Jewish historians have drawn on the details provided by him. It is perhaps surprising that the lapse of time did not lead to a demand for a more complete history to be produced on this subject. This present paper makes no pretence at being fully comprehensive, but it attempts to supplement and to elaborate upon various aspects of the previously published history by Glass, adding interpretation and explanatory comment where appropriate. The previous series of articles probably owed their origin to the author having acted as the solicitor in proceedings in the Equity jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of this State by reason of a dormant fund held by Trustees in the Great Synagogue, Sydney, when the Court's approval was sought for the proper disposal of those charitable funds, amounting to £2,618, which represented compensation paid by the Crown after the resumption of certain lands. Those lands had been granted in 1853 to the Hebrew Association, which had been established shortly beforehand, for the purpose of erecting a synagogue and a Jewish school in Goulburn. However, nothing was ever done to effectuate the object of that grant by the Crown.

On the case coming before Justice Roper in 1940, it became necessary to place evidence before the court relating to the relevant history of the former Goulburn Jewish community so as to enable the authorisation of a charitable scheme for the distribution of the funds *cy pres*, which simply meant in legal terms, that the monies be used as nearly as possible for another suitable purpose. As solicitor for the Trustees, Glass instructed D. M. Selby as counsel on their behalf. The proceedings appear in the Law Reports as *Re Davies*,<sup>3</sup> and they are briefly mentioned by the Goulburn historian, R. T. Wyatt.<sup>4</sup> The professional exercise upon which he was then engaged, led Glass to undertake the research, which he obviously expanded, resulting in his articles being published in this *Journal*. He wrote almost nothing about those proceedings other than to say, perhaps cryptically, that the granting of the land had been 'the first in a chain of events which resulted in the present generation of Jews in New South Wales receiving a substantial monetary benefit'. It was the first fruit of the writer's research in this field.<sup>5</sup> While he deserves credit for his efforts, Glass was less a researcher than, say David J Benjamin or George Bergman. He was a family man, active in the Jewish community, and a busy solicitor in a small legal prac-



*Stephen J. Tazewell, Goulburn historian*

tice. It seems to me, therefore, that the incomplete account of the history of the Goulburn Jews merits some review and further consideration. In more recent times a little additional material has been added, after the restoration of the old Goulburn Jewish burial ground in 1987, eliciting short articles by S. J. Tazewell and by myself.<sup>6</sup> I was able to furnish a few more historical details in connection with my account of the Jewish involvement in the gold rushes.<sup>7</sup> Helen Bersten included some particulars of Goulburn interest in her article on New South Wales' Jewish rural communities.<sup>8</sup>

In the course of this present article, the reader's indulgence is sought if some of the details previously mentioned are referred to, as otherwise it may be difficult to follow this article without some knowledge of what Glass has written. Moreover, there are many

today who would probably otherwise need to resort to a special library to access Glass's work.

### HISTORY AND ITS THEORY

Of an historian such as Wyatt, it has been written that he had a passion for history as a discipline. Readers, it is observed: 'are interested in significant events, crucial players, and key themes'.<sup>9</sup> Analytical comment and interpretation needs to be brought to bear on the historical process. In the course of the life of a community, equally in the case of Goulburn as others, the recitation of names and dates of events may not be illuminating without an overview by the historian. Treating history as a discipline, a principal objective will rise beyond provoking mere curiosity and providing diversion, but seeking as far as possible to extract meaning and significance from the written account and story. In the story of the Goulburn Jewish community, there remains scope enough for additional and continued research, as otherwise one may be left with a fossilised record of the past. The task of the historian, by no means an easy and simple one, has been described as 'a continuing process of interaction between the historian and the facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past'.<sup>10</sup> All this counsel, which is provided by learned and qualified theorists, should be seen as valuable in the study of a former Jewish community, equally as it would be with other subjects of historic interest and study.

### 'AS SOLID AS A GOULBURN JEW'

There is of course no question that prominent members of the local Jewish community made a noticeable impact on the affairs and progress of Goulburn in inverse proportion to their actual numbers. Wyatt's book contains the names of Jews who were actively involved in the trade and general affairs of the town, though their mention emerges in a piecemeal fashion. He relied on and quoted, a statement in MacAlister's book, as follows: 'Goulburn owed much in the formative years to the commercial genius of the Hebrew race. In fact, the term, "as solid as a Goulburn Jew" almost threatened at one time to pass into a proverb'.<sup>11</sup> In the same context, however, Wyatt, uncritically, cited from an exaggerated item in the Sydney press in 1871, when the Jewish community had passed its heyday. 'The ten tribes', a correspondent wrote, 'have not been lost, only mislaid into Goulburn'.<sup>12</sup> More to the point is the comment by Tazewell in the section of a recent book which included some of the details of the town's 'Jewish Businessmen'. With reference to them he wrote, 'their con-

tribution to the growth of our city cannot be by any means underestimated. Our city is the richer for the Jews' enterprise and perseverance and their never-ending labours in their day'.<sup>13</sup>

### THE DEAD RELICS

In the second half of the nineteenth century, isolated rural communities in Australia made serious efforts to establish local congregations and to erect synagogues, hoping thereby to safeguard and maintain Jewish religious life. Often the experience was that, having first provided a burial ground, religious services were then held in private premises until land was either granted or donated for the building of a place for worship. With few exceptions, it was not uncommon for such communities to start to decline within thirty years of their establishment, or even sooner. It was to their credit that the rural Jewish communities so often strove to achieve the best that might be expected of them, but a continuous existence was unusual. The late Rabbi Dr Porush commented that provincial Australian Jewry was 'A road strewn with dead relics'.<sup>14</sup> This thought is also applied by the historian, Hilary Rubinstein, to the Goulburn community as a notable example of failure 'to constitute a congregation, much less to build a synagogue'.<sup>15</sup> Those strictures so expressed may contain an element of exaggeration, as the community was served by a Hebrew Association. On the other hand, however useful this Association may have been until its ultimate demise in the 1870s, few details relating to its history have survived, and it may be doubted that it attained the full status of the traditional congregation. Having received the necessary land grant, the community allowed many years to lapse and took no steps to build a place for worship. It certainly did not lack the funds to do so.

The importance for religious purposes of the congregation is emphasised by Abraham Karp, a prominent American Jewish historian, regarding the early Jews of his land. He makes the salutary observation: 'It is interesting to note that the body politic of colonial Jewry was the congregation. Congregation and community were synonymous'.<sup>16</sup> A recognisable synagogue was normally the manifestation of most congregations. That was not the case in Goulburn, unlike the experience of comparable and even lesser communities in other rural areas. Hence I am mindful of the written remarks of the late Professor Kenneth J. Cable with reference to statistics of Jewish demographical interest, when he said: 'Jewish studies confront the historian... with problems of great complexity'.<sup>17</sup> In light of this underlying thought, the failure, in my view, of the Goulburn Jews

to aspire towards a synagogue, is not something to be brushed aside, or to substitute for it their proverbial solidity as Jews of their town.

Glass made no comment and did not offer any explanation of the failure of Goulburn Jewry to erect a synagogue on the land granted to them. He remarked only that in 1853 'two meetings were held at different places within a week of each other for the purpose of devising means for the erection of a place of worship on the ground provided by the government. At one of them, it was resolved that tenders be called for fencing of the allotments; this work was performed'.<sup>18</sup> If one turns to Jewish religious practice, the *halachah*, does not require that prayer and devotions must be held within a purpose-built edifice, such as the synagogue. Nevertheless, even within Australia, Jewish communities deferred to the ancient tradition to erect such places of worship for themselves, varying from humble and modest structures to the more elaborate.

### A COMMUNITY FIRMLY ESTABLISHED

During the boom years of 1852 to 1854, the era of the gold rushes, 'the community reached the peak point of its influence and organisation'.<sup>19</sup> The Jewish population of the town had steadily grown from 1850 onwards, when it was 'firmly established as the largest Jewish centre in the colony beyond the metropolitan area'.<sup>20</sup> In 1851 in the County of Argyle their numbers were 75. Whether Glass was speaking of the boom years, or of a period shortly afterwards, in his article headed 'Consolidation', his information on the religious side cannot be associated with the obvious progress of the community in its secular affairs. It is apparent that leaders of Goulburn Jewry, such as Emanuel and Mandelson, who had been leading gold buyers and prospectors, were planning to return to Sydney as the gold rushes ended. Their departure should not have had a dramatic effect on the Jewish community seeing that Goulburn's immediate future was not then dependent on gold. As Wyatt indicates, in the early 1860s there were more people on the land than was the case in later times, and he also states that the period of Goulburn's greatest industrial and commercial expansion was in the late 1870s and 1880s. Unlike places such as Ophir, Lambing Flat, Forbes and Kiandra, which were directly affected as soon as the diggings were finished, Goulburn maintained its importance as a leading rural centre. Glass himself described it as 'the chief distributing centre and warehouse for the Riverina and Southern New South Wales', and he commented further, that: 'The march of progress brought with it the first whisperings of Jewish community organisation in

County Argyle'.<sup>21</sup> He was referring to a stage preceding the boom years, when Goulburn was already beginning to develop before the discovery of gold. He was speaking of substantial donations by prominent local Jewish figures to the building fund of the proposed York Street Synagogue in Sydney. In 1841, only 22 Jews were located in the area, but by 1844, as was reported, Holy Day Services were attended by Jews of the town, and by 1846 the total number of Jews was 54, or 59 for the whole Argyle district. The census of 1851 showed that there were 75 Jews in the town, which remained the same a decade later. As late as 1871, the official number of the Hebrews, as they were termed, was 75, with perhaps a few more in the outlying region.

It was not until 1881 that the number dropped sharply to only 11 Jews. For almost a generation, as shown by these figures, the community continued to be a sizeable one. Finally, in 1878, Joe Collins, the last executive officer of the Hebrew Association, took the communal equipment and funds and handed them over to the Great Synagogue in Sydney. The community had by then 'dwindled to nothing', although Wyatt added that the Association's Cash Book recorded transactions until 1878.<sup>22</sup> If one consults *The Goulburn District Directory 1882–3*,<sup>23</sup> it is difficult to identify more than about eight Jews and of them four were members of the Emanuel family: Solomon Emanuel and his sons, Israel Samuel, Sydney Phillip, and Maurice Myer, all residing at the Lansdowne property in Goulburn. There was another son, Abraham Hort (known as Alfred) whose birth was reported, though not then named, in the *Australian Israelite*.<sup>24</sup> It is of special interest to notice that the Emanuels were resident at Lansdowne in 1871, although there is no proof that they owned the property at that time.

### THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE GLASS ARTICLES

The present writer began his research intrigued by the claims still being made about the existence of what is spoken of as 'the Goulburn Jewish Synagogue', a claim also referred to by Wyatt. Glass was unable to furnish such historical detail about either the so-called synagogue or the burial ground, and especially so in the case of the synagogue. The sites of both these places occupied the whole of the first article of his series, manifesting a literary facility on his part by recreating for his readers the scene of utter ruin, as he looked down from Goulburn's Rocky Hill besides the town's War Memorial, on these two abandoned places. He contented himself with the caption for a photograph, 'Family Chapel, Eastgrove, Goulburn'. If he believed that it had been such a chapel, or even a

synagogue, he gave no facts to support the claim. He said, however, that there had been neither Jewish ownership nor occupation of this farmhouse or chapel since the 1880s, closing 'with the sadness of reminiscence', noting that between the two points of the chapel and the cemetery, 'the life-cord of a once thriving and important community had been severed'.<sup>25</sup> The picture, as drawn by him, of unrelieved desolation, is worthy of repeating:

There crumbles in the corner of a privately owned field the remains of what is known as the Jewish Synagogue — a sad, distressing ruin. The sense of abandonment and desolation — it was built prior to the seventies — is complete and unrelieved. The ceiling of the structure has gone, and the rafters carry only a few shreds of shingles. On the blue tinted interior walls are drawled names. The bay window, and facing north, is cracked ruinously from top to its base. From the frames the blank window spaces gape outward like so many teeth knocked away. The flooring has entirely disappeared. In a space where prayers were once offered, the horses come to rub on the walls, and the farm animals shelter from the edge of the breeze.<sup>26</sup>

It is recorded by *The Voice of Jacob* (London) that services were held at the Argyle Store premises of Elias Moses (trading there with his partner, Samuel Benjamin), and that these traders had given land for a Jewish cemetery.<sup>27</sup> Glass was able to state that this land was conveyed in 1848 by Benjamin and Moses to Trustees for the Goulburn Hebrew Association 'for the burial therein of deceased professors of the Jewish Faith',<sup>28</sup> as specified in the Deed of Conveyance. The Association seems to have been formed in that year, but its Cash Book was not opened until 1851.

Glass assumed that the Jewish community was fully concerned for its religious standards, writing, 'along with civic and public activities, the Jews of the town were attentive to communal and religious matters'.<sup>29</sup> The actual extent of that attention to these latter affairs is not spelt out, but the details given cannot be said to appear impressive.

The first Jewish marriage took place in 1850 at the Argyle Store, and a second one came four years later, held at the same venue and celebrated by the reader, a Mr Strelitz. On the first occasion the parties were Samuel Davis and Sarah Phillips, followed afterwards by Moss Mark and Esther Davis. Of Goulburn interest was the marriage in 1853 at the synagogue, Sydney, of Kate, eldest daughter of P. J. Cohen to P. S. Solomon. On 7 December 1853, the

Rev Jacob Isaacs of Sydney performed the marriage of L. Cohen, of the California Stores, to Dinah, niece of Mrs Mandelson.

The Jewish cemetery, described as being behind the War Memorial near the south of the Sydney Road approaching Goulburn, has been subject of more recent *Journal* articles, much of which it is unnecessary to discuss further here. Glass had listed a handful of names of deceased buried there, and he mentioned a structure, since demolished, of a caretaker's cottage. 'Over all there lies', he said, 'a dead weight of age and neglect.'<sup>30</sup> Wyatt mentioned this ground briefly in his chapter, 'Cemeteries', and he said that the Jewish community in Sydney was planning to restore and protect the graves and site.<sup>31</sup> In this chapter, Wyatt noted that the former Jewish community had included two hotelkeepers and five storekeepers, together with partners and staff, leading him, facetiously to state that Goulburn became known as 'Little Jerusalem'.<sup>32</sup> In the course of research, I noticed an item of 1862, reported by the local press, relating to the general cemetery of Goulburn which had been laid out including a section for the Jewish denomination.<sup>33</sup>

Glass stated that the Goulburn communal leaders were punctilious in religious observance, claiming that their businesses were closed on Sabbaths and Holy Days. Apologies were made for their inability to attend a Saturday afternoon levee when the Governor visited the town in 1850. It may well be, indeed, that this level of observance was conventional and normal in those times. The leaders of the community had been active, in some instances, in the Sydney Jewish community where some of them were again to come to the fore after their departure from Goulburn to Sydney. It is not to be suggested that the Goulburn Jews were then, religiously, different from those in the metropolis at the same period. The Report of the York Street Synagogue had frankly deplored the lack of Jewish educational facilities for both young and old. Thus, in 1845, the synagogue's president explained in a letter to the Chief Rabbi in London, Dr Adler: 'so far distant as we are, Reverent Sir, from your guidance, and considering the nature of our congregation, you cannot expect we are very orthodox in all matters relating to our faith'.<sup>34</sup> Nobody could then have thought that the religious position was any different in Goulburn. Maintaining a level of religious commitment there would have been even more difficult than was the case in Sydney.

As I have said, the recorded evidence of that commitment is based very largely on the brief account in Glass's last chapter, consisting of what is shown by the Hebrew Association's Cash Book, and though, presumably not specified in the Cash Book, the writer said there was a special place of worship at the rear of the Argyle

Store. It may be, however, that the Store mentioned was not the only place used by the community for religious purposes. The Cash Book included an item of £25 as rent for a synagogue. It may be questioned whether a Jewish proprietor would have made such a charge, and it seems odd that Glass raised no comment regarding that, but then went on to close with the contributions made locally towards the 1854 appeal for the distressed Jews of the Holy Land.

### RELIGION IN GOULBURN

Of the prevalence, strength and influence of religion in general in the hinterland beyond the metropolis, a historian such as Wyatt confined his investigations to the growth of religious institutions — the Churches. He devoted a substantial section of his book to 'The Churches', in which he included the topic of 'Jews'. In its earlier days the Goulburn society was, like so many others, a frontier one, scattered throughout the rural areas. The settlers, whether free or convict, brought their indifference to religion with them. This was because, in many instances, the official Church had not responded adequately to the needs of the working class arising from difficult conditions created by the Industrial Revolution.<sup>35</sup> The first Anglican church was not built in the town before 1845. Wyatt tells that Parson Sowerby encountered his full share of the difficulties of church building. Many times he had to procure his own teams and drive his own bullocks, carrying bricks, mortar and other materials. Early colonists believed that it was the responsibility of government to pay for a minister and a place of worship. It is a matter of speculation to gauge the impact of such considerations on the Jewish community, who would have been faced with greater difficulties. It was a time of what has been called 'bourgeois ascendancy', when religious faith did not generally operate as a vital social force, and when an individual's place in society depended on wealth. Australian historian, John Ward, stated: 'Money purchased status as well as possession'.<sup>36</sup> Jewish communities would not have been uninfluenced by these conditions and their ethos. Readers might care to reflect on the concluding remarks of a Jewish historian, Todd Endelman, relating to English Jewry of that era. Anglo-Jewry, in its passage from tradition to modernity, reacted towards Judaism in a much less definitive way than had traditionally been the case. Endelman commented: 'Judaism as a religion became one concern, one element among many... For the rich in particular, the desire for approval and acceptance by the non-Jewish World became a passion'.<sup>37</sup> As he observed, this sense of social transformation was not a development peculiar to a Jewish community.

In her recently published book, Louise Rosenberg referred to the restoration of the old burial ground and spoke of 'the ongoing love affair between Goulburn and its Jewish community'.<sup>38</sup> Much of the credit for that restoration is owed to the extraordinary enthusiasm of Stephen Tazewell, an acknowledged Goulburn historian and an admirer of the Jewish people. Mrs Rosenberg added that the Jews of Goulburn wanted stability, which they achieved by living in harmony with others 'long before multiculturalism was thought of'. That this community succeeded in its integration with their fellow citizens, as well as raising the level of their material prosperity, has never been in doubt.

In contrast, it cannot be said with equal conviction that their religious efforts, as Jews, matched in any way their activities in many other directions. It was, therefore, somewhat sad that Glass was compelled to open his series, noticing 'the stately and dignified pile' of the Anglican Cathedral, and the Roman Catholic fane.<sup>39</sup> 'resplendent in stonework', alongside the town's Jewish relics: a small neglected cemetery and the ruins of a family chapel. This is in stark contrast with the religious efforts by rural congregations such as Maitland in New South Wales, Toowoomba in Queensland, and Geelong in Victoria, in all of which synagogues were built and a minister engaged. At Forbes, on the Lachlan goldfields in New South Wales, the community received a grant of land in the 1860s and immediately erected a synagogue, albeit of modest timber construction. Even Coolgardie built a timber synagogue in the early 1890s after initially holding services in a tent.<sup>40</sup> The congregation also proclaimed its public allegiance to 'our holy and time honoured faith'. The gold rush in that area was short lived and the synagogue had to be abandoned, but the community tried to fulfil the classic Rabbinic statement: 'It is not incumbent on thee to complete the work, yet are thou not at liberty to abstain from it entirely'. Indicative of what might have been attempted is the initiative taken in Goulburn on behalf of the Anglican Church by the rich and influential Rossi family, when church services were held in public places because of the lack of a church building. A recent church historian notes in this regard: 'Despite the cost, buildings were physical symbols of a community's corporate membership of the Church'.<sup>41</sup> By way of contrast, could it be said that the premises rented by the Hebrew Association of Goulburn were calculated to secure a promise of futurity for at least twenty years? What in reality, is known about the Lansdowne chapel to show that it would have had any role in the community's future? A leading family, such as the Emanuels, were heading in the direction of assimilation. Another family, for example, the Meyers, was similarly to be affected. Abraham Meyer, who

had been the manager of the Argyle Steam Boiling works, was drowned in the *Dunbar*. His brother, Solomon, had been active at Ophir and at Carcoar in the early gold rushes. He represented Carcoar in parliament from 1874 to 1876, finally settling in Goulburn in about 1880. Members of this Meyer family were also assimilated, although Solomon had been a member of the Board of the Macquarie Street Synagogue (Sydney) in 1875. When he died in 1902, a memorial service was held in the Anglican Cathedral, Goulburn. The preacher stated: 'Some no doubt, would wonder that in a Christian church a service should be held in memory of a Jew, but we rejoice that a Jew who had lived such an honourable and useful life in our midst, could be held up as an example for others to follow'.<sup>42</sup> To describe that occasion as ecumenical or multicultural does not make it, today, any more palatable for a traditional Jewish community.

Unlike some other rural areas, Goulburn's future was not inextricably linked with the discovery of gold or its continuation. The town had developed into a thriving inland centre. Dr J. D. Lang referred to it as beyond comparison the finest town in the colony's interior, the centre of a fertile region, and with a measure of industrial activity as well. The Jewish community enjoyed a stable existence there for many years, and while some of the leaders returned to Sydney, there were enough Jews who continued to be attracted by the opportunities which the town offered in trade and business. Nevertheless, the death in Sydney of Samuel Emanuel, late in the 1860s, and that of Nathan Mandelson (after his return to Goulburn about the same time), and the sudden death then of Moss Marks, seriously impacted on this community.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

To obviate the need for readers to have to refer back to all the materials in the previous series, brief particulars are included of some of the Jewish figures, with some added details. Solomon Moses was an English migrant, who after a short period in Sydney, transferred his interests in 1835 to Goulburn where he built and established the new Royal Hotel, regarded as an ornament to the district. On retirement from this business, Moses returned in 1859 to Sydney. He should not be confused with a namesake of Bungendore who was drowned in the following year. When Solomon Moses retired from the Royal Hotel business, the licence was taken over by Joseph Jones, formerly of Yass. This seems to be the only occasion where Jones was noticed by Glass. He is named in this *Journal* in a list of voters thought to be Jewish, in the first elections of the Sydney

Municipality in 1842 and was connected with a shop and dwelling in George Street.<sup>43</sup> According to Wyatt, who referred to Jones as ‘another Jew’, he took over the Royal Hotel after leaving the Harp at Queanbeyan. He stated that Jones and a partner ran coaches on the Great Southern Road, the fare being £2 from Sydney to Goulburn.<sup>44</sup> His wife and sons continued the business. A son, Lewis, managed the Salutation Inn in 1853 in Goulburn. My research shows that in 1872 a daughter of Joseph Jones was married at the York Street Synagogue to Simeon S Moses of Gulgong, third son of Solomon Moses of Astor House, Cumberland Street, Sydney.<sup>45</sup> The two original Goulburn families were linked again after their association with the Royal Hotel. It may be the case, however, that while the name of Joseph Jones appeared in the marriage particulars, he himself was possibly not alive at that date. The groom, Simon, was born to Solomon and Deborah Moses in 1842 at Goulburn.<sup>46</sup>

Two more English migrants, Samuel Benjamin and Elias Moses, who reached Sydney in 1833, established the pioneer and flourishing Argyle Store at Goulburn within three years of their arrival in the colony. It was at these premises that the local Jewish community first held religious services in 1844. It cannot be said with any certainty for how long these premises continued to be available for these purposes. The proprietors were also the donors of land for a burial ground. The firm also established the successful Boiling Down Works producing tallow from sheep and cattle. It is unnecessary to repeat what Glass wrote about those works. Whether true or not, MacAlister stated that the proprietors made ‘a big fortune out of the business’.<sup>47</sup>

Samuel Davis and his partner, Isaac Levey, opened the Australia Stores in the town. Davis was the president of the Hebrew Association in 1854. It is thought that about a year later he returned to Sydney when the Stores became known as Davies Alexander & Co. Jacob Alexander remained in this business until 1877. His brother Maurice, later elected to parliament, attended to the Sydney end of the Goulburn business. A notable identity, since about 1836, was Nathan Mandelson, of Polish origins who arrived in



*Nathan Mandelson*

Sydney via England in 1833 travelling on the same vessel as Samuel Emanuel. In 1846, Mandelson built the Hotel that was recognised as a feature of the Goulburn region. Together with Davis and Emanuel he was involved in promoting the search for gold of which Mandelson was among the largest buyers. It was reported late in 1851 that he was running 'a splendid new four-horse coach, the "Shamrock"', between Goulburn and Sydney on a weekly basis. After his temporary return to Sydney in 1854, it was written of him by Rabbi Saphir, the noted traveller, in terms of 'the respected gentleman from Warsaw', when Saphir met him as the president of 'the large Sydney Synagogue [York Street]'.<sup>48</sup> A testimonial function was held in Goulburn on Mandelson's leaving the town, which is mentioned together with his passing away in 1867, elsewhere in this *Journal*.<sup>49</sup>

Samuel Emanuel is noticed as a foremost figure, highly regarded within and without the Jewish community, notwithstanding that very little is in fact written of his involvement in the local Jewish affairs. He developed political interests, entering the Legislative Assembly for the County of Argyle from 1862 to 1864. He conducted the Beehive Stores from 1848. Before returning to Sydney, following depressed conditions resulting from the falling off of the goldfields, Emanuel and other Jewish traders were again active in the hope of staving off a decline in the town. It was reported



*Samuel Emanuel*

that there was digging at Adelong Creek and that Emanuel was a purchaser of the nuggetty gold. The employees of Cohen & Solomon were said to be engaged in that search, resulting in the comment, that 'If the report should turn out well founded, the result may be to convert Goulburn into a second Melbourne'.<sup>50</sup> Davis was in the chair at a meeting called to promote search in that vicinity. P. S. Solomon exhibited 20 ounces of fine nuggetty gold in his Waterloo Store, mined in the Tuena area to the north of Goulburn. On the committee at that time in connection with the search were Moss Marks, Joe Collins and P. S. Solomon.

There has been no previous mention of Sydney Levi Emanuel, a son of Samuel Emanuel, connected with the family business in the

town, and also an alderman of an early Goulburn Council. Both MacAlister and Wyatt stated that he was an election candidate for Argyle in 1864, when it was actually his father. When only 28 years old, he died of 'colonial fever' [typhoid]. It was reported that he came to the town as a small boy, residing with his uncle, N. Mandelson. He was married to the eldest daughter of Solomon Moses and was the father of two children.<sup>51</sup> A note is here appended regarding a reference to the Emanuel family in a book by a Catholic priest, known as 'John O'Brien'. He wrote of a benefactor of the Goulburn Sisters of Mercy 'in their days of struggle', proceeding then to name, 'Emmanuel [sic], a Jew, who kept their current account healthy till they were able to fend for themselves'.<sup>52</sup>

Prominent in the town and attentive to the needs of his own community, was Joseph Collins, spoken of as the proprietor of 'Collins Noted Cheap Store', dealing in everything, and a gold buyer. MacAlister refers to him as 'a bustling Hebrew who ran a "Cheap Jack" shop and made it pay'.<sup>53</sup> He later served as an alderman. He was associated with Mandelson and others in attempting to promote the manufacture of cloth from Goulburn wool, an effort which proved abortive. The proprietor of the Victoria Stores, he was also one of a number of local Jews whose name appeared in a petition of 1859, when a public meeting was held for the incorporation of Goulburn as a municipality. Other Jewish signatories to this petition were, R. Benjamin (Argyle Store), Elijah Silkman, S. L. Emanuel, Isaac Davis, Samuel Jacobs (storekeeper) and L. Cohen. It was Moss Marks who was in the chair at the meeting.<sup>54</sup> Marks as Glass said, was the one who secured the land from the Crown for the proposed synagogue and school. It is noteworthy that in July 1852 a Public Meeting was chaired by Marks. It was to protest against the town's millers not grinding for the storekeepers and bakers, there being only two mills and a lack of competition. The millers had raised the price of flour, resulting in the higher prices for wheat. The Gold discoveries made it important that, unlike the nomadic diggers, those who followed the plough should settle down amongst the Goulburn public. Marks stated that he would arrange for the erection of a tower mill. Emanuel also spoke of the need for more mills, referring to the anomaly of the relative price of wheat and flour. When he died, tragically, in 1869, as Tazewell noted from the headstone in the Jewish cemetery, Marks was 49 years old. Glass specified the names of a bare few, as being readable from the few headstones in the cemetery, including Saul Yates and Louis Mandelson. The latter was not related to Nathan Mandelson. He had been a tailor and draper, resident in the town for about fifty years when he died in 1909, claimed to have been the longest resident Jew

of Goulburn. According to Tazewell, the deceased was survived by two sons and seven daughters as well as his widow. Another member of the community was Saul Yates, a solicitor in Sydney, until he retired late in the 1860s to Goulburn to reside with his son-in-law, Jacob Alexander. Yates was a son of Rev Benjamin Yates, founder of the Liverpool Hebrew Congregation (UK).

Another local Jew mentioned amongst just a few of them by MacAlister, is Elijah Silkman, the town barber who 'trimmed the long beards of the bushmen in artistic style'. Silkman afterwards traded as a draper, and when his business failed, the Hebrew Association assisted him in re-locating to Sydney.<sup>55</sup> MacAlister also writes of 'Old Jacob, the Jew', as this good Hebrew was irreverently called to distinguish him from Tommy Jacobs — the cordial maker".<sup>56</sup> MacAlister stated that he was correcting Wyatt's brief list of Jews, adding the name of 'Jack the Jew', ginger beer maker. These further names are included here as they perhaps add a little colour and folklore.

#### **P. S. SOLOMON, THE CONSTITUTION AND THE SABBATH**

In the last of Glass's articles, a photograph of P. S. Solomon was included. Without doubt, he was prominent in Jewish circles and as a townsman. It appears that he had worked with the Australian



*P.S. Solomon*

Store, and in 1854 was the honorary reader of the Hebrew Association and an ex-officio committee member. He may have been identical with the Phillip Solomon who is listed as an elector of the Sydney Municipal Council, the occupant in 1842 of a shop and dwelling in George Street. Apart from his connection with the Hebrew Association and the Mechanics Institute, Glass had not much more to say about Solomon, though he included an 'interesting' excerpt from certain remarks by him in 1854 in opposition to the proposed Constitution Bill, highlighting the speaker's publicly stated reasons for appearing on the Sabbath at a Goulburn meeting. The professors of his religion on holy days, Solomon said 'are allowed to attend and take part in any public business although forbidden at the same time to attend to their own private affairs'. The question of the Constitution Bill, Solomon went on to state, 'demands the personal assistance and co-operation of every man individually as well as in the aggregate, no matter what may be his physical infirmities or his peculiar creed'.<sup>57</sup> It seems to me that Solomon appeared to have exaggerated the position and to have incorrectly given the effect of the Jewish religious law in such a case.

The political agitation provoked by the Constitution question in Sydney, and throughout Goulburn and in many other places, is not discussed by either Wyatt or Glass. By 1853 opposition had come to a head in Sydney against the principles advocated by Wentworth in the Bill, as being alien to the idea of popular sovereignty and to the political life of the colony, particularly regarding Wentworth's notion of colonial nobility in an Upper House of Crown nominees. Parkes described the Bill as 'a most detestable and un-British measure'. In Sydney, J. G. Cohen, J. L. Montefiore and J. G. Raphael were among the members of a committee formed to oppose the Bill, and Raphael moved that country gentlemen be asked to co-operate against the flagrant attack on public liberty. It was estimated that about 2,500 protestors attended the Great Public Meeting, the largest then ever held in Sydney. On 2 September 1853, a public meeting was held in Goulburn, P. S. Solomon being among the speakers, as well as Moss Marks. About a year later Solomon spoke again on this subject, to the effect that the Bill was at variance with sound principles and, supported by Marks, he moved that a petition be forwarded to the House of Lords and the House of Commons. 'God forbid', he said, 'it become law'. It was on this occasion that Solomon expressed his views on the observance of the Sabbath.<sup>58</sup> Seeing that Solomon was the Reader of the congregation, it seems surprising that he saw fit to attend such a meeting on the Sabbath and to suggest that it was permissible to do so, for the reasons which he gave,

under the Jewish law. It may be sufficient here to refer to the *Kizzur Shulchan Aruch* (condensed Code of Laws) where the scripture is quoted, and it is specified that 'heavenly subjects are permitted' on the Sabbath to be performed, including the carrying out of a precept, the code adding, that 'it is also permitted to attend to matters of public interest on the Sabbath'.<sup>59</sup> There appears to be no doubt that the Code authorises attention even on the holy days to matters of pressing Jewish communal importance, especially of an emergency nature. P. S. Solomon, therefore may well have erred, under the religious law, in attending that meeting on the Sabbath, and in claiming that the same law justified his attendance. His action, in the circumstances, required more comment and consideration than has been given to it. It illustrates, perhaps, that as well as intentioned as these Goulburn Jews then were, there is reason to question the level and standard of their religious commitment, it being assumed, *sub silentio*, from what little is specified, that the community was not highly observant in the Jewish sphere. It was certainly by no means obligatory on Solomon and other Jews to have attended the meeting in question.

Jews were well represented in the various moves taken on behalf of the general community of Goulburn, whether, on the Committee of the Fire Brigade, as signatories for the removal of the Mulwaree Bridge to a new site, or as members of the Hospital Committee. Samuel Davis earned commendation for his provision of rafts to help rescue those affected by the floods, whilst Emanuel and Mandelson were active in petitioning for increased police. The Hebrew Congregation in September 1854 observed a Day of Fasting and Humiliation on account of the Eastern War [Crimean] at the residence of S. Davis. A similar service was held by the Sydney Jewish community.

An early *Journal* contains a separate article by Glass relating to the strange life and personality of Leopold Weissberger, a tobacconist of Goulburn who died in 1888.<sup>60</sup> He was friendly with Louis Mandelson. When he died intestate, a legend developed overseas on the part of relatives and others regarding the deceased's alleged wealth, though in reality these reports were greatly exaggerated. As in life, so in death, the story is not without a touch of mystery. After due enquiries, Glass was unable to confirm where Weissberger was buried, whether in an unmarked grave in the Jewish Cemetery, or perhaps, as he mentions, in a section of the Church of England Cemetery, it appearing that a parish official attended at the burial. Thus, 'no man knoweth his sepulchre to this day'.

There is little more of relevance to be mentioned, particularly with reference to the Emanuels. Samuel Emanuel's date of arrival in

Sydney was not, as previously recorded, in 1832. It is indicated in *Australian Genesis* that Samuel Isaac Emanuel, glass cutter, arrived in the brig *Children* on 27 August 1833, with his brother-in-law Nathan Mandelson. Both of them could then only afford to travel as steerage class passengers.<sup>61</sup> By 1844, Emanuel was a member of the Committee of the York Street Synagogue, and he was a generous donor to the Building Fund. Within a year he had transferred to Goulburn. Not too long after his return to Sydney, the minutes of that synagogue for 1858–9 show that he was taking a close interest in that synagogue's affairs. In *Kings in Grass Castles*,<sup>62</sup> Mary Durack wrote of the extraordinary experiences of her ancestors' exploits as leading Australian pastoralists. The Durack family at first settled in the Goulburn area before overlanding to Queensland, and then to the Kimberleys in Western Australia, where they became a major influence in the cattle industry. In 1881, Solomon Emanuel, together with Patrick Durack, financed an expedition to the Kimberleys. Mary Durack, whilst not always accurate, made special mention of the Emanuel family. She claimed that the family had previously been long established in the legal profession at Southampton prior to Samuel Emanuel's migration to Sydney. She said that he had sold out in Sydney 'of what was bluntly described as "a slop clothing" business', and then assumed a variety of new interests in the centre of the rich pastoral tablelands in Goulburn. Durack referred to Emanuel as connected with the far-seeing group that financed and organised the Sydney Gold Escort more than a year before gold was discovered. 'Some said', Durack wrote, 'it was intuition, and others that they had "been in the know"... The Emanuels had a finger in many pies. They were gold buyers, bankers, shareholders in the Gold Escort, proprietors of the Steam Flour Mills, the Beehive Store and the Beehive Hotel'.<sup>63</sup> She spoke of the family as belonging to a prosperous Jewish community which 'with uncanny instinct', had gathered around Goulburn in the depressed 1840s. Samuel and his son, Solomon, she stated, had been of advice and assistance to the Duracks of Goulburn.

Solomon Emanuel died in Sydney in 1895. A copy of his will is filed in the archives of this Society, and the testator is described therein as a grazier. The will required the two eldest sons to reside on the Emanuel Estate property in the Kimberlys for a period of three years, and for six months each year. It seems that after 1880 Solomon Emanuel joined the Durack family in applying for large tracts of land in Western Australia. Two of the eldest sons of Solomon were educated in Goulburn and worked in the family business there. Isadore Emanuel (as he was later known) held an interest in 51,000 square kilometres in the Kimberlys and adjacent

Northern Territory, considered then as 'the largest pastoral empire in the district'.<sup>64</sup> With the possible exception of Solomon, the family probably would not have manifested any continued interest in the future of the Goulburn Jewish community. Isadore's sister, Ada Maude, is mentioned in her father's will as married to a naval captain in England.

## PARLIAMENT AND POLITICS

Between 1861 and 1881, three Jewish members represented the Goulburn district in the Legislative Assembly. They were Samuel Emanuel, Maurice Alexander and Phillip George Myers. While their names appear in the Jewish histories, there is little, if any, detailed discussion of their contributions.

Samuel Emanuel was already resident again in Sydney when the seat of Argyle was declared vacant after the then member, T. A. Murray, moved to the Legislative Council in October 1862. There was a delay in a contestant coming forward. 'It is wished', the press remarked, 'that whoever may desire to represent the electorate will at once come honestly forward', expressing the tiredness of the public with those who would 'sit, if elected', and pointing out that the suffrage was worth asking for.<sup>65</sup> Soon to be mayor of Goulburn, Phil Digman, who had been associated with Davis in the Argyle Store, was thought to be a likely candidate, but he decided not to oppose Samuel Emanuel. When nominations were called, Emanuel was temporarily absent in Sydney, thought to be there on account of synagogue business. Nevertheless, William Davies, a well-known town identity, who later became a partner in the Australian Store and a mayor of Goulburn, nominated Emanuel. It is perhaps amusing to notice the reported remarks of an interjector at the hustings in 1862, which the press referred to with disapprobation: 'It is a shuffle altogether; we are completely jewed'.<sup>66</sup> Davies stated publicly, that the interests of the County of Argyle, of the counties further south, and of the whole colony would be safe in the hands of the new member, Emanuel, who was declared elected, apparently unopposed on that occasion. Late in 1864 the Martin Ministry lost the confidence of the House and a general election followed. This time there were two candidates for Argyle, Emanuel and Dignam. Emanuel claimed to be independent, a free trader and supporter of free land selection. He argued that state aid should not be abolished except after many years, as it was needed in the bush and scattered districts. He said that he had never injured his neighbour nor oppressed him in any way, adding, that he had enjoyed the confidence of the electors, which warranted his presenting himself again. His nominator hoped

that harmony would prevail if the electors followed the noble example of those who had returned Rothschild three times for the City of London.<sup>67</sup> MacAlister specially mentioned the Argyle contest as a notable event, pointing out that the candidates were men of strong opinions, each spending a lot of money, and supported by vigorous factions. The atmosphere was very heated, 'the Jew versus Gentile cry being improperly raised'.<sup>68</sup> Dignam polled 575, and Emanuel 515. The final result was reported as marked by several free fights and lots of free liquor. Emanuel stated that he did not know what he had done to cause his rejection, referring to impersonation, intimidation, and religious organisation as factors in his loss. 'It was a blot', he said, 'on the county that would never be wiped off' (groans). He was also of the belief that Alexander's election for Goulburn at that same time was the actual cause of his defeat, and he was saying, in effect, that it was too much to expect that both of them as Jews, would be elected.<sup>69</sup>

In 1834 Maurice Alexander emigrated from England at a young age. He married the daughter of Isaac Levey, the partner at Goulburn with his brother Jacob, in the Australian Store. When an identity of the town, C. H. Walsh, resigned from Parliament in 1861, William Davies nominated Alexander for the Goulburn seat. It was remarked by Davies that the Australian Store business was paying £16,000 a year for the carriage of goods, and it had 1,000 teams on the road every year. Alexander for his part then let it be known that he would not be a candidate if Emanuel were to stand. There appeared to be no opposition to Alexander until the lawyer, Peter Faucett, entered the contest. Alexander supported free selection before survey, and had even favoured free grants of land. He was aware of the bad roads, and opposed the abolition of state aid. 'A good deal has been said', Davies stated, 'about Mr Alexander being a Jew. Now, was there ever a Jew who was not in favour of religious equality?' Alexander was regarded as 'a liberal in the most approved meaning of the term'. Unlike others, he had published an address to the electors. On the poll being taken, the result was, Alexander — 207, Faucett — 78. To conclude the proceedings, Alexander brought in a fiddle and drums, as well as a spring cart and gigs.

After the dissolution of the fourth parliament in 1864, the press believed that no ministerial candidate would have the remotest chance if he stood against Alexander in Goulburn. Davies again nominated him, but Phil Digman entered the field. Claiming to be no orator, and apprehending religious prejudice, Alexander desired it to be known that he had assisted other religions with his purse and otherwise. The result of this poll was, Alexander — 278, Dignam — 172. Remarking then that he felt like the proudest man in the world,

Alexander said that, 'the good and trusty city of Goulburn should never, in any respect, lose cast as long as Maurice Alexander was their representative'.<sup>70</sup> He served in the fourth parliament for almost three years and was in the next one for about five years.

Alexander was a supporter of the Cowper Ministry and he followed it into opposition. At the election for the sixth parliament in December 1869, he was associated with the same party under Robertson. 'There has been', it was then written, 'no more consistent Member in the Assembly than Mr Alexander', even though his was usually a silent role in the House. For his third electoral experience, he was unopposed; the press commenting that it was fitting that he should be spared the expense and anxiety of a contest, having maintained his principles unchanged. Alexander said that he would not go in as a supporter of any man, but rather of good government. He had a strong attachment to the Public School Act and was a defender of religious liberties. As the press wrote: 'He would just as soon take the Protestant or the Catholic by the hand as he would one of his own persuasion'.<sup>71</sup> Referring to the politics of those times, it has been aptly said, that 'a central question is the simple one, who were the politicians?'<sup>72</sup> Alexander, it seems to follow, had made his mark on the electorate. In 1872, however, after the censure of the Martin Ministry early in the year, Alexander was among those who opposed Martin's policies. When an election ensued for the seventh parliament, some saw Alexander as an old public servant, though criticism was raised that not enough was being done for Goulburn. He asserted that he had come to the colony as a boy without a shilling in his pocket, leading him to feel that he was now the greatest local man, mentioning his uncle, Isaac Levey of the Australian Store. 'What had they to do with all that? They wanted a man of greater power and energy', was an interjection which came from one who had been a mayor of the town.<sup>73</sup> In the end, a younger local contestant, William Teece, won the poll, 372 to Alexander's 202 votes. As MacAlister wrote, Teece gained the endorsement of the 'Natives', spoken of as the 'Cornstalks'. Amongst them were supporters who were 'as lively a party as ever stood by Australia's flag and fame upon the electoral battlefield'.<sup>74</sup>

There were five candidates for the seat of Argyle at the election late in 1880, when the sitting member, William Davies, withdrew from the contest. As Wyatt remarked, elections were then strenuous affairs, the press being flooded with anonymous advertisements. 'The worst of all was addressed to "Orangemen" asking them to vote for "no Papist whatever his views may be"'.<sup>75</sup> The two successful candidates to represent Argyle in the tenth parliament were W. H. Holborrow and Phillip George Myers. Born in Sydney in 1839, the

soon of Isaac and Esther Myers, it is thought that Phillip George Myers settled in Goulburn in about 1870. A sister of his was married to Solomon Emanuel. He was in business as an auctioneer and station agent in Goulburn, and he had been the interim secretary of the Goulburn Wool Manufacturing Co, which intended to produce woollen cloths, tweeds, blankets and flannels but failed to take off. Myers was also secretary of the Southern Mutual Building Land and Investment Society. When the election was held in 1880, Goulburn's Jewish community was at a low ebb, consisting only of a handful of Jews. Sectarianism was running high, and Myers was able to advertise that, to Orangemen, he was not a member of a Catholic Association, whilst to support of the Catholics, he said he was not a member of an Orange lodge. He appealed to the electors as a native, and he claimed that he was neither a squatter's nor a free selector's man. As flexible as he appeared to be, it is evident that he was held in good repute, and the press commented, that not one of the other candidates came 'so near to our principles as Mr Myers'.<sup>76</sup> He was regarded as active minded, straightforward, public spirited and was in the prime of life. He supported Parkes' Public Instruction Act as it brought all the children together. Characteristic of the tone of public figures of those times, Myers concluded his election remarks by indicating he was proud of his country, hoping that it would give him the opportunity to make it proud of him. 'It was not all smooth sailing' it was reported, when Myers was fortunate to extricate himself and conveyance from a flooded creek.

Short as his parliamentary career was to be, his remarks in the Legislative Assembly are included in *Hansard*, which in New South Wales commenced publication in 1879. He urged the extension of branch railway lines, arguing that it would stimulate the growth of Goulburn where many followed agricultural pursuits. He spoke on the Chinese Restriction Bill, stating that cheap labour in China would lead to social dangers if the colony were to be flooded with their goods. He supported the abolition of school fees, though that was not then feasible. As the member for Argyle he was able to represent his constituents for barely a year, his sudden death occurring at Brisbane on 16 November 1881, where he had gone for his honeymoon following his marriage at the Registrar-General's Office in Sydney. His marriage outside the Jewish faith provoked a response from the Jewish community. The archives of this Society contain a Jewish press extract which, in referring to the passing of Myers, went on to say, that 'the public have been thrown into a fever of great excitement by the numerous cases of mixed marriages which have occurred lately'.<sup>77</sup> It was reported that the *Bulletin* published an

item, which, it was alleged, stated that Myers' marriage was censured from the pulpit by Rev A. B. Davis, who afterwards agreed to furnish an apology.

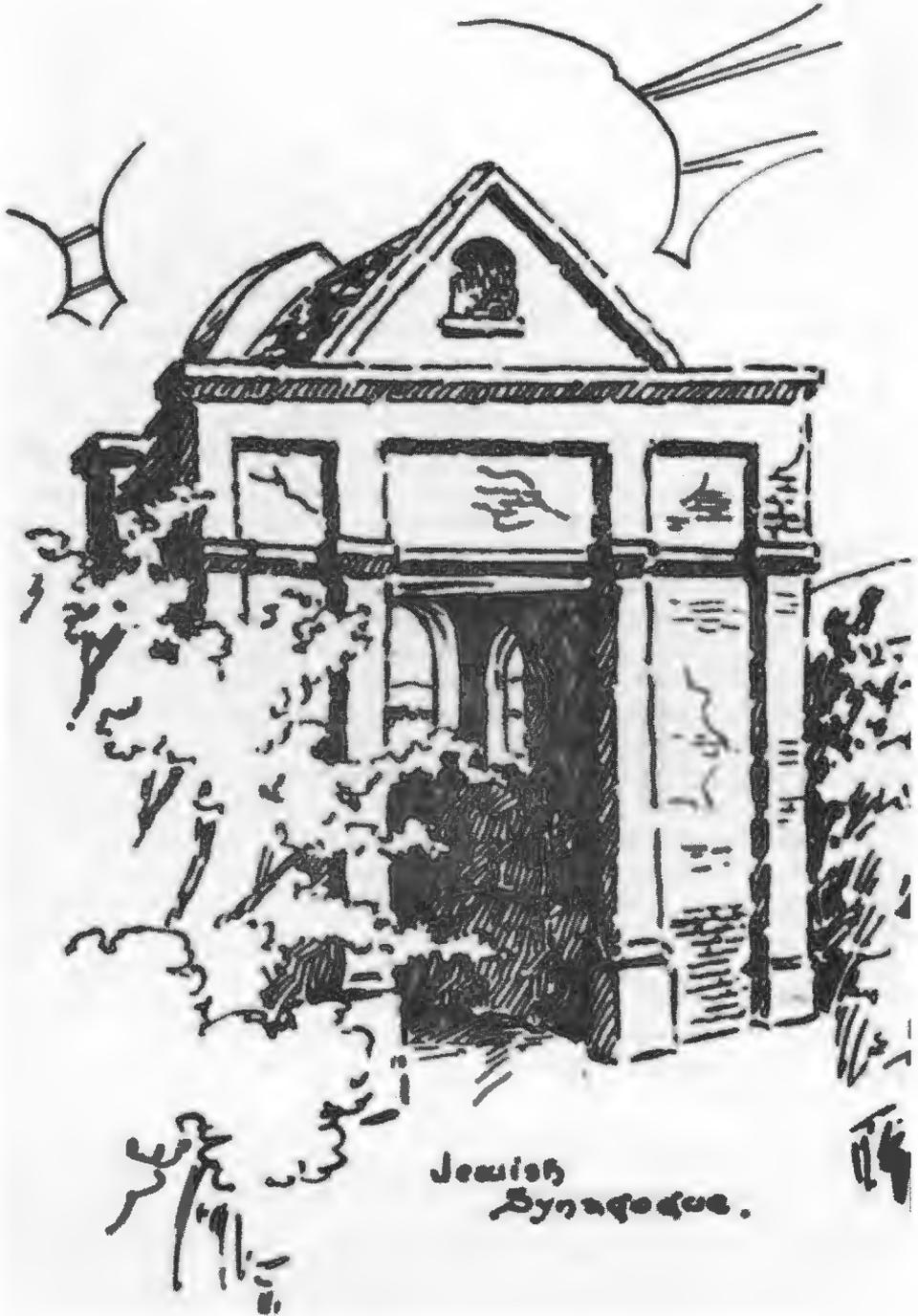
### GOULBURN JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

The claim that a synagogue existed in Goulburn requires closer examination. It is accepted that at its height, the Jewish community had the religious benefit of the Hebrew Association, a loose form of congregation. In his chapter headed 'Consolidation', Glass stated that neither the synagogue nor the school-house were built following the land grant, even though meetings were held to reach a decision. MacAlister also stated that nothing was done in that direction by the community. The reasons for this failure are not clear. It is true, that religious services took place in various locations, a procedure which was usually a temporary one on the part of most Jewish communities. The traditional *Mi Sheberach* Sabbath prayer has invoked a blessing on those who 'unite to form houses of prayer', and the Code of Religious Rules explicitly provides that 'the inhabitants of a place compel one another to build a synagogue or a house of study'. Thus, it has been the standing traditional practice for congregations to provide themselves with suitable premises as a place of worship as soon as they are able to do so. Compared with their secular achievements, Goulburn Jews, even when they received a free grant of land, refrained from taking such a step. Their attitude regarding a permanent synagogue is not clarified in any way when one considers the so-called chapel at Eastgrove, of which Glass wrote with nostalgia, but without providing any details.

### THE LANSDOWNE CHAPEL

The rather small structure on the Lansdowne property, which has stood for 150 years, is still described today as a private chapel. Jonas Bradley built the Lansdowne homestead on the Mulwaree Chain of Ponds area in 1830 and when he died in 1841, his son, William, inherited it. William consolidated his father's grazing interests and eventually they occupied some 32,000 acres. Additional buildings were added to the property, described as 'the most complete in the area, random stone being used, with carved barge board gables'.<sup>78</sup> In the 1870s Emanuel acquired the property.

Most writers have been content to trace its ownership over the years, maintaining that it was a place of Jewish worship. At the very beginning of his book, Wyatt speaks of the old Lansdowne property: 'with its convict built barns of stone with solid cedar stalls and feed



*Family Chapel, Eastgrove, Goulburn, known as the 'Jewish Synagogue'.*

boxes. On this property stands the building known as the Jewish Synagogue. It was said to have been built originally by N. C. Phillips as a summerhouse and afterwards by Emanuel as a synagogue. It has been a picturesque ruin for many years now'.<sup>79</sup> Amongst three sketches of these buildings was one that Wyatt described as the 'Jewish Synagogue'. In a lengthy section relating to 'The Churches', two pages are devoted to the subject — 'Jews' — commencing with the statement that: 'The history of Jewish worship in Goulburn is not easy to trace', and proceeding to add that: 'The building known as the Jewish Synagogue was not built as such, but as a summer house in the Lansdowne garden'. Wyatt then remarked that when Solomon Emanuel owned the property it was used for private Hebrew worship. 'It was never used', he wrote, 'as a synagogue nor did any Jewish rabbi minister there'.<sup>80</sup> Without explanation, this historian simply included a footnote referring to Glass but, as I have indicated, Glass himself did not provide any details about this chapel. Tazewell has provided more information, noting that it had 'a blue atmospheric type ceiling and prominently displayed the Star of David'.<sup>81</sup> He mentioned an account said to have been written in 1936 by an unknown friend of Mrs A. T. Emanuel, a daughter-in-law of Emanuel. She stated that her late husband was the youngest son of the latter and she remembered being told by him that he recalled the chapel, which was used as a school for the Emanuel boys and by other children who came there to be taught for about ten years by a Miss Valentine Bensusan, a Jewish governess. Religious services were held there when the boys were young children.<sup>82</sup>

In Valmai Phillips' publication, *Goulburn Sketchbook*, which contains drawings by Cedric Emanuel, including that of the 'Ruined Summerhouse' it is stated that it was used for a while as a private chapel 'for the Jewish faith of this family and their friends'.<sup>83</sup> More recently, some writers seem to believe that the link with former Jewish worship adds to the heritage interest of the property and have highlighted this link. For example, the current owners have issued a brochure, 'Historic Lansdowne Park' with a small picture of the 'Jewish Synagogue'. The Goulburn City Council has supported a brochure, 'Goulburn Heritage Bicycle Rides', which includes a drawing of one of the Lansdowne buildings, and comments that Goulburn's old Jewish synagogue can also be viewed.

### THE HISTORICAL HERITAGE

The serious historian would do well to note the salutary observations long ago attributed to a former professor, Sir John Seeley, of Cambridge University, when told that he should make history inter-

esting. He replied, 'Make history interesting, indeed, I cannot make history more interesting than it is except by falsifying it!'<sup>84</sup> Applying that dictum to the case of Goulburn's synagogue, however, the claims in question may appear to be, their historicity remains vague and much dependent on folklore. The Lee family, the owners today of the chapel property, are able to attract tourists to their property on which the summer house is located. A report appeared in the press in 1995 to the effect that, 'an historic Jewish Synagogue in Goulburn is in advanced stage of restoration', the owner believing that it would now be used continuously by Jews. It was said, rather incorrectly, that the chapel was built by Lansdowne's original property manager, a Mr Emanuel, and it was pointed out that visitors were captivated by the little derelict synagogue, over-grown with boxthorn and, during the summer a haven, for tiger snakes. As if to add an unintended comic touch, the owner was being quoted as saying that the structure was built facing Mecca! The roof had been replaced with shingles, the outer sandstone bricks were repaired, and new window frames and stained glass windows were being crafted.<sup>85</sup>

Towards the end of the same year the newspaper reported that Andrew Furst, a Melbourne visitor, believed that the building had been a mortuary because it was not in the town's centre and Jews were forbidden to drive on the Sabbath or to walk long distances. The writer of the reported item stated that Rabbi Apple of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, had inspected the site and was satisfied that a genuine synagogue had stood there.<sup>86</sup> Rabbi Apple has favoured me with a communication as follows:

Thank you for your letter about Goulburn. There does not seem to be any corroborative evidence from other sources to verify that the building was a synagogue. It was certainly used for prayers, but I doubt whether it had any official communal standing. Did the *ba'alei batim* of Goulburn simply come there by invitation of the Emanuel's? Maybe more local research will help to solve the problem.<sup>87</sup>

The *Newsletter* of this Society conveyed the tenor of the above press reports.<sup>88</sup> A decade has passed without further developments at Eastgrove. Jewish visitors have recently returned from Goulburn, expressing their disappointment that the old structure at Lansdowne still is in ruins. In May 1976, the National Trust of Australia (NSW), approved of the classification of Lansdowne, including what was designated as the 'Jewish Temple'. Well intentioned as the Trust's action was, its actual designation of this building seems to be inapt. The Trust stated that it was turned into such

a Temple by S. Emanuel when he bought W. Bradley's Flour mill after the latter's death. Title deeds seen by Marcelle Marks, a member of this Society, and inspected by this writer, seem to show that Solomon Emanuel acquired the Lansdowne property in 1874 but there is evidence that he was already residing there in 1871.

If and when, the restoration of the chapel should be completed, some input from interested Jewish parties may be expected. At Maitland and Broken Hill, former synagogue premises originally consecrated as such and no longer in use, have been preserved in non-Jewish hands, the premises being put to other uses. At Canberra, ACT, the national capital, but one hour's drive distant from Goulburn, there is today in that city, a Jewish community and centre. That community, together with those in this state, might well turn their attention to the chapel in the south of the state as an historic place, assuming its restoration, where tribute might be paid to the memory of a former Jewish community which contributed so much to the development of Goulburn in its day.

Regardless of the authenticity of the evidence of its one time use as a place of Jewish prayer, it is not beyond possibility that some will in future wish to pray there. It is feasible that some would wish to come there to remember members of their faith who gave their lives in the war. Not far from there is the old burial ground where two Jewish war time refugees are interred. In such a place, fully and suitably restored, others too, might come to offer prayers in memory of Holocaust victims. Perhaps these are unrealistic aspirations, recognising that there has been but little consciousness of Australian Jewish heritage. In the present case, a symbolic aura attaches to the structure still standing at Lansdowne. In addition to the action of the National Trust, it seems to me that it has potential, in the way here suggested, for the Jewish community of this day. That potential may materialise, but only if, in co-operation with the owner of the property, the Jewish community of NSW, together with that in the ACT, is concerned enough to accept this heritage challenge.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Australian Jewish Historical Society, Archives; Goulburn and District Historical Society; Royal Australian Historical Society; The Great Synagogue Library; Waverley Municipal Library.

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**THE ANGLO-BOER WAR, 1899–1902:  
AN AUSTRALIAN JEWISH PERSPECTIVE  
PART III: LETTERS FROM  
AUSTRALIAN JEWS IN THE BOER WAR**

*Russell Stern*

**2**003 saw the publication of *The War with Johnny Boer*,<sup>1</sup> a compilation of letters and diary entries written by Australians involved in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. Its coverage of the War encompasses events from the first shooting through to the end of the War in the treaty of Vereeniging, 31 May 1902. Although letters written by Australian Jews were published in Australian newspapers at the time, there is only one single letter in *The War with Johnny Boer* written by a Jew. As I wrote in my story of Nurse Rose Shappere,<sup>2</sup> at least one of her letters had been written up in *Australia's Boer War*.<sup>3</sup>

This article aims to fill the gap, which exists in the literature. It will track the history of the Boer War as it was recorded at the time and will look at the contribution of Australian Jews as the story unfolded through letters they wrote which were published in the newspapers of the time. Only a few of these letters were published in Jewish newspapers, most finding their home in the city and local country press, where their appeal was to the readers who personally knew the writers or their families. I have not come across a newspaper of the time, which does not include within its pages, if not daily, then at least weekly, one or more letters from Australians serving in the forces in South Africa. Newspaper interest in these letters appears to have diminished only marginally during the more than 30 months of the war.

Jewish references in the letters are few and infrequent. Mention of something Jewish has been one of the proofs that I have used for concluding that the writer was Jewish. I have included letters from:

- Samuel Goldreich — Bethune's Mounted Infantry
- Samuel Himmelhoch — South African Light Horse

- Benjamin Braun — NSW Mounted Infantry
- Clive Lima Braun — NSW Mounted Infantry
- Mark Frederick Collins — NSW Mounted Infantry
- Gerald Septimus Samuelson — NSW Army Medical Corps
- Leo Goldspink — 2nd Imperial Light Horse

This is only a small selection of the letters written by Jews who volunteered from Australia to fight in the Boer War. There are many other letters and letter writers.

### **SAMUEL GOLDREICH<sup>4</sup>**

Chronologically, Samuel Goldreich is the first of our contributors, as his enrolment in a unit appears to have preceded the other letter writers that I have uncovered. He was born in 1878 at Ballarat to Reverend Israel Morris Goldreich, minister of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, and his wife Priscilla (née Levy). Samuel was the second of the boys, being preceded by Leisser, born in 1874. The girls were Minnie born in 1870, Roselee in 1871, Philippa Ida Rachel, 1880 and Priscilla Benjami in 1883. Their mother died in 1883 giving birth to Priscilla. The four girls and the two boys survived. Samuel went to South Africa in November-December 1895. Israel Goldreich died in Ballarat in 1905. Samuel had been the honorary conductor of the Ballarat Juvenile Orchestral Society. At the time that he left Ballarat it was noted by one of the Jewish newspapers that 'The Ballarat Community was not alone to regret the loss of Mr. S.J. Goldreich, but that gentleman is to be followed next month by his two sisters. The elder of the two ladies is just convalescent from a long and painful illness, and is undertaking a long sea voyage to recruit her health. The younger, who is a highly accomplished lady, a teacher by profession, is seeking a more promising field in South Africa.'<sup>5</sup>

Samuel joined Bethune's Mounted Infantry, one of the many 'Irregular' South African units formed by the British, in Natal on 19 October 1899 and served through to 14 January 1902.<sup>6</sup> He was taken prisoner in May 1900 while acting as part of an advance guard. His first commander was General Buller and he fought under him at Colenso, Spion Kop and the battles that followed on the Tugela River through to the relief of Ladysmith in March 1900. He accompanied the unit to Zululand and its return to Natal. Here they were overcome with reverses that swept the column, leaving seven or eight to tell the tale. Then the unit went to the Orange River Colony (ORC) with General Bruce Hamilton and later was with Colonel Munro at Dundee.

An interesting letter from Samuel that I have located bears the address of the Assembly Hospital, Maritzburg and the date 13 June 1900. It is of interest because of the incident that Samuel described when he was in hospital at Greytown.<sup>7</sup> He wrote as follows:

It has been a long time since I wrote, which is not exactly my fault, as we have been all over the country, and when we have had a bit of leisure we could not get either the paper to write on or anything that would do for writing on. I was just over two weeks at the field hospital at Chieveley when I rejoined my regiment and ever since (until my regimental doctor sent me to the Greytown hospital) I have had a good deal of roughing it. I was sent to the hospital in consequence of the old wound breaking out again, caused by knocking my hand up against a box of ammunition. I am pleased to say that I will be able to rejoin my regiment about the end of the week. I am sorry to have to say that the members of my squadron (E) have been nearly all killed or wounded. Out of the original 118, including officers, there are only seven of us left, namely one officer and six men. It was the ambush of the regiment, which doubtless you have read by cable. You can imagine how I felt, and also how thankful to Providence at my narrow escape. When in the Greytown hospital, a peculiar incident took place. The nurse who was attending to my wounds looked at me for some time, and said I seemed to resemble someone she had seen a good many times in a place called Ballarat, in Australia. I told her I came from there, and asked her who I reminded her of, and she replied, 'A son of the Rev. Mr. Goldreich'. The nurse was Miss Yeomans, formerly of Ballarat East.<sup>8</sup>

In a letter datelined Amanzuntoli Hotel, Amanzuntoli,<sup>9</sup> 7 July 1901. Samuel writes about an experience of being captured by one of the Boer commandos as follows:

You will, no doubt, wonder where on earth the above place is situated. It is a seaside resort about a journey of an hour and a half from Durban by train. I came to Durban for a couple of weeks' spell, having been hard at it for the last six or seven months.

We have had any amount of hard work up at the front for the last few months, and you will be pleased to learn that I was made a corporal some time ago. We have been over and over again through the ORC, and have been for the last couple of months around the Cape Colony, where we have had plenty of sniping, and occasionally a good stiff encounter. I had a rather

severe experience a little over two months ago. Our column was moving in the direction of Smithfield, ORC<sup>10</sup>, and a large party of Boers were reported, whereupon I was told off [sic] to take two men with me, and locate them, and also if possible to draw fire. The three of us started out, and got about three miles away from the column in some nasty hilly country, but could see no sign of them (although they were there, dismounted, behind the rocks, and we passed within as close as sixty yards of them), until we came to a long valley, when we saw about a hundred of them riding leisurely in our direction about four hundred yards from us. I told the other men to retire, and the three of us started back, when suddenly the fellows we had already passed fired at us, and we extended, and made for the column. But it was not to be. As soon as we got about five hundred yards from them we came to a very deep donga<sup>11</sup>, and in went the horses. The Boers kept on firing at us, but could not do any damage. We dismounted in the donga, and were looking about for a way out, when there was a shout of 'Hands up'. We looked up, and about twenty paces from us on top of the donga on either side we saw a crowd of Boers. There was nothing left but to surrender. While we held our hands up, a Dutch boy about fourteen years of age fired at us, but luckily he missed, and one of the other Boers went for him. They took everything from us — horse, saddle and bridle, rifle, bandolier, spurs, field glasses, and put a number of questions to us, but otherwise treated us well. It was Brand's commando, about two hundred strong (a nice little lot for three men to get among), and I must say they were a very decent lot, quite above the ordinary Boer.

After keeping us for a few hours the commandant gave us a pass, and pointed out a road, which he told us to take, that would lead us to Bethulie<sup>12</sup>, forty odd miles away. The pass was to get us through Boer patrols and pickets, which we continually passed, and by which we were challenged. We only had our overcoats. The nights were bitterly cold. We could only walk in the daytime, and it took us three days to travel to Bethulie, where luckily, we picked up the column. The colonel congratulated us on our escape, and said he had no idea we had gone so far, but thought we had gone back to another column, which was about five or six miles in his rear. I don't want to be a prisoner any more, as we only had one onion between us the whole time we were on the road — a three days' journey from Yom Kippur. We are having snow now in the Stormberg<sup>13</sup> district of the colony, and it is quite a treat to be down here in Natal.<sup>14</sup>



*Corporal Samuel Goldreich, with a group of Jewish Soldiers, at the Prtoria Synagogue Passover 1901. Goldreich is at the rear at the right of the group.*

*This photo appeared in the Jewish Chronicle, 7 June 1901*

This connection between having no food and fasting on *Yom Kippur* adds a Jewish context to Samuel Goldreich's letter and would have conveyed the appropriate sentiment to his father to whom the letter was written.

Samuel returned to Australia after his war service and visited Ballarat where he was feted. He then returned to South Africa and passes from our view.

### **SAMUEL HIMMELHOCH**

Samuel was an *Uitlander*<sup>15</sup> — he had been in Johannesburg prior to the war and left there in a cattle truck when the *Uitlanders* fled prior to the outbreak of war. Samuel joined the South African Light Horse (SALH), another Irregular unit formed by the British authorities.

His father was a merchant and had a vineyard named Grodno located near Liverpool, New South Wales. In February 1900 J. Himmelhoch donated a quarter cask of wine from the vineyard to the Bushmen's Camp at Kensington, a Sydney suburb.<sup>16</sup>

Samuel was originally stationed in the Cape Colony, and his first letters were written from there. Then his unit was moved to



*The Himmelhoch Homestead.*

Natal. Samuel seems to have written at least weekly. Many of his letters appear in print, either in the Sydney newspapers, or in the two papers published in Lismore, the hometown of his brothers.

The first letters that I have located were both written from Richmond Road, Cape Colony on 1 December 1899<sup>17</sup>, one to his brothers, H & L Himmelhoch, and the other to his mother. The one to his mother, written prior to the week of British reverses, which occurred in mid December, reads:

We are still stationed at the above place, and are likely to go to the front in a day or two. The general advance on Kimberley takes place in about 4 days, and from what I can gather, we are to go up in the advance. There have been troops sent up to relieve us, and there is another squadron of the Light Horse expected here today to take over our place. We are all pretty well tired of the place, and are anxious for a move. We are kept at drill and parade pretty well all day, so we are getting well up in our drill and shooting. The chief drawback is our mounts. They are very poor animals. Good horses are scarce, as the farmers will not part with their horses. They are nearly all in sympathy with the Boers, and in many cases help them when opportunity offers. This place is awfully hot and dusty. There is very little vegetation — plenty of sand — and we eat a fair share of it every meal. The water here is very bad and awfully hard. It cracks the skin if you use too much of it when washing. My face was a picture a few days ago, but it is

alright now. The only excitement we get here is watching the troop trains go through. Many stop here for a few moments so we generally have a few words with some of the men. The New Zealanders passed through a couple of nights ago. I was on bridge guard, so did not get an opportunity of seeing them. There has been heavy fighting near Kimberley this week, and I hear great casualties on both sides. Ambulance trains pass here on an average two a day, carrying mostly our wounded. They give some awful accounts of the fighting.<sup>18</sup>

A fortnight later, there was another letter to his mother, also from Richmond Road and dated 17 December 1899:

We are having a very quiet time here, but expect soon to be in the thick of the fighting. There has been two more squadrons come up [sic], and they have brought transport and ambulance wagons with them. There are all kinds of rumours afloat as to our moving our destination. It will not be long now before we shift, and none will be sorry when we do so. There has been some rough, severe fighting at Modder River and in that vicinity. The English have been meeting with a number of reverses lately. I expect that will prolong the war considerably. The Colony and Natal Boers are joining the others now. It has given them heart hearing of the Boer successes. I do not think the war will be over for at least a couple of months. The Queensland mounted contingent passed through yesterday for the front. I had a good chat with some. They are not very much impressed with this country.

They are a fine body of men, and ought to be of good service at the front. The NZ and NSW have already been in action, and acquitted themselves very well. I did not see them when they passed through. The train passed during the night. There are quite a number of wounded who are being sent back to Capetown. The casualties on our side must have been very heavy during some of the fights.<sup>19</sup> Christmas will be here in another week. I expect they will give us a good dinner on that occasion. It will be very acceptable. We do not get much variety in the shape of food. Bread, jam and coffee for breakfast; and tea and boiled mutton and soup for dinner. Vegetables are very scarce. We have not seen potatoes since we have been here.<sup>20</sup>

A letter from Estcourt, Natal<sup>21</sup> is dated 5 January 1900:

I wrote you on my way round from Capetown and gave it to a friend at Durban to post, so suppose you will have it. We had a

very smooth trip round to Durban. We got there on Monday and had to lay outside the harbour till Wednesday afternoon, owing to the bar being silted up and the harbour full of ships. We entrained at the docks, and left the same night about 7 o'clock. We came up here in a coal truck — a little better than my trip down from Johannesburg. There were about 50 in the truck, with our kits, rifles etc., and to make matters worse, three big bales of hay were thrown in amongst us. We had quite a demonstration when we passed through Durban. I think half the people there must have turned out to see us. Fruit and food of every description was thrown into the train. They are very enthusiastic and loyal in Natal. All went well until we left Durban, when it started to rain, and did not leave off till next morning just after we arrived at our destination. We all felt pretty well washed out after the long journey we had done, and were not sorry to have a wash. This is a very pretty little place, and looks very military-fied [sic] now. There are about 8000 or 10,000 troops camped in and around the town, chiefly infantry and artillery. They are out twice a day on parade, and look a fine body of men. It is a splendid sight to see them. We were told by our lieutenant that we should probably be fighting on Sunday, so I expect we will again shift camp to-morrow. There is to be a big fight shortly at Colenso, and then they will try and relieve Ladysmith. The Boers are entrenched all around the latter town, and their fighting line is over ten miles in length. The New South Wales Lancers and the New Zealanders have had some hard fighting, and have acquitted themselves in grand style. I see by the papers that there are more colonial troops coming. They are doing better than the British troops, especially the mounted colonials. They are what are mostly wanted. Infantry are not of much use here, as they are too slow in moving around. This is a dreadful place for rain — raining nearly every day, and it rains properly. It is usually very hot before it rains, and it clears the atmosphere splendidly. This is a splendid place after Cape Colony. It is like a little paradise after the place we were at last. They have just started firing with the big guns at Frere Camp, about ten miles from here, and I can hear the firing quite distinctly. I presume they are bombarding the Boer trenches, and are fighting there also.<sup>22</sup>

Samuel's next published letter is dated 13 January 1900 and was written from Chievely in Natal:<sup>23</sup>

You will see by the above address that we have moved camp since I wrote you last. We left Estcourt last Monday, and rode

to Frere, about 15 miles. We camped there one day and then came on to this place. It rained nearly all the time we were on the move. The night we spent at Frere it rained that hard that everything was afloat in the tent. We had to sit up nearly all night or we would have floated out. There was a large number of troops there but since we have left they have gone to try to outflank the Boers. They have come to the realisation that they cannot relieve Ladysmith by way of Colenso, as the enemy are too strongly entrenched and hold positions commanding all the roads. Most of the troops have left this place and gone on the other flank. We are expecting to hear of a big fight shortly, and will probably see some fighting ourselves. Chieveley is only about seven miles from Colenso and our camp is only four miles from the latter place. We can see their entrenchments and with glasses see them working and riding about. We are out on picket every alternate day and other days on patrol. We have been fired on twice, but no damage has been done though one shell came dangerously near our heads. We are up at 3 a.m., off at 3.30 and away all day and seldom get back before 7 p.m. We are pretty tired at night and do not see much time in fixing our beds. We heard the Boers were evacuating Colenso, and I expect we will be shifting on. I think we would have had another fight had we been able to cross the Tugela River. It is in flood and all the fords have had barbed wire put in them. A lot of the Royal Fusiliers were drowned there in the last fight, owing to their getting caught in it. I was talking to some of the regiment who were in the fight, and they told me they did not see the Boers the whole time, nor could they see from what trenches they were firing. They were under fire for 10 hours; some were taken prisoners, but managed to escape afterwards, owing to the Boers trying to collect some horses. They took advantage of their absence, and made off as fast as they could. Give my regards to all my friends, and let them know I am all right.<sup>24</sup>

There followed another letter to his mother, written from Chieveley Camp, Natal on Sunday 21 January 1900:

Dear Mother — I have had quite an experience since I wrote to you last, one I'll remember for quite a long time. Last Friday (Jan. 19) we had orders to saddle up at 3.30 a.m. — and get out for reconnoitring purposes. We got out about 2 miles from camp when we were told that we were to go on the right flank for observation purposes. We had to extend 300 yards between files, and were not told in what direction the Boers were. We

extended to within about 300 yards of their positions, and halted there for quite five minutes, when one of our fellows rode up to a ridge. That seemed to be the signal for the enemy to open fire. They started in twos and threes at first, and we stood there till they started to pour on volleys, when we wheeled around our horses and made for shelter. I must tell you our position. There was no shelter within range, we were in a dip between two rises, and had to ride up this dip. My horse after going about 200 yards fell with me, and threw me. He fell right onto my leg, and bruised it considerably. The bullets were pouring around me like hell. I jumped up and tried to catch my horse, but he jumped away from me and galloped after the other horses. There was nothing else for me to do but to run for it. I ran for about a quarter mile, and then threw away my gun, it being very heavy and impeding my progress. I ran on then to a drift (that is a crossing) at a little creek, and was so done up that I sat down and took off my haversack and water bottle, and left them on an old ammunition box. Meanwhile my comrades were well out of range and had caught my horse, and instead of waiting for me at the crossing, they galloped ahead about one and a half miles. While I was sitting at the crossing, the Boers were firing at me, and I could hear the bullets whizzing over my head and around me. I seemed to bear a charmed life. After resting there about five minutes, ran about another quarter of a mile, and then walked the rest of the way. They fired on me until I came up to where the others were. One rode back about 200 yards and offered to help me; but I was so mad with them all, I would not accept their offer. They could offer no excuses except that they thought that I was shot. We then rode around to a Kaffir<sup>25</sup> *kraal*<sup>26</sup> within 1,000 yards of the Boers, and stayed there for about five hours. It was a horribly hot day, and the reaction of my run made me feel rather queer. Nearly all the time we were there, the enemy were sniping at us; but fortunately no one was hit. We had a miraculous escape considering how close some of us were to the entrenchments, and cannot understand how we got out so lucky. Our officer behaved most pluckily, and he was not to blame as he had no definite orders how far to advance or how long to stay there. Ten troopers were sent with a non-commissioned officer to try and drift over the Tugela. The Boers let them advance to the river bank, and then opened fire on them — We could hear the guns from where we were, and though the infantry were engaged with the enemy, all the fire was concentrated on these eleven men. Only four

men and three horses came out. Two men's horses collided, and both men were thrown to the ground, and practically stunned. A Hussar officer rode down to them and took one of them up behind him. The other crept out through the long grass and escaped unhurt. The other six men have not been seen or heard from since. I heard one was seen to drop (supposed) dead and another two returned the Boers' fire and concentrated the fire on themselves, so suppose they were also wounded and are prisoners. We had no chance of returning their fire. I don't suppose there were 10 shots fired on our side, so you can imagine how strong the Boers were entrenched there. You cannot see where the bullets are coming from. You hear a report and the bullets going through the air, but see no flash nor smoke. The Naval Brigade fired a few shells into their trenches or the place they are supposed to be in, but so far as we could see did no damage. I do not think they will ever take Colenso from this side, but will only shift them by a flank movement. I hear that Buller and Warren are both near Ladysmith and if they relieve the latter place they will march back on Colenso. We are shifting camp a mile from here. I cannot understand the movements. I have just been offered in another troop a corporal's position, but have not accepted it. I would rather stay in my old troop as we have the best officers of the lot. Goodness knows when this war will be over. They do not seem to be making any headway against the Boers. I think the latter have got the best of the fighting up to now as our side has made no headway. Do not get anxious about me, as I am sure I will come through without any hurt. I don't think there is a bullet made to kill me, nothing short of a meat-axe will do that act.<sup>27</sup>

I have not been able to locate letters written in late February and March. Following the relief of Ladysmith in March 1900 the SALH camped there for a time. The SALH was one of the units in General Buller's campaign to remove the occupying Boers from Natal, and then to attack the Transvaal from the east. The following letters describe features of the fighting involved in capturing the mountainous terrain to the west of Ladysmith. From there Samuel moved to Elandslaagte, from where he wrote to his parents on 14 April. The letter is headed Elandslaagte Camp:

You will see by the above address that we have again shifted camp. We left Ladysmith last Monday (9th) and rode on to Elandslaagte, where we arrived about 4 p.m., and pitched

camp. It was a very tedious ride, though only about 21 miles. We had got camp shipshape about 9, and had a good night's rest. Next morning we were aroused by the Boers shelling the camp on a ridge about a quarter of a mile ahead of us. They kept that up till about 9 o'clock, and blew several tents in the air, though they did no other damage. We had orders to saddle up about 7.30 and were all on parade order on the left of our camp. It was rather hazy and as the mist arose and exposed the different camps, so the Boers shelled. They shelled the camp ahead of us and then shelled ours. One shell went through a tent and knocked a horse over that was tied up in the lines between the rows of tents; the rest fell just ahead of the parade. (We were in very close order and dismounted.) The next pitched right in front of us, and fell between two troopers, and after burying itself in the ground, burst. It was fortunate for us that it did not burst until it struck the ground first, or there would have been a great number of casualties in our regiment. Our Colonel thought it was getting too rough, so we returned to the back of a *kopje*<sup>28</sup> and then went and packed our kits, and struck tents. It was a very artful move on the part of the Boers, letting us fix our camp, and when we thought we were well out of range of their guns, to shell us in such a manner. They wrecked some of the camps nearest their lines in a very short time. Had they shells like ours we would have suffered severely. Their practice was exceptionally good. They had an artillery duel with the Naval guns during the day, and put one of our guns out of action and killed two gunners and two infantry men. I did not learn the results of the morning's bombardment, but do not think there were many casualties. After we had packed our wagons we were ordered round in the left flank and took up a position on the left of the collieries, on a high *kopje* commanding a ridge of low-lying hills. Nothing occurred worthy of note. We stayed there until about 8 p.m. when the infantry picquets (sic) relieved us. We then went back to our old camping ground and bivouacked there for the night. Next morning we marched back to Modder Spruitt and again pitched our camp that night. The troop I am in were told off for picquet (sic) and it was a frightful night, raining as it can rain nearly all night. We were not sorry when morning broke. Next day we got orders at dinner hour to saddle up as quickly as possible. Our horses were out grazing so had to scamper off without my dinner to catch them, and after we had caught and saddled up we found it was a false alarm. Someone had brought up a report that a commando of Boers

were trying to outflank us. We did not let our horses go but tied them up to the lines, as we had a suspicion there would be some move on. We got the order soon after for A Squadron to strip tents and pack kits. After we had packed wagons we were marched back to the above place, and arrived there about 7 p.m. Fortunately it is moonlight now. If it had been dark many of us would have hurt ourselves over the stones. We shifted next morning and are now camped about 1 mile from the station. We have had a couple of quiet days in camp, but hear we are going out tomorrow. What for I cannot say. The camp now is very quiet. There has not been any shelling going on since. One — to look from our camp — would wonder where the Boers are, but he would only need to go out a couple of miles to find out. We have gone over the old battlefield here, where the Boers met with their defeats. There are hundreds of dead horses lying about; they do not tend to sweeten the air — not by any means. Here are all the graves of the Imperial Light Horse<sup>29</sup> who were shot when storming a *kopje*.<sup>30</sup> We camped just alongside. There are graves all over the place, and it is a gruesome sight to see the place even now. What must it have been like after the battle? The collieries are working now, and I hear they are being worked by the Durham Light Infantry. They were not much damaged, though one shaft is full of dead Boers that were thrown down by the Boers after our troops had evacuated the place and retired on Ladysmith. There are a great number of troops stationed round here, and expect it will not be long now before there is a reconnaissance or battle fought. The end seems as far off as ever. The Boers have strongly fortified their position around here, and will take some driving out. It is very cold during the night and early morning, and water is getting scarce. There has been a lot of sickness brought on through bad water.<sup>31</sup>

There was no mention in the country newspapers in which Samuel's letters continued to be published, to the effect that he returned to Australia, and I have not found his name in the list of soldiers returning from South Africa, so it would appear that he remained in South Africa after his discharge.

### BENJAMIN BRAUN

Braun, who was in the NSW Mounted Infantry, was one of the members of the first New South Wales Contingent to leave Australia for South Africa in November 1899. The *Daily Telegraph* of 4 June

1900 reported that Ben Braun was recovering in Naauwpoort<sup>32</sup> Hospital from Enteric. If so, Ben was one of the lucky ones, as enteric (now called typhoid) was the main killer of those who died in the Boer War.

Ben was born in 1877 to Benjamin and Miriam Braun. A letter to his father from Kroonstad, ORC<sup>33</sup> on 7 July 1900 is typical of many published. It reads:

I am still attached to the Mounted Infantry Details, and expect to be with them until we come across our regiments. Our work is mostly escorting convoys or guns. On the 19th of last month, at 4.30 a.m., we left for Zand River<sup>34</sup> to escort a battery of artillery back to Kroonstad. We breakfasted near a dam, about half-way, at 7.30, and pushed on at 8 o'clock. We picked up the guns at 10 a.m. at Virginia<sup>35</sup>, 16 miles from Kroonstad, and after a halt of half an hour, we returned. On our way back we were sniped at from some *kopjes*, on our left. A patrol was sent out, which was also fired at. One horse was shot, and a bullet passed through one of the men's helmets, an inch above the head (which was pretty close). We did not have a chance to return the Boers' fire as they were using smokeless powder, and by the time we located where the fire came from, the snipers were well out of rifle fire. We arrived in town at 7.30 that night safe and sound. We had a rest of two days in Kroonstad, which was very welcome to both man and beast. We were then sent out with four squadrons of Imperial Yeomanry, and a squadron of Rimington's Guides<sup>36</sup>, to strengthen a convoy escort, which was composed of 300 Imperial Bushmen<sup>37</sup>, a regiment of infantry, and a battery of artillery going to Lindley, 44 miles east. The convoy itself consisted of 70 wagons and three traction engines, each engine drawing four trucks, and 10 ton on each truck. At sundown we camped close to a large farm, had tea, and were just turning in when our squadron got the order to saddle up, which was not at all relished. Our orders were to catch up to the convoy as soon as possible. We went on about eighteen miles and camped until 5 next morning when we pushed on. We welcomed the rising of the sun, after having spent a very cold and windy night. At 8 o'clock we picked up the convoy. They were crossing a large drift<sup>38</sup>, which took some time, as the wagons had to have an extra span of oxen put on, and the trucks of the traction engines had to be drawn across separately. We went on until 5.30 to a drift which was also difficult to cross. After crossing we camped here for the night. At 5 a.m. next day we

pushed on again, and had not been on the road more than a couple of hours when we were sniped at from some *kopjes* in front of us. We tried to drive the Boers out with rifle fire, but it was no good; the artillery had to be brought into action, and after two hours' shelling, they were driven back. They had no big guns and it was supposed that they were the enemy's out-posts. We went on some four miles further, where we encamped for the night. At 5.30 a.m. we again pushed on. The party I was with formed the left flank guard. Myself and three others were sent on ahead as scouts. We visited some deserted farmhouses and Kaffir huts, but found nothing of importance until we came to a farmhouse flying a white flag. We asked for the "boss", and were told he was sick. We saw him, searched the house, and found one of our Lee-Metford rifles and 100 rounds of ammunition. I took the rifle and reported to our officer in charge, who was four miles to the rear, and he said that he would have to send the Boer back some way. As I was going back I met a Canadian corporal and two men, who came on with me. When we got to the farm house we introduced the corporal as a Canadian doctor. He saw the farmer, looked at his tongue, felt his pulse, and told him that he had only a bad cold, and could go and see the General, and get a pass. After some talking with his wife, he got up and dressed himself, but then said that he could not walk, so we put him on a horse and sent him back to the rear. After we had seen him off, we went on about three miles, when we came to a deserted farm house which we searched, but found nothing in the house. Outside there were hoofmarks freshly made, which showed someone on horseback had been there lately. We were just mounting, when one of our men rode down, and told us to look sharp, or we would be cut off. We needed no further warning, but went as fast as our horses would go. When we rejoined the squadron we could see the enemy at the farmhouse we had just left. The next thing that drew our attention was the grass on fire all round us. It was a great move of the Boers, as later, when the smoke got thick, they advanced behind it. We fired on the enemy, who we could just see through the smoke. We retired several times to try and draw them on to a small *kopje*, but they did not come. Although waiting some time, we had to retire as the fire was getting all round us. As we were nearing the main road, a whirlwind took the fire up, and we had to gallop to get clear. Some of us had to jump the flames to get out. I can tell you it was a lively few minutes. A lot of the horses had their legs singed. When we got on the road, we formed up,

and were moving in close formation when “whizz“ went a shell just over us. This was the first intimation we had of the Boers having any big guns in position. When we came up to the convoy, we heard the advanced guard had reached Lindley<sup>39</sup>. This was good news, as we only had to keep the enemy in check while the remainder of the convoy got in. We got in at 8 o'clock, after holding a *kopje* on the left all afternoon. We unsaddled, and had a hasty meal, and turned in. Next morning we got up at reveille (5 a.m.), fed and watered our horses. We had just brought our horses from water when a shell came into the horse lines, but as luck had it, it did not explode. About 3000 head of sheep were commandeered, and half were let loose among the troops to do what they liked with them. It was great fun trying to catch them, and it would have broken a butcher's heart to see the way they were killed and skinned. At 3 o'clock a message came into the town from Commandant De Wet saying if the town did not surrender within 24 hours he would shell us out. Next morning at reveille we attended to our horses. Nothing of interest occurred during the day, only De Wet's shelling did not come off. We moved out of Lindley at 4.30 next morning, and after four days travelling we arrived at Kroonstad.<sup>40</sup>

*The Daily Telegraph* of 27 September 1901 contained a report that Ben Braun had accepted an 'Indulgence Passage' on the *Harlech Castle* troopship on its return to Cape Town, on the basis that he would sign up on the arrival of the ship in South Africa; the cost of the passage was £2.5.00 being at the rate of 1/6 per day for the voyage. This amount had to be paid to the Embarkation Officer prior to boarding the troopship. He did travel to South Africa, serving with the 3rd NSW Imperial Bushmen, which eventually returned to Australia in mid 1902.

### **CAPTAIN GERALD SEPTIMUS SAMUELSON**

Gerald Samuelson was born in London in 1865. He received his primary education at Kings School, Sherborne, Dorsetshire. Coming to Australia in 1890, he settled in Armidale. He joined the NSW Army Medical Corps (AMC) and arrived in East London, South Africa, in early 1900. This is a letter written to a Mr. H. Weaver of Armidale, which appeared in *The Armidale Argus* and was described as being from our popular medico. What is published is described as extracts from the letter. No location is given for the scene of writing of the letter, but as it is dated 14 April 1900 it is written after the capture

of Bloemfontein, and presumably was written there. This letter gives Samuelson's philosophical views on war and soldiering:

On my part I am heartily sick of being shot at. I have been in the engagements of Paardeburg<sup>41</sup>, Osfontein, Abraham's Kloof, Poplar Grove<sup>42</sup>, Driefontein<sup>43</sup> and the Waterworks, besides being banged at whilst out with reconnaissance parties. I find that a few bullets more or less, whilst dressing casualties, as the squadron retire have a stimulating effect, but towards what, I will leave you to guess. The men are plucky and the wounded's complaint is but one. 'When can I have a cut at the blank blanks again?' Even the enteric cases, when enfeebled with the disease, harp on the same string, and to make a man remain behind or do orderly work is a punishment for which comfortable living and full rations will not give him compensation. Of course there are exceptions; yet I cannot in my experience hope to see a more bedraggled, foul mouthed, faithful, thieving, sober, plucky, careless, thoughtful and determined mass of humanity. Tommy's likeness is in any of Kipling's books. He'll play like a child, gamble like a gaol bird, "knick" any darned thing he wants; but he'll fight like a hero, put up with anything or often with nothing, and will share his last drop of water or biscuit with a Kaffir. The worst features of Mr. Atkins become prominent when resting; he nurses himself; whereas if he is kept in harness he does not suffer from that worst of all diseases — introspection. I do not, of course, say that he knows all the diseases by name. He is officered by all sorts — keen courageous gentlemen, who even after days of forced marching and deprivation, are still clean and cultured. Generally speaking the officers think of their men, and the men trust their officers.

My work is very varied. Half my time has been of the roughest. My duty is to stick to my squadron, patch them up, and physic as they require. This necessitates constant vigilance in the field whilst under fire, and hard riding to keep up with the troops in their maneuvers. I carry on my back nearly two stone<sup>44</sup> of equipment, and after 14 hours of work in the saddle — now in the middle of our men as they advance, or now after dressing or treating surgically the casualties, overtaking them as they retire.

War is civilization's disgrace. It violates the laws of God himself; it never can be righteous. Satan — I mean the satan of the church's childhood — must chuckle and order the coals when the manifest butchery commences. It violates all social law. It is a grand civiliser, an ennobling sport — and the man

who doesn't funk isn't born — plenty of liars are, though I am not one of them. The feeling I have is not of personal fright; it is suggestive of a complete collapse of all one's faith in one's fellows. I can strongly recommend it as a cure for pomp and self-inflation. We are numbers here, not people — so many pawns swept off the board, so many tricks trumped when we are 'casualties'. I believe the tales I used to hear of the Boers' blackguardism. I have been with the troops retiring before their fire; men have dropped, and the firing that had just ceased had commenced again as I have knelt by my patient, and has knocked up little spurts of sand and made my ears remind me of bees. I have seen the white flag used, camp servants murdered and marks on wounded men afterwards rescued that suggest boots more than bullets.

The cavalry have a trying time. I am with the First Brigade of the First Division and so have shared for two months the rougher work done by them. Long rides in heat, without food or water, bivouacked anywhere in all weathers, 'holding the *kopje* until you are driven clean out or relieved' with the horses' bridle hanging over our shoulders, off any-time after 3 a.m. to outflank the enemy, and then act as escort for the guns — generally where the shells fall thickest. They don't fight much, but are much fought, they are the trial shipment of an army.

Artillerymen, of whom I see much, have to my mind the most interesting work, and miss much of the hard graft of horse and foot. Their results are more usually completed, success or annihilation, with the loss of their guns. I have seen more old-time dogged no-surrender pluck with the gunners than with other arms of the service.

The much despised 'toefantry' have filled me with admiration. I have seen a cloud of dust advance, halt and belch fire at an unseen herd of Boers, march on, leaving scores of poor bleeding beggars behind, fight on and on and then each man with his kit come into bivouac, chins up, shoulders back, sweating, swearing, smelling and sleeping off their fatigue, rise at reveille laughing and eager to get a shot again. They are the men who keep us sawbones busy, and though they do not exhibit the cavalryman's dash, they excel in determination and coolness. By the way, Tommy is always washing when he can; water to him means filling himself, his horse, his bottle, and then a bath if he is allowed. As the dam is, perhaps, the only water for drinking, he's often forbidden to bathe, but of course carries the bivouac or camp as much as he likes.

The Army Service Corps are fearfully overworked, but all through are as obliging and systematic as circumstances allow. Of course, they cannot do all they would like to, nor are our transport ration and forage allowance just what we would prefer, but taking all in all, the carrying and feeding of 200,000 men of whom some 150,000 have no local habitation or name, in the enemy's country, up to 800 miles from the base, is an undertaking that I feel requires for its due execution a wiser head than mine. The medical service is certainly more complete than I expected. I have seen some really dashing work done under fire, whilst considering the absence of accommodation and equipment, the professional work, always of a high order, is met by a fair modicum of success. Our A.M.C. does our Colony credit, it is highly commended on all sides, and I am (pardon the conceit) delighted to see such excellent work, in both a technical and military sense, done by some from whom I expected mediocrity, not making personal reference.

It is a piteous sight to see our officers reading the funeral service. The poor soldier has met a man's death. I feel deep respect for his mangled body, but those who are left and are honouring their dead are indeed a sad sight. A hurriedly dug grave, a sincere but necessarily short religious ceremony, not a few honest tears, a deep curse, a hurried order, and the burying party are fighting again. Such is a soldier's funeral in the field — void of pomp or hypocrisy, but full of those truer emotions that are more searching than even his neighbour's inferences, and more virile than any sermon. I know of no more potent or divine lesson than this. But then I am an irreligious outcast, I am told, and cannot see but the blasphemy of long prayers in the synagogue, and conformity with the other fellow's views of good order and citizenship. I solace myself with the thought that orthodoxy and narrowness are strangely familiar.<sup>45</sup>

This letter is particularly interesting in Gerald Samuelson's views about the various sections of the army he was associated with. It is his comment about synagogue services and the nature of prayer in the synagogue, which establishes his Jewish origins. Gerald Samuelson returned to Armidale in January 1902, and a civic reception was held in his honour. He resumed medical practice in the town, and in March 1902 was listed as subscriber No. 36 on the Armidale Telephone Exchange. The 20 April 1904 issue of the *Armidale Argus* shows that telephone listing in the name of Dr.

Samuelson, but the following week's issue indicates that a Dr. Clune was the holder of that telephone listing. Gerald Samuelson died in 1933 in Sydney, but was not buried in the Jewish section of Rookwood cemetery.

### **CLIVE LIMA BRAUN**

Clive was in the New South Wales Mounted Infantry, and was the older brother of Benjamin Braun, and was senior in army service to his brother, being a sergeant. His father was a jeweller in Erskine Street, Sydney. References to Clive Braun appear in one of the letters written in South Africa by Mark Frederick Collins of Narrabri, also a member of the 1st NSW Mounted Rifles. A letter from Mark is included in this article.

On 9 October 1900 it was noted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Evening News* that Sgt Braun was in hospital at Woodstock<sup>46</sup> and that he would shortly be invalided to Australia. However, his journey back to Australia seems to have been by way of Great Britain, where he was presented to Queen Victoria. He wrote to his parents about the visit to Windsor Castle, and the letter with some newspaper journalist's additions duly appeared in the pages of the city newspapers:

He and his comrades arrived in Southampton on November 10, (1900) and went thence to Fort Brockhurst near Portsmouth. Here they were inspected, and those whose uniform was in fit condition were given two weeks furlough and an advance of pay, in his case, £4,[sic] and were told that if further furlough or advance was required to apply for it at Shorncliffe (near Dover), where a depot had been established for colonials. Sergeant Braun also got a ticket for Belfast, and an order for another to Ballina, and a return to Shorncliffe. He went on to London, saw various sights, and at Wellington Barracks met Sergeant Mackenzie of the Scots' Guards (then in Sydney with the Imperial Contingent for the Federation celebrations), and dined at the sergeant's mess. Going homewards through Hyde Park, he created a sensation by coo-eeing to a comrade at a distance. Next evening the colonials went to the Palace of Varieties, at Greenwich, where they were splendidly entertained, and at the conclusion of a patriotic song there was quite a demonstration; hats of Australians, Canadians and South Africans were thrown on the stage, and the cheering, yelling and coo-eeing was deafening. A visit to Cambridge came next. At the railway station they had a splendid recep-

tion, and then headed by two bands, marched to the Guildhall, where they had luncheon. Afterwards the visitors were taken in parties around the different colleges, and in the evening dined in batches, after a special service in King's College Chapel. Sergeant Braun's party dined at King's College, and in their honour the oldest rule of the College — no toasts to be proposed at dinner — was broken and 'didn't the undergraduates yell when the Provost (Mr. Austen Leigh) proposed our health, to which I replied. After dinner the students shouldered us across to the Conservative Club where a smoke oh! was held'. Oxford was next visited; but the reception there was not equal to that given them by the Cantabs; but this was due to some mistake as to the time of arrival. After tea the party went to a music hall, and then to the Royal where Frank Thornton was playing 'Facing the Music'. Next day the sights of the city were visited, and the Martyr's Memorial (on the site of the burning of Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer) specially noticed. They lunched at Christ Church, where the Dean (Dr. Paget) informed Sergeant Braun that they were the first troops who had had a meal at that place for 500 years. On the menu cards of the visitors those present wrote their names, among them being Dr. Driver, the Regius Professor of Hebrew. The party was afterwards photographed. From Christ Church they went to a football match — Magdalen College against University College. Afternoon tea and a pleasant chat at Magdalen with the undergraduates and then dinner at Exeter College. In the evening there was a concert at the Guildhall and another visit to the theatre. From Oxford to Windsor, where they marched to the Grenadier Guards Barracks, where coats were left, and then to the Castle. There they were shown, among other things, in a very prominent place, a casket presented by the Jews of New South Wales at the Jubilee.<sup>47</sup> In going over the Castle they went up a staircase, which the attendant told them was only used by sovereigns visiting the Queen. Then came the presentation to Her Majesty. The New South Wales men led the way. Then came the Victorians, six in number, the Queenslanders three, one Tasmanian, the Canadians and South Africans. 'In that order we went before the Queen. New South Wales was represented by — Australian Horse, Sergeant Legge; Mounted Rifles, Sergeant Braun, Privates Kremer, Tepper, Russell, Wilkinson and O'Connor; Bushmen, Private Hunt; Army Medical Corps, Finlay, Bowman and Burns. We marched in sections of colonies to where the Queen was sitting, then fronted and saluted. The chaplain in

charge introduced Sergeants Legge and Braun, saying 'This is Sergeant Legge of the Australian Horse, one of six brothers at the front; this is Sergeant Braun, of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles; the others are all from New South Wales.' We again saluted. Then came the command from Major Synge, Highland Light Infantry, 'Right turn; quick march', and away



*Clive Lima Braun*

*This photograph appeared in the Jewish Chronicle issue of 23 November 1900 accompanying a note about his appearance before Queen Victoria.<sup>49</sup>*

we went to make room for the Vics. After all had been by the Queen, her Majesty addressed them in a very clear voice, saying 'From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your loyalty and devotion to the Empire, and wish you all God speed and a safe return to your homes'. In conclusion, Sergeant Braun says 'Cheers were given for her Majesty, to which we added the colonial cheer. The Australians made a coo-ee of it, but the Canadians and South Africans made it into a sort of yell. I hardly think such a row had been heard in that hall before. All the Court people and reporters went into smiles. The Queen looks remarkably well, but what surprised us all was to hear her speak so clearly'.<sup>48</sup>

Clive Braun was promoted to a Lieutenancy on 30 March 1901 and continued service in South Africa with the 3rd NSW Mounted Rifles. He volunteered for service in World War I in the British Army with the rank of Captain in the Essex Regiment and was killed in action on 19 June 1917.

### **MARK FREDERICK COLLINS**

Born in Goulburn in 1875, Mark was the sixth child of Joseph Collins and his second wife Priscilla Israel, whom he had married in 1866. Lydia (Marks), the first wife of Joseph Collins, had died in 1862. An elder half-brother, Charles, second child of the marriage of Joseph and Lydia, had moved to Narrabri in 1867, and after a time had opened stores in the area. The Narrabri store had been sold by Charles to his half-brother Albert Ernest Collins in 1888. [Albert Ernest was the second child in the second marriage of his father, the eldest being Henry Nathan Collins, a solicitor.] Mark was to manage this store after Albert Ernest Collins transferred its ownership to a company in 1901, following his election as a MLA. Joseph and Priscilla Collins lived at the time of the Boer War in Dowling Street, Moore Park.

Many of Mark's letters were published in Sydney and Narrabri newspapers, beginning with letters written while on the troopship *Southern Cross* from Sydney to South Africa. In a letter from Pretoria dated 12 September 1900 addressed to his parents, Mark includes references to his visiting synagogues in Johannesburg and Pretoria in the Transvaal. He indicates that he also attended services while in Johannesburg. The letter describes incidents in the attempt to hunt down the commando of Christian De Wet as he moved through the Orange River Colony countryside from June to August 1900:

Being here on my own waiting for two trucks of supplies, which I am to go in charge of to Middleburg<sup>50</sup>, where part of our regiment have gone, en route to Belfast<sup>51</sup>, I will take the opportunity of writing another budget<sup>52</sup>. I will try and give you a little interesting reading about our chase after De Wet, and I think you will agree with me that he is the smartest Boer General we have had to deal with. We remained at Vredepoort<sup>53</sup> for two weeks, and were supposed to have De Wet surrounded completely. The hills in which he was camped were very rough — in fact, by far the roughest that we have seen — so we could not tackle him in that position. We used to send out patrols every day, and they used to run against the Boer scouts and exchange a few shots each time. I went out several times and the bullets came a good deal too close to be pleasant. The game of drawing the enemy's fire is not what it is cracked up to be; but it is not too bad when you get used to it, though it takes time. We had trenches and rifle pits all round the camp, and were prepared to stand to arms at a moment's notice if attacked, each man having 200 rounds of ammunition. Every day the horses were sent out to grass in charge of an armed party. Captain Antill was promoted to the rank of Major while at Vredepoort. On the 31st July we heard very heavy artillery firing towards the south, but too far away to see the effect. A few British subjects and Kaffirs came into camp informing us that the Boers intended to shoot all the British who were living in the town; hence their escape.

August 1: Reveille at 5 a.m. In the afternoon a Kaffir brought in word that the Boers were going to court martial some Kaffirs at a farm about 8 miles away. Those Kaffirs they suspected of bringing information to the British, and were to be shot that night. At 6.30 p.m. 16 men from C Company, under Lieut. Newman, rode out in the direction of the farm in question. Four of us and the Kaffir rode on in advance in extended order, and we were to send out word when we were about a quarter mile from the farm. When the others came up we advanced to within a quarter mile of the *kraal* and dismounted. Myself and two others then extended at 30 yards interval and advanced on the *kraal*. We sent the Kaffir on to talk to his wife and inquire if any Boers had been near in his absence. We took cover behind some ant beds and with our rifles at the ready we were a formidable trio to run against on a dark night. It was an unnecessary precaution, as the Kaffir returned with information that no Boers had appeared, but were expected about midnight. We led our horses up and put

them in an open *kraal*, and were posted in couples all around the farm, and watched all night. We could see heliographs signalling all night. The Boers never showed up, so we mixed some fun. We had breakfast about 8, and a messenger brought word from camp that we were to take up a post about a mile nearer the camp, as Col de Lisle with a party were going to reconnoitre the town of Parrys<sup>54</sup>, and we were to cover his retreat in the event of attack. The Colonel dropped men all along the left flank at intervals, and it proved a good move, for after flanking Parrys and about to return, a party of 80 or 100 Boers attempted to cut him off, but they ran against a snag, as the men who were left along the flank opened fire and beat them back in double quick time, but they came again and followed the party to within a couple of miles of the camp. There were too many of them for us to take, so we retired slowly, all the time their bullets were lodging amongst us. They are very cheeky sometimes, especially when we retire; but when once we start to advance they scatter like so many mice. Four "Big" guns arrived; heavy artillery firing south-west. All mounted men were sent out to reconnoitre a *kopje* about 2 miles away, from which the Boers used to snip at our horses when going down to water. I was sent out with three men as advance scouts. We advanced to within 500 yards of the *kopje* under cover of our guns, which were firing over our heads on to the *kopje* to search for any of the enemy. There were not many there, and the shelling soon hunted them, and we had no occasion to use our rifles. The order then came to retire on the camp. We moved off at noon of the 5th in the direction of Parrys, myself and three men doing the scouting on the left flank, sighting only a few Boers but too far off to fire on. Not so with the advance party. They ran against the enemy close to the *kopje*. They opened fire with rifles, 12 pounder pom-pom and maxim, so you can imagine it was very nice music.

6th: We killed 20 sheep and there being only 20 men we had a good supply. Every man was his own cook.

7th: There was a bit of an artillery duel on the west side of the hills. We sent out a patrol; some W. Australians got into a trap, and several of their horses were shot, and a few men taken prisoners. In the afternoon we could see the dust rising, and what looked like a transport moving in the hills. It turned out to be De Wet trekking north. That night we were ordered to be ready at 7 a.m., but we did not start till 9, when we marched east. We formed the advance guard and marched about 12 miles and camped about 5 p.m. One wagon got stuck in a drift,

and I was sent back with fresh mules to pull it out. About 7 o'clock, on riding over the hill close to the camp I saw a most beautiful sight. The whole veldt was on fire and it was as light as day. Several wagons were moving along the roads towards the different camps, and I had to ride through the fire. Meanwhile they managed to get our wagon on the move, so I could not find it, but on arriving at camp it was already there.

9th: Marched towards Vaal River and halted about three miles from the river with the wagons. The regiment went on and were just in time to prevent the enemy crossing the drift, but as is generally the case the artillery were too far back and the Boers got away. If they had only brought the artillery into position half an hour earlier De Wet would have been taken prisoner, and a valuable one at that. The regiment moved off at 6 a.m. taking two days' rations, as they expected to have a good ride after De Wet. I stayed behind with the wagons as I was still acting Quarter-Master Sergeant. We managed to procure some eggs and poultry, also some clothes at a deserted store, and that night a convoy caught up with us with a few bags of mail. I scored no less than eight letters, and I nearly jumped out of my boots with joy. It is grand to get letters from home at any time, but on active service when a mail arrives there is cheering and hooraying from one end of the camp to the other.

11th: All dismounted men were inspected, and those who had bad boots or were sick were allowed to ride on a bullock wagon. We passed several farms with oranges growing, and we loaded ourselves with as many as we could carry; we had not finished them a week later. We marched to Wolverdiend that day — 25 miles. The mules were very weak, and were dropping dead all along the roads. The travelling lately has been very fast and the stock are awfully weak. The dismounted men were all left behind, and were entrained to Johannesburg to get new clothes and remounts. It was a very cloudy night, and we were packed like sardines in open trucks. Nevertheless we all managed to sneak a few hours sleep, and reached Johannesburg at 4 a.m. on the 13th. The first we looked to was getting some breakfast, which consisted of bully beef, biscuits, and jam, after which I took 20 men to the supply depot to draw rations for 100 men. We then marched to the Showground and camped ten days, and spent a jolly time generally. Our officers tried to draw some pay for us, but owing to some cause or other they could not get any. It was rough on the majority, as they were nearly all stumped. There were only two or three of us, including myself, who had

any money. I visited the Synagogue, and met the Rabbi, Manning, who was very nice and introduced me to several Jewish people, one of whom, Mr. Klisser, invited me to dinner, and I spent a very pleasant evening. I went to the Synagogue on Thursday and Friday nights and Saturday morning. It is a very nice building. I also met a Mr. Brash, who told me that Reggie Wilson was staying with him at Johannesburg, and he was sorry his family was away, otherwise he would have invited me to his house. Also a Mr. Levy, brother of Lewis Levy, solicitor, Sydney, who invited me to his house, but as we were about to leave for Pretoria, I could not accept his kind invitation, so he made me promise to look him up when next I went to Johannesburg. I met a chap named Thompson, who used to go to the Windsor Grammar School with Syd Solomon, Reg Wilson and Ern. Lillyman. He took some of us to the Gymnasium where we spent a couple of pleasant hours. He also has a brother there, who with Will Ross played several games of tennis. The latter won the majority of games easily. We also played a game of football against a Johannesburg team and beat them by 15 points to 5.

Sept.13 — Am now sitting on the platform of Middleburg station waiting for a Regiment, so I am now scribbling off a few more lines. We bought a football, and used to play nearly every day at the camp. Our tucker was tip top. There was an institution called the Soldiers' Home with reading room, piano, refreshment, and billiard room. We adjourned there at night, and had a sing-song and a cup of tea or coffee with cakes for 3d. We got leave to go to town every day, and every other day I had to draw rations from the supply depot, including the issue of rum twice a week. The rum ration is 1 pint to eight men. The following is full ration for 1 man for 1 day —  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz coffee,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz tea, 3 oz sugar, 2 oz rice, 4 oz jam, 1 lb biscuits, 1 lb meat and  $\frac{1}{2}$  gill of rum. It is a comical sight to see the Kaffirs catching all dogs not registered. All registered dogs have a tin ticket attached to its collar. One morning while artillery men were out exercising their horses about 1 miles from town, they were sniped at by some Boers. All hands had to stand to arms, and two battalions of infantry were sent out, and they got a few prisoners. On the 24th a telegram was received ordering all detail belonging to Ridley's Brigade to proceed to Pretoria, and join their respective units, so we left for Pretoria by train, and at 8 a.m. on the 25th we reached our destination, passing right through the centre of the mines around the Johannesburg district. We marched about 4 miles

to camp. They had been a long way round after De Wet, but he gave them the slip, and is now in the Free State again. While out they came across the Bushmen's Contingent, who had been having a very rough time at Elands River.<sup>55</sup> They were surrounded on a small kopje for 13 days, and lost several men and many horses. Amongst the killed was Jim Duff, brother of Mr. Duff, who gave me the horse. A pom-pom<sup>56</sup> shell struck him on the left side, coming out at the right shoulder. Con Druitt was close to him. We camped at Pretoria 16 days awaiting remounts. The authorities wanted us to take Argentine remounts, but we refused them as they were not up to our weight, so we waited and got English horses. While there we also had a good old time. Half used to get leave every day. Our passes were from 12 noon to 6 p.m., by which time all men had to be out of town. There are a Museum and Swimming Baths in the town. The latter is similar to Pitt Street Baths, only it is fresh water. At a refreshment room we used to get a real good meal for 3s. The proprietor told me he paid 1s 6d per lb. for all meat used. Kruger's money is bringing extortionate prices. I was detailed to take charge of some trucks with supplies to Belmont and Middleburg. The regiment started by road to Belfast as escort to the convoy, so I was left in full command of myself. During the few days I waited there I visited the Bushmen's camp and met several Narrabri and Walgett boys including Con Druitt, Jack Burrows, Keen from Gurley, and several others. They all looked well. They have travelled over more country, but have not had anything near the fighting we have had. I also visited the Synagogue which is a very fine building. They are building new forts all round Pretoria, and we could hear them blasting every day. It sounded like artillery, and the men used to cry out: "Stand to your horses! Mount! Gallop!". Left Pretoria on the 12th and arrived at Middleburg on the 13th, and here I am for a few days. Had a look round the town, which is about 1 mile square; the houses are very scattered. Some of the Australian Horse are here, and I am camping with them. I saw Lord and Lady Roberts in Pretoria; also Kitchener. The weather is getting very warm, and it still keeps dry. It is well that the rain keeps off, for if the wet season comes on there will be a lot of fever. I am bullet and fever proof.<sup>57</sup>

On 13 May 1901 Mark Collins returned to Narrabri following his unit's return to Sydney from South Africa. He then took up employment at his brother's haberdashery emporium in Narrabri,

his brother being elected in July to represent Narrabri in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. Mark married Irene Sarah Alexander at the Great Synagogue, Sydney on 20 November, 1901.

### LEO GOLDSPIK

I have noted two letters written by Leo Goldspink, who had joined a South African Irregular unit, the Second Imperial Light Horse, both being addressed to his father, C. Goldspink of Carlton, Melbourne. The letters appeared in *The Age*, the first in January 1902 and the second on 6 February 1902. This second letter was written after Christmas 1901, is headed Elands River Bridge, Orange River Colony<sup>58</sup> and dated 26 December 1901 and shows what I suggest was a typical Australian Jewish attitude to Christian festivals and celebrations.

The letter was written at that stage in the Boer War in which the British were trying to trap the remaining Boer commandos, led by Louis Botha and Christian De Wet. It is a description of the slaughter, which occurred at Tweefontein<sup>59</sup> on 24 December 1901 when the Boers surprised the camp of the Imperial Yeomanry, under Major Williams:

I have had a pretty rough Christmas. I ate my pudding on horseback. We had 120 miles riding in four days. About 1 o'clock on Christmas morning there was heavy firing about twelve miles away in the direction of Bethlehem<sup>60</sup>. Soon afterwards we galloped towards the spot, and struck the camp of the Yeomanry. The convoy and wagons were gone, and we found dead and dying members of the corps lying in all directions. It was a shocking sight, and only a man with an iron nerve could stand it. In the distance we could see the Boers hurrying away with the convoy. We started in pursuit, but they were retreating into strong positions, and an advance on our part would have meant certain slaughter. They had the captured guns pointed at us, and the ridges lined with riflemen. De Wet, Botha and other Boer generals have been knocking about here for some time, and at last they have scored. Much of the good work we have been doing has been undone by this disaster. The Yeomanry had a good position and were 400 strong. The casualties numbered 59 killed and 79 wounded. The survivors told us the Boers went around shooting the wounded, and that the majority of them used expansive bullets. They also used Martini-Henry bullets split down the middle. If we could have got at them with the bayonet on learning this we would have

killed them all, so mad were we at their action in murdering the wounded in cold blood. They fired on the ambulance, but de Wet afterwards apologised to the doctors. He said the ambulance could not be seen in the darkness. On the whole it was what you would term a bloodthirsty massacre.<sup>61</sup>

I have not been able to discover any additional information about Leo Goldspink, whether he returned to Australia or continued life in South Africa in common with many other former Australians.

These letters from Jewish soldiers fighting in the Boer War provide a unique insight into life at the front — with all its hardships and challenges. They are typical in discussing troop movements, dissecting battlefields, and often being critical of the military leadership. During the course of the Boer War there was no censorship of mail from soldiers, though there was civil censorship in South Africa. The Jewish references help to add life and colour. The fact that some of the soldiers sought to establish contact with the local Jewish communities is of interest in showing that they had not lost touch with their religion, even though their origins might have been in rural Australia.

## NOTES

1. Max Chamberlain and Robin Droogleever (eds), *The War with Johnny Boer: Australians in the Boer War 1899–1902*. Sydney: AMPHP, The War Book Shop, 2003
2. Russell Stern, 'The Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902: An Australian Jewish Perspective Part II: Rose Lena Shappere' *AJHS Journal*, vol. XVII part 2, 2004, pp 191–207.
3. Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899–1902*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002.
4. In the same year as our Samuel Goldreich arrived in South Africa, his cousin, also named Samuel Goldreich, but educated in England arrived in Johannesburg. The coincidence of their names and arrival in South Africa leads to some confusion as to the person that one is dealing with. The photograph of Samuel Goldreich which accompanies this article was taken at Pretoria Synagogue, Passover 1901 and appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* 7 June 1901 p. 7. Samuel Goldreich, then a Corporal, is at the rear at the right of the group.
5. *The Australasian Hebrew*, 6 December 1895.
6. This statement is made in the response by Samuel Goldreich to a toast at the Ballarat reception given to him on his visit in

March 1902. *The Jewish Herald* 14 March 1902, p. 99.

7. In Natal, north of Pietersmaritzburg.
8. *The Jewish Herald*, 17 August 1900, p. 270.
9. Possibly now Amanzintoti, a beach resort south of Durban.
10. North east of Bethulie, in the south of the Orange River Colony.
11. A donga is a dry watercourse.
12. In the south of the Orange River Colony, on the railway line.
13. The site of a British reverse in December 1899, one of the events of 'Black Week'.
14. *The Jewish Herald*, 30 August 1901, p. 277.
15. A white foreigner in the Transvaal in the 1890s.
16. *The Evening News*, 13 February 1900.
17. Richmond Road is located on the railway line south of De Aar and north-west of Port Elizabeth.
18. *Northern Star*, 3 January 1900, p. 8.
19. This was written at the time of the major British reverses in December 1899, which caused the British Government to send Lord Roberts to South Africa to lead the British military effort. Lord Kitchener accompanied him.
20. *The Evening News*, 30 January 1900 and *The Lismore Chronicle and Richmond River Courier*, 9 February 1900.
21. Estcourt is on the railway line from Pietermaritzburg to Ladysmith, close to the front at Colenso.
22. *The Evening News*, 9 February 1900.
23. Chieveley is on the railway line, a little closer to Colenso.
24. *The Lismore Chronicle*, 23 February 1900.
25. *Kaffir* is a scornful local expression referring to the black Africans.
26. A *kraal* is a native village or an enclosure for holding horses or cattle.
27. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 February 1900, p. 6 and *The Evening News*, 21 March 1900, p. 7.
28. A *kopje* is a small hill
29. The Imperial Light Horse was the 'irregular' unit formed by Walter David 'Karri' Davies, an Australian, which had fought the invading Boers in Natal from the commencement of hostilities. 'Karri' Davies will be the subject of a future article in the *Journal*.
30. This had occurred in October 1899.
31. *The Lismore Chronicle*, 12 June 1900; *The Northern Star*, 9 June 1900, p. 5.
32. Naauwpoort is a railway junction in the north of the Eastern Cape Province.
33. On the central railway line, north of Bloemfontein.

34. The Zand River is west of Virginia. It crosses the railway line.
35. Also on the railway line, south of Kroonstad.
36. Another 'irregular' unit.
37. The term Imperial Bushmen signifies the Australian Colonial contingents which arrived in South Africa in May–June 1900.
38. A drift is a ford or river crossing.
39. East of Kroonstad.
40. *The Evening News*, 22 August 1900.
41. Paardeburg is on the Modder River west of Bloemfontein. The engagement occurred on 27 February 1900, when a Boer army under General Piet Cronje surrendered. The site of the other engagements is between Paardeburg and Bloemfontein.
42. The Poplar Grove engagement occurred on 8 March 1900.
43. The engagement at Dreifontein occurred on 10 March 1900.
44. Two stone equals 13.5 kilos.
45. *The Armidale Argus*, Saturday 2 June 1900, p.8.
46. Woodstock is east of Capetown.
47. By Jubilee, Sergeant Braun presumably means the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1898.
48. *The Evening News*, 8 January 1901. Note that Queen Victoria died two months later in January 1901.
49. *Jewish Chronicle* 23 November 1900, p. 13.
50. On the Delagoa Bay Railway line east from Pretoria.
51. About 90 km after Middelburg.
52. Many of Mark Collins' letters take the form of diary notes, and it is perhaps this sense that he uses the term *budget* in the letter.
53. Also spelt Vredefort. In the Orange River Colony, about 120km south west of Johannesburg in the central part of the Witwatersrand basin, the site of the Vredefort Dome, stated to be the world's largest impact crater.
54. 16km north of Vredefort. Also spelt Parys.
55. The siege of the camp at Elands River in the Western Transvaal occurred between 4 and 16 August 1900. There was a heroic defence of the post by 505 Australian Bushmen and Rhodesian colonials.
56. The term pom-pom describes the Vickers-Maxim or Maxim-Nordenfeldt quick firing gun, which fired a one-pound shell.
57. *Narrabri Herald*, 26 October 1900.
58. Elands River Bridge was on the road from Harrismith in the east of the Orange River Colony to Bethlehem.
59. Tweefontein is south of Harrismith.
60. To the east of Kroonstad, Orange River Colony.
61. *The Age*, 6 February 1902.

## LEONARD KEYZOR VC — THE QUIET HERO

*By Keira Quinn Lockyer*

**L**eonard Keyzor, a quiet, caring, London-born Jew, became an Anzac legend and was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1915 for outstanding bravery in the Lone Pine trenches of Gallipoli during The Great War. King George V personally presented his Victoria Cross to him; Edward, Prince of Wales, knew him by name and would joke with him; George VI invited him to his coronation. There would have been no foreseeing of a battlefield honour or private conversations with royalty when on 3 November 1885, Leonard Maurice Kyezor was born into the Kyezor family, at his parents' home at 14 Lanhill Road, Paddington in London.

Census records show the first known Kyezor to have lived in England was Leonard's great great grandfather, Isaac Kyezor (1749–1841), who travelled from Frankfurt to settle in Cambridge in the 1790s. Although the family name was spelt Kyezor, many chose to use variations of that spelling in the first 50 years of their time in Cambridge, London, Yorkshire and Norfolk. One can find the same person listed in different documents as Kyezor, Keyzor, Keyser and Keysor all in the space of a few years.

Isaac Kyezor lived to be 92 and taught his sons and grandsons the watch and clock making trade. One of his younger sons Louis Kyezor, Leonard's great grandfather (1795–1869), made enough money from his profession and the importation of French clocks to become a property developer in Whitton, where he numbered amongst his friends the younger Louis Philippe Albert d'Orleans, Comte de Paris, Pretender to the French throne. Louis was given his own title, that of 'The King of Whitton' for turning the English village near Twickenham from a 'den of thieves and ruffians' into a thriving town. He even paid passage to Australia for the worst of the inhabitants, so the town could be rid of them.<sup>1</sup>

A philanthropist and devoted father and grandfather, Louis was also acknowledged as a brilliant orator. Unfortunately he was not popular with everyone. An irate tenant, who was reported but never proven to have been the whistle blower on the Cato Street Conspiracy

(a plot to assassinate all the cabinet of the British parliament), murdered Louis in a dramatic street confrontation in 1869.<sup>2</sup>

The whole of Whitton and many from surrounding towns turned out to farewell Louis when his cortege went from his home, Gotha Villa, to the train for the journey to London and burial at the Maiden Lane Cemetery. The local Vicar, the Rev W.G. Hawtayne, wrote a lengthy eulogy printed by the *London Times* on 16 October 1869, saying Louis the Jew was 'one of the best friends to Christianity in Whitton'.

Another member of the family to make headlines at the same time was Louis' granddaughter Sophia Flora Heilbron. Acknowledged as the greatest young pianist of her time she performed before most of the royalty of Europe, played privately for Rossini in his Paris home and went to America where she played for Ulysses S. Grant, dedicating her 1875 composition 'Nellie's Wedding Waltz' to the President's wife Julia.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the tragic nature of his death, Leonard never knew his paternal great grandfather, nor did he know his grandfather Louis Kyezor Junior, also a London watchmaker and jeweller, who died while Leonard was still an infant.

Leonard's father, Benjamin Joseph Kyezor (1853–1930), was the second of the eleven children born to Louis Kyezor Junior and Julia Joseph and named after his maternal grandfather Benjamin Joseph. Benjamin started out as an apprenticed jeweller, worked as a travelling salesman and listed his occupation at various times as merchant and optician. By the 1900s he was an importer of clocks, like the three generations of Kyezors before him. Believing the name Kyezor sounded too Germanic, it was Benjamin who changed the family name to Keyzor around 1890.

Leonard's mother, Julia Benjamin (1856–1943), was the eldest daughter of a Sephardi London born cigar maker and merchant, Maurice Henry Benjamin and his wife Louisa, daughter of wealthy rag merchant Morris James Harris. Julia and her six siblings grew up in a well to do Jewish family. She was extremely well educated and saw that all her children had a superior command of the English language. All became avid, serious readers.

In letters to members of the family in September and November 2000, Leonard's daughter Joan, wrote about her grandmother Julia Keyzor:

I was very fond of my grandmother and got on well with her, but everyone didn't! She was very autocratic and dogmatic and a snob. (Why, I wouldn't know.) She was a very determined woman and tiny. She called herself 'erudite' (one of her favourite words) and didn't suffer fools gladly.<sup>4</sup>



*Julia Kyezor, née Joseph, (1834–1917) Leonard's grandmother and matriarch of the Kyezor family. Photo courtesy of Allan Dale.*

Between 1882 and 1891 Benjamin and Julia Kyezor had five children: Nellie Louisa, Stanley Louis, Leonard Maurice, Margery Jane known as 'Madge', and Doris Violet.

Leonard's brother, Stanley Keyzor, always spoke of Leonard with affection, admiration and respect. At traditional Friday night gatherings in his Sydney home he would reminisce about their childhood in London and tell his grandchildren:

Although Leonard was a year younger, he was like a big older brother to me. I was a lot shorter than he was and rather frail due to a chest condition. He made sure I was not bullied at school.

We lived well in a Liberal Jewish household and had servants to help Mother. Quite often we went by carriage to Brighton for a summer holiday.

When my grandfather Louis died early in 1887, my grandmother Julia Keyzor moved into 41 Sutherland Avenue, Paddington, and I remember many happy times there. Like we gather here, our family often went to Grandmother's home on Friday nights to meet up for a Sabbath dinner with our aunts, uncles and many cousins. My grandmother held the family together and was a real Matriarch in every sense of the word.

Grandmother Keyzor's youngest child, our Aunt Rose, was only eight years older than I was and nine years older than Leonard: she fussed over us and was like a big sister.<sup>5</sup>

Leonard and Stanley were educated at Townley Castle, Ramsgate; Leonard's favourite sport was cricket. Stanley, who loved



*Stanley Louis Keyzor, (1884–1974) Leonard's older brother. Photo taken in Sydney in 1913. Photo courtesy Keira Quinn Lockyer.*

the game as a spectator and was a long time member of the Sydney Cricket Club, said Leonard had an excellent reputation as both a bowler and fielder.

The Keyzor siblings wanted to travel and they did. Nellie left to live in the Americas after her marriage while Stanley and then Madge travelled to Australia, liked the lifestyle and stayed. Leonard was a little different and first went to Canada before joining his siblings in Sydney.

### LIFE IN SYDNEY

Leonard arrived in the harbour city to be met by Madge and Stanley, his new sister-in-law Lily Alexander, (youngest daughter of Henry Alexander and Rachel Hyams of *Druidville*, Waverley), and niece Laurel Julia Keyzor.

Leonard found he was not short of other relatives in Sydney. As well as his two siblings, there were dozens of Joseph cousins because two of his grandmother Julia (Joseph) Kyezor's brothers had settled in Australia. He was welcomed and made to feel at home by the children and grandchildren of Alfred and Frances 'Fanny' Joseph and Henry and Roselia Rebecca Joseph.

In addition to the Josephs and the Keyzors, Leonard found himself spending time with his sister-in-law's Alexander clan, including brothers Leonard and David Alexander and brother-in-law Leo Brodziak and his wife Violet Alexander. (They were the parents of famous Australian theatrical entrepreneur the late Kenn Brodziak, best known for bringing The Beatles and Marlene Dietrich to Australia.)

Leonard also had two Keyzor-Joseph cousins in Sydney: they were Alfred Abraham Keysor and Norman Harry Bendon Keysor, sons of Louis Machloof Keyzor and Louis' cousin Marie Joseph, whose marriage ended in a bitter and dramatic divorce. (Alfred Keysor played an important role in the Australian Jewish Historical Society, was elected to its committee in 1942, retaining office until his death in 1959.)

### THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

Leonard Keyzor, employed as a clerk, was happily settled into the Sydney lifestyle when war was declared. He was 28 years old. Without hesitation he presented himself at the recruiting office of the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF). The date was 18 August 1914.

His medical report of the following week, prepared by Captain Spencer Dunn, named him as Leonard Keyzor, and described him as five feet nine and 1/2 inches tall, with fair hair and complexion,

grey eyes and a weight of 11 stone. Interestingly he registered his religion as Church of England — that no doubt reflects upon the times. After weeks of examinations, Leonard was accepted as a member of the AIF and on 14 September 1914, became number 958 Private Leonard Keyzor of the H Company of the First Battalion.

### EGYPT, GALLIPOLI, THE ANZACS AND LONE PINE

Attached to H Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Division, Private Leonard Keyzor underwent initial training and was outfitted with a uniform. On 18 October 1914, he marched through the pouring rain to Woolloomooloo where he and his fellow soldiers boarded *A19 HMAT Afric*, a 12,000-ton vessel that had been requisitioned by the Commonwealth government to transport troops overseas. The ship arrived in Albany, Western Australia, on 25 October where 15 other troop ships were waiting. When they finally sailed, 20,758 members of the First AIF and 7479 horses were on board a convoy of 36 transports. The Australian light cruisers *HMT Sydney* and *HMT Melbourne*, *HMT Orvieto*, a transport designated 'A3', and the Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* escorted them across the equator and on to Colombo where they were granted leave. *HMT Hampshire* took over from *HMT Sydney* (sent to intercept the German cruiser *Emden* near Cocos Island) and the *Afric* set off for Aden, a voyage not without incident. In an accident at sea two soldiers were lost overboard and many men in the convoy were treated for measles and influenza. The ships called in at Port Suez and Port Said and when they arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, on 5 December 1914, the passengers found it was their final port of call for the voyage. Next stop was Heliopolis.

It was said that the troops thought they would be going to London. However, their training camp was not on the Salisbury Plain of England but in Mena in the shadows of the Sphinx and three Pyramids.<sup>6</sup> As one veteran later recalled:

We soldiers travelled there by cattle trucks arriving in the dark and when morning light illuminated our surroundings, the Pyramids were clearly seen: it was only then we knew we were really in Egypt.<sup>7</sup>

The Aussies set up a village of tents and commenced months of training that included bayonet charges and long marches. These marches were sometimes a distance of ten gruelling miles, slouch hats protecting them from the winter sun, 'Gyppos' following and harassing them with mandarins and oranges they tried to sell.

Many of the Aussies lived up to their larrikin reputation, finding themselves in trouble with Cairo prostitutes.<sup>8</sup>

Training over, Leonard and the men of his Battalion joined many other Australians and New Zealanders under the command of Sir Ian Hamilton. Their code name was ANZAC and on 1 April all leave was cancelled and the Aussies found themselves on board ships headed for the island of Lemnos where they prepared for a landing on Turkish soil. They made an amphibious landing at Ari Burnu Point, renamed Anzac Cove, Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and in the bloody four day battle that followed the legend of the Anzacs was born. Veterans when recalling the event remember the chaos and carnage of the landing. Some soldiers drowned from the weight of packs, some died in the boats without ever leaving. Many groups found themselves without officers because they had died first, others were split up as they tried to get ashore as quickly as possible and find some sort of cover. Instructions were to keep rifles out of the water so they waded into gunfire. The 1st Division alone suffered 366 casualties over those four days. 'We were sitting ducks' one veteran recalled while an Englishman said of them: 'They were carelessly brave'. Young boys watched their mates die and could do nothing to help as they desperately sought to survive.

For a month the men fought and died in filthy conditions, trenches filled with water, latrines and canned food were a magnet for flies. There was no fresh water to wash clothes so they had to be cleaned in the sea. Because of the numbers, the wounded could not be looked after in the field and 300 to 400 a day were evacuated to hospital ships. On 24 May an armistice was called so that the allies and the Turks could bury the thousands of dead scattered across the battlefields. Soldiers were detailed to collect the corpses. One veteran recalled the officers selecting the Aussies and Kiwis who were over six feet tall so that the Turks would think of them as a 'giant race'. It was a grim duty as many of the bodies had been exposed to the elements for up to five days. Leonard would have experienced all this and for his work during and after the Anzac Cove landing, was appointed Lance Corporal on 20 June 1915 at Gallipoli.<sup>9</sup>

Following the Gallipoli landing, the Turks built an elaborate system of trenches and kept the Australians pinned down for months. Backup support was needed, so, in August 1915 it was decided to launch an attack on the Turks to divert attention and troops away from a planned British troop landing at Suvla Bay in the north. The site for the attack was a place the soldiers had called Lone Pine because of a solitary pine tree standing in dramatic isolation on the scrub-covered ridge. The Turks called it Kanli Sirt and thought it was impregnable to direct assault.<sup>10</sup>

Janet Veilands, a Canberra woman who chose the story of Leonard Keyzor for a speech she delivered to a group of fellow tourists at Gallipoli on Anzac Day 2002 described the area as she saw it:

This area was, without doubt, the most inhospitable area on the whole peninsula. Steep little hills, steep gullies, erosion a real problem, soil a mixture of clay and loose pebbles. Further in, in the steeper areas it was extremely difficult to predict the directions the gullies would take.

Experienced bushwalkers in the group were confounded by the gullies, when walking over the area. We could all appreciate how the Anzacs had become disorientated on the day of landing, and also when Monash was moving to take a role in the August 1915 offensive, of which the fighting at Lone Pine was a part. No trees. No cover. What we saw was apparently very close to how it looked in 1915 due to a fire going through in the 1990s that destroyed the planted pine forests.<sup>11</sup>

The planned attack started just before sunset at 4pm on the afternoon of 6 August. In his diary, official Australian war correspondent Charles Bean wrote:

At 5.30 with the sun sinking behind them, pouring golden rays over the ridges and parapets, the troops scrambled out and ran for the Turkish line... .

The Australians took the Turks by complete surprise, achieving their objective but at 'fearful cost'. By 7pm a number of scattered posts were established by the 1st, 2nd 3rd and 4th Battalions in the heart of the captured position. Almost at a loss to describe the carnage, Bean reported: 'the dead lay so thick that the only respect which could be paid to them was to avoid treading on their faces.' Lone Pine had fallen but the battle went on for five days.

The Brigade's reserve unit, the 1st Battalion, which included Keyzor, was divided among the barricaded posts at the head of a depression towards the rear of the Lone Pine network, known as *The Cup*. These hastily erected posts became the focus and centre of the fiercest fighting of the battle and the bombing duels that started during the night were directed chiefly at the posts overlooking *The Cup*.

Although in better positions, the Australians at *The Cup*, as elsewhere in Lone Pine, were at a severe disadvantage. While the

Turks were well supplied with spherical steel grenades the size of cricket balls, the Australians had little in the way of quality and quantity of bombs, having to make do with their home made 'jam tin' missiles the Turks called 'Black Cats'.<sup>12</sup>

In the book *They Dared Mightily* by L. Wigmore and B Harding, the authors wrote:

Regarded as one of the best bomb-throwers in the Lone Pine affair, Leonard Keyzor was completely in his element. Hand grenades, which later became familiar to most troops in the form of the Mills bomb, were not available on Gallipoli. The bombs in use there by the Australians were crude and rather dangerous missiles manufactured at a 'factory' on the beach. Jam tins were used as casings and were filled with explosives and pieces of jagged metal, with a fuse to be lit before throwing. The Turkish bombs were cast iron missiles about the size and shape of a cricket ball, also with an external fuse of a few seconds' duration.<sup>13</sup>

Keyzor was familiar with both types and disdainful of their danger. As Turks lobbed their bombs into the trenches, he would leap forward and smother the explosion by means of sandbags; even his own coat served for this purpose.<sup>14</sup>

A second Turkish assault caused numerous Australian casualties and it was during this assault that Leonard Keyzor's gallantry reached a peak. In the book *VCs of The First World War: Gallipoli, VCs of Lone Pine* the author Stephen Snelling, using the spelling 'Keyzor', wrote:

During his time on the Peninsula, Leonard Keyzor had become well versed in the art of bombing, and was widely acknowledged as an expert in this form of fighting. Scorning what little shelter existed, he (Keyzor) worked miracles in nullifying the effect of the bombs, smothering the exploding missiles with sandbags and his own coat. When the burning fuses appeared long enough, he adopted the riskier though more satisfying course of returning the bombs to their owners. Frequently he astonished his comrades by catching Turkish bombs in mid-flight and hurling them back. It was an extraordinary feat and it put fresh heart into the defenders at a most critical moment.<sup>15</sup>

Leonard Keyzor's citation, from Supplement No 29328 to *London Gazette* of 15 October 1915 stated:

On 7th August 1915, he was in a trench which was being heavily bombed by the enemy. He picked up two live bombs and threw them back at the enemy at great risk to his own life, and continued throwing bombs, although himself wounded, thereby saving a portion of the trench which it was most important to hold.

On 8th August, at the same place, Private Keyzor successfully bombed the enemy out of a position, from which a temporary mastery over his own trench had been obtained, and was again wounded. Although marked for hospital, he declined to leave, and volunteered to throw bombs for another company which had lost its bomb throwers. He continued to bomb the enemy till the situation was relieved.<sup>16</sup>

So ended what the authors of *They Dared Mightily* described as 'one of the most spectacular individual feats of the war'. Keyzor's deed had been one of sustained gallantry over a period of fifty hours. That he survived with only two wounds must have been as much a surprise to himself as his comrades. Eighty Australian officers and 2,197 other ranks died in the five days of Lone Pine: the Turkish 16th Division lost somewhere between 4,000 and 7,000 men: the real number may never be known.

Seven members of the Australian contingent were awarded the Victoria Cross. Of Lone Pine, Gallipoli Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Ian Hamilton, wrote in his despatches:

The irresistible dash and daring of officers and men in the initial charge was a glory to Australia.

But, the stout-heartedness with which they clung to the captured ground in spite of fatigue, severe losses and the continual strain of shellfire and bomb attacks was perhaps even more admirable.<sup>17</sup>

## BACK IN LONDON

Leonard's wounds in battle finally meant hospitalisation and he was shipped to London on the *Aquitania* in October 1915. There he was reunited with his grandmother and parents. He also saw many of his Keyzor and Benjamin cousins when they were on leave from the air force and European army battles.

Leonard's closest companion during his time in London was his first cousin Maurice Benjamin who served with the celebrated 48 Squadron that flew the famous Dawn Patrols. Awarded the Military Cross, Maurice has been listed among the great British air force fighters of the first World War. According to newspaper reports, he



*Leonard Maurice Keyzor VC (1885–1951) c1916.  
Photo courtesy Richard Arman.*

was one of only 400 men in the entire Royal Flying Corps who had five enemy aircraft or more to their credit.

When they were in London, Leonard also saw his Durlacher twin cousins, sons of his Aunt Rose. Leslie Joseph Durlacher and Gordon Louis Durlacher were much younger than their first cousin Leonard and they idolised him. In 2002 Gordon's son Allan Dale (née Durlacher) wrote:

Like Leonard, Leslie had gone to Australia (only he was a mere lad of 16) and when war broke out he too enlisted in the Australian Infantry Forces. My father, his twin, joined the British Army and the two finally met up in Paris of all places.

Also like Leonard, the twins fought on the battlefields of France: my father Gordon told me he only survived the Battle of the Somme because he knew how to swim.<sup>18</sup>

On 15 January 1916, Leonard went to Buckingham Palace where His Majesty King George V presented him and ten others with their Victoria Crosses. According to Leonard's daughter Joan, a week later Leonard met the King at a function where medals were required and 'got ticked off by His Majesty for not wearing his decoration'.

## THE WAR IN FRANCE

When Leonard recovered from his wounds, it was back to war and he was transferred to the 42nd Battalion, 11th Brigade, 3rd Division on 20 November 1916 and sent to France. Weeks later he was promoted to Acting Sergeant and then Sergeant commissioned 2nd Lieutenant on 13 January 1917. Suffering from neuralgia he was shipped back to England via the hospital ship *Princess Elizabeth* in April 1917. Leonard was again admitted to hospital, this time ending up at Cobham Hall. During this period he was commissioned Lieutenant and enjoyed visits from his sister, Madge who, daringly for the times, had sailed over from Sydney to see her family.

Following his hospital discharge Leonard performed the duties of Adjutant D Sub-depot No 2 Command Depot from September 1917 until February 1918 when he returned to France, rejoined the 42nd Battalion and saw action at Morlancourt.

Wounded in action in France in March, he continued to fight on but gun shot wounds to his upper left arm at Cumiers in April of 1918 saw him briefly return to England for treatment. Leonard

returned to Rouellen, France, at the end of April and just weeks later was again hospitalised due to mustard gas. Once again he was evacuated to London where he returned to the 3rd London General Hospital. So, back in London and back in hospital, his parents, siblings and cousins were able to regularly visit Leonard. His favourite visitor was his cousin Gladys Benjamin, daughter of Frederick Benjamin and 'Daisy' Barnett.

The army felt Leonard was not medically fit to return to the front and when Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, invited him to join nine other VC winners to return to Australia and stage a recruiting campaign, the army agreed. Leonard returned to Australia on 9 October 1918. He travelled on the British transport ship *A7 Medic* (Elsewhere it has been recorded he was on the *D21*).<sup>19</sup> Back in Australia Leonard became a member of the veteran fighter group assisting in the recruiting campaign until his appointment was terminated in Sydney on 12 December 1918.



*On board the troop transport Medic in Melbourne October 1918*  
*Back row left to right: Sgt. W. Peeler, VC, Captain T.J. Bede Kenny, VC,*  
*Sgt J.W. Whittle VC, DCM, Capt J.C. Hensen, VC, Pte. J. Carroll VC*  
*Third row: Lieut. J.J. Dwyer, VC, Leonard Keysor, VC,*  
*Lieut W. Ruthven, VC,*  
*Second row: Three officers of the Medic crew*  
*Front row: Sgt. R.R. Inwood VC and Sgt. S.R. McDougall VC.*  
*Photo courtesy of Australian War Memorial Negative Number*  
*P02939.007*

In addition to the Victoria Cross, other medals received by Leonard Keyzor VC included the 1914/15 Star Number 2984, the British War Medal Number 2112 and the Victory Medal No 2116.

For a while Leonard worked in Australia but eventually, feeling homesick and thinking of Gladys, he returned to London before the middle of 1920. Once there he officially changed the spelling of his name to Keysor. (The *London Gazette* in announcing his VC award had misspelt his name as Keysor. Leonard found it easier to change than explain.) He went into business as a partner in his father's clock importing business.

### **THE FAME OF BEING AWARDED THE VC**

Back in London Leonard quickly learnt that his Victoria Cross meant more than he thought to the people of England. He was a 'hero', invited to Royal occasions, given honorary membership to many clubs and free passes to theatres. Cigarette cards were printed with images of VC Winners: Leonard was always included. (These and other VC memorabilia are now treasured collectables.)

On 26 June 1920, King George V gave an afternoon party at Buckingham Palace for all those awarded the Victoria Cross. Leonard and other VC recipients assembled at Wellington Barracks and marched to the garden of the Palace, via Birdcage Walk, Horse Guards Parade and The Mall preceded by the Band of the Welsh Guards. All were presented to the King and Queen Mary.<sup>20</sup> Leonard's guest was his cousin Gladys Benjamin whom he married at the Hill Street Synagogue in London 12 days later on 8 July.

Not long after their marriage someone broke into the Keysors' Maida Vale flat and stole Leonard's VC along with other items. The following week the VC was returned with a letter, printed in capitals, conveying the burglar's regret and that his financial position prevented the return of the rest of the property.<sup>21</sup>

Leonard and Gladys had only one child, a daughter they called Joan Doris Keysor, the Doris being for Leonard's youngest sister. She was born 21 April 1921.

In 1927 Leonard was asked to re-enact his bomb-throwing exploit in a film entitled 'For Valour'. Ironically one of the bombs exploded near him and he had to receive hospital treatment. VC historian Richard Arman of Bendigo wrote in his database on Leonard:

Leonard subsequently brought an action for damages against the producer, George Samuelson. Keysor declared that he was filmed in the act of picking up bombs in a trench and throwing them back. Wanting more smoke in the picture, the pro-

ducer put a charge in the parapet of the trench. This exploded, damaging his jaw and knocking a number of his teeth out. He was laid up for two months. The filming of Keysor's exploits was never completed, but the film was produced.<sup>22</sup>

### A SPECIAL REUNION

On 9 November 1929, Leonard joined 320 other VC holders, aged between 28 and 85, in the Banqueting Hall at the Houses of Parliament at a special dinner given by Edward, Prince of Wales. This dinner was part of special weekend reunion events for VC recipients. Canadian Colonel Graham Lyall VC, then a Major, wrote a letter about the weekend dated 15 November to the Officer Commanding 19th Lincolns in Ontario, Canada. In part it said:

Saturday night was a wonderful event and will be handed down to posterity as a great national occasion and ceremony and yet there was a welcome lack of ceremonial or stiffness. On arrival at the Houses of Parliament the crowds had to be controlled by Cavalry, Mounted Police and Foot Police plus British Legion Stewards.<sup>23</sup>

The *Daily Telegraph Pictorial* of Monday November 11 gave the dinner front page coverage reporting:

'We ought to get a Victoria Cross for this' remarked a hero last night, as he ran the gauntlet of cheering, patting, back-slapping, almost-kissing crowds, on his way to the VC winner's dinner. Australia was represented by Captain Symons and Lieutenant Keysor, both of whom are living in London.<sup>24</sup>

Colonel Lyall's letter told more of the event and the participation by the Prince of the Wales:

Then came the Toast of the Evening by HRH. It was most inspiring, occasionally with a touch of humour, and by far the best speech he has ever delivered. It seems a tragedy that such an eloquent speech by Britain's Greatest Ambassador she has ever possessed was not broadcast all over the Empire — it was indeed worthy of such. The reception of his speech was cheered and cheered for at least ten minutes ending in 'God Bless the Prince of Wales' and 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow'.<sup>25</sup>

Two days later on a cold Monday morning, 11 November 1929, some of the group reported to the Wellington Barracks for a march to the Cenotaph, the VC's Column leading. Queen Mary, Princess Mary and the Duchess of York (the late Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mother) were present at the Cenotaph to watch the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of York and Gloucester lay wreaths. Lyall wrote:

Big Ben struck eleven, ringing out in the cold still air like death. At the end of two minutes the Buglers played the Last Post which was magnificent, just like a single bugle call — a short service and Reveille, followed by the National Anthem.<sup>26</sup>

That night there was a pageant at the Albert Hall for the Remembrance Festival. There are some interesting comments in Colonel Lyall's letter.

HRH the Prince entered. Really I never saw or heard the like of the welcome given him and it was fifteen minutes before the poor lad could start his speech. He delivered his address eloquently to the delight of all and then walked along the passage and centre of the ground floor up an avenue between the VCs and believe me we didn't forget to let him hear us even about the cheers of the thousands of others assembled.<sup>27</sup>

Leonard spent the rest of his life in London, living first at 127 Maida Vale close to his original London home, then at 50 Maida Vale. After the death of his father Benjamin, and from the mid 1930s until his own death, Leonard had a partnership with German Schatz Rombach in the clock importing trade in Hatton Gardens.

He took an interest in the welfare of many of his cousins, particularly Rita Webb, daughter of his Aunt Rose and half sister of the Durlacher twins: she was motherless at the age of four. (Rita went on to become one of England's most famous television, stage and film character actresses from 1949 until her death in 1981 performing alongside such famous personalities as Gary Cooper, Sidney Poitier, Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr.)

There were many VC events Leonard attended during his life and he and his wife Gladys were honoured when invited to attend the 1937 coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey.

When war broke out in 1939 Leonard tried to enlist in the Home Guard but was rejected on medical grounds because of hearing problems and a slight heart condition. Leonard, Gladys and daughter Joan stayed in London for the duration of the war and looked

after a number of bombed-out victims of the Blitz providing them with a temporary place to stay. It was during this time that Joan married Major A. James Hamilton and gave birth to Leonard's two grandchildren: Penny and Nicholas.

As for his religion, although not active in Jewish affairs, Leonard did take an interest in the plight of the European Jews, helped many Jewish refugees and contributed to Jewish charities throughout his life. In a letter in May 1995 his daughter wrote: 'I don't think he was in favour of Israel; he was a great believer in one world'. Newspapers referred to Leonard Keysor as a 'quiet man' and one reported that in a rare radio interview he did in the 1940s he said he was just 'a common or garden clock importer' and that his war experiences were 'the only adventure I ever had'.

His daughter and Leonard's grandchildren remember him as a caring father and a loving grandfather who enjoyed playing cards. He also enjoyed the theatre, reading books and later, watching television, especially the news. When younger he was a great racegoer. He ended his business career as a Director of Shatz Rombach Pty. Ltd.

One of the last official functions Leonard attended was the World War II Victory Day Celebration Reception held at London's Dorchester Hotel on 8 June 1946. He was one of many VC recipients who attended. Leonard died in London on 15 October 1951 at the age of 65. He was cremated at Golders Green before a Jewish Memorial service at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue St. John's Wood. His urn rests at Golders Green Cemetery.



*Leonard Keysor VC c.1946.*

### **A FINAL TRIBUTE**

Leonard's daughter Joan, now in her 80s and living in Sri Lanka, read this story and asked that in conclusion a few lines about her father's character be added. Her words tell that best. She wrote:

So many people of every generation loved him, as was evident at the Victory Day Celebration of 1946 and when he was ill in 1951. He was friends with people from all walks of life, includ-

ing women, with whom he flirted gently! Many of his male friends kept in contact with him and would turn up unexpectedly knowing they would receive warm hospitality.

He was famed for his generosity, which my mother sometimes tried to curb gently — rarely successfully. He was very even-tempered and rarely got angry, though often provoked by me and others!<sup>28</sup>

Leonard's wife, Gladys, was to live for another 24 years. Until her death in 1975 she continued to play an important role in the Benjamin and Keyzor families and in the lives of her daughter Joan and grandchildren.

### **THE LEONARD KEYSOR VC LEGEND LIVES ON**

Keyzor Place in the suburb of Gowrie, Canberra, and Keyzor Road in Pagewood, Sydney, were named in Leonard's honour. Displays in museums honour him and other VC recipients.

In 1988 Katherine Cummins, Leonard's great great niece and daughter of the author, stood on the steps of the Sydney War Memorial in Hyde Park. There, on 22 April at a special commemoration service, 'RSL and Schools Remember Anzac', the 16 year-old gave the Anzac Address and told Leonard Keyzor's story to thousands of young people as well as representatives of all the armed services and State and Federal governments. She was then asked to repeat her speech before a group of Jewish War Veterans.

The deeds of Leonard and other Anzacs like him continue to inspire from the shores of Gallipoli to the 'big wide land' Australia. The Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli is built directly over the trenches wrested from the Turks at the battle of Lone Pine between August 6 and 9. It is now a very special place for all Australians and New Zealanders. On Anzac Day 1998 Phillip Ruddock, at that time Australian Minister for Immigration, was at Gallipoli to speak on behalf of all Australians. He explained how the RSL had asked in 1922 that April 25 be known as Anzac Day so that all Australians could remember the sacrifices made by its young men in time of war. In his speech he said:

In 1925, a beach ceremony here at Gallipoli marked the tenth anniversary. However, it was not until the 1980s that the tradition of Australians and New Zealanders visiting Gallipoli really took hold when, in 1985, about 150 people attended a dawn service to mark the 70th anniversary of the landing. Today we stand here several thousand strong, and each year

our numbers keep growing.<sup>29</sup>

On Anzac Day 2000 the prime ministers of Australia and New Zealand led official contingents to Gallipoli to pay homage to the Anzacs. Thousands heard their words including tourists and young backpackers who had made the pilgrimage to the Turkish field of battle to join army veterans and descendants of the Anzacs in remembering the bravery of the men who fought and died at Gallipoli.

In 2002, with only one Gallipoli veteran alive in the world, hundreds of thousands of people turned out for the 2002 Anzac Day marches held in every city and town in Australia. In Melbourne, rain could not dampen the spirits of those who marched and those who watched.

In 2003 Australia's federal treasurer Peter Costello went to Gallipoli and spoke of the heroes of Lone Pine. Mentioning Leonard Keysor in particular, he said:

This is a Cathedral to courage. Of the nine Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians during the Gallipoli campaign, seven were awarded to Australians during the fighting here. Five VCs were awarded on one day alone — 9 August.

The first Lone Pine VC was awarded to Lance Corporal Leonard Keysor. For two days he threw back grenades. Some he caught in mid air.

It is hard to imagine chaos here, where now there is order. The foe prevailed. The dead were buried or lay where they fell.<sup>30</sup>

In 2004, despite warnings by the Australian Government that terrorists might target the Anzac Day service at Gallipoli, thousands turned up to pay their respects. The media continues to report that the spirit of Anzac is alive and well and flourishing all over the world, growing stronger and stronger with every year.

Leonard Keysor VC continues to be honoured and remembered at such places as the Australian War Memorial, the Jewish Museum in Sydney, the RSL, the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney, on international websites and many other places where the courage of the Anzacs and the Victoria Cross mean so much. Of particular interest are the young students, like Daniel Bramich of Tasmania, who wrote about Leonard in 2003 for one of his school projects. The very young are playing their part in helping to keep the Anzac story and Leonard's story alive.

**Ninety years on ... Lest we forget.**

## NOTES

- This story of Leonard Keyzor/Keysor VC was checked and approved by his daughter Joan.
  - Leonard's war record comes from his detailed file provided to me by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. His VC medal, purchased by the RSL at auction in 1977, is on display at the Memorial and was checked by War Memorial staff that the inscription on it says Leonard Maurice Keyzor.
  - Accounts of the Gallipoli and Lone Pine battles came from numerous sources (see footnotes) including diaries of veterans and the first hand reports by Australian war correspondent Charles Bean.
  - All dates, names and facts quoted in relation to my Kyezor/Keyzor, Benjamin, Joseph and Alexander families have been obtained from English and Australian birth, marriage, death and shipping records, UK Census listings, *Jewish Chronicle* announcements and stories, the *Sydney Sands Directory* and family letters, and documents recorded or held.
  - Additional information about the life of Louis Kyezor Senior and his family was compiled with the assistance of Kyezor/Keyzor family historians Jenny and Ken Bywater and Allan and Marg Dale. Harold Pollins of Oxford supplied further material from his book *Louis Kyezor The King of Whitton*, written by Harold Pollins and Vic Rosewarne in 2002 for The Borough of Twickenham Local History Society.
1. Letter to the Editor from Rev. W.G. Hawtayne, *London Times*, 16 October 1869.
  2. Harold Pollins and Vic Rosewarne *Louis Kyezor, The King of Whitton*, Twickenham: Borough of Twickenham Local History Society, November 2002, p. 34.
  3. Doreen Berger *The Jewish Victorian 1861-1870*, Oxfordshire: Robert Boyd Publications, 2004, pp. 151-152; pp.222-224; and Sophia Flora Heilbron *Nellie's Wedding Waltz*, New York: J.L. Peters, 1875.
  4. Letter from Joan De Mel to Keira Quinn Lockyer September 2000.
  5. Annual Anzac Day reminiscences at the home of Stanley Keyzor and his sister Madge, to Stanley's family, Rushcutters Bay, Sydney, April 1953 to 1960
  6. [www.firstworldwar.com/features/shoutvc.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/shoutvc.htm)
  7. Harvey Broadbent *The Boys Who Came Home*, NSW: ABC Television, 2000.
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9. War Record, Leonard Maurice Keyzor VC, Australian War Memorial.
10. Stephen Snelling *VCs of the First World War: Gallipoli*, Great Britain: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995, pp. 147–153.
11. Letter from Janet Vrielandts to Keira Quinn Lockyer, May 2002.
12. Quotes from *The Story of Anzac Vol and Vol 2* 1921 and 1924 Sydney by Australian war correspondent Charles Bean from various sources.
13. L. Wigmore and B. Harding *They Dared Mightily* Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1995, pp.35–38.
14. *Ibid.*
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16. *London Gazette*, Supplement 29328, 15 October 1915. This citation calls him 'Private' even though he was promoted to Lance Corporal on 20 June 1915.
17. Despatches General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander in Chief.
18. Letter from Allan Dale to Keira Quinn Lockyer October 2002.
19. *Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, 25 April 1965.
20. VC Events, guest lists compiled by Iain Stewart [www.victoriacross.org.uk](http://www.victoriacross.org.uk)
21. *Daily Mirror*, London, 27 October 1920.
22. The Victoria Cross Database Users Group — Richard and Doug Arman.
23. Letter to Officer commanding 19th Lincolns, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada from Graham Lyall, Major, Royal Engineers, London, 15 November 1929.  
[www.victoriacross.org.uk/hhlyall.htm](http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/hhlyall.htm)
24. *Daily Telegraph Pictorial*, London, 11 November 1929.
25. Letter to Officer commanding 19th Lincolns, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada from Graham Lyall, Major, Royal Engineers, London, 15 November 1929.  
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26. Letter to Officer commanding 19th Lincolns, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada from Graham Lyall, Major, Royal Engineers, London, 15 November 1929.  
[www.victoriacross.org.uk/hhlyall.htm](http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/hhlyall.htm)
27. Letter to Officer commanding 19th Lincolns, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada from Graham Lyall, Major, Royal Engineers, London, 15 November 1929.  
[www.victoriacross.org.uk/hhlyall.htm](http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/hhlyall.htm)
28. Letter from Joan De Mel to Keira Quinn Lockyer, 6 April 2004.

29. **Speech by The Hon Phillip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration, Gallipoli, 25 April 1998.**
30. **Speech by The Hon Peter Costello MP, Treasurer, Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey, Anzac Day, 25 April 2003.**

## **PETER LAZARUS AT A HUNDRED**

*By Keith Lazarus, Cecil Lazarus, Sandra Bullon*

**T**he story of Peter Lazarus is typical of many of the East European Jews who migrated to Australia before and after World War I. The number of East European Jews who migrated to the 'Edge of the Diaspora' in this period was tiny compared with the large numbers who migrated to other parts of the English-speaking world, especially the United States, which absorbed over two million Jewish refugees from Tsarist antisemitism. In contrast, only around two thousand migrated to Australia during the same period.

Peter Lazarus was born on 10 February 1892 to Morris Lazarus and Sarah Segalnitzky in the small village of Lida, Lithuania about one hundred and sixty kilometres from Vilna. A shoemaker by trade, his father Morris was a very religious and strict man. Peter remembers, as a small boy, his father and the other Jewish men of Lida, walking to the synagogue on *Kol Nidre* and staying there all night. He remembers his mother sending the older children to the clay factory to bring clean yellow sands (called golden sands) to spread on the dirt floor of their home for the Sabbath evening.

As an ambitious man of thirty years with a young family, Morris wanted to leave Lithuania where life was not comfortable for Jewish people. Owing to the Russian government's prohibition on Jewish settlement in the villages following the May Laws of 1882, many Jews in the rural areas were forced to move to the areas in and around Vilna. The congested conditions and increasing unemployment led to large-scale emigration out of Lithuania. Large numbers left for the United States, South Africa and a few to Israel. Morris had other ideas. He was planning to go further a field than many of his friends — he was planning to travel to the other side of the world — to Australia to join his stepbrother Peter Solomon.

Whilst Sarah was pregnant with their fifth child (baby Peter), Morris was planning to leave Lithuania for the other side of the world to make a new life for his family. Morris waited for the safe delivery of the new baby and when Peter was four months old, left



Russia travelling on a sailing ship to Southampton, then undertaking the three-month journey on the *Rohenstanfen* to arrive in Australia in July 1892.

As with many Russian refugees, on his arrival, Morris did the only thing he knew — that was to travel to the countryside with a pack on his back as a hawker. As he went from farm to farm selling all manner of goods he learnt to read and write English. After a year of hawking with a pack on his back he was in a position to buy himself a horse and soon after, a cart and harness, which made life a whole lot easier. Morris spent the nights in a hammock slung underneath the cart.

Back in Lida, Sarah was supporting her five children, Dorrie, Ike, Lou, Annie and Peter by baking bagels and cakes. Peter remembers children skating on frozen lakes, and playing with his brothers and sisters down by the railway tracks putting nails on the tracks and waiting for the train to come by flattening the nails and making them into knives.

In 1898 Morris was in a position to send for his family whom he had not seen for six years. Sarah packed her few belongings, and they left their tiny village by horse-drawn sleigh in the winter of 1897. They travelled to London by ship and waited six weeks with relatives for the cargo ship *The Gulf of Siam*, which brought them to Australia on 26 March 1898. Sarah suffered from seasickness for

the duration of the voyage and remained in the cabin. Peter recalls that during this difficult voyage the crew was very kind and tried to teach the children English.

Landing in Sydney, the newcomers were met by family friends and put on a train to Cooma and then a horse drawn coach to Buckley's Crossing (now known as Dalgety) — a small country town on the banks of the Snowy River. The Lazarus family was the only Jewish family in the town and they lived in the residence behind the small store, which Morris had bought with the assistance of his stepbrother Peter Solomon. Buckley's Crossing general store sold all the requirements of a small country store — groceries, drapery, underwear, corsets, hob-nailed boots, leather soles, and so on.

Peter recalls the local school, and remembers the difficulty his teacher, Mr Sherman, had trying to teach five little Yiddish speaking Lithuanian children the English language. The family mixed very well with the locals but Sarah was slow to learn English and between husband and wife only Yiddish was spoken.

In 1903 Morris sold the Buckley's Crossing store and took the family to Bega where he had purchased another store. Here Peter and Lou attended school, Dorrie and Ike helped in the store and Annie helped in the family home. Brother Joe was born in 1905 (thirteen years after Peter).

Peter disliked school and left at fourteen and a half to work with his father in the store. In the holidays and after school he had a job delivering telegrams on his bicycle for 7/6 a week. He recalled the first car coming to Bega, the first phone and electricity that replaced the gaslights. The Lazarus family often shared Kiddush on Friday nights, Pesach and Jewish Holidays with the Rosenthal's, who owned a large store in Bega.

Peter worked with his father for eighteen months after which time Morris sold the Bega store and bought another store in the town of Candelo from his nephew, Jack Solomon. Morris arranged for his sons Lou and Ike to build the Candelo business and meanwhile Peter went to live with and work for Goldman relations in their store at Cobargo for 12/6 a week inclusive of his keep.

Cobargo was a tiny country town of around two hundred people. Peter lived above the store where washing facilities included a weekly bath, and the toilet was located on the river bank which created great problems when the river flooded and the toilet was washed away! After spending eighteen months in Cobargo, Peter returned to Sydney to stay with his uncle Peter Solomon in Moore Park Road. He got a job at Grace Bros, Broadway, in the Drapery Department for 27/6 a week and lived in a boarding house in City Road paying £1 a week rent.

Soon after, his parents moved back to Sydney, buying a house in Paddington. Peter then lived with them, walking to and from work at Grace Bros, which took about forty-five minutes each way.

After Peter had worked at Grace Bros for two years, his older sister Dorrie married Alec Gilbert and they bought a store in Walcha. Peter left Grace Bros and went to work for them. After he turned twenty he returned to Sydney and went back to Grace Bros in the Furnishing and Drapery Department where he worked for around nine months.

At this time Morris bought bankrupt stock at Warialda for 11/9 in the pound with a total value of stock being £2,000. Peter joined his father and over a period of two months they sold the stock in total and made £400 in profit. Morris decided to continue buying bankrupt stock in the country staying in that town and selling off the stock. It was not long until Morris won the tender for another assigned estate at Burringbah near Mullimbimby for 11/3 in the pound. The total value of the stock was £2,500 and included two sulky horses and a shotgun. After two months they had sold the entire stock, made another £400 profit and returned to Sydney. This time Peter was employed with the department store, Farmers, in the Manchester Department.

Happy at the profit they were making out of bankrupt stock, father and son continued with this business and purchased in Armidale, Rylstone and Tumut. In each town they stayed in comfortable country hotels and Peter enjoyed an interesting social life even playing in amateur theatricals like 'Tom, Dick & Harry'. When in Sydney, Peter mixed with his young Jewish friends, playing tennis and socialising at parties. At one time he rented a weekender at Bondi so that he and his friends could enjoy time by the beach.

When he returned to being an employee again, Peter worked with Farmers in the Manchester Department and then at Ways in the Furnishing and Drapery Departments. His wage was around £2.15 per week. In those days sheeting and damask tablecloths were sold off the roll by the yard.

Peter felt it was time to marry and settle down. He had known Vera Solomon since childhood, as Peter's father and Vera's father were stepbrothers. Vera's father had owned a hotel in Jindabyne (around twenty-five miles from Buckley's Crossing) and the families used to visit each other quite regularly. Vera was boarding at 'Riviera' in Sydney and she would often come to visit the Lazarus family on Friday nights for a Shabbat meal. So Vera and Peter became engaged. Peter was keen to open his own business and his cousin, Lou Goldman, wanted to sell his store at Cobargo. Peter paid a deposit of £1,000 and gave him promissory notes for a further

£2,000 to be paid out over the next five years. Peter went to Cobargo to sign the handwritten contract and take over the store.

Rabbi Cohen and Rev. Einfeld married Peter and Vera on Vera's twenty-first birthday on 20 August 1919 at the Great Synagogue (Peter was twenty-seven). Having joined the synagogue, he remained a member for 70 years. Ettie, Peter's niece was flower girl at the wedding. The reception was held at Sargeants next door to the State Theatre and cost 10/6 per head. The bridal couple stayed the night at the Carlton Hotel and then travelled by train to Katoomba to the San Souci Hotel. Unhappy with the room at the San Souci Hotel they soon changed to the Carrington Hotel for a week and then went on to the Jenolan Caves for a further week.

On returning to Sydney they spent a few days at Vera's parents' home in Cowper Street, Randwick, packing up their goods and then set off on the journey down to the country store and their new home at Cobargo. They travelled by train to Nowra and then by horse coach to Cobargo where they spent the first night at the Cobargo Hotel. The Cobargo townspeople gave a joint farewell party to the Goldmans who were moving back to Sydney and a welcome to Peter and his new bride Vera. Peter remembers clearly that the 'big event' was held at the Cobargo Arts Hall and that there was no electricity in the township so that everyone had to carry his or her own lantern.

The young couple moved into the four-bedroom residence above the store. The only water supply for the house was located in the back yard and the toilet was on the riverbank. Vera's father bought the young couple £140 worth of furniture at W.W. Campbells, including a three-piece leather lounge suite. Vera was miserable in Cobargo without her family and friends, and went to Sydney several times by tramp steamer from Bermagui. Sisters Miriam (Mick) and Rae and also her Dad came to visit on the *Illawarra S. S. Co.*, a boat carrying pigs, cattle and passengers. Vera remembers taking the mail coach to the coast for outings and also travelling to Nowra by horse and buggy.

On 12 June 1920 their first child, Keith, was born prematurely after Vera slipped and fell on some icy steps. She had planned to come to Sydney to be with her family for the birth, which was still two months away. Luckily there was a midwife from Sydney Hospital holidaying at a farm ten miles away and she helped with the delivery. Baby Keith was kept wrapped in cotton wool in a shoe-box with the log fires going for eight to ten days. Six weeks after the birth they brought baby Keith to Sydney for circumcision.

With Vera being so unhappy, Peter sold the Cobargo store after twenty months. He had started the business with £1,000 and fin-

ished up with £4,500 so he was able to repay his debt to Lou Goldman. Returning to Sydney the Lazarus family stayed with Vera's parents in Cowper Street, Randwick for a short while and then purchased a house from Vera's dad in Lawson Street, Redfern for \$575 as an investment. This house they rented out for 27/6 a week. Peter also bought three small terraces in Glebe opposite a Chinese doss house, paying \$1,500 for the three.

Having returned to Sydney, Peter was keen to start in business again and together with his brother Lou they bought a shoe store called Mannix, which was located on the corner of the Imperial Arcade in Pitt Street. Mannix specialised in imported Italian shoes and had a high-class clientele. Three weeks after moving into the site the landlord gave notice that they should leave as he had 'rented' the store to someone else. Lou and Peter found a new site to move to in Elizabeth Street near King Street and rented that site for £8 a week. With the help of the entire family they moved all the stock to the new premises. Their new site was only a small store so they needed to rent a storeroom upstairs for which they paid £3 per week.

Luckily for Peter and Lou, Vera's uncle, Alf Jacobs, had owned a shoe store for many years and wanted to sell out. They were offered an excellent deal on the total stock and so accepted and moved the lot into their new Elizabeth Street store. The store traded well, with the brothers taking turns opening up early in the morning. One morning, after they had been trading for around nine months, Peter arrived to find that there had been a fire in the Omar Kyam Restaurant above them and the fire brigade had ruined all their stock with water. They were heavily insured and for a stock worth £500 they received an insurance payout of £1,750.

Lou and Peter continued in business — this time buying an estate in Manly where Peter rented a flat for £3.5.0 per week. Here their second son, Cecil, was born on the 8 August 1924. They did not fare well with this venture and lost money. In the meantime, Lou had married Bertha and had purchased a store in Molong. Peter and Vera moved to Woollahra and bought a pair of semis in Garie Avenue for £1,800. Here their third child, Naida was born prematurely on the 29 February 1928 weighing only 4 lb. By this time, Peter had also purchased two pairs of terraces in Campbell Street, Waverley for £750 each. The family had a live-in maid whom they paid 15/- per week. Milk cost around 3d a pint.

Vera's brother, Bert Solomon and brother-in-law, Eddie Glass owned a furniture store (E.G. Glass) in George Street West and they asked Peter to join with them to manage the store, opposite the Paramount Theatre at 525 George Street. They were trading well

and opened further stores at 490 George Street, Hurstville, Parramatta and Auburn. Peter remembers with pride that E.G. Glass were the first furniture people to take a full-page advertisement in the *Sunday Sun* at a cost of around £100. Full-page advertisements each month in the *Sunday Sun* drew a large country clientele and people regularly wrote to them requesting orders from products advertised in the paper.

E.G. Glass traded well during the 1930s, but things started to go downhill once war was declared in 1939. Many of their best salesmen went off to join the war and the family was forced to close their shops at Parramatta, Auburn and George Street West. Amalgamating their funds, they then spent £3,000 to extend 525 George Street. Brothers Eddie and Bert both enlisted in the army and Peter continued running 525 George Street.

During the 1930s, as partners in the business, Peter and Vera were doing well for themselves and in 1932 they purchased a house at 9 March Street, Bellevue Hill for £3,350 all inclusive plus £200 for the pianola, dining and breakfast room furniture, carpets and crockery. Whilst the children were growing up, the family enjoyed many happy holidays at Jervis Bay, the Hydro Majestic in the Blue Mountains, at Lapstone and Mt. Kosciusko. Always one to keep himself fit, it was usual for Peter to play tennis every Sunday afternoon after enjoying the hot midday Sunday roast. The family played tennis on Sundays at Maroubra with the Goldmans and their family and often went on Sunday picnics and tennis days at the House of David, Ryde and Nirvana, near Penrith, in large family groups.

In 1939 Peter volunteered to be an Air Raid Warden. Their headquarters were located in a garage in Vivian Street, Bellevue Hill where he took his roster complete with helmet and gas mask. Naida remembers walking around to visit him with a thermos of hot coffee and cake for their supper. In 1941 Keith celebrated his twenty-first birthday with a party at March Street and, after graduating from medicine, he joined the army and was sent overseas to New Guinea and Wewak. Cecil left university and joined the air force on Manus Island. In 1942 Japanese submarines shelled Sydney and a shell landed just around the corner from them in Lennox Street demolishing a cottage. Blackouts, air raid drill, sirens, clothes, food and petrol rationing were the order of the day.

Peter and Vera celebrated their silver wedding anniversary at the Pickwick Club in August 1944. Unfortunately neither Keith nor Cecil could be present as they were both still overseas on army/air force duty. During this period in their lives, Peter and Vera loved to go to First Nights at the Capital Theatre with the whole family, always dressed in black tie and full evening dress. Peter also played

golf with his brother Joe at Monash Golf Club. After the war, the first family reunion was held at the Pickwick Club in 1945 with seventy-five family members attending. Peter retired from E.G. Glass at sixty having completed twenty years service with the company.

Having worked hard all his life, Peter found it very difficult to settle into retirement. It was not too long before he purchased another business, this time a sporting goods and barber shop called 'The Sportsman's Saloon' in Campbell Parade on Bondi Beach. His son-in-law, Les McClean worked with him there for around eighteen months. Peter was quite content here although business was never really good. He stayed on until he was seventy years of age and then retired again. Enjoying travel, Peter and Vera visited Tasmania, New Zealand and even spent a couple of weeks on a Murray River paddleboat cruise.

In 1953 Naida went to hospital with polio and the peace of March Street, Bellevue Hill was never the same whilst Vera and Peter struggled to look after their eldest grandchild (Sandra) then aged four and (David) only one year old. Naida went back to the family home at Bellevue Hill to recover when she came out of hospital and stayed on with baby Jeannette for another twelve months, after which time the McLeans bought a home of their own at Earlwood.

During his retirement, Peter took up bowls and joined the Bellevue Hill Bowling Club where he played regularly on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Peter showed great expertise and became a pennant bowls player and made many friends during his time with the Bowling Club. Being an organised person, Monday was Peter's day to go to town to attend to any business matters and he always lunched at the Masonic Club.

A second family reunion was held at the Chevron Hotel in Kings Cross in 1965 with one hundred and twenty family members attending. Vera and Peter celebrated their golden wedding at Kei Ron in August 1969. During this period Vera and Peter took two trips to Japan sailing on the *Tjiwangi* in 1966 and again in 1969 with brother Joe Lazarus. In 1971, on holiday in Lindeman Island, Vera fell and broke her hip and had to be flown back to St Vincent's Hospital for hip replacement surgery.

Vera and Peter's sixtieth wedding anniversary was held at the Kei Ron in 1979. Two years later a third family reunion was held at the same venue with three hundred family members attending. During this period sadly Peter had to give up driving and sold his car. Great celebrations were made for Peter's ninetieth birthday, which was enjoyed with a party at their grandchild Sandra's home at Dover Heights with all the family.

In November 1982, Naida, Sandra, Vera and Peter took a trip

down memory lane back to Cobargo and to some of the old towns where Peter and Vera had spent their early days. In Cobargo they found the old store still there — however these days it is a pottery shop. The current proprietor was delighted to meet them and show them around his business. They then went on to Dalgety where they went to visit the small school and everyone there welcomed them with open arms. The primary school children could hardly believe that this old gentleman, could have ever attended their tiny little primary school. The entire school came out to have their photograph taken with the very important guests Vera and Peter Lazarus. They continued on to Bega where Peter made himself known to the headmaster of the Bega School. This wonderful trip down memory lane was a most enjoyable holiday for everyone and Peter and Vera were able to recount many of their early memories.

Under great duress and with much bad grace, Peter was admitted to hospital for the first and only time in his life when he developed gallstones. He was not impressed with hospital service and could not wait to get well enough to leave. He continued to enjoy seeing his great-grandchildren and teaching them the same wonderful tales he taught his own children — that of the canary going to Bondi Beach on the tram, and his other party piece — teaching them the alphabet backwards.

Peter Lazarus passed away in his sleep on 28 February 1992, eighteen days after his hundredth birthday. His wife Vera died on 16 February 1998. She was in her hundredth year. Sadly, their only daughter Naida predeceased her mother and passed away on 10 January 1997. Their story reflected a period of Australian Jewry history where Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe arrived with almost nothing, became hawkers and then small town shopkeepers in rural areas, eventually moving to Sydney where they enjoyed economic success and lived comfortably. Whilst the story of Peter Lazarus at one level is one of an unexceptional life, at another level it was unusual for a time when European immigrants were classified as 'alien'. Whilst the Australian government tended to classify poorly educated East European Jewish refugees as undesirable immigrants, the Lazarus story shows the positive contribution such migrants made in developing Australia.

## MEMORIES OF AN AUSTRALIAN CHILDHOOD

*Helen Whitmont*

**R**eaders may wonder why I have not entitled this 'Memories of a Jewish Australian Childhood'. Why have I left out 'Jewish', something I have always been so proud of being; something that made me different and special among my non-Jewish school-mates; something that also made me special as my parents were always leaders in the Jewish community?

I was born in Sydney in 1932. At this time my family, (consisting of my parents, Madge and Harold Bloom, my brother, Ian, and myself) were part of an Australian community, where nationality was given more importance than religion. Most of our friends followed a religion — either Jewish or some form of Christianity, and this was secondary to their nationality. We were Australian, or English, and this was where our main pride resided. This was especially so during the late 1930s and early 1940s. My parents and their Jewish friends belonged to The Great Synagogue, the Central Synagogue or The Temple Emanuel. (I think I had a vague idea of the existence of a few other *shules* in Sydney, but to us, these three were the main ones with, 'The Great' being the most important.) Mine was a 'black and white' childhood. Things were good or bad. I had no 'greys'. I knew nothing of any orthodoxy stricter than The Great Synagogue, with, in those days, its mixed choir, and mixed congregation on *Simchat Torah*.

My parents and their Jewish friends and associates were quite religious in their practice and shule attendance. We did not work or drive on '*Shabbos*' (as we called '*Shabbat*'), we even walked from Dover Heights to the city on the 'Day of Atonement' (not '*Yom Kippur*'). Whilst never denied, our Judaism was rarely overt. I'd never heard a word of Yiddish. I'd not even heard the term 'Yiddish'. Matzo balls and matzo pudding were almost the extent of our typically Jewish cooking. We ate lemon stewed fish balls before we fasted, so 'we wouldn't be thirsty'. This was an English adaptation of

*gefilte* fish, a term unknown to me. Chopped liver, smaltz herring, *hamentashen*, and other traditional European Jewish foods were not part of my world. We did not mix meat and milk. We did not eat *trayf*. To me, as a little one, that was keeping Kosher. However we did not have separate dishes, sinks, or even buy kosher meat and *Mishna*, and *Talmud* were not part of our education. We were Australians who were Jewish, not Jews who were Australian.

My early formal Jewish education was on Sunday mornings at the old Central Synagogue. Short of classrooms we sat around the small kitchen, often on the draining boards of the sink. (I hope it was a meat sink and not a milk one!) Our teachers were kindly volunteers, with no teaching skills. The books were dull and boring. My main memory was learning to read Hebrew saying funny sounds like 'bobo' and 'baba', and resenting I was not outside playing. Later I trained for my 'Confirmation' at the Great Synagogue. We had yet to hear of 'Bat Mitzvahs'. After passing an exam, we were confirmed as a group in the Great Synagogue, reciting together just one prayer. With post wartime restrictions, plus our underplayed English background, our celebrations were very restricted. My parents were overseas at the time, and an aunt invited five friends and myself for a lunch party. We all wore white and waist length veils. Prior to this year, the girls had worn short veils just covering their hair. When my parents saw photos of us all looking like Catholic children, they were devastated, and after that there were no more veils of any length for the confirmees at the Great Synagogue.

I can recall Mr Abraham Rothfield and Miss Laura Boas, though I was not in their classes. I also remember the soaring voice of Miss Portrate in the synagogue's mixed choir. I sat in the front row above the *bimah*, Mom on one side and Mrs Porush on the other. When I was tiny, I loved sitting downstairs next to Dad, in his formal coat and top hat, in the president's box. We children were rather afraid of Rabbi Porush, but adored Rabbi Falk, who seemed much less formal and a softer man to us, and always had a pocketful of sweets for us little ones.

I grew up in an Australian atmosphere in which Judaism was my religion. We did not have a Jewish way of life, and I didn't even know that this cultural difference existed. I was well into my teens before meeting a continental person, before even knowing the existence of Yiddish, let alone hearing any expressions. In my teens, I knew my father made countless phone calls and many trips to Canberra trying to arrange for Jewish immigrants, and that both my parents met and helped those who did arrive here, but it was a world apart from our lives as children. I do recall them fighting to

keep a Jewish immigrant with a detached retina from being sent back, and Mum going daily to the understaffed Eye Hospital to feed him before the mice ate his food. (His treatment involved several weeks of lying prone and completely still.) Under the rationalisation of trying to help the new immigrants blend in, the leading Jews of the time advised the newcomers to shave their beards, their *payot*, their long hair, shorten their top coats, and not to speak foreign languages in public. Today we realise how cruel this was. It was probably our parents who were subconsciously embarrassed by them, and fearful that their own comfortable existence might be threatened. At the same time, I think they were consciously trying to help. This was still a country of few immigrants. Those that were here were not well tolerated. Certainly the less noticeable the newcomers were, the better the chance of the government allowing more Jews to immigrate here. I never heard our older generation voice their discomfort to each other. If they did, it was 'not in front of the children' — an expression often used in those days.

My parents and their friends were not Zionist. They had no European family, and although afraid of Hitler and the Germans this was, at first, political, rather than religious. It took a while for the horrors of extreme antisemitism, and then the Holocaust, to penetrate our lives. My mother did belong to WIZO, but she was much more involved with local Jewish organisations. Once Japan entered the war this was the bigger threat and fear for us. The propaganda posters portrayed German uniformed soldiers as humans like us, but characterized the Japanese faces as monkeys. We knew more about the Japanese atrocities than we did about the German ones, because Japan was geographically a much closer threat than Germany.

Throughout my childhood we were Australians, England was 'Home' to us all, and adults spoke of a trip 'home', even those who had no direct links with England, and had never been there. Both before and after World War II travel overseas was rare as it was only for the older members of the middle class and the upper classes who could afford the cost and the time away. Travel was by ship and then train or maybe car. So some took the Grand Tour and after England went to the 'Continent', (that is Europe). Of course communication was by letter and really 'snail mail' as it came by ship.

This was the time before Australians were 'Aussies', and before the British were 'Poms'. This was the time before the British were blue collar workers, before the trade unions were dominant and before the 'Poms' ran so many of them. This was the time of the White Australia Policy, with very few ethnic immigrants, when Australia was largely Anglo-Celtic and still behaved like a parochial

colony of Great Britain. It was the time when Chinese, whose ancestors came here during the Gold Rush days, ran country Aussie cafes, or grew produce in market gardens. To be British or ex British, was seen by many, as superior to being Australian. Being Australian was seen as superior to being continental, and 'white' was vastly superior to any form of 'coloured'. I was taught 'good manners'. I was well into my adulthood before I realised these were English manners, not world wide ones, and that each country had their own version of 'their' good manners, which were not 'secondary or bad manners', just different. So when I grew older I had a lot of unrealised prejudices to face and undo! Incidentally, many decades later, when the words 'ethnic' and 'multiculturalism' were introduced on the political scene my parents, their friends and myself were horrified that Jews were described and listed by the government as 'ethnics'. To us, Judaism was a religion and 'ethnic' referred to people of non-Australian nationalities. To us, we, and our Jewish friends were either Jewish Australians or Jewish ethnics from somewhere else. But I am now well ahead of my childhood.

Many, like us, were Australian Jews of several generations. I am fourth generation on my father's side. My husband, Milton, is also fourth on his mother's side. So our grandchildren are sixth generation Australian Jews. Both families belonged to The Great Synagogue, and both were hard working members in the Jewish community. The two families knew each other from synagogue and sharing work on different Jewish societies. However they did not socialise and nor did their friends. Their social circles were quite separate. In the early 1930s the Jewish congregation was small enough for most to know each other, or at least to have heard of each other. Madge Bloom and Miriam Whitmont often belonged to the same committees. Also Edward Whitmont's sister, Fanny, had married Mannus Michael, Harold Bloom's brother-in-law, Arthur Michael's father. This early connection was long before I was born and had not led to any mingling of the two families. I think this almost ends the similarities between our two families.

Whilst investigating our family trees I found another intermarriage between the two families some few generations earlier. This was not unusual in those days of smaller communities, bigger families and families with siblings stretched across many years and countries. Consequently the generations often became intermingled. Although only four years older than me, my husband, Milton was the youngest of his siblings and actually belongs to a generation above mine. His eldest brother, Cecil, was sixteen years older than him. So Cecil and Beryle Whitmont, my eldest brother and sis-

ter-in-law belonged to my parents' generation, and my aunt, Billie Michael, became Milton's first cousin-in-law.

Milton's parents, Miriam and Edward Whitmont, were not as religious as mine, but they had a very Jewish way of life. Edward Weissberger (his original family name) was born in Poland. His family moved to Frankfurt Am Mein when he was quite young. His was a very large poor family. His mother had twenty-one live births, seven of the children dying before adulthood. At the age of sixteen Edward Weissberger did not like what he saw happening in Europe, and decided to leave Germany. He immigrated to the United States and then to Australia when he was only seventeen. He spoke many languages, but no Yiddish, though many of his Australian friends did speak it. So after several years in Australia he taught himself fluent Yiddish. Well before the First World War he was advised to Anglicise his name so that, should a war start with Germany, he would not be interned. Fearing this, Edward changed his name from Weissberger to Whitmont. Although hating anything German, he had a Germanic type reserve all his life, and supported his generation's very traditional gender ideas about work and home. His family was Zionist and aware of what was happening in Europe, even in the early to mid 1930s.

Unlike Edward Whitmont, my mother was actually born here. Her parents, Louis and Rachel Samuel (née Abrahams) were both English, and were married in Australia at the Great Synagogue in 1892. Mother was born in 1894. At that time her father was mayor of Moss Vale. When mother was four they all returned to England. This was the third generation that had followed this pattern — English husband and wife, being here for a few years, marrying here, and with small children returning permanently to England. Mother broke this pattern by journeying back here in the late 1920s, staying, and ultimately marrying an Australian. In many ways she was very adventuresome, and ahead of her time. She came, (unchaperoned!) to work as a secretary for a friend, who was managing director of Yardleys Cosmetics. She was never considered an 'immigrant'. 'Immigrants' were government sponsored poor people. They certainly were not middle class English! (It is interesting to note that Australia did not have a Department of Immigration until 1945.)

In contrast, the Whitmont family had a somewhat continental Jewish feel to it, whereas the Bloom family was decidedly English! (I suspect this was one of the differences between the two families that contributed to their lack of socialising before my marriage.) In the former, the children joined in adult conversation. In the latter, children, especially girls, were 'to be seen and not heard'. In the

Whitmont family all the relatives of the extended family were welcomed and incorporated. The Bloom family was a nuclear family with in laws invited at times, but privacy and separateness were respected. As the children grew to maturity and adulthood, they too, were respected as responsible for themselves, and separate from their parents. In contrast, in the large extended Whitmont family, all adult children were expected to stay within the extended family group and keep the family rules. The Whitmont family was a publicly affectionate family, with lots of hugs and kisses for all who were there. The opposite happened in the Bloom household. They had the English type reserve, and affection was a private thing, only shown, out of the public eye, to very close people.

This was the milieu in which I grew up. My parents did not marry until they were in their late 30s. My father had assumed the position of head of his original family, as his father, John Bloom, was long dead from a flu epidemic in the early 1920s, and his older brother, Julius Bloom, was killed at Gallipoli. My mother, a very attractive lady with a vivid personality had refused marriage until then. I am sure if she had lived today, she would have chosen career over marriage and children. Although she did not officially work, we always had household help and she occupied herself with many good causes. That is, she never stopped working, but because it was voluntary and unpaid, nobody defined her occupations as 'Work'.

I was four years younger than my brother, Ian, and we had parents in their early 40s. Our family followed an English system, of a nanny and a mothering hour. As little children we ate in the kitchen earlier than the grown ups, who ate more formally in the dining room. Only on 'Shobbos' as we called it, and 'Yom Tovs' (not 'Yom Tovim') did we join together as a whole family. As small children we also had Father Christmas bringing us presents, and the Easter Bunny leaving us eggs, so 'we would not feel left out'. This had no religious connotation at all. We lived on the eastern side of Edgecliff hill and played with all the neighbourhood children, none of whom were Jewish. We took so many inconsistencies for granted, not knowing others had different traditions. For example, we knew we could not eat the chocolate Easter Eggs until after Passover, if Easter and Passover coincided. And it was always 'Passover', not 'Pesach'; 'New Year', not 'Rosh Hashona' and 'Day of Atonement', not 'Yom Kippur'. Our family did not give New Year gifts, and at Passover there was one present only for the child who found the 'middle matzo'. ('Afekomon'—what was that?). In contrast the Whitmonts used the Hebrew terms, gave *Rosh Hashona* gifts, and certainly *no* Christmas ones.

My nanny shared my bedroom and was with me until I started

pre-school at a small private class for the children of the David Jones Family in one of the rooms of their very large home. From there I graduated via a local kindergarten to Ascham. This was long before Jewish schools started here, though I doubt if I would have been sent to one even if it had existed. My parents, and most of their friends, did not believe in them. Firstly, when they started they were new, and had yet to prove themselves scholastically. Secondly, in the early days, they were attracting ex-European families, not Australian ones, so their culture seemed foreign to us. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly to our grown ups, we lived as a small minority in a Christian world, and 'should as Jews' learn to be part of that world, and not segregate ourselves from it.

At the end of 1941, the girls' private schools were recommending girls should be evacuated to the country to 'save them from the Japanese'. This was another example of the general Australian awareness and fear of the Japanese that far surpassed, for us, that of Hitler and the Germans. The idea of evacuation was not new to us. We had here many children who had been evacuated from England; two of them living with an aunt of mine. So many of our friends' daughters, and myself, were sent away. I was nine, starting fourth class, and spent three years at the Presbyterian Ladies College in Goulburn. I was put in 'charge' of two children a year or so younger than me, and we were the only Jews in the school. The headmistress was excellent. She mothered all her 'Mosquito Fleet' — her name for the little boarders. She respected our religious differences, allowing us the day off school on all the important Jewish holidays. We did have to attend Presbyterian Assembly each day, but did not have to kneel. As for the hymns, I sang them all, just changing words to make them more appropriate. For example, 'Onward Jewish (Christian) soldiers/ Going off to war/ With the *Moggen Dovid* (Cross of Jesus!)/Going on before' was one of my favourites.

During the war all windows were blacked out at night. There were no lights allowed outside — not car headlamps or streetlights, not even a burning cigarette. Australia was very conscious of potential raids and attacks from the Japanese. Many foods in short supply were rationed. Strangely, my country school had masses of land on which they could have grown fresh produce and kept chickens, but they did not. I recall powdered egg being particularly unpleasant. We all had to collect and save hair from our hairbrushes. I do not remember what it was used for. Maybe even then I did not know. We were a country that had few manufacturers before the war, and those that were here changed to producing uniforms, guns, ammunition and other war related goods. Therefore clothing was in short supply, and also rationed. Children received fewer ration tickets

than adults as their clothes used less material. If you reached five feet (152 cm) or nine stone (57 kilos) you received bonus extra ones. Most of my class finally reached five feet. I did not; but embarrassingly received them for being over nine stone!

Petrol was also very tightly rationed with many cars having gasbags fitted. This meant no country driving, no picnics or other outings. The cars were only occasionally used for important activities. It was also before the time of two-car families. People walked and used public transport. Walking was much safer in those days, even for women and children. If there was a bushy short cut we all safely took it.

During school holidays I came home, by train, to a household very involved in the war. Dad was part of the Volunteer Defence Corps and often away for weeks at a time. Mom made camouflage nets, and was one of a group of senior, trusted netters who were taken 'on site' to cover guns and other army establishments. She was also a senior trusted Volunteer Driver and was called out day and night to collect top personnel, often from brothels, if their ship or plane was secretly leaving. Needless to say, Dad was most unhappy about this! Other times she had to drive police or servicemen to arrest ex-German and Italian fathers or whole families to be interned. She would return from these trips very distressed and upset. She also drove blinded servicemen or ex-servicemen to hospitals, treatment and education. This continued right through the late 1940s. Besides all this, she worked on a voluntary basis for the Jewish community making 'Bundles for Britain'. These were parcels of clothing, food and other goods that were sent to England all through the war years.

In between these war time activities both of my parents were still very active on the Great Synagogue Board and the Ladies Auxiliary, and Dad was also involved with the New South Wales Jewish Advisory Board, which, in 1945, was reconstituted and renamed the Jewish Board of Deputies. Dad served as its first honorary secretary.

My Mum served on the Jewish Maternity Society (in those days known as 'The Sydney Hebrew Ladies Maternity and Benevolent Society'). Its original name was The Hebrew Ladies Dorcas Society. This was an English term for women who sewed clothes and gave them to the poor. She served on this committee for thirty-seven years, thirty one of those as secretary, vice president and president. This committee started in 1844 as the British government would not allow free Jews to come to Australia without a guarantee they would not be a drain on the colony and their work continued in the state of New South Wales after federation. At its closure in 1981, the

THE HEBREW STANDARD

"FOUNDATION" EXECUTIVE OF N.S.W. BOARD OF DEPUTIES



MR. S. SYMONDS, PRESIDENT.

In the near future, the New South Wales Board of Deputies will elect committees for public relations, overseas Jewry, Jewish war services, finance, constitution and standing orders, and publicity, information and statistics. The chairmen of these committees will go on to the executive of the Board, there to join the officials here depicted.

Owing to unforeseen circumstances we were unable to procure the block of Mr. H. B. Newman, one of the vice-chairmen of the Board.



MR. C. LUBER, VICE-PRESIDENT



MR. H. BLOOM, HON. SECRETARY.



MR. F. FREEMAN, HON. TREASURER

*Harold Bloom, honorary secretary of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, in July 1945, with the other executive members, Saul Symonds, president, Cecil Lubber, vice-president and Felix Freeman, honorary treasurer.*

Jewish Maternity was the oldest Jewish organisation in Australia. It was also the third oldest women's organisation of any type in continuous existence in Australia. It had a proud history of daughters following mothers on its committee. Helena Sofer Schreiber followed her mother, Miriam Whitmont, and I followed mine, and was honorary secretary for many years. It was a serious charitable organisation, investigating the needs of Jewish women, children and families, long before the Welfare Society, the Help-in Need, or

the Montefiore Home existed. Interestingly several times it tried to start a combined money-raising organisation, like today's JCA, but was before 'its time'. Others were not trusting enough, nor willing to give up their competitive power to combine in this way.

I returned from boarding school and went to Kambala for my senior education. Although an Anglican school, there were many Jewish pupils, practically all of Australian nationality in those days. The headmistress, who was very strict, was very tolerant of our special needs. Each year she consulted with me asking the dates of Jewish holidays, so she could avoid scheduling exams or other school function on those days. We were not expected to attend Divinity or Scripture lessons, but did have to attend morning Assembly with its hymns and prayer readings, as well as school notices and information. Jewish girls generally did very well academically, winning a large proportion of the prizes. In my senior year, I and another Jewish girl tied for dux of the school, and the head prefect was also Jewish. This reflected many of our home backgrounds of culture, books, education and parental motivation.

In those later teen years, we all collected in a favourite milk bar at Double Bay, and, in summer, at special spots on Bondi Beach. The non-Jewish girls socially joined our Jewish groups and parties, rather than vice versa. We stayed in groups, not couples, much later than subsequent generations. GSY (Great Synagogue Youth) was our club, and *Habonim* was unknown to most of us. Later, we also congregated at 'The Y' (the Young Men's Hebrew Association). Our parties if not at home, were often at the Woollahra Golf Club. More formal occasions were held at the Trocadero, a large fancy function place in George Street in the city. It was here we Jewish girls made our 'Debut'. Also at the Trocadero was the final night of the annual Queen Competition, which, through the Montefiore Home Ball and other functions, raised money for the Council of Jewish Women. We were expected to only date Jewish boys and certainly *never* marry 'out'. So dates with non-Jews needed considerable lying, and help from our friends to deceive our parents.

This was the time of double standards. The boys could have casual dates with non-Jewish girls, but not permanent girlfriends who were not Jewish. They could, and often did, have sex with these girls, but never with Jewish ones who must be respected and virgins when we married. From our point of view — contraception was unsafe, and the boys talked. We certainly had to preserve our reputations!

It was in the late 1940s with the post-war influx of European Jews that our Australian young groups gradually changed and I met youngsters from other countries, heard other accents and lan-

guages, first heard Yiddish expressions, and even learnt to laugh at them as they were explained to me. It took longer for myself and others to be relaxed and comfortable with this change to our Australian Jewish world. Intellectually accepting them was one thing; experiencing them was another matter. Their accents were often hard to understand and their manners and habits were so different from ours. This often caused embarrassment and discomfort on both sides. Consequently the two groups often avoided each other. Now, these many years and two generations later, this divide has largely disappeared and the established Australian Jews realise how much we have benefited, learned and grown from the newer migrants; that the cultural mix has been vital in making the rich country we are today.

When I look back and compare my childhood to that of many of my ex-European Jewish friends, the difference in our experience is enormous. We were so lucky to be here. Our life was so protected (a plus?), and also we were protected from life (maybe a minus?). We had a much longer, more innocent childhood and matured so much later (plus and/or minus?). Whatever our perspective, I can only recognise all those who have gone before and have come after me, for helping me grow into the person I am today.

## **THE MACCABEAN HALL: SOUL OF THE COMMUNITY; SPIRIT OF THE TIMES, 1918–1992**

*Barbara Linz*

*‘Architectural environments are intimately intertwined  
with the cultural imperatives of the society’.<sup>1</sup>*

**T**his article will explore The Maccabean Hall (hereinafter referred to as ‘The Macc’ since this is what it was affectionately called) and the key role it has played in the life of the Jewish community of Sydney in light of the above proposition, assuming the meaning of ‘cultural imperatives’ to include social and political dimensions as well. The history of the Maccabean Hall will be examined during three of the most important periods of local and international Jewish history. As part of this study, the physical elements of the building along with its contents will be discussed, and how they depended on mental and philosophical concerns, born out of events in the Jewish community here and overseas, thereby making these two aspects inseparable. The periods under review are 1918 to 1925, the years in which The Macc was philosophically conceived and structurally established; 1939 to 1960, during which time its importance was concrete and pressing in providing a vital support structure for pre- and post-war refugees from their time of arrival until they felt secure enough in their integration into the community, and 1978 to 1992, the period in which the concerns and the passions of Holocaust survivors transformed The Macc into the Sydney Jewish Museum. In conclusion, it will briefly discuss the legacy of The Macc in its role in the Jewish community.

The War Memorial site on which The Macc was built on the corner of Darlinghurst Road and Burton Street in Darlinghurst, consists of numerous properties acquired in 1921, 1924 and 1949, which changed form and content, depending on the needs of the Jewish community at the time. The properties bought in 1949, num-

bers 5 and 7 Hardie Street and 142, 142a and 144 Darlinghurst Road, became the community centre which was opened in 1965, and became the central office of a number of key community organisations, some of which are still there. When The Macc struggled to attract community support, rooms and facilities were also leased to non-Jewish organisations. The foyer of the building, unchanged throughout its history, is the NSW Jewish War Memorial which honours the Jewish servicemen and women who lost their lives during times of war in defence of Australia. The War Memorial Board is the owner, developer and landlord of the properties comprising the Macc and the adjoining War Memorial Jewish Community Centre. Suzanne Rutland argues:

The history of the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial is a story of contradictions and contrasts. No project could have been conceived more enthusiastically, with such high ideals, and in an atmosphere of such optimism than this War Memorial, yet throughout its history it had to struggle for proper recognition, financial support and real acceptance.<sup>2</sup>

Before the first World War, congregational activities of the Jewish community were dominated by the established Anglo-Saxon Jews, although there were also a significant but much lesser number of German and Eastern European Jews who had settled in Sydney and its surrounds.

Although European immigration had ceased during the war there was still dissension. Suzanne Rutland points to the cleavage between the old Jewish settlers and the newcomers, stating:

This cleavage resulted from different religious and cultural backgrounds, the main conflict being the ideal of the East European ghetto with its intense, vibrant Jewish communal life and that of the English gentleman, seeking respectability and denying that Jews were a separate race.<sup>3</sup>

The psychology of these defined groups created a schism in the community particularly in the first two periods, which the creation of the Macc hoped to address. Later, the division translated intangibly into an underlying lack of support for the Museum by many members of the non-survivor Jewish community.

The domination of the Jewish community by Anglo-Saxon Jews during the Great War period meant that 'the community as a whole was more concerned with conforming to the non-Jewish way of life than with maintaining its cultural distinctiveness'<sup>4</sup>. Great pride was

also taken in the fact that Jewish communal leaders were also prominent in the political and commercial life of New South Wales. A large number of Jews took part in State and local politics, out of proportion to the size of the Jewish community, and they played a leading role in banking, insurance, merchandising and stock-broking. The community has been described as 'prosperous, integrated and accepted totally by the broader community. They were loyal to the British Empire and to Australia, their country'.<sup>5</sup> At the same time most Sydney Jews were opposed both to Zionism because of the fear that it might make them seem unpatriotic, as well as to a large influx of non-British Jews, 'Yiddish speaking, foreign Jews who might upset the status of Australian Jewry within the broader community'.<sup>6</sup>

Encouraged by Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen of the Great Synagogue, many Jews volunteered for active service and enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF). Others were encouraged to contribute to fundraising appeals for the war effort. This patriotic fervour was enhanced, in August 1918, by King George V knight-ing, in the field, Lieutenant General John Monash, Australia's most successful soldier and a highly visible Jew. 'His military ability was proof to the general community that Jews could be successful and loyal soldiers and Australian Jewry felt immense pride in his achievements'.<sup>7</sup> As described in an unpublished manuscript in 1918:

Many of our fighters overseas were returning home and Sydney Jewry had reason to be proud. Of the 800 Jewish Australians from NSW who had enlisted voluntarily, 113 had been killed and many others wounded. Records show that 190 Jews held commissioned rank, and at least 95 had been honoured for bravery and outstanding service. No better time could be imagined for discussion on the question of how to honour these men who had conducted themselves so well.<sup>8</sup>

However, as has been argued that: 'The corollary of this successful integration was the possibility of the disintegration of the Jewish community because of the high rate of intermarriage.'<sup>9</sup> The weakness of the community leadership and the lack of a communal infrastructure exacerbated its vulnerability. 'For a minority group to withstand the pressures of assimilation it needs to have strong roots and close group identification, and this was lacking in the community before 1920'.<sup>10</sup>

It was within these frames of reference that the concept of the Jewish War Memorial was conceived. The idea of a communal hall that would serve as a memorial, first proposed by Herbert I. Wolff,

the editor of the *Hebrew Standard*, 'was noble and imaginative: instead of merely erecting an obelisk, its advocates were determined to honour the memory of the dead by providing a focus and facilities for the living'.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, a war memorial coupled with a communal hall seemed ideal — it would commemorate the part that loyal Jewish soldiers had played in Australian history, and provide a social meeting place for young Jews to meet each other to try and prevent further intermarriage.

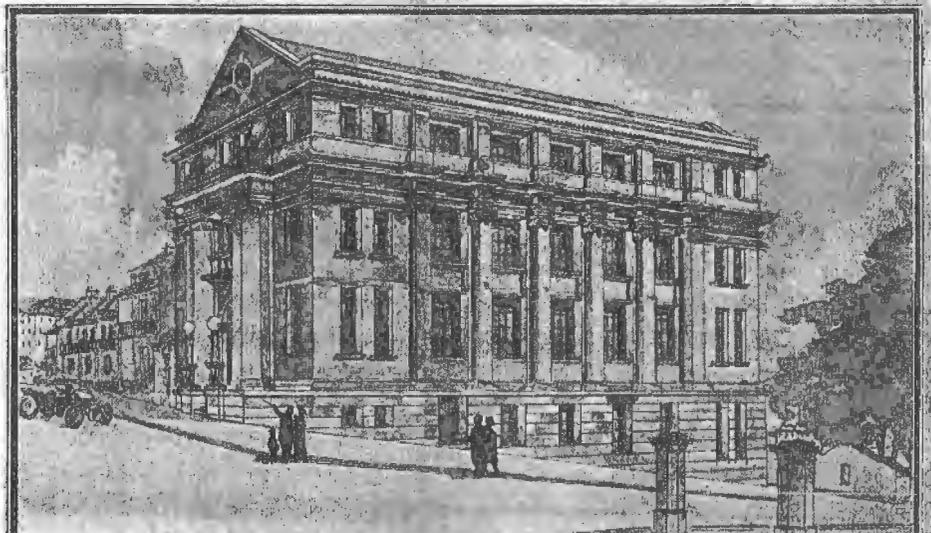
In 1919 an initial meeting of eighteen organisations discussed the project but it took the passion of one man, Ernest L. Davis, president of the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial in 1920, to make it happen by beginning the appeal to collect funds. His passion for the project was clearly evident in an emotional letter he sent to the Jewish community when he challenged its members as follows:

What have I done, what am I doing or what am I going to do for the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial? Have I enquired or given consideration to what it means, what it does, what it stands for or what it teaches? These are questions which every Jew in this State should have asked himself and still be asking.<sup>12</sup>

The following year, in February 1921, at a meeting of the synagogues and the newly formed Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen, a resolution was passed to erect a Jewish Memorial in the form of a Jewish Communal Hall on the land in Darlinghurst bounded by Burton Street, Hardie Street and Darlinghurst Road, which would be purchased for £3,250. A description of the proposed four storey building containing the desired Halls and numerous other rooms was included with the proviso that £25,000 would be collected from the community to finance the initial development and that afterwards, the centre would be able to sustain itself financially. Lieutenant Gordon Keesing, A.R.I.B.A. was announced as the architect.

It was not to be an easy task. After the war there were many other needy causes that the community was asked to support, but the fundraisers optimistically launched a 'Brick Appeal' in which the public was approached to buy 500,000 bricks at a cost of one shilling each. The wording of the brochure encapsulated all the values, the fears and the passions of the Jewish community. It reflected elements of great pride in the part played by loyal and patriotic Jewish soldiers in the military affairs of Australia and the British Empire, while giving voice to the fears of community leaders that

## THIS IS WHAT WE WANT !



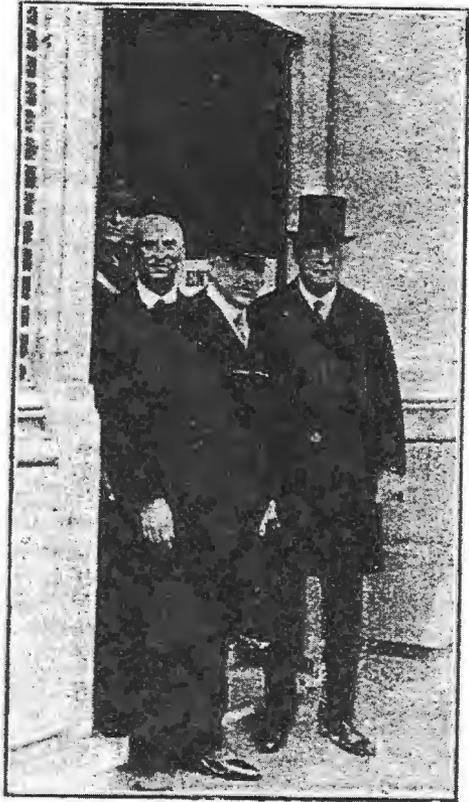
*Excerpt from the 1921 Brick Appeal Brochure showing the architectural drawing of the proposed Jewish Communal Centre.*

the level of intermarriage and assimilation into the general community was threatening the viability of the Jewish community in the future.<sup>13</sup>

The first Annual Report of the Jewish War Memorial, published in April 1922 showed that community support for the project had not reached expectations. Only £8,943 had been collected. A year later, the original plans were changed because of the financial shortfall and a tender for £14,984 for the construction was accepted. In October of the same year another appeal for £10,000, being the amount needed to finish construction, was sent to the Jews of New South Wales. Construction was completed and on 11 November 1923, coinciding intentionally with Armistice Day and the community celebrated the official opening of the memorial by Sir John Monash at a ceremony described in glowing terms by the *Hebrew Standard*. On 16 November 1923 it proclaimed:

Never in the history of Jewry in this State was there a more brilliant function than the historic occasion of the opening of The Maccabean Hall. The flower of Australian Jewry was present and all, while honouring the occasion, were especially there to do honour to Australia's greatest Jewish son, Sir John Monash.<sup>14</sup>

The establishment of The Macc was seen as such a momentous milestone in the history of the community that the issue of the *Hebrew Standard* was devoted almost entirely to all aspects of the building itself, the events of the opening ceremony and the significance of The Macc in the community. The building was described as having a foyer 'of heroic proportions'<sup>15</sup> containing a magnificent memorial with an honour roll of the 113 fallen Jewish soldiers of the 1914-1918 War and the 800 who were on active duty. The doorways of the foyer 'gave access to the hall, the supper room and cloakrooms and its communal hall with the simple inscription 'The Path of Duty was the Way to Glory 1914-1919' written across the façade of the stage'.<sup>16</sup> The *Hebrew Standard* went on to discuss the impressive opening ceremony, and the brilliance of the speakers.<sup>17</sup> The mood of the speeches at the opening ceremony conveyed the importance of the day's events to Armistice Day and the sense of belonging and duty felt by Jews to the British Empire and to Australia. Major A.W. Hyams stated: 'This building is the visible expression of gratitude for all time by New South Wales Jews and a testimony to what they owe to Great Britain and its flag'.<sup>18</sup> Monash's speech coalesced the ideals of the day:



Sir John Monash Opening Door of the Building.

It is a utilitarian memorial, but it has a symbolic purpose. It has behind it the aim of keeping the Jewish people together, preserving the creed, perpetuating the faith. I appeal to the Jews of New South Wales to set before themselves the ideal of service to the country. Nowhere in the world do we have so free and unfettered a life. Let us do loyal service to the country.<sup>19</sup>

By 1924, although plagued by financial difficulties and lack of communal support, The Macc began to fulfil the promise of a social,

religious, educational and sporting facility not only for Jewish youth but for adults as well. Some of the organisations that patronised and used the facilities were the Literary and Debating Society, the Maccabean Dramatic Section, the Jewish Social and Sports Club, the Mess Club and the Ex-servicemen's Association, which had its own clubroom, later called the Dugout. Religious services previously held in the Montefiore Home were transferred to The Macc and a communal Succah erected in the adjoining property which had been bought in 1924 and which had a connection constructed between the two buildings. Some of the events and happenings of 1924 were described as follows:

Social nights on Wednesdays and Sundays organised by the entertainment committee under the chairmanship of H.I. Wolff, Captain Hatfield and his Gymnastic class, the first Seder Service, the Maccabean Queen Competition, Miss Monica Scully and her pupils, the first Jewish Athletic Carnival for amateur athletes, and the first Jewish Returned Soldiers Smoko held in the main hall.<sup>20</sup>

There were also many attempts at fundraising in the following years, but by 1931 the overdraft had reached £6,593. During these years of the depression The Macc reflected Sydney's anglicised Jewish community's desire to build a communal hall/memorial in their own image — loyal Australian citizens integrated into the broader community, proud of their Jewishness but showing minimal Zionist tendencies which could be perceived as disloyalty, and trying to prevent the high rate of intermarriage which had come about through their own desire to assimilate and integrate. Rabbi Raymond Apple argues that:

In the inter-war years the Maccabean Hall gave Sydney Jewry, for the very first time, a social and sporting meeting-place of its own, and the community learnt to think of it with much affection. During World War II it enabled essential welfare services to be developed and maintained, and it expanded and grew in the post-war period to adapt to the changing needs of a diversifying community.<sup>21</sup>

Although the 1920s and early 1930s witnessed the increasing popularity of The Macc, Australian Jewry remained a small community with little commitment to their Judaism or Jewish education. A sense of complacency was brought about both by their isolation from world Jewry and by the feeling of acceptance within

Australian society. Their sense of loyalty was to Britain rather than to European Jews who were regarded as quite foreign and different from themselves. The small but more traditional European migration made little impact in the dominant Anglo Jewish culture and 'the community structure remained largely isolated from events and issues in world Jewry. Australian Jewry had not succeeded in its attempts to strengthen and diversify communal institutions in order to stimulate Jewish awareness.'<sup>22</sup> Rutland points to the fact that: 'It was the rise of Hitler and the resultant refugee migration of the late 1930s which reversed the trend of assimilation and forced the community to rethink many of its basic attitudes.'<sup>23</sup> The community came to realise that all Jews, no matter their origin were targets of Nazism destined for destruction and this increased their own feelings of vulnerability.

Between 1936 and 1939, over 5000 Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria came to New South Wales, and 'organisational demands were made on the community as a whole in order to assist in the rehabilitation and integration of the refugees into Australian society'.<sup>24</sup> The Maccabean Hall and the organisations and amenities it housed provided both the physical infrastructure and the psychological support for this rehabilitation and integration process to begin. Although immigration ceased during the war years, Jewish consciousness had been aroused and the migrants brought new attitudes and subsequently new dimensions to the Jewish community by encouraging the development and growth of Jewish cultural organisations and by their different perceptions of the necessity of Jewish education, religion and Zionism. In time, this period bonded the different ethnic and religious elements of the community together and the community was enriched in everyway by the refugees. The community grew, became more cohesive and more confident of its place in Australian society, yet more secure in its diversity. All this was apparent in the events that took place at The Macc.

For many of the refugees, however, there was still heartache and a lack of acceptance in their dealings with the existing community of anglicised Jewry. The Macc served as the meeting place for 'a mass meeting of migrants in 1939 when Inspector Mitchell of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch instructed the refugees to speak English, abide by Australian laws especially wage awards; not to barter; and not to dress conspicuously'<sup>25</sup> in fashions that would identify them as foreigners and refugees. 'These instructions from a non-Jew were welcomed by the established Jewish Community'<sup>26</sup> fearful that any foreign behaviour would affect their own standing in the wider community.

In October 1939, as a result of rebuilding activity by the building committee 'the annexe' was transformed into offices, with additional rooms including a gymnasium and lounge being provided. This was important extra space in view of what was to take place at the Macc. At the same time the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS), formerly the German Jewish Refugee Fund moved their offices to The Macc. Jewish Welfare was the key organisation in the rehabilitation and integration process of the refugees and survivors, and foreshadowed twenty years of incessant activity at The Macc.

Refugees and survivors remember various experiences that they had at The Macc during this period with mixed emotions. The Schneeweiss family, for example, arrived in Sydney in June 1939 on the *SS Esquilino* from Italy. Joachim turned twelve on the voyage. He recalled on his first day being taken from the ship to the Maccabean Hall. In the main hall there were various little tables, older ladies with kettles serving tea, doing charity, who were very friendly. 'I had my first confusing cultural experience there, being given tea with milk, rather than lemon. It was a traumatic experience for me as I had never seen tea served with milk before!'<sup>27</sup> More traumatic was his father's encounter with Walter Brand, the general secretary of the AJWS at their offices in the Macc. Brand only spoke English and hardly communicated with those who could not. Joachim Schneeweiss recalls: 'Nor did he exude sympathy and understanding or give my father the feeling that, as a migrant, he was going all out to help him.'<sup>28</sup> Matsdorf, a lawyer from Germany who worked with Brand and was himself a German Jewish refugee, interviewed migrants for details of their work and life experience to help them find work. Joachim recalls:

My father was a successful businessman who would not work on the Sabbath. Matsdorf told him in no uncertain terms that it was impossible to function in this country without working on Saturdays. It was substantially true because factories still worked on Saturday but my father said, thank you, that's the last time I'll have anything to do with you. This incident badly scarred my father's impressions of the Welfare Society at the time.<sup>29</sup>

Despite this incident Joachim and Matsdorf later became good friends and worked together on a number of projects.

By the time of the annual meeting of the War Memorial in 1941, ninety percent of Jewish activities in Sydney were housed in the Maccabean Hall complex. This was a remarkable fulfilment of the

original intention for the building but something that would not have been possible without the influx and influence of the refugees. In 1943, the annual report stated that 222 social functions and 598 meetings had been held at the Macc. Further, the War Memorial was financially sound thanks to the £12,000 bequest by Philip Cohen — one of the few times in its existence that this was the case and due entirely to philanthropy rather than the ability of the War Memorial Board to make The Macc financially viable.

During the 1940s, key attitudinal changes in the psychology of the community were also reflected in events that took place at The Macc. The political, social and cultural organisations that began life there in this period were to be the building blocks of the future community infrastructure. Between 1943 and 1945 the Maccabean Hall witnessed countless meetings of the 40 organisations trying to create a democratic infrastructure in the community. The Board of Deputies was born and in 1945 held its first AGM there. Rutland states:

With the end of the war a new and larger influx of refugees to Australia began. Between 1947 and 1954, the Jewish population of New South Wales increased from 13,220 to 19,637, largely through migration. The Australian Jewish Welfare Society played a central role in assisting the refugees to adjust to the new conditions in Australia, to learn English and find suitable employment. Newcomers were met at the ship and taken to the reception centre at The Maccabean Hall if they were not going interstate.<sup>30</sup>

The Macc in these vital years housed organisations and facilities that came about through necessity. It encapsulated the 'spirit of the times'. It was the central focus in the lives of pre- and post-war refugees, nurturing them in time of need. As refugees, almost everything they needed was available at The Macc — organising to be met at the boats, landing permits for relatives or other governmental procedures attended to, a place to find work, English classes, exercise classes, sports facilities, and occupational retraining in the sheltered workshop. More than that, it provided social activities enabling newcomers to meet other refugees and members of the existing community as well as learning about the political and religious organisations of the community and the opportunity to start their own.

Tom Keleman, who was the first young person to be brought out by the Welfare Guardian Scheme, a sub-committee of the AJWS, arrived in Australia in July 1947.<sup>31</sup> He described The Macc as a jum-



*The office of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in 1947.*

ble of rooms and offices, housing everything necessary for the immigration, rehabilitation and the integration of the survivors. Rooms were rented out by the War Memorial to many organisations and private people. The large Jewish Welfare office was very basic space, divided by partitions.

Keleman commented that 'The War Memorial always complained about not getting enough rent to improve conditions.'<sup>32</sup> The basement contained the dugout. Upstairs was a room used for teaching English to Jewish refugees who wanted lessons. Classes were given by Mr Savage and his son, who were not Jewish. The AJWS arranged the classes which were initially free, but later cost a token amount. Other rooms were rented to a Viennese migrant who was a singing teacher, and a club of alumni of Sydney Boys' High. The Board of Deputies met regularly at The Macc although they did not have an office as such and Dr Hans Kimmel held lectures there at one stage to discuss the Kimberley project.

The Macc as a social and communal centre played a pivotal role, with weddings and barmitzvahs a weekly occurrence. The main social event was the weekly Sunday dance, which always had a band. Many young people patronised the dances and this included not only refugees but also members of the established anglicised community. It was an opportunity for the refugees to meet the

young locals and many marriages resulted from those dances. Tom recalled some incidents of friction as well:

I remember meeting the daughters of a prominent doctor there. They were an established family, Australian Jews of a few generations back. I wanted to take out one of the daughters but sensed that he was not keen to allow his daughter out with a refugee.<sup>33</sup>

Other actions caused tension, when staff were told to tell refugees who wanted to find work to use duffer bags rather than European style briefcases, not wear their coats too long or their trousers too flared as you could 'pick a European a mile away. The conservative Jewish element said they should fit in if they wanted to get on in this country.<sup>34</sup> Many refugees felt great resentment at this critical reaction from their fellow Jews.

Another organisation of fundamental importance to the community, which was set up at The Macc in that period, was the Jewish Welfare's sheltered workshop. It was established in the basement next to the garage shortly after the influx of Hungarian refugees in the 1950s. It helped provide refugees who had no other skills with useful work, and involved those who were getting older in activity. Thirty to forty people were trained in simple trades and did assembly work there. Sewing was taught as clothing manufacturers were desperate for workers. The workers received pocket money for their work. The Macc was central and focal to the lives of many refugees as they travelled there on a daily basis to do something pertaining to their new life. The hall was used extensively for large gatherings as much as for small gatherings. It was easy to access because of the tram that came from the city, ran down Burton Street and went to Bondi. People could get to it easily and quickly from the outer suburbs of Sydney. Dalia Stanley recalls:

We lived in Canterbury in the South West, and every week my mother took my brother and I, by tram, to exercise classes at the Macc. It was an anchor for those of us who lived away from the centre of the city, a place where Jews could reassert their identity.<sup>35</sup>

This feeling of reasserting identity was crucial to some of the events that took place at The Macc in 1947/8 during the period of the creation of the State of Israel, and with other gatherings that took place during the 1950s.

Reasserting an identity that included being Jewish, and regarding Israel as the Jewish homeland, developed from the dramatic growth in the awareness of Zionism and its importance to Jews and their future, from liberation in 1945 to the United Nations Partition Resolution in November 1947. There were meetings and rallies at The Macc throughout this period. Joachim Schneeweiss recalls that defining moment in Jewish history as it was announced to an enormous crowd in the main hall of The Macc. as follows:

When the UN passed its Partition Resolution, Dr. Herbert Evatt, Australia's Minister for External Affairs, who had a close relationship with leaders of the Zionist community in Sydney, was there. He was also President of the 1947 UN General Assembly session which passed the resolution, so the jubilation had a personal element here. A rally was called on a Sunday night. Max Freilich, who spoke from the heart, got up and shouted 'mazel tov [congratulations]' three times into the microphone on the stage. The audience erupted into shouting and clapping. It was a truly emotional simcha [celebration].<sup>36</sup>

It was the first community outpouring of support for Zionism, part of the healing process between English and European Jews, and a turning point for the uniting of community ideals. The creation of the State removed the feeling of conflicting loyalties for many Jews of English origin particularly because of 'the role played by Dr Herbert Evatt in the making of that crucial recommendation'<sup>37</sup> and the 'Australian government's firm endorsement of Israel's existence.'<sup>38</sup>

The reassertion of a political identity as a Jewish community without fear of being regarded as disloyal to Australia was apparent in September 1950, when The Macc hosted a protest meeting, under the auspices of the Board of Deputies, at the government's plan to allow mass German migration to Australia. At the meeting the following resolution was passed:

Having regard to the widely acknowledged failure of the denazification program and to the survival of militant Nazi groups in Germany, this meeting believes that the admission into this country of German migrants and 'Volksdeutsche' who are still indoctrinated with Nazi ideology would be the gravest menace to the Australian way of life.<sup>39</sup>

The following year, the evidence of an assertion of a cohesive social identity became clear when The Macc was packed for the

annual Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Service. The whole community, including pre- and post-war refugees, now came together to mourn and remember the Holocaust.

The latter part of the 1950s saw the refugees begin to integrate and assimilate into the community. This led to changes in the demography of the Jewish population as people moved away from the traditional Jewish areas. Once they found jobs, married and had families and began integrating into the fabric of Sydney society, they spread out into the Eastern Suburbs, the North Shore and other areas of Sydney and New South Wales. 'The peak came in the 50s with the establishment of new congregations and the construction of synagogues'<sup>40</sup> in areas such as Parramatta, the Eastern Suburbs, the North Shore, and Strathfield. New function rooms, new meeting rooms sprung up wherever Jews moved, community organisations were formed and moved to their own premises, and an era of irrelevance was ushered in for the Macc.

By 1959, a committee was set up by the Board of Deputies to investigate whether the War Memorial should be retained as a communal centre and modernised or sold. In 1960 this committee, chaired by Justice Bernard Sugerman, recommended that the Jewish War Memorial be retained as it was and continue benefiting the community as a War Memorial and community centre, which, as discussed, was built next door to the Macc and opened in 1965.

This did not happen and the next three decades saw The Macc fall into a state of disrepair and disuse. In 1983, at the sixtieth anniversary tribute to The Macc, its position was described as follows:

In many ways the building has justified the hopes entertained for it: in others the reality has fallen short of the vision. The community at large has not sufficiently appreciated the Centre, and over and above the geographical problems there have been controversies occasioned by failures in communal consciousness by individuals and organisations. But, all in all, Sydney Jewry is fortunate in its War Memorial. The Macc has indeed often served the community better than the community has served The Macc.<sup>41</sup>

This situation of highs and lows for The Macc existed throughout its history until its present reincarnation as the Jewish Museum. In exploring the reason why the community considered this transformation, the composition of the Jewish population needs to be taken into account. Between 1933 and 1961, 27,000 Holocaust survivors arrived in Australia, increasing the Jewish population

three-fold, from 23,553 to 59,343. The number of survivors now equalled or outnumbered the members of the existing community. 'This high proportion of Holocaust survivors is very important in understanding the nature of Australian Jewry and the intensity of the development of Holocaust remembrance activities after 1978'.<sup>42</sup>

Forty years passed from the end of the Holocaust during which time the community matured, healed its divisions, and put in place the infrastructure of Jewish dayschools, aged homes, facilities to care for less fortunate members of Jewish society, and the general organisational infrastructure that exists today. The change of purpose of the Sheltered Workshop in this period is one example that illustrates the different concerns of the maturing community, changing from helping refugees acquire new skills in order to find work, to training and giving work to disabled members of the community. Survivors recreated their lives, married and had families, found work and started businesses. In the process of recreating their lives most of them did not talk about their experiences during the Holocaust. These emotional and psychological memories were repressed, deliberately or otherwise, as they were confronted with a public who did not want to hear, and often their own families whom they did want to tell.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw great changes in community attitudes as the Holocaust became integral to the consciousness of western society. Survivors of the Holocaust 'increasingly realised that silence could betray the victims, sustain ignorance and bring with it the danger of recurrence'.<sup>43</sup> Their determination to tell the world the truth about the Holocaust germinated towards the end of the 1970s. It was intensified by international and local occurrences in the 1980s<sup>44</sup> and, as survivors grew older, by their desire to talk about what had happened to them personally. Most important, the worldwide upsurge of neo-Nazi and Holocaust denial literature added to the concern survivors felt about general community attitudes to the Holocaust and Holocaust denial. All these happenings influenced survivors to actively take steps to perpetuate the knowledge and memory of the Holocaust. Their determination to create a museum documenting the historical truth, that the broader community could visit and be educated by, became an imperative. By the early 1990s, this led to the third reincarnation of The Macc as the Sydney Jewish Museum.

The ideas and discussions leading up to the creation of the Sydney Jewish Museum over that decade were focused on three different committees: the Holocaust Remembrance Committee, the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (AAJHS) and the Institute for Holocaust Studies. However, influential individu-

als, either in key community positions or with vested interests took the actions that made it come to fruition. Potential sponsors for the Museum project were Aaron Kleinlehrer, and John Saunders, a Hungarian survivor and co-founder of the Westfield shopping centre chain who had recently left Westfields and started his own property group, which is now called Terrace Towers. The properties under discussion to house such a museum were the B'nai B'rith property in Yurong Street, East Sydney and the Maccabean Hall. At the start of negotiations these two high profile survivors acted together but that situation did not last. Between 1987 and 1989 negotiations for two museums were underway creating tension between Saunders, Kleinlehrer, the AAJHS, the Board of Deputies and other interested parties, with adverse press reviews fuelling the arguments. By 1989, a declaration was made giving total support of the AAJHS only to the Saunders' project. As this support was seen as a key condition for any Holocaust remembrance activity in New South Wales, this project now had official blessing from the AAJHS and the community. The Saunders project on the Maccabean Hall site was, therefore, revived in November 1989. Saunders connection with The Macc went back to the 1960s when he funded the refurbishment of the Hall in honour of his first wife Eta who had recently passed away.

Soon after this Kleinlehrer funded, designed and opened his own museum in some terrace houses in Cleveland Street, Surry Hills. His son, Robert, became the director of the museum. Konrad Kwiet described this centre:

It was spectacular and theatrical in design, resembling a modern art gallery, almost voyeuristic in atmosphere with massive blow-ups of some of the most horrific Holocaust photos, for example, showing the naked bodies of Latvian Jewish women and their children being liquidated. In the backyard an artificial Concentration Camp watchtower was set up with burning candles.<sup>45</sup>

The museum also contained authentic artefacts, which Kleinlehrer had collected over the years from various sources, like Zyklon B and soil from the camps, which were sent to the Holocaust Museum in London when the museum closed after a few years. Whether this was his protest against the Jewish community because he was forced to go it alone, the fact was that his museum 'never existed for the Jewish community.'<sup>46</sup>

The significance of the Maccabean Hall site as a Jewish Museum lay in its sense of Jewish continuity for the community.

The building, from its construction in the early twenties, was always part of the headquarters of Jewish community and served a communal Jewish function. Setting up a Holocaust museum in an existing Jewish building reinforced the tradition of Jewish life there. Kwiet has compared this with overseas museums, commenting that:

Most other Holocaust museums have no Jewish tradition in terms of landscape and architecture. They have been constructed outside Jewish communities and are new buildings with new architecture which sometimes causes enormous debate, for example, the design of the Holocaust Museum in Berlin created by Daniel Libeskind.<sup>47</sup>

In addition, the War Memorial in the foyer was central to the concept because it highlighted the significance of the relationship between Australia and the Jews who have migrated here at various periods of its history. The symbolism was overwhelming of the juxtaposition, on the same site, of the War Memorial, which represented Jews who had given their lives out of love and loyalty for Australia, and the museum, which represented the many Holocaust survivors who had been given the opportunity of a new life in Australia. There were some negative aspects of the site, including its location in an area with little or no parking, as well as being situated in an area infamous for problems with drugs and prostitution. Furthermore, its heritage status limited what could be done to the building without going through the roof or changing the façade. However, the overall suitability of the site and the desire to begin overrode these issues.

David Dinte coordinated the whole project from the offices of Terrace Towers in William Street. He was a fourth generation Australian Jew with a limited knowledge of the Holocaust. His first meaningful contact with survivors was with his parents-in-law. His knowledge of The Maccabean Hall was equally limited. He had heard of it but had never visited it. Two important aspects of the community were represented by the two men most responsible for building the Museum; the passion and dreams of the survivor community to create a museum represented by Saunders, and the pragmatic, well-educated, but historically uninformed and non-involved Australian Jew represented by Dinte. The impact on Dinte's empathy and attitude because of his involvement was to be life changing, just as the survivors hoped the museum would be for many in the Jewish and the broader community. He later commented:

I became aware that a Holocaust museum had been discussed many times but nothing had ever happened. The impetus for John came with John Forster, George Farkas' father, who worked at Westfields. John had assisted Raoul Wallenberg and had a large amount of memorabilia relating to that time. He had spoken to John Saunders many times about it. When he passed away, John called his widow wanting to see the memorabilia and she said she had destroyed it all. That was when he realised that if a museum was not built there would come a time when there was nothing.<sup>48</sup>

A planning committee chaired by David Dinte was formed. It included members of the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (AAJHS), the Institute of Holocaust Studies, the Board of Deputies, and other members of community. This committee was responsible for the initial concepts. Meetings were held with the Association and important artefacts and items looked at for display purposes. A number of meetings were held with the War Memorial Board to strike a deal on rent for The Macc, which had hardly been used during the 1980s except for the War Memorial, which was opened every year on Anzac Day. Their discussions centred on its total disuse as a reason for the War Memorial to be more generous in the terms of the lease. Once the lease issue was resolved, they moved forward, as Dinte remembered:

Everyone involved wanted the Museum to be built but there were differences of opinion on major aspects, including the funding, the building and the running of the Museum. There was talk in general perspectives but nothing was happening. Finally, John decided that he would go ahead and fund the project himself. This gave him control over all aspects of the Museum: design, construction and operation.<sup>49</sup>

A team of individuals headed by Dinte worked on the project and went overseas visiting other Holocaust museums for broad-brush ideas. These included Bernard O'Hara, a key Saunders employee and project manager, Michael Bures, the architect of the new design, and Kylie Winkworth, a professional museum curator who drew up the original brief. On the trip she was so overwhelmed by her exposure to the Holocaust that she became ill and was forced to withdraw from the project. Dinte and Saunders then brought in Sylvia Rosenblum who was 'brilliant for transforming the concept into the museum. She pulled the whole thing together and made it happen in record time.'<sup>50</sup>

Michael Bures' unique solution was to remove everything that had been added to The Macc in the 1960s, strip back to the old ceiling, and restore as much of the original building as possible. The basement was to contain a new library, offices and a 100 seat theatre. This architectural design was commended as follows:

Bures' central design is an inspired answer to the problem of putting various levels of exhibits into the barrel-vaulted central hall without cramping claustrophobia. This is achieved remarkably successfully with an innovative, inspirational concept based on the Magen David, the Star of David, the universal Jewish symbol. There is a sculptural staircase and platforms in the centre of the hall with a geometric spiral based on the interlocking equilateral triangles of the Star of David, with it acting as the core. This creates a central vertical space all the way up into the ceiling with visual connections to the old ceiling and all exhibit platforms.<sup>51</sup>

Professor Konrad Kwiet was invited to write and check the text but was not involved in the selection of artefacts. Individuals whom Saunders had worked with in his shopping centres created the interior displays of the Museum, including the ghetto wall, the busts of Wallenberg and Korscak and the George Street display. Dinte recalled:

It was a project, like other things we did, the thrill and excitement was in the chase and when finished and done you moved on. For John, in the construction it was a job to be done in a time frame — but as the interior came together and some of the subject matter came out (John was not involved in this aspect) he was emotionally affected when he saw people's stories up on the walls.<sup>52</sup>

In November 1992, little more than eighteen months after its third reincarnation was begun the Sydney Jewish Museum, as it was named, was officially opened by Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair. The job was completed quickly and efficiently, and the museum finally created because of the passion of one man, John Saunders, as it had been with Ernest Davis in 1920.

Judith Berman argues that: 'the Holocaust became an element in the consciousness of Western societies from the late 1970s, but there has not been one single way of memorialising the destruction of European Jewry. Different societies have remembered the Holocaust in different ways'.<sup>53</sup> The Sydney Jewish Museum reinforces the significance of this comment when elements of the way in

THE SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

A Museum of Australian Jewish History and the Holocaust

A publication to mark the opening of the Museum  
on 18 November, 1992

by His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC  
Governor of New South Wales



*John Saunders (right) at the opening of the Sydney Jewish Museum, 1992, with Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair.*

which it has remembered the Holocaust are analysed. The determining element is the link between the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and the Museum. Survivors conceived, funded, built and run the Museum. Kwiet noted that: 'This creates a certain kind of Museum that is personal, almost like a tour of one's home'.<sup>54</sup> Added to this is the fact that it is a project within the Jewish community and receives almost no government funding. Its message and purpose do not, therefore, have to reflect government policy as with the Holocaust Museum in Washington or Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel. The Sydney Jewish Museum, for example, sees Israel in the chronology of events post-liberation, rather than seeing the Holocaust as a justification for the creation of the State. Adding to the feeling of authenticity given to the Museum by the impact of tours given by survivors, is the authenticity of the artefacts and items displayed on the floor or kept in the archives. 'Not one item has ever been bought. They are either loaned from or donated by survivors or their families. This is crucial in terms of comparison with Washington or Berlin, both of which have bought artefacts. The Museum didn't have a budget for that purpose'.<sup>55</sup>

At the outset it was not crucial that the content and philosophy of the Museum should extend beyond the Holocaust narrative, although there were discussions about it. The survivors wanted

Newspaper headlines at the time of the opening of the Sydney Jewish Museum.



**SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM**

**MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORY AND THE HOLOCAUST**

THE SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM NEWSLETTER  
Volume 1 Number 1 Nissan 5753 - April 1993



their story told. That was the most important object at the time. 'As well there was no museum equivalent in Sydney to set a precedent. There were some Holocaust memorials but no museum type, which only comes into being once you have reached some distance from the event'.<sup>56</sup> The way in which the narrative panels of the Museum

are displayed reflects this particular way of remembering, with the overall effects of the exhibits on the Holocaust floors deliberately low-key. Architect Bures explained: 'We deliberately chose not to shock people. Some overseas exhibitions show much more material and have much more impact. To show the whole truth you've got to show a lot more than this museum does at present'.<sup>57</sup>

The ground floor describes the celebration of the vitality and richness of Jewish culture and rituals. However, it is devoted in the most part to Australian Jewish history with tribute paid to those who came to Australia as survivors and refugees. This can be considered as the 'Australianisation' of the message of the Holocaust by looking at how the survivors recreated their lives here, and their post-war contribution to this country. Dinte stressed:

My involvement with the Museum made me appreciate Jewish history. I only realised how important Israel was when I got involved with the Museum. I discovered my roots for the first time and seeing that passion in the Survivors made me realise these people were fighting for something so important. It was an awakening for me. I trace it all back to John and my involvement with the Museum. It changed my life and focus on everything.<sup>58</sup>

When the Museum was completed the intention was to hand it over to a communal body to run, but this did not happen. Alan Jacobs was appointed as director and later Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen. It became known as John's asset and few in the community supported it financially. Years of tension in the management structure persisted until 1998, a year after Saunders' death, when it became part of the Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA) under Robert Goot's chairmanship. Like many museums it struggles financially, its continued welfare dependent on generous benefactors despite being partially funded by the JCA. Another issue that has always plagued the Museum is the apathy of a major portion of the Jewish community. Little more than half have visited the Museum since it opened. Many in the community feel that it is a museum to teach non-Jews what happened and that they, as Jews, know all about it. The highest proportion of visitors are non-Jewish school groups. It remains to be seen whether these figures will change when the waves of Jewish immigrants who have come to these shores from Europe, Russia, South Africa or elsewhere in the past eighty years, have integrated with each other, and feel themselves part of the same narrative of Jewish history, rather than being mentally compartmentalised into the particular country of their birth, with little understanding of the backgrounds of other Jews in the community.

Despite these issues, the idea and the reality of the Museum is firmly fixed in the consciousness of the Sydney Jewish community. It is a major source of information and education, describing the historical events of the Holocaust, as well as Australian Jewish history and the role played by Jews in Australian history. It is, therefore, perfectly positioned to create understanding and tolerance in the wider community. In the face of increasing antisemitism and denialist activity both on the web and in print, the need to remember and memorialise the Holocaust by being able to tell the story as it happened through the last generation of survivors, makes The Macc and what it represents, in its current reincarnation as the Sydney Jewish Museum, a genuine eyewitness to history.

In conclusion it appears that the purpose of The Macc to define and encompass the most vital aspect of community needs for this particular period in history is being met, as it was shown to do in the two previous periods under review. The Macc, with its physical space and ethical dimensions, has encapsulated the ideals, the passions, the concerns and the pain of the community. It has achieved the status of an icon as the soul of the Jewish community of Sydney, reflecting the spirit of the times.

### NOTES

1. Bugni Valerie, Lucchesi Galati Architects Inc., and Smith Dr Ronald, Chair UNLV Department of Sociology, *Connections*, May 2002, p.1.
2. Suzanne D Rutland 'Historical Chapters' in S. Encel and B. Buckley *The NSW Jewish Community: A Survey*, Sydney: NSW University Press, 1978, p.8.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p.10.
5. Ibid., p.10.
6. Ibid., p.11.
7. Suzanne D. Rutland *Edge of the Diaspora, Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 1997, p.138.
8. Typescript by B.S. (whose full name is not written in the file, probably Bernard Sugarman) commenting on Dr. George Bergman's book on the history of the Jewish War Memorial, File AB 48, Australian Jewish Historical Archives, p.1.
9. Rutland 1997, *op cit.*, p.138.
10. Ibid., p.140.
11. Raymond Apple *The N.S.W. Jewish War Memorial, A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute*, transcript from File AB48, Archives of

- the Australian Jewish Historical Society, (AJHS), Mandelbaum House, p.1.
12. Ernest L. Davis, *Open Letter to the Jewish Community*, 1920, File AB48, AJHS, Mandelbaum House. Ernest Davis was the president of the War Memorial at the time and a respected stockbroker with his offices in Pitt Street. His father was Rev. Alexander Bernard Davis, the first minister of the Great Synagogue.
  13. Some of the relevant and emotive wording of the Brick Appeal Brochure read as follows: 'The proposal to erect a Communal Hall as a War Memorial to the gallant sons of the community, who made the supreme sacrifice, is receiving the utmost encouragement from the community.' Another section includes the statement: 'The accompanying illustration will enable you to visualise the exterior of this noble structure when completed. Its chief value, however, lies within, as the Communal Hall will provide a home for every Jewish activity.'
  14. *Hebrew Standard of Australasia (HS)*, 16 November 1923.
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. Other articles in that same issue examined the Charter of Opening, the role of the Maccabean in the community and the implications of such a Memorial. One of the leading articles considered the importance of the Macc in terms of the constitution of Jewish clubs which would now provide a meeting place for young Jews to 'help them go from strength to strength, and be a potent factor in the future of Jewry in Sydney' *Hebrew Standard*, 16 November 1923. There were descriptions of and gossip about the people who were there, including some snide and patronising comments from other newspapers like the *Daily Guardian*, 'How the "Goyim" did enjoy the ceremony at the Jewish War Memorial yesterday morning! It was a field day for the *Yehudim* — as the Jew is laughingly inclined to call himself. It was also a day of interest for the Christian who happened to be there', *HS*, 16 November 1923. There were also some disparaging comments about some of the political figures who attended 'It was impressive. Especially for Inspector-General Mitchell, who looked like a marrow with a green pea on it as he tried to balance the little cap'. *HS*, 16 November, 1923.
  18. Major A.W.Hyman, *HS*, 16 November 1923.
  19. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1923.
  20. Transcript by B.S., op cit., p6.
  21. Apple, op cit., p.1.

22. Rutland, op cit., p.172.
23. Ibid., p.173.
24. Rutland, 'Historical Chapters' in Encel and Buckley, op cit.,p.15.
25. Rutland, op cit., p.186.
26. Ibid.
27. Interview with Joachim Schneeweiss, Sydney, 2003
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid. Their visit to the Macc proved to be vital for their most pressing need, as they had arrived without a place to live. 'It was there that we were told about the kosher guest house in Bellevue Hill run by a Mr Oelbaum which could give us immediate accommodation'
30. Rutland, 'Historical Chapters' in Encel and Buckley,op cit., p22
31. Tom was 17 when he arrived. He found work immediately at the AJWS office in the Macc., because of his previous experience working for UNRRA and JOINT in a DP camp. He worked there full time in a period of intense activity until 1950 as assistant accountant as well as handling migrant welfare work.
32. Interview with Tom Keleman, Sydney, 2003.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Interview with Dalia Stanley, Sydney, 2003.
36. Joachim Schneeweiss, op cit.
37. Rutland, 'Historical Chapters' in Encel and Buckley, op. cit., p.24.
38. Ibid.
39. Suzanne D.Rutland, *Pages of History: A Century of the Australian Jewish Press*, Sydney: Australian Jewish Press, 1995, p.119.
40. Rutland, in Encel and Buckley, op. cit., p.25.
41. Apple, op. cit., p.1.
42. Suzanne D. Rutland and Sophie Caplan, *With One Voice, A History of The New South Wales Board of Deputies*, Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1998, p.31.
43. Judith E. Berman *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities, 1945 -2000*, Perth: University of Western Australia Press 2001, p.148.
44. 'The international context was an important stimulus for Australian Survivors in this movement of memorisation', Interview with Professor Konrad Kwiet, Judith Berman also noted particularly with the 'increased organisation and assertiveness of Holocaust Survivors in America and Israel' Berman, op cit., p.9.

## MEMORIES OF THE MACCABEAN HALL IN THE THIRTIES

*Julie Morris*

**H**aving recently visited the Jewish Museum at the Maccabean Hall, I was overwhelmed with nostalgia and memories of the 'Macc', as it was fondly called in those bygone years, in the thirties. It was truly a magical centre for Jewish youth, where almost all the social and many other activities took place. There were no other Jewish centres that catered for such a diverse number of activities, and being Depression years, when few families had money to spare, it covered many needs for a very small outlay. The 'Macc' fostered many friendships, which have lasted throughout the years, and the majority of Jewish youth of those days met their future partners there through the different organisations.

My first introduction to the 'Macc' was as a Girl Guide in the 4th Darlinghurst, 1st Judean Guide Company. I joined in 1930 at the age of twelve. The Company had been opened by Mrs Anne Rothfield, wife of Abraham Rothfield, headmaster of the Hebrew School in Sydney, in 1927. Captain, as she was called, was assisted by two Lieutenants: Rae Whitefield (later Ginsburg) and Edna Goulston. The Guides met each Sunday afternoon in the Lower Hall at half past two for two hours, during which they learnt the Guide Law — and hopefully carried it out — learnt Morse code and sent and received messages by flags, handmade by each Guide as part of the test. Other activities included learning various knots and when to use them (I still make use of some to this day), bushcraft, pitching a tent, lighting and making a fire (only two matches allowed and no paper), how the Australian flag and the Union Jack were made and the correct way to fly them. There were many other interesting activities, such as folk dancing and singing campfire songs. We had hikes and some of us attended camps, usually held annually in conjunction with other Guide Companies in the District or Division.

Leaders came and went over the years. In 1932 the Captain was Leah Wolff (later Blits) and her Lieutenant was Julie Harris (later



*1st Judean Girl Guides*

*Back row: Esna Don, Genia Indyk, Reba Aaron, Rene Cohen, E. Manning, Julie Harris, Julie Levy, Miriam Bullen, Leah Wolff, Rae Steenbohm, Dora Dixon, —, Beryl Cohen.*

*2nd row: Lysbeth Sloman, Merle —, Sheila Bulf, Mita Levy.*

*3rd row: Yvonne Goldman, Joy Neustadt, Selina Teitelbaum, Joan Brukarz, Reiba Levy, Sabina Teitelbaum, Zara Levy. Vera Sloman.*

*Front row: Betty Goldman, unknown, Dora Redelman, Ida Hertzberg, Dora Wolff, Dorothy Bernstein, Ruth Blanks, Ruth Symonds.*

Levy). When they resigned to get married in 1934, I took over the Company at 17, and my Lieutenant was Joyce Goldstein. In those days I was Julie Levy — not to be confused with Julie Harris, who became Mrs Reg Levy. The Guides continued to meet at the 'Macc' until 1937, when the Company moved to the Bondi Junction Synagogue hall and meetings were held in the evening.

Their younger sisters, the Brownies, aged seven to eleven, met on Sunday mornings, also in the Lower Maccabean Hall. The Brownie Pack opened about 1934 with Thelma Harris (later King) as Brown Owl, and Joyce Goldstein as Tawny Owl until she transferred to the Guides. The Jewish Scouts, Cubs and Rovers met at the Great Synagogue under different Leaders, beginning with Abraham

Rothfield, Max Nathan, Edgar Kelson, David King and others. The Lady Cubmaster was Joan Goldstein (later Aaron) and her assistant and future husband was Albert Aaron. On occasions, the Guides and Scouts joined forces to put on a Revue at the Maccabean Hall. Later, the Scouts met at the Central Synagogue, their name changing from Sydney Judean Scouts to 2nd Bondi (Judean) Scouts.

The Maccabean Literary and Dramatic Juniors (MLDJ) was begun in 1930 by a group of young people looking for some form of culture. A great number of them had graduated from Scouts and Guides and needed to direct their interests into new fields. Alf Levy became the first president, and monthly meetings were held in the 'Macc' library. Their motto was 'Spectamur Agenda', their colours cardinal red and white. They had an official badge and put out a regular magazine, called Agenda. Debates were organised amongst their members and with teams from members of the public, including the senior Literary and Debating Society, who also met at the 'Macc.' Speakers and adjudicators included many prominent people of the day, such as Judge Cohen, Eric Baume (journalist and broadcaster), Rabbi Cohen, Rev. Marcus Einfeld and Flight Lieutenant Sutherland.

Plays and sketches were put on in the main hall by the members, and were well attended by relatives and friends. Some were also put on at the little Tom Thumb Theatre in King Street, under the auspices of Dulcie Deamer, a well-known journalist.

The MLDJ also held social events, the most important being the Annual Red and White Ball, with Cec Morrison's Orchestra. The MLDJ filled a very important need for young people and flourished in its small way for many years. There were not many opportunities for young people to go to University then; one had to be from a wealthy family, or clever enough to win a bursary or a scholarship, which were few and far between. The majority of young people left school after the Intermediate examination, taken at the end of third year High School — now year nine. Some continued their education at night school — later Technical College — and an amazing number of MLDJ members became professionals in this way.

When I joined in 1934, most of the original members had left, because of extra pressures that didn't allow them the time to continue, but also because the influx of younger members, often their siblings, changed the type of program that had functioned before.

After the Maccabean Hall was officially opened as the NSW Jewish War Memorial by Sir John Monash in November, 1923, it soon became the headquarters for Jewish sporting activities in Sydney. The first Jewish Interstate Cricket Contest was held in Melbourne in 1924. The following year, members of the NSW War



*NSW Ladies' Physical Culture Team. From left: Rae Israel, Phil Bear, Beryl Carrick, Beck Goldberg, Joyce Goldstein, Julie Levy, Rose Levy, Bert Lee (coach).*

Memorial Sport and Entertainment Committee held regular dances at the Maccabean Hall to raise funds to entertain a reciprocal visit from Victorians. On 26 December 1924, the Chairman of the Maccabean Sports Institute, Rupert Michaelis, and Secretary, Sam Black, welcomed eighteen members of the visiting team at the Maccabean Hall. The team consisted of cricketers, athletes, swimmers and tennis players — all men! The Maccabean Sports Association in 1928 included the Ladies' Sports Union, and ladies' physical culture classes and the men's gymnasium were flourishing at the 'Macc.'

The Interstate Sports Carnival in December 1928, included women for the first time in swimming events, tennis, basketball and physical culture. The *Hebrew Standard* reported on 6 December 1929, that Jewish girls throughout Australia would compete in the above events for the Dora Hart Memorial Cup. The 'Macc' was a hive of industry for members connected with the Sports Association. Other sports were included later, and a debating team, largely from the MLDJ, became part of the Carnival Team. The Maccabean Hall was used for many years for the Welcome Ball for the Interstate Carnival when in Sydney.

The Sydney Musical Society (SMS), was formed in 1935 by Joe Joseph and performed Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Joe was for some time the choirmaster of the Bondi Junction Synagogue, where

the inaugural meeting was held. The Society first used the School of Arts hall in Bondi Road for their rehearsals, which was not altogether satisfactory, and later made their headquarters the Maccabean Hall. They rehearsed in the Dug-out, the clubroom of the Ex-Servicemen's Association, on Sunday evenings, and afterwards finished with an impromptu dance.

The Society flourished. The first president was Philip Klineberg, brother-in-law of Joe Joseph. Joe was the producer; he had taken part in many amateur productions in London, and played the principal comic part in each of the shows put on by the SMS. The first



*Julie Morris with her husband in a Gilbert and Sullivan musical "Princess Ida" presented by the Sydney Musical Society in 1940.*

musical director was Ralph Levy, sometime choirmaster of the Great Synagogue and graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. The accompanist, Norah Lurie (later Fenton), was to become a noted concert pianist.

Many young Jewish men and women who were later to become notable citizens, played leading roles. George Amsberg, who became Judge of the District Court, took the part of the Mikado in the opera of the same name. Sam Cohen, assistant musical director, played principal parts including Pooh Bah, from 'The Mikado'. He was later to become Vice-Principal of Sydney Teachers' College, and first Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University. Another member, Sydney Friedlander, was Mayor of Lane Cove Municipality for many years. Phil Klineberg became Staff Inspector of Schools, in charge of Special Education. Harris Morris and his brother Ben became principals of State High Schools. Harris Morris was president of the Sydney Musical Society for some years.

In the early days, the SMS had only Jewish members, but as it progressed and new talent was needed, non-Jews were permitted to join. Ivan Rixon became musical director; he had wide experience as conductor of symphony orchestras and musical director of other musical societies. A number of principal roles were taken by singers, who had graduated from the Conservatorium of Music (the 'Con'). Most of them stayed with the SMS for many years and were responsible for raising the professionalism of the Society, which was putting on two Gilbert and Sullivan Operas annually, mainly at the 'Con,' profits being donated to charities.

The SMS had its social side — an Annual Ball, hikes, house parties, often with a theme such as a 'Pirate Night' after putting on 'The Pirates of Penzance'. So many members met their future partners there (including myself), that it was laughingly called 'The Sydney Matrimonial Society'. Harris Morris's article on the Society was published in the *AJHS Journal* Vol.X, Part 8, 1990.

Apart from all these diverse activities, the 'Macc' had a social life of its own. Junior membership in 1933 was ten shillings and sixpence per annum or a shilling a month. The Maccabean Younger Set held dancing championships. A typical ad in the *Hebrew Standard* ran: 'Popular Dance, Maccabean Younger Set and Athletic Club, held 10th June, 1933 — 1/6 [one shilling and sixpence] — pay at the door, ' and another: 'Concert and Vaudeville in aid of the German Jewish Refugees Fund, prices 2/6 and 1/6.'

Once a month there was a dance in the main hall with Minnie Rosenthal's Dance Band. The hall was crowded with young people, the girls in long evening frocks, the boys elegantly dressed — no jeans and t-shirts in those days! They happily danced all night —

jazz waltz, fox trot, quick-step and later 'swing'. Nobody ever had dancing lessons, unlike the following generation — somehow we just 'picked it up.' The dances were orderly and most enjoyable. Everyone was well-behaved, with no alcohol or drugs and, as far as I remember, no smoking. Nobody had cars; we all came and went home in the tram. It was never considered odd or dangerous to see these young women in their evening wear walking to the tram stop and thence home.

On Sunday nights, films were often shown, which was quite an attraction as there was no television and it cost money to go to the 'pictures.' Sometimes there would be a dance, not as 'dressy' as the monthly dance, but just as enjoyable. There were several Jewish boys who were always available to play the piano or another instrument for these turnouts. They were happy to oblige, and did it all without payment. Those I remember were Vic Levy, Leo Levy, Aubrey Levy (all cousins), Bernie Roth and Frank Fenton (formerly Finkelstein).



**Welcome Ball at the Macc, 1939**

The Maccabean Hall was used for wedding receptions, and the first Temple Emanuel wedding service and reception was held there in 1939, when Phyllis Bear and Lou Rose were married, before the Temple was completed. Of course, the 'Macc' was used on many occa-

sions, not just for the youth — after all, it was the meeting place of those in whose name it was built — the ex-Servicemen and Women.

Since I am reminiscing about the 'Macc' as it was in my teenage years, I am not able to provide details about activities in which I was not involved, for which I apologise. But oh! what happy times we had there, in spite of the Depression and the looming War! What a debt we owe to the Maccabean Hall!

**ADDRESS BY RABBI RAYMOND APPLE, AO RFD  
TO THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 27 FEBRUARY 2005  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT  
FROM THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE**

I feel like an archival relic. I have been involved in the Historical Society for fifty years, since the time when Rabbi L. M. Goldman brought together a small group of his friends and students to establish a Victorian branch of the Society. Exciting days! Sir Archie Michaelis was the chairman, Lionel Fredman was the secretary (succeeded by myself when Lionel went overseas to study), and Stuart Cohen was the treasurer. Dr. Leon Jona, Isidor Solomon, Newton Super and others were on the committee. The gentry of the community were members. Meetings took place in private homes, often heritage mansions in Toorak and elsewhere. Our enthusiasm was unbounded. Despite my lack of years, I even gave papers at some of these meetings. I felt so proud when David Benjamin, as editor of the *Journal*, actually published some of my researches.

Then I went off to study overseas and joined the Jewish Historical Society of England which had its headquarters at the West London Synagogue, the citadel of British Reform, with Rev. Arthur Barnett as the secretary. Here too the membership was a roll call of the gentry. Once or twice I delivered papers for the Society, which normally met at University College in Gower Street. It was flattering when the incumbent president took me and my wife to dinner first — a nice habit which might be adopted by our Society in Sydney. Anglo-Jewish history became a personal addiction and still is, and I have done some writing on the subject.

My first address to the Australian Society, after returning to this country fifteen years later, married my interests in Anglo and Australian Jewish history. It was a paper about Chief Rabbi Nathan Marcus Adler, utilising manuscript material I had researched at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. I became a committee

member, spent several years as president, am now a patron, and zealously supply the archives with periodicals and ephemera sometimes borrowing the material back for the purpose of my own researches.

I have busied myself over the years with a number of historical projects, but it is not primarily as a historian that I have been involved in the contemporary Jewish experience. My role has been in the rabbinate — not entirely a novel job for a Jewish boy, but marked by three special areas of activity, the old world and the new, the congregational and the national, the activist and the academic. Let me speak briefly about each of them in turn.

First, the old world and the new. Every Jewish community has its own flavour and style, usually reflecting the ethos of the host society. Eastern Europe was traditionally passionate and emotional; Western Europe, stately and precise. America was adventurous; Britain, where I began my career, proper and genteel. Australia? In order to arrive at a delineation, let us go back a little. Until 1939 this was a colonial outpost. Jewish identity was synagogue-based and not every synagogue or minister was comfortable with Jewish peoplehood or Zionism. Religious reform was mooted from time to time but mustered little support in a community that was content by and large with undemanding orthodoxy. British institutions were our model; quasi-Anglican terminology was our idiom. Little migrant groups protested but gradually adopted the prevailing ways. (There is an area for research in the so-called ‘foreign’ Shules of the pre-Holocaust era).

The new era brought massive change, which a number of historians have documented in detail. There was a sea-change in the rabbinate. Indeed the decisive move from ministers to rabbis is one of the major signs of the change. The religious centre has become uncertain; the right and left have gained considerable ground. The community is diverse and no longer automatically defines itself in synagogal terms.

What does all this say about Australian Jewry, and does it help us to arrive at a word to delineate the Australian Jewish ethos? My answer is “No” — or rather “Not yet. We are a significant segment of world Jewry, tenth largest Jewish community in the world, and still going through a period of growth and development, not that we have emerged from being a derivative community, echoing a range of places of origin, albeit no longer merely or mostly British. But we do not seem to be independent enough to have a style of our own, able to be articulated in a word or phrase.

Does this say anything about me as a rabbi? Only that 32 years in office at the Great Synagogue have given me countless opportu-

nities of openly or surreptitiously placing my own stamp on the community accepting communal diversity, living with all sections, but insistent that religion be the most evident characteristic of our communal identity and that, while acknowledging dissent, the Judaism of tradition be the face of that religious identity.

I said about myself a minute ago that my role has combined the congregational and the national. Few rabbis have that privilege. With me it was inherited. I stepped into my predecessor's shoes, though I have developed my own priorities. The senior rabbis of the Great Synagogue have all been public figures. In my case I have often stepped boldly into national debate, careful to respect the parameters of Jewish teaching but not always attracting the uncritical support of my constituency. It helped me that I was an Australian and that I knew the Australian idiom and could even use the great Australian adjective, accent and wave.

I am both activist and academic. Ethical activism, the mark of the Biblical prophet, ought to be part of the role of the rabbi. Sometimes it is; sometimes it frightens some rabbis or their congregations. Fortunately Australian Jewry has abandoned the 'trembling' Israelite stance which pleaded, 'Don't be too conspicuous, don't attract attention, don't cause antisemitism'. We are mature enough to know that in a multicultural society all are entitled to be themselves and that antisemitism is not caused by Jews: it is caused by antisemites. Result? With others, this rabbi has made his contribution towards enhancing the quality of Australian society and encouraging Australians to appreciate and celebrate Australia.

Being studious by nature, I was always inclined to read and learn, not for the sake of career advancement but because knowledge ought to inform whatever one does as a rabbi, a Jew and a public figure. It may surprise you, but I am more ignorant than I was as a child. The more I learn, the more I realise I have yet to learn. A busy professional life has militated against the level of study for its own sake, which ought to go with the rabbinate, and I hope to remedy this in my retirement. But I have been constantly impelled to study for the sake of teaching, and I have made teaching, of adults as well as children, a major part of my week. I have also been able to teach at university level, sometimes developing new courses, sometimes taking over difficult established courses at a moment's notice. I have former students everywhere; some actually acknowledge the fact.

I began by implying that had things been different I might have been a professional historian. I think I made the right choice. I probably could have done more historical research and writing, even with the demands of my congregational and communal position.

This too I want to remedy in the years ahead and I already have projects, such as a history of the Australian rabbinate, on which work has begun. But without false modesty, I hope I may say that my ministry has sometimes enabled me to write history, sometimes to make history, but above all to try to understand history. When you understand history, you know who you are and what you can do with your life. And I appreciate the implication that the Historical Society thinks I have spent my life usefully.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### MONASH THE OUTSIDER WHO WON A WAR

*By Roland Perry; Random House Australia, 2004, 'A biography of Australia's greatest military commander'. xix pp, 516 pp plus 70 pages of Postscript, Acknowledgments and Notes, Bibliography and Index.*

**R**oland Perry might seem to have stepped outside his usual forte in attempting a biography of Sir John Monash, engineer and lawyer and citizen soldier. Perry's previous titles abound in cricketing history. This is his first study of the life of a war hero, and perhaps his writing style reflects his sporting interests, containing sporting aphorisms.

Perry has had access to the thousands of letters that Monash wrote or received, which are held by the National Library of Australia and the Australian War Memorial. Throughout the book there are references to these sources and to Monash's diaries. His emphasis throughout is to focus on Monash's belief that he was up against the Australian Anglo establishment and that he had to overcome prejudice, not only because he was Jewish, but because of his Germanic background.

Perry begins his story with an 'Introduction' recounting the events of the morning of 8 August 1918 when Monash launched the Australian Corps against the Germans in France east of Amiens, and thus started the offensive which brought Germany to capitulation on 11 November. The 'Introduction' over, Perry starts his study of Monash's life story, from his antecedents in Poland, through his father's emigration to Victoria in 1854, the subsequent courtship by Louis Monash (having dropped the 'c' in his surname) of Bertha Manesse and then the early years of John in Melbourne and Jerilderie, southern New South Wales.

As the 'Great War' forged the legend of John Monash, it is appropriate that while the first 150 pages cover the years leading to 1914, the following 300 pages focus on his military career between 1914 and 1918. The years after the War until his death in 1931 are dealt with in the last 70 pages of the main text. Attention is paid to John's school years at Scotch College, Melbourne and his attempts

to graduate from Melbourne University. His domestic life is spotlighted, both with reference to his adulterous relationship with Annie Gabriel and later his continuing affair with Lizette Bentwich, who was not accepted by Monash's daughter, Bertha.

This has been a fascinating book to review because Perry presents important information about his subject. But the book is a combination of both the good and the bad. The 'good' is especially to be found in Perry's details about the years preceding 1914 and Monash's war-time military career after his appointment on 15 September 1914 to command Australia's 4th Infantry Brigade, intended preliminarily for the Middle East to join the other parts of the Australian Imperial Force. Perry presents the challenges, which faced Monash while training in Egypt, and then in command of the Brigade on Gallipoli, where he was overlooked for newsworthiness by Charles Bean, the official Australian war historian, who preferred 1st Division, and personally disliked Monash because of his Jewish heritage. He then shows Monash in command of the new Australian 3rd Infantry Division, training in England and obtaining the approval of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, the English Commander-in-Chief, and especially of King George V. Perry deals in some detail with the circumstances in May and June 1918 of Monash becoming Commander of the Australian Corps. He refers to the antisemitism displayed by Bean, one of the prime movers against Monash, and the incipient dislike of Keith Murdoch, the other antagonist in the intrigue, who had the ear of William Morris Hughes, the Prime Minister of Australia. Perry appropriately outlines Monash's planning for his offensives for 3rd Division and in 1918 as Australian Corps Commander. His planning and mindfulness for his troops set Monash apart.

The 'bad' is especially to be found in Perry's account of Monash's non-war years. It is in these pages that Perry has been let-down, either by himself in his researching, or by his editor, though errors of syntax occur throughout the book. This may be evidence of a rush to publication. There are a number of examples, the worst perhaps being on page 58 where we are told that John Monash and Vic Moss were married by a Rabbi Williams at Freemason's Hall, Collins Street East on 8 April 1891. The Rabbi was actually Melbourne's Rabbi Abrahams. An instance of Perry or his editor failing to check on facts occurs on page 72 where the statement is made that Jewish rabbis administer 'last rites' when a person has died, while a second is to be found on page 490 where he refers to Russian immigration to Palestine as being 'since the failure of the 1905 Russian Revolution'. In fact, modern Jewish immigration to Palestine from Eastern Europe started in 1878 and increased during the 1880s.

The second wave started in 1903, after the Kishinev pogrom in Russia. Militarily an editing error is made on page 341 where G.C. Somerville, the Assistant QuarterMaster General to Brigadier General R.A. Carruthers is given the rank of Lieutenant General, rather than the correct rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Apart from these mis-statements, there are a host of typographical errors and missing words.

One minor criticism that a critique written for this *Journal* has to make is to point out the failure in the references to articles to quote this *Journal* correctly. The address delivered by Sir Robert Menzies at the Memorial Service held 11 April 1965 is mentioned with the reference 'Australian Jewish Historical Society vol. 1, 1966, pp. 81-4'. There is no mention of the *Journal*. Again acknowledgment is given to the article 'B.L. Monasch, 'The Life, Labours and Sorrows of B.B. Monasch' as being in the Jewish Historical Society Magazine, 1986. It is in fact in the *AJHS Journal* Vol. X Pt. 7, pp. 647ff.

Thus, Roland Perry's Monash can be considered to be an interesting account of the life of Sir John Monash, but cannot be taken as an authoritative reference of the man as engineer, soldier or unfaithful husband.

Russell W. Stern

## PAUL CULLEN CITIZEN AND SOLDIER

*By Kevin Baker Rosenberg Publishing Pty Ltd, 2005, The Life and Times of Major-General Paul Cullen AC, CBE, DSO and Bar, ED, FCA, 224 pp including Appendix and Index.*

**P**aul Anthony Cullen has led a life filled with distinctive service to Australia, firstly in business, then in war and finally in service to the community. This interesting book has been published while Paul Cullen is in his 96th year, retired and living at Wingello Park near Marulan and with all his faculties. The Acknowledgment by the author is dated October 2004, as is the Foreword by General Peter Cosgrove. The book describes the life of one born into a family of wealth and privilege, the leaders of commerce and community, both Jewish and civil, who were loyal and charitable citizens of the British Empire.

Paul Cullen was born as Paul Cohen in Newcastle in 1909, the second son and third child of Sir Samuel Cohen and Elma Hart.

Samuel Sydney Cohen was the eldest son of George Judah Cohen and Rebecca Levy. George Judah Cohen and Samuel Cohen were respectively the lay leaders of the Sydney Jewish community from the 1890s through to World War II and the powerbrokers of Sydney's Great Synagogue. Paul's mother, Elma Hart, was one of the four children of Alfred David Hart and Elizabeth Cohen, the owners of Charnwood, the site of Melbourne's St. Kilda Synagogue.

It was into this privileged background that Paul Cullen had his boyhood. The family moved to Woollahra in 1913 and Paul eventually became a week-day boarder at Cranbrook. Paul was an enthusiastic footballer, a clever student but unguided. He did not sit for the Leaving Certificate because of unjust treatment at school. Instead he became a clerk with an accounting firm, and eventually became a chartered accountant.

Perhaps it was the fact that his mother was not an observant Jew, and though not stated, there was no *Yiddishkeit* at home, that led to Paul Cullen in 1932 marrying Phyllis Sampson, an Anglican, and eventually deserting Judaism so that, as the book states, he now considers himself an atheist. However, in 1938 he was one of the group that founded the reform Temple Emanuel in Woollahra, and while on a world trip in 1938-39 engaged the Temple's first rabbi, Max Schenk. Also in 1936, when Sir Samuel was elected the foundation president of the German Jewish Relief Fund, Paul became its honorary secretary.

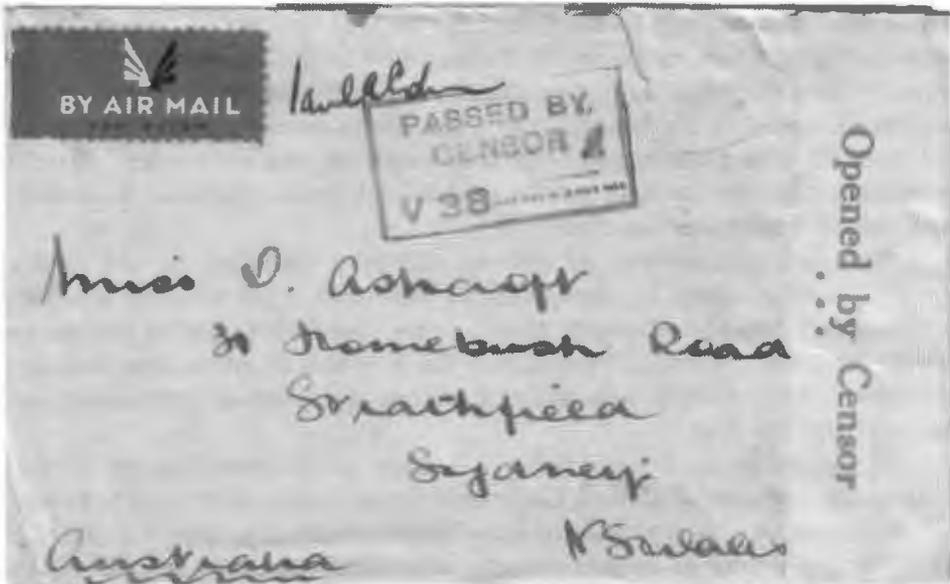
Like his predecessor, Sir John Monash, as an Australian general of Jewish heritage, Paul Cullen appears to have been fascinated during his youth by military service, and in 1927 he joined the militia, having been included in the last call-up for the reserve forces. He attended at the nearest army barracks, South Head, the base of the South Head Coast Artillery. He stayed in the Garrison Artillery until the outbreak of war in 1939, by which time he had received his commission as an officer and as captain commanded a battery.

The wartime period from November 1939 to September 1945 occupies the central position in the book, covering some 140 pages. Paul Cullen had arrived back in Sydney from his world tour in August 1939, and almost immediately he went into full-time military service. He was invited to join the 2/2nd AIF Infantry Battalion of 16th Brigade as a company commander. After training at Ingleburn, in January 1940 the 16th Brigade sailed for the Middle East. The 2/2nd was to be based at Julis near Gaza for battalion and brigade training until September 1940 when it was sent to camps in Egypt. Phyllis Cullen joined her husband in the Middle East, being one of a small number of officer's wives. Eventually she was recruited to monitor communications, based in Jerusalem.

By the time that active campaigning commenced in December, Paul Cullen had been promoted to major. Campaigning began with the attack on Bardia in Cyrenaica in January 1941 followed by the assault on Tobruk. These battles are described like other aspects of 16th Brigade history, with the personal recollections of Paul Cullen and backgrounded on unit and official histories.

On 22nd March 1941 Paul Cullen's Greek campaign began with the arrival of 2/2nd Battalion at Piraeus. The book records the fighting retreat experienced by 2/2nd Battalion from near Salonika until the unit was cut-off and Paul Cullen led the way in the escape of many of his comrades from Greece. Theirs was a tortuous escape route, by caique through the islands of the Aegean Sea to Chios (across the bay from Izmir in Turkey) to Crete which they reached on 5th May. At one point Paul Cullen managed to get a cheque on his Sydney bank account accepted in order to provide funds to finance the escape.

On Crete, the remnants of 2/2nd Battalion were based at Canea on Suda Bay towards the west of the island. Paul Cullen joined the battalion and participated in the fierce fighting on the island against the German airborne invasion. Ultimately those who could, managed to find ships to transport them back to Egypt. Paul Cullen is stated to have been one of the last to find passage on *HMAS Nizam*.



*Envelope of letter sent to 'Paul A Cohen' in January 1940, while on the transport to the Middle East.*

Following his return from Crete to camp in Palestine, the book indicates that Paul Cullen, as well as his brother George, decided to change their surname from *Cohen* to *Cullen*. The reason was to lessen the chance of being identified as Jewish if he was to be captured by the Germans and become a prisoner-of-war. It was a change that had been adopted by cousins in the United Kingdom.

The narrative then traces Paul Cullen's life in 2/2nd Battalion through its role in Syria in late 1941, then to Ceylon in March — July 1942 before 6th Division's return to Australia. However, while in Ceylon Paul Cullen was appointed to command 2/1st Battalion and, while on board their transport back to Australia on 20 July, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. This was the prelude to 2/1st Battalion shortly after being thrown into the battle then proceeding on the Kokoda Track in Papua.

The author then traces Paul Cullen's experiences from the end of September 1942 as 2/1st Battalion fought along the Kokoda Track through to Sanananda on the northern coast of Papua on 6 December when 16th Brigade was relieved. Paul Cullen's 2/1st battalion was in reserve until December 1944 when it moved to New Guinea to participate in the mopping up operations of Aitape to Wewak.

Separate chapters are then devoted to Paul Cullen's post-war experiences, firstly with the army, in the Citizens Military Forces, secondly, in business and thirdly, working for the community. With the establishment of the CMF in 1947 he was appointed to command the 45th Battalion, with which he was involved through to 1954. He was then promoted to Brigadier, and appointed to 14th Infantry Brigade, based in Newcastle. An anecdote is narrated that he insisted that on the presentation of new colours, the ceremony should include a Roman Catholic priest and a Protestant minister as well as the usual Anglican minister.

The re-organisation of citizen military services in the years from 1960 to 1966 is discussed in the text. Paul Cullen held an appointment to the Military Board from 1964 through to February 1966 as CMF member. Thereafter, he worked to form the Defence Reserves Association, a support network for past or present members of the reserve.

The chapter on his business life after 1945 notes that he terminated his involvement as a chartered accountant with J.A.L. Gunn & Partners to concentrate on the family company, David Cohen & Co. The fortunes of this company and its expansion into Grocery and General Merchants Limited are discussed, as well as his involvement in Mainguard (Australia) Limited through to its liquidation in 1958, and his rural business adventures in the 1960s. The last sec-

tion of this chapter ventures into the personal life of Paul Cullen during these years, and the failure of his first two marriages.

The final chapter considers Paul Cullen's work for the community. Initially there is a six-line reference to the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the Board of Deputies and the Temple Emanuel. More emphasis is laid on his role in Austcare and his visit to India in 1971. There follows a paragraph describing his role as president of the AJWS from 1979 to 1981 with a quote from Anne Andgel's history of that organisation. The chapter concludes with a description of his involvement as president of Austcare and of the Royal Blind Society of which he was president for seventeen years. The book's Epilogue discusses Paul Cullen's reflections on life and his family.

Due acknowledgment is given in the book to Anne Andgel's *Fifty Years of Caring: The History of the Jewish Welfare Society 1936–1986* and it is the source for the part of the description of Paul Cullen's work in the organisation that is now Jewish Care. To me this book is an 'as told to' work, and not a researched biography, and it has to be seen on that basis. Unfortunately, some poor editing detracts from the quality of the book down through misspellings and minor errors.

### Notes

The land in O'Connell Street where the Cohen house was in the 1800s is no longer connected with Permanent Trustee Company Limited. That company has now been submerged in Trust Company Limited and sold the building some years ago.

Reference is made to Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. The character is Bassanio, not Bassario.

Russell W. Stern

## KISCH IN AUSTRALIA: THE UNTOLD STORY

*By Heidi Zogbaum, Scribe publications, Melbourne, 2004*

**T**he name Egon Kisch is in my memory bank as a Jew who jumped off a ship in the 1930s in order to stay in Australia and broke his leg in the process and also failed the dictation test, which was applied to prevent selected immigrants entering Australia at the time. This book explains all this and more. Egon

Kisch was an anti-fascist of Czech origin but mainly operating in the German language sphere as a political activist. When Hitler came to power Kisch and others like him were already on liquidation lists. He escaped from Germany just in time.

My first reaction to this book was that I had never read so much detail about the activities of a person who is scarcely mentioned in Australia today. The amount of detail almost smothered the actual story, but as the book progressed, the detail morphed from being a fact by fact proof of what Kisch was doing, to painting a picture of the times prior to World War II which are normally covered by a single line mentioning the appeasers in England and Australia who were happy to make a deal with Hitler and in fact gave him support.

The book conclusively proves that Kisch should never have been prevented from entering Australia — he had not done anything wrong. He was not even likely to do something wrong and he had broken no laws. The Australian government's Special Branch of the time relied on some doubtful information from the British MI5, which prohibited Egon Kisch from landing in England. A person, who has never been identified operating under the name of 'Snuffbox', provided this information.

The English ban was sufficient for the Australian government. In Kisch's own words:

I was prevented from landing in England on one occasion ... but directly as a result of Nazi intervention. At the time I was on my way from France to give evidence, at the request of Lord Marley, before the international Jurists' Commission into the Reichstag fire. (p.44.)

It was this incident that I found the most interesting of all because it was the detail which revealed that, following the Reichstag fire, there had been an international commission in London to determine who had lit the fire. It was widely known that a secret tunnel led from government offices to the Reichstag and widely held that the Nazis had set the fire themselves. The London commission was timed to finish just before the Germans held their own enquiry in Leipzig into the fire. An alleged communist conspiracy was turned into a proven Nazi crime. The Germans were suitably embarrassed by the finding.

The London Commission was the one that Kisch had been trying to get to and, under pressure from Hitler's government, he had been prevented from landing by the British government. Other German socialists received visas but Kisch was the only person to have his denied. This decision was the basis for his refused entry into Australia

in 1934 and the cause for all the wrangling and farce that followed. He was finally kept out of Australia by his failure to pass a language test, which was administered by the Immigration Department to keep 'undesirables' out of Australia. As Kisch spoke so many languages, the final test was given in Gaelic, which he did not know. The test was ridiculed as a result of the fact that the person who administered the test could not understand the language himself.

A few years later in 1939 at the start of the Second World War, government attitudes would have changed sufficiently for Kisch to be a welcome visitor to England and Australia as an anti-fascist. The fact that he was a communist of any shade would have been forgiven as the appeasement strategy to Hitler changed.

This book includes an extract from Kisch's book about Australia, *Australian Landfall* published in 1937, but not seen in Australia in an English edition until 1969. It also contains an afterword by Marcus Patka of Vienna on Kisch as a writer, as well as detailed notes and a bibliography.

This book makes interesting reading by expanding what were newspaper reports at the time into detailed explanations of who the players were and their actions. Kisch was a Jew by birth but his connection to the Jewish community anywhere in the world was neither more nor less than many of the others who were of the Left and just happened to be Jewish. His religion was not the reason for his ban. Its author, Dr. Zogbaum researches and teaches in Central and Eastern European History at La Trobe University.

Ian Bersten

## WINTER JOURNEY

*By Diane Armstrong, Fourth Estate, Harper Collins, Sydney, 2005, pp467.*

**I**n the last decade Diane Armstrong, previously a travel writer has published *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations*, a family history of her maternal and her paternal families in pre-world war II Poland, and *The Voyage of Their Life: the Story of the S.S Derna and Its Passengers*, the story of her family's voyage to Australia in 1949, which became a best -seller, but this is her first novel. The story is based on events in July 1941 at Jedwabne, a *shtetl* in Eastern Poland whose Jewish inhabitants were burnt to death by their Polish townfolk after the departure of the Russian

occupying troops in late June 1941, when the Nazis attacked the USSR. Over the years the legend has evolved that it was the Nazis who massacred the Jews.

In this book, the *shtetl* is called Nowa Kalwaria (New Calvary) and many of its inhabitants seethe with indignation that the Polish National Remembrance Authority, as part of its candidacy to join the European Union, has decided on a reopening of the mass grave of the massacred Jews to ascertain whether the people killed were a handful of Jewish communist males, or if it was the men, women and children of the whole *shtetl*. The investigation also aims at clarifying if the perpetrators were the Nazis or the Poles themselves. 'Zionist Jews in America' are accused of being behind the forensic investigation. The town and Polish religious authorities are divided between those who are looking for closure and those who do not want any investigation to take place.

Diane Armstrong is a master of the elaborate plot, which fits together like a beautiful puzzle and her command of characters and of their complex motivation is assured. The main protagonist is Dr Halina Shore, a Polish-born, Australian-raised odontologist, an internationally experienced forensic dentist, who has been approached by the Polish government to lead the scientific investigation. Even this angers some of the Poles. There is also an empathetic Polish priest, an American rabbi now based in Poland, and the gallery of Australian and Polish characters is rich and varied. Although the visceral antisemitic feelings of many Poles are well described, others are shown as compassionate and risking their lives to help Jews now and in the past. The book is at once a mystery, a love story and a forensic and historical investigation.

The first half of Diane Armstrong's childhood was spent in Poland and she still speaks Polish, like her main character, which helps enormously in setting the scenes of the action, describing lovingly the Polish landscape, and making the reader's mouth water with her descriptions of Polish recipes. As part of the experiences of Halina's life in Sydney, the contemporary touch and ethos is so surely sketched that the reader feels she has also lived these scenes. As another part of the main character's experiences, Armstrong also brings in experiences of other massacre scenes in Vietnam Cambodia, Rwanda and Ukraine.

The redemptive power of forgiveness and the possibility of changing attitudes, especially of the young make this a powerful novel, which is impossible to put down.

Sophie Caplan

## INTERRUPTED JOURNEYS, YOUNG REFUGEES FROM HITLER'S REICH

By Alan Gill, Simon and Schuster, Australia, 2004, pp305.

Alan Gill has previously written a best-selling book about English orphaned child immigrants to Australia and the mistreatment they received in church homes and foundations. In this book he tackles the experiences of Jewish children rescued from Nazi Europe and brought to Australia in 1939 and 1940, as well as child survivors from concentration camps and ghettos who came in the years after 1945.

As well as Jewish children, he outlines the stories of those 'Dunera boys' who were still adolescents, and includes in the book Catholic youths like the Von Wolkensteins and also the Vienna Mozart Boys' Choir, who had to be at least nominally Catholic to be in the choir. In fact the book is dedicated to the two best known 'Dunera boys', the late Henry Lippmann, still alive at the time of publication, and the late Oswald von Wolkenstein, both interviewees for the book.

Oddly enough he includes Australian-born Justin Jones, father of Jeremy Jones, who was temporarily stuck in Wales with his brother Brian because their parents had opened a business there, among the 'rescued' children. In fact Gill's choice of interviewees is sometimes quirky. In the case of the children who arrived just before the war and who stayed at a home named Larino in Melbourne, the main informant was George Dreyfus, while the women in Sydney like Ingrid Naumburger and her sister Marion were ignored.

While the various groups of rescued children included, concentration camp survivors, and *kinder transport* children who initially went to England and only later to Australia, as well as the *Dunera* boys, the Vienna Mozart Boys' Choir, and Wolf Matsdorf's Gross Brezeners, the number of interviewees seems to be somewhat limited. For instance the Mozart Boys' Choir's Georg Tintner, born a Jew and later a well-known conductor, is not mentioned.

The lives of the rescued children are treated sympathetically and followed to adulthood and often to middle-age. It is made clear that the fate of the Jewish children brought to Australia involved better treatment from Jewish individuals and organisations than those gentile children about whom Gill has written previously. Welfare Guardians like Julian Rose, Sydney Einfeld, John Lewinnek and Wolf Matsdorf come in for a lot of praise from their former charges, and there is no hint of sexual abuse from the Jewish do-gooders.

There is a well-prepared index of names and places, copious footnotes, and a good bibliography which includes books by British,

American and Israeli writers, even Janina David who spent adolescent years in Melbourne and wrote a masterpiece about her childhood in the Wasaw Ghetto.

At the same time the book seems more a survey of the various categories of Jewish children rescued than in-depth research of the treatment accorded to them. But it will be useful for anyone who wants to get an overview of the fate of rescued Jewish and Catholic children who came to Australia without other family members just before and just after World War II.

Sophie Caplan

### MY THREE LIVES

*By Henry Pollack*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 2004, pp. 558, with 26 illustrations by Francis Giacco, numerous photographs, maps, documents and family trees.

Henry Pollack's book was launched in Sydney barely three weeks before he died. Like many authors of personal memoirs he wrote the book so that his grandchildren would learn about their family antecedents, and only later agreed to an edition of one thousand copies published. For that reason the book opens with four family trees, one each for his own and his wife's paternal and maternal branches. The first chapters detail both his and his wife's families of origin, all Eastern European.

Henry was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1922, after his Russian parents fled Minsk in 1919, the only surviving child of Maria Eliashoff and Salomon Polak. One of his mother's sisters married a Steinberg and their son was Dr Isaac Steinberg, one of the leading social revolutionaries in post-revolutionary Russia and two decades later the proponent of a Jewish state under British hegemony in the Australian Kimberleys during the second world war. Henry's family was full of quirky, adventurous aunts, uncles and cousins, and bright intellectuals. When Henry married Renee Goldberg, he became connected to another famous family in Australia. Her maternal uncle was Henry Krongold, a textile industrialist, developer, philanthropist, art collector and a leader of Melbourne Jewry.

In Australia, Henry changed the spelling of his name to Pollack. He had received a good education to matriculation level in Lodz, which included reading major literary magazines. When the Nazis marched into Poland in September 1939, his parents urged him to

flee to Vilnius and Kaunas in Lithuania where he had relatives. Later he came back to try and save them too, but they had fled to Warsaw and he did not find them. After several months he was saved by a visa from the celebrated Japanese consul Sugihara, which enabled him to travel via Moscow on the Trans-Siberian train to Vladivostok, and thence by ship via Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and the Dutch East Indies by ship to Australia. He has total recall of the vicissitudes he underwent and the story of that complicated trip, like the rest of the book, abounds in fascinating details. At that time, 1940 and 1941, he could still communicate with his parents in the Warsaw Ghetto and with a network of relatives in Kaunas, Moscow, Kobe, and in Canada and USA who were able to help his survival in various ways.

On the way to Australia he stopped for a time in Shanghai. Many times in his travels after leaving Lodz he was destitute and hungry. There were stopovers in Hong Kong and the Dutch East Indies where he enjoyed the hospitality of a well-to-do Sephardi Jewish family.

Arriving in Sydney in early 1942 he held a variety of basic jobs from telephonist to machinist to waiter and textile and farm worker and met his future wife when she was sixteen and he nineteen. They married young and opened two shops called Belle Star in Leichhardt, one on each corner of Catherine Street. Their combined good taste and his window-dressing skills made their shops landmarks in that area, as I knew in my teens.

Pollack decided to study in his thirties and had to do a year of Australian high school. He matriculated while his wife kept the shops going. Finally he decided to study architecture at the University of New South Wales. Even before graduation he worked in other architects' offices and eventually started his own firm. This became Mirvac, a development firm which became a by-word for quality and good taste, and possibly one of the leading development companies in NSW. The amount of development Mirvac did is amazing and its reputation for quality building projects gave it enormous prestige.

The story of his life, the many jobs he performed at which he earned a living, show Henry Pollack to have been a multi-talented and brilliant man. As a writer the wide variety of his interests in music, literature, geography and in other areas, make him a modern Renaissance man. He had a very happy marriage, two daughters, and two granddaughters. The illustrator Francis Giacco is his son-in-law.

The book is obtainable from the Sydney Jewish Museum for \$45.

Sophie Caplan

## ERRATA

- **The article in Vol XVI Part 4 on Max Lebanon (Mordechai Hevroni) — Teacher and Patentee by Morris S. Ochert and Miriam Lebanon Gavarin:**

Asher Smith has sent the following correction:

He was buried in Rookwood Cemetery grave 331, section 14 and not in Parramatta as stated at the end of the article.

- **The article in Vol XVII, Part 2 by Diana Encel 'From Country Town to City Community: Rose and Israel Samuel Hovev in Australia' has the following errors in the photo captions:**

p. 230 — the caption under the photograph should read:

From r to l, not from l to r as the names are in the reverse order.

p. 231 where my mother's name is wrong. She was Rose WEINTRAUB, as is clearly stated near the bottom of page 226.

- **The article in Vol XVII Part 3, on the Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism by Philip Mendes:**

p.386 — requires amendment, the attention of the Editors having been drawn to the paragraph hereunder by a letter from the family of the late Mr Maurice Ashkanasy:

The Council also prepared an internal, confidential anti-Ashkanasy memorandum, which outlined his political opposition to the Council, his alleged political opportunism including his friendship with Sir Robert Menzies, his personal anger towards Sam Cohen, and his alleged 'questionable business dealings'.

This last, obviously false allegation, clearly illustrates the tensions and hostility which existed between Ashkanasy and the members of the Jewish Council.'

In addition, the inference that Ashkanasy gained some political advantage from his life-long friendship with Menzies (with whom he studied at the bar) is a distortion created by the memorandum and is also false, since Ashkanasy was a member of the Labor Party, stood for election to parliament on a Labor ticket, and never sought or had a political affiliation with the Liberal Party.

No insult to the memory of the late Maurice Ashkanasy was intended by the author or the editors, and any unfortunate implications were the result of an attention lapse, and are regretted by all.

## OBITUARIES

### **DR RONALD MENDELSON OBE 1914–2005**

*Born 8 October 1914. Died 10 April 2005*

**R**onald Mendelsohn was one of the last of the generation to have helped lay the foundations for what used to be called 'the welfare state' in Australia. He spent more than 60 years thinking, writing and devising policy about practical matters of social welfare — pensions, housing, public education and superannuation. He called himself a 'socialist' for most of his adult life, although he spent the most important part of his career happily serving Liberal Prime Minister Robert Menzies. Dr Mendelsohn's political sensibilities grew out of his own experience of the Depression and the particular outlook of a Jewish intellectual, albeit one who grew up in Sydney rather than Berlin or Poland.

He recalled his childhood as unhappy. He got into Sydney's selective Fort Street High School as a small boy of 11, but was physically abused there and enjoyed little academic success. He was able to stay long enough to matriculate and was lucky enough to find a job in the Bank of New South Wales.

He loathed being a bank teller, but was encouraged to study economics at night at Sydney University. There his world opened up. He discovered that there were people trying to understand and repair the fractured world of the Depression, and these preoccupations became the kernel of his life's work. His own interests were never orthodox economics. One of his activities during his leisure time in the 1930s was studying and creating a photographic record of the slums of Sydney and Melbourne.

The Bank of NSW opened up the first economics unit of any bank in Australia and he joined it. He produced there a widely read circular on the economics of social welfare and this led to his being 'lent' by the bank's head, Sir Alfred Davidson, to the first Commonwealth Minister for Social Services, Sir Frederick Stewart. He was appointed research officer to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security in 1941 and wrote a report he often said was the most important writing he ever did. It led directly to the post-war Constitutional amendments, which clothed the Commonwealth with broad powers in the field of social welfare.

After this assignment he joined the wartime army to 'fight Hitler and his allies', but to his intense regret saw no active service. He was pulled out of the army into the newly formed Department of Post-War Reconstruction at the request of Dr H.C. (Nugget) Coombs, who had heard of his work on housing. From then until his retirement in the late 1970s, he was a Commonwealth public servant. He loved Canberra, though he was a critic of its 'heedless' spread.

In 1948 he received the first Commonwealth Scholarship to do a PhD abroad and completed his doctorate at the London School of Economics in the two years to 1950. The influential book he published in 1954 from the thesis was titled *Social Security in the British Commonwealth*. After his retirement, he returned to serious writing, publishing a number of books including *The Condition of the People: Social Welfare in Australia 1900 to 1975*, written during a period of some ten years at the Australian National University.

His most fulfilling professional time was co-ordinating social welfare policy initiatives in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet from 1951 to 1965. With a style that was direct and passionate, he encouraged debate and fostered the development of young public servants. He reminded them of history, strengthened their social conscience and reinforced their professional values. His most novel assignment was as an adviser to the Shah of Iran in 1960 to 1961: he was part of a Harvard Advisory Group and his brief was to draw up a scheme of social welfare for Iran. Needless to say, the scheme was never implemented.

Although he was never an orthodox Jew and even had serious doubts about the existence of the deity, Dr Mendelsohn became foundation president of the ACT Jewish Community in 1951. He was one of a group who worked to build the National Jewish Memorial Centre. He was particularly proud of the fact that, uniquely, both orthodox and progressive Jews shared the building and constituted a single community.

Dr Mendelsohn's wife of 56 years, Ruth, died in 1996 after a long illness, during which he cared for her with unwavering dedication. Years before, he suffered the loss of his daughter, Carola, at the age of 24. Characteristically, he met the loss of his daughter by establishing and becoming the first president of the ACT Cancer Society. He is survived by his son Oliver and his family, as well as two brothers.

Dr Mendelsohn had many interests (classical music, geraniums, photography, science fiction) and a large group of friends to the end; though he lamented that by the time he had reached 90 almost all his contemporaries were gone.

Bernard Freedman, Andrew Podger and Oliver Mendelsohn

**ANNE HOFFMAN 1922–2005**

*Born 15 August 1922. Died 21 May 2005*

**T**he Australian Jewish Historical Society was formed in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in 1984, with Earle Hoffman, the founding president. Since 1990, until her death in May 2005, his wife Anne also served as a committee member.

Anne Hoffman, born Anna Eshensky, was the daughter of Russian immigrants. Before the Bolshevik Revolution, her father Joshua, known to all as Isaac, fled across Russia to avoid being conscripted into the Czarist army. Accompanying him was his young bride Stacia (Simpkin). The couple traversed what was then a common escape route via the Trans-Siberian railway to Harbin, China. Some years later they took ship to this continent, quitting the vessel at its first Australian port of call, Brisbane.

Isaac was a successful tailor. He opened a factory that made men's garments, the Sunderland Clothing Company. The business prospered and Isaac was able to build a good life for his family in their new country. Isaac and Stacia became prominent members of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation. Anne was their fourth and last child, sister to Rose, Bill and Henry. In this happy environment Anne learnt family values and the skills that were to prove so beneficial throughout her long life.

Growing up in a small community, Anne Eshensky and Earle Hoffman attended Cheder together. Anne graduated from the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School and entered Queensland University. There her affection for Earle blossomed into a romance that never diminished through sixty years of marriage. Her medical studies were left behind in favour of a life dedicated to her husband and children, and later her extended family.

They were married on 5 December 1944 at the Margaret Street Synagogue and initially settled in Kangaroo Point. Their son David was born the following year. In 1948, Earle's profession in the then new field of agricultural economics took the young family to Canberra. The National Capital was little more than a country town with an acute housing shortage. The following year, while the family was living at the Hotel Acton, their daughter Adele was born.

Over the next five years Anne and Earle became involved in Canberra's emerging Jewish community, starting with the regular

sharing of Passover Seders with other families, especially with Ron and Ruth Mendelsohn and Kurt and Isley Gottlieb.

Anne always gave support to Earle in his public service career, as well as to his dedicated commitment to the ACT Jewish community over many years. Anne regularly extended hospitality to visitors each Friday night, especially during Earle's presidency of the community. Even today, people recall how Anne welcomed them to Canberra with a meal at her Shabbat table in the very early and often cheerless days of their arrival.

In recording their memories, Mervyn and Sue Doobov described Anne as 'amongst those people who took the first and hardest steps leading to the existence of the Jewish Community in Canberra'. Anne's and Earle's life-long contributions to the ACT Jewish Community were recognised in 1979 when they were made honorary life members.

Anne was an active and valuable contributor to the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) over the formative years of the community, and also to the activities of the Ladies Guild when it was set up. She served as the second president of NCJW (ACT), and as its inaugural secretary, as well as holding office as a committee member. She also played a prominent part in the establishment of the early communal Seders, first at the Country Women's Association hut in Civic, then at Turner Primary School and later at Telopea Park High School, before the building of the National Jewish Memorial Centre. In her capacity as an NCJW member, Anne also delivered Meals on Wheels to those in need in the wider community. Another organisation in which Anne was enthusiastically involved since 1975 was the Women's International Club.

Of lasting impact have been their generous tangible donations to the ACT Jewish Community. In 1971 when the National Jewish Memorial Centre was opened, Anne gave the *Ner Tamid* (the Eternal Light), and a beautiful set of silver breastplate and bells, fashioned in Israel. These were presented in memory of her parents who had both died the year before. The bells and breastplate now adorn a *Sefer Torah* that Earle presented to the Community in 1993 in honour of Anne.

Theirs was a traditional family with Earle as the breadwinner and Anne as the homemaker. Anne was a woman of her time, looking on house-keeping and child rearing as a vocation. She was a skillful needlewoman, a brilliant knitter, and adept at many other crafts, leaving behind beautiful pieces of work which will be treasured. She was an excellent cook, played a good hand of social bridge, and she and Earle enjoyed attending theatre and ballet performances. She was always well informed and up to date on politics and current affairs.

Anne outlived her brothers. Her sister Rose is now a resident at the Montefiore Home in Sydney. Rose's husband Bill died only a few days after Anne. Rose and Bill had been married for 67 years.

As well as her son and daughter, Anne leaves behind five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She will be remembered with love for her generous and warm personality.

Adele Rosalky (née Hoffman), David Hoffman

## **GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES**

**T**his list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until May 2005. If you did not initiate the enquiry but would like to add information, please write to our genealogist at 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW, 2008.

**BRAND, Jacob (Jack).** Born London 1857, married Miriam Sions 1909, died Sydney 1848. Arrived 1880s, exported furs and hides. Seeking descendants.

**BRAUN/BROWN, Charles.** Born Riga, 1861. Arrived in the 1860s. Seeking evidence of Jewish ancestry.

**COHEN, David.** Married Estelle Beatrice Cohen, who was born 1876 and died 1939. They had 4 children and divorced. Seeking details of their marriage.

**CONWAY JACOBS, Lewis.** Born c.1828, died Sydney 1891. Married Ailsie Harris. Seeking information on parents and siblings.

**FREUDENSTEIN, Martin.** Born Kurhessen, Germany 1834. Died in Young 1908. Arrived in early 1850s and went to goldfields as a musician. Seeking ancestry.

**FRIEDER, Helene and Geza,** children Margarit and Robert, escaped from Vienna and arrived Sydney in 1940s. Seeking descendants.

**HART, Esther.** Arrived Sydney from London 1840 with father, Lewis Hart. Married Moss Marks, died 1914. Seeking information on maternal family.

**HART, Mark.** Married Blanche Julia Levy, Sydney, 1883. Children: Henry, Rachel, Sarah, Stella, Hannah. Seeking descendants.

**ISAACS, George Samuel.** Born London c.1825 died Adelaide 1876. Writer and editor. Information on family background sought by Anne Black.

**JONAS, Benjamin.** Born Ballarat 1870, son of Isaac and Esther née Cortissos. Seeking descendants.

**JONAS, Benjamin,** accountant, 10 West Ave, Subdivision of West Darlinghurst, 1930. Seeking any connection with Benjamin Jonas above.

- LAWRENCE, Samuel Philip. Born SA 1860 to Elinor (née Solomon) and Morris Lawrence. Children Elizabeth, Morris, Julius and Josephine. Seeking descendants.
- LEVINSOHN, Hyman. Married Annie Levy 1884, Sydney. May have moved to NZ. Seeking descendants.
- MARKS, Benjamin. Pawnbroker in Melbourne. Instrumental in commencing rolling mills with Enoch Hughes in 1860. Possible connection to Marks and Cohen firm. Seeking information on business connections and family.
- MEYER, Elliott. Married Jane Levy, 1870, NZ; died 1910, Sydney. Seeking descendants.
- PHILLIPS, Rev. Abraham Phillip, first officiating minister of Brisbane's Margaret St Synagogue. Married Rachel Aarons. Died Ipswich, 1914. Seeking information on his family.
- ROTHOUSE, Victoria. Maiden name Levy. Married Joseph Rothouse, 1898, widowed; married Theodore Lenneberg 1908. Sister of Jane, Kathleen, Blanche, Annie, Frances, Esther. Seeking Rothouse descendants.
- SAMUEL, Eric. Born Germany, arrived Sydney 1930s.
- MEYER, Elliott. Married Jane Levy, 1870, NZ, died 1910, Sydney. Seeking descendants.
- SAMUEL, Rudolph, born 1874, married Frances Alexander, 1911. Brother Stanley Samuel; parents Charles Samuel and Kathleen (née Levy). Seeking descendants and information on siblings.
- SCHICK, Theodore Frederick. Born Thuringia, Germany 1854. Arrived on *Corea*(?) 1879. Seeking earlier history.

## **NEW MEMBERS 2004–5**

### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Barbara Bloch  
Garry Davis  
Jeanette Dietch  
Dr. John Goldberg  
J. Johnston**

### **NEW ZEALAND**

**Nigel Isaacs**

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Raymond Apple**, AO, RFD, LLB, MPhil, senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for 30 years, lecturer in Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney and Jewish Law at the University of NSW. He is Master of Mandelbaum House at Sydney University. He is a past president of the Organisation of Rabbis of Australasia and of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. He holds office in the Council of Christians and Jews and many other public bodies. In freemasonry, he is past grand chaplain of the United Grand Lodge of NSW and ACT.

**Ian Bersten**, B.Com (Ecs), born in North Sydney, a descendant of convict Mordecai Moses, was the first Barmitzvah at North Shore Synagogue, Lindfield, in the old house. He is a collector of Jewish books and is interested in Jewish history and continuity. He is also the spokesperson for the Jewish Secular Humanistic Community in Sydney.

**Sandra Bullon**, Eldest grandchild of Peter Lazarus, carried out most of the research into her grandfather's early life.

**Sophie Caplan**, OAM, BA, Dip Ed, MEd (Hons), a child survivor, has worked in both Australian Jewish history and Holocaust history. She is an oral historian who interviews survivors and prewar refugees and lectured on the Shoah at the University of NSW. In 1991 she founded the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society. Her work has been published in anthologies and journals in English, French and German.

**Colin Choat**, BBus, is an accountant and computer programmer. He first became interested in family history and Australian Jewish History as a result of his sister's research of the family history. He recently prepared an electronic index of the AJHS Journals, from

the published paper indexes. This index may be viewed and searched at the Society's web site.

**Morris Forbes, OAM, BA, LLB, Fellow of the AJHS Inc, previous past president and editor of the *AJHS Journal* and patron of the AJHS.**

**Keith Lazarus, MBBS, eldest son of Peter Lazarus, graduated from medicine and served the Australian army in New Guinea during World War II. He wrote the biography of his father with other members of the family.**

**Cecil Lazarus, Younger son of Peter Lazarus, now retired after a successful career in business for more than forty years.**

**Barbara Linz, BA, has been a student of Dr. Suzanne Rutland and Professor Konrad Kwiet while doing a Masters in Holocaust Studies at Sydney University.**

**Keira Quinn Lockyer. Since giving up full time work in tourism and hospitality, Sydney born but Victorian based Keira Quinn Lockyer has been researching nineteenth century personalities and is currently working with Oxford based Jewish historian, Harold Pollins, on the life of Australian conductor Gustave Slapoffski. She chose to write this piece about her great uncle in honour of the 90th anniversary of Gallipoli and Lone Pine and as part of a family history on the Keyzors.**

**Julie Morris is a retired schoolteacher. She was involved with the Girl Guides Association for 50 years, and with National Council of Jewish Women as Archivist and Chairman of the North Shore Group.**

**Russell Stern, BA. LLM, is honorary treasurer to the Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc.**

**Helen Whitmont (nee Bloom), BA. (Psych) is a retired psychotherapist, was secretary of the Jewish Maternity Society for many years, married to Milton Jack Whitmont with two daughters.**

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