

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL. XVIII 2007



PART 4

**AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
JOURNAL**

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

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Australian Jewish history suffered a grievous blow in January 2007. The extraordinary, indeed totally unique, Gurewicz Archive was sold to an overseas dealer in Judaica.

The dealer, who lives in New York, has dismembered the collection in order to remove some 500 autograph letters and other documents. He has refused to reveal his identity, except to the vendor, and he cannot be contacted. This venal act occurred despite a warning from the Federal Department of the Environment and Heritage that to remove even part of the archive overseas would constitute an offence under a section of the law that protects our past, *The Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*, the penalties for which include a fine or imprisonment.

It is believed that some of the ravaged remnants of this Carlton-based archive may still be in Melbourne, but they are unavailable to scholarship. No attempt was made to sell the complete archive to individuals or organisations in Australia before the dealer had purchased it – thus no opportunity was given to any of those organisations within our community who would have preserved it for posterity and scholarship.

An offer to allow the AJHS to scan the contents of the archive, made before the dealer returned to carry off his purchase, was suddenly withdrawn three days later. Nevertheless, we have some idea of the contents of this archive – not only does it contain a record of the activities of the saintly scholar Rabbi Joseph Lippman Gurewicz from his arrival in early 1930s Carlton, but it is a personal record of the people who comprised the observant immigrant Carlton community and their children.

It records the ideological battles, the fractious, often hostile, interactions between this 'Vilna Gaon' of Carlton and his largely Anglo-Jewish antagonists south of the Yarra.

Such is the stuff of real history: a treasure trove of source material that illuminates the gulf between ultra- and semi-orthodoxy in a pre-war setting. Notably, it records the activities of Gurewicz in working with committees and organisations to assist immigrants settle into the community, before and after the war.

But the archive was much, much, more than this. Reb Gurewicz received literally hundreds of letters in the years up to 1940 from rabbis, yeshivot, scholars, friends and relatives across Europe, begging him to apply on their behalf for sanctuary in Australia as they became aware of their approaching doom. The letters were from famous rabbonim and the humble alike, united only in their knowledge that Rabbi Gurewicz had been a prodigy, and was now a scholar and rabbi with an international reputation in far-off Melbourne. In every case he did what he could

to save these individuals, families and communities. Sometimes he succeeded, and many Australian families today owe their very existence to his efforts. More usually he failed, and those precious letters, with their heart-breaking messages, are the last testament of the victims.

Given that the Australian Jewish experience has been recorded from the moment the first Jews landed in 1788, we have only ever bestowed slight or, at best, moderate importance on the preservation of that record. Many have been the books, letters, records, artefacts and ephemera that have been stolen, lost, misplaced, or purloined. Many of our records have been damaged by water, insects, bacteria and fungi, due to neglect, ignorance, or wanton damage by those who did not consider the future. We are also reminded of the inscribed silver yad, sold by a Melbourne rabbi to a dealer in Jerusalem, and now restored to its congregation. There was the Sefer Torah taken from Ballarat to Israel by visiting yeshiva students to 'save' it, and the early register of Ballarat births marriages and deaths that we were able to have returned from interstate. There were the very early correspondence books, 'saved' from the neglect of the congregation that owned them and left in possession of another synagogue. The Crown Grant of land, giving the first burial ground to the Melbourne Jewish community, was found in possession of the London family of a former Melbourne rabbi, and was with difficulty eventually restored to the rightful owner. A Sefer Torah donated by Sir Moses Montefiore was misplaced and forgotten for nearly 100 years before being rediscovered interstate. There are Chevra Kadisha documents in private hands. Many will remember the theft of ritual silver stolen from Melbourne synagogues and melted down, and the human soap stolen from the Aron Kodesh and thrown into the Elwood canal. The list is longer, and includes the synagogue archives kept in basements and under floor boards, subjected to vermin and damp and even periodic flooding from faulty hydrant systems.

The late English historian, Rabbi Dr Harry Rabinowicz, often writing in the *Jewish Chronicle*, lamented the breaking up of highly important British Jewish archives and collections. They were invariably sold to fabulously wealthy American institutions, but such sales undermined Anglo-Jewry's literary and historical heritage. He was deeply saddened by the loss of Jews' College's most valuable Hebraica in a Sotheby's sale, the loss by sale of amazing eighteenth-century items from the Board of Deputies, the loss of the Israel Solomon collection, the Elkan Adler library, and the Strauss, Goldschmidt, Sanders and Bornstein collections. He wrote a whole article on the loss of the Dr David Mowshowitch collection of some 13,000 documents, rapidly sold by the latter's widow just after his death, to YIVO. The Solomon David Sassoon collection of rare manuscripts contained many items nearly 1000 years old, and it was scattered all over the world following a series of sales by Sotheby's.

At least there is the consolation that the documents and collections lamented by Rabinowicz had been described and catalogued, and virtually all ended up in

known collections that made them available for scholarship despite the fact that these great collections were removed from the scholars who most needed them. We were denied the opportunity to catalogue, describe or index the Gurewicz archive before the eyes were picked out of it, and now it will never be available for scholarship. We have no idea where the remnants are, nor who has them. It has indeed been a grievous blow.

This issue of the *Journal* covers a broad spectrum. It includes a forensic archaeological investigation of the original Jewish cemetery in Hobart Town, now the site of public housing. An appreciation is given of Joseph Plottel, the Melbourne architect whose legacy is found in several locations, and includes two highly important synagogues.

The truly remarkable saga of the missing wartime Graff family letters, and their contents, almost defies belief. The complex and richly detailed story of the Crawcour family is the result of years of research by the author and his father. The article on *shechita*, ritual Jewish killing, is suddenly and unfortunately quite topical, as the subject is again in the public eye.

Also topical, we include a highly important essay on the acutely controversial, even confounding, issue of Messianic Jews in Australia. It is based on recent work by Dr Dvir Abramovich, and is sure to raise a few eyebrows. Dvir has indicated that he will continue the subject with future articles in the *Journal*.

The editors once more express gratitude to the tireless and always obliging publisher, Louis de Vries, director of Hybrid Publishers, and to our excellent honorary secretary, Liz James, for all she does.

Dr Howard A. Freeman (Editor)

Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein (Associate Editor)

# HARRINGTON STREET CEMETERY

*Parry Kostoglou*

## **Author's note**

The hasty exhumation of 40 historic burials at the former Harrington Street Jewish cemetery in February 2002 will remain one of the more conspicuous acts of human ignorance in the recent history of the City of Hobart. The apparent complicity of so many government instrumentalities in giving sanction to the despoilment of Australia's oldest Jewish cemetery is a remarkable testimony to the failure of the city's various planning bodies. The damage to significant material remains seems unfortunate enough. However, the loss of a unique opportunity to identify the occupants of all those otherwise anonymous graves seems infinitely more melancholy.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to acknowledge the participation of the following people during the completion of this job. Ms Denise Gaughwin astutely gauged the site's immense significance and was instrumental in getting unqualified exhumation work stopped. Mr. Paul Gray of Housing Tasmania provided every assistance required in a most affable manner and proved a very quick minded student in matters osteological! After finally realising the great fund of knowledge being put at risk, members of the Hobart Jewish community including Messrs. David Clark, Peter Elias and Ms. Caroline Heard provided some timely historical information and on site liaison with the pathologist. Staff from the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha cemetery led by Mr. Ephraim Finch assisted with exhumations and further expedited all re-burials at Cornelian Bay cemetery. Ms. Letitia Carter proved a most timely and efficient forensic pathologist while the staff at the Archives Office of Tasmania provided their usual impeccable assistance.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project background

Housing Tasmania is currently re-developing a substantial property at 214 Harrington Street that historically served as a cemetery for Hobart's Jewish community between 1828–1871. The current development required extensive sub-surface excavation as part of site preparation works, and during the course of this activity, human burials were uncovered by the demolition contractors. The contractors then implemented a 'human remains' protocol previously negotiated with members of Hobart's Jewish community. Essentially this protocol required the contractors to remove human remains under the supervision of an officer from the Public and Environmental Health Service Unit (PEHSU) and a representative of the Jewish community. Shortly after the exhumations commenced, members of the State's Heritage Committee voiced concern about the lack of any formalised documentation of the former cemetery site with special reference to its resident human remains. Exhumation work was eventually halted to allow this documentation to occur, and this consultant was duly contracted to undertake the work. As the client was particularly concerned about the likelihood of encountering further human remains, the consultant was required to provide an estimate of further interment numbers and make recommendations regarding their treatment. This consultant subsequently calculated that a minimum of between 5 and 15 burials still occupied the site, requiring the client to allow the total mechanised excavation of the site under the direct supervision of this consultant in association with a qualified forensic pathologist to undertake any requisite analysis of newly discovered human remains.

This second and final report accordingly documents the findings of both the initial un-supervised excavation phase and the second professionally expedited exhumations at the Harrington Street site.

### 1.2 Objectives

The stated objectives of this second burial related work phase negotiated between this consultant, Housing Tasmania and representatives of Hobart's Jewish Community included:

- The total excavation of the site as defined and required by the archaeologist.
- The exhumation of all human remains by the archaeologist.
- The examination and analysis of all exhumed remains by a forensic pathologist.

- The removal and re-interment of all such human remains under the supervision of representatives of Hobart's Jewish Community.
- The authorship of a report detailing all findings made by the archaeologist and forensic pathologist and any further recommendations deemed appropriate by this consultant.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The second phase of exhumation work at the Harrington Street property commenced with a four day program of mechanised excavation at this site during which all the top soil was removed in 5 metre wide strips/corridors in order to expose burial silhouettes resident in the clay layer beneath. All such silhouettes or other suspicious irregularities in the resident soil units were then mechanically excavated until the uppermost layer of coffin timber was exposed. The confirmed burial was then hand excavated by the archaeologist and fully exposed. Various attributes were then noted and the *in situ* skeleton photographed prior to its removal. All bones were removed by the archaeologist and checked off so that none were inadvertently forgotten. These remains were then removed for inspection by the forensic pathologist who presented a written summary of all findings for each individual skeleton including its sex, approximate age at death and any signs of trauma. After the completion of this analytical work, the remains were finally removed to the Cornelian Bay cemetery for re-interment under religious supervision. Two days were then spent in State Archives attempting to locate further documentation that might assist in the identification of individual burials. This final report was then authored over the remaining eight day period.

### **1.4 Constraints**

There were two principal constraints that influenced the outcome of the second phase of this works program.

#### **Very incomplete forensic analysis of skeletal remains**

This consultant had intended to obtain accurate sex, age and trauma data for all 52 sets of exhumed burial remains in order to compare these to written records and hopefully identify as many individuals as possible. Unfortunately, the extremely untimely invocation of religious law without any prior notice saw the original 40 sets of exhumed remains re-interred at Cornelian Bay Cemetery without any professional scientific examination. No age and sex determinants were therefore obtained for 80 per cent of the sample. This factor has been the principal constraint on achieving any meaningful analysis of the exhumed remains and has weighed heavily on this consultant because as yet none can be given back their identities.

## **Finite historic research**

Due to the extremely incomplete and often contradictory nature of historic burial records relating to this cemetery, the consultant was unable to complete all the burial specific investigations deemed necessary in order to successfully identify at least some of the more characteristic sets of human remains. Unfortunately any such marriage of historic records with physical remains must await a more rigorous and far more labour intensive search of historic burial/inquest records.

## **1.5 Summary of results**

In completing this works program, the consultant has:

- Correctly identified the approximate number and location of previously un-provenanced burials.
- Carried out a sufficiently thorough excavation of the site so as to minimise the likelihood of any further remains continuing to reside on site.
- Carried out the best practice exhumation of these remains.
- Obtained accurate data on the gender and age of these remains.
- Obtained further information relating to illness, trauma and possible cause of death of some of the deceased.
- Sought with very limited success to establish the actual identifies of the deceased persons exhumed during both phases of work at the Harrington Street site.
- Produced a succinct and technically credible record of all archaeological material recovered from this site during this works program that can be used by future researchers.
- Made a list of recommendations for further private research relating to the former Jewish cemetery and its occupants.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made in regard to the former Jewish cemetery at Harrington Street.

### **2.1 Recording of historic headstones situated in adjacent properties**

The discovery of numerous intact head stones and related fragments situated on adjacent private allotments was made during the exhumation program. Even a cursory examination of these at some distance indicated that several possess inscriptions and other decorations. Ideally these should be recorded photographically and any inscriptions transcribed.

### **2.2 Re-acquisition of historic headstones**

Given the undoubted identity and high cultural significance of these head stones, it is further recommended by this consultant that all such intact or inscribed head stone fragments should be re-acquired by the Jewish community and re-incorporated into any planned commemorative monument relating to the cemetery and its former occupants.

### **2.3 Further historic research of Jewish burials**

The research of historic Jewish deaths for the purposes of burial identification unfortunately proved extremely frustrating and inconclusive. Therefore, several sets of remains with quite characteristic signs of trauma that would have required an autopsy and/or inquest remain unidentified. Despite such failure, this consultant remains optimistic that some of these characteristic burials could ultimately be identified given further perusal of historic documentation. Such success might in turn lead to the additional identification of neighbouring remains if a burial pattern based on other credible documentation can be established. This consultant therefore endorses and encourages further privately initiated research on all historic records pertaining to the deaths of Jewish persons in Hobart between 1828 and 1871.

### **2.4 Construction related discovery of bones**

The final construction phase at Windsor Court scheduled for the final months of 2002 may discover further human remains in the same locality (note that in section 5.2 the consultant raises the likelihood that up to 3 sets of remains are statistically likely to still occur at the site). As such, any discovery of bone material during construction must be reported to the Heritage Council immediately.

## **2.5 Further burial related research**

In the distant future, there may be a sufficient groundswell of interest in the historic Jewish community of Hobart for further research to be undertaken on the identification of the exhumed remains now resident at Cornelian Bay. Given that this consultant has been assured by members of the Jewish community that all 50 re-interments were buried with the numbers allocated to them on site for location related purposes, there is the potential to undertake further individual specific analysis if and when required by the community.

### 3.0 HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The story of the Jewish Cemetery at Harrington street, ultimately began in 1788, when a Viennese Jew residing in England named Bernard Walford, was caught stealing a basket of laundry in Petticoat Lane and sentenced to transportation for life. Arriving on the third fleet, Walford married and ran a successful farm on Norfolk Island before re-settling along with a large percentage of that island's population in New Norfolk, Van Diemen's Land. After successfully running a 90 acre farm, he moved to Hobart Town and served variously as a baker and tavern keeper. By the 1820s, Bernard Walford was a successful member of the community with sufficient influence to seek a favour from the Lieutenant Governor, George Arthur. Now nearing the end of his life, Walford asked the Lieutenant Governor for a grant of land upon which to establish a Jewish cemetery. Arthur assented readily enough and the Hobart Town Courier subsequently reported:

*Burial Ground For the Jews.* The want of a burial ground for the Jews has long been felt by the inhabitants of Hobart Town, professing that religion, and we have much pleasure in stating, that Mr. Bernard Walford, Senior, has at last taken the matter up, and has presented a memorial on the subject, in behalf of his brethren in that persuasion, to the Lieutenant Governor, praying for a piece of land to be appropriated for that purpose. His Excellency, we understand, has in the most handsome manner, cheerfully given his consent, and last week, a piece of ground was allotted off by the Surveyor General, contiguous to that already occupied by the Roman Catholics.

When Bernard Walford died on 20 September 1828, he became the first occupant of the newly surveyed 1.5 acre allotment. Mr Walford's legacy however proved even more substantial as the hundred strong Jewish population began to re-establish other customs and traditions, including the first Jewish wedding in 1833. A decade later, the 1842 census showed that 259 Jews now comprised a part of the total population of 42,000. Sufficiently emboldened by their growing numbers and prosperity, the Hobart Jewish community commenced work on the construction of a synagogue on land provided by the community's principal benefactor, Judah Solomon. Despite, the colonial government's failure to provide any financial assistance as custom dictated, the synagogue was completed and duly consecrated on July 4th, 1845.

The following decade's Victorian Gold Rush saw a sharp decline in the Colony's population, and this appears to have been further reflected in Jewish census statistics also. In addition to emigration related attrition, the Hobart Jewish community lost several of its most notable citizens that decade, including Isaac (Ikey) Solomon, the celebrated criminal, considered by many

literary historians to be the inspiration for the Dickensian character Fagan in *Oliver Twist*. Community elder Judah Solomon also passed away in February, 1856. Another census undertaken in 1861, indicate that the Jewish community numbered 195 people at this time.

For several years public agitation for the closure of Hobart's inner city cemeteries had been growing as public health concerns identified these poorly drained localities as 'Plague Spots'. Demands for an all denominational public cemetery outside the city limits culminated in legislation tabled in 1870 which provided for the closure of all existing cemeteries within three months after the opening of the new public cemetery. With an 8000 pound budget, the State government established the Cornelian Bay public cemetery in 1872, and all burial grounds within Hobart were soon closed, including the Jewish site at Harrington Street. Henceforth all Jewish dead would be interred in a 'Jewish section' at the new cemetery. In 1894, the descendents of Judah Solomon had his remains removed from the closed Harrington street cemetery to a family plot at Cornelian Bay. The following year, a member of the Society of Friends, William Henry Dawson, visited the cemetery and transcribed all of the legible head stones and monuments.

Despite their closure, the city's old cemeteries still posed a Public Health risk and a new movement was begun to reclaim this land for public purposes. By 1901, the City Council was investigating this issue, and a newspaper article from January that year noted the results of several cemetery inspections made by its members: 'Alderman Gould said that the only closed cemetery in Hobart that remained in a decent condition was the Jews. Of the others, the Anglican cemetery was in a bad condition, and the graves of two former governors were a disgrace to the city. The places should be levelled off, the tombstones removed, and the places turned into pleasure resorts... Alderman Benjamin said that a man was paid to look after the Jewish burial place. As to the other denominations, he thought they would do better to keep their cemeteries in order and pay respect to their dead than send money out of the country for foreign missions ...'

In 1902 an inspecting City Health Officer likewise praised the condition of the Jewish cemetery, stating that: 'No effort has been spared to keep ever sacred the memories of those buried there. Tombstones are well cared for, and the ground presents the appearance of a soft green lawn.' Another newspaper article that same year noted the modest and Spartan quality of the cemetery, stating that: 'Neither graves nor monuments are numerous in the little cemetery. Save for the Hebrew characters on some of the headstones, one might imagine himself at first glance in a Catholic burial-ground.'

Between 1916 and 1919, the newly re-convened 'Hobart Closed Burial ground Committee' once again investigated various options for the re-use of disused cemeteries before ultimately recommending the conversion of these sites into public parks. Probably due to its modest size and somewhat steep location, the Jewish cemetery did not suffer this fate. However, some years previously

in c1910, the old cemetery property had been sub-divided, with the grave occupied section on the southern summit excised from the greater bulk of the block to the north. This could be interpreted as the earliest overt intention to re-develop the site. In 1945, the Education Department presumably purchased the site off the Jewish Community, although there is no known record of any such transaction. An act of parliament titled the Jewish Cemetery (Vesting) Act, 1945 likewise saw all rights of ownership pass to the Crown.

In 1952, the Genealogical Society of Tasmania visited the derelict cemetery site and in what turned out to be a very timely exercise, transcribed all the resident tomb stones. In c1954, the Education Department re-considered its plans for the property and instead sold it to the Housing Department. Preparatory to their planned housing development on the site, the Housing Department sought advice on the matter of remaining head stones. In a letter from the Education Department, they were advised that:

the stones at present on the site are of no use to anyone with the exception of the one marked “Barney (sic)Walford which is required by Mr. Jacob of the Jewish Congregation”.

With apparent approval from the local Jewish community, the site was accordingly cleared of head stones and work was begun on the construction of a 105 unit public housing facility titled ‘Windsor Court’, in 1957. No mass exhumations appear to have been undertaken from the old cemetery site during this period, although some disturbance to remains would have been inevitable given the scale of the construction work. Garden beds and clothes lines were installed throughout the remainder of the old cemetery site, and the facility served as Hobart’s major high density public housing complex until its closure in c2001.

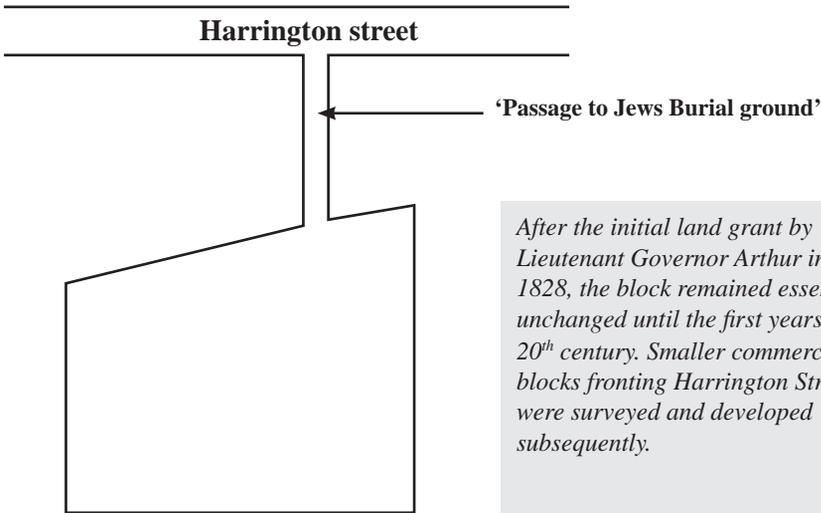
## Notes

1. *Hobart Town Courier*. 24 May 1829.
2. *Mercury*, 22 January, 1901.
3. *A guide to Hobart’s historic cemeteries and burial grounds*. No. 7. Jewish Burial ground.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Letter from Education Dept. to Housing Dept. dated 7 November 1955. Held by Housing Tasmania.

## 4.0 SCHEMATIC SUMMARY OF CEMETERY SITE DEVELOPMENT

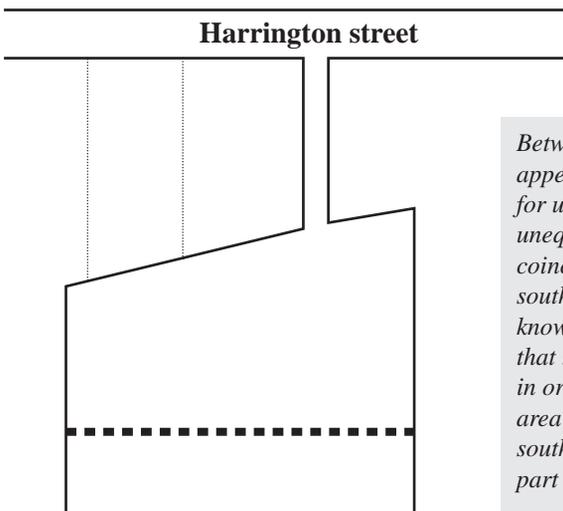
This section visually summarises the development of the cemetery block over time between 1828 and 2002.

### 4.1 Original cemetery grant (1828)



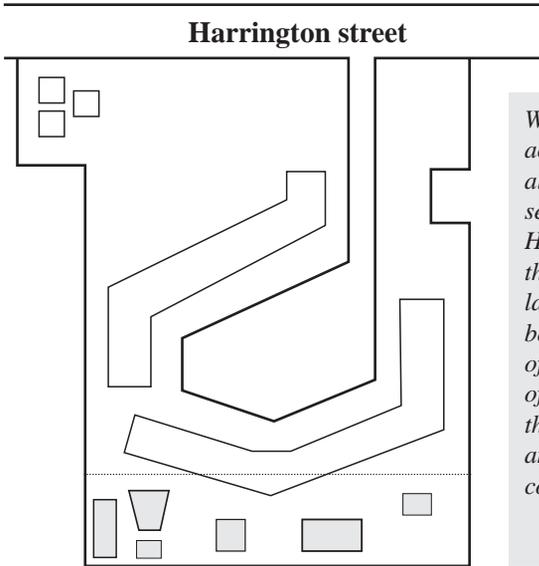
*After the initial land grant by Lieutenant Governor Arthur in 1828, the block remained essentially unchanged until the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Smaller commercial blocks fronting Harrington Street were surveyed and developed subsequently.*

### 4.2 Possible sub-division (c1905–1945)



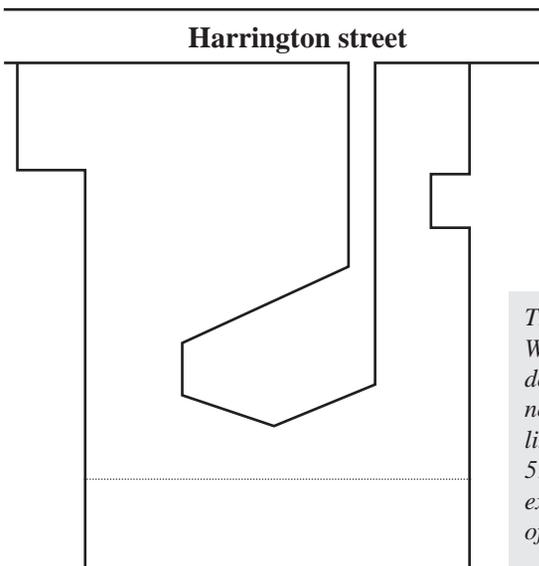
*Between 1900 and 1910, the block appears to have been subdivided for unknown purposes into two unequal lots. There is an uncanny coincidence between the smaller southern block and the location of known burials, which would imply that the subdivision was undertaken in order to separate the small area containing burials along the southern boundary from the greater part of the allotment to the north.*

### 4.3 Windsor Court development (1955)



*When the Housing Department acquired the 1.3 acre cemetery allotment, it also bought the separate titled allotments fronting Harrington Street and consolidated these into a single title. The private laneway accessing the cemetery now became a gazetted 'court'. Removal of the headstones and demolition of street-side buildings preceded the establishment of gardens and construction of the 4 blocks comprising Windsor Court.*

### 4.4 Windsor Court re-development (2002)



*The latest re-development of the Windsor Court property has seen the demolition of all standing structures north of the historic demarcation line. Furthermore, the remains of 51 deceased persons have been exhumed from the area to the south of this line.*

## 5.0 SUMMARY OF BURIAL NUMBERS

This section summarises the most recent/final estimates of the number of persons probably interred at the Harrington Street cemetery between 1828 and 1871 based on the following sources.

Source	Number predicted	Comments
Historic census records	195	Many of these persons would have emigrated and died elsewhere.
Jewish births register	121	Ditto.
Jewish burial register	45	This list is very selective and incomplete.
Jewish synagogue list	59	This list is known to be incomplete.
Jewish marriages register	47 (x2)	Only factors in adults.
Dawson headstone transcriptions	35	Very selective. Only legible or interesting headstones copied/counted.
TAMEOT transcriptions	46	Many stones broken/lost by this time.

### 5.1 Various sources

#### Historic census records

Although census records only indicate numbers of the living, they do indicate the numbers of people in a given population professing a separate faith such as Hebrew religion. This data can therefore be used to estimate the potential population of the cemetery if the approximate number of people residing in Hobart is known. The peak Jewish population in the late 1840s of 452 persons of which at least half (226 people) would be expected to have resided in the colony's capital. Another census states that in 1861, Hobart's Jewish community was 195. This declined markedly over the next thirty years. In 1891 only 49 persons were said to be residing in Hobart.

#### The Jewish births register (1835–1862)

This historic register of births kept by the Jewish Community of Hobart lists 121 newborn persons between 9 May 1835 and 28 May 1862. These occupy three completed paired pages. This register is catalogued as NS 829/2 at the State Archives Office of Tasmania.

### **Jewish burial register (1844–1863)**

This historic register of deaths kept by the Jewish Community of Hobart lists 45 deceased persons between 18 August 1844 and 17 March 1863. Curiously the list ends on an almost empty page, yet there is no other known deaths register that continued this documentation. This register is catalogued as NS 829/1 at the State Archives Office of Tasmania. In addition to any lack of documentation after 1863, this register obviously fails to document earlier burials prior to 1844. We know that Mr Walford for example died in 1828 and was the first burial at the Jewish cemetery.

### **Jewish synagogue list (1956)**

This list of deceased persons buried at the old ‘Old Jewish Burial Ground, Harrington Street, Hobart’ appears on a Memorial Board hanging on the stairway at the Hobart Synagogue. It lists the names of 59 persons and the years of their deaths. Somewhat poignantly, the date of dedication for this Memorial board is 4 March 1956, which is shortly after the Windsor Court development. This might imply that the Jewish Community felt that this was the best/only way of remembering those interred at the former cemetery once that construction had occurred on the cemetery site.

### **The Jewish Marriages register (1840–1883)**

This historic register of marriages kept by the Jewish Community lists 47 marriages between 6 June 1840 and 10 January 1883. Blank pro-forma marriage entry boxes appearing after the final completed one have been stamped CANCELLED. This register is catalogued as NS 829/1 at the State Archives Office of Tasmania.

### **The Dawson headstone transcriptions (1895)**

This volume of headstone inscriptions transcribed in 1895 by William Henry Dawson included those from both Methodist (Wesleyan) and Jewish cemeteries. Catalogued separately, the Jewish transcriptions total 35 persons. Obviously, this number relates to the number of legible inscriptions Mr Dawson found at the cemetery, rather than the number of occupants interred there.

### **The TAMEOT headstone transcriptions (1952?)**

This first ‘Register of Tombstone and Memorial Inscriptions of Tasmania’ was evidently compiled in c1952. Certainly there are 46 entries from the ‘Old Hobart Jewish Burial Ground’ indicating that this work was undertaken prior to the Windsor Court development. These listings were subsequently added to the second edition of 1999.

### **Cornelian Bay cemetery**

Cornelian Bay cemetery was checked for further information. The Jewish section at that cemetery yielded the headstones/remains of up to 7 persons formerly interred at Harrington Street. There is also the possibility that some of the occupants of 20 unmarked graves at Cornelian Bay might be further re-interments from Harrington Street. Unfortunately, gaps and omissions in the cemetery records make hurried research of this nature very difficult.

### **5.2 Final estimate of cemetery numbers**

An assessment involving all these various statistics related to the deaths of Jewish persons in Hobart suggests the following scenario of burials involving the Harrington Street cemetery. Of a projected total of approximately **76 persons** interred at this site:

- At least 7 are known to have been exhumed and sent to Cornelian Bay Cemetery after 1871.
- Approximately 15 graves were destroyed in the 1950s during the initial construction of Windsor Court (Northern most row and tip site).
- 50 sets of remains were exhumed this year.
- Up to 3 sets of remains might be statistically expected to still remain on the site.

## 6.0 RESULTS OF EXHUMATION WORK

WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM	
<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 41	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 01
<b>Burial depth:</b> 800mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 850x350mm
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> Small wood fragments noted adhering to long bones.	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> None noted.	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> Very fragmentary. Only two medial sections of a femur and humerus were recovered intact.	
<b>Orientation/attitude of skeleton:</b> Body oriented west/east.	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pathologist's summary of remains:</b>  <i>Frail and fragmented left humerus and left femur of an infant. It is not possible to determine the sex of this person.</i></p>	
<b>Evidence of trauma:</b> None noted.	
<b>Determination of gender:</b> Not determined	<b>Determination of age:</b> One month.
<p><b>Identification:</b> The following infants are known to have remained interred as solitary burials at this site. The name in bold type most closely matches the pathologist's determination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emmanual Goldsmith.</b> Deceased 1856 aged 8 weeks.</li> <li>• Wolfe Levi. Deceased 1855 aged 10 weeks.</li> <li>• Katherine Marks. Deceased 1851 aged 14 weeks.</li> <li>• Infant son of E &amp; M Moses. Deceased 1855 aged 5 days.</li> <li>• Infant son of S &amp; R Moses. Deceased 1849. Age listed as infant.</li> <li>• Dinah Myers. Deceased 1854 aged 10 weeks.</li> <li>• Leonora Sussman. Deceased 1866 aged 3 months.</li> </ul>	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

**Feature name:** Skeleton No. 42

**Feature number:** SW SK 02

**Burial depth:** 1400mm

**Grave dimensions:** 1450x420mm

**Condition of coffin:** Well preserved coffin wall fabric and associated ferrous fasteners.

**Other grave contents:** Not applicable.

**Condition of bones:** All bones and skull very well preserved and fully articulated.

**Orientation/attitude of skeleton:** Body oriented west/east.

#### Pathologist's summary of remains:

***Skull:** Many teeth are missing. All remaining teeth are secondary teeth, demonstrating much wear and caries. The dental enamel is worn through to the dentine. There is a separated left lower second molar, and evidence of caries below the gum line. The occipital and sagittal sutures are fully united.*

***Lumbar vertebrae:** All are compressed and demonstrate lipping.*

***Right humerus:** Small, frail and very brittle.*

**Evidence of trauma:** None noted.

**Determination of gender:** Female

**Determination of age:** 60+ years

**Identification:** The following 50+ females are known to have remained interred at this site. The name in bold type most closely matches the pathologist's determination.

- Hannah Abraham. Deceased 1864 aged 63 years.
- Eve Benjamin. Deceased 1852 aged 68 years.
- **Dinah Joseph. Deceased 1844 aged 56 years.**
- Elizabeth Levy. Deceased 1849 aged 57 years.
- Sarah Marks. Deceased 1858 aged 69 years.
- Sophia Moses. Deceased 1853 aged 57 years.

<b>WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 43	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 03
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1760mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 1750x540mm
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> Well preserved coffin wall fabric.	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> Hand made orange sandstock brick found at foot end of coffin.	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> All bones and skull very well preserved and fully articulated.	
<b>Orientation/attitude of skeleton:</b> Body oriented west/east.	
<b>Evidence of trauma:</b> Massive head injury (see below).	
<b>Pathologist's summary of remains:</b>	
<i><b>Skull:</b> Demonstrates what appears to be a massive head injury in the left fronto-parietal region. There are many missing teeth. The remaining teeth are all secondary, and there is significant wear on all existing teeth, and all have evidence of caries.</i>	
<i><b>Right upper femur:</b> This is expanded laterally, which appears to be the result of an infectious process, possibly osteomyelitis. The posterior surface reveals an area of linear necrosis, probably reflecting the infectious process.</i>	
<b>Determination of gender:</b> Male	<b>Determination of age:</b> Approx. 35 years.
<b>Identification:</b> An examination of supreme court inquests for the period of the cemetery's operational life span failed to find a deceased Jewish male resident in Hobart exhibiting this type of wound.	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

**Feature name:** Skeleton No. 44

**Feature number:** SW SK 04

**Burial depth:** 1300mm

**Grave dimensions:** 1800x450mm

**Condition of coffin:** Well preserved coffin wall fabric with closely packed clay matrix within.

**Other grave contents:** Not applicable.

**Condition of bones:** All bones and skull very well preserved and fully articulated.

**Orientation/attitude of skeleton:** Body oriented west/east. In contrast to other burials at this site, the skull was lying on its side.

#### Pathologist's summary of remains:

***Skull:** Possesses all adult teeth, which are generally in good condition. There is a right maxillary abscess involving both pre-molars. The squamosal suture is patent (i.e. not united) but the occipital suture is not patent.*

***Sacrum:** All components are fully united.*

**Evidence of trauma:** None noted

**Determination of gender:** Male

**Determination of age:** 35 years

**Identification:** The following male is the only person known to match the approximate age of the deceased.

- Solomon Beck. Deceased 1871 aged 46 years.

<b>WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 45	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 05
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1500mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 800x300mm
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> In this instance both the coffin lid and walls were exceptionally well preserved.	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> None noted.	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> All larger bone types were well preserved. Skull and mandible were still articulated.	
<b>Orientation/attitude of skeleton:</b> Body oriented west/east.	
<b>Pathologist's summary of remains:</b>	
<i>Almost total skeletal remains. In the mandible, the crowns of the lateral incisors are just erupting. It is not possible to determine the sex of a person this young from a skeletal analysis.</i>	
<b>Evidence of trauma:</b> None observable	
<b>Determination of gender:</b> Not determined	<b>Determination of age:</b> Approx. 6 months
<b>Identification:</b> The following infants are known to have remained interred as solitary burials at this site.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emmanuel Goldsmith. Deceased 1856 aged 8 weeks.</li> <li>• Wolfe Levi. Deceased 1855 aged 10 weeks.</li> <li>• Katherine Marks. Deceased 1851 aged 14 weeks.</li> <li>• Infant son of E &amp; M Moses. Deceased 1855 aged 5 days.</li> <li>• Infant son of S &amp; R Moses. Deceased 1849. Age listed as infant.</li> <li>• Dinah Myers. Deceased 1854 aged 10 weeks.</li> <li>• Leonora Sussman. Deceased 1866 aged 3 months.</li> </ul>	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 46	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 06
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1740mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 1800x450mm
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> Well preserved coffin wall fabric.	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> None noted.	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> All bones and skull very well preserved and fully articulated.	
<b>Orientation/attitude of skeleton:</b> Body oriented west/east.	
<p><b>Pathologist's summary of remains:</b>  <i>Sacrum: Extremely large, suggestive of a large individual.</i></p> <p><i>Skull: Massive pre-mortem tooth loss. The few remaining teeth are extremely worn and flattened, with the enamel eroded down to the dentine. There are abscesses in the left upper lateral incisor, and in the right upper canine. All skull sutures are fused and obliterated.</i></p> <p><i>Pelvis: Both acetabulae are eroded by the femoral heads. In each instance a depression has been tunnelled into the bone.</i></p>	
<b>Evidence of trauma:</b> None noted.	
<b>Determination of gender:</b> Male	<b>Determination of age:</b> 65–70 years
<p><b>Identification:</b> The following 60 to 70 year old males are known to have remained interred at this site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lewis Lyons. Deceased 1871 aged 65 years.</li> <li>• Emmanuel Moses. Deceased 1841 aged 61 years.</li> <li>• Phineas Moss. Deceased 1866 aged 70 years.</li> <li>• Harris Rosenberg. Deceased 1857 aged 64 years.</li> <li>• Alexander Saunders. Deceased 1851 aged 63 years.</li> <li>• Isaac Solomon. Deceased 1850 aged 66 years.</li> <li>• Bernard Walford. Deceased 1828 aged 66 years(probably burial No. 6. See section 11.2)</li> <li>• Benjamin Benjamin. Deceased 1837 aged 62 (headstone at Cornelian Bay)</li> </ul>	

<b>WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 47	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 07
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1600mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 1900x500mm
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> The coffin walls could be defined but little fabric remained in situ.	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> None noted.	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> All bones and skull very well preserved and fully articulated.	
<b>Orientation/attitude of skeleton:</b> Body oriented west/east.	
<p><b>Pathologist's summary of remains:</b></p> <p><i>A large robust individual.</i></p> <p><i>Skull: Pre-mortem loss of almost all lower teeth, and most of the right upper teeth. One left upper incisor remains, with a large abscess at the root. There are arthritic changes to the left occipital condyles, both posterior and anterior. This would have severely restricted neck movement.</i></p> <p><i>Pelvis: Massive deterioration and wear in both acetabulae, suggesting difficulty in moving.</i></p>	
<b>Evidence of trauma:</b> None noted.	
<b>Determination of gender:</b> Male	<b>Determination of age:</b> 70+ years.
<p><b>Identification:</b> The following 70 to 75 year old males are known to have remained interred at this site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moses Hirsch. Deceased 1853 aged 75 years.</li> <li>• Rheuben Joseph. Deceased 1862 aged 72 years.</li> </ul>	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 48	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 08
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1200mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 1900x400mm

**Condition of coffin:** Exceptionally well preserved (sample taken/described as feature SW SK 14).

**Other grave contents:** None noted.

**Condition of bones:** Skeleton attitude and preservation moderately affected by invasive tree roots.

**Orientation/attitude of skeleton:** Body oriented west/east.

**Pathologist's summary of remains:** *Appears to have been a very robust individual.*

***Skull:** The skull is extremely heavy. The nuchal (occipital) prominence is raised into a crest, suggestive of extremely strong muscles in this region. The third molars of the mandible have erupted. The right teeth from the third molar to the incisors are missing, and were missing for some time prior to death. The jaw has completely healed, and the tooth sockets resorbed. The remaining teeth are very worn, with the enamel down to the dentine.*

***Pelvis:** Deterioration and erosion of both acetabulae, with a depression in both formed by the femoral heads. The muscle attachments on the iliac crest are rugged and raised, again suggestive of strong musculature in this region.*

**Evidence of trauma:** None noted.

<b>Determination of gender:</b> Male	<b>Determination of age:</b> Approx. 50 years old
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**Incidental observations:** This man was very powerfully built and muscled.

**Identification:** The following 50–55 year old males are known to have remained interred at this site.

- John Davis. Deceased 1860 aged 61years.
- Sam Levi. Deceased 1870 aged 51 years.
- Jonathan Moccatta. Deceased 1852 aged 52 years.

Note that further research might be able to exploit the fact that this man was both tall and very well built, as evidenced by unusually lengthy grave dimension and pathologist's report.

<b>WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Feature name:</b> Skeleton No. 49	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 09
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1100mm	<b>Grave dimensions:</b> 1800x600
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> Coffin form extremely distorted by invasive tree roots and desiccation, however much intact timber fabric noted.	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> A half brick and sandstone slab supported the skull from beneath and on the southern side (right cheek).	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> Skeleton attitude and preservation extensively affected by invasive tree roots. These have crushed and distorted some of the bone assemblies. The cranium has been smashed from within by root activity.	
<b>Orientation/attitude of skeleton:</b> Body oriented west/east.	
<b>Pathologist's summary of remains:</b>	
<i>Skull: Extremely good lower dentition with minimal wear and few caries. This may suggest a relatively high socio economic status, with access to better quality food. The third molars have not erupted.</i>	
<i>Pelvis: The epiphysis of the iliac crest is united anteriorly, but the line of union is still visible posteriorly.</i>	
<i>Clavicle: The medial epiphysis is not present, and therefore was not united, placing the individual's age at less than 30 years old.</i>	
<b>Evidence of trauma:</b> None noted.	
<b>Determination of gender:</b> Male	<b>Determination of age:</b> Approx. 25 years old.
<b>Identification:</b> The following individual is the closest match to the pathologist's recommended age.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Lionel Moses. Deceased 1845 aged 18.</li> </ul>	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

**Feature name:** Skeleton No. 50

**Feature number:** SW SK 10

**Burial depth:** 1000mm

**Grave dimensions:** 1400x450mm

**Condition of coffin:** Coffin form extremely distorted by invasive tree roots and dessication, however much intact timber fabric noted.

**Other grave contents:** None noted.

**Condition of bones:** Skeleton attitude and preservation extensively affected by invasive tree roots. These have crushed and distorted some of the bone assemblies, especially the cranium.

**Orientation/attitude of skeleton:** Body oriented west/east.

#### Pathologist's summary of remains:

***Skull:** There is no right third molar. The left third lower molar has erupted. The teeth are in excellent condition, with no wear and no caries. This may suggest a relative high socio economic status... The right upper medial incisor is missing. This occurred some time before death, since the bone has resorbed. The occipital and squamosal sutures are present and clearly visible, and there appear to be tiny wormian (inca) bones in the left squamosal suture, directly above the left mastoid process.*

***Pelvis:** The epiphysis of the iliac crest is united anteriorly, but the line of the union is still visible posteriorly.*

**Evidence of trauma:** None noted.

**Determination of gender:** Female

**Determination of age:** Approx.  
25–30 years

**Identification:** The following individuals are the closest match to the pathologist's recommended age.

- **Maria Harris. Deceased 1861 aged 24 years.**
- Catherine Davis. Deceased 1856 aged 23 years.
- **Note** Catherine Davis' head stone and presumably her remains were removed to Cornelian Bay.

<b>WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Feature name:</b> Empty grave	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 11
<b>Burial depth:</b> 1800mm approx.	<b>Grave measurements:</b> 1400x450mm
<b>Condition of coffin:</b> Not applicable	
<b>Other grave contents:</b> Not applicable	
<b>Condition of bones:</b> Not applicable	
<p><b>Description of burial:</b> This feature was a well defined ovoid soil silhouette measuring 1400x450mm wide, which marks the location of a human burial. Total excavation of this feature however failed to reveal any human remains. These must have been exhumed subsequent to burial.</p>	
<p><b>Identification:</b> As the dimensions of the silhouette suggest its occupant to have been a small adult, the following persons known to have been exhumed and removed to Cornelian Bay cemetery are the most likely identities. As Bernard Walford may have been interred at another location (see skeleton No. 46), the four names printed in bold comprise the final short list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Judah Solomon.</b> Deceased 18 February 1856, aged 78 years.</li> <li>• <b>Catherine Davis.</b> Deceased 1 October, 1856 aged 23 years.</li> <li>• <b>Esther Hyams.</b> Deceased 18 April 1859 aged 45 years.</li> <li>• <b>Bernard Walford.</b> Deceased 20 September 1828 aged 66 (probably burial No. 6. See section 11.2)</li> <li>• <b>Lewis Lyons.</b> Deceased 9 September 1871 aged 65 years.</li> </ul>	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

**Feature name:** Recent rubbish pit

**Feature number:** SW SK 12

**Burial depth:** 200–1500mm

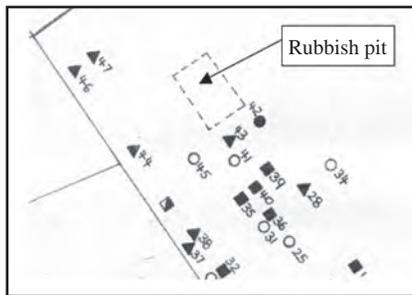
**Grave measurements:** Not applicable

**Description of feature:** This feature consisted of a 5x3 metre wide intrusive soil unit persisting from the near the current ground surface to the top of the basal clay layer. This unit consisted of numerous items such as 44 gallon drums, a truck mud guard and beer bottles. These all appear to date from the 1950s.

**Interpretation:** This rubbish was buried here during the c1954 construction of the adjacent Windsor Court flats. Note that excavation beneath this rubbish pit failed to find any burials. Given that this locality should have hosted several burials as suggested by historic 1941 photographs (see Appendix 13.6), it can only be assumed that the excavation of this pit destroyed any resident interments.

**Identification:** This feature is a recent rubbish pit.

*Map showing location of this feature.*



<b>WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Feature name:</b> Zinc fragment	<b>Feature number:</b> SW SK 13
<b>Burial depth:</b> Surface	<b>Grave measurements:</b> Not applicable
<b>Provenance of sample:</b> This item was recovered from the surface between burial numbers 6 and 8 approximately 3 metres north of the southern fence line/boundary.	
<b>Description of feature:</b> This item is a 440 x 180mm wide section of zinc coated sheet with some type of paint residue on one side.	
<b>Interpretation:</b> This fragment of coated metal is known to have sheathed the exterior of a timber coffin exhumed prior to the commissioning of this consultant. This implies that the coffin contained human remains that were moved over reasonable distance after the individual's death.	
<b>Identification:</b> The only known individual known to have died elsewhere prior to re-location at this cemetery was:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Henry Samuel Benjamin.</li> <li>• Deceased at sea while en route from Europe to Melbourne on 19 March 1852</li> <li>• Aged 42 years</li> <li>• Buried on St Pauls Island, Bass Strait.</li> <li>• Exhumed and Interred at Jewish cemetery on 28 July 1852.</li> </ul>	
This feature's proximity to burial number 5 has been cited as evidence to suggest that those remains are in fact those of Henry Samuel Benjamin (see section 11.2).	

### WINDSOR COURT ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION PROGRAM

**Feature name:** Coffin timber fragments

**Feature number:** SW SK 14

**Provenance of sample:** This sample was removed from skeleton number 48 (see SW SK 08).

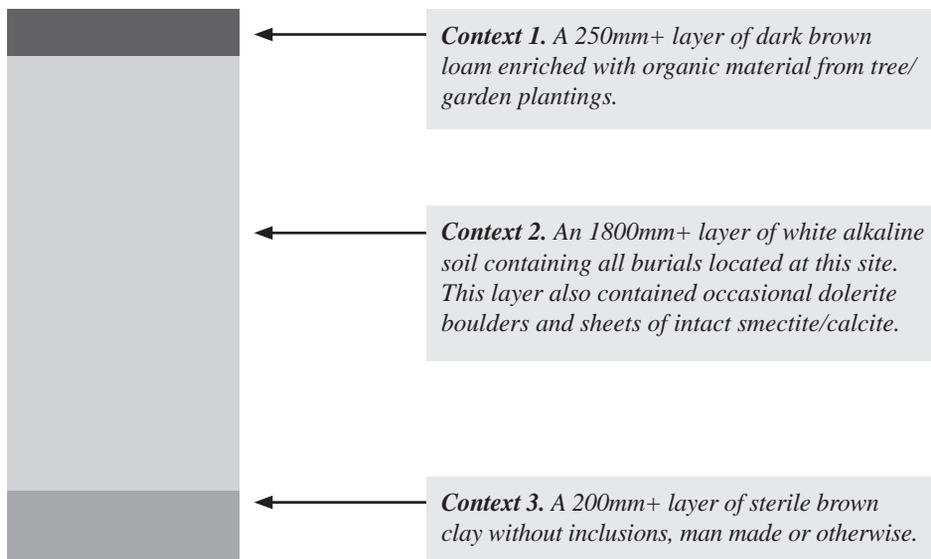
**Description of sample:** The largest fragment of timber measured 350x130x9mm in thickness. Six ferrous fasteners (rose head nails) were also recovered from the fragmented timber coffin fabric. This same timber dimension and type was recovered from coffin and lid sections in most graves.

**Analysis of timber:** An inspection and scrape of this timber sample by Mr. Gregory Nolan of the Timber Research Unit (School of Architecture, University of Tasmania) revealed that this timber is blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*). This same source stated that unlike hardwood eucalypt species, blackwood required no seasoning and as such could be worked and then relied on not to warp after completion of the coffin.

## 7.0 SOIL SUMMARY

### 7.1 Site stratigraphy

Three soil units were noted at the Harrington Street cemetery site. These were:



### 7.2 Grave soil analysis

A sample of the characteristic white grave dirt in which all burials were situated, was sent off to a government laboratory for analysis in order to more eloquently explain the unusually good state of skeletal bone preservation (see section 8.2 overleaf). The report stated that:

*The pH was found to be about 8.5. The soil is very limey and alkaline; this probably helped preserve the bones, as they would be less soluble under more alkaline conditions. Lime was probably used to cover the bodies.*

The entire report of the analysis appears as Appendix 13.9.

## 8.0 SUMMARY OF BURIAL ATTRIBUTES

This section seeks to summarise the various attributes or characteristics of all burials observed directly by this consultant.

### 8.1 Interment methodology

Obviously given the age of the cemetery, all holes were dug by hand. Some stones exposed during this program retained marks consistent with them being struck by sharpened hand tools such as picks and crowbars, although no attempts were apparently made to shift, blast or otherwise remove such large scale obstacles. Generally, these free floating dolerite boulders occurring in the second layer of soil at the site in which all burials were made were left *in situ* and interments made around them. This explains the substantially asymmetrical burial pattern evident at this site, given that the sheer number of large boulders prevented the even, consistent spacing of burials. All burials appear to have been liberally covered with quicklime to assist in decomposition. This appears to have substantially, but inadvertently enhanced the preservation of all buried bones (see section 7.2).

### 8.2 Burial depths

The depth at which human remains were buried varied quite considerably with age being the most potent indicator of relative burial depth. Therefore, the larger the body, the deeper it tended to be interred. As a result, infants and children were buried in the shallowest graves, while adults were buried deeper as the table below seeks to highlight.

Type of burial	Average depth of burial
Infants	1100mm
Children	1200mm
Adults	1500mm

### 8.3 Bone condition

The condition of all human remains at this site is deemed to be exceptional. This opinion was a unanimous one shared by the archaeologist, pathologist, Jewish funeral directors and Cornelian Bay cemetery staff who collectively have extensive experience in the handling of human remains. Anecdotal information from the Cornelian Bay cemetery staff would suggest that the bones of persons interred there degenerate fairly rapidly and cannot be readily identified beyond

15 years after interment (Stephen Jakes pers. comm.). In contrast to this the bones at the Harrington Street former Jewish cemetery are perfectly preserved after a period of between 130–180 years. Possible explanations for this curiosity involving some aspects of the resident soil chemistry were briefly alluded to in section 7.2.

#### **8.4 Burial orientation and attitude**

All of the 10 burials exhumed by this consultant were oriented west/east with cranium situated at the western end of the grave facing eastwards. Anecdotal evidence from persons who observed some of the initial 41 exhumations would suggest that this practice was consistent throughout the entire cemetery. All bodies were buried in on their backs with the head facing directly upwards and arms crossed over the midriff.

#### **8.5 Grave goods**

No personal affects of any type were found in any of the ten burials exhumed by this consultant, and witnesses present at the other exhumations insist these were similarly barren. This is evidently entirely in keeping with Hebrew religious custom (Ephraim Finch pers. comm.). Two burials however contained a brick and sandstone slab respectively which appear to have been employed in preventing the head from falling to either side.

#### **8.6 Coffin attributes**

Although there were no surviving physical vestiges of fabric in any of the burials, information from religious sources indicate that that deceased were placed naked in a plain textile bag (Ephraim Finch pers. comm.) which in turn was placed in a plain timber coffin. Examination of coffin timbers failed to yield any ornamentation of any sort such as metal fixtures or handles etc. Nor were any timber embellishments such as carved relief or rebates noted. The plain blackwood coffins were simply nailed together and their lids in turn dowed down onto the coffin.

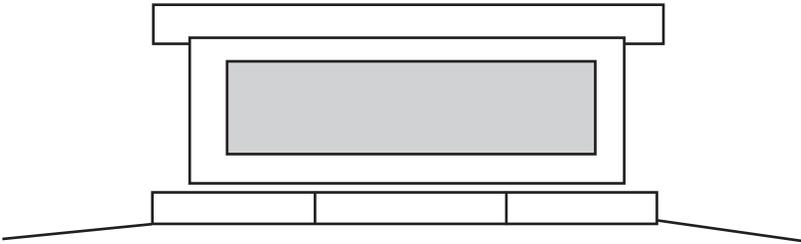
#### **8.7 Headstones/monuments**

Based on an examination of the 1941 historic photographs (Appendix 13.6) in addition to current on site remains, the following grave markers and monuments appear to have been erected at the Harrington Street Jewish cemetery.

#### **Sarcophagus**

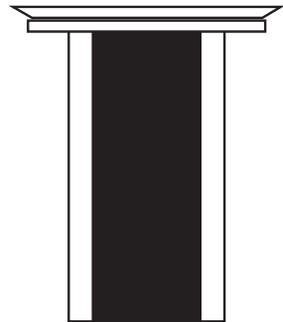
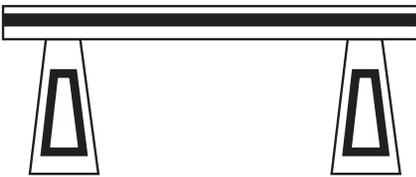
The most imposing type of monument at the cemetery appears to have been a rectangular ‘Sarcophagus’ made out of highly polished sandstone. These sarcophagi were ornamented very simply, with square/rectangular panels cut into each side of the monument. The two longest panels were further inscribed with

details of the deceased in Hebrew and English. The sarcophagus was covered with a thick sandstone slab with incised edge. The entire monument was erected on a base made of cut and pecked sandstone blocks and lintel type slabs. These were not however polished or otherwise ‘finished’, an attribute used in this analysis to separate headstone/monument stone material from ordinary foundation stone. The sarcophagus monument could also be further marked with a waist high wrought iron fence. The centrally situated monument to Sophia Moses certainly had a fence of this type as indicated in two photographic views of the cemetery taken in 1941(Appendix 13.6).



### Standing monuments /altars

Two types of free standing monuments are further evident in historic photos of the site. One is a type of altar or ‘table’ standing over the burial, which consists of four tapering stone legs supporting a slab with incised sides. The other type is a small ‘temple’ with three enclosed sides, a frontal open doorway and a more ornate roof with external cornice.



### Stone sculpture

At least three examples of stone sculpture appear to have been erected at this site. Two separate examples appearing in historic photographs consist of sculpted a urn and bird form standing on a columnar plinth. Another highly unusual piece of sculpture actually found at the site consists of a sculpted draped torso in the neo-classical style. Although now headless, it is possible that the figure once had a sculpted head, which would be anathema to the Jewish aversion to images of the dead at the burial site.

## Headstones

The head stones at the old cemetery were made with a variety of patterns on their tops, including semi circles, scrolls, crowns and plain linear edging. It is evident that these head stones came in a range of sizes/thicknesses which could but no always reflect the size/age of the occupant. These head stones were mostly inscribed with details of the deceased, although some graves appear to have been marked with stones lacking any inscription whatsoever.



## Footstones

Several burials came complete with a pair of upright markers. In addition to the head stone a smaller stone identical in design to the head stone but 75 per cent smaller and without inscription, was erected at the feet of the deceased.

## Children's headstones

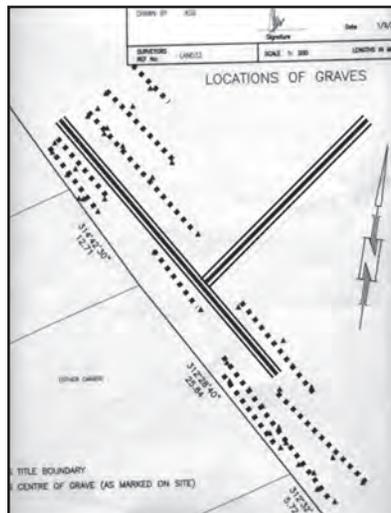
Several headstones of similar sizes to the 'foot stones' mark the graves of children and infants. One of the head stones recovered from the site certainly proclaimed the tender age of the deceased. Some children's headstones however could also be larger and therefore confused with adult's markers. Size cannot therefore be definitively used to identify the age of the deceased.

## 9.0 CEMETERY GEOGRAPHY

This section summarises the locations of burial sequences and associated means of access to the site.

### 9.1 Burial rows

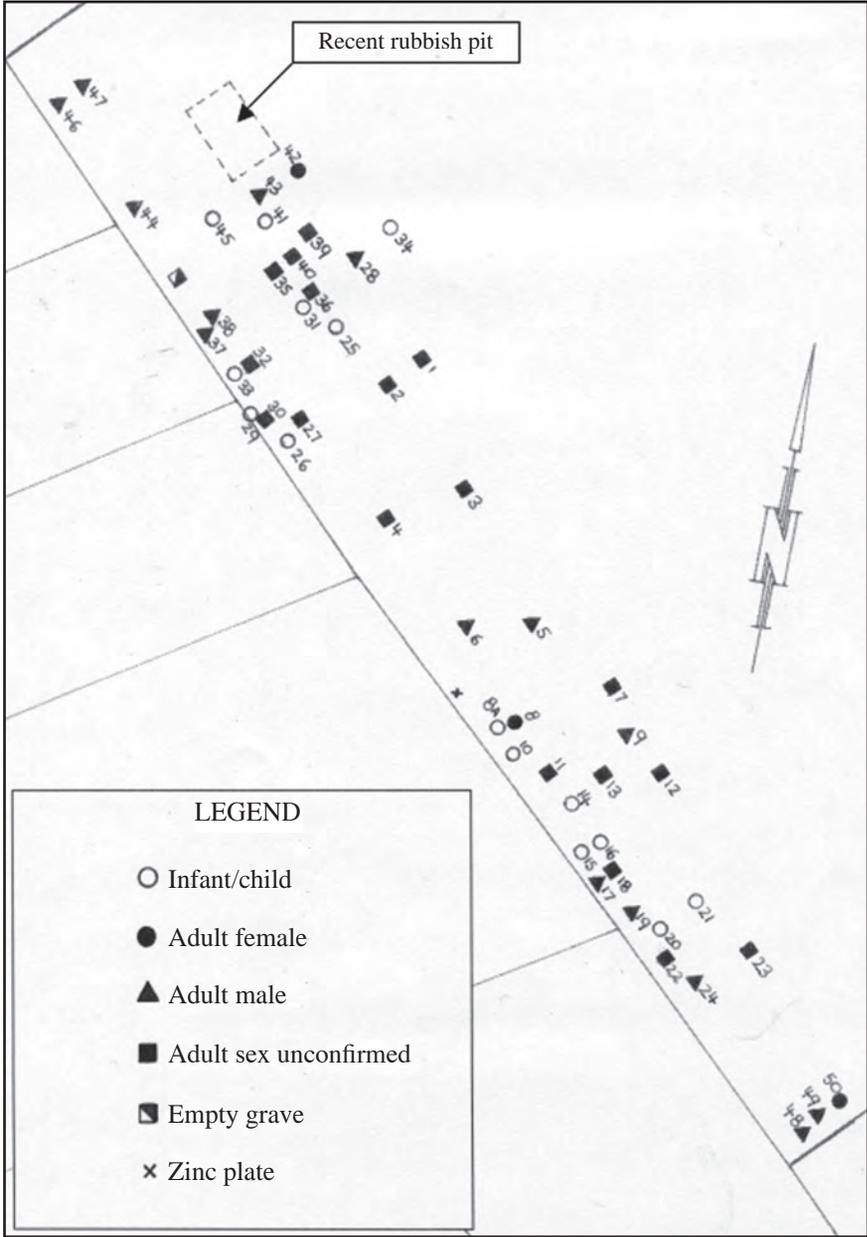
An examination of the spacing of all burials in the plan below reveals a crude but nonetheless compelling pattern of interment whereby graves were established in sections comprised of short rows. These rows measured up to 30 metres in length and often stood on a common alignment with other rows at the opposite end of the cemetery. Up to 5 burial rows are evidenced on the western side of the cemetery, although the northern most row has almost certainly been severely damaged by the 1950s construction of the former Windsor Court 'A Block'.



### 9.2 Pathways

Two historic surveys dated c1845 and c1910 (see Appendix 14.3) show access to the Jewish cemetery was achieved via a laneway off Harrington Street, that subsequently became gazetted as 'Windsor Court' during construction of the 1950s public housing estate. The original laneway would have presumably been a formed but unsurfaced path proceeding uphill to the cemetery. Given the steepness of the cemetery block, it is conceivable that coffins were delivered to the cemetery by some shortcut off Patrick and Warwick streets or Watkins Avenue as the bulk of houses lining these thoroughfares and bordering the cemetery

block were not built until after the 1871 cemetery closure. In addition to the main marked pathway off Harrington Street, there was another pathway situated between the burial rows that allowed pedestrian passage across the site from west to east. This pathway is in evidence in one of the historic 1941 photographs of the site (see Appendix 13.6).



Plan of cemetery block showing locations and principal characteristics of all known burials.

<b>Burial number</b>	<b>Gender determination</b>	<b>Age determination</b>	<b>Source of determination</b>
01	None	Adult	Burial party
02	None	Adult	Burial party
03	None	Adult	Burial party
04	None	Adult	Burial party
05	Male	'Big' adult	Burial party
06	Male	'Old' adult	Burial party
07	None	Adult	Burial party
08	Female	Adult	Burial party
8A	None	Infant	Burial party
9	Male	Adult	Burial party
10	None	Child 4–5 years	Burial party
11	None	None	Burial party
12	None	Young adult	Burial party
13	None	None	Burial party
14	None	None	Burial party
15	None	Baby	Burial party
16	None	Child	Burial party
17	Male	Adult	Burial party
18	None	Adult	Burial party
19	Male	Adult	Burial party
20	None	Child to 2 years	Burial party
21	None	Child 3–4 years	Burial party
22	None	Old adult	Burial party
23	None	Adult	Burial party
24	Male	Adult	Burial party
25	None	Child to 10 years	Burial party
26	None	Baby	Burial party
27	None	Middle aged adult	Burial party
28	Male	Adult	Burial party
29	None	Infant	Burial party
30	None	Adult	Burial party
31	None	Baby	Burial party
32	None	Adult	Burial party
33	None	Child 6–7 years	Burial party

<b>Burial number</b>	<b>Gender determination</b>	<b>Age determination</b>	<b>Source of determination</b>
34	None	None	Burial party
35	None	Elderly adult	Burial party
36	None	Adult	Burial party
37	None	None	Burial party
38	None	Adult – Post mortem	Burial party
39	None	Adult	Burial party
40	None	Adult	Burial party
41	None	Newborn infant to 1 month	Forensic Pathologist
42	Female	60+ years	Forensic Pathologist
43	Male	35 years	Forensic Pathologist
44	Male	35–40 years	Forensic Pathologist
45	None	Infant to 6 months	Forensic Pathologist
46	Male	65-70 years	Forensic Pathologist
47	Male	70 years	Forensic Pathologist
48	Male	50 years	Forensic Pathologist
49	Male	25 years	Forensic Pathologist
50	Female	25–30 years	Forensic Pathologist

## 10.0 SKELETAL CHARACTERISTICS

This section summarises the principal characteristics of the 51 skeletons exhumed from the Harrington Street cemetery site. Unfortunately, accurate and therefore reliable diagnostic data is only available for 10 of the 50 sets of remains. Crude gender and age determinants for the other 40 burials were guesstimated by the Jewish community's undertaker team who claimed to have some experience in this regard. A plan on the previous page shows the location and characteristics of all known burials at the site.

### 10.1 Gender

An assessment by gender of all 51 sets of human remains yields the following ratios.

- 3 adult females
- 17 adults of unconfirmed gender (Almost certainly female. Therefore 20 females)
- 14 adult males
- 16 unsexed children

A major bias in favour of adult males (most probably caused by the undertaker's inability to identify a female skeleton) is obviously a mistake made during attempted sex determination. If the greater majority of burials without positive gender identification are deemed to be females, then the ratio of adult males to females is roughly 50–50.

### 10.2 Age

An assessment by age of all 51 sets of human remains yields the following ratios.

- 4 infants under 6 months of age
- 3 babies under 1 year of age
- 5 children under 16 years of age
- 4 minors of unspecified age
- 7 adults under 60 years of age
- 7 adults over 60 years of age
- 20 adults of unspecified age

Unfortunately due to the lack of accurate age related data, few distinctions can be drawn between the various adult sub-groups. However, the high percentage of sub-adults can be discerned and quantified as comprising thirty three per cent of the total. This would be expected, given high childhood mortality rates in historic times.

### **10.3 Trauma and illness**

The deceased interred at the Harrington Street Cemetery are known from historic inquest records to have succumbed to an assortment of illnesses. For example, Jonathan Moccatta died at the age of 52 years from *Delerium Tremens* while Abraham Hyams aged 7 years succumbed to Dysentery. More common death determinations included enlargement and disease of the heart and various fevers.

#### **Trauma**

Two sets of skeletal remains exhibited signs of significant head trauma. Skeleton Number 43 exhibited a massive head injury that probably caused the victim's death. The cranium of skeleton number 38 had been sawn in half as part of a post mortem procedure. Unfortunately the victim's identity and potential illness remain uncertain, although it might have been some type of fever causing swelling of cranial tissue that prompted the autopsy (see pages 17 and 40).

#### **Bone diseases and infections**

A small number of ailments identifiable from their effect on skeletal bones were noted by the pathologist. These included inflammation of the bone such as osteomyelitis noted in several middle aged femoral heads and diseases of the various joints such as osteoarthritis (manifested as vertebral lipping in 60 year old skeleton number 2). Once again, anecdotal evidence from witnesses suggests several congenital deformities and irregularities in the bones of several skeletons between numbers 1 to 40. These were not however verified by this consultant and the pathologist.

### **10.4 Burial segregation**

A reasonably exhaustive analysis of all burial characteristics failed to reveal any evidence of the following burial patterns:

- Burial pairing by gender that might suggest the adjacent interment of male and female married partners.
- Segregated burial groups or precincts based on gender
- Segregated burial groupings based on age such as infants and children being buried in a separate area from the adults.
- Chronological burial based on date of death (i.e. the earliest burial at one end and subsequent burials placed sequentially up to the last burial).

There were however several instances of paired burials involving women and infants, that were presumably mother and child. Although not obviously expressed in the physical burials themselves, several clustered groups also probably represent family units. An examination of the historic head stone data appearing in Section 11.1 overleaf certainly suggests this with clustered burials of mixed age groups belonging to the Moses and Benjamin families.

## 11.0 ANALYSIS OF BURIAL IDENTITIES

### 11.1 Comparison of site based historic documentation

Although no site map or survey showing burial locations and identities is known to exist, the two sets of head stone transcriptions collected in 1895 and c1952 respectively, act as crude grave maps in that a comparison of the two shows a certain coincidence in the associations and proximity between some burials. For example, the table below shows a number of such coincidences that are consistent in both sets of transcriptions. If two numerical sequences are given to both transcriptions whereby each grave is given a number in the order it has been transcribed, two separate parallel progressions result. However where both authors note a neighbouring cluster of graves, a similar sequence of numbers will result. For example, in 1895 Mr. Dawson recorded Solomon Beck as the first burial he came across followed by Henry Nathan. In 1952 the TAMEOT compilers also recorded them as occurring in the same order, with Henry Nathan being preceded by Solomon Beck. Although such co-incidental clusters are patchy, this is partially due to the fact that Mr Dawson's list is incomplete or selective. The seven groups of graves highlighted in different colours below shows that this is no mere co-incidence and that it can still be predicted who some burials lay adjacent to. Unfortunately, the forensic evidence is too poor to allow the succinct application of this good fortune!

Name	Dawson list number	TAMEOT list number
Solomon Beck	1	27
Henry Nathan	2	28
Esther Solomon	3	43
Hannah Abraham	4	31
Wolff Levy	5	34
Lewis Lyons	6	29
Phillip Marks	7	Does not appear
Rosetta Rheuben	8	Does not appear
Sophia Sussman	9	Does not appear
Leonora Sussman	10	Does not appear
Emmanuel Moses	11	3
Meyer Hecksecker	12	13

Sophia Moses	13	14
Sarah Marks	14	15
Sarah Moses	15	Does not appear
Isaac Levy	16	Does not appear
Henry Friedman	17	19
Rachel Henry	18	Does not appear
Infant Henry	19	Does not appear
Henry Samuel Benjamin	20	5
Bernard Walford	21	6
Benjamin Benjamin	22	18
Eve Benjamin	23	17
Henrietta Rachel Moses	24	21
Elizabeth Levy	25	22
Maria Harris	26	Does not appear
Reuben Joseph	27	41
David Lionel Moses	28	42
Infant Moses	29	40
Sarah Cohen	30	9
Samuel Levy	31	10
Frances Nathan	32	Does not appear
Infant Nathan	33	Does not appear
Alfred Wolff	34	26
Dinah Joseph	35	23
Phineas Moss	36	24

## 11.2 Possible grave identifications

Some comparison of historic data with skeletal remains has however been attempted with limited success. In an attempt to at least provide some sets of remains with identities, this section identifies certain burials that have at least one significantly unique characteristic not shared by others. In finding a match between this characteristic and burial details appearing in historic records, it might therefore be possible to at least speculate on the potential identities of these people. The theoretical identities and matching burial location of some occupants is therefore detailed below and overleaf.

### **Undetermined family unit**

Burials 15–18 consisting of an adult male, unspecified adult (probably female), a baby and child are most probably a family unit. Historic sources indicate that three family groups with at least 3–4 family members were interred at Harrington Street. These families were the Levys, Marks and Moses.

### **Rachel Henry and infant**

Burials 8 and 8A are almost certainly a mother and her infant and historic sources only refer to two mother/infant burials at Harrington Street. The presence of only one child suggests that this paired burial consists of Rachel Henry and her infant, who died in 1852. Rachel was aged 37 years.

### **Zinc plate burial (Henry Samuel Benjamin?)**

A scatter of several pieces of zinc plate in the vicinity of Burial number 5 is significant as anecdotal evidence from members of the initial excavation team remember one coffin being sealed with this material. Such an undertaking occurred when a deceased person was hurriedly buried at one location but then exhumed for re-interment at another disparate location. Only one person interred at Harrington Street is known to have been buried but subsequently re-located to Harrington Street, this being Henry Samuel Benjamin who died at sea en route to Port Melbourne on March 19th, 1852. Aged 42 years of age, Mr Benjamin was buried on St. Pauls Island but exhumed and re-interred at Harrington Street some four months later on July 29th. As burial Number 5 was described as a ‘Big’ adult male by the excavation crew, the match seems all the more likely.

### **Bernard Walford?**

Burial Number 6 adjacent to the one described previously, contains the remains of an ‘Old’ adult male. Assuming that adjacent burial number 5 is in fact Henry Samuel Benjamin, his neighbour then should be Mr Bernard Walford if the two sets of historic head stone transcriptions cited on the previous page (Section 11.1) have any credence. Incidentally, Bernard Walford was the first interment at this cemetery in 1828 after he successfully obtained Governor Arthur’s permission to establish a Jewish burial ground at this locality. The location of this burial is almost exactly the mid point at the very top end of the cemetery block, and as such would be considered an appropriate final resting place for the founding father of the cemetery.

### **Frances Nathan and children**

The four burials numbered 26, 27, 29 & 33 contain the dual remains of an adult (female?) and infant and adjacent baby and child. Apart from the burial containing Rachel Henry cited above, the only other dual infant/parent burial

known at Harrington Street involved Frances Nathan and her infant. Historic records indicate that at least three other Nathan children were interred at this cemetery, and indeed Frances and her child lie side by side with three other small burials.

### **Exhumed burial**

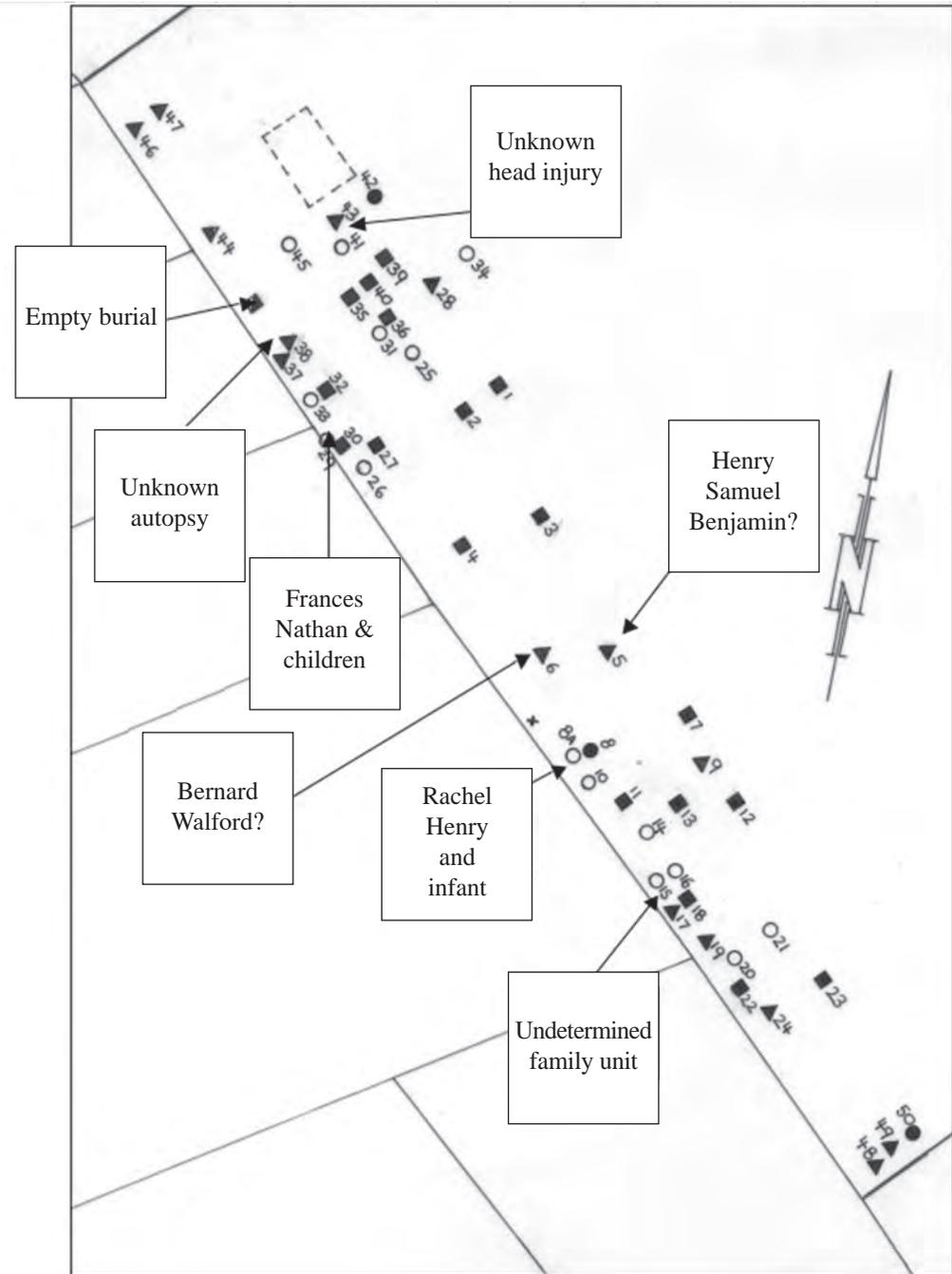
An empty burial was exposed between burials 4 and 38 towards the south west corner of the cemetery block, indicating that the occupant had been exhumed and presumably moved to Cornelian Bay. Given that the size of the burial silhouette suggests an adult occupant, the most likely candidates are Judah Solomon, Katherine Davis or Esther Hyams who are known to have been removed from Harrington Street to Cornelian Bay. Other similar re-locations may have occurred, but unfortunately the Cornelian Bay records do not indicate their identities.

### **Unknown autopsy**

The cranium of burial 38 has been cut in half laterally with a bone saw. Such a characteristic bisection is presumably the result of a state sanctioned post mortem/autopsy. As the individual was identified as an adult male, All Hobart Supreme court inquest papers between the 1820s and 1870s were perused for adult Jewish males with suspected maladies of the cranium. Only one individual was found, this being Harris Rosenberg who died in 1857 aged 64. A resulting inquest held on 25 September that year determined that he died from an 'Effusion on the brain'. This type of malady might have conceivably necessitated a major intrusive inspection of this nature.

#### **Unknown head injury**

Likewise the cranium of burial 43 displayed signs of a massive head injury that most likely caused the subject's death. Unfortunately an examination of all state inquest documentation failed to reveal a male person with wounds of this nature who died/was buried in Hobart.



Plan showing possible grave identifications based on burial characteristics and historic burial records.

## 12.0 REFERENCES

### Publications.

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Register of burials in Tasmania 1839–1933. Ref. 34/2. Archives Office Tasmania.

Register of deaths in Hobart 1838–1870 Ref. 35/1 to 35/7. Archives Office Tasmania.

### Periodicals

*Hobart Town Courier*

*Mercury*

### Survey diagrams

Drainage Board plan Number 46. c1910. Held by Hobart City Council.

Title survey Nos. 168R/15, LC 4906, 92532. Held by Lands Titles Office, Hobart.

### Historic photographs

Three views of cemetery taken in January, 1941. Held by Archives Office of Tasmania. Ref. NS 1029/29–31

### 13.0 APPENDIX

#### 13.1 Final list of known interments at Harrington Street Jewish cemetery based on all known historic sources.

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Date of Death	Document Source/s	Other Details
1	SOLOMON Isaac	M	66 years	1850	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1952 TAMEOT	
2	SOLOMON John	M	10 months	1852	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1952 TAMEOT	Son of Lewis & Esther Solomon
3	MOSES Emanuel	M	61 years	1841	1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Leaving a widow
4	BARNETT Isaac	M			1952 TAMEOT	
5	BENJAMIN Henry Samuel	M	42 years	1852	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Appears exhumed/ Widow & six children
6	WALFORD Bernard	M	66 years	1828	1895 list/1952 TAMEOT	Headstone at Cornelian Bay
7	ATHAN Francic	M			1952 TAMEOT	Nathan?Francis?
8	NELSON Henry	M	7 months	1844	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1952 TAMEOT	Son of Benjamin Nelson
9	COHEN Sarah	F	53 years	1857	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Widow of Benjamin Cohen
10	LEVY Samuel	M	51 years	1870	Synag.list/1895 trans./ 1952 TAMEOT	Leaving a widow & 11 children
11	MOSES Barnett	M		1838	Synag.list/1952 TAMEOT	
12	SOLOMON Benjamin	M			1952 TAMEOT	
13	HECKSCHER Meyer	M	3 years	1838	Synag.list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	
14	MOSES Sophia	F	57 years	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Spouse of David Moses

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Date of Death	Document Source/s	Other Details
15	MARKS Sarah	F	69 years	1858	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1852 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Spouse of Phillip Marks
16	LEE Michael	M		1860	Synag.list/1952 TAMEOT	
17	BENJAMIN Eve	F	68 years	1852	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	
18	BENJAMIN Benjamin	M	62 years	1837	Synag.list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Headstone at Cornelian Bay
19	FRIEDMAN Henry	M	17 months	1838	Synag.list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Son of Isaac & Maria Friedman
20	FRIEDMAN Ellen	F	8–9 years	1856	Synag.list/1952 TAMEOT	Daughter of Isaac & Maria(info. from birth register)
21	MOSES Henrietta Rachel	F	13 years	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./	Daughter of Samuel & Rosetta Moses
22	LEVY Elizabeth	F	56/57 years	1849	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list./1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Widow of Philip Levy
23	JOSEPH Dinah	F	56 years	1844	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./ 1952 TAMEOT	Wife of Reuben Joseph
24	MOSS Phineas	M	70 years	1866	Synag.list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	H/stone on site
25	WOLFF Alfred	M	3yrs 6mths	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./1952 TAMEOT	Son of Henry & Grace Wolff
26	BECK Solomon	M	46 years	1871	Synag.list/1895 trans.	
27	NATHAN Henry	M	10 months	1863	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	Son of Mark & H. Nathan
28	LYONS Lewis	M	65 years	1871	Synag.list/1895 trans.	

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Date of Death	Document Source/s	Other Details
29	LEVY Sarah	F	4yrs 7mths	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Daughter of Lazarus & Rebecca Levy
30	ABRAHAM Hannah	F	63 years	1864	1895 trans.	
31	MYERS Dinah	F	10 weeks	1854	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Daughter of Emanuel Moses & Matilda Myers
32	LEWIN James	M	60 years	1854	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
33	LEVY Woolfe/Wolf	M	10 weeks	1855	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	Son of Lazarus & Rebecca Levy
34	WOLFF Frederick Benjamin	M	1yr 7mths	1855	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Son of Henry & Grace Wolff
35	LEVY Rachel	F	5 months	1856	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Daughter of Philip & Mary Levy
36	GOLDSMITH Emanuel	M	2 months	1856	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
37	ROSENBERG Harris	M	64 years	1857	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
38	FRIEDMAN Hellan	F	–	1838	Synag.list/1952 TAMEOT	
39	JOSEPH Reuben	M	72 years	1862	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	
40	MOSES David Lionel	M	18 years	1845	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	Headstone found on site/Son of Henry Moses, London
41	SOLOMON Esther	F	86 years	1861	Synag.list/Jewish death list.1895 trans.	Spouse of Judah Solomon
42	MOSES Samuel	M	–	–	1952 TAMEOT	Samuel & Rosetta Moses listed as parents in birth registry(1843)
43	MARKS Phillip	M	86 years	1864	Synag.list/1895 trans.	Widower of Sarah Marks
44	RHEUBEN Rosetta	F		1865	Synag.list/1895 trans.	Wife of Abraham
45	SUSMAN Sophia	F	2 months?	1862	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	Daughter of Leo & Mary Susman
46	SUSMAN Leonora	F	3 months	1866	1895 transcript	Daughter of Leo & Mary Susman

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Date of Death	Document Source/s	Other Details
47	MOSES Sophia	F	57 years	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans./ 1952 TAMEOT	Spouse of David Moses
48	MOSES Sarah	F	89 years	1861	1895 transcript	Widow of Emanuel Marks
49	HENRY Rachel & Infant	F	37 years	1852	1895 transcript	
50	HARRIS Maria	F	24 years	1861	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	
51	MOSES Infant of E&M	M	5 days	1855	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/	Son of Emanuel & Mathilda Moses
52	NATHAN Frances	F	36 years	1844	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	Spouse of Michael Nathan
53	NATHAN Infant of Frances	M	infant	1844	Synag.list	Infant of Frances & Michael Nathan
54	MARKS Catherine	F	3 months	1851	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Daughter of Solomon & Esther Marks
55	HYAMS Abraham	M	7 years	1851	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Son of Israel & Esther Hyams
56	SAUNDERS Alexander	M	63 years	1851	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
57	MOCCATTA Jonathan	M	52 years	1852	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
58	MYERS Leah	F	2 years 3months	1852	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Daughter of Julia Myers
59	HIRSCH Moses	M	75 years	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
60	LEVY Isaac	M	4 years 3months	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list/1895 trans.	Son of Godfrey Barnett & Sarah Levy
61	EMANUEL Fanny	F	8 years	1853	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	Daughter of John & Caroline
62	DAVIS John	M	51 years	1860	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
63	MARKS Henry	M		1864	Synag.list/Jewish deaths list	
64	NATHAN Jane	F		1871	Synag.list	

**13.2 AOT Jewish deaths list (1844–1863)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>
Nathan, Frances	36
Joseph, Dinah	56
Nelson, Henry	7 months
Moses, David Lionel	18
Levi, Elizabeth	56
Moses, Infant son	–
Cohen, Elezear	–
Solomon, Isaac	66
Marks, Catherine	3.5 months
Hyams, Abraham	7
Saunders, Alexander	63
Benjamin, Henry Samuel	42
Benjamin, Eve	68
Myers, Leah	2+ years
Solomon, John	10 months
Hirsch, Moses	75
Moses, Sophia	57
Moccatta, Jonathan	52
Levy, Sarah	4 years 7 months
Levy, Isaac	4 years 3 months
Wolfe, Alfred	3.5 years
Emmanuel, Fanny	8
Moses, Henrietta Rachel	13
Cohen, Simon	2 years 9 months
Myers, Dinah	10 weeks
Lewin, James	60
Levy, Wolfe	10 weeks
Infant son of Emanuel Moses + Mathilda Myers	5 days
Wolfe, Frederick Benjamin	1 year 7 months
Levy, Rachel	5 months
Davis	–
Solomon, Judah	72
Goldsmith, Emmanuel	2 months
Cohen, Sarah	53

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>
Rosenberg, Harris	64
Marks, Sarah	69
Hyams, Esther	Adult (45?)
Davis, John	51
Solomon, Esther	86
Harris, Maria	24
Sussman, Sophia	2 months
Joseph, Reuben	72
Nathan, Henry	10 months
Marks, Henry	–

### 13.3 1895 Dawson list (Tasmaniana Library)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>
BECK Solomon	46
NATHAN Henry	10 months
SOLOMON Esther	86
ABRAHAM Hannah	63
LEVY Wolff	10 weeks
LYONS Lewis	65
MARKS Phillip	86
RHEUBEN Rosetta	
SUSMAN Sophia	2 months
SUSMAN Leonora	3 months
MOSES Emanuel	61
HECKSEKER Meyer	3 years
MOSES Sophia	57
MARKS Sarah	69
MOSES Sarah	89
LEVY Isaac	4 years
FRIEDMAN Henry	17 months
HENRY Rachel	37
HENRY Infant	infant
BENJAMIN Henry Samuel	42
WALFORD Bernard	66
BENJAMIN Benjamin	62

Name	Age
BENJAMIN Eve	68
MOSES Henrietta Rachel	13
LEVY Elizabeth	57
HARRIS Maria	24
JOSEPH Reuben	72
MOSES David Lionel	18
MOSES Infant	4 days
COHEN Sarah	53
LEVY Samuel	51
NATHAN Frances	36
NATHAN Infant	infant
WOLFF Alfred	3 years 6 months
JOSEPH Dinah	56
MOSS Phineas	70

### 13.4 1956 Synagogue list

Name	Date	Name	Date
Bernard Walford	1828	Henrietta Rachel Moses	1853
Benjamin Benjamin	1837	Simon Cohen	1854
Henry Friedman	1838	Dinah Myers	1854
Barnett Moses	1838	James Lewin	1854
Myer Heckscher	1838	Woolfe Levy	1855
Hellan Friedman	1838	Infant son E & M Moses	1855
Frances Nathan & infant	1844	Frederick Benjamin Wolff	1855
Dinah Joseph	1844	Ellen Friedman	1856
Henry Nelson	1844	David Lionel Moses	1845
Rachel Levi Davis	1856	Elizabeth Levy	1849
Emanuel Goldsmith	1856	Infant son Sam & Rosetta Moses	1849
Sarah Cohen	1857	Harris Rosenberg	1857
Isaac Solomon	1850	Sarah Marks	1858
Catherine Marks	1851	Michael Lee	1860
Abraham Hyams	1851	John Davis	1860
Alexander Saunders	1851	Maria Harris	1861

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Henry Samuel Benjamin	1852	Esther Solomon	1861
Jonathan Moccatta	1852	Sophia Sussman	1862
Eve Benjamin	1852	Reuben Joseph	1862
Leah Myers	1852	Henry Nathan	1863
John Solomon	1852	Philip Marks	1864
Moses Hirsch	1853	Henry Marks	1864
Sophia Moses	1853	Rosetta Reuben	1865
Sarah Levy	1853	Phineas Moss	1866
Alfred Wolff	1853	Jane Nathan	1871
Isaac Levy	1853	Lewis Lyons	1871
Sarah Rachel Levy	1853	Solomon Beck	1871
Fanny Emanuel	1853	Sarah Moses	–
		Sam Levy	–

### 13.5 1952 TAMEOT list

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>
SOLOMON Isaac	66 years
SOLOMON John	10 months
MOSES Emanuel	61 years
BARNETT Isaac	
BENJAMIN Henry Samuel	42 years
WALFORD Bernard	66 years
ATHAN Francic	
NELSON Henry	7 months
COHEN Sarah	52 years
LEVY Samuel	51 years
MOSES Barnett	
SOLOMON Benjamin	
HECKSEKER Meuey	3 years
MOSES Sophia	57 years
MARKS Sarah	69 years
LEE Michael	
BENJAMIN Eve	68 years
BENJAMIN Benjamin	62 years

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>
FRIEDMAN Henry	17 months
FRIEDMAN Ellen	8/9 years
MOSES Henrietta Rachel	13 years
LEVY Elizabeth	56/57 years
JOSEPH Dinah	56 years
MOSS Phineas	70 years
D J (none)	
WOLFF Alfred	3 years 6 months
BECK Solomon	46 years
NATHAN Henry	10 months
LYONS Lewis	65 years
LEVY Sarah Rachel	4 years 7 months
ABRAHAM Hannah	63 years
MYERS Dinah	10 weeks
LEWIN James	60 years
LEVY Wolfe	10 weeks
WOLFF Frederick Benjamin	1 year 7 months
GOLDSMITH Emanuel	2 months
ROSENBERG Harris	64 years
COHEN Simon	2 years 9 months
FRIEDMAN Hellan	
MOSES (none)	
JOSEPH Reuben	72 years
MOSES David Lionel	18 years
SOLOMON Esther	86 years
MOSES Samuel	

# THE CHARISMATIC CAROLINE ISAACSON

*Howard A. Freeman*

There must be printer's ink in the veins of the Isaacson family. Peter Isaacson AM, DFC, AFC, DFM, in addition to his highly distinguished career as a wartime pilot, founded a newspaper and magazine publishing empire. Peter's story is told in Denis Warner's biography of him, *Pathfinder*, in which it is related that he followed his mother Caroline to work at the *Age* when he was only sixteen.

Peter was no doubt inspired by his remarkable mother, Caroline, herself a gifted linguist and writer. Always a broadminded cosmopolitan, Caroline was born in Vienna in 1900 to a French mother, Bettina (née Lipmann), and Dutch father, Emile Jacobson. Emile was a director of Royal Holland Lloyd, a large shipping company chaired by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. The first ink in Caroline's veins may have come from a Prussian-born grandfather on her mother's side, Raphael (later Sir Raphael) Tuck of Christmas card fame, the founder of Britain's picture postcard industry.

## **Lynka**

Caroline Jacobson, known to all as Lynkushka or Lynka, was at first privately educated by a governess, and before the First World War began she travelled extensively with her parents, settling in 1914 in London, where she finished her schooling. She spoke seven languages and wrote freelance articles whilst still very young, then began pre-medical studies at Kings College London at the age of eighteen. Her studies, begun while the war was still raging, were to be abandoned for marriage.

Within a year she had met and married the much older Lieutenant Arnold Isaacson, an Australian soldier then in England as aide-de-camp to General Sir William Birdwood. It must have seemed so romantic to Caroline in the euphoric days at war's end. The wedding was in late March 1919 at Dalston Synagogue, and the rabbi was assisted by Rev. Jacob Danglow, a good friend of Arnold's family, in London on a tour of duty as army chaplain. The bride was given away by her uncle, Sir Adolph Tuck.

The couple honeymooned in Australia and returned to London. Arnold's own father, Solomon, had been lured from Lithuania to America, and then on to the Victorian goldfields in 1852, where he eventually prospered. Solomon later returned to Europe to find and marry a young wife (not unlike his son, some 60 years later), and then returned to live in Stawell, to become a highly respected community leader.

Then, six years after their marriage, Arnold and Lynka, with their two children Peter and Joan, set sail for Australia, at Arnold's insistence. But Lynka, who was happy in her cosmopolitan Englishness and sad to leave London, brought along her sister Irma for company. Her sister was later to marry Dr Cecil Pincus, a well-known Melbourne dentist. Years later the sisters were to be joined in Melbourne by their mother, Bettina, following the death of Lynka's father, Emile Jacobson. Bettina, regarded as eccentric and always staunchly French, habitually wore the Cross of Lorraine.

### Life in journalism

Described in that iconic publication *Australian Women's Weekly* as capable, charming and full of personality, Caroline Isaacson had a distinguished professional career as an 'A' Grade journalist. In 1928 she had approached Sir Geoffrey Syme, managing editor of the *Age*, for a reporting job. Her family needed the money – Arnold's toy business failed, mainly because of the rising unemployment that presaged the depression of 1929. Lynka was soon appointed editor of the women's pages. She then became editor of the *Leader*, which was a weekly magazine put out by the *Age*. It had a section called 'The Corner' and Caroline became 'Viola', giving advice to readers, mostly countrywomen. She was the editor of a series of books under the title of 'For Australian Women: The *Leader* Spare Corner Book'. She no doubt admired the courage and resourcefulness of these women, and later, during the Second World War, Caroline was busy travelling throughout Victoria speaking to meetings of the Country Women's Association and to the Red Cross.

One of Lynka's administrative duties at the *Age*, at a time when few women were employed in management roles by newspapers, was to organise the toy fund and encourage donations to purchase toys for children who were in hospital at Christmas. Often, those toys were delivered by her and her two children to those in hospital. In her 'spare' time she taught English to refugees, and she and Arnold sponsored a number of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. Lynka helped them to re-establish



Arnold and Lynka Isaacson, c. 1928

themselves in Australia, and she became a member of the board of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism.

In the early critical days of the war Lynka was the only woman in Australia to work as a foreign news editor, at the *Age*. This required her to be on duty before 6.30 a.m. and stay until late, being also responsible for preparing hourly bulletins on the progress of the war. She also contributed to the Literary Supplement at the *Age*.

### **The Freeland League**

Following the death of Theodor Herzl in 1904, the dispirited Zionist movement split. The breakaway Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO), formed by Israel Zangwill, was based in London. It aimed to establish an autonomous settlement of Jews in a sufficiently large territory 'in which the predominant majority of the population shall be Jewish'. Erez Israel was regarded as one of these territories, but only one. Among the locations considered were Uganda, Madagascar, the Crimea, Birobidjan, Angola, Cyrenaica, Mesopotamia, and Mexico, among many other possibilities.

Zangwill considered Australia as a possible location, and in 1907 he spoke to Alfred Deakin, then in London, who quickly dismissed the concept of accepting a separate class of immigrants with its own laws. Two years later, Zangwill again proposed the idea, this time to the premier of West Australia, with the same result. The ITO folded in 1925, but was replaced in its task by at least two other groups. They also failed, because, after the Balfour Declaration in 1917, all the efforts of settlement became centred on Palestine.

In the absence of any progress, in 1935 a number of members of these failed societies met in London to establish what became known as the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization. Its founders and leaders were Abraham Rosin and Isaac Steinberg. They proposed that non-Zionist Jews might consider settling in Angola, Ecuador, or the Kimberley – and, as a last-gasp, before largely collapsing in 1948, the League suggested Surinam.

In 1934, the Yiddish writer Melech Ravitch, who had been touring the world, went to Darwin. He wrote an article that was published in the *Argus* on 15 January 1934 about the opportunities for Jewish refugees in the area. He had been told that Northern Australia, as it was known, could easily support one million white people. Some 60,000 Jews had left Germany in the preceding two years, and he thought there were 30,000 German refugees waiting in Europe for an opportunity to emigrate. 'Jews', he said, 'were of strong vitality and resourcefulness and would make ideal settlers for tropical Australia'.

Just a day later, on 16 January 1934, the *Argus* published an article headed 'Homes for Jews' reporting that Portugal was offering land for a territory in West Africa funded by money from the United States. But by 1935 Palestine was widely mooted as a refuge for Jews, and much discussion was published in the press about

Jewish loans for that purpose. Zionists in Australia urged international action, and all nations were urged to open their gates to Jewish refugees.

No doubt remembering the earlier efforts of Zangwill, and inspired by the hopeful reports of the North from Ravitch, the Freeland League's secretary, Joseph Leftwich, approached the Australian trade minister, Earle Page, who was in London during May 1936. Zangwill also talked at length with the high commissioner, Stanley Bruce, a few months later. Things began to look promising to the executive of the League, and the prime minister, John Curtin, himself then suggested that Steinberg and his colleagues could come to inspect the Kimberley for themselves.

Probably the first mention of a Freeland League colonisation proposal in the press was to appear in the *Argus* on 17 January, and again on 25 February 1938. The *Argus*, under the editorship of Errol Knox, seemed interested in the proposition, if not necessarily enthusiastic. The Isaacsons were friends of the Knox family and Lynka would have contributed much to the discussions.

Then, on 22 October 1938, the *Argus* published an article from Sydney saying that The Millions Club, a philanthropic organisation with wealthy benefactors, had approved in principle a plan to settle 25,000 Jewish refugees on Melville Island, some 40 miles north of Darwin. The details were to be worked out with the Freeland League, but a lease over 1,500,000 acres would be available for an initial term of one year. This would give time to assess the suitability and potential of the island. Failing this, there were other proposals worthy of consideration in both Northern and Western Australia.

The following week, the *Argus* published a comment from London in which the Freeland League confirmed that Melville Island was under consideration, although a splinter group, ENCOL, had denounced it as impractical. ENCOL quoted a letter from its representative in Melbourne, Hans Klein. His letter said, with sarcasm and more than a hint of dramatic irony:

Melville Island is as suitable for white colonisation as either the North Pole or Devil's Island. It is an island of mosquitos, snakes and more than tropical heat. For my part I would prefer to be in a Jewish cemetery in Vienna.

With war looking highly likely, the Australian government was now unwilling to allow more than a token number of Jews to enter, and even that was to be over a period of at least three years. Then, by June 1939, it had introduced the Aliens Registration Act. The previous month, in May 1939, Steinberg, on a three-month visa, had landed in Fremantle, with letters of reference from Bevin, Attlee and Leo Amery (who was Jewish, although not widely known as such) as well as a number of church leaders and other influential British thinkers. He immediately went on a long plane and car trip to the promising cattle country of the Kimberley, in company with a member of the Durack family, owners of the now-favoured

area, and an enthusiastic young agriculturist. They were to spend nearly a month there on the inspection trip, and Steinberg returned brimming with expectation of the favourable report he and the agriculturist would write.

### Tasmania

But the Kimberley Scheme, in the eyes of most except Dr Steinberg and a few supporters, was suddenly sidelined by the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939, and Steinberg became trapped in Australia with a visa that had just expired.

Well-versed in the current issues and the earlier proposals through her journalism, Lynka was inspired by all she had heard of the Kimberley Scheme, and by what she knew was becoming the desperate plight of the Jews of Europe. She would also have been acutely aware of the deep divisions within the Australian Jewish community, not the least of which arose because the Zionists were opposed to any proposal that deflected attention from the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the promise that had been offered by the Balfour Declaration just 22 years before.

Lynka, always an active person, had a love of bushwalking, fostered by her brother-in-law Dr Cecil Pincus; she became a member of his bushwalking club. On one of these walks near Melbourne in 1940 Pincus introduced her to a young man, Critchley Parker Jr, who apparently had independently developed a keen interest in Steinberg's ideas.

Parker, some ten years younger than Lynka, was an attractive-looking man, fragile and sensitive, as well as 'a little bit lost'. According to Lynka's daughter Joan, this would have appealed to Lynka, and their shared humanitarian interests ensured that a friendship would develop.

Parker was the son of a well-known and influential Tasmanian businessman and publisher with extensive mining



*Lynka, front row second from right, with Peter and Joan, and her sisters, c. 1932*

interests, and had grown up surrounded by dreams of making Tasmania great. Critchley had private income and no known profession, and he seemed to be searching for a goal in life. He was probably falling in love with Lynka, according to Joan, and would take a very personal interest in her appearance, intelligence and ideas.

Lynka found this flattering, and a close and happy relationship soon developed. Joan, a teenager at the time, was certainly not worried about her mother's friendship with Critchley, and thought of him as just another of her mother's enthusiasms. No doubt, the relationship was more serious than an 'enthusiasm', because Lynka once asked Joan, 'What would you do if I married Critchley?' Joan replied 'I'd leave, I'd just go', realising later that this was a typical remark for a 16-year-old.

Lynka already knew Dr Steinberg, who used to visit her home when in Melbourne, and there she introduced him to Critchley Parker. Parker, although he had been a Kimberley enthusiast, was by then convinced that Tasmania would be a perfect haven for Jewish refugees. Steinberg, like Lynka, became attracted to the concept of a Tasmanian project. As a result, Parker soon arranged a meeting in Canberra between Steinberg and the Tasmanian premier Robert Cosgrove. Shortly afterwards, in November 1940, Parker received a letter from the Tasmanian premier's secretary. The letter suggested that Steinberg should visit Tasmania in January, at government expense. It went on to ask that Mrs Isaacson of the *Age* be given a duplicate of the letter, and invited on the visit, as she was known by Dr Steinberg to be interested in this matter.

With encouragement at that level, and Parker's wide contacts, a fact-finding visit was arranged in the New Year, in perfect weather, for a group consisting of Steinberg, Parker, Lynka Isaacson and a photographer (brother of Cyril Pearl, the author and journalist). The visitors went to the Port Davey area, in SW Tasmania, where Critchley was convinced that cattle, tin mining and agriculture would be successful. He envisaged the creation of a 'new Jerusalem', an example to the rest of the country that would 'change the economic and financial system in Australia'. On returning, a letter from the premier himself crowned their visit, approving in principle the establishment of a settlement for Jewish refugees from Europe, but giving no commitment.

Without revealing it to Steinberg, Parker had based his dream for Port Davey on the Soviet collective model. Had he known this, it was likely that Steinberg would have rejected the Tasmanian project out of hand. As it was, Steinberg had become luke-warm regarding the Tasmanian dream. But Steinberg had not abandoned his own dream, and he approached the new Labor prime minister in October. No support was forthcoming from that direction and the government told Steinberg that it had shelved further consideration because of the deteriorating war situation in the Pacific – the additional but unstated reason was that the government did not trust the former Soviet commissar and his past history.

Whilst the lack of official support for the Kimberley scheme would continue to be a cause of deep divisions in the Jewish community until the end of the war, the Tasmanian project had become an obsession for Parker, who by then had a vision of a model city at Port Davey designed by none less than Le Corbusier himself! In March 1942 Parker set out for the southwest on his own, and there met disaster. Ill-equipped and confronted with rain, hail and violent gales, he was soon to die of exposure, compounded by starvation. His body was not found until September although his death had been presumed since April. The senseless tragedy was deeply distressing for all who had been involved, but for none as much as for Lynka, to whom a number of personal letters had been left by Parker. His notebook, itself a gift to him from Lynka, also survived, and, like the letters, shows both his devotion to the dream as well as his deep affection for her.

### **Return to reality**

By July 1942 Lynka had resigned from the *Age* after nearly fourteen years as a valued journalist and joined the Women's Army Service, this move no doubt providing a distraction from the sadness, if not the grief, of Critchley's death. She was soon appointed to the Directorate of Army Public Relations under Brigadier (later Sir) Errol Knox, with the rank of captain. She became a field press censor and part of her role was to conduct journalists to various military installations. She was attached at various times to Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville, and Cairns, and among special assignments acted as a press relations officer to Generals Blamey and Savage. This she combined with special assignments for Red Cross, Victorian Division, and gave talks to Red Cross and Country Women's Association meetings all over Australia.

Lynka was placed on the retired list at the end of 1943. But retirement was not a word she understood. Soon becoming fashion writer for *Vogue*, and a feature writer on the *Argus*, in 1945 Lynka was appointed editor of the Women's Page for the *Argus*. The managing editor of the *Argus* was the dynamic Errol Knox, for whom she had worked earlier in army public relations. Although editor of the women's page, Lynka also wrote extensively – for example on Daisy Bates, 'The Aborigines' Friend', on the nurse Sister Burchill, and on Judith Listowel, the international authority on foreign affairs. She later, in 1948, became owner-editor-reporter of her own publication, the *Dandenong Ranges News*. Her well-modulated speaking voice was to allow her to make a considerable number of broadcasts over commercial and national radio stations.

Also at this very busy time for Lynka, 1948, she was asked by Harold Boas to become honorary editor of the short-lived *Australian Jewish Outlook*. Boas, a successful Perth architect, financed it from Western Australia. Together they wanted to create an Australian version of *Commentary*, the New York periodical magazine of Jewish ideas and contemporary issues, which had been established in 1945. This involvement, typically wholehearted, was evidence of Lynka's long-

standing concern with Jewish cultural social and political affairs, both national and international.

The *Outlook* was to be in direct competition with, and soon suffered the same fate as, a somewhat longer-lived periodical, the *Australian Jewish Forum*. (Lynka's friend Dr Isaac Steinberg had established the *Forum* in 1941. Steinberg, a similarly charismatic figure, had arrived in Australia from England in 1939, and became stranded here during the war. His ideas on Jewish Territorialism were soon to become most important in Lynka's life, as described above.)

Then, in the middle 1950s, Lynka joined her son Peter's firm as editorial director of three suburban newspapers, the *Southern Cross* (Brighton), the *Elsternwick Advertiser*, and the *Prahran News*. She had become a shareholder in the newspapers after she and her husband Arnold had lent money to Peter to help support the *Southern Cross* during its first difficult year.

### **Jewish community activity**

Throughout the war, Lynka's mind was preoccupied with great anxiety for her son Peter, who was flying with the Pathfinders over enemy territory in Europe. He was to complete 45 raids over Germany, Italy and occupied Europe with terrible odds against surviving – Bomber Command's casualties were catastrophic. When Peter returned to Melbourne in 1943 as a much-decorated war hero, Lynka's relief must have made her feel able to throw herself into Jewish communal affairs. In July 1943, the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board (VJAB), precursor to the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, held a civic reception for Flight-Lieutenant Peter Isaacson at Samuel Myers Hall, Charnwood Grove, St Kilda.

Lynka, in pending 'retirement mode' from the Women's Army Service, became involved with the Zionist Federation of Australia, of which the remarkable and inspirational Alec Masel was president. At the same time she was writing for both *Vogue* and the *Argus*, wishing to be 'fully stretched'. In 1945 she was asked to provide publicity for the Youth Aliyah Appeal – 'Bring the Children to Palestine Now'. The appeal was sponsored and supported by the VJAB. In July Lynka successfully organised a major communal dinner that was held in St Kilda Town Hall.

She had actively launched herself into Jewish communal affairs, where her skills were badly needed. A number of issues preoccupied the VJAB at that time, and included immigration and resettlement of Jewish refugees, as well as the immigration of non-Jewish German nationals. The doubts about the effectiveness of the de-Nazification process, and the anguished matter of the presence of Jewish kapos within the community were causes of acute anxiety.

By 1949 the need was urgent to establish a Public Relations Committee, and, once it was created, Norman Rothfield (who was also president of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism) became its chairman. This need was hastened by a well-publicised action for defamation by Dr Fanny Reading

of Sydney against the National Press Limited (publisher of *Smith's Weekly*) over allegations of disloyalty to Britain by Jewish organisations. Dr Reading lost her action on a technicality, but the result was seen by many as judicial antisemitism. In 1950, Rothfield stepped aside and Sam Cohen became the chairman of the public relations committee. Cohen, in that year, set up the Anti-German Migration Committee.

A year later that committee was itself replaced by a Public Relations Bureau. This resulted from a compromise to allow the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism (which had been established in 1942 in the face of deep suspicion that it would stir up trouble) to remain affiliated with the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD), as the VJAB had just become, but without the Council continuing as the de facto public relations mouthpiece for the community. From about 1949 the Jewish Advisory Board was beginning to view the Council as acting as a communist front, and moves began to purge the Council from the leadership of the community. No evidence was ever offered to prove that the Council was a communist front, but the perception persisted and was no doubt encouraged by its opponents. The reason was no doubt the fact that the Council failed to condemn communism.

Sam (later Senator) Cohen was incensed by the loss of his Anti-German Migration Committee and resigned, objecting also to the creation of the role of director of the upstart Bureau at a proposed salary of £1,000. A part time public relations officer was the compromise, and Lynka was appointed to the position early in 1952.

She thus found herself at the centre of the problems that were causing deep tensions within the VJBD. In late 1952 the Board had discussions with the ACTU regarding the government's immigration policies and the types of immigrants who were to be encouraged to come to Australia. The major concern was immigration of Germans and their wartime allies. The new German ambassador was said to have been a notorious antisemite and former Nazi, bringing the de-Nazification process into disrepute. Communal outrage was centred on the visit to Australia of the German pianist Walter Gieseking, accused of being a Nazi collaborator during the war. The government's policy, as stated in discussions with executives of VJBD and ECAJ by immigration minister Harold Holt, was not to prevent immigration on a purely national or ethnic basis. The VJBD supported this policy in principle. It is likely that Lynka attended these discussions as the Board's newly appointed public relations officer.

In 1955 the VJBD criticised its own Public Relations Committee for the latter's relationship with the Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, as it had overstepped its mandate to have a general discussion with the Council on German entry, and not to revive public opposition to German entry. Lynka herself must have been beyond reproach, because following Alfred Ruskin's advice, the VJBD, in 1955, made Lynka's position full-time. Until that time, the only paid

employee of the VJBD had been the office secretary, Miss Trudy Kingsley.

During her time with the VJBD Lynka worked closely with Walter Jona, who was a young but very active member of the Public Relations Committee – he was later to become a State member of parliament and a distinguished Victorian cabinet minister. He recalls that her enthusiasm was infectious but was given only after she had carefully considered proposals and people with perception, and that she would reject a proposal if she could not fully support it. He recalls her as a great organiser of people who could inspire them to become active even when they had no prior experience with her projects.

When Mordechai (Max) Nurock became Israel's envoy ('minister') to Australia in 1952, Lynka developed a close personal friendship with him and he became a frequent visitor to Sassafra with her friend Ilse Hallenstein. Walter Jona, also a frequent visitor to Sassafra, at the time was pressing for an Israeli consul to be appointed to Melbourne, to represent Israel at official, as well as communal, functions in the same way as other sovereign states were represented. Israel was being represented in an unofficial capacity by Melbourne Zionists if the minister was not able to attend. Nurock realised the good sense of this proposal, and although funds for such a position were scarce, warmly supported the appointment of Lynka to this role. Although she seriously considered it in talks with Jona, she realised her appointment would have met with strong opposition and even resentment from others who had stronger Zionist links than she.

### **The final trip**

In 1955 Lynka decided to return to journalism and take up an important editorial role with Peter Isaacson Publications, but she maintained her friendship with Max Nurock until he left Australia in 1958. She worked for Peter Isaacson Publications for five years and brought a professional touch to the editorial side of the business, driving in each day from her home in Sassafra, and later from her home in Croydon. Her long-time friend and admirer Pamela Ruskin remembered the Croydon house well. It was Lynka's version of an English country home, and was enhanced in Pamela's memory because it was called 'Ruskin Park'. Lynka was to retire from Peter's business only after her husband Arnold passed away, in early 1960, and she left for England.

Six months after Arnold's death she was in London, almost ready by now to stay there in retirement. She lived there in great comfort, reuniting with family and friends and appreciating the cultural benefits of all that was available. However, with ink still running in her veins, she was soon to accept an interesting commission from the Melbourne *Herald* to write a series of articles about Israel. In 1961 she set off from London by sea, to arrive in Israel for the opening of the trial of Adolph Eichmann. Lynka had journalist friends and acquaintances in Israel.

No doubt using her links with Max Nurock, Lynka was able to obtain a long interview, followed by a lunch, with Golda Meir, then the foreign minister. As

a result of that meeting, Lynka was asked by Golda to set up an Australia-Israel Association when she returned home, and Walter Jona says that no doubt Golda lit the flame again.

Leaving Israel to return to London at the end of the Eichmann trial, Lynka travelled to Germany where she interviewed Mrs Eichmann, who assured Lynka her husband was innocent and would be home for Christmas. The verdict of course was otherwise, and Eichmann was duly hanged.

Back in London she attended a royal garden party, then prepared to leave for home, visiting France (where she met Maurice Chevalier, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor), Spain, and Switzerland, where she attended meetings at the Red Cross and the European Commission for Refugees. Germany and Austria followed, where she found that arrogance and militarism had not diminished.

Lynka again visited Israel, where she had further discussions about the Australia-Israel Association. The Israel Foreign Ministry also formally offered her the post of honorary consul in Melbourne. She then sailed from Haifa to Genoa, well and in good spirits, and she stayed in a pensione for a few days to await the arrival of a cousin who was to meet her there. She complained of being off colour when she arrived and saw a doctor who advised her to rest. Next morning the staff found she had passed away during the night in her sleep.

Her old friend Rabbi Brodie, by that time the Chief Rabbi, was able to expedite both the cremation and the funeral arrangements with the Italian authorities. Among the many obituaries was one in the *Australian Jewish News* by Lynka's friend Pamela Ruskin. In the early 1950s Lynka had praised Pamela to Tony Rubinstein, the editor and publisher of the *AJN*, following a short story competition run by the Kadimah. As a result of Lynka's good judgement, Pamela was offered a position and remained as a journalist at the *AJN* for many years, always grateful to Lynka Isaacson.

### **Author's note**

I am grateful to the Isaacson family, particularly to the remarkable Peter Isaacson and his sister Joan Beck, for their encouragement and assistance with a number of 'sensitive' matters about their mother that were important to include in an article of this nature. A great deal of time and informed insight was afforded me by the late Hon. Walter Jona and Mrs Pamela Ruskin, who were friends and colleagues of Lynka – Walter through the VJBD years and Pamela through journalism. The more complete story of what happened with the Kimberley scheme is well told in Leon Gettler's book *Unpromised Land* published in Fremantle in 1993. The primary resource for the Parker story was Dr Hilary Rubinstein's article 'Critchley Parker (1911-1942): Australian Martyr for Jewish Refugees' in this *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, dated November 1990. I also relied on interviews that had been conducted by Bayden Findlay during the preparation of *Critchley*, a TV movie he wrote and directed for the Victorian College of the Arts

School of Film and Television, and I thank Bayden for his support. I was inspired by Dr Kevin Murray, Director of Craft Victoria, who did much original research into the Tasmanian venture and wrote about in *The Age* in January 2004 – the idea for an article about Lynka herself had festered in my mind because of Kevin! A great deal of information was obtained from Denis Warner's book *Pathfinder*, the Peter Isaacson story in the air and on the ground, published by Information Australia, Melbourne, in 2000.

## **MI DOR LE DOR (‘FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION’)**

*Dorothy Graff*

A voicemail message on Thursday, 19 April 2007: ‘Please ring me urgently, it’s intensely personal,’ could not be ignored. I returned Dr Howard Freeman’s call as soon as I could. ‘This is one of the strangest phone calls I will ever make’, he offered, ‘are you sitting down?’ I assured him I was. From that moment, the most astonishing story unfolded.

Howard, president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (Vic.), had been contacted by a philatelic dealer who, in turn, had been approached by a Tasmanian antique dealer wanting to sell my paternal grandparents’ letters with their stamped envelopes sent from Germany to my parents in Australia. The letters dated from 1939 to my grandmother’s release from Theresienstadt in 1945 and then her transitory time in Switzerland until 1946. The collection ended with telegrams and letters sent to my parents from friends congratulating them on my birth in 1946. A series of life events. How did all this happen?

I can only surmise that my father decided that the letters served no further purpose for the family, that they were emotional baggage, and that he did not want me to be burdened by them. However, with his keen interest in history, he did not destroy the letters, but gave them to someone (still unknown to me) who must have sensed a commercial opportunity and sold them to the Tasmanian dealer. The dealer had stored them for ten years and now wanted to sell them. After a reflective few days, I decided that, without question, I needed to buy back the letters. Now the letters are home again. The philatelic dealer has his stamped envelopes and everyone’s needs are satisfied.

My father had, however, kept all official documents, his mother’s initial letters of freedom and telegrams announcing this. I have included their contents, as well, in this article.

The purpose of my writing is to summarise, for history’s sake, the intense personal journeys of my grandparents and parents. They illustrate typical family experiences of many Central European Jews and the heritage into which many of us have been so fortunate to be born. Many readers will, no doubt, find similarities with their own family histories. I also wish to salute the decency of so many people who could help only by their private and effective acts of resistance to the war effort, often putting their own lives at risk.

## Some background

My grandmother, Blanca Graff, née Jacob, came from a large family on her paternal side. My grandfather, Benno, came from a medium sized family. They and their only child, Werner, my father, were a loving unit and close to their relatives on all sides. Family was central to their life. Benno, a country boy, had had minimal schooling. He eventually entered optics, and there followed an outstanding career full of innovations and many patents, he eventually becoming highly respected by the Berlin Optical Board. The board invited him to become an assessor and authority for the province of Prussia. I have one of his innovations to this day – Graff’s Stereo. This is probably the first stereoscopic lens invented that, with the help of prescribed exercises, could cure patients of their squint. In the Canberra War Memorial is another invention: a specially designed pair of glasses for First World War soldiers that could be worn comfortably underneath a gasmask. Why is it in that museum? It was taken from a captured German soldier!

Blanca was a devoted housewife who took pride in maintaining their home in perfect condition. She assisted Benno in his optical shop when required.

My father, in his autobiography of his years in Germany, describes himself as having been a shy and dutiful boy who followed his father into optics. During his teens, however, his leadership potential was recognised by a friend who threw him to the lions, so to speak. My father eventually took on ever more challenging leadership positions in the Deutsch Juedischer Jugend Bund (German Jewish Youth Organisation). Members engaged in intellectual thought, inviting speakers such as Martin Buber and Leo Baeck, enjoyed concerts and theatre together, weekend hiking, and gym activities. They were staunchly German and non-Zionist. My father eventually led all groups from one of the Berlin districts. To the end of his days, his closest friends were from this organisation, although all had migrated to the United Kingdom or the United States

My mother, Mary, by contrast, came from a Dresden medical family. Her father, Dr Leopold Joseph, was an acclaimed ear, nose and throat specialist who was frequently invited to America to lecture and practise (I have newspaper articles to this effect). Her mother, Lucie, was a refined lady who enjoyed entertaining and handicraft. They both died before the Second World War. Mary’s brother, Dr Walter Joseph, was forced to join the French Foreign Legion during the war and had his own story to tell. My mother completed a law degree in Germany, was thrown out of the Civil Service by the Nazis, travelled to Italy where she learned Italian in order to write her doctoral thesis in that language on family law. She did all this within two years and had her thesis accepted – no mean feat!

How my parents met, developed their relationship and eventually married in 1936 after ten years of friendship is a magical story, but not relevant here. Their marriage was ‘made in heaven’ from the beginning to the end. There was no doubt that they would work through any issue or problem together as one. I was fortunate to be born into this environment.

So to a final snippet of background information. How were my parents lucky enough to arrive in Melbourne on 26 March 1939, on the *Strathnaver*, the last ship leaving Europe on which refugees were allowed to take their possessions? They were additionally fortunate in that the packing of their goods was supervised by two kind Nazis who overlooked some of the prohibited items mum and dad were packing such as a stamp collection – absolutely ‘verboten’! The Nazis left the keys in the cupboard doors overnight, allowing my parents to take whatever they wanted, and did not check up the following morning. A simple act of defiance against orders, even in the presence of each other – two brave men.

By chance, in the early 1930s my mother had sat next to two Australian young ladies at a Dresden concert. She offered them her programme and they started chatting, each happy to practise their German and English respectively. Mum invited them to her home and showed them around town. They left their contact details with her. Thanks to my mother’s tidiness, when life was beginning to become tough in Germany, she found the addresses, wrote to the lady whose handwriting she could read and explained that she and my father wanted to emigrate to Australia. Madge Carleton replied that she would do whatever she could to help. Her brother, Carl, had contacts in the Department of Immigration – especially Don Chapman – and after a nine months’ wait an entry permit was granted. The Carletons met my parents at the ship in Port Melbourne, insisting that the new arrivals stay with them in Hawthorn until they could find their own accommodation; that took six weeks. The Carletons found office space for my father’s new optical career and brought his first patients to him. They also knew that Passover was approaching shortly after my parents arrived, found out that there was a synagogue in St Kilda, and drove my parents there and home again after the Seder service. The synagogue was Temple Beth Israel. We have been members ever since!

The intention was that Blanca and Benno would follow as soon as Mary and Werner had established themselves in their new country.

### **The letters**

There are 154 documents in the collection and copies of just as many envelopes. I have added the seventeen other documents that my father had kept. The Tasmanian dealer had presented the former in three folders, each envelope and each letter in a separate plastic insert. All letters from my grandparents to my parents are numbered, as were my parents’ letters to Blanca and Benno. My father had also recorded the date of arrival of each letter. Almost all letters include messages from the people who were the intermediaries for their distribution and several letters are from them alone. There are no letters from my parents to my grandparents, the latter’s comments are the only way of guessing what, in part, they would have written. One pencilled draft of a letter written by my mother did, however, find its way into the collection, but more about that later.



*Benno Graff, pre-1939*



*Blanca Graff, 1945*

Most letters during the Berlin years were typed by Benno; Blanca first handwrote her letters and Benno typed them as well as his own messages. Some letters from my grandmother are in old German script (*Frakturschrift*), proving quite a challenge to decipher. The letters from Theresienstadt are all handwritten in Latin script probably to ensure that the censors could read the contents easily.

People are referred to by first name and first initial of surname: for instance, Heinz Voss is Heinz V – no doubt for security reasons. Onkel R, also referred to as Onkel Richard, became the code words for Hitler. His state was frequently commented on, for example ‘he’s feeling worse, he isn’t nice to us, we wished we wouldn’t have to see him’.

The envelopes are of great interest and provide context. Each was censored separately in Europe and in Australia, and is marked as such. In Australia, ‘written in German’ was added by the censors. Airmail letters between Germany and Australia were prohibited from the outset of the war. This meant that the letters had to find their own route by surface mail through a variety of countries depending on the state of the war and postal agreements. Letters arrived in Melbourne via Sweden, the United Kingdom, Holland, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, and the United States.

An aunt of my mother by marriage, Annaliese (Aisa) Vollmer-Mittler, who lived in Stockholm, was an ‘angel’ throughout all the dark years as will be revealed. My grandparents and parents sent many letters to each other through her. A cousin of Werner, Walter Dresdener, who lived in Amsterdam, was also a willing conduit,

but only to 1940 – I do not know what happened to him. A Dr Ernst Mendelsohn, a former youth group member of my father's who arrived in the early 1930s in Chicago, was a helpful link for several years. Ilse Jacob, a niece of my grandmother who was a doctoral student in Basel, was another, though infrequent, one.

There are several messages of no more than 25 words transmitted by my grandparents through the International Red Cross, telegram style.

Owing to the surface mail limitation, postal deliveries took ever longer. By 1943, some mail took eight months and more in one direction. Letters arrived at both ends in clusters, so there would be nothing for weeks causing great anxiety, then two or three items at once. This was as much due to the war as to the indolence of postal workers.

All family members pulled together in attempting to maintain contact between my grandparents and parents, irrespective of which side of the family they were on – their compassion united them.

### **1939–1940: Berlin**

The first letter from the senior Graffs is dated 24 August 1939. It is letter number 26 (the first 25 letters are not in this collection – perhaps there was nothing unusual to report and, therefore, the letters were not kept). Benno is so happy that Mary and Werner have made a positive start, tries to picture their flat, and says that he and Blanca are prepared to find another flat once they are in Melbourne, should they become a nuisance to the children. He jokes about not being ready for emigration yet as he is struggling with learning English.

Trouble appears in September. Benno is not clear what can and cannot be written: 'one has to adapt. Much better talking face to face – the time will come'. (Letters are well and truly being read and censored by third parties.) He says that it is easy for him to write because there is not enough to do; this can only mean that he is no longer able to practise his optics. Instead, he has learned to dust (quite something for a European gentleman in those days) and always leaves a little behind to have something to do the following week. All glistens superficially, so no one would suspect it. He so wishes he could help Werner set up his business. By now, Blanca's shopping is not easy both in terms of her safety, and the produce available with their dwindling financial resources.

On 11 October Benno has some good news. He has been given permission to be re-trained. (Jews were expelled from their profession by the Nazis and many were forced to engage in non-related work.) He is to become a teacher of optics, necessitating the conversion of the front room of their apartment to a working laboratory. He has been allocated former doctors, dentists, lawyers, professors, teachers, etc., as his students and must teach them to proficiency level within six months rather than the customary four years. These people are aged between 45-60 years. Given that some of them would have no scientific background or interest in

optics as they too were being retrained, the task would have been an enormously challenging one. It would have been complicated by fear, perhaps reduced learning ability, and other hindering emotions. Further, Benno has to write detailed reports for the authorities on each student daily, a task which, with his little schooling, he says he finds enormously difficult. His students help him. Later, the students ask him for course notes and he writes to Mary how much he wishes she were there to help him construct these.

Benno's letters over time are always about his optics and his new ideas. His innovations become relegated mainly to improvisations to suit the harsh Nazi requirements. Seemingly, the Nazis give him no or minimal equipment and tools; he has to build his own for teaching and practical purposes. He gives Werner optical advice, scolds him for not knowing better in one case, and supports him with statements like *Kommt Zeit, kommt Rat* roughly translated as: 'when the time comes, so will inspiration', and 'practice leads to success'.

Blanca, meanwhile, writes with great love about her many relatives and friends and what is happening to each. She tries to maintain a semblance of normalcy about their customary Saturday family afternoon teas and their Sunday walks. She always, but always, writes that she and Benno are well and working hard, and waiting desperately for new mail. They think of Mary and Werner constantly; how wonderful it will be when they will be together again and able to share all major events, such as birthdays, in each other's presence. They want so much to relieve Mary and Werner of the pressures on their lives and contribute their fair portion.

On 25 October 1939 a note on one of the incoming letters from the Melbourne censors states: 'Communications with enemy territory via neutral and/or other countries is FORBIDDEN. Letters of this nature will NOT be delivered.' It seems the censors monitor this randomly as some mail continues to arrive whilst some is returned to Blanca and Benno. How utterly frustrating.

It is January 1940 and we read for the first time an often repeated message in future letters: 'We don't expect to move before we travel to Australia' – a first allusion to people being deported to the east, and a hidden message that they are still safe. They know that Mary and Werner are doing all within their power to help them emigrate, but matters are now becoming urgent. They apologise for agitating the children. At this early stage, both parents and children send each other messages through the Red Cross as a means of establishing that the other is all right since mail is not arriving at either end. For months ahead, the senior Graffs repeatedly send Mary and Werner birthday and New Year's greetings (Jewish and secular) to make sure that they will receive at least one.

There are increasing mentions of Onkel R. or Onkel Richard (Hitler) being a constant irritation, being sick, or not going away – 'if only he would'.

Adding to the senior Graffs' letter to the juniors, Aisa Vollmer-Mittler, Mary's

aunt by marriage, implores Mary and Werner to do all they can to help the parents migrate, otherwise it will be too late. Every day, there are deportations, she writes, to Poland and no one knows when they will be next. (It was, therefore, common knowledge, even in the very early 1940s, what was happening.)

Aisa is able to visit Blanca and Benno a few times in Berlin as she travels frequently. She is Dresden-born, with family and friends in Berlin. She has put her son, Peter, into boarding school in Celerina, near St Moritz, Switzerland to afford him an excellent education and also visits him. It is a huge joy and celebration for Blanca and Benno when she visits them and they treat her as their own, and very dear, family member. Coming from a neutral country, she is the bridge to a more normal world and also a point of love for the senior Graffs – someone who genuinely cares for them. Aisa, in turn, reciprocates by bringing them practical gifts and eating little that is offered to her (to keep the food for the hosts). At one stage, she even buys opera glasses and some optical tools from Benno to help him with his finances. Unknown to Benno, Aisa then sends these on to Mary and Werner to help them with their fledging practice. They do not arrive.

By April 1940 Benno takes things into his own hands and writes to a Herr Biessels in The Hague for whom Werner had worked when both were in Frankfurt. Benno hints that he would like to work for him in Holland in any position at all, having run his own very successful business in Berlin. He jokes about his lack of Dutch, but how he would make up for that with his hard work and his 50 years of optical experience. Biessels replies that he is prepared to be a conduit of mail, but does not mention anything about employment.

On 10 June Italy joins the war. There is some doubt how letters will be forwarded from Europe to the outside world. Aisa tries to organise mail through America. By this stage Benno has sixteen students and is working very hard indeed. He comments about tiredness and not having enough time to develop his ideas. However, after the weekend off and inhaling fresh air, he finds his energy is renewed for the coming week. He is positive: ‘one has to divide up one’s life, and then one enjoys it, too’. He continues to think of new ideas for Werner’s practice such as toning spectacle frames by patients’ clothes’ colours and taking out a patent on the idea. With his humour, he writes: ‘a new tip next time’.

Blanca is also still positive: *nicht Mut verlieren, wird schon werden* – ‘don’t lose your courage, it will eventually work out’. How much is this a show for the children to reduce their anxiety levels? How difficult it must have been for her to have sixteen strangers occupy their flat each day and still keep it tidy.

A telling sign appears on 29 July 1940. In a note from Benno to Australia transmitted via the Red Cross, Benno signs his name ‘Benno Israel Graff’. He must obviously now assume the middle name given by the Nazis to all Jewish males. Too dangerous for anyone to comment on this!

Soon afterwards, Ilse, Blanca’s niece in Basel, writes to Mary and Werner say-

ing she has completed her doctorate in philosophy, but will not be able to obtain a work permit (presumably because of her religion). Is there any chance they could sponsor her to Australia? At this stage, Mary and Werner had no citizen's rights. They were classified as 'enemy aliens', were not permitted to have a wireless licence (to limit their contact with the outside world), and had to report to the local police station once a week. Task impossible.

By now, several of Werner's youth group friends are safely settled in the United States, Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, even the Columbian jungle (a doctor) – as Benno comments: 'all places we have hardly heard of previously'.

In September 1940 a letter arrives in Melbourne from Germany via Ernst Mendelsohn in Chicago. Ernst was another youth group member of my father's – Benno uses any avenue for communication he can think of! Ernst is happy to cooperate. Benno now has so much work that, if he cannot finish all he needs to during the day, he and Blanca work during the night and study – he says he loves learning new things. (Sounds like first real signs of overwork.)

Ernst Mendelsohn adds a note that Rabbi Swarsensky, who is the rabbi of a small city nearby, will come to Chicago to lead the High Holyday services. Rabbi Manfred Swarsensky married my parents in Berlin on 5 January 1936 at the Prinzregentenstrasse Synagoge! They told me that his wedding address centred on the theme *und dennoch* – 'in spite of all'. What a powerful message. I visited him at Temple Beth El in Madison, Wisconsin on my first overseas trip in 1968 and was struck by his warmth and wisdom. He remembered my parents immediately, said our meeting was a miracle, and was fascinated by what had transpired since 1936.

In October 1940, Blanca and Benno heartily congratulate Mary and Werner for having established a fledgling and growing practice. Benno is so proud that they have managed this in one year as two years is the norm. Blanca adds that all relatives are still in Berlin and are well. Both wish they could taste Mary's homemade biscuits and chocolate. (They must be missing comfort food a lot.)

At year's end, Benno writes jovially: 'We are celebrating the New Year with the best of fruit, cake and liqueur'. Of course, that would not have been the case. Aisa adds her best wishes to the junior Graffs commenting that Mary and Werner are Blanca and Benno's whole hope and confidence. Blanca has confided in her that she would not have the courage to continue living otherwise. Aisa finds extremely moving how loving and kind they were to her when she visited them.

### **1941-March 1943: Berlin**

Blanca and Benno's first letter in 1941 is full of hope that this year they will be reunited. Blanca wants to be invited to Werner's birthday on 1 March. It is four months since they have heard from the children and, each day, they imagine what the children must be doing. They are interested to hear how Mary and Werner's

Australian friends are, both refugee and new ones. This is an amazing external focus considering their own internal realities.

At last, in February, a letter arrives from Australia. In response, Blanca uses an expression she repeats on later similar occasions: *da scheint ja wieder die Sonne* – ‘now the sun is shining again’. In his last few years, my father often used this expression when I visited him, and I did not ever know its significance! We read how Blanca wants to help Mary with the household; she has just cleaned her own windows and curtains, and all looks fine. She knows Mary has been producing spectacle cases and would like to help. Benno gives Mary light-hearted advice. What they cannot realise is that Mary and Werner are not earning sufficient income; they have barely enough to feed themselves and pay rent, let alone save to bring the parents to Australia. They can afford only the basic of optical tools and so are limited in the service they can provide their patients. Mary, in her practical and determined way, walks around Melbourne creating demand for leather goods, going to Coles and other large retail outlets. Coles do not believe she can meet demand as a sole supplier, and decide to test her. They give her an inordinately large order. Mary buys scrap leather and has her Singer treadle sewing machine delivered to Werner’s city office. While they wait for patients, Werner cuts the leather to size and Mary sews together spectacle cases and other small goods e.g. casings for notebooks. They work day and sometimes nights – and meet the order. Around this time, they also walk to the city from their St Kilda flat and back each day to save the cost of the one-penny tram fare each way.

It is now taking four months for a letter to arrive in Sweden from Australia and another two for a letter to reach Germany from Sweden.

Aisa visits the senior Graffs again in April, to their intense joy. This time, she is pleased to see that they appear less agitated than at her last visit. She brings them all sorts of daily luxuries. What I have not reported on is that Aisa’s life is not easy either. Her husband, Hans (my mother’s uncle) has had a severe nervous breakdown and is in an institution in the United States – he does not recover. Her son is in boarding school in Switzerland, and she is in Stockholm looking after her elderly mother. It almost appears that the Graff family have become the cause which keeps her going – it is focused, deeply appreciated, filled with love by all, and is her own contribution towards helping others during ever worsening times. However, that is pure speculation on my part.

Benno has special news in May 1941. He will be opening an optical laboratory with a former staff member, Heinz Voss, and youth group member of Werner’s, and will have 30 students to help. ‘Real work is about to begin again’. However, Aisa writes to Mary and Werner about this a week later and the tone of her letter is quite different. Because of the lack of skilled workers, Benno is able to do repairs for the Optical Union under strict government supervision. It is enormous luck, but the wage is pitiful and is not enough for two people to live on.

In June, Benno gives Peter, Aisa's son, a compass and the boy is rightly thrilled with it. What generosity in such difficult times! Benno asks his children if they have already reserved a table for all four Graffs for New Year's Eve. It is now two and a half years since they have seen each other.

Blanca continually updates Mary and Werner about people at home and wants to know about old and new friends in Melbourne. She worries that Mary may not be able to manage her leather goods production alone any more.

During August and September Blanca laments that they are now hearing little from friends, if at all. (Does this mean that they have been deported?) 'Onkel Richard is as unbearable as before. We'd love not to hear anything from him, but unfortunately, he always comes back; one day we'll get rid of him.' Benno, meanwhile, is busy organising grinding stones for his laboratory. They need ten, each of which he has to construct himself – he has only four to date. They are in non-stop operation from 7 am to 4 pm each day. The laboratory is managing 150-160 repairs each day, but they are hoping for 300. My questions: is this a reference to an impossible daily target set by the Nazis? From where do all these repairs suddenly come? Benno is also constructing all sorts of equipment himself so that eight people (not 30 as he had been told) can work in the laboratory. 'We can already make our own screws'. In other words, not only do they have to achieve impossible daily targets, build their own equipment and tools, but they also have to make their own screws – all under supervision. No wonder he is feeling tired. He still is able to be thoughtful to Mary and Werner, reminding them to be patient with their slow business progress: it is not easy without money and they cannot expect quicker results.

Blanca replies to a question from Mary about their customary Sunday tours: because Onkel Richard doesn't like it much, they've stopped them. She jokes about a friend who came to them; she was so negative about life it made the visit so good she and Benno had to take sleeping tablets that night. (This is typical Berlin humour.) Blanca contrasts the quality of the senior and junior Graffs' relationship with the friend's family and says she cannot imagine a situation where all four Graffs would not play a role in resolving an issue. She is so proud of Benno's achievements. But Benno feels he is becoming a machine, ever more efficient. 'If only I could return to the quality of hand crafted work'.

Blanca is not sure if they will have time to write as regularly as before; she does not feel well and her hands are not cooperating. Benno sometimes still works at 8 pm, comes home, and works some more. Aisa comments that she does not like the sound of this letter. However, Benno is still joking that it is time to hear from Mary and Werner again, 'if it weren't so far, we would come for a visit'.

In another message transmitted through the Red Cross in October we read: *uns geht es ausgezeichnet* – 'we are outstandingly well'. Now who should believe that! Followed by: 'we would really like to go to Aisa. Stay healthy and happy'.

It must have been around this time that Mary and Werner wrote a phrase on

each of three of their business cards. These phrases became a dictum for them by which they lived: *es geht, es muss gehe, warum auch nicht?* ('it will work', 'it must work', and 'why shouldn't it?') These words were often quoted to me as I encountered 'problems' (or so I thought) whilst I was growing up. I have the cards to this day and treasure them.

In March 1942 we hear that there has not been any news of two of my grandmother's siblings, Rosa and Sally (Solomon), for a long time. It is now two months since the Wannsee Conference agreeing on the Final Solution to the Jewish Question. Things are becoming tough. Red Cross-transmitted messages from Blanca and Benno arrive six and eight months after being sent. The senior Graffs write again in April through the Red Cross – this letter arrives in Melbourne on 5 September. They lament not having heard from the children since August 1941. They are well, but yearn to be reunited.

On 8 May the sun shines again for Blanca and Benno. The day a letter arrives from the children is a day of celebration. They read and reread the letter until they know it by heart, then share the pleasure all around with the relatives who are all delighted for Mary and Werner. Blanca cannot thank Madge and Carl Carleton (who arranged my parents' immigration to Australia) enough for what they have done and continue to do, and sends her kindest regards to them. Blanca is so thankful that, at least, the children are safe. The only people they still visit are Ilse's parents. For this, they walk one and three quarter hours each way – a nice walk, she says. Questions: what has happened? Are they forbidden public transport or is it too dangerous? They ask more frequently now about Werner's other side of the family – the Graffs. Has he heard anything? They want to know how the children, Horst and Herbert, are. They state that they have not heard from their parents for a long time. (Horst Graff, my father's cousin, is of 'Weintraub Syncopators' fame! I met him several times in Sydney.) Blanca tells the children that she is now helping Benno in the laboratory and that they would be so amazed to see how she has adapted to the work. Aisa adds that it has not been possible to correspond with Australia from Sweden direct since the summer of 1941, but now it is possible. Fortunately, airmail connection between Sweden and England has been established. (From now on, each envelope bears the stamp 'via England'.) Somehow, she says, mail will find its way to Australia.

Benno congratulates Werner for his stereo work, as it is not easy. You may remember how Benno invented Graff's stereo to correct cross-eyedness. (It was only a few months ago that a lady at Temple Beth Israel approached me, and told me that, when she was a child in Melbourne, my father had helped cure her squint. Whereas the local doctors had not been able to do so, the 'refo' could – she owes him huge thanks. Did my heart swell with pride!) Benno also says how glad he is that he can work continuously as this keeps his mind off all else.

Blanca is so grateful for having received Aisa's latest letter. It is such a consolation that there are people who think so lovingly of them. She is wearing Mary's

old clothes and loves them because they are bright. Hidden message from Benno: Werner will be so happy to hear that they have repaired over 1000 pairs of celluloid glasses in a short period of time and they look like new. (This is terrible: they must be working like slaves.) He is stimulated by the work and thinks of new ideas daily. Their July letter is handwritten – this could mean that they have no time left to type in the evening or are just too tired to do so.

For the first time, in August 1942, we hear from the senior Graffs: ‘we are miserable’. And then comes the usual: ‘we are well and have work’, but then and ‘that distracts us’. Benno states how wonderful it would be to have time off to relax. They now have to repair 300-350 pairs of glasses per day. ‘One still must have a bit of hope. Perhaps we will all be together next year?’ Blanca again uses her sun and light analogy: ‘everything is so dark. Letters lighten up life’. Aisa implores Mary and Werner to try to bring the parents to Australia: ‘two old, loving people, so lonely, so abandoned, in the most difficult of circumstances, every day filled with fear, worry, and barely the opportunity to buy daily bread and necessities’. She yearns to give Benno and Blanca the joy of receiving another letter from the children, but so few arrive. (My parents must have felt so powerless and distraught at reading this message.)

Blanca continually asks Mary and Werner to write to Ilse, enclosing a self-addressed envelope to help her with expenses. Blanca feels so sorry for her and her poverty. (Only recently, I found out that Ilse was immersed in philosophy and could not manage to live in the world of reality with little money, few possessions, and constant struggle. But she obviously had a heart of gold.)

Aisa writes how cold it is in Europe this year and that she cannot become enthused about Christmas. There is so much darkness in the world. (All letters from Sweden are stamped: ‘written in German’ and are, of course, censored.)

The next letter in this collection is the only one from my parents. I do not know why it, alone, is included. It would have been written towards the end of 1942. It is a handwritten draft of my mother’s to a Grete (almost the only person in this collection I do not know about, probably a sister or cousin of Aisa’s). It seems my parents have reached their fill of stress. My mother writes in excellent English how very, very much she appreciates Aisa’s many kindnesses, but cautions her to write less explicitly as this could prevent messages from being delivered. My mother also states that Aisa might not realise the restrictions she and my father are under. At last they are now allowed to move outside their district, but still only within a radius of 15 miles, and to enjoy public entertainment. Last week they also received their wireless licence again after two years without. They are, however, still regarded as ‘enemy aliens’. She hopes that the time will soon come when they will be recognised as responsible citizens. This letter may never have been sent.

Whilst Mary and Werner were not permitted to move outside their district, they set up a circle of friends they called either the Group or Circle (I cannot

remember the exact title) of childless couples (Gruppe/Kreis der Kinderlosen Ehen). I had not connected the initiative with the circumstances before writing this article! It consisted of Jews who lived in the St Kilda area whose movement was, of course, also restricted and who could not yet afford to have children. I'm told that it became so popular and well known that they invited politicians, academics, and all manner of interesting people to address them; one speaker would recommend another. Some of the local guards (i.e. the police) who patrolled the meetings were so interested that they asked if they could join – and did. Don Chapman, the person who procured my parents' entry permits, came regularly, and some of the speakers also joined. The group continued for several years until people gained their freedom and the confidence to lead normal Australian lives, and began to have a family.

It is January 1943. Benno writes that their only happiness is to know that Mary and Werner are happy.

Benno writes via the Red Cross on 19 February that Mary and Werner's greetings of 22 September 1942 have just arrived. This transmission arrives in Melbourne on 6 October 1943 – thirteen months after the Australian greeting!

By March, the tone of Blanca's letter is different. She must have a premonition. For the first time, she writes that they do not know if they will succeed in celebrating birthdays together again. 'Onkel Richard has quite a different view and makes it obvious'. She tells them to keep enjoying themselves as one lives only once. She ends with 'may God protect you from all evil'. Benno writes how busy he is and hopes to be for a long time to come. (Another, not so hidden, message.) There is comment after comment about 'when will the sun shine again?' Aisa fears that they are losing courage. She agonises about the world scene and the annihilation of human values.

### **1943–1945: Theresienstadt (Terezin) to Switzerland**

And now the world changes. On 30 July, Aisa writes to Mary and Werner that she has received hideous news that she needed to validate and has now done so. Blanca and Benno are gone! She had a letter returned to her mid-June addressed to the senior Graffs 'unknown, moved'. In her resourceful way, she enlists a member of her husband's family, Dr Lothar Graefe (my mother's nephew – no connection with the Graffs), who is half-Jewish, to undertake the enormous risk of going to the Graffs' home to confirm the news. He does so with great courage, and the truth is confirmed. There is no way to check where they are and there have been no letters from them. Aisa is distraught. For the first time, we read that Blanca and Benno have survived all possible inhumanities inflicted upon them through their vision of all four Graffs being reunited in Australia. Aisa gives her absolute commitment that if she hears from them, she will help them with her own finances and as much else as is in her power to do so.

On 7 September 1943 Mary and Werner receive some news from Trude Amitai,

another of Blanca's nieces who now lives in Palestine, that many of their relatives (all named) are in Theresienstadt; some have already died of heart failure. Mail and parcels arrive. Blanca and Benno are well. (It has taken six months for Mary and Werner to find out anything since the parents' last letter! But how cautiously relieved they must have been to know the parents were still alive.)

On 28 October Aisa lets Mary and Werner know that she has at last received a letter from Blanca and Benno from Theresienstadt. It has taken three months to arrive in Sweden. A huge stone has been lifted from her heart. The card states that replies must be on cards only and in German. The senior Graffs were deported on 18 March 1943. They report being well (there's that phrase again) and Benno is working in an optical laboratory. Blanca would be happy if Aisa would greet Mary and Werner (how formal) and wish Mary a happy birthday for July. Other people – all named – send their regards. Blanca states: 'I can even cook on my little stove.' This is a very strange comment. Presumably Blanca and Benno were living in dormitories, at best together but not necessarily, and lining up for hours along with everyone else for soup made of potato peel. For whom was Blanca cooking then? And with what? I can only assume that this is coded language for Mary and Werner signifying that they did not have sufficient food and were starving. Aisa tries to be helpful by explaining that there is one small point of light: the parents were lucky they went to Theresienstadt, not to Poland, where 'the worst takes place'. She presumes – and my father had told me this as well – that that is because of Benno's technical expertise. She continues:

It is also good not being in Berlin any more as homes are being destroyed. How much hope and courage it has taken on both sides. God permit it has not been in vain.

She is so very sorry that she has not been able to procure Blanca and Benno a visa to Sweden and promises to see if the Jewish Welfare Agency can help in any way.

My father immediately contacts the Melbourne Red Cross and enquires about sending food parcels to his parents. He receives an official reply:

We regret that the address stated cannot be accepted as sufficiently definite. Unfortunately it does not fit conditions. There is nothing you can do beyond sending your monthly messages to your father.

But someone in their office is compassionate and handwrites: 'but you can contribute to the general funds of the Jewish Welfare Society in London which endeavors to distribute comforts to Theresienstadt. This can be done through the Melbourne (Red Cross) Office, however there is no guarantee that an individual may benefit from this'. My father sends money, food and clothing. There is no indication that the parcel arrives.

It is winter, January 1944. Aisa has just sent the parents second-hand clothes,

woollen socks and underwear, jumpers and scarves which she has hand knitted for them, and 1 kg of lollies filled with chocolate (indeed a luxury for anyone during the war). She wishes she could have sent more, says she was so lucky to have received a permit at all, and paid the freight right to Theresienstadt. She had gone from one authority to another trying to obtain a permit, and each had told her how impossible that was. Even the Jewish Welfare Agency told her so. Finally she cajoles a customs official and he agrees (another decent human being). She continues to write to the parents, but does not receive a reply.

Mary and Werner receive two cards from Theresienstadt, one dated 18 August 1943 and the next 14 January 1944. The former arrived in Stockholm three months later, the second five – and then they still had to make their way to Australia. Both are in Benno's handwriting. The addressee of the former is Blanca, and the second is Benno. This adds weight to my hunch that they did not live together, but in separate dormitories. This was perhaps Benno's way of encoding his message for my parents. Again, both cards say that they are well and that Benno is working in his profession. In August they want to know if 'Onkel Richard is really so sick or if he feels better again?' (Have they heard about D Day in June?) For the first time we read their exact address: Wallstrasse 8. There are many references to Frau Abramczyk and a request to Aisa to contact or visit her and 'wish her all the best'. From what I can gather, this is a cousin of Benno's who works for the Jewish Welfare Agency in Stockholm. Benno is asking for help. Aisa does so, invites the lady for afternoon tea and asks her to send Blanca and Benno a parcel as well. Aisa truly could not be more involved or more giving.

Miraculously, Aisa's January parcel arrives in Theresienstadt in March 1944 and Blanca and Benno even receive it. They cannot thank Aisa enough, especially for the precious sweets. They still have not had mail from anyone.

Aisa writes to Mary and Werner in September that she has just sent another large parcel to the parents to help them over the winter, but it is doubtful that it will arrive. It doesn't.

Mary and Werner are naturalised on 27 October 1944. A major milestone has been achieved. At last, they are recognised by their adopted country and have freedom of movement. Aisa realises how this will help the parents.

In January 1945 Aisa sends Blanca and Benno yet another parcel with the highest quality Christmas delicacies; again she goes through the process of seeking a permit. This time, she has the parcel sent via a department store. It does not arrive. Mary must have thanked her even more than usual, as Aisa replies that she has done so little and wishes she could do more.

There is a great discovery for me in Aisa's next letter of 25 February 1945. She writes that she is so glad that Mary remembers all the details of her Swedish Christmases. Peter, now aged 16, is about to become confirmed. I had absolutely no idea that this fine lady was not Jewish. My parents had never mentioned it – it was irrelevant. As a child, she was simply *Tante* ('Aunt') Aisa to me. This makes

her, her motives, her actions, more noble in my eyes than I can describe. She is sad about not having heard from Blanca and Benno since August 1944. She also laments that ‘our wonderful Dresden’ is a heap of rubble. (This is twelve days after the Allied Forces’ bombing of Dresden.)

### **1945 – Deliverance: Switzerland**

On 4 March 1945, a telegram arrives for my parents from Werner Rosenstock in London. Werner had also been in my father’s Berlin youth movement and now, inter alia, was responsible for tracking liberated Jews together with the Red Cross and assisting with their international resettlement. He writes:

Blanca Graff arrived Switzerland. Telegram from Committee Zurich follows. Overjoyed.

He had seen Blanca’s name on the Red Cross list of liberated Theresienstadt people. My parents send a telegram and telegraph money immediately to Blanca at Les Avants, Montreux. On 28 March Aisa, too, cables that she has heard the good news from Ilse and Frau Abramczyk. She wonders, however, where Benno is. Blanca has, in fact, cabled as well and so has the Zurich Agency, but neither cable arrives in Melbourne. Finally on 3 April, Blanca cables from Engelberg that she has received Mary and Werner’s telegram and money.

Eventually, letters begin to arrive from Blanca. They have taken three months. She has been wondering why neither Aisa nor Mary and Werner have replied. She has been one of the lucky 1,200 to escape from Theresienstadt!

The story of these 1,200 people is an amazing one. At the height of the war, there were 60,000 people living in Theresienstadt at any one time in a town designed for 7,000 people. In total 87,000 people were deported from there to the east. To be amongst the 1,200 liberated people was, therefore, nothing short of miraculous. In September 1944, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of USA and Canada contacted Jean-Marie Musy, a Swiss politician known for his connections with SS Chief Himmler. Musy was prepared to help. After much negotiation, he struck a deal with Himmler whereby the 600,000 Jews still located in concentration camps under the control of the Germans would progressively be released in exchange for five million Swiss francs (\$US1.25 million), this amount to be paid to the International Red Cross. Himmler had wanted trucks, tractors and cars, and a supply of medicine, but Musy was able to talk him out of his demands, citing the complications that would cause. Musy did manage, however, to have some medicine supplied for the Germans through the Ciba Company. The money was placed in Swiss banks by the Union of Rabbis. The first 1,200 people left Theresienstadt by train on 8 February and my grandmother was amongst them! Negotiations went sour, and no further liberation occurred.

Back to Blanca’s letters. Writing on 2 March, 1945, she explains that the Zuercher Hilfskomitee (Zurich Welfare Agency) has given them all a little money so

that they can buy airmail paper. It is the flimsiest of paper and she writes in pencil. She explains how Benno collapsed in body and mind through starvation and died on 24 July 1944. He was sick for half a year and she could do nothing to help. 'It was terrible'. She is so grateful for the loving support she received from fellow prisoners, 'otherwise I would not have made it'. She and Benno had been together for 38 years. To occupy her mind, she applied for and was granted work in the optical laboratory where he had worked. It was in his memory. One day, prisoners were offered free passage to Switzerland. It sounded highly improbable, but she thought that either she would go to her beloved husband or, indeed, be reunited with the children. She had nothing to lose. (The papers tell me she was number 406 to volunteer.) They travelled by train through Prague to Constance past nothing but ruined towns. Once over the Swiss border in Kreuzlingen, they were told to take off their star which branded them as Jews. At last they knew 'the Nazis had told the truth for once' (Blanca's words). When they were over the border

We were embraced with so much love, I cannot describe it. There were banners flying and we received so many loving gifts which we did not know any more such as apples, sweets, cheese. We were also given warm meals on the train!

They were taken to St Gallen where they received the best of care for eight days, then to Montreux and then, by mountain rail, to Les Avants. They are now in quarantine in excellent accommodation and are told they will move on again in a month's time. We are *Menschen unter Menschen* again – 'human beings amongst human beings'. 'Ilse has been so kind, and already sent me writing paper and stamps'. Blanca wishes Werner a happy birthday. Every special day, she and Benno had said to each other that next year they would all be together again. The thought of being the sole survivor of her family is too much for her to bear. She writes about each of her relatives who lost their life in Theresienstadt. There are many others about whose fate she does not know.

On 16 March she writes to Aisa and Mary and Werner from the Hotel Titlis in Engelberg. This letter also arrives in May and has been routed through France. Blanca asks Aisa to contact Frau Abramczyk as she has no further money for postage. After six weeks in Engelberg, she will be allowed three days off. She plans to travel to her beloved Ilse in Basel, her only relative left in Europe. The Agency will pay for this. 'It is so terrible to be alone'. Were it not for the vision of seeing Mary and Werner again, she would have nothing left to live for. Aisa immediately sends her money and asks her contacts to send food and clothes.

On a card written to Aisa in April, routed through England, Blanca says that she is trying her hardest to stay healthy for the sake of her children so that she will be able to help them with their work when they are together again.

In her May letter to the children, Blanca lauds the hotel and the beauty of its natural environment, which she says, she cannot really enjoy until she hears

from Mary and Werner. There are 100 of the refugees accommodated at the Hotel, one of the most elegant in the area. It is so beautiful and everyone, including the officials, is so loving towards them. She cannot believe that she has a room – she shares this with ‘two lovely ladies’ – which has a bed, so that she does not have to sleep on straw, and a clothes cupboard. She marvels that she has running water in her room. They are served excellent food. She is so grateful. She cannot comprehend that they are being treated as equals and how loving and thoughtful the Swiss are to them. She is so thrilled that they can eat eggs and fresh fruit. Ilse continues to buy her little practical gifts such as envelopes, and she worries that Ilse is spending too much of her own money doing this. She, Blanca, is working a little in a dry cleaning agency now and is ‘even earning some money so that I can buy the bare essentials. I need the work to stop myself from thinking’. Ilse is looking for accommodation for the three glorious days when they will be together; Blanca does not mind, however, where they stay – she says she can sleep on the floor just as easily. Again she marvels at the Swiss who are organising film nights and concerts for the refugees to help them regain a sense of normal life. She does not feel like attending, so they do all they can to encourage her to help her out of her psychological state.

In the same month, Blanca sends a card via the USA to see if this has a better chance of arrival. She has finally heard from Aisa and Frau Abramczyk and received their money. She asks for more and for this to be taken out of her own bank account (Aisa has access to it). She needs shoes and socks – second hand would be what she could afford – and she apologises profusely for her request. The group left Theresienstadt with almost nothing, but were glad to discard their ‘criminals’ clothing.’ Thanks to Switzerland, she has recovered so that she feels human again. She writes that punishment for the Nazis has come too late. Too many people lost their lives in the most terrible ways.

Aisa now lets Mary and Werner know that, whenever she writes to Blanca, she encourages her about the imminent trip and reunion although she realises that immigration to Australia is still enormously difficult. In response to a question from my parents she promises to enquire at the shipping lines, whose names they have given her, in case Blanca can leave Europe from Sweden. And now Aisa reveals something totally different from her previous letters – she is broke! She cannot send any more of her own money. On her last visit to Berlin, she set aside 2,000 German marks from Benno’s account for the eventual trip to Australia, but she is now not permitted to take any money out of Germany: not the Graffs’ and not her own. There is no further communication with Germany. She seeks permission from my parents to sell some of their or Blanca’s possessions which they had asked her to store for the time being. My parents must have told her not to do so as they were now able to pay for Blanca’s passage. Aisa laments how sad it is for everyone in Germany, especially the children: *wir sind doch alle Menschen* – ‘we all share a common humanity’.

### 1945–48: How does it all end?

My grandmother begins signing papers on 28 September 1945. The first is a certificate of identity issued by the Justice and Police Department in Bern, Switzerland. On 5 November, her Landing Permit is issued by the Commonwealth of Australia; her classification is ‘stateless’. Then on 17 January 1946 she receives both a visa for Sweden for fourteen days and a visa issued by the British Passport Control in Switzerland for Australia – classification ‘immigrant’. That precious document that she had dreamed about with Benno for so very many, long years!

On 19 January she leaves Zurich Airport and arrives at Malmo Airport, Stockholm. She has flown to Aisa, supported by the Jewish Welfare Agency, to thank her in person, bid her farewell, and collect the goods Aisa had been safekeeping. The police stamp her document at Gothenburg on 22 January. She leaves for Southampton on 25 January and is on her way. Unfortunately, I do not have the name of the ship. However, I do know from Blanca’s letter written on board that it is a cargo boat with only twelve passengers. So Aisa has been able to obtain a berth for Blanca on a Swedish vessel after all, just as Mary and Werner had asked her to look into! Blanca writes that it is unbelievable what Aisa and her mother have done for her – her own family could not have done more or with greater love. The Swiss have made her feel special, too, and this has given her a sense of confidence. The enormity of the new chapter in her life strikes her and she writes how strange it is to leave the European continent – the children must have felt similarly. She is so happy that the trip will take only 35 days on the sea. There are only two stops: Southampton and Cape of Good Hope. She is busy practising her English from a book Aisa’s mother has given her, a lot of which she has forgotten under the strain of the years, and she writes: ‘I had bacon with egg and fried potatoes, butter and bread and jam for breakfast’. She adds that Mary and Werner should not to be too impressed with her fluency – she did have to look up several words! Her sense of humour has returned. She writes: ‘I have spoken with Neptune one day and one night now. Enough – he is an awful man.’ She must be very seasick. She ends her letter with the usual loving greeting, then adds for the first time *Eure Omi*: ‘Your grandma’. How excited she is about my imminent birth!

On 7 March 1946, there it is: the Immigration of Australia, Melbourne stamp on her passport. A miracle has occurred. She has arrived home, her new home, at last reunited with her children.

That date happens to be thirteen days before I am born. On 20 March another miracle occurs: a new generation is born to the Graff family. It is hard to imagine the enormity of these events for her and my parents: the anticipation of reunion, the incredible reunion against all odds, my mother’s late stage of pregnancy, my birth, and the settling in together of four people in a small flat each with a different set of immediate needs. How did each of those three adults cope? It could not have been easy.

After news of my birth, and in reply to my parents' profoundest words of thanks to Aisa, Aisa ends the last of her letters in this collection with: 'I did not do anything more than what one person should do for another: love one another, help one another, that's how it should always be'.

The final letters and telegrams are from people in Melbourne, England, Palestine, and the United States congratulating Mary and Werner on Blanca's salvation and uncanny arrival time, and my birth. I was perplexed as to why my father had included them in the collection. But I understand now that they all belong to the development of the Graff story: the continuation of love and life.

To end on a light-hearted note, the well known and respected Melbourne Jewish couple, Frank and Grace Togget, wrote in their telegram: 'hope to see your child chair our meetings soon!' I do hope they would be pleased with the outcome of their wish!

Do I remember my grandmother? She died of heart failure on 4 June 1948 when I was not quite two and a quarter years old – a bit early for memories. Yet, I distinctly remember bringing an orange to her sick bed which my mother had lovingly arranged on a plate in the shape of an open flower. I know I remember this, even though I have been told about it many times. I have also been told that Blanca loved me dearly; it is not too difficult to understand why – life had been renewed and she was witness to it.

On 7 June Rabbi Dr H. M. Sanger officiated at her funeral service. His words best sum up my grandmother's being:

Mrs Graff lived to give and to help all people, whether Jew or gentile. She made friends easily. In Melbourne, she often said: 'I am not here for fun', and 'I am not an invalid'. She was here to work and share the load. She had a great sense of humour. Her qualities were to organise, help, work, and give. She showed great courage. Hers was a hope that triumphed.

## Reflections

For me, the greatest message in reading these letters is the compelling power of hope. Blanca and Benno remained alive through their vision of being reunited with Mary and Werner in Australia. Blanca made it, Benno almost did. They were rock solid in this.

Blanca and Benno's absolute decency and character are without blemish. With all their heart, they were thrilled that Mary and Werner were continuing to integrate well into the Australian way of life and that their business was slowly growing. Of course, they were not able to criticise the State except with reference to Onkel R. They helped others even when their own financial resources were diminishing. They kept their Berlin flat spick and span. When Benno was given increasingly impossible workloads by the authorities, he and Blanca just worked and worked,

because that was what had to be done – notwithstanding that they probably had an official standing over them. It is also amazing that my grandparents kept their sense of humour almost to the end.

My grandparents were typical of their generation. They were assimilated Liberal Jews. They had many Jewish friends, enjoyed Friday evenings, together with their friends' children, – usually playing cards. They sent their only child, Werner, to a Jewish youth movement, and kept Passover and the High Holydays. As well, they had many Christian friends, and enjoyed the holidays and food of Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. My father was told that some kind Christian friends left a food parcel for his parents on their doorstep at Christmas 1942 – that's how much they were appreciated. They were German citizens of Jewish persuasion. Their reference to God in the letters was expressed in terms of hope, such as 'may God grant that we will be reunited soon'. This did not alter during the whole dark period.

I want to make special mention of Aisa Vollmer-Mittler. She truly was a righteous gentile, an unsung heroine, and needs to be saluted with heart, mind, and soul for all that she continued to do to help a family that was not her own.

The pain my parents experienced must have been immense. They were forced to build up new lives in a foreign country and sustain themselves, starting from a financial base of next to nothing at a time when there was no government support. They had the pressure of needing to save enough to sponsor Werner's, now elderly, parents to a new land where German refugees were branded and treated for a long time as 'enemy aliens'. They had to continue day after day after day with ever decreasing contact with Blanca and Benno, knowing that things were becoming increasingly disastrous for European Jews. My parents did not speak of their pain with me. They referred to this time as: 'it was not easy, but we made it'. I know they wanted to shield me from this evil.

I have been asked how the terrible years affected my parents. I find this extraordinarily difficult to answer and must admit that I do not know. I do know, however, that they carried on together, united by their determination to succeed in establishing a new quality of life and saving my grandparents. Maybe they suppressed the bad to be able to live effectively in the present and future – which they certainly did. I was always raised to hear how many decent people there had been, how very difficult the life of non-Jewish people in Europe was during the war, and to work towards the vision of creating the family of man in every practical way.

I have also been asked: 'what is the purpose of this gift of letters to me'? What a difficult question. I can only answer by saying that the letters are a confirmation that I come from a long line of people who lived a life of love, unity and integrity, and that the best way I can honour them is to live accordingly. Strangely, I feel more anchored now, having learned more about my vibrant family and their indomitable spirit. I recognise how very fortunate I have been and continue to be.

Why this is so is beyond my ability to answer. I ponder on what a loss to humanity the death of all my family members has been. Not only of my family, but of so very many others as well.

### **Epilogue**

Hope, to tenacious vision, to near desperation, to death, to liberation, to freedom, to rebirth. That is my family story. My name is Dorothy Madge, the former means 'gift of God', the latter honours Madge Carleton and her brother Carl, who enabled my parents to escape from Germany and start a new life in Australia.

May the memory of my family and all those truly wonderful people who assisted them be a blessing! *Mi dor le dor*.

### **Note**

Since writing this article, another wonder has occurred. Realising for the first time how much Aisa had helped my family, I decided to contact the Swedish Consulate to see if there were any possible descendants of hers whom I could thank for her extraordinary kindnesses. The consular official gave me the addresses of three Mittlers all of whom live in Stockholm. Within a week of my writing to each of these total strangers, I received two emails, one from Aisa's granddaughter (Eva Mittler) and one from her grandson (Hanns Mittler). Both had been trying for years to discover if they had any living family, particularly on their father's side – i.e. Peter's – but in vain. Needless to say, they are delighted with their new contact and are sharing with me the little they know about their grandmother and, indeed, their father, who died when they were very young. I have sent them this article and they are currently digesting its richness in respect to their own family. I can do no better than to repeat *mi dor le dor*!

# JOSEPH PLOTTEL: A MAN AHEAD OF HIS TIME

*Robin Grow*

The suburb of St Kilda is the home of two important synagogues – the first is the St Kilda Synagogue in Charnwood Grove (c. 1926); the second is Temple Beth Israel in Alma Road (c. 1937). Both buildings were the work of the architect Joseph Plottel. Born in Middlesborough, Yorkshire in 1883 to Orthodox Jewish parents, he came to Australia with his family in 1895 but soon returned to England after the death of his father. Whilst training as a draftsman with a London architect, he was advised to go to the colonies for further advancement. Moving to South Africa in 1903, he worked in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town, before heading for San Francisco (via Melbourne), reasoning that there would be many architectural opportunities after the earthquake of 1906. En route, Joe ran out of money so by the time he reached Melbourne, he decided to stay. His late son-in-law, Rolf Hallenstein, fondly recalled him reminiscing about walking down St Kilda Road with only a hat and a walking-stick to his name. <sup>1</sup> However, the gregarious young man soon found a community that embraced him.

## **Early days in Melbourne**

Melbourne had an extensive rail network and Plottel took up a position with the Railways Engineering Department. After four years, he went to work as a draftsman for Nahum Barnett, a noted federation-style architect, before opening his own office in 1911. <sup>2</sup> Taking such a step without much financial backing was a gamble, but he soon received a steady stream of work designing factories, offices, shops and civic buildings (such as a three-storey brick factory in Melbourne, a building at 325 Collins Street with a castellated parapet, alterations to the premises of Kozminskys in Little Bourke Street, and the Williamstown Town Hall in 1914). A decade later, he designed a house (called Trawalla) for H. V. Nathan, in a new subdivision in prestigious Toorak.

By 1915 Plottel was making enough money to get married – he had met Rachel Gross, the daughter of Maurice and Celine Gross (née Isaacson). Known to everyone as Re, she was born in Fitzroy, where her father was mayor at one time. Re did not marry until she was 29, which was relatively late, but the determined young woman wanted to finish her medical studies first – she later specialised in skin conditions. The wedding was held at Wickliffe House reception centre on the Esplanade at St Kilda, and the ceremony was performed by Rabbi Danglow. The couple took up residence in an apartment in the historic Cliveden Mansions in East Melbourne – later demolished for the Hilton Hotel. (They moved to Toorak

in 1934, where Plottel designed a house in Evans Court, with an adjacent block of flats that provided rental income.)<sup>3</sup> The courtship still provides a source of mirth for Plottel's grandchildren – Re loved the theatre and the opera, and during the courtship Plottel took her to the theatre, concerts and other refined pastimes. After they were married, he rarely went to the theatre again!<sup>4</sup>

In 1920 Plottel designed a house in Inverleith Street, St Kilda, for Rabbi Danglow, who was credited with transforming St Kilda synagogue into Melbourne's pre-eminent congregation during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> The large house, Routeburn, was a social centre for the rabbi's many visitors, whose children were delighted to find that the back hall of the house was about the length of a cricket pitch. The garden was designed by noted landscape architect Edna Walling<sup>6</sup> but it is not known whether Walling's 1922 design (with its chicken coops, putting green, lawns and brick paving) was actually constructed. Many years later, Rabbi Danglow's grand-daughter (Sue Goulston) married Plottel's grandson (Hal Hallenstein).

Plottel was an early advocate of apartment living, which was to be a major direction for architecture in Melbourne through the 1920s and 1930s. In 1918, the year that his daughter Phillipa was born, he designed Garden Court in Marne Street, South Yarra, for Frederick Payne, a prominent land owner. Local legend has it that the owner of Raveloe in Domain Road built 'a huge wall ... to preserve the privacy of their house and garden from the overlooking windows of the new corner block.' For years, it was known as the Wall of Hate.<sup>7</sup> Plottel's design of Waverley (1920) at 115-119 Grey Street, St Kilda, was an early experiment in combining shops and flats. The ground floor shops face Grey Street, with flats above, and another wing of flats faced Clyde Street.<sup>8</sup> Whilst this was a common configuration in Europe, it was unusual for Melbourne.

The Jewish community provided many commissions for Plottel's growing practice. Members of the St Kilda synagogue, who knew him as Plot, owned manufacturing businesses in Melbourne's industrial suburbs and soon turned to Plottel to design new factories. At a meeting of the AJHS in 2006, a fellow member of the congregation recalled that they became used to Plot good-naturedly sidling up to them after the service and asking if they needed a new factory!

In 1925, Plottel was responsible for the design of a new synagogue for the St Kilda congregation in Charnwood Grove. The original synagogue that had served the community since 1872 was no longer adequate and, in 1924, a number of sites for a new synagogue were being considered as a replacement. The next year saw the purchase of a large house (and extensive grounds) from the Hart family in Charnwood Grove by a syndicate from the congregation comprising Myer Zeltner (president of the congregation), Fred Michaelis, Ernest Michaelis, Reuben Hallenstein, E. B. Myer (brother of Sydney) and Plottel. The house was retained but the land was to be split. The syndicate offered to sell to the congregation a large allotment for a synagogue (at a cost of £4000). The money was quickly

raised and the plans proceeded. The remaining land was to be sub-divided into '5 choice residential sites', with the profits to be donated to the building fund for the synagogue, and a sale was scheduled for 30 January 1926 – a Saturday. The group submitted an ad for inclusion in the *Australian Jewish Herald*. It was refused by the editor (Newman Rosenthal) who was offended by the sale of land on the Sabbath by a group associated with the synagogue. He asked in his editorial how 'the president of the congregation reconciles his congregational position with his association with a syndicate which has openly shown its entire disregard for one of the cardinal principles of his own institution'.<sup>9</sup>

But the choice of a Saturday was not due to disrespect for the Sabbath. The group had little choice in scheduling the auction. Whilst mid-week and Sunday auctions are now commonplace, in 1926 the real estate industry was structured in such a way that residential blocks were only auctioned on Saturdays. Myer Zeltner took strong exception to the editor's position and went to see Theodore Fink, who ran Herald & Weekly Times, publishers of the *Jewish Herald*. The *Jewish Herald* published an apology, but Fink decided to close the paper and hand it over to a Board of Trustees.<sup>10</sup>

Plottel had been asked to prepare a preliminary design and specifications, and to invite tenders for construction. When he asked the committee of the congregation for an idea of shape and appearance, someone produced a photo of an American reform temple in Chicago – the Temple Isaiah Israel. Plottel adopted the exterior, producing a design in 'Byzantine Revival style with an octagonal base and a dome roof clad in Wunderlich tiles'. Before Plot's designs could be finished, the congregation had to decide about whether a gallery was to be included. The previous building had functioned without a gallery but had a separate section for women on the ground floor. After a vigorous debate the congregation decided that no gallery would be built. But then pragmatism took over when the constraints of the site became apparent. If everyone in the 550 mixed seats was to be able to hear the rabbi on the pulpit without a public address system, then a gallery would be required. However, a section was also set aside for women on the ground floor – described by John Levi as 'another characteristic St Kilda compromise'.<sup>11</sup>

The building contractor was Henry Eilenberg and the building, with its attractive Moorish décor, is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. It is regarded as significant for 'the unusual composition and massing of its façade with contrasting use of colour and material, its triple-arched entrance with a half-rounded tympanum over the door and the distinctive saucer dome and flanking smaller domes'.<sup>12</sup>

On the inside Plottel's innovative design included a gallery and a dome – without supporting columns – providing abundant light. The building is finished with finely crafted woodwork, a trademark of Plottel's buildings. He always used the same woodworking firm – that of Goldman's of Chapel Street, South Yarra. The *Bimah* is an outstanding example of ornately carved timberwork. Further similarities with the Chicago building were seen in the Ark, such as the pillars, stone

tablets beneath a semi-circular arch, and the choir loft placed above the Ark. The relative affluence of the two congregations is reflected in the materials used on the pillars – in Chicago, travertine marble was used, whilst in St Kilda Plotttel used wood and plaster painted to look like marble.<sup>13</sup> The foundation stone was laid in February 1926. Amongst the 500 celebrants was Joel Fredman, who had been in the group that met Rabbi Danglow's ship in 1905 in his capacity as secretary of the synagogue. When the choir rehearsed under his direction for the first time in the new building, Rabbi Danglow was fulsome in his thanks and affection for Joel. On Joel's death in 1943, he was described by Rabbi Danglow as a 'very dearly beloved and faithful colleague' and lauded for his service to the synagogue since 1888 as secretary, choirmaster and headmaster. In 1939 Plotttel designed the adjacent Samuel Meyers Hall, consisting of four classrooms, an assembly hall, kitchen and library. Described by Isidor Solomon as 'the most used Jewish hall in Melbourne'<sup>14</sup>, the hall was later modified by the addition of a new front section.

The 1920s saw Plotttel design a series of factories, shops, and commercial buildings in Melbourne and surrounding industrial suburbs, and in the national capital, Canberra. He was one of a number of architects who responded to the call of the Commonwealth government to assist with designs for Canberra, apparently as a result of his acquaintance with Joseph Lyons, later to be Prime Minister. He was subsequently responsible for a number of buildings in the suburb of Civic.

Plot was elected a fellow of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1926. His designs were practical, perhaps reflecting his Yorkshire origins. By 1928, business was thriving and he was in a position to take the family to Europe. The large office in Queen Street was left in the hands of his partner Harold Bunnett. Plot's grandson, Hal Hallenstein, recalls Bunnett as a very quiet man and the perfect partner for the gregarious Plot.

A photograph of Plot, with daughter Phillipa on the Riviera in 1928, reveals a well-dressed, well-fed gentleman enjoying the sun at Nice. But little did he foresee the turmoil that was about to envelop the world.



*Joseph Plotttel and daughter Phillipa in Nice, 1928*

Having left a busy practice, Plottel was shocked to find on his return that the office had little work and he was faced with re-building the practice at a time of major economic downturn. He worked very hard at re-establishing his connections and gained some commissions, mostly obtained on the golf course and at the races! His speciality became the design of industrial buildings in suburbs such as Richmond, North Melbourne, West Melbourne, and Brunswick, invariably designed with an eye to future expansion. Typical was the four-storey knitting factory in Richmond, commissioned by Norman Kayser in 1930, to which he added a further floor in 1933 and then further extended the building in 1936 to effectively double its output. Plottel's design provided for additional floors to be added in similar material to the older structure, and without structural alterations to the lower floors which meant that there were no interruptions to production.<sup>15</sup> In the Depression years, manufacturers preferred to add to their buildings incrementally as demand arose, rather than outlay large sums at the outset.<sup>16</sup> Also important was the ability to work quickly, particularly when trading or rent revenue was threatened. When the premises of H. Rothberg Pty Ltd at 122-128 Flinders Street were destroyed by fire in 1933, Plottel produced a design for 'modern shops, offices, showrooms and factory space' within a month. Provision was also made for the installation of the 'latest types of passenger and goods lifts, and for automatic sprinklers to guard against fire'.<sup>17</sup>

### **Footscray Town Hall**

During the 1930s, a number of municipalities upgraded existing town halls (Collingwood, Richmond) or constructed new edifices to demonstrate civic progress (Heidelberg, Box Hill). The city of Footscray, in Melbourne's industrial west, also decided to replace its aging town hall in 1933, with the stated aim that the new building 'would be a constant reminder to the present councillors and to their successors of the importance of the duties which the citizens elected them to perform.'<sup>18</sup> It was intended that the new building (with space for formal gardens and lawns) would be completed in time for the Centenary of Melbourne in 1934,<sup>19</sup> but construction did not commence until October 1935. At a cost of around £40,000 (aided by a substantial grant from the state government) Plottel designed a lavish building in a suburb still built mainly of weatherboard and corrugated iron.<sup>20</sup> How did Plot gain the commission, for which he received a fee of 7½ per cent of the total building cost? Many of his associates, from business and the synagogue, owned factories in Footscray and took an active interest in local government in the area, and may have been able to influence the council to engage Plottel. But a more likely scenario was that the commission derived from his friendship with the municipal engineer, A. H. Munro, who supervised the erection of the building.

Plot designed a wonderful building which certainly owed something in style to his 1926 St Kilda Synagogue. The exterior design, in the American Romanesque

style generally used for commercial buildings and department stores, features a terracotta tile mansard roof and a finely detailed entrance loggia with Corinthian columns. Inside, Plottel provided a stylish moderne design, opulent with terrazzo, mosaic tiles, decorative plaster, a sweeping marble staircase, jazzy amber-glassed light fixtures, and oceans of Queensland Maple veneer panelling, especially in the Council chambers. In the view of the city historian, John Lack, 'Plottel's Town Hall amalgamated the suburban cinema with the moderne office block'.

A special feature is the ceiling tiles, with figures of birds in the plaster, provided by the firm of Picton Hopkins, who provided plasterwork for many buildings in the era and still trades under the name of Hopkins Plaster Studio. The interior remains relatively intact and is now used for office space. Unfortunately, during the conversion in the 1980s, some of the beautiful woodwork was painted over. The complex is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHO 1968). Its overall effect is enhanced by its location in a landscaped garden setting, which was to characterise many of Plottel's designs in future years.

### **The move to Moderne**

Like many other architects, Plot began to embrace the latest architectural style – the moderne – in the mid-1930s and designed a number of buildings in this fashion, starting with the 11-storey 1935 Beehive Building in central Melbourne for the mercer Henry Rosenthal. He commissioned Plottel to design a 'height-limit building'<sup>21</sup> at a cost of around £33,000. The result was a symmetrical composition featuring rounded protruding spandrels in the centre bay of the floors, each of which includes fluted terracotta clad columns.<sup>22</sup>

1937 was a big year for Plottel. A major government-funded work in the Depression years was the completion of a boulevard along the river Yarra in the suburb of Richmond. On a two-acre site in parkland, facing the boulevard, Plottel designed a factory for paper producers Lamson Paragon, giving expression to his ideas that industrial buildings worked best when situated in garden settings and included recreation facilities for the workers. Stylistically, the two-storeyed cream brick building featured an elegant entrance, 'executed in terracotta of old gold or leather brown tone, with olive green and yellow enriched trims', with large long windows lighting the stair well over the main doorway'.<sup>23</sup> Special attention was paid to the staff facilities, with recreation rooms designed to give a maximum of convenience and comfort. The men's and women's dining rooms were joined by concertina doors and were able to be opened into one for dances and social gatherings. The factory was surrounded by lawns and flowering shrubs, and the design was a telling illustration of a 'growing tendency to create a new atmosphere for factories, to avoid drab settings and to pay more and more attention to the comfort and welfare of the staff'. Once again, Plottel used wood panelling extensively and, like factories designed by his contemporary Norman Seabrook, produced a building that was a model of efficiency.<sup>24</sup> Regrettably, the building was demolished in the 1990s.

The location of the factory in a garden setting was applauded. According to the *Age*, 'there is adequate evidence that Melbourne is becoming garden conscious...architects are paying more and more attention to preserving as much as possible of the existing foliage'. So when Plot designed a block of eight flats on the corner of Alma and Westbury Streets in St Kilda in 1938, he was impressed by the beauty of some of the fine old trees on the site and decided to preserve as many as possible and designed a building to present a dignified and restful appearance amongst the trees and garden shrubs.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps this indicates that whilst he was adept at designing buildings in the latest, moderne style, his first preference was for a style that recalled his English homeland.

Plottel's ideas of improving life for the occupants of his buildings was also demonstrated in his 1937 design for a boys' home in the eastern suburb of Burwood. Working amongst trees and gardens on a site that included a dairy farm and an apiary, his design was aimed at banishing all traces of the old-fashioned institutional atmosphere, substituting 'friendly, comfortable lines for the forbidding aspect that characterised institutional buildings for so long'.<sup>26</sup> The building, constructed in brick with an entrance porch in white cement, radiated in four wings from a central octagonal entrance hall.

There was no room for a garden surround at Plottel's 1937 design of Yoffa House.<sup>27</sup> Located in the centre of the rag trade in Melbourne's Flinders Lane, the eight-storey warehouse and showroom building was 'one of the few recent building undertakings in that part of the city'. It was a study in asymmetry, and the stairwell at the front of the building had windows rising from first floor to the roof, giving it an appearance of 'lofty dignity'. Plot took advantage of the fall of the land, and his design included a double ground floor – a few steps down from Flinders Lane led to the lower ground floor which opened to a private area at the back. The design also allowed for floors to be fully self-contained, as it was intended that warehouse space would be let to a number of tenants and it was advantageous if they could occupy an entire floor.<sup>28</sup> Today the building is the trendy Adelphi Hotel, a fine example of adaptive re-use of interwar buildings for a new purpose. Although hidden behind the hotel sign, the original lettering of Yoffa House remains intact. A major feature of the hotel is a swimming pool on the rooftop that extends out over Flinders Lane!

Phillipa became a lawyer who for many years was involved in women's affairs and prominent on such bodies as the National Council of Women. She was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1972. In 1993, she was described by Dame Phyllis Frost as 'a woman who gave much encouragement to younger women to explore and express their talents and was always supportive of all women whether in the workforce or working voluntarily in the community. She will be remembered as a truly remarkable, outstanding and supportive woman who was ahead of her time'. She married Rolf Hallenstein, a member of the German side of the Hallenstein family, and produced three children. But the union needed much

ingenuity on her part. During the Second World War

Australian women were Australian citizens and British subjects but our Nationality Act decreed that when an Australian woman married, she lost her Australian nationality and took the nationality of her husband. This created enormous difficulties for Phillipa as Rolf was German. Her intelligence made her probe and research the situation and she discovered that Germany had withdrawn citizenship for Jews and this made Rolf a stateless person, so she was able to marry in 1943 and Rolf became an Australian citizen. (See [www.womeninaustralia.info.biogs](http://www.womeninaustralia.info.biogs).)

In 1937, Plottel was engaged again by the Jewish community to design Temple Beth Israel (TBI) in Alma Road, St Kilda. A building fund had already been established when Rabbi Sanger arrived in 1936 after leaving Germany just before he was to be arrested. In October 1936 the site in Alma Road was purchased for a total of £1250. The building was to cost £3500 and Plottel was contracted as the honorary architect. Plot came up with a simple modernistic design in May 1937 and the foundation stone was laid by Sir Isaac Isaacs in July 1937 in front of hundreds of people. The building was completed in four months and the highly modernistic design was praised by *The Age* for its simplicity and dignity. Innovations in the Liberal Jewish building included the absence of a women's gallery and provision for the installation of an electric organ. The design also provided for future extensions to accommodate an increased congregation and for an instruction hall and a balcony overlooking the auditorium. Plottel's simple design was highly regarded and was featured in the *Journal of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects* (March 1938) and later used to illustrate an article on Church architecture in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*.<sup>29</sup>

TBI was upgraded in 1955 at a cost of £40,000, with the first function in the new Temple hall being held in May 1958. Much of the site was demolished and re-built during the 1980s and all that remains of Plot's original design is the red-brick eastern wall. Fittingly, TBI was where his funeral was held when he passed away, at age 94, in 1977, before heading to his final resting place at the Necropolis, Springvale.<sup>30</sup>

### **Beauty in power houses**

Perhaps Plottel's most unusual commission was a series of electrical sub-stations. Footscray was one of a number of municipal councils that maintained and sold its own electricity in the 1930s (others included Melbourne, Brunswick and Northcote) and in 1937, the council decided that 'electric current shall be distributed from ornamental little buildings instead of from the box-like structures that raise their ugly shapes in many suburbs'.<sup>31</sup> They turned to Plottel to design a series of sub-stations and switch control houses. Solidly constructed, with brick walls, concrete roofs and floors and in the moderne style, each was finished in different colours with cream and blue glazed bricks and individual touches to harmonise with the surroundings. Today, the few that remain are deteriorating and covered

in graffiti, but they demonstrate that moderne design could be effectively applied to industrial buildings to produce a stylish and elegant outcome.

Joe and Re took an extended world trip in 1938, travelling by ship to Europe via Singapore and the Suez Canal and then aboard the *Queen Mary* to the United States and Canada. Recently, the Hallenstein family discovered a series of recordings of radio broadcasts made with Plot on his return from America. The show was called *Voice of the Voyager*, broadcast on 3KZ, where a very serious interviewer (Norman Banks) met returning travellers at the docks and interviewed them about their experiences. Not surprisingly, Plot was of the opinion that travelling in Europe in this troubled time was much more difficult than his previous trip in 1928. He recounted his experiences of nine months' travel through Europe and America, including the difficulties experienced with passports, visas and currency exchanges in Mussolini's Italy. Ever conscious of the dangers of publicly criticising the dictator, he recalled how the English passengers on the ship advised that Mussolini only ever be referred to as Mr Smith – a practice that appealed to Plot's sense of humour. There were other stories that have passed into family folklore. While in Europe, Plot was in Italy and Re was in France, so he boarded an aeroplane to get to France. In a time when flying was rudimentary, Re was horrified that Plot had not only boarded a plane but had then flown over the Alps. Re was not averse to expressing her annoyance with Plot, such as the time when they were apart on the Continent. Rather than writing, he dictated the letter to his secretary who typed it up. When Re received the letter, she returned it to him with a note written on it to the effect that she would not accept letters from him 'received first by another woman'<sup>32</sup>

Having visited relatives in Plottel's native Yorkshire, it was dispiriting for the couple to pass through London at the time of the Munich Crisis, described by Plot as feeling like being at the side of a dying relative. Not surprisingly, the *Queen Mary* was crammed with passengers seeking to escape Europe in 1938 – perhaps a forerunner of its imminent conversion to a wartime troop carrier. Commenting on modern architecture that he observed during his travels, he said he was impressed by the modern factories, tenements, and hotels – particularly with the comfort and conveniences provided for guests. But he also observed that Australian architecture did not seem to be far behind the rest of the world.

On his return, Plot undertook another institutional commission for a new two-storey female block, with 150 beds, at the Mount Royal Hospital in inner-suburban Parkville, near the site used for the 2006 Commonwealth Games Village. The design included a series of colonnades with semi-circles along the ground floor and a large central quadrangle laid out with lawns and ornamental shrubs. As in other hospital designs of the 1930s, wide sun verandahs and sun balconies were provided on the four sides of the quadrangle, accessed through double doors to enable beds to be taken out during the day. As always, Plottel was concerned for the well-being of the occupants of his building and he provided spacious dining

rooms and sitting rooms, as well as introducing a number of the latest devices, such as electrically heated trolleys to carry food from the kitchens.<sup>33</sup> But the most important event in his life in 1939 was the twenty-first birthday of Phillipa, celebrated 'in right royal fashion' with much laughter, singing and shouting. The sentiments of the family and friends were captured forever by her Uncle Alex Isaacson in a six-page tribute entitled 'The Plottelian Gazette'.

In 1940, Plottel designed alterations and additions to the Brighton Theatre in Bay Street, probably the only time he worked on a cinema (since demolished). Following the war, he designed a house for daughter Phillipa and her husband Rolf Hallenstein in Dandenong Road, Hughesdale. Constructed at a time of postwar austerity and lack of building materials, it was a clever design that maximised light and room size by using large bay windows and which remained as the Hallenstein family home until Rolf passed away in 2005.

The cornerstones of Plot's life were his family, his community and his work. He was a likeable and gregarious bloke, always laughing and telling stories. Grandson Hal remembers summer trips to the holiday house at Sorrento (in Plot's big 1933 Buick) where he would chatter and sing all the way and entertain his three grandchildren, Hal, Colin and Josephine. Then he would head off to the Sorrento Golf Club for a scotch and soda, or head over to Delgany in Portsea for a cup of tea with the nuns. The Plottels entertained regularly at their Toorak house (where card parties were a favourite) and had a happy family life. Plot was adored by his daughter Phillipa (who called him 'Plotty-darling') and he named a street after her in a 1930s subdivision at One-Tree Hill, Boronia. Plot is remembered by his grandchildren as a man who was generally content with what he had. He enjoyed playing cards, particularly bridge, and going to the races, claiming that most of his work was done there.

Plot was described by his family as religious but not overly Orthodox. He played a major part in the affairs of the community and at the St Kilda Synagogue, and his achievement of designing two synagogues in one suburb is remarkable. Fittingly, he was engaged to update part of the St Kilda synagogue by extending the ladies' gallery in 1957-58.<sup>34</sup> He continued to work until the 1960s, having moved his office to Grey Street in East Melbourne, and greatly enjoyed the family atmosphere provided by the arrival of great-grandchildren. Like his grandchildren, they called him Grumps. Following his death in 1977, his practice was taken over by Harry Hershberg, who became responsible for many fine buildings in the St Kilda area.

Plot is remembered as leaving an indelible mark on the industrial, commercial and civic world of interwar Melbourne. A driving principle was to improve the life of the occupants of his buildings and he was ahead of his time with his love of trees and gardens, often working around established trees. He had been very taken by the garden movement in England and the United States, with its emphasis on planned estates in garden settings. His value is demonstrated by the inclusion of

a number of his buildings on Victoria's Heritage Register and the continued (and adapted) use of many others. But I wonder what he would make of the swimming pool at the Adelphi Hotel!

### Author's note

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### Other buildings by Joseph Plottel

- 1911 325 Collins Street, Melbourne (Embank House)
- 1911 586 Bourke Street, Melbourne
- 1911 Premises for Tate & Townsend, Melbourne
- 1912 Alterations and additions to Kozminsky, 561-565 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne
- 1914 Williamstown Municipal Buildings – 104 Ferguson St, Williamstown
- 1918 Garden Court, Marne Street, South Yarra
- 1920 Waverley, 115-119 Grey St, St Kilda
- late 20s Brash's, 108 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne
- 1926-27 Masonic Club Building, 164-170 Flinders Street, Melbourne (now the Cosmopolitan)
- 1929 Yarra Yarra Golf Club (with Burnett & Alsop)
- 1930 Prell's Building
- 1930 Victoria Club, 141 Queen Street, Melbourne
- 1932 H. V. Nathan House, Trawalla Avenue, Toorak
- 1933 In conjunction with Bunnett & Alsop, Venetian Court dining room, Hotel Australia
- 1933 Factory for Maize Products, Maribyrnong Street, Footscray
- 1934 Extension to existing factory of Victorian Woollen Mills, Moreland Street, Footscray (previously Barnet Glass & Rubber Factory)
- 1934 Bathurst apartments; 24 Queens Road; Melbourne (remodelling)
- 1934 Flats, cnr Toorak Road and Evans Court, Toorak
- 1935 Richards Factory, Roden Street, West Melbourne
- 1937 House, Palm Grove, Deepdene
- 1938 Clovelly Flats, cnr. Alma and Westbury Streets, Street Kilda
- 1940 Alterations and additions to Brighton Theatre, Bay Street, Brighton
- n.d. 122-128 Flinders Street, Melbourne
- n.d. Factory, A W Allens, 2 Byrne Street, South Melbourne (demolished for Southbank)
- n.d. Freemason's Club, Flinders Street, Melbourne
- n.d. RSL Elderly Persons Home, cnr Nepean Highway and Hotham Street, Sorrento

- n.d. Grantham, 547 Toorak Road, Toorak  
 n.d. Devon, 551 Toorak Road, Toorak  
 n.d. Factory for Kayser, Ferntree Gully

## Notes

- 1 Interview with Rolf Hallenstein, 2005.
- 2 Charles Justin, *The Synagogues of Three Congregations*, unpublished B. Arch. Thesis, 1969, p. 71.
- 3 The Plottel house was recently sold (June 2007). Parts have been substantially remodelled, particularly the rear where wide glass doors now open to a paved area that includes an in-ground pool. Plottel's grandson, Hal Hallenstein, recalls that steps down to a concreted yard (with a clothes line) led from the original back doors to the pantry and kitchen, beneath an outside verandah.
- 4 Recollection of Hal Hallenstein, October 2006.
- 5 John S. Levi *Rabbi Jacob Danglow* (Melbourne, 1995), p. 121, Heritage Victoria Register H1968, St Kilda Hebrew Congregation Synagogue, [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au), accessed 22 May 2007.
- 6 Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Edna Walling, 'Rough Sketch of Garden Plan for Rev. J Danglow, Inverleith Ave., St Kilda', Collection of State Library of Victoria.
- 7 L. Oscar Slater, *Walking Tour of South Yarra West*, 1987, p. 23.
- 8 The form and significance of early blocks of flats in St Kilda (including Waverley) is discussed in the Heritage Victoria citation for Summerland Mansions, Fitzroy Street. See Heritage Victoria Register H1808, Summerland Mansions, [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au); accessed 29 June 2005.
- 9 Newman Rosenthal, *Look Back With Pride*, p. 85
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 86
- 11 Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
- 12 Victorian Heritage Register H1968; at [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au), accessed 22 May 2007.
- 13 Ephraim Ehrmann, 'Discovering an Architectural Model of the St Kilda Synagogue in America's Midwest', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. 16, 2002, p. 307; Plottel's signed contract drawings now adorn the offices at the synagogue, having been rescued some years ago by Clive Fredman, a prominent Melbourne architect and committee member of the AJHS.
- 14 *Australian Jewish News*, 12 November 1970.
- 15 *Melbourne Herald*, 22 April 1936.
- 16 The Kayser factory has been extended on the top floor and converted to apartments.
- 17 *The Age*, 21 March 1933.
- 18 *Australian Municipal Journal*, 30 November 1936, p. 302
- 19 *The Age*, 28 November 1933
- 20 John Lack, *A History of Footscray* (Melbourne, 1990), p. 304
- 21 Melbourne buildings were limited to a height of 132 feet, giving rise to the term 'height-limit buildings'.

- 22 Graeme Butler, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Multi-Storey Office Buildings in Melbourne* (no date) Appendix 2, p A2-23.
- 23 *The Age*, 14 September 1937.
- 24 *Ibid.* and 1 January 1937.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 4 January 1938.
- 26 *The Age*, 4 May 1937.
- 27 Butler, *op. cit.*, Appendix 2, A2-24; Plottel also designed a house for the Yoffa family in Waiora Road, Caulfield (demolished).
- 28 *Building Magazine*, 24 September 1938.
- 29 *The Age*, 25 May 1937; *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, April 1944, p. 80.
- 30 In her 1989 history of St Kilda, Anne Longmire (p. 170) noted that the TBI congregation grew strongly to become the largest single Jewish congregation in Australia by the late 1950s. Rabbi Sanger dedicated a new Temple, war memorial sanctuary and religious school building for the congregation in June 1959, and expressed great optimism about the future of the congregation he had watched grow strongly since those fearful days when he arrived in St Kilda as a refugee.
- 31 *The Age*, 13 July 1937.
- 32 Recollections of Hal Hallenstein, October 2006.
- 33 *The Age*, 24 January 1939.
- 34 Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Heritage Victoria Register H1968, [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au): accessed 22 May 2007.

## TRACING MY COUSINS DOWN UNDER: THE JOYS OF JEWISH GENEALOGY

*Judith Romney Wegner*

(Editors' note: An earlier and shorter version of this article appeared in *Shemot*, the quarterly Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, Vol. 13-2, pp.20-3.)

By descent I am a 'Kosher Kiwi'. That's because, although brought up in London, my maternal grandfather Mark Marks was actually born in Auckland, New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> Later, he spent some time in Australia serving as a fireman in the outback; according to my late mother, he claimed to be the first Jew to see a burning bush since Moses! But the details surrounding his birth I learned only after both of my parents were gone, when I began my genealogical enterprise knowing nothing about ancestors more remote than my grandparents. Much of what is presented here, based on material published by the AJHS more than fifty years ago, was supplied by distant cousins I had never seen. My husband Peter and I had the pleasure of meeting some of my informants in person during a pilgrimage Down Under in 2001, which began in Auckland.<sup>2</sup>

To account for her father's birth in mid-nineteenth-century New Zealand, my mother imagined that her grandfather had been transported for stealing a loaf of bread! But family research laid that cherished family myth to rest in short order; the truth was far more mundane. My grandfather was born in Auckland in February 1864 because my great-grandparents John and Adelaide Marks had emigrated there to join John's brother Charles. Married almost two years, they arrived in Auckland on the SS Ganges on 12 October 1863,<sup>3</sup> after a voyage that can hardly have been pleasant for the pregnant Adelaide.

Charles and three more brothers (Samuel, Abraham and Joseph) had already responded to gold-rush fever in Australia and New Zealand during the 1850s. Like many poor Londoners, the Marksese sought to improve their economic situation by availing themselves of subsidised sea passages and land grants offered to emigrants.<sup>4</sup> All told, five out of six brothers (and one of their three sisters) took ship for Australia or New Zealand or both; only John and Abraham would ever go home again.

John and Adelaide Marks stayed three years in Auckland, with their firstborn Mark and his sister Kate, born in February 1865. The following year, they returned to London to take over the house and hat business of John's father Mark Marks (who had passed away in December 1865); the next two children, Noah, 1868 and

Juliet, 1870, were born in Pimlico in the flat over the shop where the latter had spent his final years.<sup>5</sup> So, as it turned out, my grandfather grew up in London and married there – which is why I am a Limey and not a Kiwi! However, before he married, he did return briefly Down Under about 1890, when his sister Kate and their brother Noah were living in Melbourne with their spouses and families.

The family saga begins with my great-great-grandfather Mark Marks (1799-1865), born in London to Dutch-Jewish parents. He married his Dutch-born cousin Juliet Collins, and they produced nine children, the seventh being my great-grandfather John, born in 1838 at the family home in St Giles' High Street. Only John and two younger brothers have birth certificates; the other children arrived before birth registration was required. However, thanks to an article published in *AJHS Journal* in 1950 (a goldmine of information that launched the Marks-Collins genealogical enterprise!), we know the birth years of the first six children also.

That article, 'Genealogy of an Australian Jewish Family',<sup>6</sup> printed posthumously a letter written in 1945 by a pioneer of Anglo-Jewish genealogy, the Reverend Morris Rosenbaum, emeritus minister of the Borough Synagogue in South London (who died in 1947). The letter describes handwritten entries in a Passover Haggadah printed in Fürth in 1762, a family heirloom presented in 1835 by Abraham Collins to his sister 'Gitla' (Juliet), wife of Mark Marks the latter. In a note written on the flyleaf, Abraham says the Haggadah had belonged to their late father 'Zanvil' (Samuel) Collins, and lists the names and dates of Mark and Juliet's first four children: Lydia 1825; Sophia 1827; Samuel 1831; Esther 1833. A different hand (presumably Juliet or Mark) subsequently added five more names: Abraham 1835; Charles 1837; John 1838; Isaac 1841; and Joseph 1843.<sup>7</sup> Some years later, the second 'scribe' listed six children born in Goulburn, New South Wales, to Lydia Marks and her husband Joseph Collins, giving their English and Yiddish names: Juliet *Gitla*, 1848; Charles *Yakusel* (his grandfather's name) 1850; Anne *Yachten*, 1852; Sophia *Pheila*, 1854 (after her great-grandmother *Fijle*); Dina *Dahina*, 1856; and Fanny *Frumet*, 1859. (Missing is the name of Elizabeth, 1858, who died at seven weeks and is buried at Goulburn in an unmarked grave, along with a stillborn male that Lydia died birthing in 1862.<sup>8</sup>) Rev. Rosenbaum noted that in 1945 the Haggadah belonged to a grandson of Lydia's sister Sophia; but recent inquiries have failed to locate it, and it may have been inadvertently discarded by someone unaware of its genealogical significance.

Nineteenth-century Marks families frequently married their Collins cousins – some of whom would leave their mark on Australian political history. Rev. Rosenbaum's letter states that Priscilla and Ann Marks, who married their cousins Woolf and Charles Collins respectively, were daughters of a merchant named Samuel Marks (son of 'Mark of Amsterdam') who had settled in London and married 'Fanny Collins' in the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place in 1793. The synagogue's marriage register gives the bride's Hebrew name as *Fijle bas Yekusiel* and her English name as 'Fyla Collan', daughter of a Dutch Jew named Yekusiel Kallam; 'Kallam' and

‘Collan’ are attempts to transcribe the surname Kollum, written in Hebrew in the register.

The rare occurrence of the biblical name Yekusiel (1 Chronicles 4:18) was a godsend for Marks-Collins family research. Chaim Caran, a noted Dutch-Jewish genealogist, discovered that Yekusiel Kallam’s grandfather had resided briefly in Collum (now Kollum), Friesland about 1700; and when surnames became mandatory in the Netherlands, the family, having moved to Amsterdam, adopted the name van Collum, ‘from Collum’. Yekusiel Kallam’s descendants would later anglicise the name to Collins; in his wildest moments, the eponymous ancestor (who died in 1805) could never have imagined that three descendants – all named Charles Collins and all bearing the Hebrew name Yekusiel – would end up buried in a municipal cemetery in Sydney, Australia!) Yekusiel’s daughter Fijle, born in Amsterdam in 1766, chose later in life to exaggerate her age; when she died in January 1861, the *Jewish Chronicle* published an obituary of the supposed centenarian Sophia Marks (as she was then known). Sophia left four children: Priscilla (1794), Mark (1799), Ann (1804) and Charles (1812); whether others predeceased her we know not. As mentioned earlier, Mark Marks married his cousin Gitla (Juliet) Collins. Many Collinses were already in the hat trade, so Mark Marks’ debut in that business may well have come with the marriage.

Mark and Juliet could not have known that their offspring would reach maturity just in time to catch mid-nineteenth-century colonisation fever and emigrate to Australia and New Zealand during the 1850s and ‘60s. Lydia, Samuel, Abraham, Charles, John and Joseph would all brave the hazardous voyage halfway round the world – the brothers hoping to improve their economic status, and Lydia to wed her cousin Joseph Collins, who had settled in Goulburn and was destined to become involved in Australian civic life. Their marriage certificate from the New South Wales Registry tells us that Lydia and Joseph were wed in Sydney’s York Street Synagogue on ‘Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 1847 and Corresponding with 26<sup>th</sup> Tishrie [sic] 5608, at the Synagogue ... in the parish of St Andrew’s’(!)<sup>9</sup>

Given the dearth of Jewish women during the early colonisation period, importation of marriageable cousins by Jewish *émigrés* is no great surprise. But the response of so many young Jews to government incentives to populate the British dominions beyond the seas bespeaks a higher level of acculturation than one might expect. A generation or two after their Dutch Ashkenazi grandparents settled in England, they already saw themselves as ‘Englishmen of the Mosaic persuasion’ (in stark contrast to the Jews of Eastern Europe, most of whom continued to suffer persecution and severe discrimination, including ineligibility for citizenship in countries where their ancestors had resided for centuries).

Three of the latter’s sons migrated first to New Zealand, but John soon returned home and Samuel later transferred to Australia, leaving only Charles in Auckland. Seduced by the 1855 Auckland Immigration Certificate Act’s offer of free or subsidised land, 19-year-old Charles had sailed from London on the *Cor-*

*nubia* on 1 May 1857, docking in Auckland on 6 September. In 1863 he married his 16-year old orphaned cousin Rayner Woolf in the Auckland synagogue. Rayner had been brought to New Zealand by her grandfather Benjamin Asher, who is characterised as one of Auckland's 'shopkeepers of good repute' in a history of New Zealand Jewry according to which 'most of the hundred-odd Jews who lived there in the 1850s did reasonably well in the trades and businesses with which they or their parents had been connected in England'.<sup>10</sup> In one respect, Charles and Rayner Marks were true pioneers; taking seriously the government's exhortation to populate the colonies, they produced thirteen children; but the two eldest died before reaching 40 and four more died in infancy. (Paradoxically, one son lived to be 87 and two daughters lived into their 90s!) Several of the siblings eventually transferred to Australia. Charles died in the Costley Home for the Aged Poor in 1908, and is buried in the Symonds Street cemetery, Auckland, along with other Markses. My husband and I met two of his descendants: Raymond Skinner in Auckland and Beverly Flider in Sydney.

Charles' eldest son Mark, born in Auckland a few weeks after my grandfather, was likewise named for the latter. Raymond, Charles's great-great grandson, showed us several places of Jewish interest on our 2001 visit. One highlight was the old synagogue building in Princes Street (now owned and occupied by the University of Auckland), which at the time of our visit was a branch of the New Zealand National Bank. Glancing upwards as we passed through the arch-shaped glass doors, we could see the protective balustrade of the three-sided balcony that had been the synagogue's 'ladies' gallery'. Turning round, we saw elaborate decorations on the fourth wall, through which we had just entered the building. That was when it struck me: the arch-shaped entrance had been cut through the back wall of the *Aron Kodesh*, the Ark that had housed the old synagogue's Torah scrolls! The Auckland Hebrew Congregation had long since moved to a new synagogue in Greys Avenue, where Peter and I attended Shabbat morning service. To our delight, the kiddush lunch included fried gefilte fish balls – traditionally served in English synagogues but unheard of in America, where I may be the only Jewish mother who actually fries her gefilte fish.

Concerning my grandfather's birth in Auckland I made a fascinating discovery. The register entry signed by my great-grandfather John gives Mark's birth date as 15 February 1864. But this was a manifest error, as the child's arrival had already been reported in the *Daily Southern Cross* the week before! The 9 February issue announced the delivery thus: 'On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the wife of Mr. John Marks, Hobson Street, late of London, of a son.'

So my grandfather's official birthdate was 'off' by a whole week! That my great-grandfather was indeed *this* John Marks (and not some other man with the same name) is clear from his signature in the register – which exactly matches his signature on the *ketubbah* when Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler married him to Adelaide Aarons in the Maiden Lane Synagogue in 1861<sup>11</sup> – and from the Hobson

Street address (corroborated in other documents). So what could account for this discrepancy in the date of birth? John did not actually register Mark's birth until 10 March; perhaps he simply lost track of the baby's exact age. Or could he have deliberately misstated the date to evade a fine for reporting the birth out of time? (It was more than a month after the actual birth, so he may possibly have missed an official deadline.)

As every family researcher knows, misstatements of date or age on official documents are surprisingly common and one cannot take for granted the accuracy of names, ages or dates on old birth, marriage or death certificates. At the same time, the wealth of information provided in certificates issued Down Under puts their English counterparts to shame. The former often identify a deceased's parents and sometimes list names and ages of surviving children, as well as the deceased's age and birthplace and the length of his or her residence Down Under. Such records are a gold mine for Anglo-Jewish researchers trying to trace the family name of a mother or bride in pre-1837 births or marriages. Without them I would never have learned the family name of Juliet, the latter's wife. She appears variously as 'Hymans' or 'Hyams' on the birth certificates of her three children born after 1837; but Australian and New Zealand certificates established that her official surname was neither of the above; it was in fact 'Collins'. (Hymans was evidently a patronymic, these being habitually used as surnames by Dutch Ashkenazim.)<sup>12</sup>

Lydia Marks and Joseph Collins, who were first cousins, represent a third successive generation of Marks-Collins marriages. Her father Mark Marks the latter had married his cousin Juliet Collins c.1824, and her grandfather Samuel Marks his cousin 'Fyla Collan' in 1793, as stated by Rev. Rosenbaum. Even more important, thanks to my Australian and New Zealand cousins, Rosenbaum's revelation that Sophia Marks was née Fyla Collan led me to her father Yekusiel Kallam, whose name was to prove crucial in tracing remoter antecedents of the Marks-Collins family. With the help of genealogist Chaim Caran, I have now traced the family back to Yekusiel Blits, a scholar who in 1677 produced the earliest Yiddish translation of the entire Hebrew Bible!<sup>13</sup>

Two mementos of Lydia Marks Collins include a copy of her elegant portrait, sent me by her great-great-grandson Dr Geoffrey Walker of Croydon, New South Wales; and a photograph of her amazingly well-preserved grave in the old Goulburn cemetery, from Alison Marks Ryan of O'Connor, ACT, a great-granddaughter of Lydia's youngest brother Joseph. Goulburn, which declined when the gold rush subsided, is today a historic site. Of the Jewish community no trace remains but the old cemetery; yet when Lydia and Joseph settled there in 1847, the town boasted the third largest Jewish community in Australia (mainly comprising merchants who supplied the miners' needs).

In a photograph of Lydia's grave, Alison stands beside the headstone, which is inscribed in Hebrew and English. The Hebrew text translates as follows: 'Here lies Leah bas Mordechai, wife of Yosef ben Yekusiel, who departed on the Holy

Sabbath Day, 13<sup>rd</sup> Adar Sheni, and was buried on the second day of Purim in the year 5622 aged thirty-seven years.<sup>14</sup> The English inscription identifies her as ‘Lydia, wife of Joseph Collins’ and quotes from the well-known biblical tribute to the Woman of Valour: ‘Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.’ (Proverbs 31:30). Lydia was indeed a woman of valour; she had left her London home and sailed halfway round the world to marry her cousin, whom she presented with six surviving children before her life was sadly cut short. The excellent condition of her stone made it easy to decipher the Hebrew and gave me a means to repay Alison for sending me so many journal articles and press clippings along with the photograph of Lydia’s grave, which she visited some years after the reconsecration of the cemetery in 1987.

Peter and I spent part of our Sydney trip with Geoffrey Walker and his wife Wendy Roach. The Harbour Bridge and the Opera House were not the only highlights; we also visited the Jewish section of the vast Rookwood municipal cemetery, where Joseph Collins rests with his second wife Priscilla Israel – another cousin whom he married after Lydia’s untimely death. The Hebrew inscription praises him as a man of integrity: *ish zaken tam ve-yashar* (literally ‘a venerable man, simple and upright’). Geoffrey was delighted to receive my translations of both Lydia’s and Joseph’s stones.

Joseph Collins (1822-1902), a successful merchant, became active in Goulburn civic life and was elected alderman. His son Charles (1850-1898) did even better. After being educated at Rev. A.B. Davis’s Academy in Sydney, Charles (like his father and most nineteenth-century Jewish Australians) became a merchant, with stores in places like Wee Waa and Pilliga. Besides serving as president of the Goulburn Jewish community, he became a magistrate in 1883 and was later the first mayor of Narrabri. He acquired a couple of breweries and was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, where he served from 1885 to his death in 1898. One biographical assessment says this:

... Collins campaigned as a convincing land reformer in 1885 and borrowed much from the Labour platform in a tough fight in the 1891 election. His career mirrored the emergence of northwestern New South Wales from an area of weatherboard and sheep in the 1860s to a more sophisticated land of railroads, unions and wheat in the 1890s. He was also important for pioneering Jewish participation in the commercial development of rural New South Wales.<sup>15</sup>

Charles, who never married, died prematurely of a stroke at age 48; his funeral was conducted by Rabbi Davis, and he is buried at Rookwood beside his father Joseph and stepmother Priscilla Israel Collins.<sup>16</sup>

New South Wales is not the only Australian state where my nineteenth-century forebears lived; some settled in Melbourne, where we spent a few days in 2001. While there, we visited the minister of the Toorak Road Synagogue, Rabbi

Ian Goodhardt, whom we had last seen as a small boy in London (his father had been a contemporary of Peter and myself at Cambridge in the early 1950s). Rabbi Goodhardt gave us a tour of the synagogue and presented us with a history of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, which I read with great interest.<sup>17</sup>

My earliest family connection with Melbourne is my great-grandfather's brother Samuel, who died there in tragic circumstances. Having first settled in Auckland in 1853 (where, like Benjamin Asher mentioned earlier, he was cited by Lazarus Goldman as a 'shopkeeper of good repute'), he transferred to Melbourne in 1872 with his wife Jane Louisa Cheetham and seven children. But in 1875 Jane, aged only 35, died of 'phthisis' (tuberculosis), leaving Samuel to raise the children alone. The stress of coping with them while being hounded by creditors led 50-year-old Samuel to drown himself in the Yarra on 23 August 1881. At the inquest, his children testified to his depression and financial difficulties. His married daughter Juliet deposed that her father 'did not drink' and 'had recently been annoyed about money matters'. His teenage daughter Annie testified that he 'had not slept much during the last week, he was very low-spirited' but had never threatened to kill himself. One witness saw him take off his hat and shoes and jump into the Yarra 'about nine o'clock on Tuesday morning'. Another, who saw him shortly before nine o'clock, said he was 'very excited about money matters, and appeared to be slightly out of his mind'. The jury returned a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind.<sup>18</sup>

Peter and I paid our respects to Samuel by cruising along the Yarra in a water taxi. Our six fellow passengers included an elderly couple I recognised at once as co-religionists. They turned out to be Melbournians, and the husband was a Holocaust survivor – a Polish Jew who by sheer serendipity was visiting Russian friends when Hitler marched into Poland on 1 September 1939. The outbreak of war kept him from returning home, thereby leaving him the sole survivor of his family. (How extraordinary that eight passengers randomly gathered on a small boat on the Yarra should include not one but two Holocaust survivors; my husband Peter had escaped from Vienna on a Kindertransport in April 1939.)

My second Melbourne connection involves the marriage of Samuel Marks's daughter Esther to my great-uncle Noah Marks, born in London soon after John and Adelaide's return. As mentioned earlier, Esther came to Melbourne when her family transferred there from Auckland in 1872. Noah left London in 1888 to settle in Melbourne, and married Esther (his first cousin) at the Bourke Street Synagogue on 1 May 1889.

Noah and Esther's marriage poses a conundrum. Esther's mother Jane Cheetham, a gentile, had married Samuel Marks at the Auckland Registry on 8 August 1857. We have found no evidence of an Auckland conversion for Jane, or a synagogue marriage for her and Samuel, so Jane's daughter Esther would in principle have had to convert in order to marry in the Melbourne synagogue (then nominally under the authority of the United Synagogue in London). But when the

couple married in 1889, Esther's parents were long gone; and as she was Noah's cousin and shared the Marks surname, her mother's Jewish ethnicity may simply have been assumed.

It is no secret that the chronic shortage of Jewish women in nineteenth-century Australia made the conversion of prospective brides a bone of contention between successive ministers of the Melbourne congregation and the Beth Din back in London, which (then as now) adamantly opposed conversion undertaken solely for marriage. Rabbinical authorities half a world away seemed impervious to the needs of young Jewish colonial émigrés who could not find Jewish brides, so it would be understandable if greater leniency was exercised at the local level – at least where the bride's father was indisputably Jewish, as in Esther's case. The matter was especially pressing during the ministry of Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams; according to an historical comment on the current Melbourne synagogue website, 'at least twenty years of his ministry was taken up by requests for conversion to Judaism and he always felt that such conversions became his responsibility.'<sup>19</sup>

The Bourke Street Synagogue register records the marriage of Noah and Esther Marks, listing their Hebrew names as Noah ben Ya'akov and Esther bas Sh'muel, along with the Hebrew date: Yom Revi'i, 30<sup>th</sup> Nisan, Rosh Hodesh Iyyar, 5649 (corresponding with Wednesday, 1 May 1889).<sup>20</sup> The Hebrew details are painstakingly interspersed with the English details, which match those given in the secular marriage certificate; and I am told that the Hebrew would have been penned by Rabbi Dr Abrahams himself. We have found no *ketubah*, but presumably there must have been one, as the marriage took place in a synagogue.

A visit to the Melbourne Public Records Office confirmed the births in 1889 and 1891 of Noah and Esther's first two children, Adelaide (named for Noah's mother) and Alfred Samuel (named for Esther's father who had met such a tragic end). Subsequently the family returned to England, where they produced two more children, John in 1895 (named for Noah's father) and Harriet Arona in 1904 (named for Noah's younger brother, Harry Aaron Marks, who had died typhoid fever at Bloemfontein in 1900 while fighting in the Boer War). In Melbourne, Noah Marks changed his name to 'John Norman' (for business reasons, according to a cousin of my mother) and is so named in the birth register. The couple seems to have had trouble sticking with either surname; the 1901 British census lists them as Noah and Esther Marks, but they are buried as Esther and John Norman in the Marks family plot at the United Synagogue cemetery in Willesden. I never met Great-uncle Noah – he died in January 1933 six weeks before I was born – but he appears together with my grandparents and many other family members in a formal photograph taken at the 1920 wedding of his London-born son Johnny and I distinctly recall my mother identifying a pub we passed frequently on the way to Heathrow as one of several owned or managed by her cousin 'Johnny Norman'.

This brings me to another family tragedy, involving Johnny's Australian brother Alfred. On 9 November 1914, two months after the outbreak of the First

World War, we find Alfred in Liverpool, New South Wales, enlisting as a private in the AIF; on 1 January 1915 he was promoted to sergeant in the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Light Infantry. Along with thousands of fellow-Australians, he was killed in action at Gallipoli on 20 May 1915, aged 24, and is buried in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Parade Ground cemetery at Anzac. A fellow researcher, Patrick Gariepy, who had researched Jews who fought at Gallipoli, sent me Alfred's service record – which is so detailed that it even records his red hair! A photograph in *Australian Jewry's Book of Honour 1914-1918* portrays a very personable young man; and the name of Sergeant Alfred S. Norman appears in a display commemorating First World War heroes in the Sydney Jewish Museum. Many years later, the family placed a stone plaque for Alfred at the foot of his parents' grave in the Marks family burial plot at the United Synagogue Cemetery in Willesden (north-west London). It reads as follows: 'In loving memory of Sergt. Alfred S. Marks (Norman) 4th Battalion Australian Light Infantry, killed in action at Gallipoli, 20 May 1915 in his 24th year. Beloved son of Noah and Esther Marks and grandson of John and Adelaide Marks, he rests on the field of battle.'

My late Uncle Alfred, born one year later, was obviously named for his fallen cousin (though no one ever told me that). Today, whenever the strains of 'Waltzing Matilda' come over my radio, my tears well up for a handsome redhead I never even met.

Besides my great-grandfather John, the only brother who returned to England was Abraham. Thanks to yet another AJHS *Journal* article, we know a lot about his activities in Australia. After crossing from New Zealand about 1860, he spent some time at Lambing Flat before settling in Forbes, where his youngest brother Joseph would later join him for a while. The AJHS *Journal* records that Abraham, like many of his 'co-religionists', opened a store in Ranken Street, where he advertised as 'The Original Little Wonder'. He served on the governing board of the Forbes Jewish congregation when it was planning a synagogue – to be located, appropriately, in Templar Street! The committee's report urges:

... in electing your officers, your committee earnestly request you to choose the most fit and proper persons, in whom you can place perfect reliance, and whose talents are of such a nature as to do credit to the trust reposed in them.

Your Committee hope that they will not be misunderstood and deemed presumptuous for impressing you with the importance of electing good and true men, as their only object is to see the affairs of the congregation well managed so as to reflect credit on the community at large.

Lastly, your Committee recommend unity and harmony in all your proceedings and they have no doubt that prosperity will crown your efforts and that the favour of heaven will look graciously upon your undertaking.<sup>21</sup>

The plea for ‘unity and harmony’ has an oddly contemporary ring – as anyone who ever sat on a synagogue board anywhere will no doubt confirm.

An appeal by the Forbes-Lachlan synagogue to Sydney’s York Street Synagogue for help in obtaining a Torah scroll evoked the response that ‘the secretary should apply to Joseph Collins of Goulburn, as that gentleman had a Sepher which was not in use’.<sup>22</sup> The article’s author surmises that the congregation ‘was able to obtain the Sepher from Goulburn, particularly as Abraham Marks (a member of the Forbes Synagogue Committee) and Joseph Collins were close relatives’, citing a local newspaper report of the death of Abraham’s sister Lydia, which praised the Jewish community’s concern for its members’ welfare:

It is pretty generally known that members of the Jewish persuasion are wont to show more kindness to each other than is usually found to exist among other religionists; and we saw evidence of it in our own town: Mr. Abraham Marks hearing of the death of his sister Mrs. Joseph Collins of Goulburn went round among the portion of the Jewish family residing in Forbes, who assembled together for prayer morning and evening for several days after the melancholy intelligence was received.

Thus reported *The Miner* (26 March 1862).<sup>23</sup>

The picture of Abraham gathering a *minyan* to recite *kaddish* for Lydia is doubly heartrending, because we know of impending tragedies he could not foresee: his sister Esther in London (who, like Lydia, had married a Collins cousin) was fated to die in childbirth in 1868; and when the Forbes gold fever subsided, Abraham himself would return to England, marry, father two little girls – and then lose his wife and daughters to the ravages of infectious disease.

That Abraham returned home I learned from a *Jewish Chronicle* notice placed by his brother John and sister Sophia when he died in London on 24 December 1894. But it was thanks to Doreen Berger’s compilation *The Jewish Victorian: Genealogical Information from the Jewish Newspapers 1871-80* that I tracked down Abraham’s wife and children.<sup>24</sup> ‘Marks’ listings included the deaths of two children (Fanny, aged three, in 1878 and Juliet, aged five, in 1880), with parents named Amelia and Abraham Marks. This, allied with the facts that Juliet had been the name of Abraham’s mother and Fanny’s death notice requested: ‘Australian and New Zealand papers please copy’, seemed to point to our Abraham. Sure enough, the marriage register at the Family Records Centre in London listed an 1870 marriage of an Abraham Marks; and the certificate revealed that he had indeed married a woman named Amelia.<sup>25</sup>

An unexpected bonus was the identification of the bride’s father as ‘Isaac Isaacs, furniture dealer’ – a name already known to me because his grandson Isaac ‘Charles’ Isaacs married my Auckland-born great-aunt Catherine Marks in 1885! Charles and Kate Isaacs were destined to form the vanguard of another generation of Markses Down Under; in 1886, they left London with their newborn infant,

Michael Albert, on the *Australasian* bound for Melbourne, where their second son, John Archie, was born in 1889 (the same year that Catherine's brother Noah married cousin Esther in the Bourke Street Synagogue).

As mentioned at the outset, my grandfather Mark Marks had spent some time as a firefighter in the Outback. Though I cannot pinpoint the exact dates, it seems likely to have been the early 1890s, when his brother Noah and sister Kate were both living in Melbourne with their families. But we know that both families soon returned to London, because Catherine's next child was born there in 1892 and Noah's in 1894. So Mark may not have stayed in Melbourne much longer – which is how I missed my second shot at being born Down Under! We know he returned to London before 1903, when he met and married my grandmother. I barely remember my grandfather, who died just before I turned five. My sole recollection is rather traumatic; one day, thinking to amuse me, he suddenly removed his dentures and snapped them at me! Needless to say, I was terrified and howled inconsolably. (Today, like so many Jewish genealogists, I wish I had asked more questions while my mother was still here to answer them.)

This memoir would not be complete without an account of my great-grandfather's youngest brother, Joseph Marks – who had just turned fifteen when he emigrated to Australia. He evidently landed in Melbourne, as his name appears in the passenger list of the *SS Wonga Wonga*, which sailed from Melbourne, docking in Sydney on 15 May 1858.<sup>26</sup>

Joseph (Alison Ryan's ancestor) first spent some time in Goulburn with his sister Lydia. She was eighteen years his senior, and he had been a young child when she left home to marry Joseph Collins, so it is some consolation to know that they managed to renew their acquaintance before her untimely death four years later. Thereafter, Joseph moved on to Grenfell, New South Wales. *The Grenfell Record* of 2 February 1901 reports that Joseph's father, the hatter, had been a special constable in London during the Corn Law Riots of the 1840s. The mere idea of a nineteenth-century Jew being appointed a law-enforcement officer may astonish those descended from East European Jews; but it illustrates how far Jewish life in Victorian England diverged from that of their Polish or Russian co-religionists under the tsars.

*The Grenfell Record* reports a ceremony marking the return from the Boer War of Joseph's son, Trooper Charles Marks. Charles fared better than his English cousin, my great-uncle Aaron Marks, who fell at Bloemfontein the previous year. As the newspaper tells it:

There was a gathering at the Royal Hotel, on Saturday afternoon, the occasion being the presentation of a gold pendant to Trooper Charles Marks (lately returned from South Africa) ... After Trooper Marks' varied experiences, it was ... a matter of gratification that he had returned safe and sound; he had shown himself a true Briton, prepared to defend the flag of the great Empire to which he belonged.

Joseph Marks' comments regarding his son reflect an attitude typical of Victorian Jews:

Mr. J. Marks, on behalf of his family ... responded in a highly loyal speech. Had he fifty sons, he would have sent them, or gone himself. Speaking as a Jew, though one who had embraced Christianity, he said England had been their good friend, and his people felt it their duty to assist her.<sup>27</sup>

Can we imagine a Polish or Russian newspaper in 1901 publishing a similar report? Once more we see the contrast between the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe and the lives of 'Englishmen of the Mosaic persuasion' at the turn of the twentieth century.

We hear from Joseph Marks again on 20 February 1917, when *The Grenfell Record* published a rambling memoir describing his early days in Australia: 'I left Melbourne in '58 in the old *Wonga Wonga*, and after two days and a night at sea arrived in Sydney ... I shortly afterwards booked for Goulburn ...'<sup>28</sup>

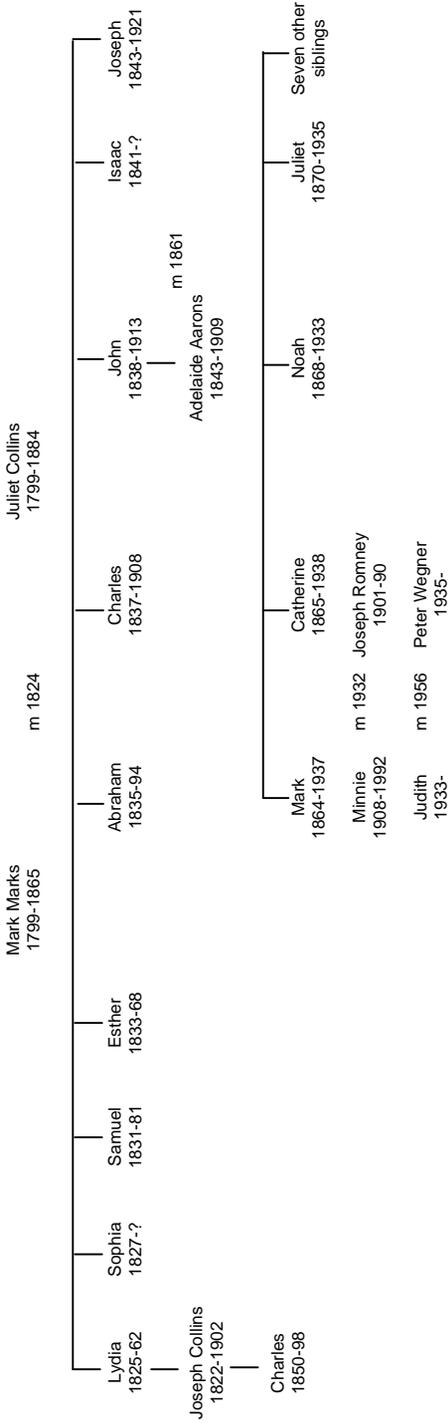
Presumably Joseph went to Goulburn because Lydia was there. His memoir recalls a number of Jewish settlers: Alfred Joseph, Harry Moses, Harry Levy, Abe Cohen, Mendelson Bros., and Benjamin & Marks, and mentions that 'Joe Collins, who kept the Victoria Store, was father of the late member for Narrabri' – a reference to Charles Collins, who had died twenty years before; Joseph had attended the funeral.<sup>29</sup> Oddly, Joseph's memoir does not identify Joseph Collins as his brother-in-law, nor does he mention his sister at all when discussing his move from Sydney to Goulburn soon after arrival; I cannot explain this puzzling omission.

Joseph was the first member of the Marks family Down Under to depart from Judaism by actual conversion to Christianity; but subsequent generations of the family Down Under routinely married gentiles and were eventually absorbed into the mainstream population. Today, so far as I know, none of their descendants practise Judaism; yet I have been greatly touched by their interest and persistence in tracing their Jewish ancestry along with other branches, and will always be grateful to my newfound cousins for their help in unearthing the family history.

Australian and New Zealand gold mines still yield dividends for me, but not from gold veins long exhausted; my treasure comprises genealogical nuggets of which I can truly say:

*Ha-nehemadim mi-zahav u-mi-paz rav u-metuqim mi-d'vash v'nofet tsufim.*

'More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.' (Psalm 19:11)



*Marks family tree*

### Appendix: Solving some puzzles in Rev. Rosenbaum's 1945 letter

As noted in the 1950 *AJHS Journal* article that reproduced Rev. Rosenbaum's 1945 letter, the plethora of nineteenth-century Marks-Collins marriages resulted in confusion among their descendants. Rev. Rosenbaum's informants told him that Joseph was the son of Woolf Collins and his cousin Priscilla Marks; but, as the 1950 author points out (*AJHSJ*, vol. 3, part 4, p. 193, note 2) other Collins descendants contradicted this claim, insisting that Joseph was the son of Charles Collins and his cousin Ann Marks.

Documentary evidence and tombstone inscriptions have proved the latter group correct. Priscilla and Ann Marks were sisters (specifically, the sisters of my great-great-grandfather Mark Marks the latter) while Woolf and Charles Collins were either brothers or at least cousins; therefore later generations could easily confuse the offspring of those two Marks-Collins marriages. We can now report that Rev. Rosenbaum's informants were mistaken and the 1950 author's informants correct; Joseph Collins was indeed the son of Charles and Ann Collins and not of Woolf and Priscilla Collins.

These relationships could not have been established without the help of two Australian cousins, Geoffrey Walker (a direct descendant of Joseph Collins) and Alison Ryan (a direct descendant of Joseph Marks), who showed me two headstone inscriptions, both recording Joseph Collins' Hebrew name as Yosef ben Yekusiel. The name Yekusiel bears no relationship to the name Woolf (the latter name traditionally 'matches' the Hebrew name Ze'ev which actually means 'wolf'); more importantly, this Collins family traditionally 'matched' the Hebrew name Yekusiel with the English name Charles (earlier, in Holland they had consistently matched it with the Dutch name Coenraad). So Joseph's father Yekusiel would certainly have been Charles and not Woolf. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that Joseph and Lydia's second and third children were named Charles and Anne (evidently for Joseph's parents), whereas no child was named either Woolf or Priscilla.

Mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-Dutch Jews often lacked proficiency in Hebrew – so the progressive mispronunciation and misspelling of Charles's Yiddish name (from Yakusel to Yaksel to Yaskel) could – and did – easily occur. Indeed, a typographical error even changed Yaksel (given as Charles's Hebrew name in Rosenbaum's original letter) to Yaskel in the printed *AJHS Journal* article! The Rookwood Jewish Cemetery lists four burials of men named Charles Collins: two with the rare Hebrew name Yekusiel (obviously our family) and one with the Hebrew name Yehezkel (not our family). The fourth is our Charles Collins (M.L.A. for Narrabri), who died in 1898; his Hebrew name is apparently illegible on the eroded stone and it is therefore missing on the website that records details of Jewish burials at Rookwood: <http://www.rookwoodjewishcemetery.com.au/> But the information supplied by Rev. Rosenbaum makes it clear that his name was Yekusiel – after his paternal grandfather, whose name appears on the stone

of Charles' father Joseph Collins, buried beside him at Rookwood.

The confusion was compounded by the fact that Joseph Collins' death certificate gives his father's first name not as Charles but as Mark (see n. 2 to the *AJHS Journal*. article – the name of his mother Ann is correctly recorded. Evidently Henry, who reported the death, confused the name of Joseph's father Charles with the first name of Mark Marks (father of Joseph's first wife). Henry never met any of the three sets of grandparents, who lived 10,000 miles away in England; and he would have heard the grandfathers mentioned simply as 'Grandfather Collins', 'Grandfather Marks' and 'Grandfather Israel' – which could well explain his confusing their first names.

### Notes

1. My third cousin Raymond Skinner of Auckland kindly obtained the birth records of my grandfather Mark Marks (b.1864) and his sister Catherine (b.1865), as well as information about his own ancestor Samuel Marks.
2. I am indebted to the late Barrie Marsden and his brother David Marsden (my second cousins, grandsons of my Great-Uncle Hyam Marks) of Auckland; to Raymond Skinner of Auckland; to Dr. Geoffrey Walker and Beverly Flider of Sydney; and to Alison Marks Ryan of Canberra. Without their valuable contributions this article could never have been written.
3. The Auckland shipping Index 1840-82 lists 'MARKS, John & Adelaide, Ganges 12/10/63' (as announced in the *Southern Cross* newspaper).
4. In John Marks's case, this was the Auckland Immigration Certificate Act of 1861; in the case of Charles, who emigrated in 1857, it was the Auckland Immigration Certificate Act of 1855.
5. 17 Grosvenor Row (now 73 Pimlico Road). The building still stands on the corner of Pimlico Road and Bloomfield Terrace.
6. Morris Rosenbaum, 'Genealogy of an Australian Jewish Family', *AJHS J*, vol.3 (1950), pp. 187-93.
7. Isaac disappears from Marks family records after the 1841 census (he may have died in infancy). He definitely was *not* the Polish Jew named Isaac Marks who was hanged for murder in 1877, as reported in Doreen Berger's indispensable reference work *The Jewish Victorian: Genealogical Information from the Jewish Newspapers 1871-80* (Witney, Oxon.), 1999, p. 376.
8. See <http://www.interment.net/data/aus/nsw/southerntablelands/jewish/index.htm> (records of the old Jewish cemetery in Goulburn). The lives of all the hatter's daughters were touched by tragedy. Lydia died in 1862 aged 37, delivering her eighth child (stillborn). Lydia's sister Esther, likewise married to a Collins cousin, died in childbirth in London in 1868. Sophia lost her 85-year-old mother Juliet Marks (the hatter's widow) along with her husband Israel Abrahams and two of her children in a fire that destroyed their house at 33 Wilton Road near Victoria Station on 12 August 1884. According to a *Jewish Chronicle* report on 15 August, Juliet's remains were found in her bedroom chair, where she had been reciting 'the usual morning prayers' when the fire claimed her. (The *JC* reported the inquest in detail in the 22 August and 29 August issues, noting that the coroner adjourned the

- 15 August session early to accommodate the many Jewish witnesses who needed to prepare for the Sabbath, and resumed the inquest the following week.)
9. Special thanks to my dear friend Peter Bloomfield of Sydney, who made a special trip to the BDM Registry to obtain Lydia and Joseph's marriage certificate for me.
  10. Lazarus Morris Goldman, *The History of the Jews in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1958), p. 70.
  11. 18 December 1861, as reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 20 December. Surprised that so august a personage as the Chief Rabbi had officiated at the marriage of my not particularly distinguished ancestors, I investigated the matter, and learned that until the influx of East European immigrants (which began about 1880), the London Jewish community was small enough to enable the Chief Rabbi to officiate at almost every wedding.
  12. However, the heirloom Haggadah gave the first name of Juliet's father as Zanvil, and we have her Hebrew name Gitla bas Sh'muel, written in a prayer book owned by the family of her daughter Sophia. Zanvil is a Yiddishised version of the English 'Samuel', while Shmuel is the Hebrew name that is rendered as Samuel in Bible translations. So Juliet's patronymic Hymans or Hyam must have belonged to a more remote ancestor, perhaps Juliet's grandfather.
  13. It was published in 1677 by Uri Phoebus ha-Levi of Wittmund (grandson of Rabbi Moses Uri Ha-Levi of Emden, an Ashkenazi who became a founder of the Portuguese Sephardic community in Amsterdam). Yekusiel Blits married a great-granddaughter of Rabbi Moses Uri, from whom my family traces its descent along two different lines.
  14. The English inscription misstates Lydia's age as 27. Either the stonemason misread '37' as '27' or the document from which he was copying already contained this error.
  15. Clarence Karr, 'Collins, Charles (1850 – 1898)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1969, Vol. 3, pp. 441-442. See also *Narrabri Herald*, 1873-98; *Narrabri Age*, 1894-98; *Tamworth News*, 13 Apr 1898; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 April 1898.
  16. The records at Rookwood list no Hebrew name for Charles Marks. However, the Haggadah gives his name as Yaksel (a misspelling of Yakusel, which in turn is a Yiddishisation of Yekusiel). Hebrew inscriptions on Collins tombstones in Australia and in England, as well as Dutch records going back into the seventeenth century, show that all previous, and most subsequent Charles Collinses in this family bore the Hebrew name Yekusiel. As discussed in the Appendix, Charles (named for his grandfather Charles Collins) would likewise have had the Hebrew name Yekusiel.
  17. Joseph Aron and Judy Arndt, *The Enduring Remnant. The First 150 Years of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation 1841-1991* (Melbourne Univ. Press 1992)
  18. The proceedings were reported in the *Argus*, 25 August 1881. I am indebted to Rachel Bolto of Brisbane for supplying the court record of the inquest proceedings (quaintly titled 'an inquisition for our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria ... upon the view of the body of Samuel Marks'.)
  19. See <http://www.melbournesynagogue.org.au/growingcongregation.htm>. This knotty problem is tackled in Aron and Arndt, *op. cit.*, *passim*, but especially

- in chapter 17, 'Conversions', pp. 331-356.
20. The marriage took place on the New Moon, Rosh Hodesh Iyyar, one of very few days between Pesach and Shavuot when a Jewish marriage can be celebrated. My inquiries to date have found no evidence of a halakhic conversion; had this occurred, one would expect Esther's name to appear in the register as Esther bas Avraham Avinu ('Esther, daughter of our Father Abraham') as is traditional with Orthodox conversions. That she was recorded as Esther bas Shmuel suggests that she and Noah either claimed expressly or tacitly implied that her late mother had been a Jew.
  21. *AJHS Journal*, vol. 4 (1954-58) 'Jews of the Lachlan District. 1861-63' p. 14
  22. *Ibid.*, p. 16
  23. *Ibid.*, p. 18
  24. Berger, *op. cit.*, p. 372 (See note 7 above.)
  25. Lest any doubt remain, the bridegroom's father is named in the certificate as 'Mark Marks, Hatter', the couple were married in the Maiden Lane Synagogue by Chief Rabbi Adler, and one of the two witnesses was Isidore Abrahams, husband of the groom's sister Sophia!
  26. I am indebted to Alison Ryan for information about Joseph Marks as for so much else.
  27. *The Grenfell Record*, 2 February 1901.
  28. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1917.
  29. An obituary for Charles Collins MLA, published in the *Hebrew Standard*, 22 April 1898, p. 2, lists Joseph Marks as among those present at the funeral.

# ANIMAL SLAUGHTER IN MELBOURNE: CAMPAIGNS CONCERNING THE ISSUE OF SHECHITA, 1946-58

*Catherine Pearce*

## **The first campaign: installation of the casting pen**

In June 1947 the Melbourne Beth Din was informed by the Victorian Health Commission that unless it accepted the new regulations regarding the securing of animals before slaughter, the kosher method (*shechita*) would be banned. These new regulations were part of a general abattoir reform campaign which embroiled the Melbourne Jewish community in a long and bitter contest between the advocates of ‘humane slaughter’ and the defenders of ‘kosher slaughter’.

The Victorian abattoir reform began the previous year on 3 October 1946. Two letters to the editor of the *Herald* newspaper instigated the campaign. The main letter titled ‘Cruel Killing’<sup>1</sup> sent by Mrs Louise Lort-Smith, president of the Animal Welfare League,<sup>2</sup> protested about the general conditions in Melbourne abattoirs, and the second letter, signed by ‘Regular Watcher’, wrote about the appalling display of cruelty which he had personally witnessed: ‘throwing of calves from the top of trucks to the ground’<sup>3</sup>. In response to these letters, two *Herald* reporters unofficially visited a Melbourne abattoir where they observed a bullock knocked unconscious by eleven blows from a 5-pound hammer<sup>4</sup> and a bullock jabbed six times by a spear.<sup>5</sup> In the ensuing article, the reporters also described the appalling conditions in the abattoir – such as stench and the ‘bloody mess’ from the blood that was running down the drains. It also reported that local children were allowed to enter the yards and play around the piles of entrails, and crudely muzzled dogs were seen amongst the cattle.<sup>6</sup>

The investigative exposure of the conditions in the local abattoirs prompted an outpouring of angry letters to the editor supporting the disclosure and demanding that the paper further scrutinise the abattoir industry. The *Herald* demanded that the government of the day investigate what it saw as scandalous conditions and this eventually forced the premier, John Cain, to announce an inquiry. The response to this very aggressive campaign mounted by the *Herald* and supported by the Animal Welfare League saw the Health Commission and the Department of Agriculture being instructed by the government to report on the most effective and humane method of slaughter and to clean up the abattoirs.

In November 1946 the Commission of Public Health resolved that a commit-

tee of department officers, veterinary surgeons and superintendents of abattoirs be formed to investigate methods of killing and make recommendations to the Commission. The terms of reference were to examine and report on the methods at present adopted in Victoria for the slaughtering of animals, with special reference to the degree of cruelty involved.<sup>7</sup> The main thrust of the inquiry was to examine in great detail the methods of stunning animals pre-slaughter which consisted of either (a) stunning with 5-pound hammer, (b) pithing with spear and/or (c) shooting with gun.<sup>8</sup>

The committee's interviewed representatives from the Victorian Society for the Protection of Animals, Animal Welfare League (Louise Lort-Smith), and the Country Women's Association. Also involved were the wholesale butchers, Meat & Allied Trades Federation, and the Meat Industry Employees Union. The Health Inspectors Association was also included and, representing the Jewish community, was Rabbi Danglow.

As the committee's brief was to look at all aspects of slaughtering, the Jewish method of slaughter was included in the investigation. The committee members only relied on formal discussions with the above representatives about the kosher method and did not view the actual slaughter or the casting of the animals in the abattoirs.<sup>9</sup> Those who were familiar with the method, with the exception of Rabbi Danglow, expressed the opinion that while the actual act of slaughter may not have involved cruelty, the preparation of the animal did and they strongly condemned the practice. Thus, the first report, issued on 6 June 1947, recommended banning *shechita*.<sup>10</sup>

The description of the latter in the report is as follows:

This is the Jewish method of slaughtering and is carried out by hoisting the animals by one hind leg and cutting the throat transversely by means of a special long-bladed knife. There is no preliminary stunning and the actual slaughtering is carried out by a specially appointed official of the Jewish community known as a *shochet*, who carries out certain ritual observances.<sup>11</sup>

The commissioners reported that Rabbi Danglow had placed before them a considerable volume of scientific evidence in support of the argument that the actual cutting of the throat was comparatively painless and that the casting of the animal was not a part of the religious requirement.<sup>12</sup> The committee accepted the evidence supplied by non-Jewish scientists of 'high reputation' that the actual cutting of the throat by the special knife was painless and that unconsciousness caused by cerebral anaemia was quick, but they strongly disagreed with the casting of the animal which they considered to be extremely cruel. The committee was mindful of the implications of making stunning compulsory in the Jewish method and that its implementation would have world-wide ramifications: 'it is appreciated that this is a delicate question, involving religious beliefs',<sup>13</sup> but they

strongly believed that unnecessary cruelty could and should be avoided during the slaughtering of *all* animals.

Although the committee had recommended that the provisions exempting animals intended for ritual slaughter from stunning be revoked, the secretary of the Commission of Public Health wrote to the Melbourne Beth Din stating that the Commission would be happy to work with the Jewish community to find a method of slaughter that would eliminate cruelty without interfering with Jewish custom.<sup>14</sup> The Beth Din was happy to cooperate with the Commission but insisted that its method of slaughter was humane. Although it accepted that some cruelty was involved in the casting of the animal, it rejected the premise that the actual cutting of the throat was cruel.<sup>15</sup>

On 23 June and 3 July 1947, the Chief Health Officer, Dr Cole, Messrs Hardy and Bennett from the Health Department, Rabbis Danglow and Goldman of the Melbourne Beth Din and Mr Berliner from the Melbourne United Shechita Board visited the city abattoirs of Melbourne, South Melbourne and Richmond to view methods of casting beasts preliminary to ritual killing.<sup>16</sup> After viewing the casting of the animals in the three abattoirs it was accepted by all those present that the casting methods were unsatisfactory. The Committee then recommended that cattle destined for ritual slaughter be placed in a suitable restraining apparatus approved by the Commission. Dr Cole, chairman of the Commission, acknowledged that both rabbis appeared to be genuinely anxious to find a method of casting that would avoid any cruelty. It was also resolved that it was the Jewish community's total responsibility to design and cover the cost of a special casting pen suitable for Australian conditions.<sup>17</sup>

On behalf of the Beth Din, Rabbis Goldman and Danglow wrote to the Health Department accepting the report that the casting method of animals as witnessed at the three abattoirs was unsatisfactory.<sup>18</sup> They acknowledged that the local Jewish authorities were aware that casting of the animal was not always humane and years ago a Weinberg pen had been imported in the 1930s in an attempt to eliminate pain and discomfort to the animal before slaughter.<sup>19</sup> However, after a brief trial, the use of the pen was discontinued because it involved too much time and trouble on the part of the slaughtermen.<sup>20</sup> In pointing out to the Department that the Jewish community had previously purchased a restraining pen, they hoped to show that the community was most anxious then, and now, to minimise suffering in connection with animals required for slaughter in accordance with the humanitarian dictates of the Jewish religion, which opposed any form of cruelty. The letter finished with the assurance that the Jewish authorities had consulted with Mr. Trevaskis, the chief inspector of the South Melbourne Abattoir, and that a new pen or one similar to the Weinberg would be constructed as soon as possible.

The final amended recommendation of the Commission of Public Health in November 1947 regarding ritual slaughter confirmed that as long as a restraining pen was built according to the Commission's specification, ritual slaughter could continue.<sup>21</sup>

At the bottom of one of the letters explaining the amendments was a handwritten note by the Minister of Health, Mr Berry: 'I do not think that we should act without sufficient consideration by all parties. I do not agree to interfere with religious rights of any people.'<sup>22</sup> This note indicates that the Victorian government was mindful of the religious sensibilities of the Jewish community. Thus, the Health Commission, after conferring with the Jewish authorities, had come to a compromise regarding ritual slaughter by allowing the restraining pen.

The regulations amending the Meat Supervision Regulations 1947 were gazetted on 10 May 1949.<sup>23</sup> The Act covered regulations for the handling of animals before slaughter and the structure and use of killing pens, and the abolition of the pithing spear. Stunning instruments could only be the hammer or the captive bolt pistol. Of particular relevance was the regulation relating to *shechita* regarding the introduction of the casting pen. All these regulations were to come into effect on 1 August 1949, three months after publication in the government gazette.<sup>24</sup>

The story behind the actual installation of the Melbourne casting pen is an intriguing saga which included disputed communications between the Health Commission and the Jewish authorities resulting in embarrassing delays, hostile reactions from certain sections of the press, and internal squabbling within the Jewish community. The first pen eventually commenced operation in November 1950 nearly three and a half years after the Beth Din had initially been contacted by the Health Commission. As stated above, the Beth Din was informed in June 1947 that a casting pen had to be installed or *shechita* would be banned. A local engineering firm was engaged in designing and producing the pen on behalf of the Beth Din but no definite order was placed as they were awaiting instructions from the Health Commission. It seems that the Beth Din directed all efforts to obtaining consent from the Health Commission for two proposed designs of an approved casting pen and in October 1947 submitted blueprints for approval. There were repeated requests by the Beth Din to the Commission regarding the status of the pens, but the Commission for some reason did not respond, and a prototype pen was not produced. When, two years later in May 1949, the recently gazetted 'Meat Supervision Regulation Act' stipulated that the casting pen be up and operational in six months, the Beth Din was shaken by the news.

In view of the urgency of the matter a special meeting of representatives of the rabbis, congregations, the Melbourne United Shechita Board and the Jewish community represented by the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, resulted in the formation of the Victorian Kashruth Commission headed by Trevor Rapke. The deadline for the installation of the new casting pen was 18 August but a report from the Shechita Board indicated that it would be impossible to install it for at least six months and it was hoped that the Public Health Commission would be satisfied as long as an order was placed before the deadline.<sup>25</sup>

A meeting was held in August 1949 between the Kashruth Commission and the Department of Health and an extension for the installation of the restraining

pen was granted to the Jewish authorities. The Kashruth Commission believed that this extension was for one year, until 31 August 1950, but according to the Health Department only six months was granted, until 31 March 1950.<sup>26</sup> The Jewish community and the Kashruth Commission were thus extremely surprised to learn of the revised timetable from press statements in the *Argus* and the *Age* published on 15 March 1950 stating that the laws relating to the casting pen would come into effect sixteen days later on 31 March. Both articles reported that the Health Commission had confirmed that *shechita* at abattoirs would be banned after that March date. In explaining the background the papers described how regulations were passed by the Victorian Government in May 1949, but were not brought into operation at the request of the Kashruth Commission.<sup>27</sup>

The Jewish community was understandably worried by the reports in the papers, and the Kashruth Commission felt obliged to inform the community what had transpired between it and the Health Department. The sequence of meetings between the Health Commission, the Beth Din, and the Kashruth Commission concerning the lengthy and involved saga of the casting pen were published in the *Australian Jewish News*.<sup>28</sup> Trevor Rapke hoped that the account of the proceedings would show that the Jewish authorities had acted responsibly and were not negligent in their pursuit of a suitable casting pen. The readers were informed that the Melbourne Beth Din was notified on 6 June 1947 that the Commission of Public Health had recommended regulations to limit cruelty in the slaughter of animals and that the Commission had invited the Melbourne Beth Din to confer on the matter. The Beth Din accepted the invitation but proposed that the only matter for criticism was the method of preliminary casting prior to slaughter, rather than the actual cutting of the throat of a conscious animal. The Commission of Public Health accepted the view of the Beth Din and after consultation it was agreed between both parties that a casting pen suitable for Australian conditions be built. The Beth Din then directed all efforts in obtaining approval from the Public Health Commission for two proposed designs of an approved casting apparatus. Engineers W. J. Powell & Co were engaged in designing a pen to meet the requirements on 29 July 1947.

In October that year blueprints of two different types of casting pens were submitted to the Commission of Public Health by the Beth Din, which requested speedy approval of the designs so that the pens could be constructed as soon as possible. There were repeated requests by the Beth Din to the Commission regarding the status of the pens, but the Commission never communicated approval of any design.<sup>29</sup> The Commission, it seems, contacted W. J. Powell and Co. directly in June 1949, indicating that the pen designed by their firm would receive approval by the Commission subject to it proving satisfactory in operation. Meanwhile on 18 May 1949, the Amending Meat Supervision Regulations were gazetted to come into operation on 18 August. The relevant regulation prohibited the bleeding of any large animal unless it had been stunned. Excluded from the regulation was the

slaughter of animals by the Jewish method, provided that the preliminary casting of the beast was carried out by an apparatus approved by the Commission.

As soon as these regulations were gazetted, the members of the Beth Din called meetings of butchers, representatives of Orthodox congregations, the Melbourne United Shechita Board, and the Congregational Committee of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies. Since the meetings proved inadequate a Kashruth Commission was formed to be responsible for the whole matter and on 5 July 1949 the Kashruth Commission was formally constituted. Immediate steps were taken to place an order for the supply and installation of the pens from W. J. Powell and Co.

The Public Health Commission was informed of the formation of the Kashruth Commission and sought reassurances that meat would still be supplied to the Jewish community while the pens were being installed. The Kashruth Commission then made immediate and successful arrangements with the Melbourne City Abattoirs for the provision of approved facilities for the installation of the casting pens.

A meeting between the sub-committee of the Kashruth Commission and Powell and Co. was held on 25 July 1949, and a firm order was placed for one casting pen at a cost of £2000. The company pointed out there would be major delays due to shortage of raw materials and heavy workloads, and on 11 August 1949 the Commission of Public Health was informed of the latest advice regarding delivery date.

On 8 September 1949 Mr. Whitlock, Secretary of the General Health Branch, contacted Trevor Rapke to enquire whether he (Whitlock) could contact the contractors, whether the Kashruth Board could advise the Commission before 13 September 1949 that the work was in hand, and whether the Commission of Public Health would delay enforcing the regulations for a period of twelve months. The last request was strictly carried out and the Kashruth Commission believed that a year's extension was granted.<sup>30</sup>

An added distraction for Rapke were comments made by Judah Waten, secretary of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism. In reply to newspaper reports that the new laws regarding the restraining pen would come into effect, Waten wrote a damning letter to the *Herald and Age*. He staunchly believed that the threat to ban ritual killing unless a suitable casting pen was provided was a gross interference with religious freedom and in no uncertain terms lambasted the decision.<sup>31</sup> 'We view the threat with concern and suspicion because our experience has shown that such moves are likely to result in arousing antagonism toward the Jewish people rather than causing any decline in cruelty to animals.'<sup>32</sup>

Rapke observed that Waten's remarks and their coverage in the mainstream newspapers were not helpful to the Jewish community: 'whilst enemies of the Jewish community are watching the situation to ensure that the Commission of Public Health does not alter its decision or grant an extension'.<sup>33</sup>

One of the problems regarding the introduction of the casting pen was that not all in the community agreed with the decision. The scandal-loving *Truth* news-

paper conducted a very hostile campaign against the Jewish community. Using terms such as ‘barbaric’, ‘cruel ritual’ and ‘struggling beast having its life blood drained away’ to describe kosher slaughter,<sup>34</sup> it especially objected to the findings of the Commission and wrote a scathing report under a large blazing headline, ‘But Kosher Killing Is Still Cruel’. It also reminded its readers that legislation had removed one of the cruel practices of kosher killing – the casting or hoisting by one leg of a struggling beast, yet still permitted the throat of the un-stunned beast to be slit and ‘its life-blood drained away’.<sup>35</sup>

The public’s knowledge of the methods of slaughtering cattle in the abattoirs would have been rather limited, so the gory tales of cattle being slaughtered without first being stunned would have been quite confronting. Many would have felt uneasy that the Melbourne Jewish community had obtained a dispensation from the law governing slaughtering of animals. The encounters regarding animal welfare exposed the community to much public scrutiny at a time when the Australian Jewish establishment had to deal with a changing world in which there were public debates over post-Holocaust immigration, Zionism, and the new state of Israel.

The *Australian Jewish News* had informed and reassured the community by publishing the full account of Rapke’s report with particular emphasis on the fact that the laws were not specifically designed to harm the community but were in fact part of the anti-cruelty animal reform:

The importance of the matter is whether it is in any way tied up with restrictive measures against Jews. In this instance, it does not appear to be the case. But it will cause the majority of the community great distress and disability should the restriction be brought into force. There is no valid reason why the restriction should be imposed before the pen arrives. There is far more urgency in the improvement of the abattoirs generally and the conditions at the animal yards.<sup>36</sup>

The Kashruth Commission lost no time in addressing the issue and at the next meeting the proposed banning of *shechita* was discussed. Rabbis Danglow and Freedman,<sup>37</sup> Trevor Rapke and Sam Cohen, chairman of the Congregational Committee, were elected to meet the Health Commission on 28 March with a view to extending by six months the time limit for the construction of the casting pen. After its meeting with the Jewish delegation the Commission of Public Health decided to recommend that the Executive Council of Victoria postpone operation of the new regulation until 1 October 1950. The Kashruth Commission could now concentrate on ensuring that the casting pen be ready by the new date. Unfortunately, underlying tension between different groups within the Jewish community over the handling of the affair was aired in the local Jewish press. The president of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, Maurice Ashkanasy, had written a strongly worded letter to Sam Cohen<sup>38</sup> about the Kashruth Commission’s performance and had demanded explanations as to why the Jewish community

found itself in such an untenable position. Ashkanasy believed that the Jewish community had not been informed properly of the need to act as a cooperative group: 'I feel that I may make a considered claim that had the community as a whole been able to handle the matter, this situation would not have arisen, and that even at this stage the intervention of communal representatives will be able to remedy the situation.'<sup>39</sup>

The Kashruth Commission, being an independent body, and thus not under the control of either the Congregational Committee or the Board of Deputies, had detractors who claimed that it did not truly represent the whole community. The need for harmony eventually saw a meeting of the executives of the Kashruth Commission, the Congregational Committee and the Board of Deputies, and a statement was issued saying that in all matters affecting *shechita*, and particularly regarding the provision of casting pens, they would work together. Another insight into the dispute between Rapke and Ashkanasy was aired in the *Australian Jewish News*.<sup>40</sup> In a letter to the editor, a correspondent posed the question of whether the tension between the two gentlemen was due to Ashkanasy's 'feeling of being piqued'<sup>41</sup> for not being in charge of the situation. The reader goes on to further comment that Ashkanasy's statement 'that the end result would have been the same whether the Kashruth or the Board of Deputies had approached the Health Commission' showed a disdain for all the good work done by the Kashruth Commission.<sup>42</sup>

A further six months' extension saw the Melbourne press once again enter into the controversy over *shechita*. In a long article titled 'Officials Dodging Kosher Slaughter', *Truth* berated both the Jewish community and the Health Department over the delays.<sup>43</sup> According to the article the decision to extend for another six months just 'adds another dimension to the three-year-old official humbug and shifting on cruelty which should have been outlawed. The diary of official vacillating starting back in 1946 when the killing was condemned by slaughtermen and the committee was set up to investigate.'<sup>44</sup>

An inopportune incident at a local abattoir added fuel to the fire. While accompanying a small party of officers of the Victorian Society for Protection of Cruelty to Animals to inspect the Jewish method of slaughter, the *Herald* special reporter witnessed an unfortunate scene. The description was most distressing and charged with emotive terms: 'Today I saw a cow, suspended from a hook by a newly-broken leg, bash its eye out on an abattoir's floor as it thrashed about in agony, waiting for a kosher blade. For 2 min. 40 sec. it hung bellowing with 8in. of shining white shinbone sticking through its torn hide, until a slaughter-man stunned it with a killing hammer.'<sup>45</sup>

The Jewish papers once again had to defend ritual slaughtering. In an article in the *Australian Jewish News*<sup>46</sup> the editor argued that the *Herald* report made out that cruelty was invariably involved in ritual killing but pointed out that Jewish law specifically forbade any animal maimed in this way being slaughtered for Jewish consumption so consequently the animal was not kosher. The readers were

reminded that the incident witnessed by the reporter was an unfortunate accident and such accidents happened even in the non-Jewish method.

Despite their support for the community, Jewish newspapers were prepared to comment that the Kashruth Commission needed to be watchful and guard against any more delays. In a subtle dig at the length of time the authorities had taken with the casting pen and the resultant publicity, the *Australian Jewish Herald* observed: 'The other States should do well to start implementing the installation of the pens without waiting to be compelled by the State authorities. It is much better that the Jewish community acts of its own volition without waiting for officialdom to prod them.'<sup>47</sup>

Although the casting pen had to be operational by 1 October 1950, further problems, such as delays at the customs sheds, were responsible for the postponement of the trial runs of the pens. Eventually, the Health Department approved the installation and on 20 October a special demonstration of the new casting pens was given before rabbis and representatives of the Kashruth Commission. An explanation of the mechanics of the casting pen was reported in the *Australian Jewish News*.

The pen is like a box-like construction with a door at one end and a 'window' at the other. The animal enters through the door, which is closed behind it by the operator, and is forced forward until its head and neck are visible at the other end. The sides then close, clamping the animal firmly. There is an automatic valve which goes into action as soon as the sides exert a pressure of 10 pounds per square inch and thus prevents any discomfort to the animal whatever its size.

The pen, which is on an axle slung between two posts, is then turned over and can be adjusted for the convenience of the *shochet*. Operation of the machine is extremely simple, requiring the moving of only two levers, much of the mechanism working automatically.<sup>48</sup>

The Melbourne Beth Din must have thought that the debate regarding the Jewish method of slaughter was over, but many issues still had to be addressed. The Health Department had been generous in granting two extensions but it had taken over three and a half years for the casting pen to be installed and even they had lost patience with the Jewish authorities who were responsible for its installation. The Health Commission chairman, Dr Cole, in January 1951, openly expressed his dissatisfaction with the whole process and declared that from the start of the introduction of the new regulation there had been no cooperation from the Jewish Kashruth Commission.<sup>49</sup> These comments were in response to a district inspector's report that the new type of killing pens which were installed in October 1950 were not in use during a recent inspection of the Melbourne City Abattoirs. The report stated that only vague excuses were offered as to why the pen was out of order, and most damning was the fact that the pen had not been working for a fortnight

but the firm responsible for making the repairs had not been notified. Eventually, the City Council and union officials intervened and insisted on the pen being used instead of the old kosher method despite operatives claiming the pen was slow and dangerous and that it should be moved to a separate slaughterhouse. Cole held the Jewish authorities responsible for the delays and even refused a request for the Jewish community in Shepparton to continue slaughtering under the old method.<sup>50</sup> Even Dr F.V. Scholes, the chief medical officer of the Public Health Department, was quoted in the press as saying he believed the Jewish authorities ‘would be trying to have the casting pen put off for the next ten years by constant postponement’.<sup>51</sup>

Once more a spokesperson for the Jewish community had to defend its part in the campaign.<sup>52</sup> The health officer of the Kashruth Commission, Dr Hans Ruskin, expressed disappointment that Cole had publicly criticised the efforts of the Kashruth Commission and reiterated that the Commission and the Jewish community had gone out of its way to cooperate with Cole since the beginning of the campaign. However, Ruskin did agree that the only way for the correct use of the apparatus and cessation of delays was for the City Council to allocate a kosher killing house and chilling chamber for the use of the pen.<sup>53</sup>

In the end the Kashruth Commission was instrumental in saving the kosher method after a long campaign. Although the review of *shechita* was not motivated by any antisemitic attitudes within the government or the Public Health Commission, the Melbourne Jewish authorities found themselves in an untenable position exposing the community to ridicule and hostility and the ever present risk of antisemitism.

### **The second campaign: the battle of the bolt**

The Animal Welfare League’s first campaign to change the laws regarding humane slaughter had to some degree been successful (they had a victory in the banning of the spear, the introduction of a trial run of the captive bolt pistol, and cleaning up of the abattoirs) but a second campaign by its anti-cruelty campaign committee was launched in the early 1950s to complete its agenda. One of the major aims was to have legislation enacted to ban the hammer and for the introduction of the captive bolt pistol ‘without exemption’ for the stunning of *all animals* or in other words a second effort to ban the traditional method of ritual slaughter. As a result, legislation was passed in October 1952 banning the hammer and ruling that the captive bolt pistol be the only stunning instrument in use in city abattoirs.<sup>54</sup>

The anti-cruelty campaign approached the problem to ban ritual slaughter by using two methods. The first was a concerted letter campaign to the Health Minister, the Hon. E. P. Cameron, and to private members of both government and opposition. This was unsuccessful as the Health Department and the Minister were unwilling to enter into any further debates on *shechita*. As far as the minister was concerned the issue had been attended to in 1947 with the introduction of the

casting pen. Although Cameron was sympathetic towards the aims of the animal welfare lobby, he maintained that his first priority was to protect the rights, religious or otherwise of the citizens of Victoria before animal rights.

The second tactic involved convincing the public as to the benefits of the captive bolt pistol and explaining why the kosher method should be banned. The Animal Welfare League had successfully harnessed local press assistance in its crusades against animal cruelty, and this particular campaign was no different. The public's imagination was especially aroused by the introduction of a movie comparing the methods of slaughtering, which was shown at public meetings, and by the issuing of pamphlets which verged on being antisemitic propaganda. The emergence of the firebrand Reverend William Salter, a Baptist minister who became the spokesperson for the anti-*shechita* push, also added an extra dimension.

A disturbing theme in the second campaign was that Salter seemed to view the debate as a contest between good and evil, and promoted the Christian religion as superior, 'the Christian conscience, being the highest step of civilisation' and Jewish religious rites as callous, forfeiting 'all respect from God and man when they involve cruelty to the defenceless'.<sup>55</sup>

It must be accepted that the main opposition to kosher slaughter focused on the cruelty question, but an issue that also appeared to rankle welfare groups was the dilemma of how half of each kosher beast killed was rejected and that the hindquarter was 'sold and eaten by Gentiles who are horrified at the thought of any beast being treated so cruelly in slaughter whilst conscious'.<sup>56</sup>

Another contentious issue that Salter highlighted and published in his anti-*shechita* pamphlets was that only a small percentage of the Melbourne Jewish community actually ate kosher meat and, even worse, only a small proportion of the Melbourne Jewish community actually consumed kosher food. It was thus argued: why should such a small number of Jews enforce their ritual will on a majority which abhors the cruelty of their slaughtering methods?

One of the difficulties the Jewish community had to face was that the animal welfare lobby became a very powerful organisation. To further enhance their status and political power, a number of groups came together in October 1955 to form a confederation titled the Combined Animal Welfare Organization of Victoria (CAWO). Its main agenda was to lobby the government and educate the public, not only on the ritual slaughter issue but for all outstanding animal reforms.<sup>57</sup> The public meetings organised by the CAWO covered many other pressing issues relating to animals, and those in attendance were always reminded that a petition signed by 60,000 concerned citizens had specifically urged the government to make it compulsory to stun *all cattle* using the captive bolt pistol *without exemption*. One detail overlooked was that the petition never mentioned ritual slaughter and that the introduction of the captive bolt *without exemption* would effectively ban the kosher method which would then heavily impact on the Jewish community.

### The Jewish response

The Melbourne Beth Din believed that the kosher method had been the subject of unjustified criticism and that it was imperative that the Jewish community educate the public on a subject that was unfamiliar to them. Rabbi Danglow, who was involved in the first campaign as the official representative of the Jewish community on the Public Health Commission, became the public figure who responded to the cruelty charges against the kosher method. He was invited to speak on *Radio Roundmans* broadcast on 3AW, 6 June 1955, in response to a previous broadcast by Salter.<sup>58</sup> The text of the interview was published under the title 'Eminent Scientists Endorse Kosher Killing'.<sup>59</sup> Danglow argued that the most important issue was the need to emphasise that scientific and medical opinion fully endorsed the humanity of kosher killing. Thus, this radio program and an ensuing pamphlet issued by the Beth Din, was an attempt to bring before the public a true and authoritative appreciation of the Jewish method of slaughter.

The Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies realised that it needed to be kept abreast of the progress of the anti-*shechita* campaign, and as a result Bob Kahn, a reporter with the *Australian Jewish News*, was commissioned to assist. His detailed reports of all the public meetings provided a basis for analysis of the ongoing campaign and he submitted suggestions regarding how the Jewish community should act. He believed that the best tactic was to emphasise the 'kindness to animals' aspect of Jewish ethics by issuing a pamphlet highlighting how far advanced Jewish life was in relation to the treatment of animals. Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, produced such a pamphlet titled *How Judaism Teaches Kindness To Animals*.<sup>60</sup> Rabbi Falk covered the subject of *shechita*, and all aspects of Judaic law regarding treatment and duty 'towards dumb creatures'.

The public education initiative by the Jewish authorities to counteract the cruelty charges, and the inability of the Animal Welfare League to influence the government to legislate to have all animals stunned, eventually spelled failure for the second anti-cruelty campaign. The Jewish authorities and community were very concerned about the structure of that campaign. Unlike the first campaign, where the Jewish authorities had to deal only with the introduction of the casting pen, the second campaign potentially could have seen the kosher method completely banned. To an ardent animal lover the Jewish explanation that *shechita* was a religious rite deriving authority from the Torah and prescribed by Divine Law carried little weight. That it was also binding on the conscience and universally observed by Jews throughout the ages, was not an adequate explanation.<sup>61</sup> The animal lovers' only concern was for the beasts' welfare – not for the religious sensitivities of a small section of the Victorian community.

The animal welfare lobby's main objective was to convince the public and the legislators that kosher slaughter was inhumane, but it seemed that Salter, who was the spokesperson at that time, used it as a personal crusade for the advancement

of Christianity. The 1950s campaign to ban the casting pen and have *all* animals stunned before slaughter eventually lost momentum but even today animal welfare groups in America, Britain and some European countries are still trying to ban *shechita*.

## Notes

- 1 Melbourne *Herald*, 3 October 1946, p. 9.
- 2 The Victorian Animal Welfare League was formed in 1934 and one of its main objectives was to oversee the conditions in the local public abattoirs and stockyards and bring about humane slaughtering by the introduction of a stunning gun called the captive bolt pistol.
- 3 *Herald*, 3 October 1946, p. 9.
- 4 One blow only should have been necessary to stun the animal.
- 5 *Herald*, 4 October 1946, p. 5: 'Repeated Blows to Stun Animals'.
- 6 *Ibid.* p. 5.
- 7 Chairman of Commission of Public Health Report, 6 June 1947. Files of the Commission of Public Health 1946-58, Department of Human Services Archives. The Commission of Public Health was a Statutory Authority and in the Archives of Victoria it is recorded as VA694. The Public Records Office had numbered the collection but did not have the files. The Department of Human Services archivist found the Victorian Commission of Public Health files covering the period 1946-58.
- 8 Stunning: the animal was stunned on the forehead, a chain was put around its back leg and it was then hoisted up side down before having its throat cut and bled out. Cattle killed for Jewish consumption were exempted from the stunning but followed the same procedure which was carried out whilst the animal was conscious.
- 9 The term 'casting' was used to describe the positioning of the animal before the throat was cut. Chain around back leg then hoisted upside down.
- 10 Chairman of Commission of Public Health Report p. 3: DHS Archives
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 12 Commission of Public Health Report, p. 4.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 Letter from General Health Branch to Secretary, Melbourne Beth Din. 6 June 1947, DHS Archives.
- 15 Melbourne Beth Din letter to the Secretary, Commission of Public Health, 11 June 1947, DHS Archives.
- 16 Report by G. E Cole, Senior Health Officer dated 4 July 1947, in the file H. 6064 of the Commission of Public Health. DHS Archives.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Letter from Melbourne Beth Din to Secretary, Department of Health, 2 July 1947, DHS Archives.
- 19 The introduction of the Weinberg restraining pen in the late 1920s addressed some of the problems relating to the pre-handling of animals in England. The use of the pen was voluntarily made obligatory by the British Rabbinical Commission in 1934. I could not find date when pen arrived in Melbourne: it was probably the late 1930s.

- 20 The pen was designed for farm-bred English cattle and was not appropriate for fractious Australian cattle.
- 21 'Memorandum for the Honorable, The Minister, Outlining the final recommendations of the committee and adopted by the Commission', 5 November 1947, DHS Archives.
- 22 Letter to the Minister of Health from the Commission of Public Health explaining the amendments to the Meat Supervision Act, 5 August 1947, DHS Archives.
- 23 Health Act, Department of Health, Commission of Public Health, *Victorian Gazette*, No. 406, 18 May 1949, p. 2707.
- 24 Health Act, Department of Health,, Commission of Public Health, *Victorian Gazette*, No. 406, 18 May 1949, p. 2707.
- 25 *Australian Jewish News*, 15 July, 1949, Report on the formation of the Kashruth Commission.
- 26 I did not find any letters in the DHS archives showing that the Health Department wrote to the Kashruth Commission extending the time for a year. This information is from the *Austrlaian Jewish News* and the Kashruth Commission.
- 27 *Argus*, 15 March 1950, p. 3.
- 28 *Australian Jewish News*, 24 March 1950, p. 16.
- 29 I was unable to find any correspondence between the Commission and the Beth Din in the VJBD or in the Public Health Commission regarding this particular statement.
- 30 *Australian Jewish News*, 24 March 1950, pp. 15-16.
- 31 *The Age*, 16 March 1950, p. 3.
- 32 *Herald*, 15 March 1950, p. 7.
- 33 *Australian Jewish News*, 24 March 1950, p. 16.
- 34 *Truth*, 2 July 1949, p. 19
- 35 *Ibid.* p. 19.
- 36 *Australian Jewish News*, 17 March 17 1950, p. 2.
- 37 Liberal Rabbi of the Beth Israel Synagogue.
- 38 Chairman of the Congregational Committee.
- 39 *Australian Jewish News*, 31 March 1950, p. 2.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 31 March 1950, p. 4.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 31 March 1950, p. 4.
- 42 *Ibid.* p. 4.
- 43 *Truth*, 1 April 1950, p. 9.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 1 April 1950, p. 4.
- 45 *Herald*, July 10 1950, p. 5.
- 46 *Australian Jewish News*, 14 July 1950, p. 3: 'Shechita Misrepresented in Newspaper Report'.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 9 June 1950, p. 7.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 20 October 1950, p. 3.
- 49 *Sun*, 17 January 1951, p. 2.
- 50 An Orthodox agricultural community. The Jewish farmers and orchardists slaughtered their own meat by the old method as they did not have a casting pen in place.
- 51 *Herald*, 1 November 1950.

- 52 In a reply to the *Sun* article of Jan 17.
- 53 *Sun*, 19 January 1951, p. 2.
- 54 In small country abattoirs with only one slaughterman, the use of a shot gun was permissible. *Shechita* continued as long as restraining pen was in place.
- 55 From pamphlet issued by the Anti-Cruelty League. *Stunning before Slaughter: A Challenge to Conscious Killing*, by Rev. W.J. Salter, VJBD Archives.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 The petition covered such animal welfare issues as banning traps, shooting of live birds, dumping of domestic animals, licensing and inspection of all pet shops and markets stalls and for stunning by captive bolt of all animals before slaughter, *without exemption*.
- 58 Rev. Salter broadcast on Radio Roundsmans, March 8 1955: his talk titled 'The Question of Kosher'. This media interview went into great detail over the alleged barbaric and diabolical aspects of Jewish ritual slaughter. Two anti-*shechita* pamphlets were written by Salter on behalf of the Animal Welfare League, *Stunning before Slaughter* and *A Question of Kosher*. They are held in the DHS archives and VJBD archives respectively.
- 59 VJBD Archives, State Library of Victoria.
- 60 Makor Library, 'Shechita File'.
- 61 Michael and Eli Munk, eds., *Religious and Historical Research on the Jewish Method of Slaughter* (New York, 1976).

# CRAWCOUR STORIES

*Patrick Coppel*

## **What became of the broken-hearted?**

The question of the Crawcour family's origins has long been debated both within and outside the family. The most common retelling within the Australian branches of the family claims that they were a family of Sephardic Jews who fled Spain to France before moving on to England and the colonies. Another story has it that the family were Polish Ashkenazi Jews who travelled west through Europe to England. It would be an interesting exercise to look into the Anglo-Jewish class history that compels many Ashkenazim to claim a far rarer Sephardi history as their own; however, that is not the intention of this paper.

Its intention is to uncover the true origins of the Crawcour name and family along with an insight into the family's place in dental history and a few stories relating to some of its more famous and infamous members. From an Australian perspective the Crawcour family is of particular note to those interested in the history of Victoria's Jewish community due to both the family's own activities and its connections by marriage to many of the other pioneer Jewish families in the state.

The following excerpt from Murray M. Crawcour's memoir *Heroes are Fools* identifies the origin of the story that the Crawcours were Sephardim from Spain who made their way to England via the French town of Crève-Coeur (meaning 'heart-breaker' or 'heart-broken').

... he [Professor Cecil Roth] "knew" my family and told me that the name did not derive from Krakow, but was an Anglicised form of the French name "Crèvecoeur", a French noble family from the days of William the Conqueror. No, the Crawcours are not the descendants of this good Catholic family who were lords of the manor in France and the builders of Leeds Castle in Kent... Like all old Jewish families of Spain before the Inquisition, the family had no surname, but was identified as "Abraham Ibn Isaac" or some such style. Like the Hamburgers, Oppenheimers, Berliners, Krakowers, etc. they took the name of the place of refuge from the Inquisition when they fled Spain at the end of the 15th century. They had settled in one of several villages named Crève-Coeur in Normandy. One minor mystery is that a family who chose to flee and not to convert to Christianity, like the Marranos of their time, should have chosen a name so closely connected with Christian theology. For

the name “Crève-Coeur” refers to the broken heart of Jesus. This could be the reason why they quickly changed the name when leaving France; for in the Jewish cemetery at St Hillare [St Helier] on the Isle of Jersey it is spelt “Crawcoeur...”<sup>1</sup>

Professor Cecil Roth, a leading Anglo-Jewish historian who published over 600 books and articles, was editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. He appears to be the source of the story that the Crawcours left France and arrived at St Helier on the island of Jersey in the English Channel, carrying the name ‘Crève-Coeur’ with them before later Anglicising it to Crawcour. It is a fascinating, romantic story but it is also wrong.

Roth was not the first to make this connection. The publication of Charles Wareing Bardsley’s *Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames* in 1901 is possibly the first published evidence of a link between the Anglo-Jewish Crawcour family and the name Crèvecoeur.<sup>2</sup>

**Crawcour.**—Local, ‘de Creve-cœur.’ This ancient baronial surname still survives in the London Directory. The modern form closely resembles some of the mediaeval variants.  
 Alexander de Crevequer, co. Linc., 1273. A.  
 Hamo de Crevequer, co. Bedf., *ibid.*  
 Robert de Crewquer, co. Bucks, *ibid.*  
 Cecilia le (sic) Creuker, co. Linc., *ibid.*  
 Lewin Crawcour & Co., *upholsterers*: London Directory.  
 Morris Crawcour, *inkstand and ruler maker*: *ibid.*  
 London, 2.

*Crawcour entry in Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames by Charles Wareing Bardsley*

Bardsley’s dictionary seems to imply a connection between Hamo de Crevequer, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and the Crawcour family. Roth quite clearly made the connection with the town of Crèvecoeur rather than the Norman nobles but perhaps credit for the myth of the Crawcours’ Sephardic-Norman origins needs to be shared.

The first Crawcour, Samuel, left Krakow, Poland, during the eighteenth century; Samuel of Krakow became Samuel Crawcour. This fits with more than one branch of the family’s oral history and notes made on family tree documents passed down through the generations. There is also documentary proof of the connection with Krakow. In his *The Rise of Provincial Jewry* (1950) Roth provides evidence to show that one Jew, Barnet Levy, was in the Channel Islands as early as 1787 (and possibly as early as 1765) but no other proof is given of any others inhabiting the islands until the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> This is significant in that there is irrefutable evidence that Samuel Crawcour was plying his trade as a dentist and apothecary in the countryside of the English mainland as early as the

first half of the 1770s. If the Channel Islands were the Crawcours' first English port of call then they would need to have been there before this time.

In her article 'James Blair (1747-1817), Provincial Dentist', dental historian Christine Hillam notes Samuel's advertisements in the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, the earliest known published reference to the Crawcours. 'Between ... 1769 and ... 1775, the only visiting dentist noted in the newspaper had been Samuel Crawcour, 'dentist and operator for the teeth and gums'.<sup>4</sup> On 21 November 2002 the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*'s 'Memory Corner' referred to an item that appeared in its paper 225 years earlier in 1777: 'Mr. Crawcour, dentist from Gloucester, returns his sincere thanks to the ladies and gentlemen of this town and neighbourhood for the many favours he has received and takes the liberty to acquaint them that he intends to spend a few weeks at Shrewsbury annually.'<sup>5</sup> Cameron Hawke-Smith, writing in *Dental Historian* refers to such visits,

The movements of some peripatetic dentists in the late-eighteenth century has been studied by Beal and others through newspaper advertisements. The Crawcours, for example, were astonishingly energetic in their coverage of parts of England, including East Anglia. In these early days a dentist could carry all the necessary equipment of his trade in a bag. Gradually a pattern would establish itself, with the dentist planning regular monthly or seasonal visits from his permanent base.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear, then, that the Crawcour family was active in regional England in the late eighteenth century.



Samuel Crawcour  
(c.1748-c.1816)<sup>7</sup>

What do we know of this original Crawcour?

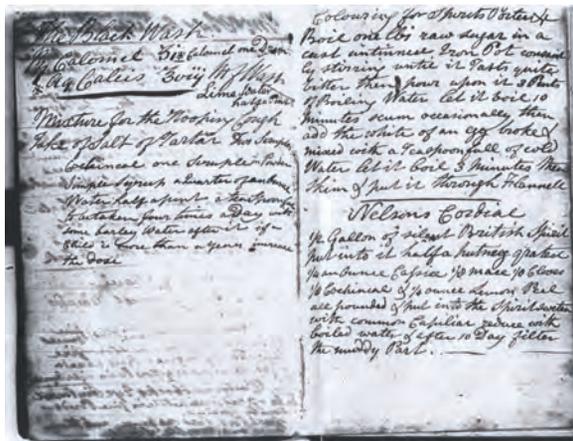
There is no evidence that any other individual used the surname Crawcour until the birth of Samuel's offspring and their descendants. All research completed has attached almost every known Crawcour descendant to one of Samuel's children. Considering the fact that at least five of his children would become dentists it seems safe to assume that the 'Mr. Crawcour, dentist from Gloucester' was this Samuel. It is also possible, however, that in his later years he had either diversified his business interests or changed professions as a classified advertisement soon after his death suggests: 'TO BOOKSELLERS, STATIONERS, &c. – To be DISPOSED OF, with immediate possession, an old established and very respectable BUSINESS, with a circulating library, eligibly situated in a large market town, in a western county, on terms most highly advantageous, and such as vary rarely indeed offer. Letters, post paid, from principals only, with real name and address, directed to Mr. Crawcour, Commercial-road.'<sup>8</sup> Since it refers to an 'old established' business, it seems likely this advertisement is about a business owned by Samuel rather than one of his sons. That it is being sold so soon after his death supports this.

Another advertisement eleven years earlier, in 1806, which may have been placed by Samuel or one of the older sons shows further diversity in the family's commercial life.

**T**HE strongest proof of the superiority of VERDENAUD'S ONLY-GENUINE RUSSIA OIL, is, that the first Nobility in England have since its introduction into this country, given preference to the use of it, and all declare it not to be equalled, either for the growth of hair, restoring it on parts which have for a length of time been bald, and preventing it from falling off or becoming grey. If used in lieu of pomatum, which the Proprietor most earnestly recommends, bearing a rich fragrance, it will afford, even when the hair has been thin for years, the consumers such proof of its efficacy as will not only surprise, but astonish them. In truth, not any is equal to it. Sold wholesale by the Proprietor, Mr. Crawcour, 15, Strand, London; and retail, by his appointment, by Mr. Oxley, Chemist, 21, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden; Mr. Parking, Medicine Warehouse, 14, Tavistock-row, Covent-garden; Keith and Co. Perfumiers, 30, Haymarket; Mr. Lorient, Perfumer, &c. 60, New Bond-street; Mr. Newbery, corner of St. Paul's Church-yard; Mr. Low, Perfumer, Drury-lane; Mr. Cryer, 68, Cornhill; Mr. Jones, Perfumer, 2, in the Poultry; Mr. Scott, Chymist, 193, Strand; Mr. Berger, 85, Strand; Kernott and Blake, Chemists, 33, St. James's-street; Sangwine, Perfumer, 38, Strand; Mr. Blackman, Oil and Colourman, 302, Oxford-street; Messrs. Hazell and Webb, 26, New Surry-street, Blackfriars; Colesworthy and May, Chymists, 144, Whitechapel; Mr. Metcalf, 54, Holborn-hill; and by a principal Perfumer; &c. in the principal market towns throughout the United Kingdom. Price only 5s. each, or one bottle containing five small ones, at one guinea. All letters must be post-paid. The Public will be cautious to ask for Verdenaud's Russia Oil, signed by Mr. Crawcour, 46, Strand, London.—To counterfeit which is felony.

*Advertisement from The Times<sup>9</sup>*

To contemporary eyes the impression given in the advertisement is that of a snake-oil salesman but based on the detail given for various recipes in Samuel Crawcour's apothecary book (held by descendants of Samuel's son Barnett) there is little doubt Samuel took his dispensing seriously. The book contains detailed descriptions of ingredients for 'The Black Wash' and 'Nelson's Cordial' along with remedies for 'whooping (sic) cough' and other common ailments, suggesting that he was at least attempting to alleviate his client's symptoms.



*Excerpt from the Apothecary Book of Samuel  
Crawcour (courtesy Shirley Hinkly)*

The family's oral and written history has it that it was Samuel who emigrated from Krakow. Early handwritten family trees list Samuel Crawcour's birth date variously as 1726, 1727, 1735 and 1748. All of these sources list his death date as 1813 or 1816. Based on the birthdates of his children, who, calculated from their death certificates, tombstones and court records, were born between about 1773 and 1791 (perhaps as late as 1797 if one family tree showing a child born in 1797 is correct) a later date initially seems more likely. If Samuel was born in 1726 then the first of his children would have been born when he was 47 and the last when he was 71.<sup>10</sup>

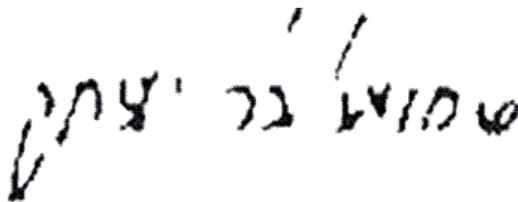
However, one family story suggests an early date. Samuel Crawcour's great-great-great-granddaughter Shirley Hinkly (née Wilson) was told much of her family's history by her grandmother Elizabeth Emily (Lizzie) Wilson (née Crawcour) who died in 1962 aged 96. According to the latter, a granddaughter of Samuel Crawcour's son Barnett and his second wife Fanny Alexander, Samuel Crawcour was already a widower and middle-aged when he arrived in England in search of a daughter by his first marriage who had eloped to England with an English soldier. If Samuel Crawcour had a daughter old enough to elope to England prior to about 1770 then it suggests his own birth date would have to be close to the earliest of the dates suggested by the various family trees.

In addition, according to Lizzie Wilson, the story of Samuel leaving for England in search of his daughter was reputedly used as an inspiration for a Victorian novel. What the title of this novel was can no longer be confirmed, but family stories are as enjoyable for the speculation they promote as for the facts they offer us.

In 1876 George Eliot published her last novel, *Daniel Deronda*. Lizzie would have been about eleven years old at the time of publication and there is little doubt that the pro-Jewish tone of the novel would have had a significant impact on Anglo-Jews at the time. The heroine, Mirah Lapidoth, is a Jewish singer taken from her mother at a young age by her father to perform throughout Europe. Mirah escapes from her father and heads to England to find her brother. Her father eventually tracks her down in London.

Whilst not the central focus of the story, Mirah's relationship with her father may well have been inspired by stories told by a Crawcour friend, a friend of a friend or perhaps even by way of a little dental couch conversation.

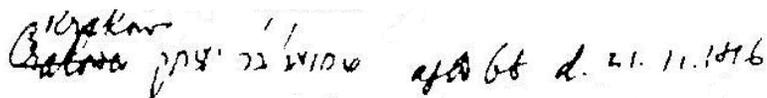
*Daniel Deronda* is extremely positive in its portrayal of almost all its Anglo-Jewish characters; the obvious exception to this is Mirah's father Lapidoth. Obviously trying to make direct links between the character in a novel and a possible inspiration for one small part of that novel is a flawed undertaking but if the unscrupulous, deceitful, thieving, gambling Lapidoth was actually based on the life of the progenitor of the Crawcour family it is certainly an unflattering portrait.



*Hebrew script of A.M. Hyamson (Hyamson Collection)*<sup>11</sup>

The Hebrew script shown above is taken from the papers of Albert Montefiore Hyamson which he left to the Society of Genealogists in London upon his death in 1954. Along with publishing many books and articles Hyamson spent years compiling a file on various early Anglo-Jewish families including the Crawcours. Whilst most of what is relevant to the Crawcour family in the Hyamson papers is available elsewhere this small clue is the strongest evidence for the dates of the birth and death of Samuel Crawcour. The page on which this script appears is a collection of notes taken from the registers of the Western Synagogue. The original registers were destroyed by bombing during the Second World War.

The first line of the full text has the word ‘Crakowa’ crossed out and replaced with ‘Krakow’ followed by the above script and then ‘aged 68 d. 21.11.1816’. The Hebrew script translates as ‘Shmuel ben Yitzchak’ or ‘Samuel son of Isaac’.



There is no story or evidence anywhere to suggest that Samuel’s father Isaac ever came to England, which means Samuel must still be considered the first to use the name Crawcour. This one small clue gives us the name of Samuel’s father, the date of Samuel’s death and the probable year of his birth.

So what of the stories of the earlier wife, the eloping daughter, and George Eliot?

It is unlikely we will ever know the definitive truth about the early life of Samuel Crawcour. It is still possible that the age given by the person who registered Samuel’s death at the Western Synagogue is incorrect, but for now that evidence has to be considered the strongest available and that evidence along with documentary evidence of his confirmed children’s birth dates suggests that Samuel Crawcour, son of Isaac, was born about 1748 in Krakow, married once in England around 1770 and died in 1816.

### **The Channel Islands**

Part of Roth’s story rests on the Crawcour presence in the Channel Islands. It is entirely possible that Samuel Crawcour stopped in there on his way to England from Poland but there is no evidence of this or of a continuing Crawcour presence from that period.

The earliest mention of a Crawcour in the Channel Islands is again from Roth.

In 1847, the Jewish community comprised eleven full members and five additional seat-holders, representing a total population of 47 souls. It is on record that on 1 June of that year Maurice S. Mawson, of Pernambuco, was married at St Helier to Rosa, daughter of Michael Phillips, of Jersey. Six years later there were seventeen seat-holders and the President was B. Levy. Among the local families was, according to family tradition, that of Crawcour, a dentist, said to have originated the amalgam filling of teeth.<sup>11a</sup>

Roth gives no evidence for his assertion that the Crawcour family was there as early as 1847 other than 'family tradition'. As far as I can tell the first Crawcour to appear in St Helier was Samuel Crawcour's son David Crawcour (c.1791-1882) who arrived there sometime between 1861 and 1870. There are no Crawcours (or any likely variant spellings) listed in the Channel Islands at the time of the 1851 or 1861 census.

There is no other evidence of Crawcour family members on Jersey other than that relating to David, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren but this is much later than 1847. David is cited there on the death certificate of his wife Amelia Barnes in 1870; he and his family appear in St Helier in 1871 in the UK Census, in 1881 in the Census again and then at his death in 1882. In 1861 David was still in London, listed at 266 City Road with his wife Amelia and grandson David (son of Henry John Crawcour). These are the earliest documented Crawcour connections with Jersey found and yet they appear nearly a century after the first evidence of their existence on the English mainland.

There is evidence of the family's existence in England as early as 1769, but other than Roth's unsubstantiated claim no evidence has yet been found of Crawcours living in Jersey prior to the 1860s. This suggests that the family went to Jersey from mainland England rather than the other way around.

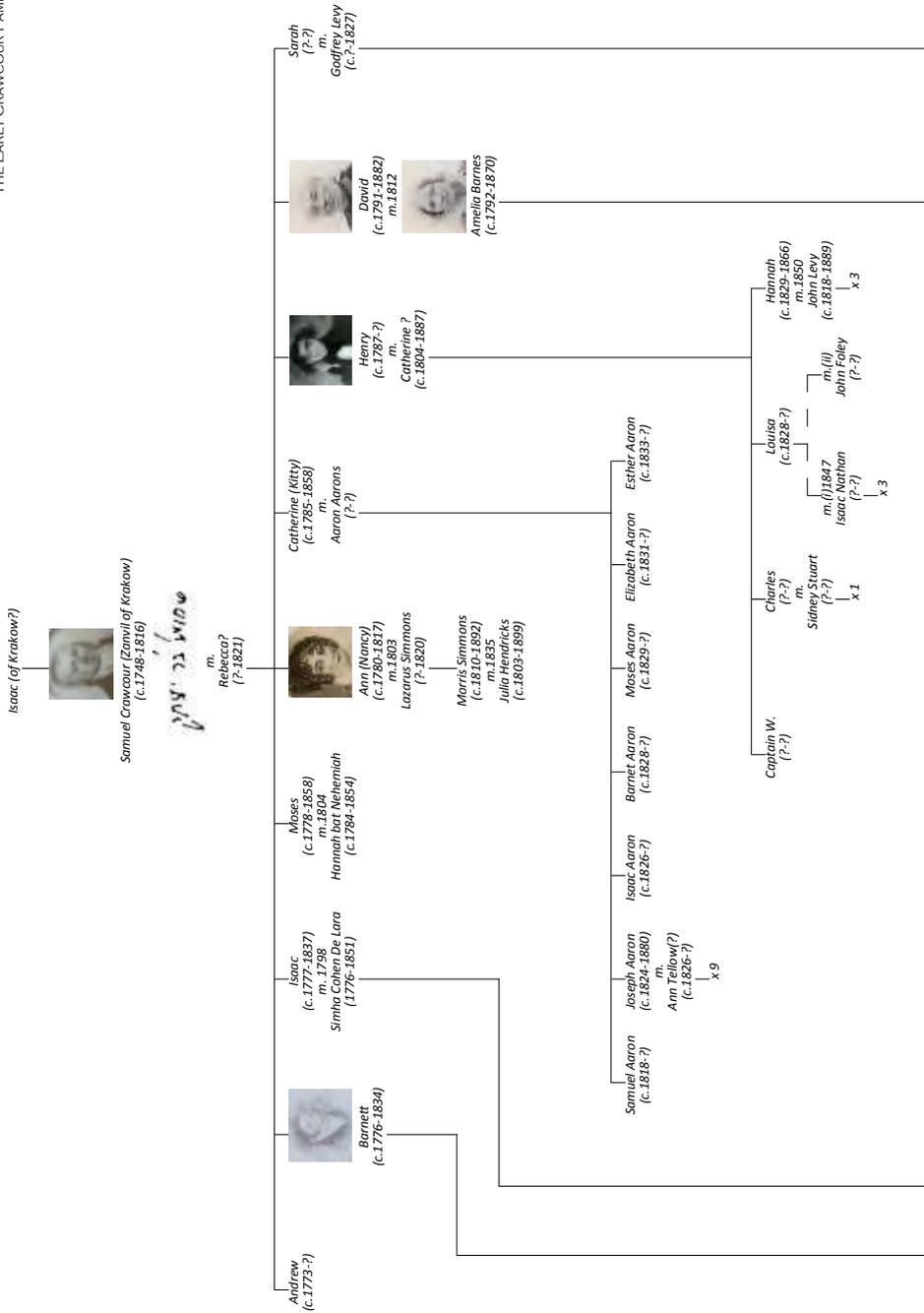
David's choice of destination at which to spend his final years is certainly curious. His possible reasons for moving to Jersey will be discussed later but one story has it that David's older brother Barnet purchased a plot at the Almorah Cemetery.<sup>12</sup> Considering Barnet died in 1834 that would place the family there much earlier than David's arrival. What is more likely is that this story has been confused with Barnet's purchase of land for a cemetery at Norwich where he lived, founded a synagogue and died.

### **Sephardim or Ashkenazim?**

A key issue raised by the story that the Crawcour family came via Crève-Coeur to England is the suggestion that they were Sephardim rather than Ashkenazim.

It is common amongst Sephardic families to follow naming conventions whereby the first-born son is named after the paternal grandfather, the second-born son after the maternal grandfather, the first daughter after the paternal grandmother,

THE EARLY CRAWCOUR FAMILY





the second born daughter after the maternal grandmother and so on through the various aunts and uncles until the parents run out of either children or parents and siblings after whom they might name them.<sup>13</sup> Whilst this is by no means an absolute proof, the existence of such a naming pattern would suggest a family of Sephardic origin. There is no evidence of strictly Sephardic naming practices in the early generations of the Crawcour family.

Conversely, it is an Ashkenazi custom to name children after a deceased close relative, in so doing creating a bond between the deceased and the newborn child. As will be discussed later, there is strong evidence of this in the early generations of the Crawcour family.

London's Sephardic community was based in the Bevis Marks Synagogue whilst the Ashkenazi community worshipped at the Great Synagogue from 1690<sup>14</sup> along with the Hambro Synagogue from 1702<sup>15</sup> and the New Synagogue from 1761<sup>16</sup>. If it were true that the Crawcours were of Sephardic origin then there would surely be evidence of this in their choice of synagogue.

The burial register of the Novo Cemetery in London contains over 10,000 listings from 1733-1918.<sup>17</sup> This cemetery was the main burial ground for Sephardic Jews in London for 200 years. If the Crawcours were Sephardim then it seems safe to assume one would find entries in the register for family members, but of those more than 10,000 listings not one is a Crawcour. Conversely, there is ample evidence of the Crawcours registering births and marriages at the three Ashkenazi synagogues, as follows:

### **The Great Synagogue<sup>18</sup>**

Ann Crawcour, sister of David, marries Lazarus Simons on 15 March 1803.

Ann Crawcour, daughter of David's brother Isaac, marries David Davis on 11 September 1822.

### **The New Synagogue<sup>19</sup>**

Moses Crawcour, son of Samuel, marries Hannah, daughter of Nehemiah on 24 February 1804.

Solomon Crawcour is born on 25 February 1810. He is the son of David's brother Isaac.

Abraham, son of David's brother Isaac, marries Charlotte on 30 June 1824.

Isaac Crawcour is born on 14 June 1825. He is the son of Abraham, son of David's brother Isaac.

Lewin (transcribed Lewis) Crawcour is born on 1 October 1828. He is also a son of Abraham, son of David's brother Isaac.

### **The Hambro Synagogue<sup>20</sup>**

Isaac Crawcour, son of David, marries Esther Cashmore on 10 June 1835.

Samuel Crawcour, son of David, marries Esther Cashmore's sister Leah on 17 August 1836.

All the above evidence is admittedly circumstantial, but it is in the detail of these Ashkenazi records that the real proof of the Crawcours' Polish origins resides. In the New Synagogue birth entry for Isaac Crawcour's son Solomon on 25 February 1810 Isaac is referred to by his Hebrew name of Isaac ben Shmuel Krakow. In addition, the wedding of the original Samuel Crawcour's son Moses to Hannah bat Nehemiah in 1804, also at the New Synagogue, lists Moses' Hebrew name as Moses ben Shmuel Zenvil Krakow.

Whilst I believe the above is ample evidence that the Crawcours were Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe there is one other piece of evidence that confirms this beyond any doubt.

From about 1847 Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler began a policy of consolidating the Ashkenazi community. Whilst the Great, Hambro and New Synagogues were the three great Ashkenazi places of worship many people instead attended *hebra* or *chevra*, small benevolent societies often attached to a small synagogue. In 1887 some 21 *hebroth* joined to become the Federation of Synagogues, a burial society established by Samuel Montague MP (later Lord Swaythling) to 'preserve the structure of east European Jewry'.<sup>21</sup>

In a letter to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* on 8 November 1891 regarding the rationalisation of many of these smaller synagogues Montague wrote: 'The members of our Board are no doubt aware of the facts that the two synagogues called the "Crawcour" and the "Sons of David" having proved to be unfit for public worship, the members were induced to close them and to erect jointly a new building.'

The Crawcour Synagogue? Whilst nothing further is known about the location or origin of the Crawcour Synagogue I don't believe there is any possibility whatsoever that an Ashkenazi synagogue in East London was named after a Sephardic family.

## Teeth

Dentistry dominates what we know of the early generations of the Crawcour family. In her article 'Dentistry in the British Isles', Anne Hargreaves tracks the movements of England's dentists throughout the 1790s by analysing the newspaper advertisements practitioners would place to announce their arrival in a town or region.<sup>22</sup> Whilst she notes the difficulty of tracking which particular Crawcour is advertising due to their tendency to advertise as 'Mr.' or 'Messrs.' only, it is safe to assume that any activity up to at least the mid-1790s is that of Samuel, as his sons would not have been of age to be working as itinerant dentists until that time.

In the eighteenth century the provision of dental treatment was still new in England for all except the very wealthy. Hargreaves has identified 165 individuals offering dental treatment at some stage of the 1790s but in any given year there were on average as few as 43 dentists working in London, 29 for the rest of England and only eight who were truly itinerant. Samuel Crawcour was one of

these eight; however, although (to judge from addresses given in their advertisements) he and his sons continued to travel regularly for their work, by 1786 they were based in Short Street, Moorfields, London and by the late 1790s they were established at the more up-market Strand at number 373.

For the itinerant dentist advertising was crucial. The record these advertisements have left of their travels, services and personal style is revealing. Samuel comes in for special appreciation for his 'eloquence... [which] threatened to over-reach itself'. The following advertisement from May 1797 is a wonderful example of his florid style,

In common life we everyday observe an irreparable damage that beauty sustains by the loss of a tooth; the oratory of the Pulpit, and the bar, and above all, the art of pleasing in conversation and social life, are matters of the highest concern to individuals, but in these no one can excel, whose loss of teeth, or rotten stumps, fallen lips and hollow cheeks, destroy articulation, and the happy expression of the countenance, whose voice has lost its native tone, and whose laugh, instead of painting joy and merriment, expresses only defect and disease, too early and too frequently betokens old age.

A foulness of the teeth is by some people as little regarded as it is easily removed, but with the fair sex, with the polite and elegant part of the world, it is looked upon as a certain mark of nastiness, because the smell imparted to the breath by dirty rotten teeth, is in general disagreeable to the patients themselves, and sometimes extremely offensive to others in close conversation...

Therefore as this opportunity offers, those who require their assistance, will be pleased to direct a line as above, when they will be waited upon at their own house.<sup>23</sup>

By the following month he had God on his side,

The following observations concerning those honourable and useful members [the teeth], may be found in PSALM XXXV.10; where we find King David made his remark on these honourable members. 'All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?' by which he means the teeth as they are the only instruments in pronunciation; Therefore, since we are honoured with such instruments in cutting the heavenly provision asunder, how particular ought we to be in keeping them clean and wholesome.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately for the health of their patients and the reputation of the family, the Crawcours' professional performance never quite matched this eloquence. The family is often credited with having invented the first affordable dental amalgam but the truth is somewhat less palatable. That honour is now generally attributed to either France's August Taveau (in 1816) or the Englishman Thomas Bell (in

1819), depending on which text is consulted. The Crawcours' dubious claim to fame lies in their introduction of Taveau's amalgam to the USA. In doing so they made themselves both rich and notorious.

In 1830 the Crawcour family of London-based dentists began filling dental cavities with amalgam. Unfortunately the Crawcours were unworthy representatives of their profession. Without removing any caries they took only minutes to cram amalgam into cavities and promised their patients miracles. In 1833 two Crawcour brothers settled in New York and with them the amalgam age had begun. Their treatment room was elegant, their manners excellent, but their methods deceitful. Nevertheless, the wealthiest citizens became their patients and in a short time, the Crawcours had made a fortune. This highly-profitable 'treatment' was imitated by many. There are no statistics to show how many 'dentists' set up in business to fill teeth but in 1830 the number of dental establishments in the USA was about 300, by 1835 this had more than doubled, by 1842 there were 1400 and by 1847 the number rose to 1600-1700. Many of the practitioners had few scientific qualifications. Their serious colleagues began to oppose the methods of the Crawcours and their followers. This was the 'first amalgam war'. The attacks against the Crawcours were justified. The amalgams were of inferior quality; they did not hold sufficiently but broke up easily and contracted. It was also feared that mercury in the amalgam might evaporate and intoxicate the patients.<sup>25</sup>

Which of the Crawcours made the trip to the United States is unknown. An advertisement from a New York newspaper held by the National Museum of Dentistry in the United States fails to mention which brothers opened their consulting rooms (at 52 Hudson Street, New York) but does supply us with a sense of the grandeur of their claims: 'MESSIEURS CRAWCOUR of the firm Monsieur Crawcour and Sons, established for more than a century, of Bond street, Piccadilly, Brunswick House, Commercial Road, London; and 5, South East Circus Place, Edinburgh; Surgeon Dentists to the Royal Families of England and France, patronised also by His Most Gracious Majesty, King William IV, the courts of Austria, France Russia, Prussia and Belgium.'<sup>26</sup>

In many of their advertisements the Crawcours referred to themselves as 'Messieurs Crawcour'. The French appellation and references to Paris and the French court were perhaps responsible for the mistaken belief that they were themselves French and may also have contributed to the Crèvecoeur theory. More likely is that they were simply trading on the image of the exotic and attempting to provide the (false) sense of security that often accompanies a long established company.

It is also unknown which member or members of the family opened a branch office in Liverpool. Their advertisement in the appropriately named *Liverpool Mercury* in 1833 announces details of their business and the amalgam they would take to New York:

### **A Most Important and Grand Discovery**

For Filling Decayed Teeth, However Large The Cavity May Be, Preventing The Necessity Of Extraction

Patronised by the Royal Family, and the most distinguished Nobility of Great Britain, France, &c. &c.

Messieurs Crawcour, of the Old Established Firm of Crawcour and Sons, of Brunswick-house, Crawcour Place, Commercial-road, London, SURGEON-DENTISTS (Established for more than a Century) beg respectfully, and with great deference, to thank their numerous Friends, the Nobility, Gentry, and Public, for the innumerable favours so long conferred on the firm; and take the present opportunity to inform them, and the inhabitants of this town generally, that one of their firm intends to take up abode here, and may be consulted at his New Establishment, 23, BOLD-STREET, LIVERPOOL, as usual, in all cases of DENTAL SURGERY and the accessories appertaining thereto.

Messieurs CRAWCOUR and SONS, sole, and original Proprietors, invite particular attention to their INVALUABLE DISCOVERY,

THE MINERAL SUCCEDANEUM which is in HIGH REPUTATION in LONDON and PARIS, and is UNIVERSALLY RECOMMENDED by the FACULTY in this country and in FRANCE.

In consequence of having received numerous applications from families of the highest distinction, to establish a branch of their profession in this part of the kingdom, they have determined to comply with the flattering request; and they trust that they shall preserve the high reputation with which they have hitherto been honoured.

This unique REMEDY for CARIES, or that destruction of the Teeth, which is one of the greatest evils attendant on humanity, they can with confidence recommend, not only to their friends, but to the notice of the medical profession in this town, whom they particularly invite to a consideration of its qualities, as totally void of any deleterious ingredient, and so immediately efficacious in relieving pain, and putting a stop to further decays, that it might appear to be the work of magic. ONE MINUTE WILL SUFFICE to fill the cavity of the Tooth with the SUCCEDANEUM which becomes actually as hard and as durable as the natural enamel. The cause of toothache is generally the operation of the air upon the nerve exposed by the Caries; the Succedaneum, puts an immediate stop to pain without subsequent inflammation. The operation is performed WITHOUT the SLIGHTEST PAIN or INCONVENIENCE.

Messieurs CRAWCOUR and SONS wish to call the attention of the Public to their INCORRODABLE TEETH, which they fix in the Mouth either singly or in sets. They are incapable of discolouration, and can-

not be discovered from NATURAL TEETH. They also fasten LOOSE TEETH, in a manner singularly efficacious, even in the most hopeless cases, whether arising from age, TARTAREOUS CONCRETIONS, or Diseases of the GUMS.

Hours of attendance from Ten till Five.

N.B. In answer to the absurd caution of certain individuals, who state that they are the SOLE proprietors of the “Mineral Succedaneum” and who appear only to have assumed Proprietorship within a very short period, Messrs. CRAWCOUR and SONS beg respectfully to state, that they have been in possession of the “Mineral Succedaneum” for a period of not less than 40 years, and they feel proud in referring to the gratifying testimonials of the Press during the above period in corroboration of the fact.

Messrs. C. and SONS do not PROFESS TO MAKE THEIR “CHARGES AS IN PARIS” and then DEMAND TREBLE the SUM PAID THERE. Their CHARGES ARE, IN EVERY CASE, STRICTLY MODERATE.

23, Bold-street, Liverpool<sup>27</sup>

The ‘Royal Mineral Succedaneum’ was a mixture of mercury and coarse filings of French silver coins; the same product as that developed by Taveau. That Taveau is credited as the inventor of this product in 1816 and the Crawcours are claiming as early as 1833 to have been in possession of the material for 40 years only adds to the belief that their practices were somewhat dubious. Hargreaves notes the family’s place in dental history:

...the present-day historian approaches the name of Crawcour with much caution. Such hindsight might have been appreciated by many in the early nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

### **The first Crawcour family**

Of Samuel Crawcour’s wife or wives very little is known. It is my belief that he had one wife and that her name was Rebecca. According to one of the old family trees Samuel’s wife died in 1821. She is most likely the Mrs Crawcour who appears as a witness in a Court of King’s Bench trial – ‘Crawcour v. Waterhouse’ – on 1 March 1811 in which one of her sons brings an action against the proprietor of a coach company for failing to deliver nine dozen toothbrushes sent by his mother to be collected in Shrewsbury,

Court of King’s Bench, Friday March 1

Crawcour v. Waterhouse

This was an action brought by a traveling dentist against the proprietor of the stage-coaches which start from Lad-lane, to recover the sum of £4 10s, the value of nine dozen toothbrushes, directed for the plaintiff

by the defendant's Shrewsbury coach, which never came to hand. The plaintiff's mother, who delivered the parcel at Lad-lane, at first swore that she did so on the 8th or 10th of March, but afterwards expressed her uncertainty as to the day; but it appeared from the books of the coach-office, that the delivery did not take place until the 29th, which was after the period of the plaintiff's enquiry for it in town; and an offer to deliver it to the plaintiff on the 1st of May was proved by the defendant. The parcel, which was now opened, contained two or three letters dated as lately as the 20th of March; and LORD ELLENBOROUGH, in directing the plaintiff to be non-suited, observed, that if others were to deal as hardly by the plaintiff as he had by the defendant, he would be sued by the Post-office penalties of 20p upon sending each of these letters in a parcel. In the examination of a Clerk in the defendant's coach office, his Lordship also observed, that the public had a right to see the parcels booked for which they paid two-pence bookage; and directed the witness to correct the practice of his office in that particular, he having hitherto refused to shew his books for that purpose.<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting that Samuel's son David named his third son after his recently deceased father in 1816. His daughter, born in late November 1821, the year of David's mother's suggested death, was named Ann Rebecca and known as Rebecca throughout her life. Furthermore, the only other Crawcour child born in 1821 was Barnett Crawcour's third daughter with his second wife Fanny Alexander. Her name was also Rebecca. As mentioned earlier it is an Ashkenazi custom to name a child after a deceased relative. The naming of the Crawcour children born in 1816 and 1821 would seem to strongly suggest that the Crawcours were Ashkenazim and that Samuel Crawcour's wife was Rebecca.

Samuel and Rebecca had nine confirmed children; two additional children (George, born c.1777, and Mary, born c.1797) appear in one family record but no evidence has been found to confirm their existence and those names do not appear in subsequent generations. Of the nine known Crawcour children spouses have been found for eight with seven having descendants. At the time of writing over 1200 Crawcour descendants had been identified. (See pages 590-1 for The Early Crawcour Family Tree).

### **Adelina de Lara and the Polish military**

Sarah Abigail Cohen Crawcour (c.1804-79), a daughter of Samuel's son Isaac and his wife Simha Cohen de Lara, married David Laurent de Lara (c.1806-76) in 1828. Of this line we know much due to the family's achievements in and connections with the arts. David Laurent de Lara, a son of 'Count' Laurent de Lara<sup>30</sup>, was illuminating artist to the queen. Much of the decoration on royal proclamations during the reign of Victoria would have been his work, and in 1860 he published

a key text in the art of illuminating titled *Elementary Instruction in the Art of Illuminating and Missal Painting on Vellum: A guide to modern illuminators: with illustrations in outline as copies for the student*.<sup>31</sup>

Sarah and David had five children; Simharia, Alfred, Rachel, Anne and Hannah. Simharia (c.1831-1910) married a barrister named William Playters Moore (c.1831-82) and had a daughter named Rose (c.1869-?). When her husband was struck by a tram and killed she discovered he'd left everything to his sisters.<sup>32</sup> Alfred (c.1834-?) was an illuminating artist like his father as well as manager of the illuminating artists' union. He and his wife Margaret (c.1838-?) had at least three daughters and four sons. Rachel (c.1837-?), the third child of Sarah and David married Henry Lax (c.1846-?) a musician who would later become a tailor. They had no children.

It is the families of Sarah and David's fourth and fifth daughters Anne and Hannah that provide the most notable stories. Anne De Lara was a 'vocalist and pianista' as a child. In 1851, aged 11 she sang at the closing of the Great Exhibition in London:

EXHIBITION OF 1851. – Amongst the other novelties which characterised the closing scene of the Exhibition, was the scientific performance of a young talented lady, Miss Annie de Lara, the daughter of an Exhibitor, on one of Collard's grand pianos. She finished her performance by singing very artistically and gracefully three of the difficult morceaux from "Il Don Giovanni" in Italian, amidst the cheers and applause of some thousands of eager listeners, which surrounded her on the platform. The young lady in question, who is only eleven years of age, is of the Jewish persuasion.<sup>33</sup>

Anne ran away from home at sixteen and married Joseph Laurence (c.1833-c.?), a solicitor who left her destitute while their children were still young. Anne then married George Matthew Tilbury (c.1839-1883) otherwise known as George Preston, an engraver. Anne and George had one daughter and it is this child who is both the source of much of what we know of this branch of the Crawcour family and the only possible lead we have with the history of the Crawcour family in Krakow prior to Samuel Crawcour's arrival in England in the mid-eighteenth century.

Lottie Adelina Preston was born on 23 January 1872. From the age of six it was clear that she possessed extraordinary musical ability and soon after, on the advice of a music shop owner, she adopted her mother's maiden name to become Mademoiselle Adelina de Lara. Beginning her career as a child prodigy Adelina was initially employed to play the piano at a waxworks gallery in Liverpool at a rate of four pounds a week. She soon became the family's major breadwinner and by 1882 was performing recitals in concert halls. The *Chester Chronicle* reviewed one such performance:

We must devote a special paragraph to the performance of a charming little puss, Mademoiselle Lottie Adelina de Lara. The child is really a musical phenomenon. At the piano, in her recitals which have created the greatest interest, not only amongst the general public of Chester, but also amongst its professional musicians, she was a perfect little mistress of the instrument. The feats of musical memory performed by this little one were nothing less than marvelous. Without a note before her, she sat down to the piano and went through a lengthy programme, comprising pieces bristling with great difficulties; but the little pianist, without the slightest apparent effort, and at the same time without the slightest trace of self-demonstration or affectation, gave each composition with a flow and rhythm and delicacy of touch which would be the envy of performers who have practised laboriously for years.<sup>34</sup>

In January 1883 George Preston died of pneumonia aged 43. A week later his wife Anne, having gone into a deep depression, died of 'heart failure'. Adelina was left with only her two older half-sisters Nellie and Penelope. If things seemed grim to the ten-year-old they only got worse. Another week on and Nellie, the eldest, disappeared presumed drowned, after threatening to take her own life. Luckily for the child her remaining sister Penelope began managing Adelina's career, and helped by the support of various patrons the two girls set off on tour around England playing both public recitals and private audiences including one with the Prince (later Edward VII) and Princess of Wales.

On the recommendation of the pianist Fanny Davies, Adelina then moved to Frankfurt-am-Main to be tutored by Robert Schumann's widow Clara (with occasional assistance from Johannes Brahms). She returned to England in 1891 and began a long and successful career as a concert pianist.

The family of Adelina's aunt Hannah de Lara (1844-1922), the fifth of Sarah Cohen Crawcour and David Laurent De Lara's children, was also well represented in the arts. For many years Hannah was the mistress of the composer and performer Henry Russell (1812-1900). Russell was the son of Moses Russell of Sheerness, a brother of Esther Russell (wife of Judah Solomon) and Philip Russell among others whose exploits and those of their descendants in the early days of the Australian colonies have been examined by many.<sup>35</sup> Henry Russell fathered two sons with Hannah whilst married to Isabella Lloyd with whom he had five other children including the novelist William Clarke Russell. One of Henry and Hannah's illegitimate sons was Sir Landon Ronald (1873-1938), conductor of the New Symphony Orchestra, principal of the Guildhall School of Music and accompanist of Dame Nellie Melba. Isabella Lloyd died in 1887 and Henry Russell and Hannah de Lara were married the following year.

Much of Adelina's story comes from her memoir *Finale*<sup>36</sup>. The rest of her life is as interesting and eventful as the beginning including her marriage to an actor, Tommy Kingston, their performance tours of South Africa and Australia and

her life with Tommy's hermaphrodite friend Toby with whom she would live for many years. It is on the first page of this autobiography that a clue to the European origins of the Crawcour family can be found. She writes:

I was born at Carlisle, Cumberland, on January 23rd in the year 1872. My parents had each been married before. My father, George Matthew Tilbury of Southampton, already had one son. My mother, Anna, was the youngest of the four daughters of David Laurent de Lara, the son of the Spanish Count Laurent de Lara; he married my maternal grandmother, a Polish Jewess of the name of Cracour, that of an important Polish military family who lived in Krakow, in the part of Poland then under Austrian rule.

At first sight the suggestion that an itinerant Jewish dentist migrating from mid-eighteenth century Krakow might be a member of 'an important Polish military family' seems unlikely. Considering the persecution of Jews in Poland over a long period it seems incongruous that there might be military leaders of Jewish descent but after further investigation it now appears that this may not be so far-fetched.

In his article 'History of the Jews in Poland'<sup>37</sup> Dr Mike Rosenzweig outlines hundreds of years of military involvement of Poland's Jews. As early as 1514 the Jews in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (then a part of Poland) were ordered to form an army contingent. By the middle of the sixteenth century Jews were fighting with the Polish military and by the 1610-12 war with Muscovy there were more than ten Jews in one regiment. Over time their number increased significantly and by the late eighteenth century (not long after Samuel Crawcour's arrival in England) the Jewish population was providing its own separate military unit.

During the Kosciuszko Insurrection and wars against Tsarist Russia in 1794 Jews supported the uprising either in auxiliary services or in arms. For example they took part in the April revolution in Warsaw where many of them perished. After the Russian army was repulsed from Warsaw the idea was born to create a separate military unit composed of Jewish volunteers. This idea was backed by the commander in chief of the Insurrection, Tadeusz Kosciuszko. 'Nothing can convince more the far away nations about the holiness of our cause and the justness of the present revolution', he wrote in a Statement on the Formation of a Regiment of Jews, 'than that, though separated from us by their religion and customs, they sacrifice their own lives of their own free will in order to support the uprising.' The Jewish regiment under Colonel Berek Josielewicz took part in the fighting during the storming of the Praga district of Warsaw by Tsarist troops on 4 November 1794. With the blood shed in this war they documented the loyalty of the Jewish population to the cause of the revolution and the slogans it upheld – equality and fraternity.

Thus it is entirely possible that Samuel Crawcour was a member of ‘an important Polish military family who lived in Krakow’ and this may also explain his obvious education. From his apothecary book it is clear that he was able to write in English and Latin from an early date (presumably he was also fluent in Yiddish and Polish) and the fact that his son Barnett’s wife and daughters established a school suggests a higher than average level of education among his family than might be expected for Polish Jewish immigrants to England at that time.

### Isaac and Esther



*Isaac Crawcour (1815-86) & Esther Cashmore (1816-83)*

Isaac Crawcour (1815-86) and his wife Esther Cashmore (1816-83) are the ancestors of the vast majority of known Crawcour descendants to have lived in Australia.

**NOTICE to SHIPPERS and PASSENGERS for ADELAIDE and PORT PHILIP**—The well-known, fast-sailing ship WELLINGTON, Capt. FRANCIS BENNY, will positively leave the Jetty, London Dock, on Tuesday the 28th, and Gravesend 30th of January. No goods received after the 27th. Has a splendid poop cabin for a family disengaged, and two or three side cabins. For freight or passage apply to Page and Smith, 1 A, Bishopsgate-street within; or to Hotchkiss and Mobbs, 3, East India-chambers, Leadenhall-street.

On 13 July 1851, just two years before his father David’s trial, Isaac and Esther and five of their children arrived in Melbourne on the sailing ship *Wellington*. To that stage they had produced nine children although three of them had died prior to the family’s arrival on the far side of the world.

Why did Isaac and Esther leave England? A business card of Isaac’s shows that he spent at least some of his time in England working as a ‘dentist and cupper’, but directory listings and the birth certificates of his children show him more often as a tobacconist. The family moved regularly within the East End area. Whether this was due to financial constraints, their growing family or some other reason is unclear. On 11 July 1850 Isaac is listed in *The Times* in Bankruptcy Court. A year later they were in Australia.

It seems safe to assume that Isaac and family left England for a second chance. Gold was discovered in New South Wales on the 22 May 1851 and in Victoria



soon after but this cannot have been Isaac and Esther's motivation for migrating to Australia as they left England approximately three months before that first discovery. It may simply have been family ties that convinced Isaac and Esther to leave England. Isaac's closest friend and brother-in-law, Michael Cashmore, had established himself in Melbourne. Michael arrived in Australia around 1839 and by the early 1850s was well established in business as a draper at 1 Collins Street on the corner of Elizabeth Street. Esther's sister Rebecca Cashmore (later Abraham) and their widowed mother Alice (née Nathan) would follow on the *Prince Alfred* in December 1852.

Upon arriving in the colony Isaac tried his luck in the goldfields at Ballarat, Brown's Diggings and Daylesford before settling in Geelong where he spent the remainder of his life as a very successful pawnbroker and financier. The *Age* published an obituary when Isaac died in 1886:

Another old resident of the town has passed away. We refer to Mr. Isaac Crawcour, of Victoria Parade, Eastern Beach, who died at his residence on Saturday at the age of 72.

He arrived in Melbourne in 1851 and after trying his fortune at Ballarat, Brown's Diggings and Daylesford, he finally settled in Geelong where he has resided for the past 20 years. On Tuesday he attended the funeral of his brother-in-law, Mr. Cashmore, and returned apparently well. On Friday he was attended by Dr. Reid, but his illness was not considered serious until Saturday and he died on Sunday. The deceased left seven sons and two daughters. Two of his sons, Joseph and David, carried on the business in Geelong and Geelong West.<sup>38</sup>

A family story has it that Isaac contracted pneumonia in pouring rain at the funeral of his dear friend and brother-in-law Michael Cashmore. In 1886 the return journey between Geelong and Melbourne was far from the one-hour freeway ride of today, and the two overnight coach trips on bumpy dirt roads along with the inclement weather would have been arduous. Isaac was born on 13 March 1815 six days after the birth of Michael Cashmore and he died on 10 October 1886 six days after him.

When the original Zanvil of Krakow (Samuel Crawcour) migrated to England in the mid-eighteenth century he founded a large family who, whether by choice,

convenience or necessity, followed his lead into dentistry. Nearly 100 years later Samuel's grandson Isaac Crawcour would also take his family to a new land where all of his adult sons would follow his chosen occupation of pawnbroking and finance. In a pattern not unfamiliar to new immigrant populations, by the following generation (the third in Australia) the Crawcour descendants, with the benefit of the solid financial base provided by their parents and grandparents, would diversify their interests and enter into various professions including law, medicine, the retail trade and even in one instance a return to dentistry.

### **Aaron**

The life of Aaron Crawcour has provided one of the great mysteries of my investigations into the family. Aaron, a son of Samuel Crawcour's son David, was born in London in 1818 and lived much of his life in Australia yet he does not appear on any of the old family trees in circulation among the Australian branches of the family. There is no death record for an Aaron Crawcour in any Australian state or territory.

On 22 December 1852 the *Lady Flora* docked at Gravesend having sailed from Port Phillip and Sydney carrying a cargo which included over three and a half tons of gold dust valued at about £420,000 (or more than \$80 million Australian based on current gold values). During its journey from the colonies the ship ran into a gale and was forced to land at Rio de Janeiro for repairs. Whilst docked the captain became aware that at least three of the bags of gold dust had gone missing. The second mate, John Gore, was taken into custody and so began an extended investigation which, over the following months, would see the arrests of a number of passengers and result in a series of overlapping trials that caused much excitement in the courts and the English press.

Aaron Crawcour, then in his mid-30s, was charged with stealing 570 ounces of gold dust valued at £2,300 (more than \$470,000 Australian based on current gold values). Confronted in a Rio hotel by the captain, Nicholas Pentreath, Aaron denied any involvement but, having already been implicated by another passenger, was taken into custody before the British consul who sent them back to the ship and returned them to England to stand trial. On the way to the vessel Aaron escaped. After establishing that Aaron had disposed of almost half of the gold dust to a local jeweller in exchange for jewellery, the *Lady Flora* sailed for England without him.

A detective, Inspector Brennan, was assigned to find Aaron. Having established that Aaron had returned to England he kept watch over his father David's home at Windsor Terrace, City Road, until, on 22 February 1853 he spotted Aaron coming out of the house and took him into custody.

Throughout the case Aaron maintained his complete innocence, but unfortunately for him there was no shortage of witnesses and co-defendants who said

otherwise and he was eventually found guilty of the crime and sentenced to 'the extreme punishment of two years' imprisonment with hard labour'.

There is still some confusion over Aaron's sentence, since reports of later trials of others involved in the theft refer to Aaron having been sentenced to seven years' transportation, the same sentence given to the second mate, Gore. It may be that Aaron was tried on more than one count and sentenced to both transportation and hard labour on separate charges. Perhaps the sentence was for seven years' transportation including two years' hard labour. No evidence of Aaron arriving in Australia as a convict has been found. By 1853 there were far fewer ships leaving for the colonies with prisoners than in earlier years. Victoria was taking very few convicts by 1853 and would cease taking them entirely within the next one to two years. It is possible that Aaron was sent to Western Australia which was taking the bulk of the arrivals from that time until the practice ceased in 1867.

A consequence of Aaron's return to London was to involve his father in his situation. David was charged with receiving the produce of stolen property.

Clerkenwell.- David Cracour, of 14, Windsor-place, City-road, was charged with receiving two £50 notes from Aaron Cracour, knowing them to be the produce of stolen property, belonging to Messrs. Pentreath, shipowners, of Bishopsgate-street.

Mr. Poulden, the barrister, instructed by Messrs. Lacey and Bridges, of King's Arms-yard, conducted the prosecution; and Mr. Ramsey, solicitor, of Frederick-street, Gray's-inn-road, supported the defence.

Many particulars in connexion with this extraordinary affair were detailed in *The Times* last week, in the Winchester Assize intelligence, the prisoner's son, Aaron, having been there tried and convicted of stealing 570 ounces of gold dust, while a passenger on board the *Lady Flora*, on her homeward voyage from Melbourne. The younger prisoner, it may be recollected, escaped from the vessel at Rio, having plundered it, in conjunction with the second mate and another, of the quantity of gold mentioned. It would appear that he (Aaron) afterwards proceeded to America, and in New York obtained a Bank postbill payable on Messrs Rothschild and Co., London, for £1,332 11s. 6d., with which, and other valuable property he arrived in England in the month of February last, passing under the name of Sinclair, and took up his abode with his father in Windsor-place; but before the expiration of seven days he was discovered by the detective constable, and there captured. Subsequently to the conviction, Brennan had ascertained that the prisoner, David Cracour, had changed two notes of £50 at Portsmouth, and, in consequence thereof, he yesterday paid him a visit and accused him of having done so, telling him that such notes were a part of the cash his son had received on the postbill, whereupon he remarked, "Oh, yes, my boy, I paid them for

him.” Brennan then asked if he had any other notes? when he gave up one of £10 and 12 of £5 besides 40 sovereigns, saying, “That is all.” The officer informed the prisoner that he was not satisfied, and must consequently make a search, and, in so doing, he found in a tin box several ounces of gold dust, similar to the stolen property, besides a £5 note and 10 sovereigns.

Mr. Peter Stafford, cashier to Messrs. Masterman, said that he paid the man convicted as Aaron Cracour cash for the postbill on Messrs. Rothschild as follows:-22 notes of £50, 23 of £10, and 11s. 6d. The two £50 notes were a portion of that sum.

Proof of the passing of those particular notes having been given, the learned counsel requested a remand as the detective officers were still of the opinion that they would be able to make further important discoveries in connexion with this extensive robbery.

Mr. CORRIE observed, that the prisoner would not be injured by such a proceeding, as the matter would have ultimately to be referred to a superior court.

Mr. Ramsey then applied to have his client bailed.

Mr. CORRIE said, it was so serious a case that he should require un-exceptionable sureties, two in £1,000 each, and the prisoner in £1,000

Two gentlemen having presented themselves as bail were accepted, and the accused, having entered into his recognizance, was set at liberty.<sup>39</sup>

In a later report on 17 August 1853 David is said to be charged with harbouring his son.

Mr. CORRIE listened attentively to the witnesses, but remarked that the case had become much weaker since the former examination, and now he would accept his own personal recognizance in the amount of £100 to answer the charge on a future day.<sup>40</sup>

It is unclear whether these reports relate to the same charge or separate charges. If they were in fact the same charge then the outcome begins to look more favourable for David. No subsequent reports of the trial have yet been found.

Aaron Crawcour and Sarah Anne Laurance<sup>41</sup> were married in a Church of England ceremony at St John’s in La Trobe Street, Melbourne on 7 September 1870. Sarah Anne’s maiden name was Bushell. She was born in Kent around 1828, the daughter of Peter Bushell, who was present at the wedding and acted as a witness, and Elizabeth Petley. The marriage certificate states that she was a widow. Aaron’s name has not been found in any convict lists, nor does he appear in official immigration shipping lists and yet there is no doubt that it is him marrying Sarah Anne. His father is listed as David Crawcour, surgeon dentist, and his age is listed as 52 which fits perfectly with the birth date of 1818 shown on

the one family tree on which he appears. This tree was passed down the South African branch of the family.

At the time of Aaron and Sarah Anne's wedding Sarah Anne was the mother of three children (one deceased). Catherine, the eldest child, was born to Charles Frederick Laurance and Sarah Anne Bushell in North Melbourne in 1859. Amelia, the second child, was born in 1862; again the parents are listed as Charles Laurance and Sarah Anne Bushell. The third child, deceased at the time of Aaron and Sarah Anne's wedding, David Laurance, was born in 1865 and died in 1867. It is in this two-year-old child's life and death that we find the strongest clue to solving the mystery of what became of Aaron Crawcour. David Laurance's birth certificate states that his father is Charles Laurance. Two years later his death certificate states that his father is Aaron Laurance.

The possible scenarios that this discovery provokes are fascinating. Did Aaron assume the married surname of his de facto partner? Did Aaron assume the identity of his de facto partner's first husband? Did Charles Laurance ever exist or was Aaron Crawcour actually Charles Laurance from the beginning? Is Aaron the father of one or more of the children of Sarah Anne Laurance?

Sarah Anne died of a cerebral hemorrhage aged 76 in Kew, Melbourne on 6 June 1905 and was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery the following day. Her death certificate lists her surname as Laurance. The informant on the death certificate of her son David Laurance was a friend of the family named James Mitchener and I believe it is only through his slip in listing the father of the child as Aaron rather than Charles that the truth of Aaron Crawcour's identity becomes plain.

The original sexton's book for Melbourne General Cemetery for the year 1901 includes a burial on 5 September in Church of England Plot EE 170 for 'Charles Lawrence'. He shares a plot with three others: Sarah Anne Laurance, buried 7 June 1905, David Laurance, buried 31 October 1867, and Peter Bushell (father of Sarah Anne), buried 9 January 1884. The grave was originally a private grave (no headstone or inscription) but it appears that after the death of Sarah Anne's daughter Amelia in 1952 an inscription was added. The inscription uses the spelling 'Laurance' and makes mention of Catherine and Amelia who are both interred at Springvale. The only reference to Charles Laurance is as 'father buried 5.9.1901'. If Sarah Anne Laurance is widow to Charles Laurance at the time of her marriage to Aaron Crawcour in 1870 why is her first husband buried in 1901?

The only credible answer is that the body in the grave under the name Charles Laurance is the body of Aaron Crawcour. The age listed for 'Charles Lawrence' in the sexton's record is 83 at the time of his death. This would place his birth date between 6 September 1817 and 4 September 1818. The date of Aaron Crawcour's birth according to the only family tree on which his existence is acknowledged is 9 July 1818. A 1901 death certificate for 'Chas Lawrence' who died (also in Kew) aged 83 lists his parents as 'David Lawrence' and 'Amelia'.

Did Charles Laurance ever exist? We may never know. Perhaps there never was a Charles Laurance and Sarah Anne's status as a widow at the time of her marriage to Aaron was a smokescreen intended to cover up the illegitimacy of her children. My hunch is that Sarah Anne Bushell may have had a first husband named Charles Frederick Laurance and that he was the father of Sarah Anne's first child Catherine. The other children's father is simply listed as Charles Laurance on their birth records and this, combined with the names of her second and third children, provides far too much circumstantial evidence to the contrary to allow me to accept the suggestion that Charles Frederick Laurance was their father also. Aaron Crawcour's parents were named David and Amelia. So too, I believe, were his children.

An obvious question arises when considering Aaron Crawcour's change of identity; was he still an active member of the family? Aaron was clearly no longer of the Jewish faith in 1870 when he had a Church of England marriage with Sarah Anne Laurance. He also had a convict past. For his older brother Isaac Crawcour, who had left England as a bankrupt before building up a substantial business with his sons, the appearance of his younger brother Aaron in Melbourne may have presented both social and commercial difficulties. This situation would hardly have been unusual. There would have been thousands of ex-convicts starting life in the Australian colonies at the time and many would have had free settler relations. The stigma of being a convict only really lifted in Australia in the late twentieth century, and for a person such as Isaac, who was involved in pawnbroking and moneylending, having a brother who had been convicted of a major gold theft may not have been particularly conducive to good business.

I find it difficult to believe that Aaron could simply not have found Isaac and family if he had chosen to do so. It was Melbourne which Aaron had left in 1852 on board the *Lady Flora* and Isaac was already in the colony at that time so he must have known Isaac was likely to be here. The Crawcours were a prominent Jewish family and a quick word to any of the members at any of the synagogues would have located a Crawcour fairly simply; Aaron's brother Isaac was a close friend and brother-in-law to Michael Cashmore who was one of the most prominent figures in Melbourne's Jewish community at the time. That Aaron changed his name to Charles Laurance also suggests that the family wished to remain distanced from Aaron.

We may never know whether Aaron and Isaac were in contact with one another. However, the fact that Aaron does not appear on any of the family trees I have from Australian descendants suggests that he may have been intentionally removed from the family history in this part of the world. In a family in which there are strong naming repetitions from generation to generation the fact that no Crawcour was again given the first name Aaron supports this.

In the process of researching one's ancestors the stories of certain individuals tend to grip tighter than others. The hunt for Aaron Crawcour has perhaps

obsessed me more than any other Crawcour story. The romance of the gold heist, his escape across South America, the ambiguity of the paternity of his children and his change of identity certainly created much of the appeal but perhaps it was his possible deletion from the Australian Crawcour family's recorded history that fascinated me most of all.

The *Times* report of the trial was the initial evidence of the existence of Aaron Crawcour. After that discovery it took close to eighteen months to discover his final resting place. Having trawled through court reports, births, deaths and marriages, newspaper articles, shipping lists from England to Australia to Brazil along with various other sources it amuses me no end that when he did finally appear he was lying buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery less than 500 metres from where the bulk of this article was researched and written.

### **A final reflection**

Perhaps it is impossible to highlight any meaningful universal themes when studying a family of this size; each individual's life is likely to have had numerous turning points for better or worse, and collectively their experiences may not be dissimilar to any unrelated group of a similar size. However, one thing I continue to reflect upon in the Crawcour history is the willingness of many family members to take risks. Emigration, itinerant work, the founding of communities and the seemingly high level of self-employment come to mind. Many of these decisions may have been forced upon them through circumstances beyond their control but others appear to be chosen. Perhaps most were a combination of the two.

It is difficult to know if this is unusual for an Anglo-Jewish family of Eastern European origin or part of a broader culture of risk-taking established over many years of itinerant existence. The path from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and then England, followed by emigration to the colonies is a well-worn one and they were certainly not unusual in following it. At the time Samuel Crawcour arrived in England life for many was often difficult but the restrictions on Jews practising in certain professions and lack of property rights along with the general distrust and racism of many must certainly have added to any obstacles faced by the wider community. To overcome those obstacles an element of risk-taking may have been necessary.

The poor reputation of the family's many dentists is no doubt warranted although as much of modern dentistry was a mystery until the twentieth century they cannot have been alone in these practices and their reputation may in part have been magnified by the fact that they became financially successful as a result of their practices whilst others remained pedlars.

Within the Crawcour family it seems there is a thread of dubious and occasionally illegal behaviour, however with more than 1000 direct descendants of Samuel Crawcour it is more likely that this is the result

of the fact that infamy makes a better story and tends to be recorded in a way that lasts generations whilst the daily lives of the vast majority of family members are now forgotten. Thus we have newspaper articles of the trials of Aaron and David Crawcour but little sense of their relationships with their loved ones.

The above paragraph is from an early draft of this work. Not long after that was written came the discoveries of a number of additional stories of Crawcour indiscretions including those of Andrew and the candlestick, Samuel (son of David) and the tortoiseshells, and Henry Isaac and the spoons (these stories will be covered in a forthcoming publication, of which this article is an excerpt). This means that David Crawcour, his brother Andrew and his sons Samuel and Aaron and nephew Henry Isaac were all before the courts on felony charges between 1825 and 1853. When taken in conjunction with the family's well-recorded professional practices I can no longer suggest that the early Crawcour family's indiscretions are statistical norms or the result of a public fascination with infamy over other more mundane events. As will be shown by the trial of Henry Isaac Crawcour it wasn't difficult to (wrongly) end up in court in the early to mid-1800s but the case of Samuel and the tortoiseshells will prove that you can certainly increase your chances of making that happen.

H. L. Mencken once wrote: 'No virtuous man – that is, virtuous in the Y.M.C.A. sense – has ever painted a picture worth looking at, or written a symphony worth hearing, or a book worth reading, and it is highly improbable that the thing has ever been done by a virtuous woman'<sup>42</sup>. I'm yet to discover an early Crawcour descendant that I could describe as 'virtuous in the Y.M.C.A. sense' and for that I am grateful. Instead I have found a family with a history that is rich and fascinating and their commercial zeal along with their indiscretions has left a trail that otherwise would not exist.

## Notes

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- 41 The surname ‘Laurance’ has been used in this article. However, in some documents ‘Lawrence’, ‘Laurence’, ‘Lawrance’ etc. occasionally appear. Sarah Ann Laurance was illiterate (she signs her name with a cross on documents) and it is likely there was no fixed spelling. The family seems to have settled on Laurance for the burials at the Melbourne General Cemetery, and for this reason that spelling has been chosen for the purposes of this article. There is no possibility that records of other people have been confused for this family. All key places, ages and relationships match appropriately.
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### Author’s note

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# MESSIANIC JEWS IN AUSTRALIA: A CLASH OR A HYBRID?

*Dvir Abramovich*

Can one be a Jew and also believe in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and Son of God? This perplexing question usually invites a quick dismissal and a definite no. Yet, what is one to make of Messianic Jews/believers,<sup>1</sup> those men and women who have accepted the central tenet of Christianity, namely, a belief in Jesus, but who continue to identify as Jews and describe their adopted religious beliefs as natural extensions of Judaism? Is this self-conception, which encases within its midst the multiple configurations of Jewish-Christians and Jews who are followers of Jesus, but who express a desire to retain a distinctive Jewish identity and observe Jewish commandments a fiction?

The purpose of this essay, *in nuce*, is to provide a basic instructive and analytical survey of the Messianic movement in Australia, as embodied by the little known organisation Celebrate Messiah and its *Beit HaMashiach* ('House of Messiah') Messianic congregation (the first of its kind in Australia) situated in South Caulfield, Melbourne. The essay, based on examination of published materials, proffers descriptive information and interpretive perspectives that will serve as an introduction for those who have no previous knowledge of Messianic Judaism. Conclusions are drawn cautiously and are tentative subject to gaining access to the principals of this study. Additionally, the article provides a brief overview of the historical development of Messianic Judaism, essential in placing the group under investigation into some kind of context. It is intended that this paper will form part of a lengthier study which will produce a comprehensive account of this phenomenon, as manifested in Australia.

It is not too much to say that Messianic Judaism is an acutely controversial and confounding subject for the Jewish and Christian communities. The question of who and what are Messianic Jews has received very little attention from the academic world, even though from both a sociological and theological perspective their bewildering mixture of Judaism and Christianity is worthy of scholarly examination.

The growth and development of global communities of Messianic Jews now means that these ruminations, at once puzzling and unnerving, are gradually seeping into the fabric of theological and sociological discourse. As a matter of fact, the *Jerusalem Report* in 2005 noted that in recent years, 'Messianic Judaism in Israel has experienced extraordinary growth'<sup>2</sup> with estimates of more than 10,000 people who consider themselves Messianic Jews.

There are several explanations advanced for the rising interest in Messianic Judaism. One is that an increasing number of evangelical churches are invigorating their drive to evangelise Jews. Another is a renewed sense of fascination by Christians craving to explore their Jewish roots of faith. Finally, there is the mindset, prevalent among a subset of evangelicals, that Jews' welcome of Jesus as their Lord will quicken his second coming.

In 2004, Bill McCartney, the former coach who took the University of Colorado football team to a national championship and who founded the Promise Keepers, an international Christian organisation for men, set his sights on Messianic Jewish believers. McCartney implored Christians and Messianic Jews to 'come to one accord ... envisioning that both groups will be strengthened, as they celebrate Christianity's Hebraic roots and love for Israel.'<sup>3</sup> In forming *The Road to Jerusalem*, a Denver-sited ministry, McCarthy urged his supporters to raise millions of dollars to support the 'thousands of Jewish believers, who are now living in poverty in Israel'<sup>4</sup> adding that while support for Israel was important, the first financial priority should be to help Messianic Jews underpinned by the command in Romans 15 by the apostle Paul. In essence, McCartney's aim is to persuade evangelical Christians to embrace a group historically scorned by Christians and Jews alike, since he is of the view that the Bible commands Christians to stand with Messianics and shakes his head at Christians who embrace the 'unbelieving Jews' of Israel but shun Messianics.

In a similar vein, in 2005, the Southern Baptist Convention ignited a controversy by voting to support a nationwide effort to convert Jews, saying that Southern Baptists 'have largely neglected the Jewish people.'<sup>5</sup> It asked its executive committee to explore the option of using a group of Messianic Jews as an evangelistic mission to the Jewish people. The idea drew fire from Jewish organisations in the United States, who complained that to use the Messianic Jews to try and convert Jews was immoral and deceitful. Anti-Defamation League director Abraham Foxman said the effort was detestable because the Southern Baptists were using Jews who have converted to Christianity 'to go after other Jews'.<sup>6</sup> 'If people convert, that's their individual business,' Foxman said. 'But don't use them as a tool to convert other people.'<sup>7</sup> The Presbytery of Philadelphia went further, setting up congregation *Avodat Israel*, a church for Messianic Jews in 2005 and pledging \$250,000 for its running. This followed a controversial decision by the Presbyterian Church (USA) to begin exploring selective divestment from companies doing business in Israel and the occupied territories.<sup>8</sup> After eighteen months, the local Presbyterian leadership voted to cut off its funding midway through the five-year project, questioning both the theology and stagnant growth of *Avodat Yisrael*. One of the pivotal objections concerned *Avodat Yisrael's* blended liturgy, chiefly its use of Torah scrolls in worship. While the congregation's leaders argued that the ritual was 'part of their personal identity', the panel concluded that it must cease as this was non-negotiable.<sup>9</sup>

Are messianics Jews, or Christians portraying themselves as Jews? Is Messianic Judaism a deceptive missionary movement, organised and substantively funded by evangelical Christian bodies with the exclusive aim of converting Jews to Christianity? Are they simply couching fundamentalist Christianity in Jewish symbols? The answers may not be so easily reached.

More broadly, the clear demarcation between Christianity and Judaism is provocatively blurred by Messianic Jews, whose hybrid expression, while counter-intuitive, constitutes an intriguing current pulsating through the modern religious tapestry. In various ways, Messianic Judaism is located within a variety of intellectual, historical, cultural and anthropological planes, embodying the ambiguous and shifting nature of a post-modern landscape. Inevitably, the presence of Messianic Jews opens up the sensitive and troubling issues of proselytism, mission and conversion. The permanence of this group in Australia is seen by some as endangering Jewish-Christian reconciliation.<sup>10</sup>

Today, the most authoritative articulation of what Messianic Judaism stands for is provided by The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC). The UMJC defines Messianic Judaism as a:

movement of Jewish congregations committed to Yeshua the Messiah that embrace the covenantal responsibility of Jewish life and identity rooted in Torah, expressed in tradition, and renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant. Messianic Jewish groups may also include those from non-Jewish backgrounds who have a confirmed call to participate fully in the life and destiny of the Jewish people. We are committed to embodying this definition in our constituent congregations and in our shared institutions.<sup>11</sup>

Two other facets within this theological rubric should be referenced. The first relates to the twin interlocking relationships Messianic Jews have with the Jewish and Christian worlds: 'For a Messianic Jewish group 1) to fulfill the covenantal responsibility incumbent upon all Jews, 2) to bear witness to Yeshua within the people of Israel, and 3) to serve as an authentic and effective representative of the Jewish people within the body of Messiah, it must place a priority on integration with the wider Jewish world, while sustaining a vital corporate relationship with the Christian Church.'<sup>12</sup> The second pertains to the nexus between the organisation's credo and the collective canon of Jewish religious law.

In the Messianic Jewish way of life, we seek to fulfill Israel's covenantal responsibility embodied in the Torah within a New Covenant context. Messianic Jewish halakhah is rooted in Scripture (Tanakh and the New Covenant writings), which is of unique sanctity and authority. It also draws upon Jewish tradition, especially those practices and concepts that have won near-universal acceptance by devout Jews through the centuries. Furthermore, as is common within Judaism, Messianic

Judaism recognizes that halakhah is and must be dynamic, involving the application of the Torah to a wide variety of changing situations and circumstances. Messianic Judaism embraces the fullness of New Covenant realities available through Yeshua, and seeks to express them in forms drawn from Jewish experience and accessible to Jewish people.<sup>13</sup>

Fundamentally, Messianic Jews trace back their roots to the original Jewish Christians, known as the Nazareans. In his book *Jewish Roots: A Foundation of Biblical Theology for Messianic Judaism*, Daniel Juster explains that the Nazarenes embraced the core creeds of the New Testament. Although they were faithful to their Jewish heritage, they did so through a belief in Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus Messianic Jews use for the Christian deity).<sup>14</sup> As the Church became institutionalised, it broke away from its Jewish antecedents, sometimes in very intentional ways, as when the decision was made to separate Easter from Passover, notwithstanding the reality that these holy days were inextricably linked to each other. The Church demanded that one choose whether they are a Jew or a Christian. Jews who professed a belief in Jesus and who persisted to practise Judaism were excommunicated at the Second Council of Nicea in 787. Moreover, Jewish converts in the seventh century had to declare the following profession of faith: 'I do here and now renounce every right and observance of the Jewish religion, detesting all its most solemn ceremonies and tenets that in former days I kept and held. In future, I will practice no rite or celebration connected with it, nor any custom of my past error, promising neither to seek it out nor to perform it.'<sup>15</sup>

In light of the gradual split between the early Church and the Jewish community, the Jewish-Christians became a fading minority. For centuries they were an insignificant presence on the religious vista, composed of a few individuals.

In the late nineteenth century, closely following the emergence of Zionism, the Jewish Christian movement experienced a revival. That awakening was termed the 'Hebrew Christian renaissance'.<sup>16</sup> Although Hebrew Christian and Messianic Judaism differed, the latter drew significant religious doctrines from the Hebrew Christian movement, which consisted of Christians of Jewish background who grew closer to their Jewish roots. Although they unashamedly declaimed their Jewish heritage, the Hebrew Christians continued their membership in the church.<sup>17</sup> Importantly, the Hebrew Christians did not lead Jewish lives. They did not mark or celebrate the Festivals or observe Jewish life cycle traditions such as circumcision and bar-mitzvah. For its part, Messianic Judaism promoted and encouraged its adherents to practise a more comprehensive Judaism. This included founding separate Messianic congregations for its Jewish and gentile believers. While being nourished by Hebrew Christianity's writings and experience, Messianic Judaism chose a low-profile type of existence, preferring not to call any attention to its existence.<sup>18</sup> At this point, Hebrew Christianity, with its fundamentalist roots and

acceptance within the church, expanded institutionally. The Hebrew Christian Alliance was established in London in 1866, with the explicit evangelical aim of spreading its philosophy and to reach out to scattered Hebrew Christians.

Twenty-nine years later, the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America was birthed, and in 1925 an international version, known as the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, was created.<sup>19</sup> The seeds of contemporary Messianic Judaism were sown when Mark John Levy, the general secretary of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America failed to convince the organisation to ground its prayer and liturgy in Hebrew and to form congregations. To compound and reinforce this rupture, Hebrew Christianity made it publicly clear that it now completely unshackled itself from the fetters of Messianic Judaism and would have no links with it.<sup>20</sup> The two movements were now free from each other. An important figure in the evolution of Messianic Judaism was David Bornstein. A convert from Judaism who was ordained as a Presbyterian minister, Bornstein turned the Peniel Community Centre in Chicago, initially designed to furnish Jews with social services, into the First Hebrew Christian Church. Primarily Protestant in tone and prayer, it nevertheless integrated Hebrew phrases and minor Jewish teachings into its services, heavily and obviously influenced by Bornstein's background.

It was not until the 1960s that Messianic Judaism came into its own. The Jesus Movement and Israel's near-miraculous triumph in the Six Day War resulted in major changes and a fresh direction in religious thinking and, consequently, in the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America.<sup>21</sup> Of cardinal importance was an injection of youthful membership, spearheaded by Manny Brotman. He was president of Shalom International, a small organisation that produced and distributed literature centering on Messianic Jewish culture and legacy. He met a considerable number of the veteran leaders of the Hebrew Christian Alliance and was familiar with the activism of Bornstein, and decided to form the Young Hebrew Christian Alliance. As a result, a move towards Messianic Judaism among his 'Jewish believers' was conspicuously evident.<sup>22</sup>

And indeed, in 1971, a substantive number of young Jewish believers, headed by Joe Finkelstein and his wife Debbie, attended the Hebrew Christian Alliance Association in California and managed to bring about a complete transformation of the Alliance. In the 1973 gathering they tabled a motion to change the name of the Hebrew Christian Alliance Association to the Messianic Jewish Alliance.<sup>23</sup> Although their proposal was narrowly defeated, they were victorious in the 1975 conference. The name-change symbolised a radical alignment in the movement's stance and outlook. Without question, the direction was towards a more ardent and impassioned articulation of Jewish identity.

This track was solidified by Presbyterian pastor Daniel Juster. He devoted several years to formulating a Messianic Jewish thought process that guided the Messianic congregations that began appearing throughout the United States. At that stage, Messianic Judaism was still in its transitional phase. Meetings would

frequently take in private homes or hotel room, as members debated how to best express their Messianic Judaism. Positions regarding the extent to which traditional Jewish practice should be incorporated into services, and what was the correct nexus between their belief system and Christianity, naturally varied from one group to the other. The ultimate institutionalisation of Messianic Judaism occurred in 1979, when the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations was incorporated, welcoming nineteen out of the twenty-two properly functioning Messianic Congregations into the fold. The central objective of this umbrella body was to educate and proffer support. The by-laws of the Union revealed its core goals. In order to be admitted as an affiliate of the Union, congregations had to profess a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible as the ‘absolute authority on all matters of teaching and practice’ and that ‘salvation is by grace through faith in Yeshua’s atonement and resurrection. Above all, Jesus’ divinity and his role as Messiah must be proclaimed. Where they assert variance with Christianity is that they believe that Jesus and the New Testament documents must be seen in their Jewish context to be rightly understood.’<sup>24</sup>

In the 1980s the Union’s special committees (focusing on communication, music, services, amongst others) tabled various recommendations that were aimed at codifying and tightening the movement’s statement of faith. Thus, for example, the concepts of the Godhead, the Virgin Birth and the resurrection of both the saved and the lost were adopted. In addition, evangelical values and methodologies were approved, albeit with modifications to suit Messianic Judaism.<sup>25</sup>

A close look at the development of Christianity shows that a new religion was formed with its attendant beliefs and practices precisely because followers of Jesus, such as Paul, evolved a Christology in which for them Jesus as Christ is God.<sup>26</sup> This Jewish-Christian schism remains today. Indeed religious history reveals that although Christianity had its roots as a Jewish sect, it eventually assumed a supersessionist theology, whereby Christians had superseded Jews and took their seat of favour before God.<sup>27</sup> Also called ‘replacement theology’, currently, in a number of mainline Christian denominations, the church is seen as having replaced Israel in Biblical prophecy.<sup>28</sup> Such fundamentalist theology was the piston-engine that fuelled antisemitism during the Middle Ages and now feeds moves by some Protestant churches to financially divest from Israel. Throughout history Jews were accused of denying and murdering Christ, refusing to acknowledge his divinity and Messianic mission. Although the varying branches of Judaism are split on different issues, all agree that one cannot be at once a Jew and a Christian. The consensus is that Messianic believers who are born Jewish according to *Halakhah* retain their identity and status, but are unfit to carry the duties and benefits of Jewish life. Accordingly, Messianic believers cannot partake in a prayer quorum or be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

The Israeli government does not recognise Messianic Jews under the Law of Return and accordingly does not grant them Israeli citizenship. In 1989, the Israeli

Supreme Court rejected the application of two Messianic Jews. In his judgment Supreme Court Justice Menachem Elon cited the couple's belief in Jesus as the unbridgeable chasm: 'In the last two thousand years of history ... the Jewish people have decided that Messianic Jews do not belong to the Jewish nation ... and have no right to force themselves on it'.<sup>29</sup> He closed by saying that 'those who believe in Jesus, are, in fact Christians.'<sup>30</sup>

A large part of Messianic Jews see themselves as 'completed' or 'fulfilled' Jews, stressing that their faith in Jesus does not invalidate their Jewish identity, but is a path every Jew should traverse.<sup>31</sup> If some Jews accept Buddhist or Hindu tenets while claiming to remain Jewish, why, Messianic Jews ask, can't they believe in Jesus and remain Jewish? Messianic Jews posit that they are endeavouring to erect a positive and living bridge between Judaism and Christianity, invoking the early Jesus movement of the first century as their model for their community. They stand firm in the avowal that they are fully Jewish. Concisely put, Messianic Jews point to the Hebrew Scriptures, in particular Isaiah 53, which they hold foretells of a personal Messiah and that Jesus perfectly fits the prophesy. The verses in Isaiah speak of a person who was despised and rejected, who took on our weaknesses and sorrows and was pierced by our sins. Jewish rabbis interpret the chapter contrarily, noting that it refers to the prophet Isaiah or the people of Israel.

Michael L. Brown, author of the multi-volume series *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus* argues that 'Messianic Jews believe that traditional Christianity has obscured the real image of Jesus.'<sup>32</sup> As such, they view and celebrate Jewish holy days through the prism of Jesus. For example, Chanukah has special significance to Messianic Jews because they maintain Jesus celebrated the festival according to the Gospel of John 10:23, which registers that Jesus was present at the 'feast of dedication in Jerusalem.'<sup>33</sup>

One of the seminal works on Messianic Judaism is by Dan Cohn-Sherbok, ordained a Reform rabbi and now professor of Judaism at the University of Wales, Lampeter. His minority view is that Messianic Jews should be considered part of pluriform Judaism. He bases this substantively unique judgment (without referencing the proponents of this paradigm) by employing the pluralist model, which he deems a more tolerant one. Cohn-Sherbok contends that since modern Jewry is no longer united by belief and practice, 'pluralists maintain that the exclusion of Messianic Judaism from the circle of legitimate expressions of the Jewish heritage is totally inconsistent'.<sup>34</sup> He further opines that adherents of Messianic Judaism are more theistically inclined and observe a larger proportion of the commandments when compared with their counterparts in the Conservative and Reform movements. Deploying the image of the seven-branched menorah, he states that 'Messianic Judaism should be seen merely as one among many expressions of the Jewish faith, (alongside) Hasidism, Orthodox Judaism, Conservative Judaism, Reform Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism, and Humanistic Judaism'.<sup>35</sup>

As Rabbis Hurvitz and Karesh observe in the *Encyclopedia of Judaism*: 'All

mainstream Jewish denominations, from orthodox to reform and Reconstructionist, hold that Messianic Jews are not practicing Judaism.<sup>36</sup> Mark S. Alfassa, founder of the Judaic Alert News Service, which tracks the progress and activities of groups posing as authentic Jews, expounds on the inroads Messianic Jews have made: 'The 'Messianics' have the specific intent of being accepted as Jews in Israel. So much so that they have developed a political action group that lobbies the government, even using Holocaust survivors that have converted to Christianity as spokespersons. These people have a highly strategic plan, are well financed by mainstream Christian groups and have a single goal, to remove Jews from following the faith of their ancestors. Calling it a 'significant breakthrough,' Messianic Judaism has been officially recognized by the Registrar of Non-Profit Societies, which is a department within Israel's Ministry of Interior. There you will find this Christian group with an official sounding name Vaad Poala Lma'an Yahadut Meshichit (Action Committee for Messianic Judaism).'<sup>37</sup>

Messianic Jews contend that they are not closet Christians. Yet, most Jews find the Messianic message deeply offensive, and categorically discount persons of Jewish heritage who have embraced Christianity. Though Jewish scholars are steadily exploring the Jewish roots of Jesus' teaching, they draw the line at the Christian belief in his divinity. The reproach stems from the Messianic message that says that one can retain their Judaism while taking Jesus as their saviour.

Considering that for centuries Judaism fought to preserve itself within antagonistic gentile societies, and in the face of the Church's assailing missionary attempts, one can readily comprehend why Messianic Jews are perceived as part of a clandestine effort to undermine the Jewish faith. And this is, indeed, the one item on the Jewish agenda on which there is complete consensus. With few exceptions, Jewish groups and leaders respond that Messianic theology is an absurdity, and view it as a deceptive Christian attempt to usurp the traditional Jewish view of the Messiah and decimate a persecuted tribe already under threat from assimilation and intermarriage.

Crucially, rabbinic Judaism explains that the Messiah is not a deity, and that Jesus falls short of Messiah criteria on several fronts. For instance, the Messiah is to be a descendant of King David, he will establish a government in Israel that will be the centre of all world government, rebuilding the Temple, end evil, gather all the exiled Jews into Israeli and usher in world peace. Clearly, according to these criteria, Jesus did not complete the mission of the Messiah described in scripture. Traditional Jews are still waiting for the Messiah.<sup>38</sup>

Ellen Charry is emphatic that Messianic Jews represent no religious coherence or integrity. She observes that 'the religion attributed to Jesus by the Gospels overturns nearly every Jewish belief and practice ... Christians do not worship a Jewish Messiah - they worship the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God Incarnate ... Messianic Jews are a duplicitous *terbium quid* that has neither Jewish nor Christian theological integrity, no matter how sincere its adherents

are.<sup>39</sup> Lauren Winner offers a similar assessment, arguing that any attempt to braid Judaism and Christianity is an inconsiderate and discourteous approach. Winner, who converted to Christianity, explains that Anglican observances reflect Jewish historical practices without claiming to be Jewish. She avoids attending synagogues out of an understanding that, in the eyes of the Jewish people who are infused with love for Judaism, she is now an apostate.<sup>40</sup> Carol Harris Shapiro, who wrote a book-length study of a Messianic congregation in the United States, depicts Messianic Jews as ones who accept:

Christ as their saviour without fully converting to Christianity ... They want to continue in their Jewish customs and festivals while accepting theological doctrines that all other branches of Judaism find blasphemous. Messianic Jews then reinterpret Judaism in light of Jesus as the Messiah and try to teach that reinterpretation to other Jews.<sup>41</sup>

Harris Shapiro is irritated by Messianic Jews: 'It's almost like a case of identity theft. It's like when someone takes your credit card and tries to use it to their own advantage.'<sup>42</sup> The Central Conference of American Rabbis, the association of Reform rabbis, considers Messianic Jews to be apostates who have adopted another religion without coercion.<sup>43</sup>

Orthodox Jewish theologian and philosophy professor Michael Wyschogrod proffers an interesting analysis of the status of a Messianic Jew:

I have written elsewhere that from the Jewish point of view accepting trinitarian Christianity is not a good thing to do. In fact, it is so bad that a Christian Jew loses all sorts of privileges in the community of Israel. What she [sic] does not lose, however, is her [sic] standing as a Jew. Once one is born of a Jewish mother or properly converted, one remains a Jew no matter how many of the Torah's commandments are obeyed or violated. Therefore it is not correct to assert that I am willing to accept Messianic Jews' claim that they are still Jews as long as they act like Jews by obeying the Torah, keeping kosher, observing the holidays, circumcising their sons, and so on. If born to a Jewish mother or properly converted, I am willing to accept all Jews as Jews - though perhaps not as good Jews -whether or not they do any of the things enumerated. I also believe that a Jesus-believing Jew who observes the Torah is better off than a Jesus-believing Jew who violates the Torah by eating pork, working on the Sabbath and so on.<sup>44</sup>

David Novak, in an article 'When Jews Are Christians', sees Messianic Jews/believers as a 'new type of Jewish convert to Christianity'.<sup>45</sup> For Novak, these are people who contend that they remain Jewish while simultaneously accepting Jesus as the Messiah. Novak additionally asserts that Messianic Jews should be compared to the 'heretical syncretists of the second and third century' rather than the first Jewish Christians.<sup>46</sup>

Novak explains:

These Jewish converts to Christianity not only claim still to be Jews, they also claim still to be practicing Judaism. Some of them insist that they are indeed practicing *the* true Judaism, implying that all other Jews are practicing a false Judaism. Others merely insist that they are practicing *a* true Judaism, thus implying if not actually demanding that their practice be accepted as a legitimate form of Judaism ... In relation to the Christians, the new Jewish Christians claim a special role for themselves within the Church, offering themselves as a kind of personal link between the now gentile Church and its Jewish origins. This claim often includes a demand for recognition of their right, or even obligation, to perform the ritual commandments of the Torah, from which all other Christians have been exempted by Christ (see Matthew 12:8). Some of them go so far as to refuse the name 'Christian' altogether, preferring to call themselves 'Messianic Jews.'<sup>47</sup>

Finally, Novak points out that while at some juncture it was conceivable to regard Christianity as a conformation of Judaism, history and Christian doctrinal delineation have now rendered this view impossible.<sup>48</sup> Howard Bass, pastor of Nachalat Yeshua Messianic Congregation in Beer Sheva, Israel, self-identifies himself in line with Novak's thesis. 'We are converts to Christianity who continue to think of ourselves as Jewish,' he writes, 'We ... believe that history confirms the new covenant (Testament) testimony of Yeshua being the son of the living God.'<sup>49</sup> Indeed, one could venture the observation that Messianic Jews merit their own treatment because they do not fit into the mainstream of organised Christianity even though they avow a belief in Jesus.

*In summa*, Jewish scholars argue that the Messianic belief runs counter to a key maxim of Judaism that the Messiah has yet to arrive.<sup>50</sup> Jews worldwide say that Messianic Judaism represents an assault on their very system of faith. The vast majority of Jews consider embracing Jesus a fatal contradiction to the faith, as oxymoronic as kosher pork.<sup>51</sup> They brand Messianics as stealth Christians with an agenda to convert Jews via deception. Most Jewish groups strongly condemn Messianic Judaism, offended by what they feel is the movement's misappropriation of Jewish identity to facilitate their missionary outreach to Jews. Yad L'Achim, Israel's largest anti-missionary group (founded in 1950) has been in what they characterise as a holy war with gentile missionaries, which they contend includes Messianic Jews. They maintain that Messianic Judaism is an effort to 'hoodwink' Jews into being Christians.<sup>52</sup>

A non-profit organisation, Celebrate Messiah is financed by individual Christians and churches who share the ministry's desire to spread the gospel among the Jews, described as 'God's ancient people'.<sup>53</sup> It was established in 1995 by Lawrence and Louise Hirsch. Celebrate Messiah and its transplanted congrega-

tion *Beit HaMashiach* have been part of Chosen People Ministries worldwide since 1999.<sup>54</sup>

It is prudent to elaborate a little on Chosen People Ministries. The organisation was founded in 1894 as Brownsville Mission to the Jews by Rabbi Leopold Cohn, an Orthodox rabbi who believed, after studying the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Messiah awaited by the Jews. The parent organisation of Chosen People Ministries was the American Board of Missions (ABMJ) to the Jews.<sup>55</sup> In 1929, the organisation started publication of a magazine called *The Chosen People*. Their purpose was to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel of Christ and to convert them to Christianity. Many organisations have grown from the ABMJ, including Jews for Jesus. What makes Chosen People different from other organisations that evangelise Jews is that instead of going from town to town they transplant congregations in different countries. Today, it has staff in 12 countries whose main concern is setting up Messianic centres and congregations. Their key message is that Jesus, Yeshua, is the Messiah of Israel, and that a Jew who accepts Jesus as the Messiah is still Jewish. Accordingly, employees of Chosen People Ministries encourage Jews who choose to believe in Jesus to maintain their identification as Jews, to observe Jewish holidays and support Israel.<sup>56</sup>

Don Meecha, Toronto branch director of Chosen People Ministries explains the Messianic paradigm in an acutely revelatory way. He notes that the challenge before Messianic Jews is how to be 'a viable option' to the Jewish community, which he deemed as 'unsaved,' 'dying,' and 'perishing,' and which 'promotes expulsion' should any of its members embrace Jesus.<sup>57</sup> Meecha asks 'Why would Jews want to leave the comfort and security of their community, for one that offers only eternal life but nothing for them in this life?' He argues that the solution is to plant a Messianic synagogue that speaks Hebrew, and to allow Jews on the path to Jesus to preserve their traditional symbols and customs 'as long as they do not violate the new covenant's [New Testament's] values.'<sup>58</sup> He laments that Messianics have missed the mark with the Jewish community: 'We have not reached full potential to make them jealous enough to leave their dying community behind for one that offers eternal life.'<sup>59</sup> The end goal for Meecha is to 'no longer go into the Jewish community, but to be part of it' because if that does not occur, a 'spiritual holocaust will continue.'<sup>60</sup>

On its website, Celebrate Messiah states its purpose and definition with clarity, 'Celebrate Messiah Australia is an interdenominational, evangelistic society dedicated to raising the banner of Messiah amongst God's ancient people in Australia and abroad through our partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries.'<sup>61</sup> In addition, the organisation endeavours 'To successfully communicate the Gospel in a culturally relevant way to Jewish people in Australia by raising the truth that one can be Jewish and believe in Yeshua.'<sup>62</sup>

As well as serving as executive director of Celebrate Messiah, and up until recently as congregational leader of *Beit HaMashiach*, Lawrence Hirsch is also

the Australia/New Zealand area coordinator for the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism and the president of the Messiah Alliance of Australia.<sup>63</sup> Hirsch writes that he was brought up in a traditional Jewish home, that he attended an Orthodox synagogue and celebrated his bar-mitzvah. He became a Jewish believer after arriving at Melbourne from South Africa: 'It was in Melbourne, in 1984, where Lawrence came to faith through the witness of his brother Alan, who had come to faith in Jesus a few months earlier. Amazingly, at the very same time, Lawrence's childhood sweetheart living in South Africa at the time, also came to faith in Jesus.'<sup>64</sup>

Hirsch and his wife were educated as missionaries in South Africa and worked as missionaries for five years.<sup>65</sup> Writing to the *Australian Jewish News*, Hirsch succinctly encapsulated his doctrinal moorings: 'As a Messianic Jew ... (i.e. a Jewish person who believes in Yeshua/Jesus as the Messiah), I firmly and passionately uphold my Jewish identity, actively participate in Jewish causes and embrace biblical Jewish faith.'<sup>66</sup>

Admittedly, the decision to anchor its offices in South Caulfield was deliberate. Lawrence Hirsch elucidates on the rationale for the particular locus:

... we moved our offices to be strategically placed in the heart of the Jewish community of Melbourne, i.e. Caulfield (the largest Jewish community in Australia). Our office is now meters away from where we hold Messianic services every Shabbat. As we are conducting our services, Jewish people are walking right past our place of worship on their way to their Shabbat services. Within the area of Caulfield there are 30 synagogues. We have an amazing mission field right where we are, and Jewish people are talking about us.<sup>67</sup>

Hirsch has alerted his readers that now that Celebrate Messiah has the full use of the church building they are able to arrange their outreach to the Jewish community in a 'more effective and culturally sensitive way.'<sup>68</sup> In 2002, the organisation announced plans, as part of their blueprint for reaching the Jewish community in Australia, for a project titled 'Messiah College.' The aim is to design a 'platform for the Gospel by providing relevant education in a coaching environment for people of all ages' so as to 'serve and interact with the Jewish community while creating a platform for the preaching of the Gospel.'<sup>69</sup>

A cardinal dimension in the Messianic matrix is the missionary mandate. In their zeal to spread the 'gospel' about their newly discovered faith in Jesus, Messianic believers/Jews fervently preach that one can both be Jewish and believe that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in Jewish scripture. Consequently, they are vocal and energetic in disseminating the good news within the Jewish community of which they still feel themselves part.

In a talk to Northbridge Vineyard Christian Fellowship about the Passover festival, Lawrence Hirsch told his audience that Celebrate Messiah is 'a mis-

sion organisation. We do missionary work visitation, evangelism in Australia, in particularly in Melbourne, which is our main focus ...<sup>70</sup> When the pastor of the Northridge Vineyard Christian Fellowship commented that it seems that more and more Jewish people were becoming Christians or accepting Jesus as their messiah, Hirsch replied:

We actually live in very exciting times. We've seen Jewish people come to faith in Jesus today at a rate that we haven't seen since the times of the Book of Acts. So it is significant. We're living in very significant times. In Melbourne we've seen a lot of Russian-speaking Jews come to faith in Jesus, around 250, almost 300. We've seen also Australian-speaking, English-speaking Jews come to the Lord. God's hand seems to be very much on Russian-speaking Jews, all around the world, Israel, that's true also in Israel.<sup>71</sup>

Immediately afterwards, the Northridge Vineyard Christian Fellowship host asked that his members join him in praying for Lawrence and his organisation. The short prayer is worth quoting in its entirety for it discloses the mindspace of some Christian groups towards Judaism and Jews, as well as how these churches envisage the role of Messianic Jews within the missionary scheme:

Lord thank You for what you are doing in the Jewish nation, in the Jewish people all around the world. Lord we thank that they were Your first your love, that You love that nation, and that You came first for them. When Jesus came, He said I come for the lost sheep of Israel. *And lord we thank You for what You are doing through organisations like celebrate messiah in reaching these folk and showing them the reason for their faith in God, and that Jesus is that One they have been waiting for, so bless their work* [author's italics].<sup>72</sup>

Again and again, Celebrate Messiah is lauded for its missionary activities to the Jews by leading personalities in the church. Pastor Mark Conner, senior pastor, City Life Church (Melbourne) praises the organisation for being the 'most effective evangelistic ministry to Jewish people'<sup>73</sup> that he knows of. Pastor Rob Buckingham, Senior Pastor, Bayside Church (Melbourne) recommends Celebrate Messiah as being on the 'cutting edge of ministry and evangelism to the Jewish community.'<sup>74</sup> He then adds: 'Their proven strategies are working powerfully with many precious people coming to know Jesus as Messiah and Lord. I highly recommend this ministry.'<sup>75</sup> Rev Dr David Price, principal of Bible College of Victoria applauds Celebrate Messiah and advocates financially supporting it since he believes it is 'having a significant evangelical witness to Jewish people'<sup>76</sup>. Pastor Gary Rucci, executive pastor, Southside Christian Church (Adelaide) acclaims the organisation for its passion and compassion in ministering to the Jewish community and for 'reaping a harvest in a field most others have overlooked'.<sup>77</sup>

Celebrate Messiah actively seeks to cultivate relationships and partnerships

with local churches in order to ‘share our burden to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people.’<sup>78</sup> In other words, the organisation is on a recruiting drive for additional partners to aid its objective of mission to the Jews. The organisation proposes several creative ways for the churches to collaborate in its mission to the Jewish people. There is ‘Xperience Jewish Melbourne Week’ which affords non-Jews ‘an opportunity to come and experience Jewish Melbourne and learn how to share the Gospel with Jewish people. This four-day mission experience is designed to give you a ‘taste’ of Jewish culture, history and tradition and introduce you to the world of Jewish evangelism and the work of Celebrate Messiah Australia.’<sup>79</sup> Barry Buirski, an associate missionary with Celebrate Messiah who has worked with the Christian Open Doors Ministry, recounts that during ‘Xperience Jewish Melbourne Week’ 2005 over a thousand brochures were given out.<sup>80</sup> Buirski recalls being introduced to a Holocaust survivor with whom he shared the message of ‘God’s unfailing love in Yeshua.’<sup>81</sup>

Celebrate Messiah operates ‘Jewish Missions Week’, a three-day campaign, which includes witnessing to Israelis on St Kilda Beach in Melbourne.<sup>82</sup> The first was held in 2003 and culminated on the St Kilda beachfront. The group of missionaries consisted of university students who attended the ‘Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students’ National Training Event’ where Lawrence Hirsch taught a class on ‘Bringing the Messages to The Original Messengers’.<sup>83</sup> As part of their activities, students and members of Celebrate Messiah, wearing T-shirts with Yeshua emblazoned across the front, distributed pamphlets and spoke to those frequenting the cafes on Acland Street.<sup>84</sup>

Then there is ‘Xperience Israel’, described as ‘a two-week mission/tour to Israel designed for 18- to 35-year-olds.’<sup>85</sup> Celebrate Messiah approaches churches offering ‘to customise a short-term program that meets your needs. And who knows, perhaps this ‘taste’ of Jewish missions will lead someone to pursue a life-long calling to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people.’<sup>86</sup>

Celebrate Messiah holds an annual a National Messianic Conference called Simcha. The convention is characterised as ‘a gathering of Messianic believers from across New Zealand coming together to seek the Lord’s favour and blessing. The vision for Simcha is to gather Messianic believers together in unity in the Messiah, to look to God to grow and mature the Messianic movement, to encourage one another and to work together for Messianic revival amongst Jewish people in New Zealand and abroad.’<sup>87</sup> In one picture, a man wearing a *yamulke* and draped by a *tallit* (traditional Jewish prayer shawl) stands on a stage, behind him the Ten Commandments.<sup>88</sup> Elsewhere a person is seen blowing the shofar<sup>89</sup>; a man holds up the Torah scroll parading it around<sup>90</sup>; a man recites a blessing over a *challah*<sup>91</sup>; a woman says a prayer over what appear to be Sabbath candles<sup>92</sup>; children are given what seem to be kiddush cups, while another holds two round *challor*<sup>93</sup>; a group is dancing with a curtain imprinted with a Star of David situated behind a musical group<sup>94</sup>; men, women and children are baptised in a wooden tub.<sup>95</sup>

A considerable number of images show men and women with T-shirts emblazoned with the word Yeshua in Hebrew. In the 2004 meeting, as reported in the Celebrate Messiah newsletter, three Jewish people embraced Jesus for the first time. One striking vignette is highlighted:

One of the new believers was a sixteen year old Jewish boy whose parents brought along to the conference. At the end of the conference he confessed that he didn't want to attend Simcha but that during the weekend's events he felt that God was calling him. One of the Simcha youth workers prayed with him and felt that the barrier between him and God was taken away.<sup>96</sup>

While Celebrate Messiah pronounces that its Judaic heritage is indispensable to its identity, it is imperative to stress that its entire Board of Reference is peopled by prominent figures within the Christian world. They include Rev Dr Bill Brown of Syndal Baptist Church (Vic); Pastor Richard Botta of Christian City Church Epping (NSW); Pastor Rob Buckingham of Bayside Church (Vic); Pastor Mark Conner of City Life Church (Vic); Rev Peter Corney, vicar emeritus of St. Hilary's Anglican Church, and director, Institute for Contemporary Christian Leadership and senior advisor, Arrow Leadership Australia (Vic); Rev David Cohen, dean of Old Testament Studies, Baptist Theological College (WA); Rev Dr John Mallison, director of John Mallison Ministries (NSW); Rev Allan Meyer of Careforce Church (Vic); Glenda Weldon of Christian Missionary Alliance, national evangelist and Lausanne Consultation World Evangelism prayer coordinator (NSW).<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, a dissection of the gaggle of endorsements issued by members of the board and pastors confirms that figures from the Christian sphere judge and construe Celebrate Messiah not as a Jewish organisation, but as a Christian entity. Rev Prof Allan M Harman, retired principal, Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne remarks that:

There is an urgent need for *evangelical Christians* in Australia to recognize their responsibility to reach out with the Gospel to the Jewish people ... Celebrate Messiah is doing just that ... This is the type of Jewish evangelism that we need to support.<sup>98</sup>

It is noteworthy that the Christian community considers Celebrate Messiah as an indispensable and intimate patch in its religious quilt. Thus, *Which Christian on-line Guides* lists the organisation as an 'interdenominational mission agency'<sup>99</sup>. The *Directory of Christian Ministry Organisations in Melbourne* classifies it as a 'Christian Outreach to Jews'<sup>100</sup> and 'Associated Christian Ministries', a network of associated Christian churches, ministries and pastors, based in Melbourne that is officially recognised by the government, also files Celebrate Messiah under its Church/Ministry demarcation.<sup>101</sup>

Celebrate Messiah refuses any links with the Jews for Jesus group. In a letter to the *Australian Jewish News* Hirsch expressly averred that '*Beit HaMashiach*

has no organisational ties with Jews for Jesus whatsoever'.<sup>102</sup> Several years ago, it was reported that St Mary's Anglican Church in Melbourne used Jews for Jesus in its recruitment campaign to draft members of the Jewish community into its church. Thousands of leaflets were distributed in neighbourhoods where many Jews reside, and billboards featuring a Holocaust survivor saying 'you should hear my story' were erected.<sup>103</sup> Those who signed up received letters inviting them to join Christian courses. In the backlash that followed, Lawrence Hirsch claimed that windows were smashed and graffiti painted on the *Beit HaMashiach* building and silicone inserted into the locks.<sup>104</sup> Hirsch claimed that the spate of vandalism was carried out 'by misguided and over zealous orthodox Jews' and that this 'demonstrates the religious intolerance that exists in the Jewish community to other Jews who believe differently to the mainstream.'<sup>105</sup>

Believing simultaneously in Jesus and Judaism seems perfectly natural to the *Beit HaMashiach* Messianic Congregation. Its core mission is to erect 'a Messianic community of Jews and Gentiles who are a living testimony for Messiah Yeshua.'<sup>106</sup> Members of *Beit HaMashiach* observe a variety of the rituals of Judaism, while believing that Jesus was the Messiah. Notably, along with accepting Jesus as Lord and Messiah, the congregation also accepts such Christian theological concepts as original sin, the devil, the trinity and vicarious blood atonement-creeds, antithetical to the Jewish code of belief. There is no crucifix at *Beit HaMashiach*. Members do not celebrate Christian holy days such as Christmas and Easter, which they do not deem to be part of Biblical tradition. The congregation consists of people raised Jewish, and others, including Christians, who were not.

*Beit HaMashiach* conducts Jewish life cycle events, albeit through its own unique spectrum. Messianic bar-mitzvahs are celebrated for boys who have reached 13. The boys read a portion of the Torah, as well as recite liturgical passages of the service in Hebrew. They often deliver a *drasha* (sermon) related to the text they read, donning a Jewish prayer shawl and wearing a *yamulke*.<sup>107</sup>

In 2004 Phil Plotnek officiated at his first wedding between a Jewish man and his girlfriend. Plotnek observes that when the man announced his new faith to his family, his father unanticipatedly became more committed to Judaism, beseeching his son to do likewise.<sup>108</sup>

Messianic Jews believe that the Jewish liturgical calendar, especially Passover, is the complete story of creation, revelation, redemption and resurrection.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the *matza* is used in Passover because it is 'pierced like the body of Christ. It is bruised like the body of Christ and it is about to be broken like the body of Christ.'<sup>110</sup> Messianic Jews do refrain from eating leavened bread and recount the Exodus story of Jewish liberation from enslavement in Egypt. Celebrate Messiah holds Passover seders in Melbourne, hoping that, 'many of our Jewish people will discover that Jesus the Messiah, this Lamb of God and Bread of Life, is the ultimate "guest" at Passover. The Seder points to Him!'<sup>111</sup> For sale are *The Messianic Passover Hagaddah*, *The Matzah Tash* (Unity), along with other items

prepared and written through the prism of Messianic theology. The obvious difference from normative Judaism is that Messianic believers also contemplate and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, believing that the Exodus narrative signaled a greater deliverance - Jesus.<sup>112</sup>

Celebrate Messiah is concentrating on the Russian community whose religious heritage was denuded and stripped bare by the Communist regime, and may be perceived as more vulnerable. The evangelism to the Russian Jews was aided immeasurably by Chosen People Ministries. This is how Chosen People Ministries chronicles their help to Celebrate Messiah in seeking the Russian Jews in Australia:

In early 1998, Chosen People Ministries President Mitch Glaser came to Australia to explore how Celebrate Messiah and Chosen People Ministries could work together to reach the Jewish people of Australia. As a result, it sent Klaudia Zhelezny, a gifted Jewish missionary from Ukraine, to help Lawrence in an outreach in Melbourne. For two weeks, Klaudia worked tirelessly with Celebrate Messiah as they led Bible studies, conducted special evangelistic services and visited with individuals and families. By the end of Klaudia's visit, 40 Russian Jewish people had received Jesus as Messiah. The exciting ministry to the Russian Jewish people of Australia continues<sup>113</sup>.

Supposedly, Celebrate Messiah has had particular success in making inroads into the Russian immigrant community in Australia. It spreads its Christ-centred Judaism to the Russian community through a Russian-speaking congregation named *Dom Missi'ee* (House of Messiah). *Dom Missi'ee* conducts its meetings in St Kilda.<sup>114</sup> Doubtless, the location of *Dom Missi'ee* is aimed at affording Celebrate Messiah optimal access to the Russian community. The person principally charged with reaching out to the Russian community is Rita Ivenskis, whose duties include teaching Bible studies for Russian Jewish people in Melbourne. On their website Rita Ivenskis is quoted as saying: 'I feel that Russian Jewish people are becoming more open and ready to receive the Gospel and they are hungry for the word of God.'<sup>115</sup> A graduate of a training course with Chosen People Ministry in New York, she is at present a student at Tabor College, a multi-denominational charismatic Christian Education Centre offering government-accredited courses at tertiary level. The College 'seeks to equip people for Christian life and ministry by providing teaching which is Christ-centred, biblically based, ministry-oriented, academically sound, positively expressed and spiritually empowered.'<sup>116</sup>

Celebrate Messiah claims that that since 2003 over 150 Russian Jewish people have accepted a belief in Jesus.<sup>117</sup> In the organisation's newsletter, Rita Ivenskis speaks of her achievements with Russian Jews in Melbourne:

Today I went to see a Jewish family who I've known for 25 years. They asked me to visit with them because they were experiencing health prob-

lems as well as problems with their son. I shared with them my personal testimony of what Yeshua has done in my life and they accepted Yeshua with open hearts. Michael, the father, has been reading the Bible and had come to believe that Yeshua is a Son of God. They now want to meet regularly each week for a Bible study.

In another account, Rita mentions that she visits Russians Jews with terminal illnesses and assists them with their shopping. She conducts Bible studies for elderly Russians in the Commission flats.<sup>118</sup> Phil Plotnek, a Melbourne-born former pastor of Creative Ministries in Melbourne's Bayside Region, now with Celebrate Messiah, works alongside Rita. He reports:

I am enjoying a new challenge of working with the Russian Jews ... During a recent meeting, five Russian Jews made a commitment to follow Jesus. We have also been visiting with people in their homes and this week another two Jewish people came to the Lord.<sup>119</sup>

Rabbi E. Gorelik, executive director of Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe in Melbourne, whose Jewish cultural centre and synagogue cater for many Jews from the former Soviet Union, has confirmed that Celebrate Messiah has been operating within the Russian Jewish community. Rabbi Gorelik is concerned that Russian-speaking Jews are being intentionally targeted for proselytising because of their relatively weak ties to Judaism and poor socioeconomic status.<sup>120</sup>

According to Celebrate Messiah their Messianic idea also touches young Israelis visiting the antipodes. In its June 2006 newsletter it narrates the story of an Israeli couple backpacking through Australia and New Zealand who were witnessed to by Christians. After arriving in Melbourne, they visited *Beit HaMashiach*, and were astonished to encounter a number of Israelis believing in Jesus. Armed with Messianic literature, they returned to Israel, apparently transformed into believers.<sup>121</sup> Further, the organisation reports that during 'Jewish Missions Week' 2003, which involved visits to the Holocaust Museum, attending a synagogue and a Sabbath dinner, one of the ten Melbourne University students (known as 'The Messiah Team') met Irit, an Israeli tourist at the Jewish Museum. Irit, apparently, was receptive to the message about Jesus and turned up at *Beit HaMashiach*. There she met two Israeli believers who regularly attend services.<sup>122</sup>

Celebrate Messiah boasts its own punk rock band, Joyful Noise, consisting of Asher Reich and Jordan Plotnek, sons of the ministry's main leaders. Set up in 2001 and due to release its first album in 2007, it performs at various events, including concerts, conferences and benefits. On its MySpace site, the band introduces itself with the following:

Ever listened to Hava Nagila and other Jewish songs and thought, hey this will sound great with fast drums, thumping bass and blazing guitar? Well we did! This is a Messianic Jewish Punk Rock Band.<sup>123</sup>

It then announces the members of the band: 'With Nath, the most yidish goy

ever, shouting till he needs his inhaler, the girls Jordan and Nadege providing some harmony and energy, Ash rocking and making the “noise” on guitar, Sam banging on drums and other things and Jord, um, playing bass, Joyful Noise play a unique style of punk/rock/klezma/jazz/funk/metal and traditional Jewish music that will get stuck in your head all day.’<sup>124</sup> The band, apart from embodying the youthful expression of the Messianic ardour, may be another marble in the mosaic of attractional tools wielded by the organisation to draw younger members.

Dr Paul Gardner, a Melbourne-based Jewish community leader who has been active in interfaith work for several years, strongly rejects groups such as Celebrate Messiah. Dr Gardner was chairman of the B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC) from 2002 to 2006 and a founding member, in 2004, of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Association of Australia (JCMA). He currently represents the ADC on the JCMA Board. He was also a founding member of the Victoria Police Multifaith Council and served on the advisory committee of the Premier’s Multifaith Forum in 2005.

Dr Gardner anchors his denunciation of Messianic movements on several grounds. He opines that such movements are intellectually dishonest. ‘Christians are of course free to have faith in Jesus as their Messiah,’ he says,

but Jesus cannot possibly be the Jewish messiah ... One cannot therefore be a faithful Jew and simultaneously believe in Jesus as the Messiah. The argument by Messianic movements that one can be both a Jew and a Christian is a case of intellectual fraud.<sup>125</sup>

Moreover, Dr Gardner treats such movements as clandestine attempts to convert those Jews who are on the fringes of the Jewish community to Christianity. ‘Viewed over the period of two millennia, Christian-Jewish relations have generally been unhappy, to say the least.’ Dr Gardner notes:

They have been dominated by a supersessionist view that regards Christianity as a superior replacement for Judaism, that Judaism is an obsolete religion, and that Jews who retain their adherence to Jewish tradition are blind at best and deliberately stubborn at worst. This is classic theological antisemitism, contempt for Judaism and for those who hold to it. During the past half-century, mainstream Christian groups have sought to reject this view. In the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council and the *Nostra Aetate* document laid the foundations for a paradigm shift. God’s covenant with the Jewish people remains in force. Attempts at conversion are no longer theologically acceptable.<sup>126</sup>

One must bear mind, Dr. Gardner adds, that the emergence and flowering of organisations such as the Council for Christians and Jews and more recently the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Association reinforce the notion that Jews and members of other faiths can meet together in an atmosphere of warmth and mutual respect to learn about their similarities and differences. ‘However,’ says Dr Gardner,

there is no attempt to blur the differences or pretend that we are all the same, and there is an absolute rejection of attempts to convert people. This position demonstrates a respectful recognition that the long history of interfaith relations has often had tragic consequences for the Jewish people. Christian groups that seek to convert Jews do not demonstrate this respect.<sup>127</sup>

The Rabbinical Council of Victoria has issued an unequivocally condemnatory statement concerning *Celebrate Messiah*:

The advent of the Messianic Jews phenomenon is very unfortunate. It amounts to reincarnation, a kind of ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’ of the old missionising of Jews into a slick new deceptive form but with an unchanged goal of sparing no effort to convert Jews to Christianity. Historically, Jews have suffered greatly at the hands of Christians who would resort to any means, fair or foul, friendly or violent, to draw Jews away from their ancient, timeless beliefs and sacred way of life and to force them to accept Christianity. Whilst the Messianic phenomenon resorts to subtler means, the unlimited financial resources it invests in this process are evidence of its determination to win over Jews. The messianists and their missionary aims are at sharp variance with many mainstream Christians today, who, through the experience of the role of Christianity in setting the background for the Nazi Holocaust, have cast aside their desire for winning over Jews to their saviour in favour of mutual understanding and respect.<sup>128</sup>

The former executive chairman of the Council of Christians and Jews, Rev Anne Amos, labeled *Beit HaMashiach* in 2000 as heretical and fundamentalist,<sup>129</sup> while Temple Beth Israel Senior Rabbi Fred Morgan expressed a deep concern. ‘We’re not at all happy with it, like all other Jews I imagine.’ Rabbi Morgan observed ‘we would distinguish between Christianity and Judaism as two distinct religions and an attempt by one group to portray itself as Jewish when in fact they accept the tenets of Christianity is undermining to Jewish identity.’<sup>130</sup> Rabbi Morgan was of the view that the activity undertaken by *Beit HaMashiach* was ‘insulting, as it did not treat Jews with dignity or respect as a separate religious group.’<sup>131</sup> In response, Lawrence Hirsch compared the work of *Beit HaMashiach* to the activities of other Jewish groups:

Well, don’t the Lubavitchers do that? They go out actively on the street in the Chabad mobile or mitzvah mobiles actively seeking people to convert to their form of Judaism. They try and convert Jewish people from other different sections of the Jewish community to their form of Judaism, which they believe is the only right form of Judaism.<sup>132</sup>

Although few in number, statistically speaking Messianic Jews are growing and becoming harder to ignore. An increasingly organised faith community, Mes-

sianic Jews have formed transplanted congregations in numerous countries and are forging ahead with national and international networks that are emphatic about their creeds and core beliefs. Specifically, the existence of this community defies established verities and illustrates the new direction that religious beliefs have taken in a post-modern environment. Moreover, Messianic Jews signal that, in the study of religion, a variety of religious forms often confound our expectations by transcending conventional boundaries. A linear analytical strategy may not capture the complex, often contradictory nature of this type of religious practice. Clearly, the group which resides in this essay forces sociologists to reassess old theories and re-think the sharply defined divides of conventional religious forms. Messianic Judaism is not simply a taxonomic exercise, but reflects a real struggle over identity within contemporary religious consciousness, within the Jewish world and its confrontation with missionaries and within the thorny tableaux of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

## Notes

- 1 I concur with Carol Harris Shapiro's position regarding the usage of this label. She correctly notes that by using the term Jews, one is buttressing the Messianic assertion that its members are practising and believing in Judaism. I agree with her statement regarding what the use of the term is: 'for clarity's sake; I refer to the group with the same nomenclature it refers to itself ... this does not imply a recognition of Messianic Judaism as "real Judaism".' Carol Harris Shapiro, *Messianic Judaism: A Rabbi's Journey through Religious Change in America*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1999, p. 190.
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## 100 YEARS AGO: VICTORIA 1907

*Compiled by Lorraine Freeman*

In the early years of the twentieth century Australian Jewish youth appeared worryingly indifferent to the practice of Judaism. They had strayed away from synagogue attendance and were drifting quickly into intermarriage.

The 8 March edition of the *Jewish Herald* features a lengthy letter with the heading 'The Great Marriage Question: Concerning Jewish Young Men who are Single Still, by One of Them'. The author writes that he will tell 'what in my own experience are some of the reasons why Jewish young men do not marry into their religion'. He goes on to relate a personal incident in which he experiences an uncomfortable and protracted interrogation by the father of an unmarried woman when he visits the family home. His orthodoxy in religion, his family connections, and his line of work were all deeply probed. His letter points to extreme anxiety concerning matrimonial prospects, and concludes with the words: 'Many a young man will tell you that he is afraid to be seen in the company of a Jewish girl, because a matrimonial intention on his part is at once assumed by the young lady's relatives. Thus it is that Jewish mothers are so often distressed to see, in the theatres and other public places, desirable Jewish young men with gentile girls as their companions'.

Isaac Jacobs (father-in-law of the future governor-general, Sir Isaac Isaacs) was an active member of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, and a former president of it. His concerns about this worrying trend led him, in 1907, to strongly advocate the introduction of Reform Judaism. He had already publicly advocated the use of more English in the service. The Reverend Jacob Danglow, firmly against any move to reform, warned his congregants about any 'practises of convenience'.

Isaac Jacobs had greater success in another direction – in 1907 he was reported as travelling to London for discussions with officials of the 'Association to Promote the Settlement of Russian Jewish Farmers in Australia'. This would lead, eventually, to the establishment of the Shepparton settlement in 1913.

Unfortunately, anti-Jewish sentiments were aired in the secular press in response to these proposals. On 22 March the *Jewish Herald* published a half-page article headed 'Labour Attitude on Jewish Immigration', in which it quoted an article from *The Australian Star* headed 'Undesirables' claiming that 'this scheme of Mr Israel Zangwill for populating this country with Polish and Russian Jews ... would have meant flooding the country ... with unlimited numbers. We don't want them here, for what would become of our eight hours and minimum wage?'

The editorial of the paper's 29 November issue bore the heading 'Pandering to Prejudice'. It was a reply to the leading article in a recent issue of the *Age* on 'Zionism and the Jewish Question'. The editor described the *Age* article as a vicious attack made upon the Jewish religious objections to intermarriage. The *Age* writer had said the religious objections were 'a valid ground for estrangement between the members of the Jewish faith and Englishmen of other creeds'.

On a happier note, the *Jewish Herald* editorial of 26 July contains a delightful piece headed 'Our Benevolent Sisters'. It concerns the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society, which had just held its fiftieth annual general meeting. The editorial said the meeting was 'largely attended by a keenly interested assemblage of members ... [It] beat the record for harmony, pleasantness, brevity and despatch ... and had decided against a formal celebration of the Jubilee'. It decided it would rather 'go on, without display, in the even tenor of its quiet and unobtrusive path of charity'.

**(Editors' note:** To celebrate this year's sesquicentenary of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society, a function is to be held in October, at Raheen, during which a monograph will be launched on the history of the HLBS, compiled and edited by Lionel Sharpe, together with Howard Freeman.)

## BOOK REVIEWS

THESE ARE THE NAMES: JEWISH LIVES IN AUSTRALIA, 1788-1850

By John S. Levi

(Carlton, Victoria: The Miegunyah Press, 2006)

Half a century ago Australian Jewish history had barely begun. Not in the sense of there being nothing to report – Jewish life in Australia was a rich tapestry dating back to the first day of white settlement in 1788 – but the story had not begun to be told. Attempts had been made by A. Newton Super, Percy J. Marks, and especially by Rabbi L. M. Goldman and the early stalwarts of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, but not until John Levi and George Bergman published their *Australian Genesis* in the 1970s was there any solid work combining impeccable research and elegant writing to lay the foundations of Jewish historiography in this continent. Others have followed – notably Hilary and William Rubinstein and Suzanne Rutland – and the story is now a widely respected genre of Australian and Jewish literature.

John Levi has continued to be an active, productive and inspiring participant and leader in the field over all these years, earning a remarkable reputation as a researcher, recorder and writer, and every time I have the privilege of launching or reviewing one of his works I marvel at his capacity and skill.

*These Are The Names* covers the first 60-odd years of Australian Jewry, resurrecting the lives of more than 1500 of the earliest Jews in Australia: convicts, common and characters; dealers and drapers; the proud and the pedlars; the bankrupts and the bankers; the feckless and the fortunate.

Were the early Jews literate? Honest? Religious? How do their stories compare with those of their gentile counterparts? How did they fare at the hands of officialdom? Is Levi right that ‘Jews were often damned if they succeeded and damned when they failed’?

Where did Levi find his information? It took years of painstaking delving into often quite unsatisfactory documents but unlike the gold rush prospectors of the mid-nineteenth century Levi often came up with virtual gold. There will be critics who will pounce on errors of omission or commission in the book, but no one will fail to be enlightened. Once again John Levi has placed us firmly in his debt. Once again he has come up trumps.

Raymond Apple

## WORLDS APART: THE RE-MIGRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS

By Colin Tatz, Peter Arnold, and Gillian Heller

(Melbourne: Rosenberg Publishing, 2007)

Australian Jewish history is a history of migration and adaptation to an unfamiliar land. John Levi in *Australian Genesis* and the monumental *These Are the Names* has charted the origins of colonial Australian Jewry. Other historians have tracked later arrivals. *Worlds Apart* tracks the very latest newcomers, the South Africans. However, while the first arrivals' stories rely on ship and prison records for documentation, the most recent are analysed by a survey questionnaire with the results presented as graphs, charts, discussion and telling anecdotes. We move from history to sociology.

As the authors of the book insist, the South African arrivals are in many ways unique in our communal history. They are not refugees; they generally didn't require financial assistance and they quickly melded into the community and its institutions. Moreover they came from a country long mired in racism, inequality and injustice, one in which the mainstream Jewish community was not, as has often been the case elsewhere, the victim, but one element, however peripheral and perhaps reluctant, of the apartheid system itself.

Given also the rich 'Litvak' heritage of South African Jewry, the story of this remnant of a remnant promises much, and much is delivered. Reading the book brought to mind an old adage about encyclopaedic German academic treatises. The volume is remarkably comprehensive, with informative chapters on the history of Lithuanian Jewry, the development of apartheid in South Africa, an excellent chapter (as might be expected) on Australia's Anglo-Jews and their response to post-war Jewish migration, on New Zealand's minuscule Jewish community, on the story of antisemitism in South Africa, prior to and post ANC rule, and even the extent and nature of antisemitism in Australia.

All these matters are germane to the heart of the book, a sample survey of Jews from South Africa who, from the days of apartheid and following its demise, have settled in Australia.

The Litvak background of most South African Jews is well known, but it is vividly recounted in the relevant chapter and in numerous brief anecdotes by descendants now far removed in time and space from the old Lithuania.

Central to the book are the chapters in which the survey data are embedded. (The questionnaires are included as Appendix One). Some of the questions sought basic data about the respondents, including reference to visits to this country prior to migration and the presence of close relatives already in Australia. Pre-migration patterns of education and employment were also canvassed. A critical element is related to the broadly defined Lithuanian background of migrants and their parents. A short supplementary questionnaire for those who chose New Zealand

was also developed. A further appendix listing Yiddish and Lithuanian place names is a poignant testimony to the extensive vitality of pre-war Jewish Lithuania. The responses on educational background (Chapter 7) indicate that no less than 70 per cent had university/professional qualifications. Only 11 per cent had not progressed beyond high school. Not surprisingly, half the respondents indicated professional careers.

South African migration to Australia, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, was very limited until the numbers began to increase sharply in the 1960s, reaching the present-day total of some 80,000. The reasons for the exodus, including the political and racial situation in South Africa, are carefully discussed by the authors. Analysing the responses of their Jewish subjects, the authors note that ideological factors, important to about 1985, played a much smaller role in subsequent migration. Arrivals after 1990 cited fear of crime, concern for the future, and family considerations, as more important. Age at the time of leaving was a further factor and for older (60-plus) arrivals, family was significant, with many coming to look-see as the authors term it before actually migrating. For those migrating for family and quality of life reasons, Australia was the chosen destiny. In fact, while emigrants to 1992 tended to prefer Israel and the United States, after this 40 per cent of 10,000 emigrants chose Down Under.

The most confronting issue discussed in the book is South African Jewry's response to apartheid. The authors (all early migrants to Australia) document the many Jews (often alienated from the Jewish community) who played a part in the frequently illegal opposition or in leading defence teams in the notorious treason trials. One of the few Jews prominent in support of the status quo, Dr Percy Yutar, a trial prosecutor, is contrasted with defence barristers such as Israel Maisels and Maurice Franks. The South African community was never very large and the number of Jewish opponents of apartheid cited by the authors suggests their contribution was significant.

The failure of the mainstream community and its leadership to take a public stand is not something of which to be proud. In fact, the authors canvas the possibility that some Jews may have regarded the struggle as 'not their war'. It is a complex issue. The fact that the number of South African volunteers for Israel in the 1967 Six Day War was second only to the much larger communities in the United States suggests that for some South African Jews 'not my war' may have been a factor. The record shows some 'did' firmly join the struggle while the community as such did not, a failure the book's authors clearly regret. Resistance to oppression takes many forms, including emigration, refusal to co-operate, joining the struggle, deciding the extent to which it is 'your fight'. I have not read Gideon Shimoni's book on the Jews and apartheid. The authors quote his summary: 'although there is nothing in the record deserving of moral pride neither does it warrant utter self reproach'. They regard this assessment as 'too forgiving'.

Jewish communities' leaders have frequently faced terrible dilemmas in un-

welcoming and hostile diasporas. Judging their actions is a fraught matter. Being a Galicianer, I am perhaps best advised at this rime to stay on the sidelines in the debate.

Bare summaries of the data from the survey underestimates the depth of the insights in the book, as each set of information is embedded in chapters exploring background, history and context enriching the hard data with anecdotal material and a diversity of relevant photographs. The understanding the authors have of the world the migrants' ancestors left behind, and the Australia they settled in, is evident throughout. Nowhere is this more so than in the discussion entitled 'Inside History, Outside History' comparing, among other matters, the occupations of grandfathers and grandmothers in Lithuania with that of their children in South Africa and later in Australia.

The authors make clear their view on the South African migration in the concluding paragraph of the book, completing a final chapter of reflections on their whole project. They write:

Two questions must follow. First have Australian Jews – whether of the Anglo-Australian tradition, of British, Polish, Russian or Israeli origin – had an impact on the South African émigré's? And, second has Australian society at large had an impact on them? We think not.

No doubt time will tell.

Bernard Rechter

## MY FATHER'S COMPASS: A MEMOIR

*By Howard Goldenberg*

*(Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2007)*

As a young boy growing up in Melbourne I was a regular worshipper at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation on St Kilda Road every Shabbat, accompanying my father. One could not miss, nor fail to be impressed with, the presence of Dr Myer Goldenberg, whose voice boomed out above the choir, especially with the singing of *Adon Olam* at the conclusion of the service. Such devotion to prayer was rare there, for the congregation comprised mostly unobservant persons who rarely attended this traditional orthodox synagogue.

Its geographic location was far away from an epicentre of Jewish communal life in St Kilda and Caulfield, which meant that few without a deep commitment to Orthodox Judaism would walk the long distance on Shabbat. I also recall Myer Goldenberg's brother Abe, who was a colleague of my late father in supporting the work of the United Jewish Education Board. Both men made the long journey. Many decades later Dr Goldenberg was the *mohel* at the *brith mila* of each of my three grandsons.

On receiving a copy of *My Father's Compass*, a biography written by his son Howard, I was fully expecting to read a detailed account of Myer Goldenberg's long-standing and devoted contribution to Jewish communal life in Melbourne. Myer Goldenberg, there is no doubt in my mind, was a unique individual in the landscape of the Melbourne community. He melded the world of Eastern European Jewry, inherited from his Yiddish-speaking father, with his roles as a father, a family doctor who had spent some years in the New South Wales country town of Leeton, a keen sailor, a gardener, a carpenter, an olive grower and a general handyman. I was keen to fill in some of the gaps in my personal acquaintance with this man I so much respected. However, I was pleasantly surprised to encounter a very different perspective. His son Howard takes us on a journey of over 57 years, offering an intimate glimpse into his own personal relationship with, and the family dynamics of, a much admired father. He allows us to share his own emotions and reflections on an extraordinary life and the impact it has had on a loving son. Particularly moving is the detailed account of the final days and hours before the passing of his father.

Born in 1910, Dr Myer Goldenberg was one of three male siblings whose father had arrived at the age of twelve in 1898 as a stowaway from Turkish Palestine. After debarking in Adelaide his father made his way to Ballarat where he later married Millie Grinblat, also from a family from Palestine. They moved to the Melbourne suburb of Carlton, a growing centre of Jewish life, in 1915.

But there are only small smatterings of a fascinating family history. Howard is a natural storyteller and it is through his numerous light-hearted stories that we gain insight into his father's religious faith and personality. An unusual memoir and tribute by a sensitive son, guided by his father's compass.

Lionel Sharpe

## OBITUARY – THE HON. WALTER JONA AM

*Howard A. Freeman*



Only rarely in our time do we find those who not only wrote history, but also actually made it. Yet there are such people, and the late Walter Jona was such a person.

For some 20 years a member of Victorian state parliament as the member for Hawthorn (itself a record), he was the first Jew to become Parliamentary Secretary to State Cabinet. Walter was for some ten years a parliamentary secretary, Assistant Minister of Health, Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and then Minister of Community Welfare Services. His was the major role in events leading to the ‘world’s first’ compulsory use of seat belts in motor vehicles, in major prison reforms, and in early childhood development initiatives.

Following his 20 years of intense public political life, the next 20 years as a private citizen saw no decrease in the level of involvement. Walter and his wife Alwynne were significant and active members of some 50 communal organisations, yet much of their community work has never been publicly acknowledged. These organisations ranged from opera to animal welfare, hospitals to universities, football and cricket to philanthropy, neuroscience to asthma research, baby welfare to aged care, and from progressive Judaism to Zionism.

The vigorous tradition of public service in his family had an early influence on young Walter. His uncle Dr Leon Jona had been a trustee of the original Shepparton Settlement in 1913 (Leon had followed his father-in-law, Abraham Kozminsky, in that role). The family were proud and active early Australian Zionists, and Walter’s father Dr Jacob Jona was a president of both Melbourne Hebrew

Congregation and the Jewish Advisory Board, precursor to the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, later the JCCV.

Following war service with the RAAF, Walter returned to civilian life and in the very early 1950s became active on the Public Relations Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies. This was a crucial time for the Jewish community, faced with the arrival of war-damaged refugees, antisemitism and the spectre of post-war Nazi immigration.

As a member of the AJHS for 53 years Walter supported and participated at meetings of the Society in the fullest sense. Notably, on his retirement from parliament in 1985, he found time to research and then give a definitive address to the Society on 'Jews in Victorian Politics, 1835-1985'. This was published in the *Journal* the following year.

In September 2006, Walter published his long awaited memoir, *People, Parliament and Politics*, an insightful and informative account of his own years in politics. It has been said that there is no such thing as history, only biography, for which these highly personal memoirs provide good evidence and good reading.

## OBITUARY – ISIDOR SOLOMON

*Philip Solomon*

My father, Isidor Solomon, was born on 28 March 1928 and died on 5 August 2007. He was 79 years old.

Seventy-nine years before his birth, gold was discovered in the colony of Victoria. Many of his ancestors, on his father's side, came to the colony at that time. He was always very proud of his family's early associations with the colony.

Isidor's father, Isaac, was a storekeeper at a well-known shop in Maryborough in the early years of the twentieth century. He was also the mayor of Maryborough. (One of his brothers, Isidor's uncle Julius, was mayor of Geelong.) Isidor's father came to Melbourne in 1926, at which time he married Charlotte Glass.

My father was born at a house which still stands in Orrong Road, Toorak, and had a peaceful, indeed a privileged, upbringing. He attended the Geelong Grammar Preparatory School, known as Glamorgan, and then the Melbourne Grammar School. He finished school in 1946. He was one of the fortunate children of his generation, if it be considered fortunate, who was too young to serve in the wars which blighted Australia and the rest of the world in the first half of the twentieth century.

He married my mother, Genia Sweller, a doctor from Adelaide, in August 1968. His two sons followed soon after: Philip (myself) in June 1969 and Ian in December 1971. Each of his children was, thereafter, a source of great pride for Isidor.

My father's long and abiding love was of history, principally, but not only, of individuals involved in the Jewish community of Victoria over the last 160 years. He relished the reading of history, and the discussion of history. He was called upon by sources far and wide for his assistance on the missing pieces of innumerable different jigsaws. He invariably knew the answer, or where the answer might be found.

Sadly, after a valiant struggle, he succumbed to cancer. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends. For those involved in historical research, in particular in the Jewish community, his death will leave a void difficult to fill.

## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors

I refer to my book review of Dr Rodney Gouttman's book, *An Anzac Hero: The Life of Lieutenant-Colonel Eliazar Margolin* (AJHS Journal Vol. XVIII 2006, Part 2, pp. 247-9), and would like to make a correction. The main Margolin letter in apologetic tone to General Monash was dated 17 August 1917 and is held in the John Monash Collection at the National Library in Canberra NLA Box 123 (NOT 116).

Additionally, there is other earlier correspondence, also in an apologetic tone, from Margolin to General Monash in December 1915, offering to resign for some other possible misdemeanours (although I am unsure whether they were real or imagined). This was about the time of the Gallipoli evacuation. Strangely Margolin never earns a mention in any of the voluminous Australian history of WW1 by the Australian official war historian Charles Bean. Undoubtedly, the record demonstrates that Bean was biased against Jews and certainly against Monash, whose key role in the Allied victory was also deliberately understated by Bean. One of the criticisms by Monash's opponents throughout the Great War was their intimation that Monash initiated preferred treatment for other Jews at the front. The anti-Monash sentiment that prevails to this day in certain quarters as a consequence of Bean's history legacy is only now being redressed by others such as by Roland Perry in his book on *Monash: The Outsider Who Won The War*. Monash's phenomenal contribution is likely to be further reiterated during the period leading up to the 90th anniversary of his important victories of July-October 1918.

Disappointingly, none of Margolin's correspondence with John Monash was mentioned anywhere in Dr Gouttman's book, nor has it been referred to in any of the biographies of Monash. In Roland Perry's recently published book on John Monash, Margolin does not even get any mention. Perry's book, unlike the seminal work on Monash by the late Professor Geoffrey Serle, tends to understate the Jewish aspects of Monash's life beyond his youth. The near-mutiny against Margolin's leadership by the men of the (Victorian) 14th Battalion ('Jacka's Mob') as reported in Captain Edgar Rule's book by that name (published in 1933) does not get mentioned at all in Dr Gouttman's book. The men were resentful of his leadership possibly because his promotion was that of the outsider, a Western Australian and a Jew who had a strong foreign accent and who did not have any public speaking skills in front of the unsympathetic audience under his command. The parochial Victorians would have preferred their own home-grown hero Vic-

toria Cross winner Albert Jacka who was overlooked for the appointment. Their grievance seems to have lasted beyond Margolin's departure. In 1921, the grudge against Margolin resurfaced in the form of a tirade against him by the erratic Victorian Senator Pompey Elliott, who during WWI had been a brigadier-general in the AIF. Dr Goultman refers to the Senator Elliott episode, as does Serle as well as Elliott's recent biographer Ross McMullin.

From my analysis of the evidence, based largely on my interpretation of the 1917 correspondence referred to above, my view is that General Monash was the person who had arranged for Margolin's promotion and selection for the position of 14th Battalion commander. When it turned out badly, Monash spoke privately in critical terms to Margolin. Margolin responded by his apologetic letter to Monash. I believe this episode may have triggered some personal depression for Margolin (my view is based on Ze'ev Jabotinsky's own writing about his conversations with Margolin which can be found in Jabotinsky's book, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*). After much persuasive talk from Jabotinsky, he accepted the invitation to leave the AIF and join the British army in order to head one of its Jewish regiments (which eventually became the Jewish Legion in Palestine). The whole unhappy episode that Margolin had experienced may also have spurred Margolin to prove himself again militarily, enough to become a hero to his Jewish compatriots in Palestine and redeem his reputation as a top front-line soldier and leader.

Joe Lederman

## REPORT TO MEMBERS

This year has been an exciting and busy one for the AJHS Victoria. First, congratulations to our president, Dr Howard Freeman, on being recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours. Howard received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), 'for service to the Jewish community, particularly through the preservation of historical documents'. Howard's passion for history and his inspiration and leadership has long been admired by our members and the community at large.

We have recently seen the culmination of a project that has been underway since 1981. Beverley Davis OAM, our former honorary archivist, has released the Australian Jewish Gravestones Inscriptions Database. The work Beverley has done is truly monumental and the results of her labour will assist countless researchers and historians all over the world. This project encompasses in total 363 cemeteries with over 48,402 entries from Jewish gravestones.

There have been a number of interesting and well-attended meetings. Our final meeting for 2006, in December, saw the launch in the State Library of Victoria of Rabbi Dr John Simon Levi's *These are the Names: Jewish Lives in Australia 1788-1850*. This long-awaited publication was the culmination of 40 years of researching the lives of early Jewish pioneers, both convicts and early settlers. The first edition of the book had already sold out by the end of January.

Professor Bill Rubinstein spoke about Jews in both the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* at our 57<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting. Bill discussed how important Australian and British Jews are considered in these two works. On the same evening, the committee was thrilled to announce that both Dr Hilary Rubinstein and Professor Bill Rubinstein were granted honorary life membership for the immense contributions each have made to Australian Jewish historiography.

In March, Professor Klaus Neumann addressed us on the subject of his latest book *In the Interest of National Security* and spoke of two internment experiences from World War Two.

In May, Simon Tisher spoke about the proposal in the 1940s for a Jewish Day School in Melbourne. The debate at the time reflected a community whose voting patterns were clearly divided by social origins and politics.

In August, Dennis Spielvogel, the grandson of Nathan Frederick Spielvogel, gave us a delightful insight into his grandfather. Nathan was born in Ballarat to a family that was typical of the strong Jewish Community on the Ballarat Goldfields. Using photographs and text from *The Spielvogel Papers* and other publications and notebooks, Dennis transported us back to early life in Ballarat and surrounding areas.

In October, Ephraim Finch spoke to the society about the history and future plans of the Chevra Kadisha.

The November meeting of the AJHS will mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Both Rabbi John Levi and Dr Howard Freeman will talk on the fascinating origins and history of the congregation and its synagogues.

Finally, in December Robin Grow will speak about the Jews in Shanghai; his talk is entitled 'Beyond the Bund – Life in Shanghai'.

As mentioned, the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held at the Jewish Museum of Australia, and as there were no vacancies, the current executive and committee remain as follows: president, Howard Freeman; honorary secretary, Liz James; honorary treasurer, Allan Nahum; committee members – Terry Ashton, David Cohen, Harvey Cohen, Trevor Cohen, Clive Fredman, John Levi and Lionel Sharpe.

Victorian membership currently comprises 405 members.

Liz James  
Honorary Secretary, AJHS Victoria Inc.

## **MEMBERS JOINED AJHS VICTORIA INC**

*since November 2006*

COWEN, Katrina

COWEN, Jennifer

EISENBRUCH, Maurice

GASPAR, Peter and Lesley

GRAFF, Dorothy

JACOBS, Rodney

LANYON, Scott

TOFLER, Gerald

WIMBORNE, Brian and Judith

WYSS, Felix

## CONTRIBUTORS 2007

**Dr Dvir Abramovich** is the Jan Randa Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, and director of the Centre for Jewish History and Culture at the University of Melbourne. He is editor of the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, and president of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies.

**Rabbi Raymond Apple** AM, patron and past president of AJHS, is emeritus rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney. He now lives in Jerusalem, where he spends his time writing and teaching.

**Patrick Coppel** is a great-great-great-great-grandson of the original Samuel Crawcour. His grandfather, Elias Godfrey Coppel was a grandson of Isaac Crawcour and Esther Cashmore's daughter Rebecca.

**Dr Howard A. Freeman** OAM is the long-time president of AJHS Vic Inc, and is the co-editor of the *Victorian Journal of AJHS*.

**Lorraine Freeman** BA, Dip Crim, Grad Dip Appl Soc Psych, is a longstanding member of the Victorian Society who continues her series of abstracts from the Melbourne Jewish press of 100 years ago.

**Dorothy Graff** is a fourth generation Progressive Jew. She is a career transition consultant by profession. Outside of work, she is a Board Member of Temple Beth Israel and the Deputy Chair of the E W Tipping Foundation (a Victorian organisation that supports people with disabilities).

**Robin Grow** is the President of the Art Deco Society Inc., an international Society which recently hosted the World Congress on Art Deco. He is passionate about the preservation of interwar buildings and has a special interest in researching and documenting the architecture (and designers) of the interwar period in Victoria. He has written and presented extensively on the era.

**Liz James** Dip Tch, Dip LIB; is a committee member of the AJGS Victoria, and Honorary Secretary to the AJHS Victoria Inc.

**Parry Kostoglou** has been an archaeologist for twenty-two years, and has worked professionally in Tasmania, the mainland and abroad on a wide variety of cultural heritage projects situated in both rural and urban contexts. The sites have included early colonial whaling stations, Chinese miners' camps, cemeteries, subantarctic sealers' camps, 19th century inner city slum housing, early logging camps, tramways, convict stations, colonial hospitals, probation stations, prisons and a Second World War POW camp.

**Joe Lederman** is a Melbourne lawyer, professionally engaged as one of Australia's leading experts in the field of food-industry law. He has a wide range of history interests, including an interest in the pre-WW2 Jewish community history of Melbourne and Perth, and Australian military history of the early 20th century.

**Catherine Pearce** is completing a master's degree at La Trobe University (part time). Her thesis covers the subject of animal slaughter in Melbourne, focusing on the debates surrounding the kosher method. Her interest in the Melbourne Jewish community began with an honours thesis for which she researched the Jewish and non-Jewish press reactions to the persecution of European Jewry and the proposed immigration of Jewish refugees to Australia from 1938 to early 1939.

**Professor Bernard Rechter** was Director of the Centre of Jewish Civilisation at Monash University.

**Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein**, a former research fellow in history at the University of Melbourne, has written several books and many articles on Australian Jewish history. In addition, she has co-authored *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (1999) and *The Jews in the Modern World: A History since 1750* (2002).

**Lionel Sharpe** is an Honorary Research Associate at the Australian Centre for the Study of Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, and a long-standing committee member of AJHS Vic Inc.

**Philip Solomon** is one of the sons of Genia and the late Isidor Solomon. Philip is a barrister, having graduated from Melbourne University, and then obtained his LL.M (Hons.) from Cambridge. He is married to Rachel and they have two young sons.

**Professor Judith Romney Wegner** holds law degrees from Cambridge and Harvard Universities and a Ph.D. in Judaic Studies from Brown University. She is a barrister of Gray's Inn and a retired member of the Rhode Island and American Bars. She is the author of *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah* (Oxford University Press 1988) and numerous articles on various aspects of Judaism and Islam.