

SHEMOT

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JERUSALEM CONFERENCE 2004 SPECIAL REPORTS AND PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

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From the Chairman

BURIED TREASURE

"I hope, one day, early London synagogue records (accounts, memberships, address books, etc.) will be made available to provide address details of our ancestors for the period prior to 1841. I understand some records like these do exist.

Regards from sunny Sydney, Australia."

HOW good it would be to be able to respond to that comment with something positive in relation to these and later records. Eight years ago the JGSGB approached the United Synagogue (US) asking to be allowed to index their burial records and marriage authorizations before 1900. Although we have had close co-operation and help to access records from most other communal organisations, the US, which holds many of the community's records, refuses to say exactly what they hold in their archives or to respond to our request.

We have had several meetings with them the last one in January 2004 attended by Alan Grant, Chairman of the US Archives Committee, Charles Tucker the US archivist, George Anticoni, a past chairman of JGSGB, and myself. Mr Grant promised us an expeditious response. We offered to pay any expenses incurred, to supply the manpower to do the work and to ensure that those undertaking it were both experienced and carefully trained.

At that meeting the US offered several specious excuses as to why they had not been able to reply earlier. They were concerned that there were legal reasons for the records not being made available but were unable to explain what those reasons were. They told us that they had approached the Charity Commission, as they were worried that releasing the records would infringe their charitable status. When we wrote to the Charity Commission at the end of September asking about that statement, they told us that the US had "recently" approached them and that they had replied promptly, telling the US that it was of no concern to the Commission. They also suggested the US should take advice from the Information Commissioner on data protection considerations.

So now, 11 months later, the US continues to procrastinate. In spite of their promise of a quick response. These records, which belong to the community, remain locked away and our reasonable request for access is ignored. We do not want something for nothing. If we can index these records, the public can see what is available and request copies, paying for them accordingly. We will continue to argue for access in whatever ways appear appropriate. We wonder whether the records are in a similar state to some of the cemeteries in their care?

MARTYN WOOLF

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A musical dynasty

by Ralph Forbes-Ritte

WHEN looking at my family tree recently, I was struck by the number of those who were musically famous or involved in the theatre in some way, while I, unfortunately, cannot sing, play an instrument or even tap my fingers with any sort of rhythm.

The dynasty seems to have begun with Haim Wasserzug, my great-great-grandfather, and I can do no better than to quote his obituary in the *Jewish Chronicle*, dated 1 September 1882.

“We regret to announce the death, in the 60th year of his age, of the Rev Haim Wasserzug, First Reader of the North London Synagogue,¹ which took place in distressing circumstances at Brighton on Thursday 24th August. The reverend gentleman had arrived in Brighton for a short stay on the previous Monday, and on Thursday he took his usual morning bath in the sea. He remained too long in the water, and having caught a sudden chill he fell down insensible while endeavouring to clothe himself, and after having uttered a few inarticulate words. He was at once conveyed to the General Hospital where he died about seven hours after the seizure.

“The evening prior to his death he spent at the residence of the Chief Rabbi to whom he sang several portions of the synagogue services for the New Year and the Day of Atonement. The remains of the reverend gentleman were brought to London and on Sunday last they were interred at the West Ham Cemetery in the presence of an immense concourse of persons, nearly 100 coaches, carriages and cabs having followed the hearse to the cemetery. The Burial Service was impressively read by the Rev B H Ascher, who had been on intimate terms with Mr Wasserzug for upwards of 40 years. The deceased leaves a widow and 15 children, five of whom are the offspring of his first marriage.

“The Rev Haim Wasserzug was born in the year 1823 at Scheritz, in Prussian Poland, where his father filled the office of cantor. He received his education at a *chedar*. At an early age he was endowed with a remarkably sweet voice and displayed such great genius for music that when 18 years old he was elected *chazan* at Konin, a few miles from the German frontier. He had already officiated in that capacity in his native town some three years previously. According to a prevalent custom in Poland he spent the greater part of every summer travelling through the country, in many towns of which he conducted the synagogue services from Sabbath to Sabbath. His renown having thus spread among the Jewish communities of Poland, he received a call as *chazan* to Novodnor, a town



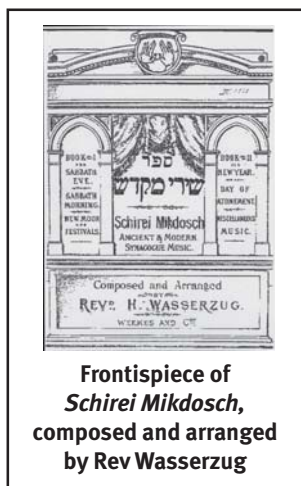
Chazan Wasserzug (centre) ‘takes the four species’ as part of the *Succoth* service at North London Synagogue¹

situated about four miles from Warsaw. It is said that so great was the excitement at Konin on his departure for his new post that the aid of the military had to be called in to prevent disturbances.

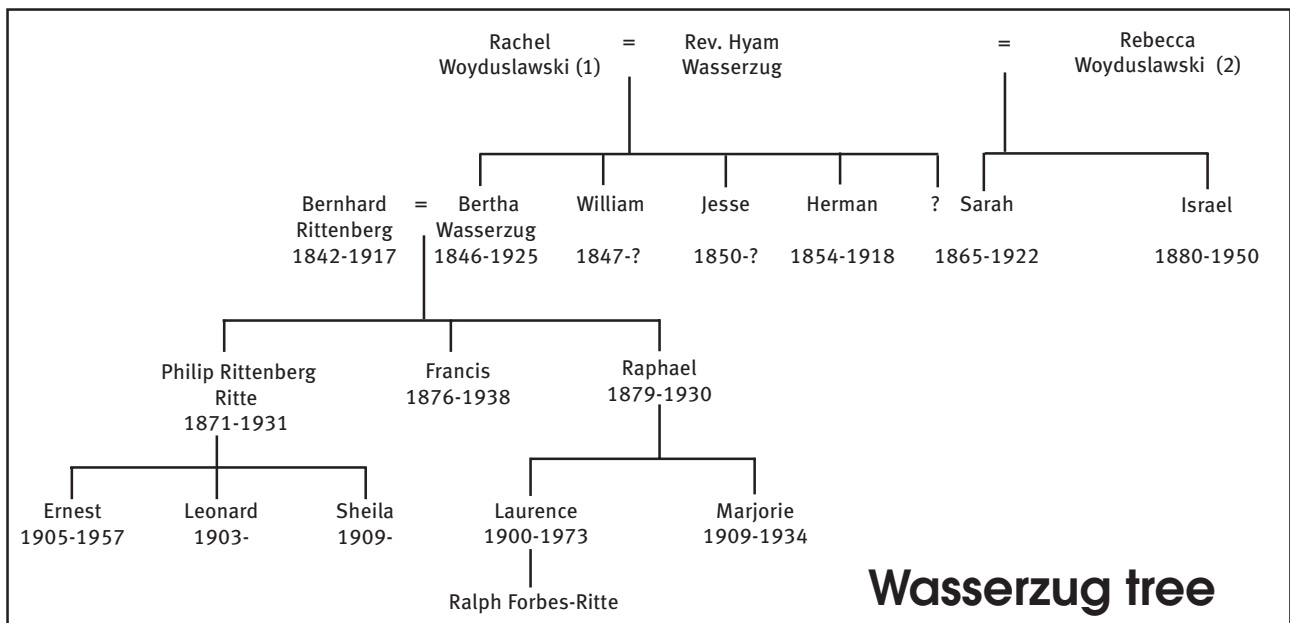
“He was the first *chazan* in the Russian Empire to introduce choral singing and singing in harmony, instead of the Concert *Chasonos*, as it is called, of the cantors of the time, these *chasonos* consisting principally of *bravuras* and *tours de force* while he himself was in favour of simple harmony. He was, therefore, looked upon as a reformer, and at the outset encountered great opposition from the *Chassidim*, who formed nearly the whole of the congregation at Novodnor, but in a short space of time he succeeded through his amiable disposition in overcoming their scruples and gaining their affection. His close proximity to a musical city like Warsaw gave him the opportunity for which he had ardently longed, of becoming proficient as a musician, and he was accustomed to drive thither, generally twice a week, to take lessons from eminent professors.

“After remaining at Novodnor as *chazan* for about 13 years, he accepted a similar post at Lomsa, near the Lithuanian frontier. Here he remained five years, and continued his itinerant visits to Jewish congregations, which this time were extended to Hungary. His voice was then extraordinary in quality and compass. During a visit which he paid to Vilna shortly after the death of the Emperor Nicholas, he conducted the Sabbath services in the Great Synagogue and created so great an impression that he was at once and unanimously elected cantor of the congregation.

“The Great Synagogue, in which he officiated, is an imposing and venerable structure of immense size. It is said to be upwards of 500 years old, and originally belonged to the Karaites. On several occasions during his ministrations the synagogue was attended by the almost incredible number of 10,000 worshippers. His



Frontispiece of *Schirei Mikdosch*, composed and arranged by Rev Wasserzug



splendid singing attracted many Christians, among them being high Russian officials, and occasionally also a minister from St. Petersburg. From these personages he received the greatest consideration, and was even invited to their residences, a rare honour for a Jew in those days. Several attempts were made to induce him to abandon the synagogue for the operatic stage, and an offer of a lucrative engagement at the Italian Opera in St. Petersburg was held out to him, but his religious feelings were too strong to allow of his accepting the offer. From Vilna, where he introduced important innovations in the mode of conducting the services, he paid frequent visits to Vienna, in order to perfect himself in harmony.

“About 15 years ago he spent a short time in London, where he had several relatives.² During his stay he officiated at the Borough Synagogue, and also conducted a special service in the Zetland Hall, to which admission was only obtained by tickets previously purchased. In the year 1868 he was elected, from among three other candidates, First Reader of the North London Synagogue, and held this post until his death. Six years ago he revisited Vilna, his journey thither from the Polish frontier having been, we are told, a veritable triumphal progress. He was met a few miles distant from Vilna by a crowd numbering several thousand persons. The Chief Rabbi Rabinowitz

composed a Hebrew ode . . . in his honour, and he received gifts from all sides. His former congregation urgently pressed him to resume his old post, offering to elect him for life and to present him with a residence. His affection for the liberal rule of England, and his detestation of the harsh form of government in Poland, induced him to resist the tempting offer.

“During his chazanship at Wilna he commenced his well-known sacred compositions which, under the name of *Sefer Shire Mikdash* were published in London in 1878. This music is in use in the North London and Borough Synagogues, and in many synagogues in Germany and the United States. The compositions have been highly commended, among others, by Professor Ziremba, Director of the *Conservatoire de Musique* at St. Petersburg, by Dr Wylde, Principal of the London Academy of Music, and by Mr F Weber, organist of the German Chapel Royal, St. James’s. Several of the principal cantors on the Continent and in America were his pupils; among them were M Beer, First *Chazan* of the Paris community, Chief Cantor Markson, of the Great (Orthodox) Synagogue, Berlin, the late Cantor Angel of the Congregation *Beni Jeshuran* in New York, and the chief Readers in Chicago and Philadelphia.”

Musical talent

In notes about his religious music, published in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 4 October 1872, Wasserzug revealed that his original title had been *Rinat Yeshurun*, which he rendered as *Joyous Songs of Israel*. For its eventual publication, he altered a few details and changed its title to *Shirei Mikdash* (*Songs of the Temple*, sometimes as *Songs of the Sanctuary*), but *Temple* is the word he chose himself.³ His own compositions and some older melodies, recast in simple harmonies for cantor and choir, were published in London in 1878 as *Shirei Mikdash*. This music is still in use all over the United Kingdom, and in many synagogues in Germany and America.

I know little about Hyam’s forbears but a great deal about his descendants. He married twice: His first wife was Rachel Woyduslawski by whom he had five children. After her death he married her sister Rebecca Woyduslawski⁴ and they produced 10 more children. The father of his two wives



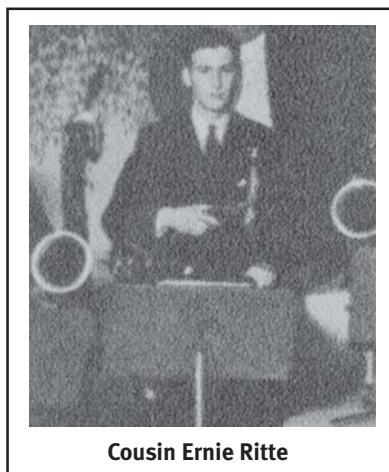
Randall Jackson’s Concert Party, 1913.
 l to r: Paula Stuart, Randall Jackson, Fred Milner,
 Alfred Morley (front), Lillian Burgiss, Philip Ritter

was also a *chazan*⁵ but I have not discovered his name or where his ministry was. Below are some details of the musical dynasty which Rabbi Wasserzug founded.

His second child, William Wasserzug was born at Malat Navt, which is possibly near Novy Dvor, where his father was minister (1847-?)⁶. William was a self-employed music master⁷ and Choirmaster of the Bayswater Synagogue from 1872-1874.⁵ The fourth child was Herman Wasserzug, who was Choirmaster of the St John's Wood Synagogue from 1889. I believe he was the H Wasserzug named as training the choir at the synagogue in Kingston, Jamaica⁶ where his brother-in-law, the Reverend Bernhard Rittenberg (my great-grandfather) was the minister.

His youngest child was Israel Wasserzug, later Ivor Warren (1880-1950), Choirmaster of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue (now St John's Wood) from 1910 until 1949.⁹ He was also Professor of Music at Trinity College of Music in London. Sarah Wasserzug (1865-1922), the eldest daughter from his second marriage, married the Reverend Abraham Levinson (?-1955) of the Brighton Synagogue and one of their sons was Lionel Levinson who combined being a concert pianist with that of a medical doctor.⁵

Hyam's eldest child by his first marriage was my great-grandmother Bertha Wasserzug. She was the second wife of



Cousin Ernie Ritte

Reverend Bernhard Rittenberg: he was minister in Edinburgh (1867-1872) and later in Kingston, Jamaica (1872-1878).¹⁰

Their eldest son, my great-uncle, was Philip Rittenberg/Ritte (1871-1931) who was an actor and singer¹¹⁻¹³ sometimes with the D'Oyly Carte Opera. He was also a member of

Randell Jackson's Concert Party which in 1907 included Miss Carrie Tubbs. In addition, he had his own Philip Ritte Concert Party which performed in Worthing during World War I.¹⁴ I have two records of him singing as well as copies of postcards of the Concert Party and a concert programme.

Professional dancer

Philip's sons, my father's cousins, were Ernest Rittenberg/Ritte (1905-1957) who played the reeds and also arranged some of the music in the Lew Stone and Roy Fox Orchestras¹⁵⁻¹⁷ and Leonard Rittenberg/Ritte (1903-?) who was the Star Amateur Ballroom Dance Champion in the 1924-1925 season¹⁸ and then became a professional dancer. He had entered the championship the year before when he had been beaten into second place by Victor Sylvester.

How Leonard's career might have developed if the winners of the championship had been reversed makes an interesting speculation. Philip's daughter, Sheila Rittenberg/Ritte (b 1909), was also a singer and dancer, and a member of his Concert Party.¹⁴

Bernhard's third son was my grandfather Raphael (Ralph) Rittenberg/Ritte (1879-1930) who was a headmaster at Bude County School in Cornwall where he produced, directed and sang in amateur productions of Gilbert and Sullivan operas. His daughter, Marjorie Rittenberg/Ritte (1909-1934) was a pianist and singer.

After an unfortunate marriage to a superintendent in the Indian Imperial Police she returned home and was on the way to being a successful concert pianist when she sadly died at the age of 24. So far unsubstantiated family belief has it that she accompanied Leslie Sarony and scored his music but there is no mention of her in a short biography of Sarony.¹⁹

My father, Laurence Forbes Rittenberg/Ritte (1900-1973), was also adept at playing the banjo and I have seen him doing a good soft-shoe shuffle when he was overweight and 70 years old!

Perhaps my lack of this talent was the result of my mother's Scottish forebears who were, in the main, crofters in and around the Parish of Skene, Aberdeenshire, except that my sister is a member of two choirs.

● The author, born in Chile, came here as a child and joined the Army. He is now retired, living in Cheltenham.

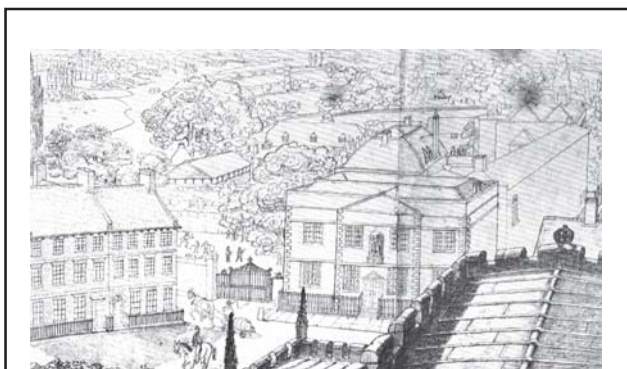
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1. Picture from *The Graphic*, 2 November 1872 and reproduced from *The Lost Synagogues of London*, Peter Renton, Tynsder Publishing, London, 2000.
2. Unfortunately, neither Michael Jacobson, a grandson of David Wasserzug, nor I have yet been able to discover who these relatives were. The information might help to link "our" Wasserzugs to those others around the world who are also interested in making a connection.
3. Michael Jacobson advises that, apart from the one held in the British Library, the only original copy of the 1878 book still extant is held by his cousin Marcelle Katz in Johannesburg. This is distinct from the limited edition reprint produced in 1984 by Hyam's grandsons, "Pip" Levinson and Harold Warren.
4. From 1881 census, living in Islington, London. She was born in Poland.
5. Correspondence with Michael Jacobson.
6. 1881 census, 3 Alma Road, Islington.
7. *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 October 1872.
8. *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 July 1871.
9. Rabbi John Rayner, *Shir Chadash* in *Manna* magazine, 5 July 1986. It was the text of a presentation given at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood, London.
10. Jacob Andrade, "A Record of the Jews in Jamaica", *Jamaica Times*, 1941.
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17. Albert McCarthy, *Big Band Jazz*. Peerage, London, 1983.
18. Telephone conversation with Gillian MacKenzie, Archivist at the Blackpool Winter Gardens.
19. Colin Larkin, *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, Guinness Publishing, 1955.

Bedford's Jews in the 1800s

by Patricia Bell

RECENTLY I was invited out to lunch by a friend to meet your Editor. I am now elderly, but before my retirement in 1986, I had been the Bedfordshire County Archivist. When I was young, you tended to go into archives because you were full of curiosity. You were interested in history and details of the past, all sorts of details: the meaning of field names, why one road was straight and did not meander like the other roads in the parish, what the poor ate in the 17th century, where the first site of a manor house was and why otherwise practical country people believed in underground tunnels.



Pen and ink drawing of central Bedford 1833
by William Dawson

When you are the person running the office, most of the pleasure disappears. You are no longer in the search room helping people with their enquiries, which allows you to rummage among the odd happenings of the past. You are supposed to spend your time dealing with structures and finance and so on. So when I retired at 60, and therefore not too decrepit, I was able to start work on many of the things that had aroused my curiosity over the years, and one of these was a small community of Jews who were in Bedford, a town 50 miles north of London, from the 1780s to the 1880s.

Any of you who have been looking for Jewish ancestors in this country before the year 1837 and the beginning of the civil registration of births, deaths and marriages, will know the problems. However capable the Jews in general are thought to be, their record keeping was abysmal and unless your ancestors were extremely well off, you will have endless problems. However, in Bedford we had a charity, now the Bedford Charity or the Harpur Trust. It began in the 16th century, when Sir William Harpur re-founded the Bedford Grammar School and endowed it with 14 acres of land. At first the rent just about covered the upkeep of the building and the salary of the master. The land was in

Holborn in Central London and as London spread the income rose like a balloon. By the end of the 18th century the charity supported not only the free grammar school (which taught Greek and Latin and so was not much used by the townspeople) but a new lower or English school, teaching boys English, mathematics and geography, which a tradesman or merchant would want for his sons. In time there were also elementary schools, marriage portions for young girls, apprenticeships, grants to young people in their first jobs, and almshouses and pensions for the elderly, with annual doles to the poor.

Bedford benefits

During the Napoleonic Wars every county town was crowded, for each county's militia had been called up, and there was endless work to do with supplies of grain, supervision of carts and horses for transportation, and the usual wartime emergencies. Thus we find that many county towns had, for a time, a small Jewish community, attracted by the increased trade, but when peace came again, and the towns returned to their natural somnolence, the Jews generally moved to where trade was brisker. However, in Bedford they stayed for some years, undoubtedly because of the benefits every Bedford household received from the Bedford Charity. It is in the charity records that we find details of these Jewish families that would otherwise be recorded nowhere. You find sons entered in the schools, girls whose names were put forward for marriage portions, other children being educated or apprenticed.

There was a case in Chancery in 1818, when some people of influence considered that a charity founded to give a Christian education to the townsmen's sons should not be open to Jewish children. The evidence here gives information about several families, especially those of Joseph Lyon and Michael Joseph. Evidence before a Select Committee dealing with the disputed 1832 parliamentary election for the Borough of Bedford tells us where on the continent some of the Bedford families originated. Godfrey Levy was said to be an alien, and so his vote was challenged, and his elder brother Emanuel Moses of London said that Godfrey had been born in Germany "at a place called Conroydt in Prussia". Joseph Lyon of Bedford said that he had been born six miles from where Godfrey Levy's family lived in Prussia, and had seen him when still a babe in arms. Certainly there was a degree of enmity between the Levy and the Lyon families, which you can trace back to a previous election dispute, but without this evidence we would not have these details.

Supporting the church

Later in the century we find two most interesting characters. Nathan Joseph, the able son of Michael Joseph, converted to Christianity and was ordained by the Church of England to work among the Jewish immigrants in Liverpool, to the great grief of his aged father.

However, later in the century the town welcomed Morris Lissack, who in time became a leader of the Liberals in Bedford. At that time a churchwarden had civil as well as religious responsibilities and all ratepayers, whether members of the Church of England or not, could vote at the election in their parish.

REJECTED VOTES.

Name.	Residence.	Ground of Rejection.	W.	P.	R.
Bennett Joseph	Thames-street	Received relief.			
Burbridge George	Castle-street	Ditto			
Christmas Henry	Ditto	Not inhabt. householder			
Cockman Joseph	Thames-street	Received relief.			
Covington John	Castle-street	Ditto			
Covington Samuel	Thames-street	Ditto			
Cunvin James	Castle-street	Not sufficient residence			
Dawson William	Ward's Yard	Received relief.			
Farr Samuel	Castle-street	Not inhabt. householder			
Garrett John	Thames-street	Not sufficient residence			
Gordge William	High-street	Received relief.			
Haynes Joseph	Castle-street	Ditto			
Hollowman John	Brown's Court	Not inhabt. householder			
Lightfoot William	Thames-street	Received relief.			
Lilley John	Goldington Road	Not sufficient residence			
Lyon Joseph	High-street	An Alien			
Peacock Joseph	Castle-street	Not sufficient residence			
Phillips James	Thames-street	Received relief.			
Rainbow Joseph	Ditto	Ditto			
Rainbow Thomas	Ditto	Ditto			
Richardson Joseph	High-street	Ditto			
Robinson William	Castle-street	Ditto			
Sharpe George Henry	High-street	Not inhabt. householder			

Copy of the '1830 Election Poll of Two Burgesses
to serve in Parliament for the Borough of Bedford'

In 1855 Morris Lissack was nominated as churchwarden for the main town church, Bedford St Paul's. Mr Rose, a nonconformist and leading draper, proposed Mr Lissack because he was "a fit and proper person to serve". Mr Coombs, a physician and a Liberal, seconded the nomination. "Although that gentleman was a member of another religious community he had no feeling of hostility towards the Established Church; and though his election would be a novelty in Bedford, it was no uncommon thing in the metropolis and other large places for gentlemen of the Hebrew persuasion to be elected and re-elected to the office of churchwarden."

It was all great fun, and Lissack had the opportunity to speak at length, which he always seemed to enjoy. "So long

JOSEPH LYON was called in, and having been s
was examined by Mr. Follett, as follows:—

Were you born in England or in Germany?—In Germany.

Do you live at Bedford now?—Yes.

Do you know Godfrey Levy of Mill Lane?—Yes.

Was he a countryman of your's?—Yes, he was born in Gefin
English miles from the place where I was born.

You have known him very well in Bedford?—Yes.

Did you know his family abroad?—Yes, his father and mother w

You know the person living at Bedford is the same person?—Yes!

Have you heard him speak of his family?—Yes, I know where h
born, I used to frequent his father and mother's home before he was
You knew him when he was a child abroad?—Yes, when he w
petticoats.

How much younger is he than you?—About 11 or 12 years yo
next birth-day. I am 66.

Cross-examined by Mr. Ryland.

Do you know his brother?—Yes.

What was his name?—Emanuel Moser.

Do you recollect his being born?—No, he is as near my age as po
can be, there is not 6 months difference.

How old are you?—66 years.

Emanuel is much the same?—Yes.

How old is Godfrey?—53 or 54 as near as I can guess, he may t
years

Extract from the cross-examination of Joseph Lyon in the
case of Godfrey Levy by the Select Committee of the
House of Commons, 1833

as a parishioner was called upon to pay towards the maintenance of the [parish] church irrespective of his religion, no man had a right to question his religious principles." He and the Church of England candidate tied, and Lissack's opponent was elected on the chairman's casting vote.

Likeable Lissack

However, Lissack was much liked, and had great influence in the town, especially on its intellectual life. His popularity was such that he was elected as a trustee of the Bedford Charity in 1870, after which he could make sure that Jewish children were properly catered for in the schools.

By and large I much enjoyed working on this topic. In a way I had been brought up to think that Jews were likely to be better than gentiles, which I suppose could be thought a little unusual. I come from a Buckinghamshire farming family and, as you probably know, many Buckinghamshire landed estates were bought up by various members of the Rothschild family. This made little difference to the established tenant farmers on each estate, and we had been on our farm since about 1800. At a time when gentry were expected to build good houses for the farms and for the labourers, the Rothschilds were unusually benevolent landlords, probably because they did not need to live on their rents, as most of their predecessors had had to do.

Our farm was owned by the branch that lived at Ascott in Wing, and much of their land was put up for sale towards the end of World War I, when most tenants bought their farms on a mortgage, as did my father. A few years later, in the middle of the Depression, when we had no money, my father was in hospital and needed an operation. I was always told that Mr Anthony de Rothschild paid for this, perhaps because they had both been in the Bucks Yeomanry at Gallipoli in the Great War. I have only hearsay evidence but we all considered that Jews, as we knew them, were better than the rest of us.

Later, in the sixth form at school at High Wycombe between 1942 and 1944, I met a group of evacuee Jewish girls. It seems odd today, but at home I had never heard people talk about ideas. You might discuss the weather, the crops or the cattle, how A was related to B or, if not related, then their sisters had gone to boarding school together, but here were people talking about ideas: Marx, Zionism, politics and books. It was in itself an education, even apart from the excellence of the school. So when I found evidence for the Bedford community, you can see why I followed it up.

● The author, a Fellow of the Society of Archivists, was Bedford County Archivist from 1968 to 1986.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The photocopied extracts are courtesy of the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service County Record Office County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP. Tel: 01234 228833.

Bedford's Second Jewish Community 1787-1883 by Patricia Bell was published by her in 1994. There is a copy in the JGSGB Library.

Editor's note: I discovered that my grandmother's grandmother had been born in Bedford. In Ms Bell's book I found an enormous amount of useful information which I would never otherwise have come across.

Finding my family

by Chris Newall

I was an adopted child with no knowledge of my Jewish roots. My wonderful parents, who did not know either, told me that I was special because they had chosen me—a lovely way to put it. Sadly, they both died in the 1960s.

I found my original Adoption Order neatly filed among Dad's papers; he wanted me to be able to trace my birth family, but I waited until after his sister, my beloved aunt Kathleen, died in 1997. It just would not have felt right while she was alive although I am sure she would have enjoyed the hunt just as much as me.



My father, Richard David Leigh (Levy) 1907-1981

I knew my birth name and my mother's name but nothing about my father, who was not mentioned on my birth certificate. The adoption society was no longer active but after making some enquiries I discovered that their records still existed. I made an appointment with my local social services department who requested the records, and I was able to study them in due

course. They revealed that my father was Richard Leigh, a solicitor of 88 Fenchurch Street, London and my mother had met him at a lunch party in Canterbury on 28 October 1937, had spent the afternoon with him and, as far as I am aware, never met him again.

According to the *Law Lists* Richard had qualified in 1929 and had practised until at least 1938. *The Times* reported that he had passed the Law Society examinations in 1929 with Honours, having served his articles in the chambers of Mr Lawrence Michael Davis.¹ *The Times* also disclosed a skeleton in the cupboard. Richard David Leigh, a solicitor aged 32 years, had been sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment in April 1940 for conspiring to forge a deed with intent to defraud the Inland Revenue.² This explained his absence from the later *Law Lists*; he had been struck off. I could not find any record of his birth, marriage or death, which was puzzling. Where had he come from and what had become of him?

Fruitful search

The newspaper's indexes contained several references to "Leigh" under "Changes of Name"; could his original surname have been different? I noticed that initials were usually retained during name changes and decided to search the 1907-1908 General Register Office (GRO) birth indexes for boys named Richard David L***. This was tedious but bore fruit as there was only one, Richard David Levy. His birth certificate stated that his parents were Joseph Levy and Esther Levy, formerly Davis. He had been born at 189

Brooke Road, Upper Clapton on 16 June 1907.³ Joseph and Esther had married at the Great Synagogue on 3 August 1904,⁴ but were they my grandparents?

Joseph Levy had entries at 189 Brooke Road from 1908-1913 in Kelly's *Post Office Directories* and from 1915-1927 Joseph Lambert Leigh was at that address, which was promising. Final confirmation came from a Deed Poll by which Joseph Levy of 189 Brooke Road, Upper Clapton, changed his name to Joseph Lambert Leigh in November 1915.⁵ The deed was witnessed by Lawrence Michael Davis, solicitor. *Q.E.D.* Joseph and Esther were my grandparents and Richard was my father. I later found that Lawrence Davis was his cousin.

Joseph Leigh died in 1945, appointing Richard as his executor, but he was abroad on war service and administration was granted to his brother Patrick.⁶ Richard was not in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission database; presumably he survived the war and its aftermath but where was he? After his brush with the law he had probably emigrated, but to where? I decided to research his ancestry and see where that led me.

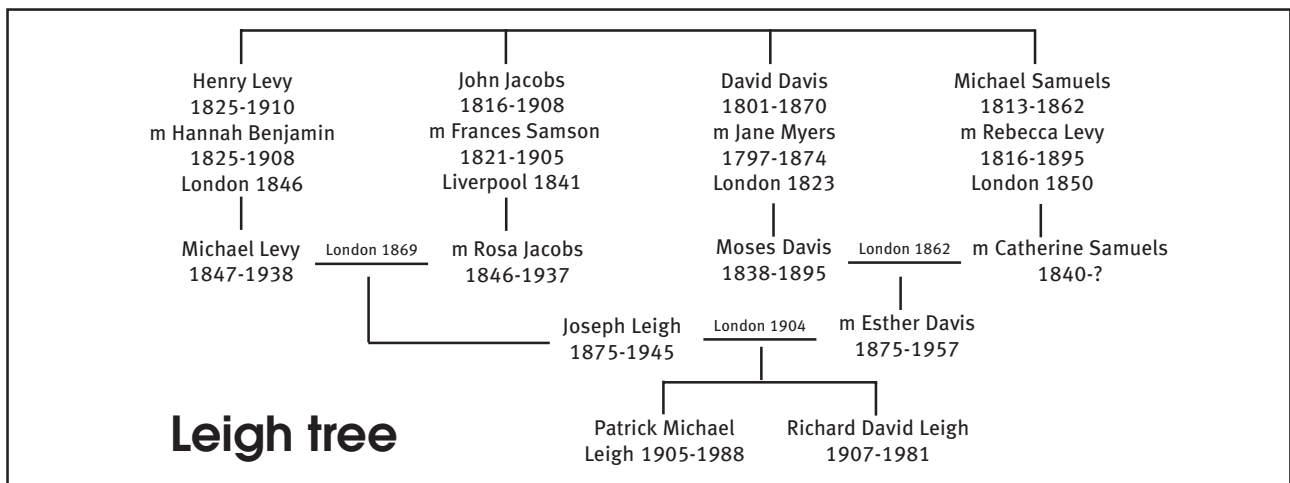
Despite their common names, Joseph's and Esther's parents were easily traced. They were Michael and Rosa Levy, of Morgan Street, St George in the East, and Moses and Catherine Davis, of Ellison Street, Aldgate. Both families could be traced back through censuses from 1881 to 1841 and civil registration records to 1838. Most of the marriages took place at the Great Synagogue and the family surnames were consistently Ashkenazi: Levy, Jacobs, Benjamin, Samson, Davis, Samuels, and Myers.

Initial failure

Now I mined the Jewish Genealogy Family Finder database, extracting all references to these surnames in London and ranking the researchers by the number of surname matches; the higher the ranking the greater the likelihood of an interest in one of my families. After sending dozens of letters and e-mail messages, I awaited events. Early responses were not encouraging; nobody seemed to be researching the same families. Then I received the following message from Aubrey Jacobus, "I have passed your message on to Angela Shire who should be able to help", and help she certainly did.

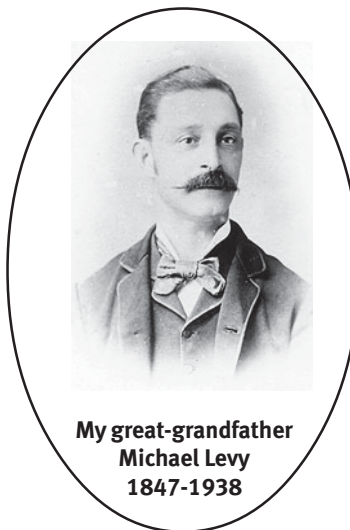


My grandparents, Joseph and Esther Leigh, née Davis



Angela, a great-granddaughter of Michael and Rosa Levy, was my second cousin and had been researching our family for several years.⁷ She knew about my father, although she had never met him.

Richard, Esther and Patrick Leigh had emigrated to Australia soon after the end of World War II. Richard, who had married in Australia, had died in 1981, but his son



**My great-grandfather
Michael Levy
1847-1938**

and daughter, my half-siblings, were thought to be living in the Sydney area. Now the challenge was to try to contact them. I concentrated on trying to locate my half-brother, I did not have his address but at least I that knew his name was Andrew Leigh.

Fortunately, my son Toby was in Sydney, so I had a man on the ground. I sent Toby the appropriate references from the Australian

White Pages on-line directory⁸ and asked him to check them against the Sydney electoral registers. He came up with just one match and I dispatched a carefully worded letter stating that I was researching Richard Leigh's family but not disclosing too much in case I was writing to the wrong person.

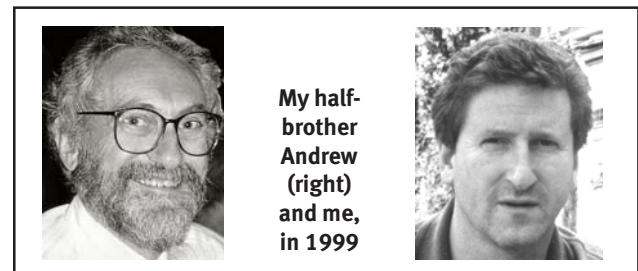
Fruitful search

Four days later I received an e-mail message confirming that Andrew was the son of Richard Leigh. I replied telling him who I was and how I knew who I was, and after a frustrating exchange of messages between our answering machines, we finally spoke to each other. We were both extremely excited, talked for hours at great expense and the relationship blossomed. He was planning his first trip to Europe, to attend a cousin's wedding in Italy and he arranged his itinerary to include a few days with us in London.

So, in August 1999, we met at Heathrow Airport. We had exchanged photographs and had no problem in recognizing each other. Was it an emotional moment?

I suppose so, but we were both far too busy swapping stories and enjoying each other's company to notice. He brought photographs and other memorabilia, including our father's and grandfather's old passports and a full transcript of the 1940 trial. This revealed that, although Richard had undoubtedly been casual in the management of his office, it was quite possible that the actual forgery had been committed by his senior clerk, whom Richard had fired and who admitted in court that he had informed on Richard to get his own back. The jury took a different view. Richard was imprisoned, struck off by the Law Society and had to find a new career.

We have stayed with Andrew in Sydney, visited Parramatta where he lived when he was a boy and seen Richard Leigh's memorial plaque in Rookwood Cemetery. I had run him to earth at last but, typically for that elusive man, my photograph of the plaque failed to come out and he remains as intangible as ever.



**My half-brother
Andrew
(right)
and me,
in 1999**

I also traced my non-Jewish birth mother and we had some glorious times together before she died. She had nothing to tell about my father, she scarcely knew him. It was fortunate that she had recorded his name and profession in my adoption records; if she had not I could not have traced him and would never have found my Jewish family. I am a lucky man!

● **The author was a research scientist who began studying family history after his retirement in 1996.**

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2. *The Times*, 13 April 1940.
3. Richard Levy, birth certificate.
4. Joseph Levy and Esther Davis, marriage certificate.
5. Levy—a Deed Poll (TNA class J18, piece 227, p101).
6. Will of Joseph Lambert Leigh, proved at Llandudno, August 1945.
7. Angela Shire, "A myth is good for a smile", *Shemot*, Vol 5, 4.
8. Australian *White Pages*, www.whitepages.com.au/.

A Dutchman lost in France

by David Gompertz

MY search for my Gompertz origins moved out of the United Kingdom to the Netherlands in 1998 when I made contact with Ernest Gompers of Utrecht. I had been researching all Gompers, Gomperts and Gompertz names in the Dutch archives.

I explained to him that my great grandfather, Aaron Simon Gompertz had come to England from Amsterdam about 1855 and his ancestors had already been traced back to a Moses Gomperts who married in The Hague in 1731. Ernest sent me an outline tree of the descendants of Moses Gomperts. This tree started with Moses's marriage and in later generations included a number of people, unknown to us, who had died in the Holocaust.



My missing cousin:
Levie Gompertz

We visited Amsterdam in 2001 and at the Anne Frank Museum I discovered the Dutch *In Memoriam* book.¹ This contained several of our family names so I then decided to write a document recording the members of our Gompertz family who were murdered in the Holocaust.

With Ernest's assistance, I was able to identify 44 individuals who died and they are recorded in my note *In Memoriam: Our Dutch Gompertz cousins who died in the Holocaust*.²

However, one person I could not trace, was a Levie Gompertz, a son of Aaron Gompertz and Hester van Leeuwen. We could not find him in the official Dutch *In Memoriam* list. Ernest discovered that Levie was a commercial traveller and had lived in Brussels. We wondered if Levie had been lost during the occupation of Belgium. A search of *Memorial de la déportation des Juifs de Belgique*³ in the Wiener library did not reveal Levie's name. Later, following another clue, I looked for Levie in *Memorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*.⁴

In this book, Serge Klarsfeld lists alphabetically the members of each of the 80 transports from France to the concentration camps. I found that Levie was on Convoy 74 which left Drancy on 20 May 1944 and arrived at Auschwitz on 23 May. An addendum was added to my document and it was assumed then that we would learn little more about Levie and his life in France. However, in April 2003 I found a request on a French genealogy site for information regarding Levie Gompertz. The author, Gérard Thomas, confirmed information I had about Levie: his parents came from The

Hague and both had died at Auschwitz. Gérard wrote that Levie had been married but his wife, surname Cadet, had died before the War. I responded with details of Levie's parents and siblings, telling Gérard that Levie and my father, Harry Gompertz, were second cousins.

Gérard then told me that Levie had married his father's half-sister, Lucienne Emilie Cadet, on 29 January 1924 in Marseille and had died in 1929. Gérard and his family had always wanted to know what had happened to Levie after the death of his young wife and before his deportation in 1944. They wondered whether Levie had remarried. I told Gérard about my research and sent him my document. I explained how I had also found Levie's deportation in the list of transports documented by Klarsfeld.

This correspondence with Gérard was difficult, as my French was inadequate to ask detailed and possibly sensitive genealogical questions. Luckily a family friend, John Hathaway, helped me when I found that the language translation program on the Internet, *Babelfish*, was not sufficiently accurate for my purposes. As the three-way correspondence developed, I told Gérard that we would soon be in France on holiday so we agreed to meet in Faverges, near Lake Annecy.

Useful documents

The most useful document Gérard gave me was a copy of Levie's marriage certificate. This described Levie as a commercial traveller from The Hague living at 1a L'Academie, Marseille, son of Aaron Gompertz, musician. He had married Lucienne Emilie Cadet from Boulogne-sur-Mer, daughter of Louise Emma Bridget Cadet. Gérard also gave me copies of Lucienne Emilie's birth certificate, Levie's birth certificate and parents' marriage certificate which he had obtained from the Dutch archivists.

During autumn 2003 Gérard wrote to various archivists in France and Poland about Levie and in November he

22261 / 23 ¹⁹⁴⁴⁻¹¹
CD CA
Nom : G
GOMPERTZ
Prénoms : levie
Date Naissance : 29-6-92
Lieu : La Haye
Nationalité : hollandaise
Profession : voyou ^{ca}
Domicile : Marseille 32 d'Endoume
VOE ←
G. Val. jusqu' ...

(VOE: widower without children)

Levie's file card

received a copy of Levie's *fichier des internes*, his file card, from the camp at Drancy (see right). It stated that Levie was a widower who had no children and, extremely importantly, it gave his address in Marseille as 3 rue d'Endoume.

1	Guimard	Julia	1891	♂	♂	Nevre	Bar
2	Guimard	Jean	1914	♂	♂	Bib	Boucher
3	Gompertz	Levy	1892	La Haye	Belleville	Lezatrain	agent de commerce

Entry from 1936 Marseille census

Gérard later contacted a genealogical colleague, Jean Marie Aubert, living in Marseille and asked for help. In the 1936 census for Marseille, Jean Marie found Levie at 3 rue d'Endoume, residing as a tenant of a widow, Madame Julia Guimard. Her profession was given as bar owner. Jean Marie wondered whether Levie and Julia, widower and widow, were living as a common-law couple. Julia's grown-up son, Jean, also lived there.

Jean Marie Aubert then discovered Albin Guimard, the son of Jean Guimard living in Marseille who remembered Levie. His family used to call Levie "Louis" and Albin thought that he was Dutch. Albin also told Jean Marie that he had a photo of Levie: this has been sent on to me with a photo of Albin as a baby with his two grandmothers, one being Julia Guimard.

So now we have found something of where and with whom Levie was living after the death of Lucienne in 1929 and up to the time of his deportation in 1944. We can only speculate about the situation that brought about his arrest and the consequences for the Guimard family.

This story was especially poignant for my generation of the Gompertz family living in England. We believed that our family had been in touch with cousins in the Netherlands until 1939 but we knew nothing more. The number of cousins listed in my pamphlet was new to us and saddening, but the photo of Levie made the whole matter personal; a new experience for those of us whose immediate family had been insulated from the horrors of the Holocaust.

● **The author is a retired toxicologist who is now involved with wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire.**

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Also at <http://dutchjewry.huji.ac.il/maineng/upload/remember/main.html#top>.
2. *In Memoriam: Our Dutch Gompertz cousins who died in the Holocaust*. D. Gompertz. 2002. Private publication.
3. *Memorial de la déportation des Juifs de Belgique* by S Klarsfeld and M Steinberg, 1982. Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York.
4. *Memorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* by S Klarsfeld. 1983. Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York.

This research would not have been possible without the generous input from Gérard Thomas (Lyons), Ernest Gompers (Utrecht) and John Hathaway (Birmingham).

Letter to the Editor

CORNWALL REVISITED

I have been sitting on this for a week—my June *Shemot* was delivered last Friday—and, as with every issue, everything stops so I can read through *Shemot* and savour every article! My mother is one of the founding members of the JGSGB, and proud to be so: she is the reason I am also a member.

Imagine my huge surprise when I turned to page 11 and saw a picture of an etching I had bought my mother in 1976 from Wendron Forge, at Helston! I immediately called her, as I remembered she had done a little bit of research into the origins of the picture, prompted by a recollection that one of my paternal great-grandfathers was at one time an artist's model.

I do not have her copies of the correspondence, but can report that the owner of Wendron Forge was a Peter Young who sold the forge, probably in the 1980s and now lives in Catalonia, Spain, in the same village where my mother's friend owns a holiday property!

She found this out after having contacted the Town Clerk at Helston, and been given the Spanish address. After some time, Peter Young wrote to my mother, telling her that the artist lived in Redruth; my mother (like a trusty bloodhound) traced the artist. He was a little reticent at first, but then told my mother that a Jewish man had walked into his studio with a photograph and asked him if he could do an etching.

The etching which you illustrated was the result. The name of the man who brought the photograph was not given, perhaps the artist did not remember it, or wanted to preserve that person's privacy. The artist was last contacted in the mid-1990s and may still be living in Redruth.

So, although my mother found out who the artist was, she could not find out who the person was in the etching. We still do not know if the man was my great-grandfather . . . perhaps he is not, as my great-grandfather lived in Hutchison's Avenue, St. Botolph, in the City of London in the late 1800s—a long way from Helston!

Perhaps another Society member can shed more light on the matter, we would love to solve the mystery. Incidentally, my mother is bringing the etching northwards at the end of the month, where its buyer can get reacquainted.

Yours sincerely

SUSAN GREGORY



Anyone with information which may shed some light on the mysterious *shofer* blower, should e-mail the Editor for Susan's contact details.

Unsolved family problems

by Victor Stone

TOGETHER with Mark Rosenholz, the grandson of Dolly Bloch Rosenholz, I have been involved over the past five or six years in editing her *Memoirs* which she wrote some 45 years ago when she was in her 80s. The first part of the *Memoirs*, entitled *Strangers at the Gate*, which relates mainly to her life and times and that of her family in Sheffield, runs to some 40,000 words. The second part relates mainly to Staten Island, New York, where she immigrated with her family in 1896.

In editing, we have attempted to identify the people, places and events she mentioned and, where possible, we have added annotations which may be of interest to the reader. In addition, we have tried to check dates and put some order into their stories which, in their original version, were not necessarily chronological. This has either been an exhilarating and rewarding task where we have been successful in our detective work or, to a much lesser extent, a depressing one where we have hit one or more brick walls. I have hardly been able to fault her in anything of which she writes and I am working on the principle that what she has written is correct.

Dolly's origins

My paternal grandfather's uncle, Samuel or Shepsel Bloch, married Jane Agar (or Sheine-Reine Eigar) on 7 February 1872 in Sheffield, England, and it is her side of the family (not mine!) which is causing all the problems. Dolly was the daughter of Samuel and Jane Bloch, her grandmother was Miriam or Mary Agar, Jane's mother, and her great-grandfather was Rabbi Solomon Reinitz Homburg ("the *Rov*"), Miriam's father.

Dolly writes that the *Rov*, born about 1807 in Lebova, Poland, as per his headstone in the Walkley Jewish Cemetery in Sheffield, while working in Kalvaria, a major centre of Jewish learning in Poland, "received a call . . . to come and preside over the Kalvari Synagogue which had just been built in New York". Having recently become a widower and having no family ties in Kalvaria, he accepted and

went to New York, first calling on his family in Sheffield. On his retirement some years later, we think shortly before 1871, Solomon returned to his daughter, Mary Agar, in Sheffield, and there married a widow called Pesche Hanni. The latter "had a married daughter who had three children, but they lived at a distance the other end of Sheffield".

Unanswered questions

Dolly stated that Pesche Hanni had died some six months after the *Rov*, her husband, who died on 27 March 1891, aged 84. This statement leads to the following questions:

a) Where is Lebova, Poland? Could this be Lipowa in Poland¹—a strong contender since it is only a few kilometres from the Bloch homestead of Pokomsze. Or is it Lyubovo (Liubavas) now in Lithuania,² a mile and a half over the frontier with Poland and not far from Kalvaria where the *Rov* ultimately studied and worked? Was Lyubovo a Polish town in 1807?

b) Whereas Dolly says in the *Memoirs* that her grandfather was ordained by the famous Rabbi Spektor, we have not been able to find any mention of him in any list of rabbis although his ordination appears to have been accepted as such by the Sheffield community.

c) Diligent searches of the Ellis Island and Hamburg lists have failed to reveal the arrival of Rabbi Homburg in America. Searches of New York street directories and census records have also drawn a blank.

d) At some later time, members of the *Rov*'s family lived at 15 Pike Street, New York, which was the address of the Congregation Sons of Israel Kalwarie, built in 1853 (now and for the last few years a Buddhist temple). We have not been able to establish the whereabouts of any of the Pike Street Synagogue records, if such still exist.

Accordingly we have not been able to confirm in what year and to which congregation the *Rov* went in New York, whether or not it was the Pike Street *shul* or the date when he retired and went to join his daughter in England.



Walkley Jewish Cemetery, Sheffield,
where Solomon Homburg and Louis Agar are buried

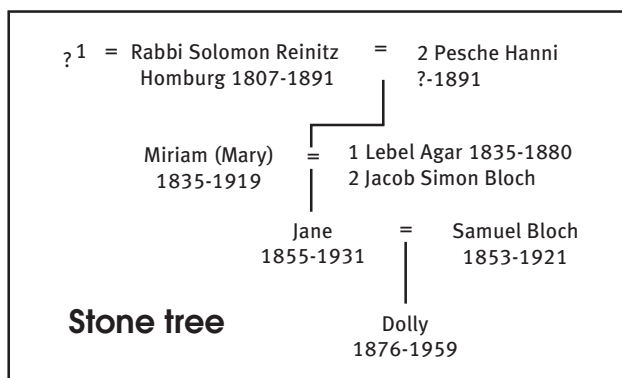
e) Dolly gives no previous surname or maiden name of the twice-widowed Pesche Hanni. Nor have we been able to find any reference to her marriage to the *Rov* in the Sheffield Congregation's Marriage Register nor in the Sheffield or national registers, although a detailed account of the wedding celebration in Sheffield is given by Dolly. It is possible that because of a large age difference between the *Rov* and Pesche Hanni, the marriage was a *stille* or silent marriage but that does not help us.

Pesche Hanni does appear in the 1881 census as Annie Homburg, the wife of Solomon Homburg, and in the 1891 census as Pesche Hanni Homburg, widow. Many hours have been spent probing registers for the death of a "Pesche Hanni" both under that name (and variant spellings) alone and with the surname Homburg in 1891 and thereafter.

If, as Dolly says, she went to live with her daughter after the death of the *Rov*, living still as far as we know "at the other end of Sheffield", we have no real idea where to search, particularly as the family lived in central Sheffield and we do not know where "the other end of Sheffield" is. My searches of the registers for central registration districts of Sheffield have drawn a blank.

f) Now we come to the *Rov*'s daughter, Miriam, or Mary Agar, as she was known in Sheffield. Her first husband Lebel or Louis Agar died on 25 November 1880, aged 45, at 3 Hoyle Street, Sheffield from chronic bronchitis. The *Rov* is later buried, with an unmarked gap, the width of a grave, next to his son-in-law. Could this be where Peshi Hanni is buried?

According to her marriage certificate, dated 22 November 1883, Mary Ager (*sic*) 44, widow, paper dealer, of 46 Westbar Green, Sheffield, father, Solomon Homburg,



married Jacob Simon Block³, 38, bachelor, paper dealer, of South Street Park, Sheffield, father, Ber Hirsh Bloch.

Could this Jacob Simon Bloch have been some relative of Mary's son-in-law, Samuel Bloch? As a Bloch family member myself, I have not been able to identify him or his father, Ber Hirsh Bloch, whose name appears in the marriage

register. Mary's age is approximately correct but she has knocked off a couple of years.

Jacob Simon Block appeared only once in a Sheffield street directory and thereafter completely disappears from any Sheffield record as far as I can tell. Oddly, neither the marriage nor Jacob Simon Bloch is ever mentioned by Dolly in her *Memoirs*.

After her marriage to Jacob Simon Bloch, Mary continued to be known in Sheffield and Rotherham street directories, where she had a wallpaper shop, as Mary Agar. She later emigrated to America and lived under the name of Miriam Agar and Dolly always referred to her by this name. Miriam died in January 1919 and is buried under that name alongside her daughter, Jane, and son in law, Samuel Bloch, at Baron Hirsch Cemetery, Staten Island, New York.

What was Mary's marriage to Jacob Simon Block all about? What went wrong?

If any reader can cast any light on any of the above problems, I shall be forever grateful!

● **The author's Polish grandfather came to Sheffield in 1884. Victor is a retired solicitor, now living in London.**

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1. Lebowa map co-ordinates 54° 13' N 23° 03'E.
2. Lyubovo map co-ordinates 54° 22' N 23° 03'E.
3. The spelling changes, sometimes Bloch or Block.

The Belarus SIG

THIS group has recently been active, spurred on by the example of its co-ordinator Dave Fox, whose efforts to expand and improve the many Belarus databases won him the Outstanding Project Award of the IAJGS.

Among the additions to its website you will find:

- A detailed inventory of records found on each of 13 microfilms of the Family History Library converted to digital images, created by Vitaly Charny.
- 1943 Minsk Ghetto List of names from *Judenfrei—Svobodno ot evreyev*, (Free from Jews) published in Minsk in 1999.
- Update of the Belarus Static Index with records from the 1850 Vileika district revision list for nine towns.
- Membership Lists of 1945 Vitebsk Branch 24 Workmen's Circle, Workmen's Circle Branch 210 Pinsk Branch, 1930 Progressive Brethren of Nieshvies,

Pinsk Fur Workers 1938 *Souvenir Journal*, and Mirer Young Men's Benevolent and Educational Society, contributed by Jerry Seligsohn.

- 1811 Minsk *uyezd* (area) Revision List, including the town of Minsk, added to the All Belarus Database.

The Belarus SIG is currently working on a number of database projects including records filmed by the Family History Library, records in the National Historical Archives of Belarus (both Minsk and Grodno branches), and Belarus records in the Vilnius Archive. The SIG is looking for volunteer translators for Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish. If you can help, please contact Nancy Holden at nholden@interserv.com.

Anyone interested in joining the Belarus SIG should click on www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/membersh.htm. The newsletter can be found at www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/newsletter/bnl_index.htm.

FRAN BOCK, Editor
Belarus SIG Online Newsletter.

Memories of pocket Caruso

by Harry Jarvis

ATTENDING a music appreciation class of the University of the Third Age (U3A) gave me a chance to listen to a CD entitled *Ein Lied geht um die Welt* by Josef Schmidt.¹ As an assiduous collector of genealogical material since the age of 17, I have had various articles published in *Shemot* on my home town of Czernowitz (Chernovtsy), the principal Yiddish-speaking centre of Bukovina, a territory now in Ukraine, which had over the years been subject to numerous occupations and was then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire.²

Now in my 80s, with my memory for recent events somewhat dimmed, I have a clear recollection of being taken as a child to the beautiful large temple in the town centre to hear the then well-known film star and international opera singer Josef Schmidt who invariably returned to his home town each year to act as cantor during the high holidays.

Though the Czernowitz synagogue was burned down by the Russians in 1941³, still the magic voice remains recorded for posterity. I feel that through *Shemot* with its wide circulation, Joseph Schmidt's contribution to Jewish culture would not be forgotten.

Josef Schmidt was born in 1904 in Davideni, Bukovina. During World War I his family settled in Czernowitz, where he began singing in the synagogue choir, and soon embarked on concert appearances. He became cantor in Czernowitz and later at the Leopoldstadt Synagogue in Vienna and at the *Adas Yisroel* Synagogue in Berlin. Despite the extraordinary brilliance of his lyrical tenor voice, a stage career proved almost impossible, since Schmidt was only 4ft 10in tall. His impresarios found the means of overcoming this difficulty by building his career on radio concerts, recordings and operetta films in which his stature was raised by adroit camera work.

Small is beautiful

The CD sleeve provides an interesting account of his life.¹ It also notes that "given that his extremely small stature precluded a normal operatic career, his popularity was all the more remarkable in that he became something of a favourite not only with the general public but also with the opera buff." It records that his parents, Wolf and Sarah Schmidt, were both musical and lived in a truly cosmopolitan community where he was exposed to Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish, German and even gipsy cultures. This fact was to have a profound influence on his interpretations later on.

In 1924 it was arranged that he should live with his uncle Leo Engel in Berlin, while he studied voice and piano with *Frau* Dr Jaffe and Professor Hermann Weissenborn. Despite his slight physique he was conscripted for military service from 1926 to 1929. Upon his discharge, he returned to Czernowitz as cantor, and his career took off when he was discovered by Cornelius Bronsgeest, the eminent Dutch

baritone, then director of Berlin Radio. His international reputation was made on 29 March 1929 when he sang the role of Vasco de Gama in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* and fan mail poured in from wherever the broadcast had been relayed.

Recordings were made by Ultraphon (Telefunken) and HMV and issued that year. Subsequently he recorded largely for Odeon/Parlophone.

It is ironical to note that his popularity among German-speaking countries was at its height in 1933 just when the Nazi party was taking power. Between 1933 and 1936, he made an English version of the film *Ein Lied geht um die Welt* (*My song goes round the world*) as well as *Wenn du jung bist, Ein Stern fällt von Himmel* (*A star falls from heaven*, its English version) and finally *Heut' ist der schönste Tag in meinem Leben* (*Today is the most beautiful day in my life*).

Though the ban on Jewish performers made concerts in Germany impossible, he was able to sing in a series of concerts where the orchestra was conducted by Richard Tauber, that other outstanding romantic tenor. The anti-Semitic smear campaign against him reached ludicrous proportions with the issuing of a "Wanted" poster featuring Schmidt as a sought-after criminal. In 1937 Schmidt toured the United States where he was billed as the "Pocket Caruso" and "The Tiny Man with the Great Voice".

He also appeared successfully in England, France and Belgium. In 1940, he was saved from arrest by gentile friends during the occupation of Belgium and brought through France to Switzerland.

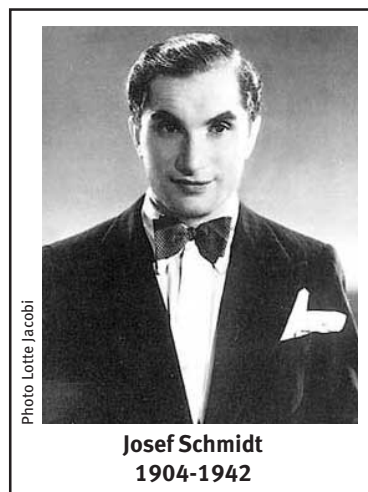
Switzerland's humanitarian record during the Nazi era has not been exactly praiseworthy.⁴ Interned in a refugee camp (*Auffangs-Lager*) in Gyrenbad, he subsequently died there when he was refused special treatment for a serious throat ailment and denied admission to the local hospital.

He was buried in the Friesenberg Jewish cemetery in Zurich, where his headstone bears the simple inscription "*Ein Stern fällt*—Joseph Schmidt, Kammersanger, 1904-1942". The quasi-autobiographical film *Ein Lied geht um die Welt*, in which he had starred, was reissued with scant success in 1952.⁵

● **The author, a retired doctor, who has traced his family back to 1775, has deposited papers in the Weiner Library.**

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Josef Schmidt
1904-1942

Jerusalem 2004

The 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy



President's eye view

by Anthony Joseph

THE genealogy boom of the 1960s and 1970s had fired the enthusiasm of the world-wide Jewish community in a major way by the 1980s. Inspired by American example, regular gatherings of devotees to family history research have been in place for 25 years.

Initially springing from the idea that a different American Jewish genealogical group would host an annual convention in some part of North America each summer, by 1984 the Americans mounted the first such conference overseas: a most memorable meeting in Jerusalem was the result. As the annual Jewish genealogical conferences became more international with venues in London (twice), Paris, Jerusalem (again in 1994) and mooted future venues in Amsterdam and Eastern Europe, an unwritten sense of tradition has become established that every 10 years the focus of interest should be directed towards Israel. Hence in 2004, Jerusalem was chosen for the 24th International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) Conference and it proved to be another outstanding success.

The annual IAJGS conference has become a major highlight in a Jewish genealogist's timetable. The professionalism that has characterised so many of these recent gatherings has fuelled high hopes that each subsequent one should equal if not surpass the previous one. With this background of expectations, the Israeli conference convenors must have worried that they would be judged and found wanting: in the event they need not have had any such anxieties. The hotel was superbly situated, well appointed, adequately comfortable and with good conference facilities. Everything ran smoothly and the initial lavish reception set the tone for an intellectual feast which amply repaid the delegates for their labours expended in planning it.

On this occasion I was simply a delegate at the conference and my only professional genealogical responsibilities were fulfilling my final commitments to the

board of the IAJGS as my four-year membership ended at the annual general meeting. I attended an overview of Australian databases including a lecture entitled **Buried Down Under and other Australian Projects** about the Jewish section of Rookwood (Sydney) cemetery, given by Kim Phillips.

Another Australian highlight for me was the presence of Louise Rosenberg, a sprightly nonagenarian from "Down Under" whom I have known for 40 years and who was a most conscientious secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society for 25 years. She has just published an excellent book¹ of her reminiscences which covers many aspects of the story of the Jewish people in Australia.

Site visits were arranged to several important Jerusalem archives (including *Yad Vashem*) and, courtesy of an invitation from Rose Lerer Cohen, I appeared on an Israeli television news slot offering my opinions on the significance of the conference.

An **Anglo-Jewish SIG** was held at the conference which was a well-attended and lively session, including a plug for the recent book on the *Marriage Records of the Great Synagogue (1791-1885)* produced by veteran researchers, Harold and Miriam Lewin. Publicity was also given to Doreen Berger's latest deservedly well-received book, *The Jewish Victorian*, culled from personal announcements in Jewish newspapers during the 1860s.

It was also a particular pleasure for me to be at the presentation entitled **From the Habsburg Empire—the search for my great-great-grandfather's grave**, given by my fifth cousin, Kathryn Berman, on her recent visit to Hungary, researching a strand of her ancestry which had always fascinated her.

In the session taken by two longstanding stalwarts of the Jewish genealogical world, Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack gave overviews of the research achievements of the past 20 years and predictions as to how the genealogical investigative world will go for the next 20.

Finally, the end-of-conference banquet with its awards to achievers and a few other traditional features proved a fitting culmination to another fine conference of which our Israeli hosts can feel justifiably proud.

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Genetics and genealogical discoveries

by Saul Issroff

I co-chaired the most stimulating **Genetics and genealogy** session with Professor Karl Skorecki, a Canadian-born renal physician now at Rambam Hospital in Haifa. He was one of the first scientists to study the Cohen-Levi haplotype markers and spoke on **Genomic archaeology of Jewish and Near-East communities**.

The human genome project has shown any two humans differ by less than 0.1 per cent at the level of their human genome sequence. This small difference makes the genetic contribution to the wonderful diversity of humanity. Genetic archaeology uses the Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA to clarify paternal and maternal genealogical relationships and unravel mysteries about past history.

He and his colleagues have applied analysis of DNA markers to unravel the geographic origins and historical relationships among communities in the Jewish Diaspora.



They found evidence at the DNA level for the biblical tradition of the Jewish priestly lineage (Cohen-Levi haplotype) and recently uncovered some interesting information regarding the Levites, traditionally the priests.

Professor Skorecki's presentation provided a brief overview of the scientific approach known as "phylogeography", a

summary of some of the findings, as well as its potential social and ethical implications.

The presentation covered both Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA approaches, and described recent collaborative laboratory research regarding the Ashkenazi communities, as well as other Diaspora Jewish and non-Jewish Near-East communities. Possible health implications were discussed.

He emphasized that the most important unit in population genetics is the individual and that genealogical affiliations or genetic markers do not "predetermine" our characteristics. The goal of genetics research is to understand our DNA heritage, and not allow DNA to become the master of our societal destiny.¹

Rabbi Yaakov Kleiman, who directs the Center for *Kohanim*² (and lectures at *Aish Ha'Torah*, a modern orthodox seminary in Jerusalem), spoke on **The DNA connection: ancient Hebrews and modern Jews**

- a. Biblical history and genealogy: is it historically true or a myth?

- b. Was Abraham a unique living person, or a made-up character?
- c. Did the 12 Tribes of Israel really exist? If so, where are they now?
- d. Can present-day *Cohanim*, the Jewish "priestly family" be traced to a common ancestor who was the founder of the lineage, as written in the *Torah*?

Genetic research based on DNA analysis has revealed a direct connection between present-day Jewish people and the ancient Hebrews of Biblical times. The new scientific field of genetic archaeology seeks to trace historical origins and movements of peoples over time and space by comparing DNA patterns. The Jewish people have been at the forefront of the research and the results have been interesting.

The initial research project³ concerned the Jewish *Cohanim*. The *Torah* relates that the father of the *Cohanim* was Aharon Ha'Kohen, brother of Moses. The tradition is that the line of the *Cohanim* would never be lost. The geneticists examined the Y-chromosomes of Jewish males, which is passed from father to son with little change from generation to generation. It therefore can be used to detect paternal lineage. The findings were significant. A high percentage of present day *Cohanim* share a common set of Y-markers, indicating a shared common ancestor. Their "most recent common ancestor" was calculated to have lived 106 generations ago, approximately the time of the Exodus from Egypt, in the lifetime of the biblical Aharon.

Wider studies of Jewish genes⁴ confirmed the Middle Eastern origins of all of the major Diaspora communities. Jewish men from ancient communities of Babylonia (Iraq and Iran), from Sephardic communities of North Africa and *Ashkenazim* of Europe all share a similar genetic profile which is common to other groups who never left the Middle East, and is different from the various Diaspora host communities.

Besides the Y-chromosome, which indicates male lineage, there is mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), which is passed from mothers to both sons and daughters, and can be used to trace maternal lineages. The discovery of the DNA signature of the ancient Hebrews has led to a search for these genetic markers among groups worldwide. Some of the Lemba tribe of southern Africa and other "lost tribes" have been found to possess these Semitic DNA markers, indicating a genetic connection to the Middle East and possibly to the Jewish people.

Importance of DNA

Scott Woodward, Professor of Microbiology at Brigham Young University (BYU) Salt Lake City and head of its Molecular Genealogy Research Group, spoke on the **Molecular genealogy of world populations**. DNA analysis for genealogical purposes is gradually establishing itself as a valuable tool for family historians. However, many misconceptions about what can and cannot be done with DNA

still exist. What DNA services are available to family historians? How do they work? What research is underway in the field of genetics and genealogy? What will the future bring?

This lecture described what DNA is and its connection to family history. Currently available genetic services, such as the Y-chromosome (paternal line) and the mitochondrial DNA (maternal line) testing were outlined. Descriptions of each test were given, including the new Y-chromosome genealogical database released by the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation (SMGF) in Salt Lake City (www.smgf.org/). SMGF is a non-profit organization that was founded to build a correlated genetic and genealogical database which maintains strict confidentiality of participants' information while linking these individuals together in "relationship trees" based on their DNA.



A brief summary of current research and future expectations in the field of molecular genealogy, especially with regard to the use of autosomal DNA⁵ in the reconstruction of ancestral information

and in studying population migrations was given. All three talks were presented clearly and a lively and informed discussion ensued.

As Dr Jacob Lindenthal, Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Medicine and Dentistry, New Jersey Medical School, could not attend, his talk on **The Lindex, a database of the disease experience of the American Jew**⁶ was presented by Karen Franklin. The Lindex has been under development since 1973 and is a powerful and

accessible research instrument covering a 130-year period (1874-2003). No comparable database has been created for any other ethnic group.

At the end of 2003, it consisted of 2,433 entries, encompassing 550 diseases and disorders derived from 1,160 reports. Data sources include journal articles; conference proceedings; community, insurance, and government reports, hospital- and government-based vital statistics, monographs and doctoral dissertations.

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- * These are paired sets of genetic markers. An allele is any one of a series of two or more different genes that occupy the same position (locus) on a chromosome.
5. This is DNA derived from a chromosome that is not a sex chromosome. For an explanation of different types of DNA see www.fairlds.org/apol/bom/bom01.html.
 6. <http://130.219.35.151:8500/lindex/>.



It's all in the genes

SAUL ISSROFF gives a brief conference overview

The organisation of the conference was excellent and I pay tribute to the committees and the co-chairmen, Eitan Shilo, Danny Wagner and Jean-Pierre Stroweis. Overall, the turnout of more than 400 Israelis including many Sephardic Jews was impressive. There was significant attendance of religious genealogists as compared to all previous conferences I have been to and many came for a specific day. The personal aspect of seeing so many old friends, and making new ones, is part of the pleasure of these conferences.

The opening event had numerous short speeches about the conference and the Israel Genealogical Society (IGS), interspersed with Israeli songs and dances, and a brilliant Ladino musicologist, Levana Dinerman, who sang to her own guitar. Professor Sergio Della Pergola from the Hebrew University's Institute of Contemporary Judaism, the keynote opening speaker, gave an outstanding presentation on **Jewish genealogy macro-trends: past, present and future** with clear expositions on the application of statistics to various populations past and present. A total of 92 per cent of the world's Jews live in the wealthiest fifth of the world's population, according to a report he prepared for the Jewish Agency's Institute for Jewish People Policy Planning research group.¹

Sessions held in conjunction with *Yad Vashem* were outstanding, not only for content but from the organisational aspect which involved consecutive sessions in two venues, one in Hebrew and one in English. The progress on the new Pages of Testimony databases, demonstrated by Alex Avraham, Director of the Hall of Names, is amazing and is scheduled to be on www.yadvashem.org by the end of 2004. This multi-lingual site, with Cyrillic, Hebrew and Roman scripts, can bring up the actual image of the page entry with a translation, and has fuzzy logic search facilities.

Yaakov Lozowick, Director of Archives at *Yad Vashem*, gave a talk entitled **How far can we go? An operative program** about progress in new acquisitions. Valery Bazarov, Director of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) New York, spoke most interestingly on **Racing with death: the HIAS (HICEM) Lisbon files (1940-1945)** about Jews who were rescued through Lisbon during World War II. We saw the new, not yet completed, museum building, and in the evening appropriate entertainment and lectures were given among the most moving stone monuments in the Valley of the Destroyed Communities.

1. An article on this is available online at www.jafi.org.il/papers/2004/june/june24hz.htm.

Moving memories

by Doreen Berger

WHAT more fitting place could there be to hold a Jewish genealogical conference than in Jerusalem? It is some years since I stayed in Jerusalem, or even visited Israel, but the thrill of that drive from the airport through the hills to the city was exactly the same.

In fact, even on the plane I had the same familiar feeling of going home. This is inexplicable, especially from someone who is second-generation born in England. My grandmother's sister settled in Palestine, as it then was, under Turkish rule and our family now has several generations living in Israel.

Why try and analyse it? The venue and conference were unforgettable. As representatives of the British branch of Jewish genealogists, we received a most warm welcome from our counterparts who had come to participate in this conference from all over the world. The first evening we arrived we attended a mayoral reception where enthusiastic Israeli teenagers danced for us and everyone was friendly.

We also attended a memorable reception at *Yad Vashem*, which was followed by an inspiring and impressive open-air concert at the Valley of the Destroyed Communities, which will be hard to forget. Shuttle buses were available during the day to take us from the hotel to the Archives, so it was easy to visit *Yad Vashem*, now the repository of the world's largest documentation on the Holocaust.

Nick Evans gave an instructive and entertaining lecture on **The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelters and their documentary legacy 1885-1915 and British passenger lists and medical records as a source for migrant history 1793-1960**. Harvey Kaplan spoke on **Ghetto to Gorbals - tracing your Jewish roots in Scotland**.

An **Anglo-Jewish SIG** (Special Interest Group) meeting took place with a panel consisting of Anthony Joseph, Harold Lewin, Harvey Kaplan and me: it was chaired with great charm by Joe Isaacs, a member of ours who lives in Netanya. About 40 participants attended and we were able to answer questions from people whom we would never have had the opportunity of meeting. What a thrill it was when the answer to one question was in the new volume of *The Jewish Victorian*.

The other lectures I attended were given at *Yad Vashem*: Eva Floersheim, who came to Israel from Scandinavia, spoke on **Koordinacja: 1,000 children from Poland to Eretz Israel after the Holocaust**. Eva helped child survivors of the Holocaust who were looking for information about their past. **What became of them? the fate of the St Louis passengers—a case study in retracing an event from the Holocaust** was given by Scott Miller, Director of the Registry of Holocaust Survivors at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. His talk was based on a project to trace the fate of all 937 passengers.

My best-loved moments were being with our own members who had travelled from the United Kingdom and meeting several people with whom I had corresponded or met at previous conferences. I can honestly say that I came home tingling with pleasure at the experience of attending this conference at a wonderful venue with wonderful people.

Southern Africa round-up *by Saul Issroff*

THE southern African sessions were well attended. Richard Newman, a Cape Town historian, opened with an informative talk on the Origins and history of South-West African (Namibian) Jewry. It followed with a presentation on German-Jewish migration to South Africa.

This occurred in three phases: first came the early pioneer merchant traders from 1830 to around 1890 who opened up the hinterland. Next came those prospecting for diamonds and gold in the mines (1870-1895) and finally there was a group of about 7,000 German Jewish refugees who came to South Africa in the 1930s.¹

Dave Bloom, an ex-Zimbabwean Israeli, gave a short but pertinent demonstration and talk on The new Zimbabwean and Zambian website², that he has compiled, and also showed a short video pilot by Romi Kaplan on the *Jews of Zimbabwe*. Beryl Baleson, formerly from Cape Town, and I spoke on Southern Africa Jewish genealogy resources and demonstrated the databases.

A Special Interest Group luncheon was addressed by Sid Shapiro, Executive Director of Telfed,³ on the History and contribution of South African Jews to Israel.

Louis Zetler, an ex-South African lawyer, president of the Galilee Genealogical Society, gave an excellent talk on Creating databases of Jewish births, marriages and deaths for any state or country. He explained that the main purpose is to provide as much information as is available to enable future generations to trace relations. The information is derived from a number of sources, such as press advertisements, online newspapers etc. and put into Excel spreadsheets. A section for doubtful surnames is created for each year which can sometimes be clarified with later additional information.

Although initially applied to South Africa, this methodology can be used for any other country.⁴

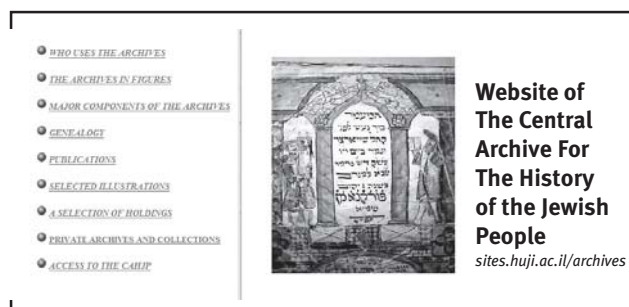
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Genealogists need to know the 'form' for best results

by Arlene Beare

THE Jerusalem Conference was well run with many interesting presentations and speakers. Steven Morse is an amateur genealogist who has been researching his Russian-Jewish origins. He has developed some web-based searching aids and last year was the recipient of the Outstanding Contribution Award at the Washington Conference. He is best known as the architect of the Intel 8086, which is the grand-daddy of today's Pentium processor. Entitling his talk **White, blue, gray! What color Ellis Island search form should I use?** he described the website¹ that he has devised to make access to the Ellis Island data easier.



The white form is for general use but has limitations as regards town entry. It searches the whole database and has an ethnicity search which allows you to choose the exact word as defined on the ship manifests. The site also allows you to select multiple ethnicities. For example, if your ancestor came from Vilna, you are asked whether he was Hebrew, Polish, Russian or Lithuanian which would take four searches with the Ellis Island site. On his site, by clicking the check box next to each ethnicity you will get there in one search.

The blue form is for finding Jewish passengers and is excellent for towns. The grey form is for all nationalities and is one of the newest. If you do not find the passenger you are looking for using one of the forms, try each one in turn. A subscription to Ancestry.com is required if you want to view the original manifest or the photo of the ship.

A lecture on **The Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People research potential and recent developments** was given by Hadassah Assouline, its New York-born director who made *aliyah* in 1965. She has been employed at the archives since 1967.

The Central Archives was formally established in 1969, having originally been founded 1938 as the Jewish Historical General Archives.² Ms Assouline described some new acquisitions which include lists of Jews from the Ukraine (Zhitomir, Kamanets and Berdychiv) and from Bulgaria (family lists and burial lists for Sofia and Shumen). Belarus marriages for 1919-1933 are also available as is the Warsaw telephone directory for 1939-1940. An important

acquisition, not yet catalogued, is from the Kovno area (Lithuania) and includes population lists and vital statistic registers for the 18th-20th centuries.

The **Genealogy Software Workshop** was run by Jay Sage, immediate past-president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston. His passion for genealogy developed in 1996 and he was one of the developers of the Z-System, an advanced operating system for the first generation of popular home computers.

Entitled **Genealogical Software For The Palm Pilot**, the workshop dealt with three programs, *Gedstar*, (which I use), *GedWise* and *MyRoots*. The presenter came out in favour of *Gedwise* because he felt the ability to enter sources was better. *MyRoots* had the advantage of allowing changes to be made on the Palm as against most other programs which only allow editing on a desktop computer. *MyRoots* is slow and he felt this was a really bad feature. The computer program *The Master Genealogist* has software which allows you to see the whole tree on the Palm as well as in lists; the other programs only bring up the data in lists.

The **Latvia SIG** meeting was partly a business meeting. Barry Shay was elected as president for the next two years. I updated the meeting on three new databases which are ready to go into the All Latvia Database. The databases are additions to the *1897 Census Database* and are names from Tukums, Friedrichstadt and Talsen. **The Archive of Latvian and Estonian Jews** based at *Kibbutz Shefayim* has been reorganised and is being computerised.³ A new Latvian and Estonian family file section is being set up. People of Latvian/Estonian origin are invited to create their family file and send the documents to the archives.

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SEPHARDIM were particularly well catered for. There were talks on **Consular Archives in Eretz Israel Relating to Protected North African And Turkish Jews** by Yves Fedida (France).

The importance of genealogy in Marrano-Anusim research given by Gloria Rachel Mound (Israel).

Growing Les fleurs de l'Orient in cyberspace: the major Jewish families of the Ottoman Empire (and beyond) by Alain Farhi (United Kingdom).

A treasury of Jewish names from the community of Mogador, Essaouira (Morocco) from local Jewish sources by Sidney Corcos (Israel).

Sephardic and oriental genealogical guidebook

by Yitzchak Kerem and Mathilde Tagger

THE aim of this project is to uncover the wealth of resources on Sephardic history and genealogy in Israel. Even though research can be conducted abroad, the essential sources and collections are in Israel. It is hoped that this guidebook will advance family searches and will inspire researchers to spend more time in Israel to capitalize on the large number of resources available.

The book is divided alphabetically into 46 country listings. The material is then sub-divided into eight chapters. Some of the more detailed data was added as an appendix. To use the material more easily, a special search tool has been added, a Surname Search Index, which gives the various spellings of surnames as found in the guide.

Chapters

1. Selected Hebrew periodicals—bibliography

A Hebrew-based bibliography is provided in order to acquaint readers with important sources of the history, culture, and genealogy of Sephardic and Oriental Jewry. Recently, genealogists have arranged for the translation of some of these publications.

2. Burial societies

Many Sephardic and Mizrahi (Oriental) groups in Israel formed their own burial societies and these are usually open to the public. They have valuable data on burial places and death details.

3. Archival items

Sephardic and Mizrahi holdings from major Israeli archives have been classified by regional groupings to assist potential users. *Yad Vashem* is the main source of information on Holocaust victims from the Balkans, North Africa, Iraq, and other parts of Asia and the Far East. The Central Zionist Archives have files on the organization, membership and migration to Israel. The CAHJP has files on most communities and countries where Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews lived.

It has recently acquired microfilms from the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* Archives mainly dealing with the Mediterranean countries, and the *Hakham Bashi* (Chief Rabbi) archive of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, which contains correspondences from numerous Sephardi communities throughout the Ottoman Empire. Archival material from the Bulgarian State Archives was also recently

microfilmed and can be consulted at CAHJP. The Ben-Zvi Institute is the largest Sephardi library in the world, housing more than 70,000 volumes of Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic newspapers.

4. Research institutions

This contains little-known archival and library collections on Jews from many eastern countries, such as Greece, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Bukhara and Cochin. The Haberman Institute or *Ha'aguda le'Tipuah Hevra Ve'Tarbut* (The Association for the Cultivation of Community and Culture) have rich collections on a wide range of Sephardi and Mizrahi Jewish communities.

5. Immigrant and other ethnic associations

The two Syrian organizations are relatively new, and have amassed libraries, genealogical materials such as circumcision and immigration records, and have taken a great interest in their respective Damascan and Aleppo rabbinic dynasties and lineages. The Libyan and Iraqi groups have built up impressive museums, libraries, and archival collections.

The Heritage House for Libyan Jewry and The Iraqi Center for the Heritage of Babylonian Jewry, both located in Or Yehuda (near Ben-Gurion Airport), have begun to collect family projects, trees and photographs.

Both are currently constructing new buildings which will be used as heritage

centres: the Libyan *Or Shalom* (Bat Yam) and The Ezra Laniado Mosul Jewry (Iraq) Heritage Center in Tirat Carmel, south of Haifa. The municipality of Or Yehuda has actively supported ethnic museums and new centres on Bukharan, Georgian and Ethiopian Jewry are now in preparation.

The Kurdish associations have also organized themselves and currently publish newsletters and journals, while their offices contain membership lists and data on their migration from Kurdistan and settlement throughout Israel. Kurdish Jewry has become the basis of Iraqi Jewry in recent centuries as the "Old Babylonian Jewry" dwindled. This information is also important for Sephardi Jewry because in Jerusalem and the Jewish *yishuv* there were many marriages between the Balkan Judeo-Spanish speaking Jews and the Kurdish groups.



Ketubah, Istanbul 1862

6. Agricultural settlements

The authors spent a great deal of time tracing Sephardi/Mizrahi settlements on *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*. The settlement groups are divided by country of origin and



sometimes even by city or region of origin. In many cases it was not clear whether the specific Sephardi group founded the settlement or arrived later.

This research has shown that the *Sephardim* played a much larger role in agricultural settlement, whether *kibbutz* or *moshav*, than was previously believed. *Sephardim* settled on many *kibbutzim* in the form of settlement groups.

It was known that *Mizrahim* comprised the major group forming the new wave of settlement on *moshavim* between 1948-1950. This study has illuminated the vast number of Moroccan, Tunisian, Yemenite, Kurdish and Cochin Jews settling on *moshavim*. Even the urbanite Egyptian, Karaite and Turkish Jews wound up on numerous settlements.

7. Synagogues

Efforts were made to collect information about a few synagogues from most Sephardi/Mizrahi ethnic groups. Libyan Jews immigrated to Israel through prior preparation and sponsorship from the religious Ashkenazi Mizrahi political movement. In Israel they continued their religious

practices, as opposed to most *Sephardim/Mizrahim*, who underwent secularization due to the influence of the ruling secular socialist *Mapai* Party. Libyan Jews have more than 160 synagogues in Israel.

8. Memorials

Two memorials have been erected: one for the Libyan victims of the terrible riots that occurred in 1945, 1948 and 1967, and the other one for the Tunisian children and their guides (*madrikhim*) who perished in an airplane crash near Oslo, Norway, on their way to Israel in 1949.

9. Homes for the aged

Several Sephardi/Eastern ethnic groups founded and operate retirement homes for their members. Other retirement homes are organized for the larger Sephardi/Mizrahi population and are not defined by country of origin. These are valuable resources for finding elderly members. Usually, the institutions are open to visitors who should arrange any visit in advance with the staff.

The appendices

There are 24 appendices which contain diverse lists of Sephardic/Mizrahi Jews, such as those who arrived during the period of the British Mandate and earlier, as well as historical lists and information from Holland, Greece, Croatia and elsewhere. A general index covering all the names found in the text and in the appendices will conclude this comprehensive project.

- **Mathilde Tagger is an active member of the IGS and its Sephardim SIG. Yitzchak Kerem is an historian and researcher on Greek and Sephardic Jewry.**

Conference lectures, recorded using MP3 technology, can be obtained by sending in the form which can be obtained at www.isragen.org.il/ROS/CD/2004ConfCDlecture.pdf.

Archives and libraries in Israel

PART of the material made available at the Jerusalem Conference was a list of Israeli resources. These references were actually “hot-linked” on their website page, which meant that when you clicked on the item, you were taken directly to the page. Unfortunately, as this technology is not yet available for the printed page, we have manually supplied the links for you. Bear in mind, web address exchange, sites close or move.

We gratefully acknowledge the work done by the Israel Genealogical Society in compiling this valuable list and hope members will make full use of the resources listed. See www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/archive-resources-index-subj.html for an initial overview.

JERUSALEM

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People

<http://sites.huji.ac.il/archives/>

Central Zionist Archives

www.wzo.org.il/cza/Default.htm

Center for Research on Dutch Jewry

<http://dutchjewry.huji.ac.il/>

Israel State Archives

Website under construction

Jerusalem City Archives

www.jerusalem.muni.il/

Jewish National and University Library

Department of Manuscripts and Archives

<http://jnul.huji.ac.il/imhm/index.html>

<http://sites.huji.ac.il/archives/>

Eran Leor Cartographic Collection

<http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/maps/jer/>

Microfilm Room

<http://jnul.huji.ac.il/imhm/index.html>

Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) Archives

www.jdc.org.il/ and www.jdc.org.il/archives/index.html

Oral History Department, Hebrew University

http://icj.huji.ac.il/archives_ohd.asp

Yad Vashem Archives and Library

<http://yadvashem.org>

TEL AVIV

Beit Hatefusoth—The Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Tel Aviv University

www.bh.org.il/

Hagana Archive

www.archives.mod.gov.il/default_h.asp (Hebrew)

Jabotinsky Institute in Israel

www.jabotinsky.org/

Rambam Library, Beit Ariela, Tel-Aviv

www.tel-aviv.gov.il/Hebrew/Community/Ariela/Sections/Rambam.htm

S L Shneiderman Archives at the Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University
www.lib.umd.edu/LSSES/donors/thematic.html
The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Center for the Media of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv University
www.tau.ac.il/institutes/bronfman/
The Aviezer Yellin Archives of Jewish Education in Israel and the Diaspora
www.tau.ac.il/education/
The Israeli Documentation Center for the Performing Arts (IDCPA), Tel Aviv University
www.tau.ac.il/arts/CENTERS/theatre.html

CENTRAL AREA (excluding Tel Aviv)

Archives of the Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel, Hof Hasharon Shefayim
www.jewishgen.org/Courland/data_by_sources.htm#shefayim
Beit Theresienstadt, Givat Haim— Ihud
www.bterezin.org.il/
Dr Zerah Warhaftig Institute for the Research on Religious Zionism, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan
www.biu.ac.il/JS/riz/ (in Hebrew) and <http://aleph.biu.ac.il:4500/ALEPH/ENG/BAR/BAR/RIZ/START>
The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, Or Yehuda
www.babylonjewry.org.il/
The Central School for Holocaust Studies, Beit Wolyn, Givatayim.
www.yadvashem.org.il/

NORTH

Ghetto Fighters House, Beit Lohamei Hagetaot, between Akko (Acre) and Nahariya.



<http://english.gfh.org.il/> or <http://hebrew.gfh.org.il/>
Haifa Municipal Archives, Haifa
www.haifa.muni.il/English/Default.htm
Memorial Museum of Hungarian Speaking Jewry, Safed
www.hjm.org.il/
Safed— The Ancient Cemetery, British registration and assport registration records from the British Mandate period, names of records available in **Beit HaMeiri Museum**, *yahrzeit* list from the Safed Old Age Home
www.safedfound.org.il/online.asp

SOUTH

Beit Haedut, Nir Galim, near Ashdod
www.beit-haedut.org.il/ (Hebrew, English site under construction)
The Religious Kibbutz Movement Archive (Hakibbutz Hadati)
www.kdati.org.ill/ (Hebrew)

Updated appendices from *A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel, 1994*

www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/AppendixA.html
Appendix A—**Yizkor (Memorial) Books** in the Library at *Yad Vashem* updated 2004
www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/AppendixA-1.html
Abbreviations
www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/AppendixA-1.html
Genealogies
www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/YBI-genealogies.pdf
Yizkor (Holocaust Memorial) books
www.nypl.org/research/chss/jws/yizkorbooks_intro.cfm
Dorot Jewish Division—The New York Public Library



Model of the Great Synagogue in Újpest, Hungary

Appendix G—**Files on Germany and the Netherlands** at the CAHJP, updated 2004

www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/CAHJP-Microfilms.pdf

Appendix K—**Montefiore censuses** at the Jewish National and University Library

www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/AppedixK-2.html

Appendix L—**The 19th Century Montefiore censuses**

www.isragen.org.il/ros/archives/AppedixL-2.html

Appendix P—**Hevrot Kadisha (Burial societies)** updated 2004

www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/Hevra%20Kadish.html

Appendix R—**Arabic alphabet**

www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/appendix-arabic.html

Cyrillic alphabet

As above . . . [/appendix-cyrillic.html](#)

Hebrew alphabet

As above . . . [/appendix-hebrew.html](#)

Hebrew Letter Charts

NAME	BO-OK	CUR-SIVE	BO-LD	RA-SHI	HA-ND	NUM-BER	Sound	Literal Meaning	Symbolic Meaning
Aleph	א	א	א	א	א	1	a	ox, bull	strength, leader, first
Bet /Vet	ב	ב	ב	ב	ב	2	b/v	temple, house	household in, into

Old German alphabet

As above . . . [/appendix-oldger.html](#)

Recent Sephardic Hebrew scripts

As above . . . [/appendix-seph-heb.html](#)

New Sephardic cursive alphabet

As above . . . [/appendix-seph-curs.html](#)

Other resources

Annotated bibliography of published books on Jewish cemeteries in Jewish National and University Library, Library of the Ben Zvi Institute and Library of Israel Genealogical Society.

Early Hebrew newspapers

The Jewish National and University Library, David and Fela Shapell Family Digitization Project, offers access to its Historic Hebrew Newspapers project. The first stage of the project, now completed, contains: *Halevanon* (1863-1886), *Hamagid* (1856-1903), *Havazelet* (1863-1911). The search engine is on the Hebrew site. Search by date, volume, subject and author.

<http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/newspapers/eng.html>

<http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/newspapers/index1024.html>

Researching Jewish genealogy in Holland—April 2004

www.isragen.org.il/ROS/ARCHIVES/holland.html

We Shall Remember Them All—*Nizkor Et Kulam*

www.izkor.gov.il/izkor12.htm (Hebrew)

Official government website, in Hebrew, for those who fell. The database includes a picture of each soldier and his story. It can be searched by the first letter of the family name, the Hebrew date of soldier died, or the community he lived in. This last option allows you to find the soldier without typing in Hebrew.

Footsteps in the past

by Doreen Berger

AN ACCIDENT TO A WEDDING PARTY AT TIBERIUS—A tragical accident happened the other day at Tiberius where as we are told by the *Habazeleth*, Rabbi Raphael Mamon, formerly spiritual head of the Spanish congregation at Sefad, was officiating at the nuptials of his grandson. The guests, being numerous, were accommodated in an old and spacious house situated within that Spanish row of buildings which had been spared by the destructive earthquake of 1834.

A species of balcony, peculiar to most Hispano-Jewish houses, was used as the flooring on which the canopy was erected, and where, besides the bride and the bridegroom, about 40 guests presented themselves. Before, however, the bridegroom could complete the binding words of the betrothal, the balcony gave way amidst the deafening screams of the assembly.

Many men, women and children fell into a deep pit below, and others fled precipitately, under the impression they had to save themselves from a sudden eruption of a volcano. An aged man received fatal injuries from which he died, having lingered two days. The unfortunate couple were eventually married before the coming in of the Sabbath, in the presence of 10 men. *Jewish Chronicle* May 9, 1873.

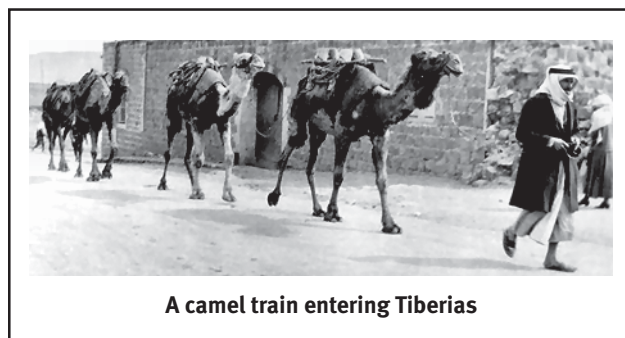
To the Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*

Sir, During my stay in Tangier, I had the pleasure of being invited to a Jewish wedding, and a most interesting affair it was. Contrary to general idea, early marriages seldom take place among the Jews of Tangier, the age of the contracting parties differing little from that usual in Western Europe. Neither do the Jews of the northern coast of Morocco practice polygamy, though in the interior it is a common occurrence for them to have two or more wives, according to their position.

In the circumstance to which I refer, the engagement had taken place two years previously. On the Sabbath preceding the marriage, friends were invited to a repast at the house of the bride's parents, and on Tuesday the festivities commenced.

At about 10 o'clock the lady friends assembled at the house of the bride's father. The bride, who wore a scarlet dress, embroidered with gold, sat at the top of the room; her face was thickly powdered, whilst her fingers were stained with "henna", an indigenous plant, which produced light brown dye; with this dye curious devices were painted on her hands, others having the same ornamentation.

Among her rings, which I was allowed to admire, I perceived the never-failing charm, carved in the shape of a hand, all worn by the Jewesses of Tangier to guard off the evil eye; on either side of the house door an open hand painted in red, also for the same purpose. In one corner of



A camel train entering Tiberias

the room four Moorish musicians sat cross-legged, chanting Arabic songs of love in a peculiarly droll manner, the instrumental accompaniment consisting of a guitar, violin and tambourine.

Having chatted until five p.m., the ladies proceeded to another apartment to partake of green tea and sweets. Tangerine etiquette differs considerably from European, the guests conveying away in their handkerchiefs the remnants of the feast. At six the ladies made way for the gentlemen—the bridegroom being absent according to custom from the bride's house. The festivities were continued until eight, and the bride was then covered with the marriage veil, her head being surmounted by a wide head-dress adorned with flowers. Her eyes were closed by her mother, otherwise the bride might feel bashful at meeting the gaze of the assembled company.

After embracing her father, she was conducted to a special palanquin, and in this was carried, with her mother and sister, to her future home, where her intended husband awaited her.

On arrival she was led to a seat on a dais prepared in the apartment in which the ceremony was to be solemnised, her mother sitting on one side of her and the bridegroom's mother on the other. Here she remained for some time until the company gradually dispersed.

She was then confided to the charge of her future mother-in-law, under whose care she remained until nine o'clock the following morning, when the marriage was celebrated in the presence of about 50 friends, ladies and gentlemen, the former being attired as at the previous day, while a few of the latter were dressed in European style; the majority, however, wore the sombre characteristic dress of the Israelites of the country, consisting of a black skull cap, dark blue gaberdine, and short baggy trousers with white stockings.

The bride again sat on the dais, whilst the bridegroom, wearing a *talith* and phylacteries, his dress being European, even to the silk hat, stood at the foot, under the overhanging canopy. Prayers were said by the officiating minister, and the customary glass broken by the bridegroom, after which congratulations were offered to the newly-wedded couple. At about 11 o'clock the ladies breakfasted, followed by the gentlemen, and at two p.m. the company dispersed.

Next day the young husband went to render homage to his mother-in-law by kissing her hand, and a dance on the following Saturday night concluded the festivities.

I am Sir, yours obediently,
Frederick Sternberg Clifton,
Bristol, 22 March 1880.

All change for names!

by David Farber

FOR Jewish genealogists, names have a great deal of significance. Information about family backgrounds or places of origin may be incorporated in a name if you know where to look.

We Jews have an advantage over other Europeans in that our patronymic has been included in our names since biblical times, whereas in most European countries the use of surnames became a legal obligation only in the early 19th century. At first the obvious choices were made: the town where you lived or your trade.

Often your patronymic was translated into the local language, so that *Yosiel ben Yakov* became Joseph Jacobson. Genealogists should be wary, however, because we cannot always assume that these apparent links are true without further investigation.

Ashkenazi Jews have the tradition of naming a child after a deceased member of the family in the belief that by so doing they are perpetuating the name and thus the memory of the deceased. *Sephardim*, on the other hand, may call a child after a grandparent even if that grandparent is still alive. A Sephardi boy is named after his father only if the father has died before the boy is born.

This tradition may also help genealogists because the same name cropping up frequently can be an indication of a family relationship. My Hebrew name is *Chaim Dovid Shlomo*; *Chaim* after my father's brother and *Dovid Shlomo* after my mother's great-uncle. A few years ago a cousin in the United States sent me a family tree of my mother's family, and I was amazed to see that the name *Dovid Shlomo* occurred frequently in the anglicised versions of David Solomon, Solly, *Shloime*, *Duddy*, etc.

Cousins of my mother whom I had known for years by their nicknames had, I suddenly realised, the same name as mine. I also recognized that one or two men, whom I had in my ignorance presumed were merely friends or acquaintances, were actually family members!

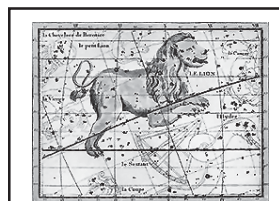
Traditions and practices

My knowledge of the traditions and practices regarding Jewish names was much extended when I went to work at the Manchester Jewish Homes for the Aged, now renamed The Heathlands Village. One of my areas of responsibility was the provision of memorial plaques and it was my duty to help people sort out the names and dates of the deceased to put on the plaques. Documents did not help much, especially for working-class immigrants who had arrived here during 1890-1920 with limited knowledge of English.

I was surprised to learn that so many people had no idea of their parents' or even their own Hebrew names. At times my investigations had to be worthy of Sherlock Holmes. The prime source of information is preferably some sort of

legal document, for example a *ketubah* (marriage certificate). In the period mentioned above, when certificates may have been written by semi-literate *rabbonim* whose claim to *smicha* (authorisation) was tenuous, mistakes were made and sometimes names were virtually plucked out of thin air. One of the favourites was to take a familiar diminutive nickname and write it down as a proper name. In Yiddish, or maybe originally in Russian/Polish, the suffixes *ke* or *kele* denote the diminutive or familiar forms of a name. Thus my wife, whose middle name is Freda, ought to have been given the Hebrew name *Frayda*, but as her Yiddish grandmother usually called her *Frayke* and sometimes *Fraykele*, *Frayke* is on our *ketubah*.

Another confusing point is the adoption into Hebrew of foreign names such as *Todros* and *Aleksander* (often abbreviated to *Sender* or *Sander* in Yiddish) which are both of Greek derivation, while the Russian diminutive is *Sasha*, also a common Yiddish name. One rather strange instance is *Devorah* (Hebrew for bee and the first woman judge in the Bible; Deborah in English) which in Russian became *Dobrush*. This, in turn, became reabsorbed into the Jewish world as *Dobrush* or *Dobbish*.



**Leo the Lion:
Funny, you don't look
Jewish!**

Yiddish names and the "Yiddishisation" of Hebrew names provide fertile ground for confusion. This is made more frustrating by the frequently used style of taking a name in both its Hebrew and Yiddish forms. Thus you may think that a man named *Aryeh Leib* has two names, but *Leib* is

Yiddish for the Hebrew *Aryeh* which means a lion. *Aryeh* is also the equivalent of Leo in the signs of the Zodiac. *Leib* is often developed into *Leibl* or *Leibish*.

Women's names

Some examples of women's names include Minnie, from the Hebrew *Minna* which often changes to *Mindl* in Yiddish. A girl called *Hadassah*, Hebrew for pretty, the real name of Queen Esther, is likely to be called *Shayna/Shayndl* and the familiar *Shayndele* in Yiddish. A number of names are linked, such as *Chaya Sarah*, the name of one of the *sidrot* (weekly portion of the Pentateuch read in synagogues on *Shabbat*) where the opening sentence reads "And the life of Sarah was ..."). *Dovid Shlomo*, the two kings, father and son, is also linked.

So far we have touched on the vast subject of first names. In the early 19th century the legal requirement for surnames opened a whole new ball game. Many people already had family names from various sources but the legal requirement to have a surname often fired the imagination. The old favourites were obvious: adoption of one's patronymic, the town where one lived, one's occupation or some physical attribute or disability. Usually these adaptations followed the language of the country of residence.

The fun really started in the last quarter of the 19th century, when emigration to America began to increase and immigrants arrived on American and English shores speaking little or no English, and bearing complicated



foreign-sounding names. Immigration officials of the time were also poorly educated and, being unable to read foreign documents, conjured up some wonderful names.

Some emigrants were told back home that their Hebrew first names had an English equivalent. When they arrived at immigration an official asked them

“What is your name?” Name sounds like the Yiddish “*Nahme*” so they understood what was wanted and quoted the name they had been told.

When the official asked for the surname, they could not understand the difference so they quoted the same name again, which is why there were many with doubled names, like Morris Morris, David David, or Samuel Samuels. Some names were arrived at by misunderstandings.

For instance, the man who had been a tailor in *der Heim*, having got past his first name, Samuel, when asked again, thinking they wanted his trade, replied in Yiddish *Schneider*, and so was recorded as Samuel Schneider!

An Irish rabbi

So common were these events that they became immortalised in the story of the cardinal attending an inter-faith dinner who found himself seated next to an orthodox rabbi, with traditional beard and *peyoth* (side curls). Looking at his name on the table place card he was surprised to see the name ‘Rabbi Sean Ferguson’.



“That’s an unusual name for a Jewish person, rabbi, I suppose you’ve changed it?” “No”, replied the rabbi, “I was named after my grandfather of blessed

memory. As he was leaving the old country to sail here, a friend told him an English version of his name. He kept repeating to himself, over and over, being nervous in case he forgot it.

“When he arrived in front of the immigration official he was in such a state that, when asked for his name, his mind went completely blank. ‘Oy!’ he said. ‘*Ich hob shoyrn vergessen*’ (I have forgotten already). The reply: ‘Welcome to America, Sean Ferguson.’” So you see there really can be a lot in a name.

● **After working in the family travel agency, the author became administrator of the Manchester Jewish Home for the Aged.**

■ We would be interested in hearing any stories about names being changed on arrival, and also from any descendants of much-maligned immigration officers!

Who changed their names?

This subject was covered in *JGSGB-discuss* recently.

David Fielker wrote: When people arrived at immigration here, an official asked what their name was. This seems to perpetuate the myth of the name change. My grandfather said his name was Fialka but it was spelled Fielker. In America, names were on passenger lists and any errors were recorded at the European port of departure.

My sisters and I spent three of the World War II years at a Jewish evacuation hostel where we were all given Hebrew names. My own only required a change of pronunciation. My sister Marianne became Miriam—which sounded the same. Valerie, however, became Shulamith, with the completely erroneous explanation that Valerie came from the Latin *vale*, meaning farewell (it does not), hence *shalom*, used as a greeting, which is itself doubtful since it means “peace”, and Shulamith was supposedly derived from that, which is also doubtful!

Alan Cohen asked: My paternal grandfather’s surname in the United Kingdom was Cohen. My father always said the real name was Kunyen and was changed by immigration officials. Grandfather actually signed his marriage certificate as Cohen, in Cyrillic, the year after arriving here. Moreover, his *ketubah* gives his father’s name as Shneur Zalman ha-Kohen. So which is correct?

Judith Romney Wegner replied: In different ways, they are probably all correct. Clearly the family are *Kohanim*, which is why your grandfather’s Hebrew name includes *ha-Kohen*. As given on the *ketubah*, that is not a surname as such but just the standard title which is always tacked on to the Hebrew name of a *Kohen* every time someone of that name is called to the *Torah*.

Your grandfather’s surname could well have been “Kunyen” or something like it. When surnames came in, many (perhaps most) *Kohanim* either chose Kohen, Kahn, Kuhn, Kahana, Kagan, etc. as their surname or took some other surname beginning with a K. However, I think it was not uncommon for *Kohanim* who entered with foreign sounding “K” names, to change their names later to Cohen.

I have a great-grandfather, Jacob Cohen, who came from Poland with his three brothers, all four surnamed Wartski at the time. Later, two of the brothers, including my great-grandfather, switched to Cohen. My guess is that the family were *Kohanim*, but the two who switched evidently perceived Cohen as sounding more English, or at least less foreign, than Wartski!

Tracing Rivka Sigal

by Elaine Paradise

MY late mother, Miriam Bennett, (née Becker/Baker) once told me that she had a relative who, as a child, managed to get to Israel from Poland. She thought the child's mother's name was Yetta. I knew the names of my grandparents and great-grandparents and that the family came from Witkow Nowy¹ near Radichov, now in Ukraine.

On the first night of my late mother's Shiva, 24 December 1998, held at her sister Helen's home in Manchester, Helen brought out a photograph album. Many of the photographs had been taken out but one of the remaining ones was of an unknown young girl, aged about 16. I carefully removed this from the page to which it has been stuck and on the reverse was written in Hebrew, *to my uncle (my grandfather), from your niece, Rivka Sigal, Tel Aviv, April 1947.*

So began my search for Rivka. In 1999, when on holiday in Israel, I visited the Ministry of Internal Affairs but because I did not know Rivka's husband's name (if she had one) or her father's, they could not help me. I visited the Ministry of the Interior which gave me a list of Rivka Sigals but nobody seemed sure which, if any, were mine.

I wrote to the guru of missing persons, Batya Unterschaft who was then at the Bureau for Missing Relatives² but even she could not find her and I also sent a message to the *Jewishgen* discussion group³. I had a reply from the Jewish Genealogical Society in Israel⁴ who were extremely helpful but unable to trace her. It was suggested, incorrectly as I found out, that I contact the Red Cross in Israel.⁵

Lucky meeting

In a chance conversation with Saul Issroff, an honorary vice-president of the JGSGB, at the Washington conference last year, I mentioned that I was trying to find Rivka, a missing relative in Israel. Saul introduced me to Rose Lerer Cohen from Israel with whom he had recently written *The Jews of Lithuania* and after the conference Rose e-mailed me the name of the person she thought might be able to help me, Eva Floersheim, whom I e-mailed with the scant information I had.

A few days later Eva replied: she had found in the *Pages of Testimony* at *Yad Vashem* the names of Rivka's parents.

"Jenta Beker, born 1898 in Witkow Stry, was the daughter of Abraham and Chana Rosa Beker. She was married to Szmul (Samuel) Sigal (born 1894) and was the mother of three children." I also learned that Jenta had a brother, Natan Beker, born 1893, in Witkow Nowy. Natan was married to Eta and they had three children.

This information was submitted to *Yad Vashem* by a Josef Beker in 1956 who lived in Tel Aviv. I discovered Josef Beker had passed away. With this information I wrote to *Yad Vashem* to find out further details. Jenta (Beker) and Szmul Sigal, Natan Beker (Jenta's brother), his wife, Eta, their children Hudel and Yitzhak Beker all perished at Mosty Wielkie Camp, now in the Ukraine, in 1943.

Several years ago I had visited *Yad Vashem* and taken copies of the *yizkor* book which included Witkow Nowy and had also copied the necrology which included the name Beker. I looked again at the list of names and found another child of Natan's was listed which was not included in the above list. Once more I e-mailed *Yad Vashem* and found that there were pages of testimony on Beker Eta, Natan and their son Avraham of Witkow Nowy, but this time it had been submitted to the Hall of Names by the victims' friend Mr Yitzhak Sigal from Netanya, Israel, in 1989. Two people had given testimony on the same family.

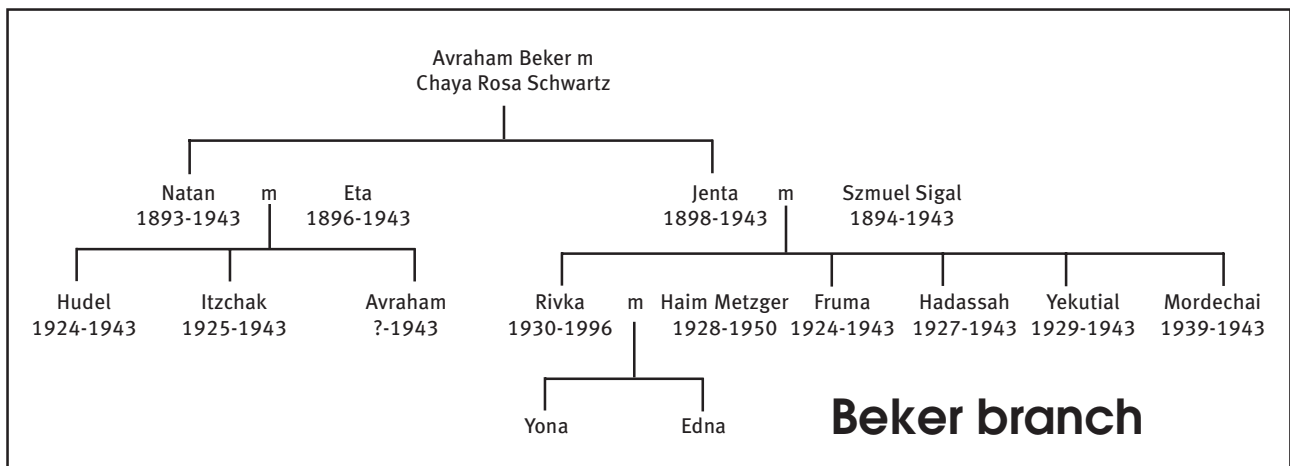
I put yet another message on the *Jewishgen* discussion page asking if anyone knew of Yitzhak Sigal from Netanya. One most helpful researcher in Israel found his address was no longer listed, called the cemetery in Netanya and was told that he was buried there but was unable to visit the cemetery. Not to be deterred by this, I e-mailed a friend in Israel, Sharona, who was advised to contact the *Chevra Kadisha* (burial society) for Netanya. They were helpful and gave her the

name of a friend of Yitzhak, Shabtai Levy, who had arranged his funeral as Yitzhak seemed to have no close relatives. Shabtai gave Sharona the name of the lawyer who handled the will, Sharona contacted her and was given the name of Yitzhak Sigal's nephew, Edi Sigal, who did remember Rivka as a child and knew she had two daughters but had lost contact with them more than 40 years ago.

I telephoned Edi. He found out for me that Rivka had died in 1996 and that one of her daughters, Yona, lived in Jerusalem. I posted another message to *Jewishgen* and sure enough somebody came back with her address which Edi did not have at that time. I rang Yona. She had remembered her mother mentioning an uncle who lived in Manchester. Through Sharona, I arranged to meet Yona, her two children, and Edi and his brother David. Edi had brought his uncle Yitzhak Sigal's file in which Yitzhak had drawn a plan of the village of Witkow Nowy listing many names of inhabitants including the Beker and Sigal families. It was an emotional and wonderful meeting.



Rivka, aged about 16



So how did Rivka manage to get to Israel? At the age of ten she survived by escaping from the train on the way to a concentration camp, worked on a farm and after the war went back to Witkov. With the help of a charity, Rivka went to a camp in Germany, where she stayed for six months before obtaining a visa. In Israel she went to an agricultural school and under the auspices of the school joined the group that established *Kibbutz Be'erot Yitzhak*. “On the night of *Yom Kippur* 1946, the students were quickly organised for a secret mission and built Kfar Darom overnight.”⁶

She eventually married and had two children but had lost three sisters, one brother, parents and relatives, either shot, murdered while sick in a hospital, or in the camps.

I have now found Rivka, her daughter Yona and her two grandchildren. Yona has now found a family. However, the story does not finish here.

Marvellous memory

Two days after the reunion, I visited the Hall of Names at *Yad Vashem*. I asked the English-speaking volunteer, Rabbi Schachter, for help with finding information on the families from Witkov Nowy submitted by Yitzhak Sigal. At the mention of his name, he replied: “Ah, the *tzadick* (righteous person) from Witkov Nowy”. Yitzhak Sigal had come there in 1980; Rabbi Schachter had noticed him and asked if he could help. With the rabbi’s encouragement, Yitzhak had, over several months, managed to remember 697 names of the Jewish residents of Witkov Nowy and had drawn a plan showing where they lived, in 1939. In all, *Yad Vashem* has the name of 942 Jews from Witkov Nowy who lost their lives in the Holocaust.



Rabbi Schachter recalled that in more than 20 years at *Yad Vashem* helping survivors find their families, there were only a few he could recall so clearly and Yitzhak was one those. He commented: “If anybody who survived the Holocaust could remember his own name, that was really something”.

He was so impressed by the work done by Jicchhak that he arranged for him to be awarded a certificate from the Ministry of the Interior for his contribution to *Yad Vashem*. Rabbi Schachter volunteers there for three hours on two days a week: I just happened to be there at the right time to hear this story.

● The author, an occupational psychologist and careers consultant, is on the JGSGB Council.

REFERENCES

1. Witkov Nowy, 30 miles NE of L'viv, is now in Ukraine at map coordinates 5019 2429.
2. The Bureau for Missing Relatives no longer exists. It is now the Family Research Department, (*Ha'mador Lechecher Ha'mishpacha*) at the Central Zionist Archive, Zalman Shazar 4, P.O. Box 92, Jerusalem 91000. They have *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) material from 1919 to 1968 and some of the files from the Search Bureau, shipping lists, a number of passports and other information relating to *aliyah* to Israel. They charge a fee for their search.
3. www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/DiscussionGroup.htm.
4. www.isragen.org.il.
5. In dealing with Missing Persons searches you should contact the local Red Cross Society who then refer to the relevant correspondent unit in the foreign country. Enquiries to the Red Cross should start with the branch in the country of the researcher. The International Tracing and Message Services, British Red Cross, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EJ, tel. 020 7235 5454. www.redcross.org.uk.
6. For information about Kfar Darom see testimony of Shmuel Armal, <http://209.58.241.78/vjholidays/yomhashoa/shmuel.htm>.

The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names at *Yad Vashem* went on-line in November 2004 at www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome.

I should like to thank the many named and unnamed people who helped me in my search.

The original title of the *yizkor* book is *Sefer zikaron* (Memorial Book) *le-kehillot Radikhov, Lopatyn, Witkov Nowy, Cholojow, Toporow, Stanislawczyk, Stremiltsch, Shtruvits, ve-ha-kefarim Ubin, Barylow, Wolica-Wygoda, Strilow, Zawidze, Mikolajow, Dmytrow*.

Part of the book has been translated: www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/radekhov/radekhov.html.

The closed cemeteries of Manchester

by Lorna Kay

IN August 2004 the Manchester Branch of the JGSGB toured four closed Jewish cemeteries in and around Manchester with a knowledgeable and amiable guide, Yaakov Wise. We easily filled the 16-seater mini-bus which we had hired and regrettably had to disappoint the other eight people who wanted to join us.

Manchester's first Jewish cemetery was **Pendleton Cemetery**, in Brindle Heath Road, Salford, once part of Pendleton Village.¹ Prior to the purchase of this plot of land, Jews who died in Manchester before 1794 had to be interred in the burial grounds in Liverpool. The land on which the cemetery was established originally belonged to the church. It was purchased by the Jewish community, represented by Isaac Isaacs, Phillip Isaac Cohen and Jacob Sanks, for £43 8s 9d, (£43.43) with an annual rent of one peppercorn "if demanded", on 10 March 1794 from Samuel Brierley and Michael Hughes.

This cemetery was first used in 1794 under the auspices of the Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation (later the Great Synagogue), the last burial being in 1840 when it closed. It measures approximately 13 yards by 12 yards and contains 29 graves, most of which are overgrown. Although the grass is under control and the cemetery is clean and tidy, only about four or five flat gravestones are still visible. It is maintained by Salford City Council from time to time and there are protective railings all round it, with large gates for access.



Broken stone at Pendleton Cemetery

To one side, the area has been paved with a *Magen David* (Star of David) design picked out in small stones. An organisation called "Groundwork" is responsible for the site at the present time. A list of names of some of those buried in Pendleton Cemetery can be found in the burial registers of the Great Synagogue, at present held by the Manchester Central Library Archives.²

While we were visiting the site, a local lady, Mrs Dorothy Jones, brought across to us in a supermarket trolley a gravestone which she had found lying about.

During regeneration of the Brindle Heath area, which began in March 2004, a workman had unearthed the stone while clearing the ground before new railings were erected round the cemetery. A fallen tree had taken root in the ground and when it was lifted, the stone came up with it.

Although the workmen wanted to discard the stone, Mrs Jones realized its importance and took it home for safe-keeping.

Gratitude was expressed to Mrs Jones and the stone was put into the back of the minibus. A local *sofer* (scribe) later helped Mr Wise to decipher the wording on the stone which translates as follows: "Here lies the girl, Breinl, daughter of Mr Mordechai Yaffe (or Jaffe) who was freed from this world and buried on the Fourth day (Wednesday) 27 *Tammuz* 5558." Mr Wise calculated the Hebrew date to coincide with 11 July 1798.

Historians have no record of a Yaffe or Jaffe family living in Manchester at that time and it is possible that the deceased was the child of a travelling pedlar. Mr Wise said that as the stone is full size (36 inches by 16 inches) and is elaborately decorated, it indicates that the family must have been financially successful.

The stone of a child from a poor family would have been much smaller and plain. Conservation experts at English Heritage and the Manchester Museum are now being consulted in order to protect the stone before it goes on display.



Rescued from destruction: tombstone in a trolley



Pendleton Cemetery iron gates

The land for **Collyhurst Cemetery, Thornton Street North** was purchased in 1843 by the New Synagogue which was a breakaway orthodox synagogue. Despite the information given on the memorial plaque on site, this cemetery was only for members of the New Synagogue (and not the Great) and it was only in use from 1843 to 1872. The plaque is a fairly recent marker and the information is not accurate. This cemetery was mainly for pauper burials and for children and was established by recently arrived immigrants at that time.

Conservation area

Approximately 200 people are buried here but virtually all the graves are overgrown with just small portions of a few graves visible. Manchester City Council has erected a board stating that the area is being renovated and conserved. It is enclosed but accessible to the public and when we were there, a few youths were playing on the grass, unaware that it was a cemetery until our guide informed them.

Prestwich Cemetery, Bury New Road, Prestwich was more elitist and the plot of land was purchased by the Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation in 1840 when there were few houses in the area. The burial ground was consecrated in April 1841 and there are more than 300 graves. Wealthy families who belonged to The Great Synagogue on Cheetham Hill Road buried their dead here. The Prestwich Cemetery closed in 1951 and part of the land was turned into a Garden of Rest by the borough council to celebrate the Festival of Britain.

On the day we visited, access was impossible because it is completely overgrown with bushes and trees. A brick wall surrounds the cemetery and through a wrought iron gate we could see a little of the area. Appeals have been made to the Great and New Synagogue and Bury Metropolitan Council (who administer the Prestwich area) to provide funds to clear the undergrowth, but so far without success. The area to the side of the cemetery which once housed the mortuary house is now a well-maintained memorial garden with flower beds and seating.

Well maintained

Higher Lane Reform Cemetery, Besses o' th' Barn, Whitefield is a spacious brick-walled cemetery used only by Reform Jews and was opened in 1858 by German immigrants who were members of the Manchester Congregation of British Jews.

The cemetery was officially in use for about 100 years and although it is now closed, several plots are still available because wealthy families purchased whole sections of the cemetery for their own use. The wording on most of the headstones is either in English or German with little Hebrew. Some old headstones have a thin hard-wearing protective cover of glass on the upright section, and others have long flowing inscriptions in German. The cemetery is well maintained.

We managed to go into the *Ohel* (prayer house) where we saw the columbarium containing the ashes of approximately 200 people, set into the walls at a low level. Each section had gold lettering on the white marble front indicating the name of the deceased and the date of death.



Gothic style headstone at Whitefield Reform Cemetery

Any readers who can offer further information about these cemeteries, or who would like more information, can contact Yaakov Wise by e-mail at yaakovwise@msn.com. He has written a 40-page illustrated booklet⁴ which fills in a lot of the background detail of individuals who made their mark in this part of Manchester.

● **The author is Chairman of the Manchester branch and regional group co-ordinator of JGSGB.**

REFERENCES

1. Further information on the area can be found in a book *Brindle Heath—A Salford Village*, by Ike Chapman, publisher Neil Richardson, ISBN 0950625728. www.salford.gov.uk/living/bmd/historysearch/lhlibrary.
2. Archives and Local Studies, Manchester Central Library, St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD. Tel: 0161-234 1979/1980. www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries/arl/.
3. More information is available at Salford Local History Library, Peel Park, The Crescent, Salford M5 4WU. Tel: 0161-736 2649.
4. *A Brief History of the Jewish Community in Prestwich, Whitefield and Bury*. To obtain a copy, e-mail the author at yaakovwise@aol.com. The book is privately published; costs £4.50 including postage, and the proceeds go to charity.

The oldest established synagogue in Manchester was in **Halliwell Street** which was on the site where The Printworks now stands in Manchester city centre (at the corner of the former Withy Grove). This was where the earliest immigrant Jews lived in Manchester, a distance of some four miles from the cemetery in Pendleton, but much closer than having to make the journey to the cemetery in Liverpool.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful to Mrs Dorothy Jones for rescuing the headstone and returning it to its rightful home, and to her husband Barrie for providing the information about the book and local history.

Yarnton Manor

yizkor books

by Natalie Lamb

FOR the past two years I had promised myself a trip to the Leopold Muller Memorial Library in the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (OCHJS) at Yarnton Manor, and when I heard that the JGSGB was arranging a visit, it seemed the perfect opportunity to go.

Yarnton Manor is a restored, early 17th century country house, set in beautiful Victorian gardens, situated in the district of Cherwell, about four miles north of Oxford. When I pulled into the grounds on a sunny September morning I knew I would not be disappointed.

Our party was met by Dr Piet van Boxel, the wonderfully enthusiastic librarian, who proceeded to give us a fascinating presentation. He has been in post for some two years, and explained that previously there had been books of Jewish interest located in the libraries of a number of colleges throughout Oxford University, leading to unnecessary duplications. The OCHJS is just one of the Oxford colleges.

His mission is to consolidate and reduce the number of repositories over time and to maintain an accurate and up-to-date catalogue of the contents at Yarnton and make it available online to all researchers.

The library is housed in two converted stone barns, and its contents can be divided into two major collections. The larger of these contains a number of resources, including the Kressel Archive, within which is a vast collection of newspapers and cuttings covering the period 1935-1980, the Foyle-Montefiore collection of books, some centuries old, the Hugo Gryn collection and further treasures. However, for me the jewel in the crown, and my reason for being there that day, is the *Yizkor* Book collection.

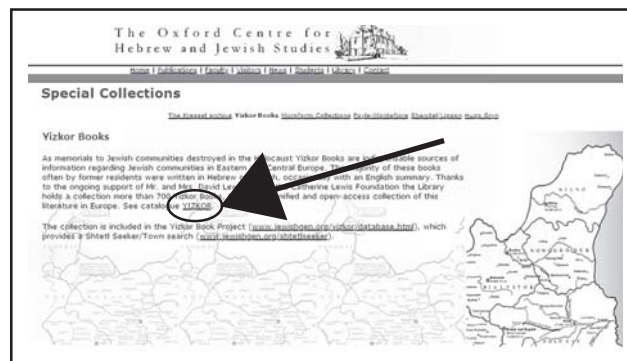
Valuable sources

Yizkor books were written by the surviving former residents of Jewish communities that were destroyed in the Holocaust. Their purpose was to document and so keep alive the names, events, stories and memories of the lost communities. Often there are photos of people and places, and generally there is a necrology, or index, of those who did not survive. They were written shortly after the end of World War II, in Hebrew or Yiddish and sometimes with a section in English, and privately published in small numbers.

Dr van Boxel is passionate about the importance of building this collection at Yarnton. It currently contains some 700 books out of a total published of about 1,300 and is already the largest of its kind in Europe.

The collection grows constantly, thanks to the generosity of benefactors who have provided funds for Dr van Boxel to buy as many books as he can find.

The online catalogue is available for anyone to search. To see if there is a *yizkor* book for your family's *shtetl*, go



to the following website <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ochjs/library/yizkor.html> and select *YIZKOR* (see arrow). This reveals a search page, offering Roman or Hebrew characters input, with a bi-lingual virtual keyboard.

This was where I headed once the presentation had concluded. I already knew that there was a copy of the book for Łowicz, the Polish town where my late father had been born in 1907, and which I visited in 2001. He was fortunate to have come to England as a boy with his parents and siblings. Although he did not speak of his maternal Rozendorn line, my genealogical research over the past few years had revealed a large family living in Łowicz since at least the 1840s. Two years ago, I was “found” via the Internet by surviving relatives now living in Australia, and with their help have updated my fairly comprehensive family tree to modern times.

I still had a number of names on my tree for whom there was no closure. I had guessed what their fate must have been, but had seen no evidence of it in any of the databases searched so far. Now I have it. There, in the necrology index of the Łowicz *Yizkor* Book, I found written in Yiddish the names of my father’s Aunt Helena, and 10 of his cousins, and finally I knew conclusively that they did not survive and perhaps why my father did not speak of them.

I left Yarnton with photocopies of all the pages that I needed, and headed for home with mixed emotions, but satisfied that my lost family whom I never knew would not now be forgotten, but that I would be able to think of them in the synagogue at the *Yizkor* service on *Yom Kippur*.

I shall go to the library again, not just to look for more names in other *shtetls*, but also to investigate the inviting shelves of the other collections.

My thanks go to Cyril Fox and Reva Hill for arranging the visit. It would have been well worth going there even if I had not managed to find what I was looking for.

- **The author’s Polish father came to England in 1912 and she has been researching her family since 1997.**



**Yarnton Manor,
built c. 1611
by Sir Thomas Spencer**

BOOK REVIEW

Memorial Volumes to Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust

GENEALOGY is a multi-disciplinary study leading the researcher down a host of avenues into the past as we learn more about the lives of our forebears and their descendants. After the accumulation of vital records we broaden the scope of our research in the hope of discovering more about the lives of those we are following through history.

In most cases our relatives did not leave us their biographies. Attempting to better understand their lives we search for material about the period in which they lived and the communities that were their homes. Eventually, all roads lead back to Europe, where the majority of our ancestors and relatives lived prior to their emigration or the catastrophic events of the Holocaust.

The *Yizkor Buch* or *Memorial Volume* is a genre of Jewish literature that sprang up as a result of the Holocaust, where individuals or groups of former residents of particular towns and cities compiled histories of their lost communities. These volumes are rich in biographical, cultural, geographic, visual and historical information about the locations they describe. Furthermore, they might be the only social histories written about the particular area of interest.

Ilana Tahan, Hebraica Curator at the British Library, took on the formidable task of cataloguing the collection of more than 300 Memorial Volumes which make up the subject of her bibliography. Not only has she meticulously noted their bibliographic details but she has provided the reader with a host of fascinating facts and trends relating to these books in her introduction, appendixes and indexes. We learn that about 80 per cent of the volumes were published by *Landmanschaft* organizations and the rest by individual authors. Some communities are memorialized more than once while a few authors have been responsible for editing and writing about a number of locations.

While the majority of books were acquired by the library from the mid-1970s, the 1960s saw the issuing of the greatest number of books per year. This phenomenon is surely due to the flood of Holocaust literature in response to Adolph Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem in 1961. A minor part of the collection which refers to counties and specific regions is listed separately, while there is another section on Encyclopedic Volumes.

Most of us will have met the problem of "variant spellings" of the name of the location that we are seeking. Tahan solves this by giving us a large selection of possibilities to lead us to the right volume. She further lists locations which are not mentioned in the titles but are discussed within the text. Appendix I shows the communities by current location.

It is interesting to learn that slightly less than half were written about Polish towns where more than three million Jews resided prior to the Holocaust, while Index IV shows that the majority of volumes were published in Israel, the home to most survivors. I was surprised to learn only three of these books originated in South Africa.

The various languages in which the books are written are mainly Hebrew, Yiddish and English, some being a mix.

Others books are written in Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Ladino, Polish, Slovakian and Spanish. Peculiarly, no books are in Russian.

My only personal disappointment in this bibliography is the choice of photographs which although following the Holocaust theme, do not seem to be related in any way to the *yizkor* books themselves. Most are richly illustrated with scenes of former residents, both groups and

individuals, as well as views of the towns and maps, sometimes detailing the occupants of each house.

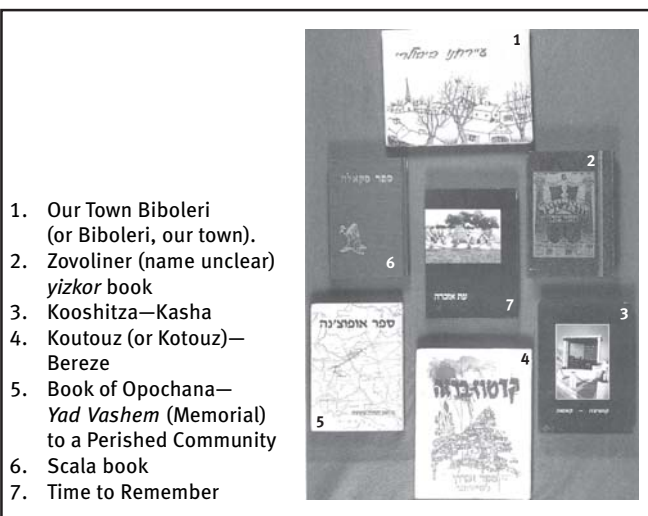
With the publication of this bibliography, Tahan brings together, a most valuable collection that will help immeasurably with many of our genealogical researches. Furthermore, the location of the collection is easily accessible to residents of the greater London area as well as visitors passing through.

Memorial Volumes to Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust: A bibliography of the British Library holdings. Compiled by Ilana Tahan with introduction by Sir Martin Gilbert. Published by the British Library, 2004, 89pp. ISBN 0-7123-4820-4. £14.95.

PAUL CHEIFITZ

☆ Be sure to look at **Jewishgen's Yizkor Book Project**, www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/, as well as the collection of the **Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies** at Yarnton Manor, Yarnton, Oxford, OX5 1PY. Tel: 01865 377946.

The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB, tel. 020-7412 7332, www.bl.uk. Nearest Tube, Kings Cross. The newspaper archives, situated in North London can be found at the British Library Newspapers, Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5HE. Tel. 020-7412 7393. Nearest Tube, Colindale.



1. Our Town Biboleri (or Biboleri, our town).
2. Zovoliner (name unclear) *yizkor* book
3. Kooshitza—Kasha
4. Koutouz (or Kotouz)—Bereze
5. Book of Opochna—*Yad Vashem* (Memorial) to a Perished Community
6. Scala book
7. Time to Remember

Out of the *shtetl* . . . into Africa . . . and beyond PART 2

by Herzl Marks

IN Part 1, Herzl's father leaves Belarus for South Africa and his mother starts describing her life in Poland with its virulent anti-Semitism after World War I, and why she wanted so desperately to escape to Palestine.

MY older daughter Ilana asks her grandmother, *Sabta*, "So the British made it difficult for you to get in?" It is evident that Ilana's earlier questions about how her grandparents met had a magically calming effect on my distraught mother whose thoughts had been centred on her husband, now on life support in Groote Schuur Hospital after his tragic traffic accident in 1979.

Responding to Ilana, my mother, Chana Marks, (*née* Janowska) nods in agreement and continues, "Our Zionist Youth movement (*Hashomer Hatzair*) had a good idea (of how unmarried Jewish girls could get into Palestine). They got single men to 'marry' single girls. They were not real marriages, just a document to get around the quota. So my cousin Meir Odelski decided to 'marry' me and add my 'married' name to his passport. I became Mrs. Odelska which was my mother's maiden name. Of course, we didn't get married, it was just a way to get two people in on one permit and it worked. There were hundreds more like us. Three hundred or 400 couples instead of 300 to 400 single *bochers* (young men). Clever, no?"

"My father told us we should believe in the *Moshiach* (Messiah) to get to *Eretz Yisrael* but *Hashomer Hatzair* believed in self-help. I used to ask my father how the *Moshiach* would solve the problems of the Jews in Poland and Russia. You know what he said? 'Trust in God, the day will come when we'll all be in Jerusalem, there's no rush. Ask Choni, he'll say the same.' Even Choni, first cousin of Albert Einstein, who had married my cousin, ended up in Treblinka with the rest of my family who didn't leave."

My mother had not calculated on the opposition she was about to encounter from her father Chaim. Even though he was regarded as a modern-thinking, wide-ranging businessman, he still firmly believed that the only way into the Promised Land, was the *Moshiach* route¹. "You know, we managed to beat the British system, but you can't believe what my father did when he heard our plan." "What did he do, *Sabta*?" Ilana asked.

"He was furious when I told him: he took my passport and tore it into little pieces, then grabbed me and gave me a beating. He told me, 'I don't want to hear such nonsense from you ever again. You understand? Isn't life good here while we wait? You've got all you could ever want, a nice home and enough money to buy whatever you need. I'll find you a good man and you'll marry him. You must wait for the *Moshiach*, that's when we'll go, together as a family.' Round and around, it went. I was already 19. When would I ever get there, and all the time I get called *Zhyd*, *Zhyd* (Jew). There had to be a way."



Chana (my mother), far left, wearing her sash, as a member of *Keren Kayemet* in Poland, 1919

Overcome by the memory, Ima spits out, "The *Moshiach*? Hitler was the *Moshiach*!" Belief in *Moshiach* was a major reason so many Jews did not try to get into Israel. None of this new-fangled Zionist doctrine for them or their families. Not even after Hitler had declared his intentions in *Mein Kampf*.²

Meir Odelski left on his own, to become a founder member of *Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek*. After the run-in with her father, a young man who had emigrated to America before the 1914 War returned to visit his parents in Łapy. He met the modern, independent of spirit, Chana, now a beautiful woman. He was smitten and asked her to marry him and return to America. Good news for Chaim who gave the proposal his blessing, happy that his dissident daughter had made a match with a successful American.

Routes to the Promised Land

In a sad voice, she recalls, "He was a very nice man, and loved me, but I didn't want to go to America. I refused. It was Israel I had to get to, but I couldn't tell them that. I couldn't speak to my mother because she was no help at all. She did what my father told her." Ima goes on, "I worked in my father's business and he gave me a lot of responsibility. He wasn't good at collecting money that was owed to him, so that was one of my jobs, to see we got paid. Business was really good and I had to deal with large sums of money. This didn't scare me. I also had to pay merchants who supplied us. I went regularly to Warsaw and to other big cities. During these trips I worked out a way how I could leave."

"I still belonged to the youth movement. They used the same route to *Eretz Yisrael*. Catch a train in Warsaw, on through Germany to England and then by boat. The Zionist Council in Poland paid for any couple who couldn't afford the fare. Single young women couldn't join these groups,

because they had to have a husband. Again they found a way around this by using a new route via Bucharest in Romania where border controls were more relaxed. Here single men with genuine certificates were able to pair up with 'wives' and wouldn't have to go through formal marriages. I decided to join one of these groups.

"The whole scheme was a *schmichel* (subterfuge), but it worked well. Lots of young people left this way. I waited for my turn to leave with Boruchansky, the 'husband' I'd been allocated. Then I got a telegram from him from his little *shtetl* that the scheme had been exposed and that many in the last group were arrested. He said he wasn't prepared to risk arrest by going with me in any new group.

"Boruchansky was a nice, gentle, honest man but a *kuhne lemmele* (ineffectual). I couldn't lose this chance and decided to go to his *shtetl* and give him the courage to continue. I told my sisters I had to go away and would be back in a day or so. I bought a train ticket but was nervous because at this time my father was travelling on business in the same area. My 'husband' lived in a shack, with his three brothers, a decent family, very poor. I said I had a new plan: we wouldn't go to Bucharest but straight from Warsaw to Vienna. It would cost double but I could get enough money for both of us. We arranged to meet in Warsaw two days later. I returned to Łapy to pack my bag. My father was still away when I finally left. I never saw him again, nor my mother, nor most of my brothers and sisters.

"Our route was from Warsaw to Vienna, Vienna to Trieste, then by boat to Alexandria and by train to *Eretz Yisrael*. In Trieste we met up with the new group of *chalutzim* (pioneers). Boruchansky got cold feet and wouldn't put me on his passport without a genuine marriage licence. It had to be *kosher*. So, then and there, I married him officially. We sailed down the Adriatic. We slept on deck, no cabins, girls separate from the men, even though we were married."

Ima finally arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* in 1923, passed through immigration control with her husband and immediately they went their separate ways. He, to start his new life, and she hers, living with distant family, the Bloch-Blumenfelds, in Tel Aviv.

The perfect match

I do not know what kind of work my mother did but suitors she had aplenty, including Moshe Nachman Marks, also newly arrived from Cape Town in 1923. At 34, he was a confirmed and bookish bachelor but he fell in love with beautiful Chana, 12 years his junior. He had one serious rival, younger and more athletic. "Very nice person," *Ima* sighs, "but Moshe seemed steadier. He was kind to me and I decided he was the right one." No messing around, no long waiting period, they decided to get married. This was not as easy as it sounds, because Chana

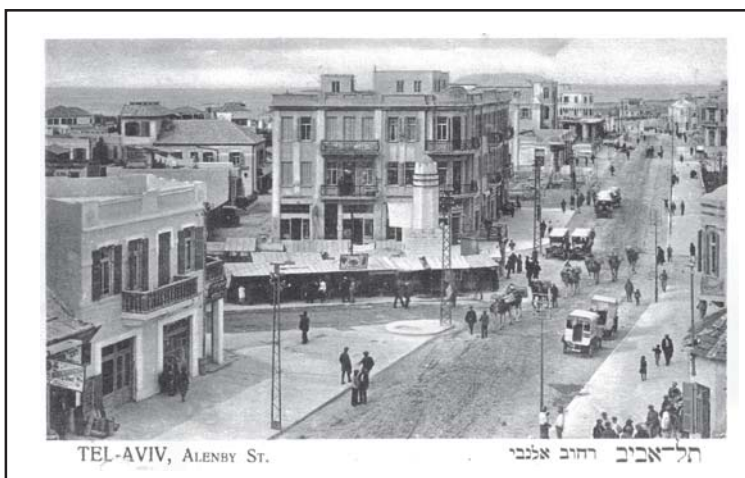
had not thought of getting a divorce from Boruchansky when she parted from him. She did not even know where to start looking.

After frantic enquiries up and down the *yishuv* (Jewish areas in Palestine), she finally traced him to a kibbutz in the Galilee. When he saw her, he was reluctant to give her a divorce and even worse, he refused to give her a *get*, a Jewish rabbinical divorce. "I worked on him, I nagged him. He said he loved me. I reasoned with him. Finally, he said OK but he'd always love me!"

Moshe and Chana married on 21 June 1925 in Tel Aviv Register Office. At that time, Tel Aviv was being built on sand dunes at the northern edge of the ancient port of Yafo (Jaffa). None of the streets was paved. "I had *kadoches*" *Ima* says of those days. For years I thought this meant nothing, penniless, so I always imagined she had had a terrible struggle to make ends meet. Nothing was further from the truth. The Bloch-Blumenfelds were leading lights in Tel Aviv and she mixed in good circles. After the marriage, they had enough money to set up a nice home. I found a deposit slip from Barclays Bank in London, transferring £1,700 to *Aba's* account in Tel Aviv. So it seems they were financially comfortable.



My parents in 1925



Kadachat habitsot, is Hebrew for malaria, which she contracted just after arriving in Israel. Despite this and searing heat, humidity and dust from the unrelenting *hamsin* (hot desert winds), *Aba* and *Ima* were ecstatic at being part of the vibrant experience of building a new country. For 2,000 years Jews had been praying daily for return to the Land of Israel. Whether all took it literally is another matter but here in their lifetime, in their vital years, they were presented with this unbelievable opportunity to be part of it.

"We used to dance in the streets, clapping in time to the music, the *hora*, joining hands in a big circle, we used to sing and dance to an accordion, *Heiveinu Shalom Aleichem* and *Hava Nagila* (songs), sometimes right through the night. As we danced our shoes made little puffs of dust and as we moved faster, so the puffs became clouds and worked into our clothes and hair, we breathed dust, but it didn't matter. It was *Yishuv* dust, our dust, hot and sweaty. We drank anything to help our dusty throats: water, *mitz* (juice), but no alcohol, not even beer, and when we weren't dancing and singing, *Aba* sometimes took me to nearby Eden Hall where we sat

and listened to recitals. I still have the programme for Jascha Heifetz's performance.

"This was the impossible dream come true, without the *Moshiach*. My father didn't have to go to the gas chambers nor my mother nor all the others. I can't think of *Moshiach*!" she murmurs sorrowfully.



Family group, Cape Town, 1930.
Bobbe, centre, with my parents on her left

The scene in Palestine was constantly clouded by the fear of attack by Arabs. Nevertheless, *Aba* went into business in Jaffa, in partnership with a friend, Lifshitz, who had built up a trusted relationship with local Arabs. However, his wife could not adjust to life in Palestine and Lifshitz offered to sell his share to *Aba*, who was quite prepared to run the business on his own but *Ima* worried that *Aba* wouldn't be safe, working alone in an Arab area.

My mother explains how life became even more difficult after Uri was born in January 1927. "He became dangerously ill with dysentery. I suffered from malaria and still got the shakes and fever. I had just nursed Uri back to health and then *Aba* got dysentery too. All our drinking water had to be boiled. I was afraid to take Uri for a walk more than 500 metres from our house in case we were attacked by Arabs in the neighbourhood. We started hearing about Arab attacks and riots all over the *yishuv*. I persuaded *Aba* to sell his share of the business. Once we were freed from this responsibility, why not use the opportunity to visit the family in Cape Town for a few months? *Aba* agreed but said to make sure it doesn't become years." It turned out to be prophetic.

Return to Cape Town

On 4 October 1927 my parents and their son Uri sailed on *RMS Gascon* from Port Said to Durban, where they caught a train to Cape Town, bringing them back into the bosom of the Marks family. *Ima* tried to adjust to life in the city. She had been a free spirit in the exciting, emerging *Eretz Yisrael*, but here, as a *greenehr* (greenhorn) in strange new Cape Town, she had to earn her spurs all over again under the critical scrutiny of the all-enveloping family headed by its patriarch, *Zeide* Yitzchak, her father-in-law.

My mother had to become the little woman whose place was in the home and certainly not in business; that was a man's world, or at least the Marks-men's world. It must have been really difficult after being her own boss in her father's successful business in Poland. She spoke fluent Hebrew,

Yiddish and Polish, passable Russian and German but no English: the Marks family spoke only Yiddish or English.

Aba rejoined the family business, even though he and Chana promised each other that they would return to *Eretz Yisrael*. At the southern tip of Africa, *Aba* and *Ima* first thought they were far removed from world events but they were reminded that Hitler was not that far away when his supporters in South Africa, the Greyshirts, began to whip up anti-Jewish feeling. There seemed to be no escape from anti-Semitism.

Staying on

Ima and *Aba* had barely settled in when my sister, Ziona, was born on 22 January 1929. *Ima* made her stay conditional, and she told *Aba*: "We'll speak Hebrew to the children, not Yiddish. One day when we go back to our *yishuv*, they must be able to speak and understand Hebrew. Cape Town must not become home. Anyway, English they'll learn at school. Agreed?" *Aba* nodded his agreement but began to wonder when they would ever get back. When indeed? Arab riots began in earnest in 1929.



Living dangerously—*Ima* and family
Muizenberg, 1935

"Stay a little longer," begged *Bobbe*, my father's mother. They stayed a little longer. In 1932 *Ima* gave birth to her third child, Herzl. They stayed a little longer. In 1934 *Zeide* Yitzchak Marks died unexpectedly while swimming in Muizenberg. *Aba* "stayed a little longer" to shepherd *Bobbe* through her grief. In 1935 *Ima* gave birth to her fourth child, Yitzchak. By now war clouds were gathering over Europe while *Aba* and *Ima* remained marooned in Cape Town speaking Hebrew at every opportunity. They lived in rented accommodation because it was their intention to buy a home of their own on their return to *Eretz Yisrael*.

It took another 10 years, until 1946, before they got their chance to return. In the meantime, they worked tirelessly for their dream of creating a Jewish *Eretz Yisrael* in their twice-promised land.

● **Herzl Marks, now living in England, is a photo-journalist currently writing his family history.**

REFERENCES

1. The ultra-religious believe that the return to *Eretz Yisrael* would only come about when the Messiah comes.
2. The book written by Adolf Hitler in 1924, while in prison, outlined his plans for world supremacy and "ridding the world of Jewish domination".

CORRECTION: Dates for Chana on Modukhovitz tree, September issue, p.25, should be 1904-1981.

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ARGENTINA

Toldot, No 23, Sept 2004

First results of a project on Argentinian surnames which can be seen online at www.surnames.rutrin.com.ar.

Russian immigrants to Jewish Colonization Association colonies in Argentina 1892-1902 with a surname index.

Haquetia, the Spanish dialect spoken by Jews in Morocco; and Baron Maurice de Hirsch (part 1).

AUSTRALIA

The Kasher Koala Vol 11 No 3 September 2004

Lives and Times of 19th and early 20th Century Settlers: Family history sources in the State Records Authority of New South Wales.

The Kasher Koala is now on CD Rom: Vol 1, September 1993 to Vol 10, December 2003. Available from society@ajgs.org.au.

BELGIUM

Los Maestros, No 56, sept 2004

La Aljama judía de Monzon, La recordada is an account of the Jews of the Spanish city of Monzon in the mediaeval period with a list of more than 200 names.

FRANCE

Etsi, Vol 7 No 25, juin 2004

The Barki family of Smyrna in the 18th to 20th centuries.

The Circumcision Register of Rabbi Habib Toledano containing 144 entries from Tangier 1907-20 and Portugal 1920-29 with a surname index.

GenAmi, No 29, sept 2004

The Levy families of Marmoutier, Bas-Rhin before 1808.

A little-known round-up of Jews in Paris on 20 August 1941.

Jewish clowns and circus performers with a pedigree of the Susman/Sosman family of *Le cirque Sosman*

The origin of the name Basch.

A review of the Rothschild family history *Le Sang des Rothschild* by Joseph Valynseele and Henri-Claude Mars (published by *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, Paris 2004, ISBN 2-908003-22-8).

A new website www.sepulturesdeguerre.sga.defense.gouv.fr lists some 420,000 war graves from 1870 onwards.

CORRECTION: abstract of *GenAmi*, No 28, juin 2004 (published in last issue of *Shemot*) should read Paul Dukas not Lukas.

La Lettre Sépharade, No 51, sept 2004

The reissue of Joseph Nehama's *Dictionnaire du Judeo-Espagnol* (in French, 610 pages, available from Jean Carasso, *La Lettre Sépharade*, 84220 Gordes, France).

ISRAEL

Sharsheret Hadorot Vol 18 No 3 August 2004

Moroccan Jews in Latin America mainly in Argentina and Venezuela

Organizing a Family Reunion in Jerusalem by A Ginzberg (Bernstein, Steinberg and Ginzberg families).

Private Researchers—When and Why?—questions to ask and what a researcher can do

SWITZERLAND-HAMBURG

Maajan-Die Quelle No 71 June 2004

Synagogen der Schweiz features Lausanne Synagogue.

Judenfriedhof Breisach gives names and dates of people buried in Breisach (1782-1879).

Neu entdeckte Quellen zur Fruehgeschichte der Juden in der Schweiz gives recently discovered sources of the history of the Jews in Switzerland including names in marriage registers in the 18th century. Guggenheim and Oppenheim mentioned.

UNITED STATES

Avotaynu Vol XX No 2 Summer 2004

Jewish Genealogy: The Past 25 Years, adapted from a talk given by Sallyann Sack at the Jerusalem Conference.

The Future of Jewish Genealogy by Gary Motokoff.

The Importance of Establishing a Family Genealogy Website enabled the author to make contact with long-lost relatives via his website

Tracing Family Roots using JRI-Poland to read between the lines. The author shows how this database can be used as a research tool.

Ancestry.com offers many services and products including databases primarily for research in America. There is also a growing list of British databases as well as some Canadian and Irish ones.

Jewish Genealogy in Germany by the Hamburg State Archivist Juergen Sielemann.

Children less than 16 unaccompanied by a parent: the family Zuser. This case illustrates a common problem encountered at Ellis Island and other United States ports of entry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

ILLINOIS **Morasha** Vol XX No 2 Summer 2004

Travel to Eastern Europe has useful information on travel and research in Romania, the Czech Republic and Ukraine.

Rooting around in Central Europe gives practical information on travel mainly in Western Ukraine (Eastern Galicia).

Jewish Chicago by the Book lists a number of books on Chicago Jews.

LONG ISLAND **Lineage** Vol XVI No 2-3 Spring-Summer 2004

Getting the most out of JewishGen: the second part of a useful article.

Do not give up the ship (search) using Steve Morse's "Searching for Ships in the *Morton Allen Directory* in One step" and other helpful information.

WASHINGTON **Mishpacha** Vol 23 No 4 Fall 2004

Diplomatic Correspondence of the USA and Russia relating to the Jews: 1866-1906

Ancestry.com Collection. Now includes San Francisco passenger lists 1890-1912.

First American Jewish Families. Now online contains family trees of Jewish families who arrived during the United States colonial/federal period 1654-1838.

Yizkor Book Reproductions from National Yiddish Book Center. The list can be viewed on <http://yiddishbookcenter.org/+10151>.

Photos of New York Buildings. New York Municipal archives are selling pictures of every building in New York City as they were, 1939-1941.

Argentinean Jewish Death Index Online for Buenos Aires cemeteries.

A happy and healthy
2005
to all our contributors
and readers.

Camden & Islington Family History Map

With so many centres for family history this close in Camden and Islington, you can trace your ancestors and get some exercise at the same time!

The coloured routes will take you between the centres. Average walking times are shown.



This leaflet has been produced by the partner archives and LSE with financial support from the British Library. ALM London has given a grant as part of the Archive Awareness Campaign.

1 The British Library

Oriental and India Office Reading Room
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Tues–Sat 9.30am – 5.00pm
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2 BT Archives

Tues 10.00am – 4.00pm
Thurs 10.00am – 4.00pm
Please call to make an appointment.

3 Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre

Mon & Thurs 10.00am – 7.00pm
Tues & Fri 10.00am – 6.00pm
Sat 10.00am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

4 Family Records Centre (FRC)

Mon, Wed, Fri 9.00am – 5.00pm
Tues 10.00am – 7.00pm
Thurs 9.00am – 7.00pm
Sat 9.30am – 5.00pm

5 Islington Local History Centre

Mon & Thurs 9.30am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm – 8.00pm
Tues & alternate Saturdays 9.30am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Fri 9.30am – 1.00pm
Please call to make an appointment.

6 London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)

Mon, Weds, Fri 9.30am – 4.45pm
Tues & Thurs 9.30am – 7.30pm
Selected Saturdays 9.30am – 4.45pm – call +44(0)20 7332 3820 for dates.

7 Royal Mail Archive (Postal Heritage Trust)

Mon–Fri 10.00am – 5.00pm
Thurs 10.00am – 7.00pm
Selected Saturdays 10.00am – 5.00pm – call +44(0)20 7239 2570 for dates.

8 Society of Genealogists

Tues–Sat 10.00am – 6.00pm
Thurs 10.00am – 8.00pm
Saturday Library tours – call +44(0)20 7251 8799 for details.

10 The Court Service (Principal Registry of the Family Division)

Wills and divorce records for England and Wales from 1858. Call +44(0)20 7947 6000 for opening times and information.

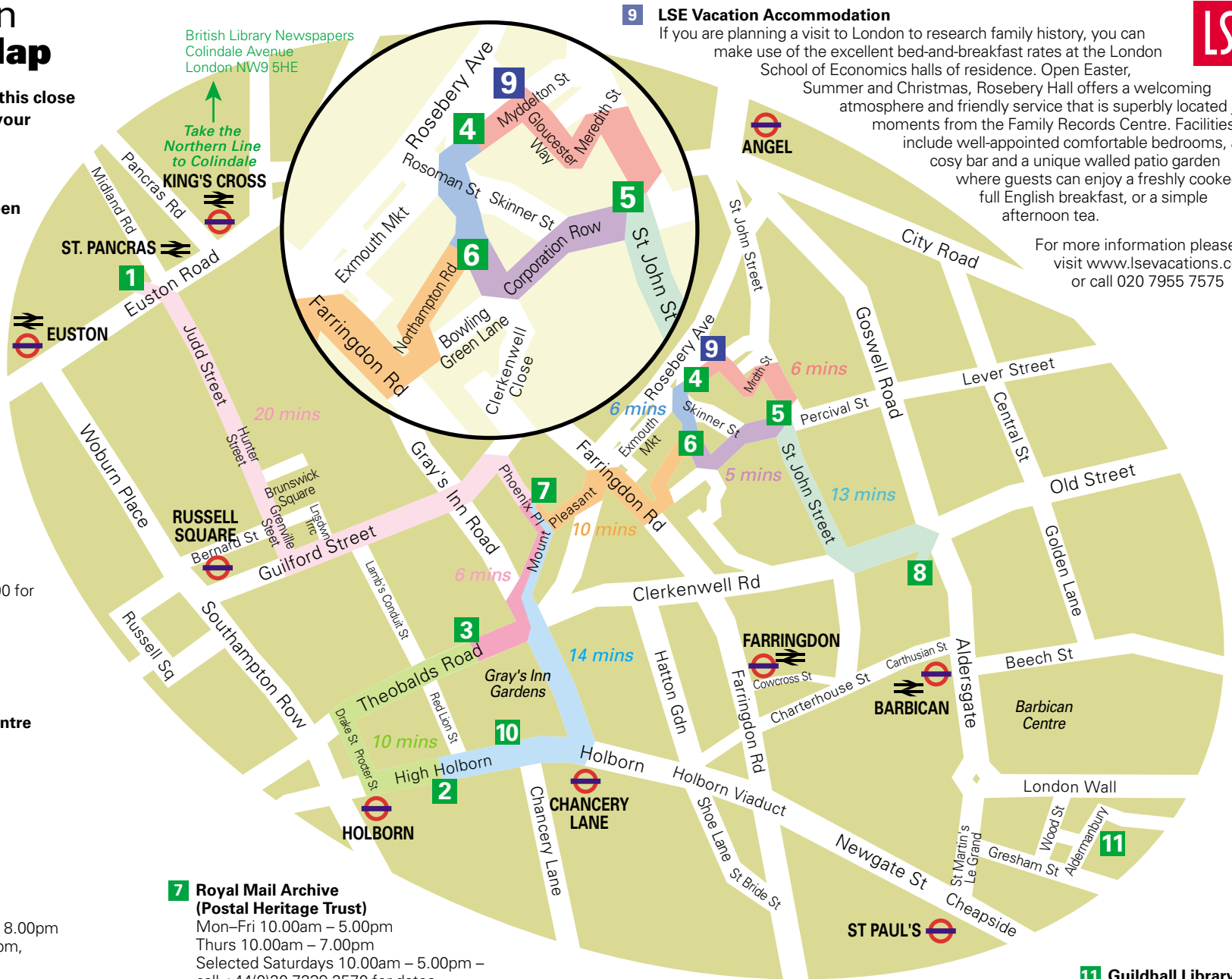
11 Guildhall Library

City of London parish registers, maps, directories and more. Call +44 (0)20 7332 1868 for opening times and information.

9 LSE Vacation Accommodation

If you are planning a visit to London to research family history, you can make use of the excellent bed-and-breakfast rates at the London School of Economics halls of residence. Open Easter, Summer and Christmas, Rosebery Hall offers a welcoming atmosphere and friendly service that is superbly located just moments from the Family Records Centre. Facilities include well-appointed comfortable bedrooms, a cosy bar and a unique walled patio garden where guests can enjoy a freshly cooked full English breakfast, or a simple afternoon tea.

For more information please visit www.lsevacations.co.uk or call 020 7955 7575



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The British Library

1

96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
T +44 (0)870 444 1500
E reader-services-enquiries@bl.uk
newspaper@bl.uk
W www.bl.uk



The principal resources used for family history are in the India Office Records, for ancestors in British India, and in the newspapers at the Newspaper Library in Colindale. Extensive collections (606km) include directories, oral history, pedigrees, maps and patents.

Check website for catalogues and opening hours of different reading rooms.

BT Archives

2

Third Floor Holborn Telephone Exchange
268–270 High Holborn, London WC1V 7EE
T +44 (0)20 7440 4220
F +44 (0)20 7242 1967
E archives@bt.com
W www.bt.com/archives



BT Archives preserves the documentary heritage of BT and its predecessors. A major resource for family historians is the near-complete set of UK telephone directories dating from the first directory produced in 1880 to the present.

Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre

3

Holborn Library, 32–38 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8PA
T +44 (0)20 7974 6342
F +44 (0)20 7974 6284
E localstudies@camden.gov.uk
W www.camden.gov.uk/localstudies



The Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre contains archives, printed material, illustrations and maps about the history of the area from the 17th century until the present day. Sources for family history research include ratebooks, electoral registers, local directories, local newspapers, monumental inscriptions and Highgate Cemetery registers.

Family Records Centre (FRC)

4

1 Myddelton Street, London EC1R 1UW
T +44 (0)20 8392 5300
F +44 (0)20 8392 5307
E frc@nationalarchives.gov.uk
W www.familyrecords.gov.uk/frc



The FRC holds indexes of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales from 1837, census returns for England and Wales (1841–1901), PCC wills and administrations, and other records including death duty registers and non-conformist registers. We provide access to many online resources including the 1901 census, PCC wills, and other family history websites.

Islington Local History Centre

5

245 St. John Street, London EC1V 4NB
T +44 (0)20 7527 7988
E local.history@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/libraries



Family history sources include census returns for Islington & Finsbury (1841–1901), electoral registers (from 1870s onwards), parish registers for St. Mary Islington, ratebooks, maps, photographs and a range of archive and published material. Please book an appointment to visit.

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)

6

40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB
T +44 (0)20 7332 3820
F +44 (0)20 7833 9136
E ask.lma@corpoflondon.gov.uk
W www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

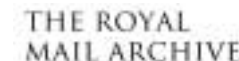


LMA is the largest local authority record office in the UK, with 55km of records dating back nearly 900 years. LMA has records from the former county councils of London, Middlesex and Greater London. Main sources for family history include registers from over 800 parishes, poor law records and registers of electors; plus maps, plans, prints and photographs.

Royal Mail Archive (Postal Heritage Trust)

7

Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL
T +44 (0)20 7239 2570
F +44 (0)20 7239 2576
E heritage@royalmail.com
W www.royalmail.com/heritage



The Royal Mail Archive contains records for the history of The Post Office over four centuries. For family history research the main sources are the appointment books (1734–1774, 1831–1956) and establishment books (1742–1946). There are also records of pensions, postmasters/postmistresses, packet boat agents and captains and many other supporting sources.

Society of Genealogists

8

14 Charterhouse Buildings, London, EC1M 7BA
T +44 (0)20 7251 8799
F +44 (0)20 7250 1800
E library@sog.org.uk
W www.sog.org.uk



The Society has the largest family history library in the UK. It holds copies of family history sources, finding aids, indexes and unique research materials. The Library also has free Internet access to some major genealogical websites. The Society is also proud to boast the largest collection of copies of parish registers in the UK.



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