



The Kosher Koala

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 154, Northbridge 2063, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Phone: (612) 9958 6317 or (612) 9427 6075 Fax: (612) 9967 2834

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EDITORIAL

This issue of the newsletter is very late. The reason is lack of helpers to bring it out. We are a Society with many members, but very few are willing to give up any of their personal time to give the handful of committee members in each state a hand in the many tasks which go into operating a successful organisation run entirely by volunteers. We need volunteers to take over tasks such as typing of the newsletter, organising its distribution, general publicity officer and database coordinator. Is there anybody out there who is willing to help? Last month our membership in NSW alone reached over 120. Surely **SOMEBODY** can give us an occasional few hours. If you can, please give us a call. Last month our membership Australia-wide reached 227 individuals. But when some months ago Rieke Nash, our vice-president and honorary secretary, asked to be relieved of the task of also publishing this newsletter, no one else could be

found to do the task. Even one person who tentatively volunteered to do this dropped off before having started.

At the moment your editor is at a crucial stage of work on a book, but it seems as though there is no one to relieve either Rieke or me. We appeal to members who have good typing skills or who can spare time for any phase of this Society's work to please come forward and help. The whole weight of this organisation cannot be carried by just two or three people.

If not for this, our Society would be going forward by leaps and bounds. Both Rieke and I and our spouses from Sydney, and Dr Albert Braunstein from Melbourne attended the 5th International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Paris and plunged for five days into the heady atmosphere of a meeting with people whose major hobby is also Jewish genealogy. Seekers for both Sephardi and Ashkenazi roots were well served in Paris,

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Australian Jewish Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 154

NORTHBRIDGE SYDNEY NSW 2063
AUSTRALIA

E-mail: rieken@zeta.org.au

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SYDNEY WORKSHOPS 1997

The Society will hold its usual workshops at the North Shore Synagogue, Lindfield in the Rev Katz Library on the following Sunday mornings, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

November 16

December 7

The library is occasionally open at other times. If you would like to be notified when a day or evening session is planned, please contact 9427-6075.

ADVANCE NOTICE

BEGINNERS' SEMINAR

Sunday, 15th March, 1998,
Shalom College, University of
New South Wales, Sydney

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

New South Wales

Alexis Apfelbaum
Michael Appleberg
Charles Feldman
Evelyn Frybort & Vicky Nathan
John Goldberg

Mel Harris
Adrian Paul
John Posener
Ella Ross
Ken Smith

Victoria

Helga Berger
Lewis Coleman
Ester Goldberg
Jenny Jackson
Althea Oliver
Diane Rose

Tova Rosenbaum
Anette Salmon
Ray Salmon
Gerald Shapiro
Guillaume Steiner
Jennifer Worth

United States

Cheryl Etting

South Australia

Jeannie Susman
Helen Twersky

NOW ON THE INTERNET

JEWISH GENEALOGY IN AUSTRALIA

<http://www.zeta.org.au/~feraltek/jozgen.htm>

THE HOME OF JEWISH GENEALOGY

<http://www.jewishgen.org>

U. S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

<http://www.ushmm.org>

THE POOR JEWS TEMPORARY SHELTER DATABASE, LONDON, 1896-1914

<http://www.hrm.uct.ac.za/shelter/shelter.htm>

NEWS FROM THE VICTORIAN BRANCH

by Lionel Sharpe, Chairman

The Victorian Branch experienced its best attended meeting this year when Melbourne based researcher, Krystyna Wyszogrodzki, addressed the Branch on June 18th, at the Beth Weizmann Community Centre.

Some eighty members and interested members of the community crowded into the hall to listen to her address illustrated with interesting overhead slide material. Krystyna had assisted Mark Baker in his research for his popular fast selling book *"A Journey through Memory - The Fiftieth Gate"*. She is currently in private practice conducting genealogical research. Her business is called "Lost Histories - Eastern European Research". Krystyna is studying for a doctorate on a town in Poland which was the subject of her talk. She outlined her research methodology and the sources she used in exploring Jewish-Gentile relations in a Polish town, Lubartow, about 30 kilometres north of Lublin, at the outbreak of World War II. In 1939, Lubartow's population was 40% Jewish and 60% Polish. She spoke about the quantity of Jewish historical material which is available in some Polish archives for such towns as Lubartow and how to access this material.

A meeting on 23rd July was planned to encourage members to share their successes and problems experienced in their own family research. A number of members addressed the meeting and feedback was given by the audience to assist in opening new avenues for further research.

The question of the use of computer programs had been raised by a number of members and a meeting on August 19th was devoted to exploring the advantages and

disadvantages of computer programs and the experience of members with various programs such as Reunion, Dorot and Family Maker. Two committee members brought along their own computers and the audience had an opportunity of doing some hands-on practice in the exploration of family trees and the production of charts and family reports.

Our regular beginners' workshop was held on September 21st and on this occasion Les Oberman's computer was connected to the Internet to explore the JewishGen Family Finder database. The recently arrived collection of microfiche and nineteenth century maps purchased from Avotaynu in New Jersey attracted a great deal of interest and a microfiche reader was available for searching.

'Preparing your Family History for Publication' is the topic for the Branch meeting on October 29th. Wilder Ghostwriters, a Melbourne-based company, which specialises in writing books for families, holocaust survivors and commercial institutions, will discuss the process of preparing material for publication.

A visit to the Church of the Latter Day Saints Family History library is planned for the last week in October.

The Victorian Branch meets at the
BETH WEIZMANN COMMUNITY CENTRE,
306 Hawthorn Road, South Caulfield, Melbourne.
Tel: 03-9273 5611
Postal Address: P.O. Box 189,
GLENHUNTLY VIC 3163, AUSTRALIA

Internet contacts:

Leslie Oberman oberman@tmxmelb.mhs.oz.au

Dr Albert Braunstein sbr@bbs.ausom.net.au

Enquiries: Rhonda 03-9578 6456

Lionel: 03-9523-6738 Fax: 03-9532-7797

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

by Klee Benveniste

The South Australian branch has increased to eight members as we welcome new member Helen Twersky.

At our July meeting, guest speaker Dorit Ninio gave a fascinating presentation about the family history of three Jewish brothers each of whom settled in New Zealand and had a Maori wife. Her presentation included stunning pictures of female family members in traditional Maori dress, accounts of family traditions, and the significant contribution the descendants have made to Maori affairs and public life in New Zealand in general. We hope Dorit will prepare an article about them for The Kosher Koala.

Our next quarterly meeting will be held in October. The contact address for the South Australian branch is Dr Klee Benveniste, Honorary Secretary
Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (SA branch),
C/- Adelaide Hebrew Congregation,
P.O. Box 320, Glenside SA 5065, AUSTRALIA

NEWS FROM THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

by Michelle Urban

In June, 1997 a West Australian Jewish Genealogical Society was formed in Perth and now has five financial members. Although small, there was discussion of the interest levels for many who could not attend and we hope to build on that in the future. It was decided to meet quarterly with workshops at private homes in between.

The first workshop was held in August and took the form of an informal gathering. The afternoon ended pleasantly with consensus that the networking effect was of use to those interested in tracing their Jewish family history.

The next workshop will be held on the second Sunday, 9th November at 2.30 p.m. at Michelle Urban's, 21 Broomhall Way, Noranda 6062 Western Australia.
Tel: 08-9375-3874.

The other contact is Ross Trobe, 1/24 Broomhall Way, Noranda 6062, Western Australia. Tel: 08-9375-1492

FROM A LITTLE CORNER OF THE DIASPORA OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

by Klee Benveniste

On reading the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Miami which arrived for the first time at the South Australian Branch, I noted a small item mentioning an 'Historical Society of Jews from Egypt' based in New York. It is not widely known that within the South Australian Jewish community of less than two thousand Jews are hundreds of descendants of families who fled the Egyptian Jewish communities of Cairo and Alexandria between 1948 and 1956 and settled in Adelaide. Many were related but at least a dozen males who had strong friendship ties as masonic brothers in the French Lodge of Cairo chose to stay together. The original refugees are now in their seventies and still speak French or Italian amongst themselves. Sephardi traditions in Adelaide differ from those of every other Australian city.

I made a note to write to the Historical Society of Jews from Egypt about a newsletter, but that evening to my great surprise, my husband brought home a copy of their newsletter 'Second Exodus' received in the post that day by two relatives who also did not know the Society existed. Wow, I thought, brainwaves are faster than electronic mail!

Our relatives were fascinated to read that the Society intends to establish a museum and a university for the study of Egyptian Jewry, in New York State. My mother-in-law avidly read the article on the House of Cicurel, a department store in Egypt, underlining names of bosses for whom she had worked. We were stunned to read that the New York-based Historical Society of Jews from Egypt demanded that all the Torah scrolls in Egypt must be given to them to take to the United States. The President of the Jewish Community of Cairo rejected their demand stating that all Sefarim have been classified as antiquities by the Ministry of Culture which means their export, sale or displacement is forbidden by

law and punishable by ten years imprisonment. We were shocked to read that a "do-gooder" had previously sent over one hundred Torah scrolls overseas from Alexandria, only to find they were sold rather than given to ex-Egyptian communities as intended. We read an article from Cairo about the need for foreign help to preserve the synagogues and cemeteries and learned that over two hundred locals and tourists attended the Chaar Hashamayim synagogue in Cairo for Purim.

Many of our older relatives in the Benveniste, Franco, Hasda and Mires families were married in Egyptian synagogues or have parents or children buried in cemeteries in Egypt. On reading the newsletter, our aunt immediately wanted to write to Egypt for a copy of her marriage certificate. Many couples who fled Egypt lost their Jewish marriage document, which was traditionally kept by older relatives or deposited in Egyptian synagogues for safekeeping.

My husband and I visited Egypt for three days in 1993 following the Maccabiah Games in Israel. His parents were born in Alexandria and married in the Great Synagogue of Cairo. Other relatives married in the synagogue in Alexandria and some were buried in Jewish cemeteries of Cairo, Alexandria or Zagazig. We knew many stories of their lives there, where they lived, went to school, worked or relaxed, and that a synagogue had an oil lamp they donated.

It was our first visit to Egypt and we were excited just to travel past places which relatives had mentioned. They had said that Egypt was now an Arab country, and there were few Jews left. We had read that in 1974 there were only 350 Jews in the whole of Egypt (M. Gilbert 'Atlas of Jewish History', 1984). We photographed where the family lived in Cairo, but finding family graves was impossible. Apart from having a synagogue address from a Jewish Travel Guide book, we had difficulty finding family sites as most Cairo streets had been renamed. We stayed one night on the beachfront in Alexandria. After a peaceful evening walk I could understand why his relatives loved Alexandria and were reluctant to leave.

That newsletter renewed our hopes of visiting the Jewish community in Egypt again one day, and of seeing the synagogues, cemeteries and historical sites. Next time we hope to have a Jewish guide. To any Jews in Egypt who may read this, as this newsletter also travels widely, just know that in another corner of the diaspora, on the other side of the world, other Jews who fled Egypt are thrilled to know that you are there in Cairo and you care about preserving our Jewish family heritage, and we say to you "Mabrouk!"

Dr Klee Benveniste is the honorary secretary of the South Australian Branch of the Society in Adelaide, and honorary archivist of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation.

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Future Jewish Genealogical Seminars

In 1998

it will be held in Los Angeles (see page 7)

In 1999

it will be held in New York and

in 2000

in Salt Lake City
from 7th to 12th July,
well before the Sydney Olympic Games.

ANEMIA OR BETA-THALASSEMIA?

by Stanley Diamond

(From JewishGen Digest)

It is eighteen months since I last posted a lengthy message outlining my search for carriers of the beta-thalassemia genetic trait. I welcome responses from all readers.

So much has happened in the past eighteen months that the full story will run far too long. If I cut it short, some key points are eliminated. I hope I have found the right balance. You, your family and friends, could hold some important clues for this project. Please take the time to read the message and please ask yourself, "how can I help?" Knowing about the beta-thalassemia genetic trait may be vital to someone you know.

For years, thalassemia (also known as Cooley's anemia or Mediterranean anemia), was thought to affect only Greek, Italian, Asian, and Sephardic Jewish families. Recent discoveries indicate that Ashkenazic Jews also carry the trait and could be at risk for the fatal disease.

Several years ago, Dr Ariella Oppenheim of Hebrew University, Hadassah Hospital, Jerusalem, and Dr Charles Scriver of McGill University, Montreal Children's Hospital Medical Research Institute, independently discovered that my family and a family in Jerusalem carry a newly recognized mutation of the beta-thalassemia trait. As a result, I embarked on a scientific and humanitarian project that invites the participation of genealogists around the world. The first scientific paper related to the project was published in January 1997 in the medical journal "Human Mutation" (Vol. IX, No. 1).

In Israel, where there is mass pre-natal screening for beta-thalassemia, only seven Ashkenazic families have been identified as carriers. This rarity creates a potentially dangerous scenario for Ashkenazic families with unsuspecting carriers. The thalassemia genetic trait (thalassemia minor) does not affect carriers themselves. However, it can be a ticking time bomb for their descendants because the trait is typically diagnosed as mild chronic anemia. Thus, Ashkenazic Jews and their physicians, particularly in the Diaspora, are unlikely to try to identify the cause of the anemia.

There is one in four chance that the offspring of two carriers will inherit thalassemia disease (thalassemia major), which, until recent medical advances, had always been fatal by early adulthood. It remains a devastating disease. With the growing rate of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, as well as the increased frequency of Ashkenazic-Sephardic marriages, there is an ever-increasing risk of this deadly disease occurring in an unaware Ashkenazic population.

To learn if you are a carrier, ask your physician about your MCV level, which is normally recorded in a

standard blood test. If it is 78 or less, you should have an evaluation of your hemoglobin A2.

My initial goal in this project was to find other carriers of the specific beta-thalassemia mutation carried by my family, originally from Ostrow Mazowiecka (Ostrowa) in the old Lomza Gubernia of Poland, and a family in Jerusalem (originally from Bobruysk in Belarus) and identify the earliest carriers of this mutation in both families. The project has already led to alerting unsuspecting Ashkenazic carriers outside my family and I want to continue to do this wherever possible. This is the most urgent aspect, because the beta-thalassemia genetic trait is not usually found unless physicians are looking for it. Carriers are often misdiagnosed as being anemic and are incorrectly prescribed doses of iron. Most carriers in my family learned that they carried the trait later in life, in some cases, long after having grandchildren. This late diagnosis could have been disastrous.

While I have not found other carriers of my family's specific mutation so far, outreach has turned up six other Diaspora Ashkenazic families carrying the trait. A few already launched programs to alert their extended families about the potential dangers to future generations. These families were found through JewishGen posts and articles in the general and Jewish press and Jewish Genealogical Society newsletters.

On-site research in Poland and the cooperation of the Polish State Archives and key Civil Records Offices enabled me to document over forty additional families who may be at risk. With descendants of so many families to be traced and contacted, my task, already immense, has now become virtually unmanageable. I need help from my fellow genealogists, their friends, relatives, and physicians, and anyone who might have knowledge of a carrier.

Here's how you can help:

1. Review the names below for possible matches with your family, friends and acquaintances. If the family can trace its roots to or near one of the towns, it could explain the mild chronic anemia which until now may have been ignored, discounted, or worse, incorrectly treated.
2. If you are, or know, an Ashkenazic carrier of beta-thalassemia, please contact me immediately. According to standard medical practice, all names will be held in confidence.
3. Contact the experts on Jewish genetic diseases in your area. This will usually be the chief hematologist at a general hospital serving a large Jewish patient base and/or a hematologist associated with a local children's hospital. Genetic counsellors may also know possible contacts. The question to ask is, "Have you, or anyone you know, ever identified Ashkenazic carriers of the beta-thalassemia trait?"

If the answer is yes, please let me know the name of the attending physician. I will forward the full background on the project, which could then be given to the carrier. The next step would be for the carrier to contact me.

4. Send a copy of this request to your physician(s); ask that it be mentioned to associates, particularly in the fields of hematology, genetics, and pediatrics. This step is necessary since information about a carrier may not always come to the attention of the local expert.

If you want to help or need further information, please contact me via email (SMSDiamond@aol.com), telephone 1-514-484-0100 or fax 1-514-484-7306.

Stanley Diamond is the President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal and a member of the REIPP Board.

The 19th Century Lomza Gubernia and Bobruysk families

who may be carriers of my family's novel mutation of the Beta-Thalassemia genetic trait are listed below.

Known Anglicized spellings for some names are noted by square brackets [].

ALTERMAN/ELTERMAN	Bobruysk, Minsk, Belarus
BEKAS	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
BENGELSDORF	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
BORENSZTEJN	Wyszkow, Poland
CANTOR/KANTOR	Bobruysk, Belarus
DOMB/DAB[DUNN]	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Wyszkow, Poland
DENDA	Poremba-Koceby, Goworowo, Poland
DMOCHER	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
DYSKANT	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Zaremby Koscielne, Poland
ELBERG	Bialystok, Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
FISZMAN[FISHMAN]	Poremba-Koceby, Poland
FUX/FUKS	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
GRABINA	Wyszkow, Poland
GRUMA	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
JARZEMBOWICZ	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
KAGUN/KAGAN	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Lomza, Bialystok, Poland
KAMIEN	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
KRAVETSKY	Bobruysk, Belarus
LUSTYK[LUSTIG]	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
MAJMUDES	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
MALOWANY	Poremba, Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
MANCHICK	Bobruysk, Minsk, Belarus
MILLER	Siedlce, Poland
MORDKOWICZ[MARKOWITZ/MARDEN]	Wyszkow, Poland
MYSZNE[MICHNER]	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
NOWES	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
OLENBERG	Wyszkow, Poland
OFFMAN/HOFFMAN	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
PALUCH[PEARLMAN/PERLMAN]	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Wyszkow, Poremba, Poland
RACHMAN/ROCHMAN	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Wyszkow, Poland
SEGAL	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
SOLNIK	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
STONEK	Jadow, Lomza, Poland
SZTABA	Szomowo [Lomza District], Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
VIDYLKA[VIDELOCK, WIDELOCK]	Lunna, Grodno, Belarus
WAJNGORT	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
WIDELEC [WIDELITZ, WIDLITZ]	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poremba, Wyszkow, Kamienczyk, Kaluszyn, Sochaczew, Dlugosiodlo, Poland
WIERZBA	Lomza, Poland
ZALCBERG[ZALTSBERG]	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland
ZELEK	Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland

"HOLLYWOOD CHAI"

18th Annual Seminar on Jewish Genealogy

July 12-17, 1998

Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles invites all those with Jewish roots from around the world to come join us for the 18th Annual Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, or "Hollywood Chai" to be held at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles from July 12 to 17, 1998. You will be able to take advantage of a wealth of genealogical resources, learn from experiences genealogists, librarians and archivists, and enjoy the warm Southern California sun and other wonderful recreational opportunities.

Come for the Research

The **Los Angeles Family History Library** is the largest branch outside of Salt Lake City, with original records from the U.S., Great Britain, Poland, Germany, Hungary and more.

The **Four Major Judaica Libraries** are Hebrew Union College, University of Judaism, Yeshiva University Simon Weisenthal Center, and UCLA which houses the largest Judaica library west of the Mississippi.

The **Los Angeles Public Library** has a large genealogical and historical collection and an assortment of city directories.

Los Angeles County Public Records Offices has vital records, court and probate records, tax and real estate records, and voter registration records.

The **National Archives** has information for the Pacific Southwest Region.

Come for the Lectures

There will be "**Back to the Sources**" lectures on how to use original genealogical resources around the world with an emphasis on sources available in Southern California, "**Jews of the West**", a series on Jews in the Western United States, and "**The Rest of Us**" lectures about Jews in such places as France, Greece, Africa, South America, the Iberian Peninsula and others.

Come for the Fun

We offer sunny Southern California weather, miles of beaches, Disneyland (the original theme park), Universal Studios to see how movies are made, the Museum of Tolerance, the newly opened Skirball Museum and the world famous Getty Museum.

For more information contact:

Geraldine Winerman

C/- JGSLA, P.O. Box 55443,

Sherman Oaks, California, 91413-5544,

U. S. A.

THE POOR JEWS TEMPORARY SHELTER DATABASE, LONDON

Paul Cheifitz, President of the Jewish Family History Society of Cape Town has announced a new resource on the Internet. He is excited to report that the records of the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter in London are now on the web. The shelter was situated in Leman Street, Whitechapel in London. The database spans the period 1896-1914 and contains some 43,000 names. The shelter was set up to house immigrants on their short stay over in London before embarking on their cross continental journey. Some of the destinations include, South Africa, America, South America, Holland and England, among many others.

This project was coordinated and sponsored by the Kaplan Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town. The project was headed by Professor Aubrey Newman of the University of Leicester.

Although there are a few gaps in the registers themselves, these records will surely prove to be an extremely useful resource and significantly alter our knowledge of our immigrant ancestors.

The site can be reached at:

<http://www.hrm.uct.ac.za/shelter/shelter.htm>

This database will be of assistance to many of you and he is looking forward to hearing about the hopefully many success stories.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF PRESOV JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish Religious Community of Presov, Slovakia, which was also once know as EPERJES, Hungary, is searching for all past members of their community and their descendants to help them celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the old Orthodox synagogue in Presov/Eperjes. The organizing committee has previously published a book containing a list of Presov survivors of the Shoah. They are now working on a book to contain a short history, and also a list of all Presov Jews and those of surrounding areas who were taken to concentration camps. They will also include a list of all Jews presently living in Presov, with addresses. They hope that through this the living Jews of Presov will be able to find a distant relative, an old classmate or a colleague who might contact them.

There will be many lists of interest to former Presov Jews and their descendants included in the book. Funds are also sought to help with its publication. Contact address for contributions and for further information is: ZIDOVSKA NABOZENSKA OBEC, Jewish Religious Community, Svermova 32, 08001 Presov, SLOVAKIA.

Adapted from information in
MORASHA, Volume XIII, No. 1

MY TRIP TO LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

(continued from Vol. 4 No. 2)

by Selma Jackson

Friday, July 5, 1996. It was pouring with rain, and it was really a pleasure having a lovely buffet breakfast, in pleasant surroundings. Riga is a city of eleven suburbs with a population of one million people. Roman, with his driver Raymond drove us along Freedom Street, which is the fourteen-kilometre long main street out of the city to Salaspil, the Concentration camp where 100,000 Jews were experimented on and killed. Roman's mother Marina, and Eta Cohen of Johannesburg are two of those who survived this horrible place. Just then we heard a train go by somewhere in the neighbourhood, and Roman told us that, as in other towns, there was always a railway track nearby, so that it was easy to get the Jews in, and out to concentration camps. Salaspil is surrounded by a huge concrete wall which was originally of wood, and beyond are the Symbols of Resistance, two single statues, one of two men holding a third man up so that he doesn't fall, which would result in him being executed, as the lame were done away with, another depicts a mother trying to shield her children, and another of a man falling to the ground. Another memorial is a long flat black marble slab, from where one hears a continual beat, which represents the heart beat which will never be silenced. It is eerie! There were 30,000 Jews in the Riga ghetto. We then went to Rumbulas Forest, where there is a huge stone memorial with Hebrew and Latvian inscriptions "BEHIND THIS GATE THE EARTH SCREAMS". At this point the Jews were made to take off their clothes, shoes, spectacles, jewellery and made to walk bare into the forest and shot. The memorial at the mass graves only mentions "victims of fascism", but 15,000 Jews were murdered on 30 November, 1941, and a week later on 8 December, 1941 another 15,000 Jews were murdered, and only one woman survived. Here, too, we heard a train go by! All the camps were far out of towns, so that the people of the towns could not hear the gun fire.

In the 13th and 14th Century, Riga was a Jewish area and centre, and in 1952 it was Russian. We drove along Ebrejuiela, Jewish Street, where a few of the old Jewish buildings still stand, to the old cemetery, now a park in the old part of the city. Only in 1995 was a stone with a large Magen David prominently erected at the entrance to the once old cemetery. Tombstones were used to build the wall around the park, and the pieces are there to be seen. We went to the site and remains of the old Gogal Synagogue, which was burnt down on 4 July 1941, and which remains a monument today. July 4 is remembered in this square each year. There used to be 82 Synagogues in Latvia, and Reb Meier Simcha has got 35 back. The Jewish shops used to be on Maiyas Street.

We then drove out to the Jewish cemetery where we saw graves with photographs of the deceased attached to the

headstone. I always thought this was against the Jewish religion, and some have the faces etched out of the tombstone. (Ed: It is). There are graves where family members are buried in the same grave. Some graves are surrounded by low hedges, and some have a bench so that the person visiting the grave can sit. There are a number of "RYPEBANY" - "Horwitz" graves, one as late as 11 May 1995, Moshe, son of Josel, murdered because he was a rich man and they stole his Volvo motorcar. In the few lanes we walked along, we noticed the "Horwitz" name about eight or nine times, Frieda, daughter of Jacob, Simon son of Aaron 28 March, 1909, 6 August 1972, Masha, daughter of Josel, Chaim son of Leibe, and more. The records of this cemetery date from after 1950.

As it was too early to fetch Dina, Roman's daughter, we went to the Old Car Museum, which Steven and Gordon thoroughly enjoyed. We fetched Dina from the Summer Camp organised by the wives of the Lubavitch who are teaching the children about Yiddishkeit, their Jewish Heritage, the Festivals, our traditions and laws, sing Jewish songs and dances, and being Erev Shabbat, they baked challah for Shabbat. The camp is held at the Jewish Community Centre. We drove to Roman's mother, Marsha Blumenthal's flat, where Roman, Marina and Dina live with her. What a lovely early Shabbat dinner Marina and Marsha prepared for us! We had to eat early, because the boys couldn't walk from where the Blumenthals live. They have a very nice three roomed apartment, with a kitchen and bathroom. The lounge, with Marsha's late husband's piano on the one side, is her bedroom at night, the dining room where we ate dinner is Roman and Marina's bedroom by night, and Dina has her own bedroom. Living conditions in Riga are very poor, mostly communal living, each floor has a shared communal kitchen and bathroom, but Roman's father, an accomplished and well known pianist, had applied for and was granted his own apartment, because he had to practise all the time. Since his death, they have been allowed to stay in their apartment. When we arrived at Shul, at 8 pm, we were greeted by ten elderly men, who are paid, either with a meal or with cash, to come to shul, morning and evening to make up the minyan. The Rabbi, a young American, was very pleased to see Gerald, Steven and Gordon, although I believe there were a few other visitors there the following morning.

Saturday, July 6, at 8.30 am, I went to the hotel's second floor ladies' hairdressing salon, which is divided into two sections, to have my hair washed and blow-dried which cost L3.20 = A\$8.60. Roman and Raymond drove Gerald and me to Jurmala, a beachside resort 17 km from Riga, with 30 km of clean white sand beaches, where 1 Lat has to be paid before you can enter the resort. We walked along the 800 metre pedestrian mall, down to the beach where the stalls along the way were just setting up as it was evidently still early. There are a

few shops along this walkway, with a couple of restaurants, an ice-cream shop etc. We drove past Breshnev's holiday house, all walls of pinky-beige marble with a high fence, and next door was a block of flats that the KGB used, to guard him. There are three train stations in this area, which allow the people of Riga and the surrounding areas to travel to the beach resort. We drove to see the house Roman and Marina's parents have been able to buy reasonably, a run down beach house, which they are having renovated. We met Marina's mother there, as she and Marina were redoing the garden while the workmen are there! It was then 3.40 pm, and taking Dina with us, we decided to drive out to Rundelas Palace, beyond Bauske, but 20 kms before we got there, we drove into and through a violent storm, and when we had to slow down to go past a huge tree that had just been uprooted and thrown across the road, Gerald decided that was the omen for turning back! I believe Rundale Castle is magnificent! We took Roman and Dina to the Shalom for early supper, and they sang Yiddish songs with the pianist, who had already serenaded me!

Sunday, 7 July, we left at 10.10 am for Daugavpils (Dvinsk), Raymond had put a video machine and TV in the car, and Roman showed us the video of Cecil Gelbart of Cape Town and Mike Getz, now living in New York. Roman has lots of family in Johannesburg, whom he has already visited. The scenery was lovely with the Plavinas Forests along the way. We stopped at a roadside cafe in Jakapils for tea and cake and while no one was in the cafe when we arrived, it filled very quickly! We arrived in Daugavpils at 2.35 pm and checked into the Latvija Hotel, another KGB hotel. The room was clean, but the bathroom I certainly didn't use, only putting my fingers under the running water. We had a first class room costing L40, and to give some idea, second class L30 and single L15. We went straight to the Community Centre, which is combined with the Synagogue, where we met Mr Birch, the Gabbai of the Shul, and Sofia Meerova, who is the head of the Jewish Society. What a lovely lady! They accompanied us to the Paqulauka forest, where 30,000 Jews were killed. There are 1,000 Jews in Daugavpils today. There were 56,000 before World War I, some went to Russia, the United States and Israel. Of the 30,000 in the ghetto, only about 300 survived, of which some who were deported to Germany, later went to Australia and South Africa. 3,000 Jews came from the Ukraine in 1990. In the forest, there are tombstones saved from the nearby Jewish cemetery, inscribed with the names of countries and how many Jews from each country died.

Russia	125,000
Baltic countries	22,300
Greece	45,000
Luxemburg	1,000
Yugoslavia	20,000
Romania	300,000

Belgium	40,000
Poland	3,000,000
Italy	8,000
Norway	900
Holland	105,000
Hungary	450,000
Bulgaria	14,000
France	90,000
Denmark	Saved by the King

We were then taken back to the Shul, where eleven men and women sat around a table in the community centre, and Roman asked them to tell Gerald how they managed, because most of the people were elderly. Sofia told us that the American Joint sends them medicines, some of which are of no use, and that 70 elderly and sick people are helped with subsidised food and monies, because of the generosity of a family from Johannesburg, South Africa. Then a big plate of cut-up bananas appeared, also a small box of liqueur chocolates, a bottle of vodka, with which they drank a "lechaim" to the family! One of the younger ladies went home to fetch her piano accordion, and for a long time thereafter, song after song, mostly Yiddish songs, were sung. Steven and Gordon were very impressed and didn't stop taking the video to show back home. One of the elderly ladies went to her home, and brought back aprons she had made and presented them to us. There was a general discussion as to what form of help, Sofia and the other ladies, including a lady doctor, felt was needed. Then it was time for the elderly men to go into the Shul and Steven and Gordon led the praying. At the back of the Shul was a lot of furniture, fittings, books etc, which evidently was left to the congregation by a doctor, who had died recently, for the use of others in the community. After evening service, the elderly men went into an ante-room, where their evening meal was served. We then left to go out for dinner with Sofia. She wanted us to go to a particular restaurant, but we found it was closed on Sundays. So we went down the road to another, Paradize Cafe, where we sat outside under the umbrellas, since inside was full. This building has been given back to the Jewish community, as the property was previously owned by Jewish people, but the present owners of the restaurant refuse to pay rent, or to vacate the premises, so there is going to be a court case!

Monday, 8th July, bats and swallows were flying around outside. I went walk-about to see what the town looked like. We had arranged the previous evening that we would go to Sofia's apartment in the morning before leaving, to collect a few more hand-made aprons for Cynthia (Stanley's wife) and Lisa. Well, when we arrived at Sofia's apartment, she had a banquet laid out for us - fried fish, salad, herring, potatoes, strawberries and vodka! What a lovely breakfast! Her son arrived to meet Gerald just before we left, and as he is unemployed, Roman offered to try and help him get a job! Back in Riga, we went to see Roman's mother-in-law,

who lives in a communal building, opposite the Jewish Communal Affairs building, in downtown Riga, and this is where we saw what communal kitchen, bathroom and toilet living was like! As Steven and Gordon wanted to go to Jurmala, I asked Raymond to take me back to the hotel first, and I went walk-about in Riga - Freedom Square, Meistaru Street and the "Three Brothers" - three four-storey houses, typical old Riga houses at 17-21 Maza Pils iela (street) near Butcher Street, built in 1646, where three brothers used to live! No. 17 was built in the 15th Century, no. 19 in 1646, and no. 21 in 1718. I walked into all the little shops, and although there were very few available, managed to buy four different shaped sets of amber cuff-links at different shops, for Harry, Michael, Daryl and Raymond. Joseph and Erica Brodie of Riverdale New York, having met Gordon at Shul that evening, called to say they were downstairs in the hotel, and they would like to meet me, as they were going to Anyksciai the following day with Regina. Erica was a Goldman from Melbourne, and asked me to phone Sue Lang, now Kimmel, my landlady's daughter in Melbourne in 1961, with whom she had been at school!

Tuesday, 9th July, our last day in Riga, Roman came to have breakfast with us at 7.45 am and then took us on a walking tour of the Old City of Riga. Roman no longer works as a guide, he is in business working with a young Jewish entrepreneur, who has a variety of businesses, but as Roman got to know Natie four years ago when Natie went to Riga, and also when Roman went to South Africa to meet his own family, he organised to take leave, to show us Riga and Dvinsk. On a drive around Riga, he showed us Doma Church in Doma Square, built in 1727, where organ concerts are held, Riga Palace where the President lives, a replica of Sherlock Holmes' house at 332 Baker Street. Krama iela is Rubbish Street. Huge uncompleted buildings were built by the collective farms, once allowed by the Russians, but there wasn't enough money to complete them. We then drove to the Markets, which Natie had told the boys we HAD to see. The number of people getting off the buses and arriving at the main train station to do their shopping at the markets, is unbelievable. Parking is a problem, but Raymond, our driver, knew how to deal with the parking attendant. There are five huge market halls, but as Gerald was not interested, we only went into the hall for milk, cheese, and fish. I would have liked to have seen what the other halls contained, as I believe it is very interesting with foods, clothing, furniture and much more. It was pouring with rain but we continued to drive around. In Revolution Square, St Peters Church stands seventy-two metres high. We took a lift to the lookout and saw a wonderful North, South, East and West panorama of Riga.

Then to the airport, a farewell speech from Roman, and we finally left Riga for the beautiful city of Prague, the next leg of our travels. Here we toured the Jewish

Quarter, visiting all the beautiful old Synagogues, the old cemetery and other places of interest. We drove north-west to Horovice from where the family name of Horowitz/Horwitz was evidently taken and then south-west to Theresienstadt which was the infamous concentration camp from whence the Jews were sent to Auschwitz to the gas chambers where thousands of Jews were murdered. The crematorium in Theresienstadt was built to look like a wood factory.

We finally arrived at Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv on Friday July 12th and travelled to Jerusalem for the weekend to visit the graves of my paternal grandparents David and Esther Horwitz, who had left Chveidan (Kvedarna) in 1936. We then attended the International Gathering of the Horowitz/Horwitz/ Hurwitz/Gurwitz Family Association in Tel Aviv.

Gerald made a very good observation, that in Lithuania and Latvia where "they" had got rid of the Jews, the countries are poor and still living in the nineteenth century, whereas where there are Jews, as in Israel, it is bustling, vibrant, with new buildings going up everywhere. All countries in the world who allowed Jews to settle there have prospered and "Jews have had a staggering impact on society" as stated in the 15th October 1996 issue of the Australian Bulletin magazine.

I am very thankful I was able to make this trip, and will forever remember my wonderful but sad experience of seeing where my father, grandparents, great-grandparents and their families had lived in days gone by.

Selma Jackson is a member of the Society in Sydney to which she emigrated from Cape Town, South Africa, about 8 years ago.

SOME NOTES ON SELMA'S ARTICLES

Many of our readers have enjoyed sharing Selma's experiences, knowing that they will never be able to have the pleasure themselves of visiting ancestral towns. They particularly enjoyed the small details reflecting the local conditions that are sometimes missing in other articles. There were however a few errors, some a result of misinformation from guides and some from guide books. Travellers should be aware that information may not be always accurate or complete. For example, a 1996 guidebook on Warsaw has only one Jewish reference, the Jewish Theatre. We thank Howard Margol of Atlanta for pointing out to us, in particular the error in the dates for the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797).

THE LITVAK SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP and THE LATVIA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP can be accessed through JewishGen.

To access it, type <http://www.jewishgen.org> and scroll through the lists. You will be able to subscribe to discussion groups that are specifically focussed on the areas you are researching. This is particularly valuable for those countries where the records are difficult to access.

EDITORIAL (continued from page 1)

and I was privileged to preview the forthcoming **DICTIONARY OF SEPHARDIC JEWISH SURNAMES** prepared by Guilherme Faigenboim and his Brazilian Jewish Genealogical Society on the model of Alexander Beider's Polish and Russian Jewish surname books, which will encompass Jewish surnames from the whole Sephardi diaspora and also mention the places where they were mostly found in the last five hundred years. This will give an enormous boost to Sephardi research.

AVOTAYNU, Inc is presently investigating the possibility of a tax-exempt foundation to print more of the books which Jewish genealogists have been clamouring for, particularly those presently inaccessible to those who have only a basic or non-existent grasp of Hebrew or Yiddish.

The REIPP (Russian Era Indexing in Poland Project) to translate the indices for Jewish vital records and make them available on JewishGen on the Internet, is going ahead under the leadership of Stanley Diamond of Canada who also pioneered the work on identifying Jewish family groups genetically affected by the Mediterranean-basin originated anemia, Beta-thalassemia, which affects Jews from certain areas of Poland. REIPP includes vital records between 1868 and 1880 when, Poland having rebelled against Russian hegemony, the punishment became that all records in Russian-dominated Poland had to be in the Russian language and the Russian alphabet. This indexing in the Latin alphabet will also facilitate the work of Jewish genealogists.

In Paris I acquired a number of recently published books on various aspects of French Jewish vital records including a listing of 18th and 19th century ketubot from Alsace, religious marriages in Paris from 1848 to 1872 and the family tree books of families from the Papal area of France and Fontainebleau. I will be happy to make the contents available to any member with French Jewish roots.

There will be a full report of the Paris conference in the next issue, and also one on our pre- and post conference genealogical activities in Europe. The Annual General Meeting of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies which took place during the conference, resulted in the election of a new slate of office-bearers chosen by the appointed Nominating Committee and the failure to elect the one person who was nominated independently showed that it is unfortunately the Nominating

Committee which controls the election. Fortunately the new president is Dr Sallyann Amdur Sack of the Greater Washington J.G.S., founder and still editor of AVOTAYNU, the Review of International Genealogy, author of "A Guide to Jewish Genealogical Research in Israel" and co-author with Gary Mokotoff, the founding president of the Association, of "Where Once We Walked, A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust", perhaps the most important book in English on Jewish genealogy. Karen Franklin of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York and now also publisher of STAMMBAUM, the journal of German-Jewish genealogy, is now vice-president. Hal Bookbinder is again treasurer, Saul Isroff, a former South African, now resident in England, is now also on the committee, as is Bruce Kahn of Rochester. We will endeavour to give you the full list of committee members of the Association in our next issue.

Sophie Caplan, Editor

A LETTER FROM YALE REISNER

Dear Sophie

Many thanks for your latest contribution of US\$100.00 to the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute. Thanks to contributions like yours over the course of this Project, the Institute has been able to purchase, for the first time in its fifty-year history, enough acid-free containers and fireproof cabinets to securely store its collections. Our priorities will now shift to the painstaking and time-consuming tasks of stabilizing deteriorating documents, cataloguing several collections not yet processed, and computerizing the information they contain for easier and more rapid access. Funds are also needed for the acquisition of indices to Jewish vital records and of other historical materials currently spread throughout Poland.

Through your gift, you have done a great mitzvah. On behalf of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, the Jewish Historical Institute Association and the Jewish Historical Research Institute, I thank you for your kind support and encourage you to enlist others in support of these efforts. Best wishes to you in 5758!

Sincerely yours

Yale Reisner

Director of Research and Archives
Ronald S. Lauder Foundation Genealogy Project at the
Jewish Historical Institute of Poland
ul. Tlomackie 3/5, 00-090 Warsaw, POLAND

Tel/fax: 48-22-625-0400
Email:reisner@plearn.edu.pl

PNINA GUTMANN REQUESTS OUR FURTHER HELP

I will briefly recapitulate the facts in my previous letter to The Kosher Koala Volume 3, September, 1996 and then give details of what I have learned since then. I hope that all the information will lead to the discovery of people who can help me find out about my biological parents.

My name is Pnina Gutmann. I was born 55 years ago in Poland and came to Israel with my adoptive parents in 1950. In 1944, when I was two and a half years old, I was found in a railway carriage in the small town of Milanówek near Warsaw. I said then in German that my name was Barbara Rebhun. I was handed over by the Red Cross liaison woman to a Polish family named Kaczmarek. They took care of me, first in Żyrardów near Warsaw and later in Sieraków near Poznań, until 1948. In March, 1948 I was taken from that family by the Central Jewish Committee in Warsaw and transferred to the orphanage at Otwock near Warsaw. After about six months there I was adopted by the Jewish Himmel family of Łódź with whom I came to Israel.

From June 1996 when I learned the name Rebhun, I sought the Rebhun family, thinking that they were my biological family. In March 1997, with the help of the Red Cross in Germany, I traced Wolfgang (69) and Adele (67) Rebhun. I met them in Germany and found that they were not my biological family but that our fates were intertwined. From them I learned what had happened to me between the ages of nine months and two and a half years.

I was born in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 or at the end of 1941. My parents were a young couple, Warsaw Ghetto fighters, and I was their only daughter. At the end of 1942 or at the beginning of 1943, when I was 9 months old, I was smuggled by my mother out of the ghetto. I was given to Charlotte Rebhun, mother of Wolfgang (then 14) and Adele (then 11) to be cared for until the crisis passed. Charlotte was a Christian and her husband, a Polish Jew, had already perished in Treblinka before I came to them. The family had been expelled from Berlin in 1939, and Charlotte lived in the Aryan part of Warsaw at 33 Krochmalna Street. She hid other Jews, and brought me up as her daughter. I lived with the Rebhun family until August 1944, when during the Polish uprising in Warsaw, all four of us were seized by the Germans. Wolfgang was sent to Mauthausen camp, Charlotte and Adele to Częstochowa. At that point I was forcibly taken from them by the Germans and left in the railway station. From then onwards the events are known.

Two additional pieces of information were provided by the Rebhuns. When I was handed over to their mother Charlotte I had a certificate round my neck (a birth certificate?) in the name of **WEGLIŃSKI** (which in



FOREBEARS AUSTRALIAN FAMILY FINDER

Our Family Finder column will be charged for at the rate of \$AUS 8 for 25 words plus address, telephone, fax or email number of inquirer. For overseas advertisements \$US5 if sent in cash OR for cheques \$US15 due to new high bank exchange rates for cheques in other currencies. Please communicate directly with inquirer, but kindly inform us if this column has helped you to advance in your research.

00053 JULIAN KEMPLER Julian is researching the Sephardi families **MENDES, de FONSECA, de SOLA**, and would like contact with others researching same families. Email: 806713.376@compuserve.com

00054 BERNARD ADWOKAT, 65 Avenue du Roule, 92200 Neuilly-Sur-Seine, FRANCE originated from **RZESZÓW** and **ROSWADÓW**, Poland, and seeks anyone with the surname **ADWOKAT/ADVOKAT** from either of these towns.

00055 ELIE GARBARZ, 19 rue Lisfranc, 75020 Paris, FRANCE seeks anyone with connections to the name **GARBARZ, GARBIASZ** or variants.

00056 MEIR BEER, 2575 Palisade Avenue #2F, Bronx, New York 10463, USA. Email: meirbeer@smb.com Fax: 1-212-816-6163. Seeks information on fate of **JIRI BEER-WEISS**, born 31 July, 1939, who was in Jewish children's home at Sazavská 15, Prague, was deported to Terezín on 24 October, 1942 and stayed there until liberation. Father was **ISAAK WEISS**. Mother **TAUBE DONNER-WEISS** was sent east with transport AAH at times of Heydrich's assassination. Any information on Jiri welcome, particularly his address.

Polish sounds like Wengliński). In the Rebhuns' opinion this was a false name, and only the name Barbara was real. However, I do not rule out the possibility that Wengliński, a Jewish name, too, is the name of my family of origin. When my mother gave me to Charlotte, she said that, if she did not come back to take me, Charlotte should send me to my rich relatives in America. I know nothing of them.

I shall be grateful to anyone who can give me information about a young couple (Wengliński?) or their family who were in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 and had a baby girl named Barbara. Please help me to solve the riddle of my life and complete the mosaic. Only the first nine months are now missing!

With thanks,

Pnina Gutmann, Kfar Mischar, 76850 Israel
Telephone: 972-8-859-1693 Fax: 972-8-859-6702