

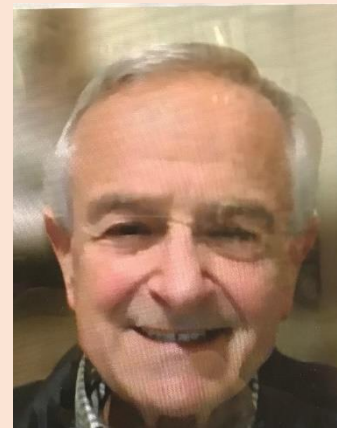
The Kimberley Zoom on 18 September 2022

Dear Friends

Thank you so much to the speakers and listeners on the Kimberley zoom of 18 September. It was a really lovely meeting, with 27 devices present. Each talk reinforced the others. I am battling to upload the recording onto our YouTube channel as usual, but for some reason it says the recording is too long. (If anyone can, help me please advise) meantime this is the zoom link to the impermanent recording if you wanted to see it – or listen again. (It cuts out just before the end for some reason.) Zoom link to recording

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/4xj5LYGEvhv0gEQLmqr-rFJ1kri2KEbabS51>Ifv76XFYNVrJeQn-E3Mabn5FRiq.zxJUinJu1wL0tMTa?startTime=1663502708000>

It was great to hear from **Philip Mayers** (Melbourne) grandson of the pioneering Philip Sussman (who came out to Kimberley first and then brought his Sussman brothers, sister and cousins) and his exceptional wife Augusta née Cohen of Somerset East. They lived in Kimberley, then moved on to Northern Rhodesia in the 1930s, opening up the infrastructure for the copper belt for his friend Sir Ernest Oppenheimer. Philip said how he has pieced his family together and connected with people from different parts of this Sussman mishpocha via the information gathered on the website. It’s wonderful when people discover some family history that they had not connected with before.



**Michael Sperber** now in Sydney, gave us a wonderful snapshot of Kimberley Jewish life when he was growing up in the 1940s and 50s complete with ‘cuts’ from brother Shorty O’Connor, at CBC, which school he says gave him and many other Kimberley Jewish boys an outstanding education and work ethos. He recalled Rabbis Bloch and Abramson and Rev Goldberg, and the long-serving synagogue secretary Sam Levine. He spoke about his pals and what they got up to, going to the Plaza on Saturday

mornings (after shul of course) and swapping comics. He mentioned also the tragedies that befell Kimberley boys who were accidentally drowned (Alan Stoller) or killed in an air crash at Kimberley Airport (Vernon 'Tossie' Goldman pilot and his passenger Joseph Nogid) – devastating for their families.

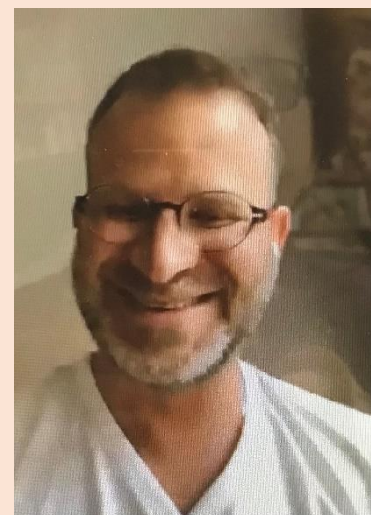
**Leon Chonin**, now in Toronto, told us more about his wish to document where what he calls the 'Kimberley youth' of the latter heyday of the Kimberley community in the 1950s, 60s and 70s when he was growing up, have landed up. It's a story of how the poor, fervently religious Yiddish-speaking Litvak Jews made the arduous journey to South Africa, made good, flourished and then in a few generations over the course of barely 100 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have left and gone on to fertilise with their brains, skills and dedication centres of learning and excellence across the English-speaking world and Israel. He exhorted those there, to fill in the gaps on his data list.



### **Resonates with Barney Horwitz**

This is a theme that resonates with **Barney Horwitz**, Chairman of the Kimberley community, who believes fervently in Hashem's plan to save some Jewry from what was to come in Europe by offering the haven of Africa. (Barney has offered to address us on this subject at another time.) He told us on the Zoom how the Kimberley shul has just this week, on 14 September 2022, celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary and has been in constant use ever since.

Barney invited his 'team-mate' for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the last 20 years **Nachi Ash** (right) to tell us how nurturing it is for him and his family and well as his friend **Yosef Shisler** and his family and their friends to go down to the beautiful and historic city and synagogue to celebrate the High Holydays with Barney and the people that are still in Kimberley. Nachi told us how they bring their children and commented on how great it was for everyone to once more hear children's voices and footsteps around the synagogue and its grounds. This reminded those watching the Zoom of themselves, as children doing the same.



Nachi and Yossi, both from strong rabbinic families, had been instilled by their parents with the need to be able to lead the High Holyday prayers, in case they

ever needed to do this, either to help a community or if they landed up somewhere with nobody else to do this. They feel it is a great Mitzvah for them to be of help to Kimberley.



They have virtually 'grown up' making Rosh Hashanah in Kimberley. The first time they came was 21 years ago when they were in high school. They love **Barney** (left) and **Maud Horwitz** and their family and enjoy being with them and the others in Kimberley: **David and Shirley Allen, Trevor and Hubre Datnow, Barry Katz** and his wife (who have sadly now moved to Cape Town). They enjoy meeting those that come specially to be part of the holidays. They feel as though they ARE PART of the Kimberley community. Now they have wives and children of barmitzvah age who swell the minyan. They

never feel it is an imposition to up sticks and go en-masse to Kimberley – rather they see it as a great joy. Nachi said they would steadfastly continue to provide a minyan for Kimberley as long as Barney wants them to – if there was only one person left, then they would bring nine!

**Nachi paid special tribute to Barney** for all he does to keep the community not only alive, but truly stimulated and refreshed with Yiddishkeit. We all echoed this praise for Barney and said that instead of saying 'next year in Jerusalem', we should all strive to celebrate next year's High Holydays in this wonderful atmosphere in the beautiful Memorial Road shul with Barney, Nachi, Yossi and co in Kimberley. This year **Rabbi Silberhaft** will also be joining them for the High Holydays. They are preparing a communal meal for thirty-seven people with kosher food coming from Johannesburg. We wish them all a joyous new year – as we wish all members of this group who may be reading this Newsletter.

Barney also told us that he is slowly getting together and cataloguing the registers and ketubot, and counting and cleaning the sefer torahs and their covers. ready for **photographing and digitizing**. He will be contacting the Jewish Museum and the Kaplan Centre in Cape Town in the near future.

### **A Virtual Cemetery for Kimberley**

I mentioned that it is my wish now to create a **virtual cemetery** so that while the graves are still pristine, we photograph and transcribe the tombstones and have it available on the web where we can visit, leave a stone and contribute financially to

those in Kimberley who care for the physical premises. I hope to be in touch with Barney soon after the High Holydays to put this in motion.

### **Eli Rabinowitz – king of the kehillalinks**



Eli Rabinowitz from Cape Town now living in Perth, Australia (pictured left with me in London when we started this work about eight years ago) showed some of his work on the internet, and also several pages of the Kimberley website, of which he is justly proud.

It is because of Eli that we have this website.

When I had this dream

of making a Kimberley website I was lucky to be introduced to Eli. He is somebody special, who loves to document communities. At first, he worked on lost towns and villages in Poland and Lithuania and then also in South Africa where several communities are dwindling. Eli has created nearly a hundred sites and posted amazing family stories and information that might otherwise be difficult to discover. Here is the link to [Eli's PowerPoint for Kimberely Zoom](#) which he kindly offered. And here is the link to the Kimberley website – which I am sure you are all familiar with. <https://kehillalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Home.html>. All his other sites can be seen on the 'communities' page of the new website that has been made for CHOL – Community History On-Line.

<https://www.chol.website/index.htm>.

**Natalie Sussman** The last word was from Natalie Sussman who at a sprightly 94, is now honoured to be the most senior living Jewish person who resided in Kimberley. Natalie expresses thoughts and idea so beautifully. She said that through our work the Kimberley community has been given new life. She affirmed that the Kimberley Jewish community had played a big part in the city. Many had been members of the school and hospital boards and of the chamber



of commerce and on professional bodies. They had served as councillors and been elected to the highest office of Mayor of Kimberley. Here she mentioned Lionel Jawno, the grandfather of Shelley Catzel who was present, and her dear late husband Cecil (both of whose stories are on the website under 'families'). Natalie appreciated how, through this project, we, the 'survivors' though elderly and spread out far and wide across the world, have been brought together to meet and talk to each other and to celebrate the community. She said: 'Kimberley Jewry will be remembered for generations because of the gift – and the untiring work of Geraldine and Eli'

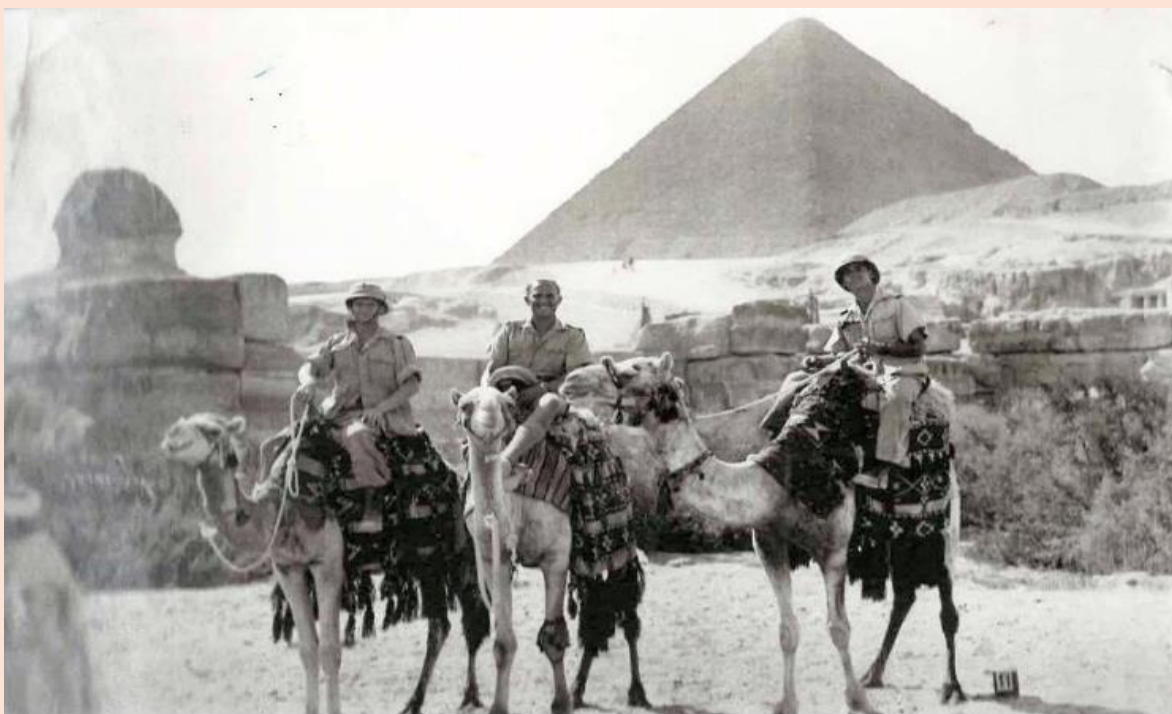
Thank you so much for your thoughts and kind words, Natalie.

## **The Annals of the Kimberley Jewish Community**



I mentioned that I had found an article from the Diamond Fields Advertiser of 1946 amongst my father Noel Kretzmar's papers. He was the president of the community at the time. This was a report about a grand Social and Dance, put on by the Union of Jewish Women, at the prestigious Constance Hall to welcome all the 50 Jewish servicemen, back to Kimberley after the war.

The article said, 'The event was attended by a large crowd of Jewish friends and relations of the serving members. In welcoming the returned soldiers, Dr Noel Kretzmar, Chairman of the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation said that the day had at last arrived which they have been waiting for, for six years,



the day they could say “welcome home” to the large number of Jewish people who had been away on service. They said it with joy in their hearts and with great thankfulness that all had come safely through the hazards of six years of war and grim fighting and were able to be with their friends and families once more.

#### ANSWERED THE CALL

‘During the past few years, he said, space in Europe for freedom-loving people had become less and less and even the right to live had become precarious, especially for Jews. When war came, the Jewish men had answered the call to arms, not because they were looking for excitement and adventure, but they were convinced that there would be no peace or freedom for anyone, and least of all for Jews, while tyrants were allowed to reign in Europe. It was a tough job, and you went into it with courage and determination, and our hearts went with you. Many had been mentioned in dispatches, others had been decorated for gallantly in the field, and those at home had been very proud of them.’

My father finished his speech by saying ‘They formed part of a young force and were comparatively lightly armed, and they faced an enemy seemingly oblivious to the rules of international warfare, but their deeds throughout their many campaigns up North, and as part of the Sixth Division **would be written in the annals of the Jewish community.**

How did he know, I wonder (or did I know for that matter?) that one day, his six-year-old at the time, daughter Geraldine, would reach out to all these families and compile the stories of those individual soldiers, from memories and pictures contributed by their children and grandchildren, and that she would one day make a website to highlight and memorialise the ‘**Annals of the Kimberley Jewish Community**’?



#### Feedback

Hi Geraldine

Last night’s Zoom was impressive, thank you as always for getting everything together. I am in awe what has been achieved and what blew me away was the fact that Rosh Hashanah services continue to occur in Kimberley even though there are so few people left – what wonderful and dedicated leaders are left – Kol Hakovod and the Bochrin who ensure that there is someone who can Daven and support those living in Kimberley – true menschkeit!

I had a cursory look at what Leon Chonin has put together and this week I hope to see if there are any gaps I can fill in. I think what he has put together will plug

another piece of the Jigsaw Puzzle of Kimberley – I think he is amazing! What has been achieved with the website is so thrilling and will be a lasting memory for decades. Between you and Eli words fail me to express my gratitude and those of others for the time and effort and what has been achieved and continues.

It definitely stirred many emotions and pride from my side of the family from those early years of the pioneers and my about eight years growing up in Kimberley. I am now in touch with Peter Harris (-a relation as I am descended from Sir David Harris's sister Hannah Speelman – and he from Sir Davids son Wilfrid). My niece who lives in London will be in Sydney next month and we will be going through the family memorabilia, and she hopes to catch up with Peter on her return.

Today I am spending glued to the TV to say farewell our Queen. It has been a momentous week and watching UK Sky has been such a revelation as to the sentiment of the people, also Britain with its organisational skills and the transition to Charles 111 as King – a moment in History which we will never forgot. Queen Elizabeth II was an Icon and will be remembered and etched in people's psyche forever.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and all members of your family Shana Tova and a year filled with good health, happiness and many Blessings.

Love, **Beverly Solsky (née Buirski)** (Sydney Australia)

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Thank you, Geraldine. It was my first time on a Kimberley Zoom. I appreciated all the effort and time that you Barney and others devote to keeping this history alive. I have been negligent to respond. I shall try to do better. I am living in Irvine CA and have been for 32 years. I have 2 children and 4 grandchildren. Retired from my school job as music teacher, I now teach piano at home and am enjoying being less busy. All the best and Chag Sameach and once again thank you for what you do. I Am in awe. **Jenny Goldin(Brown)** Irvine California

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Dear Geraldine,

This is to wish you Shana Tovah and to congratulate you on your outstanding efforts on behalf of the Memory of Kimberly's Jewish past.

You are an example to the rest of Jewry, now scattered around the world, in the work that you have done, and continue to do.

With great respect, **Abel and Glenda Levitt**, Kfar Sava, Israel