

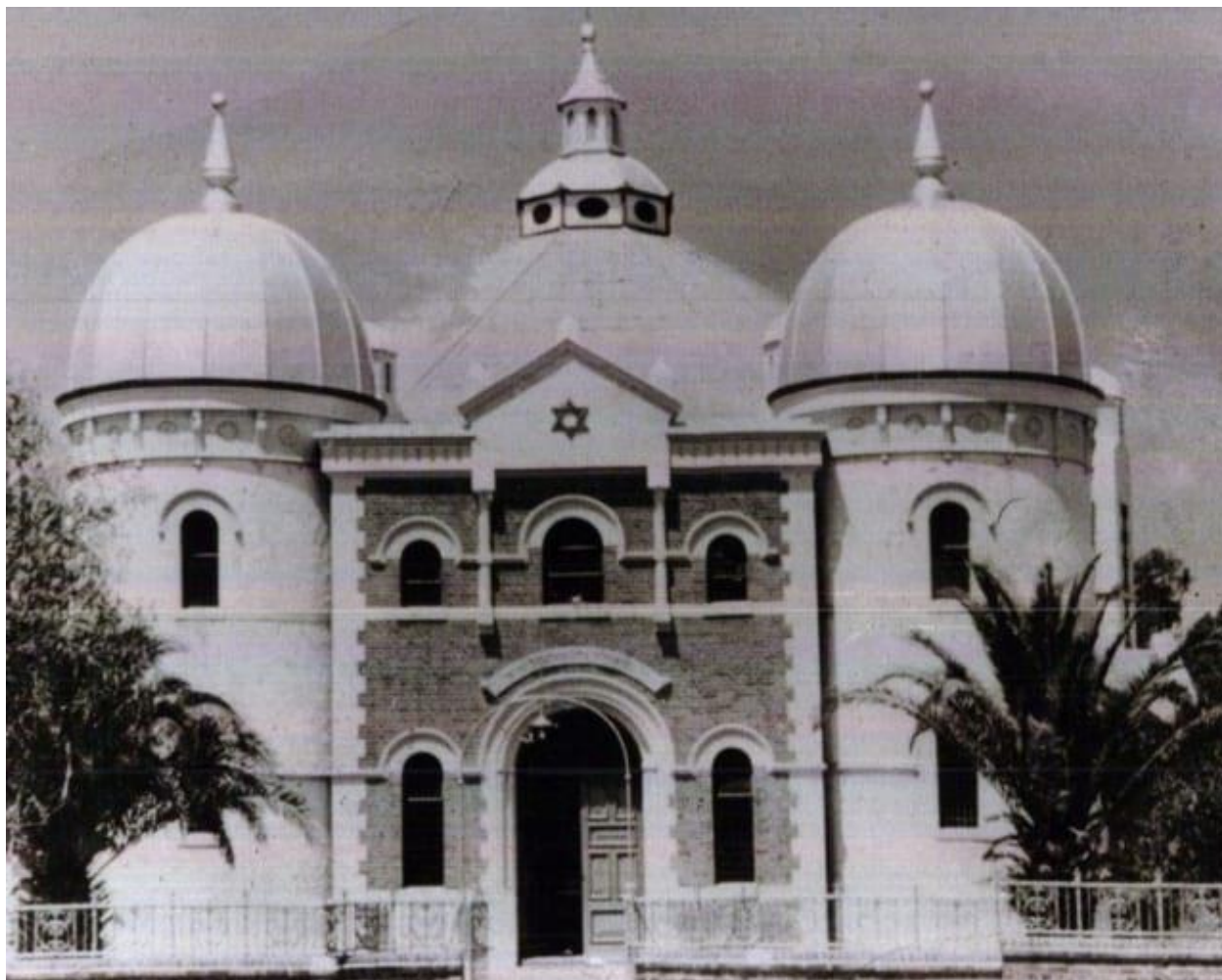
## Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter No 27

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach, MBE, London  
March 2020

### Corona Virus, Spanish Flu and Jabotinsky's visit

Plus, new family entries, future research and responses to Newsletter no 26

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Dear Friends

I found this lovely black and white picture (above) of our Kimberley synagogue in the early days. If we knew how fast that kind of palm tree grows, we could probably assess the age of the picture – but it was probably taken about 100 years ago in the 1920s. Anyway, we can all offer up a few prayers.

### Kimberley Ex-Pats Isolation Lockdown Diary?

It's a cliché to say it – but we are living in unprecedented times. What does it mean for humans to be confined to small spaces and not have family or friends close by socialise with for weeks or months on end? **I am inviting you** to contribute to a Kimberley Ex-Pats Coronavirus Diary. Write to me about how you are hunkering down in this unfamiliar and new circumstance, as we all wait, wherever we are, for the tsunami to engulf us. Send a few lines or paragraphs to say where you are and how you are feeling and coping with the ever-confining restrictions. And I will circulate your entries to us all, so we feel connected to our Kimberley family – however spread-out we are. If you write every week, we can see

as things transpire, the continuity of your life and the progress of the threat and of our response. This Diary could become a very interesting historic document. Let's hope we all come out unscathed. I look forward to hearing from you.

## The Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918

About the time this picture of the synagogue was taken, the world was emerging from the catastrophic effects and huge death toll of the first world war and then Kimberley, like the rest of the world except Australia (that closed its borders to shipping) was hit by the so called 'Spanish' flu pandemic. World-wide nearly 50 million people died of that illness.



It seems relevant in the light of the present coronavirus pandemic that is proving deadly, to look at the previous one. Coronavirus does not sound quite as bad, but the effect it is having on changing lifestyles and curtailing activity worldwide is truly mind-blowing, and where will we all come out at the end? Will there be an end and when might it be? I don't think anything will ever be quite the same as before.

The previous pandemic affected many Kimberley Jewish families. **Milton Jawno** remembers: 'My father (**Lionel Jawno**) told me from the early days how the Great Flu pandemic hit Kimberley in 1918. Lionel remembered how neighbours died during the night and early the next morning a red piece of material was hung from a broomstick so that a hand-pulled wagon could come by and collect the dead. Amongst those affected were Jews, who were buried in the old Stead Street Jewish cemetery. In 1976, I was a member of the Jewish Board of Deputies for Kimberley when Gus Saron, the author of *The Jews in South Africa*, came to see me and we visited the graves of Jewish flu victims, many of whom were small children.

**Benjamin Bennett**, brother of **Connie David**, later a well-known author, was a pupil at the Kimberley Boys' High School at the time. He wrote: "Many of the senior boys helped at the Kimberley Hospital. Others were themselves stricken or had to look after the sick in their own homes. Fortunately the plague passed by my home, and I remember vividly, as a little boy, cycling through Kimberley's streets of death to collect lemons at the City Hall – they were said to be good for one's health and somehow staved off influenza – then watching the unending funeral processions on their way to the cemeteries. The Irish Christian Brothers, those still on their feet, rendered yeomen service in assisting the few doctors available by nursing the sick in their own homes and in the Kimberley hospital". Quite surprisingly, no Brothers nor boarders from CBC – all of whom contracted the flu – died from the disease.

**The total deaths in Kimberley** from the epidemic reached 4861. Some 40 000 people in the Kimberley urban area would be stricken with the influenza, the greatest natural disaster the city has ever seen, and the majority of the people affected were blacks. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser* reported that the Flu 'had a firm grip of nearly half the population, the deaths among the native element being nothing short of appalling'. We have posted a longer story of the Spanish Flu in Kimberley on the website under 'Articles' here [Spanish Flu Epidemic](#)

**It impacted on our family** greatly too. My grandfather **Jacob Bergman's** brother and business partner in Schmidtsdrift, **David Bergman**, contracted the flu and died. He was 44 years old. He had come out as a teenager with his brother Jacob from Kandau in Latvia and after two mysterious years in Rhodesia settled on the Vaal River 30 miles west of Kimberley with a trading store, a hotel and operating the river crossing on a pont, drawn by chains. He left a wife Dika from Sweden and two young daughters, **Kate and Siri Bergman**. You can read the David Bergman Story here [Friedman, Joe & Kate \(nee Bergman\) & son David](#)

Maybe the Spanish flu of 1918 impacted on your family as well? These are sobering thoughts as we hunker down on our homes today – wherever we are in the world. Let's stick together in this tricky time and see if we can create a picture of what Coronavirus and the lockdown means to us, spread across the world. Start with your name, your location and, if you don't mind, your age and tell me how you are faring and how you are feeling about the world lockdown and your own particular situation.

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### **The visit of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky to Kimberley 1938**

In **Milton Jawno's** opinion Jabotinsky's visit to Kimberley in 1938 was the most momentous occasion in the history of Kimberley Jewry. He says, "My father (Lionel Jawno) told me, this great prophet and leader warned the community of the impending hell that was about to decimate our people. Certainly, meeting Jabotinsky was one of the highlights of my father's life".



Receiving Jabotinsky at Kimberley airport are: Kollen Sussman, Mr Hyman Jacobson (Dan's father and who had arranged the visit to Kimberley) Mrs Flo Jawno?, unidentified man – maybe the Mayor of Kimberley, Mrs Jacobson, Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky, Laz Barnet, Freda Barnett In front are the children: Dan Jacobson, and the three Barnett girls, Ruth, Mavis and baby Jessica. (picture courtesy of Ruth Sheer (née Barnett))

The visit was organised by Dan Jacobson's father Hyman, who was a passionate believer in Jabotinsky's New Zionist goals. Some 21 years later Dan – seen in the middle of picture above as a small boy amongst the reception committee at Kimberley airport to meet the great man – wrote a story of his impressions of that visit. I have been able to put them together with some personal memories of other Kimberley children of that occasion in an article on the website. You can read the whole story on the website under 'Articles', here: [Jabotinsky's Visit](#)

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## New family postings

### Mr and Mrs B Goldberg

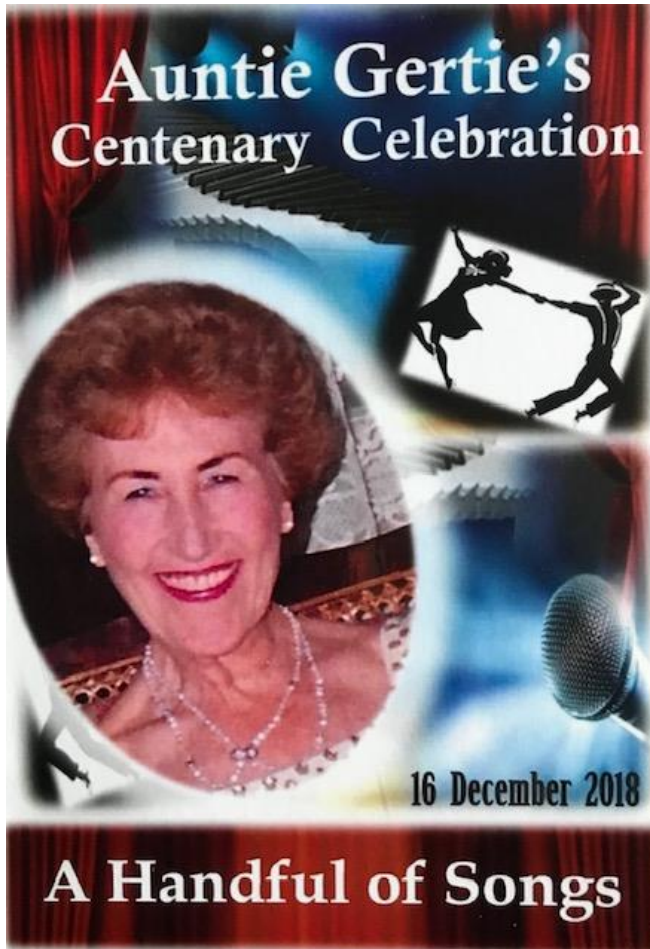
I have been delighted to have been in touch with grandchildren of the Diamond Breakwater King. We have now built up a great story with pictures of **Bernard and Sarah** and their three sons. [Goldberg, Mr & Mrs Bernard & Family](#) On their family page is a link to a chapter about him and his breakwaters in Lawrence Green's book, 'There's a Secret Hid Away'. I am grateful to grandchildren, **Lorna Agras** (daughter of Alf) and **Lynne Gordon** (daughter of Dudley – and Nan née Sagar) and friends, who have contributed information, anecdotes and pictures.

(The **Sagars** are another great Kimberley family I am working on. So, if you have any recollections of the Sagars, William JP and son Harold, please send)



(Above Mr and Mrs B on their golden wedding anniversary with l-r: **Dudley, Alf and Sam Goldberg**.)

## Gertie and Ivor Haas



I also met recently with **Selwyn Haas**, son of **Gertie and Ivor Haas**. Selwyn too has provided lots of information and images for the story of Gertie's achievements as musician, piano teacher, speech and drama teacher and music appreciation teacher.

She was born Gertie Goldberg in Kimberley on 7 July 1918.

We also have the story of Gertie's parents **Taube and Solomon Goldberg**, who ran a modern dairy in Kimberley with the earliest cold storage facility.

Read the story here:  
[Haas, Gertie, Ivor & Family](#)

## Laz and Freda Barnet

To write the fascinating story of **Laz and Freda Barnet (née Jawno)** I am working with their daughter **Ruth Sheer (née Barnett)** in London, who will be turning 90 this year. Laz was born in North Wales in 1899, saw distinguished service in the first world war and followed many sisters to South Africa. He was apparently a real character in Kimberley, operating publicly as a wrestler, strong man, hypnotist and was well known as a writer of interesting lifestyle pieces in the local newspaper, the Diamond Fields Advertiser. He was also an ardent 'New' Zionist (see the Jabotinsky story above). If you have any recollections of Laz (pictured right) please send them to add to the story which we hope to post soon.



## Philip and Gussie Sussman

Another story in the pipeline, is that of **Philip Sussman**, bother of Kollen, Guttel, George and

Israel. It was Philip who came out first in 1900 from Taverig and started farming in the Kimberley area, before bringing his brothers out to help run the farming and meat processing businesses.

Grandson – **Philip Mayers** of Melbourne, son of their youngest daughter Sheila, has supplied the amazing story of Philip who went on to work with **Sir Ernest Oppenheimer**, opening up businesses in the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt and the Transvaal to support Anglo-American mining enterprises. He also shared Oppenheimer's interest in Horse Racing. There was much excitement when Philip's nag Santor, won the Durban July in the mid-30s. No less illustrious was Philip's wife **Augusta (Gussie) Sussman**. She made a great impact on Kimberley life, raising funds for many charities particularly for soldiers returning from the First World War. When Philip and Gussie eventually left Kimberley in the mid to late 1930s the Mayor gave a special reception for her at City Hall where she was greeted by the great and good of Kimberley with much adulation, and they gave her an illuminated address. You will be able to read the citation and see the beautiful work by Kimberley's most famous artist, William Timlin, when we post the article.

## Solomon and Sophie Zweiback.

I am also working on the story of Dr **Solomon Zweiback** and his wife **Sophie (née Ettin)**. His grand-nephew, **Raymond Lewis**, the grandson of his younger sister Fanny who married **Coleman Lewis** has been in touch. Cole worked as a clerk for SAR & H. Their two sons, **Harold and Shirley (aka Mitchell) Lewis** went to Kimberley CBC and trained as Doctors at UCT. I am waiting for some pictures to go with this story before posting.

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## Developing Research:

While we are stuck at home, it's a good time to go through those old photo albums and documents we have kept all these years and hardly looked at. Soon everyone who knew the Kimberley characters will have gone! So here are some of the interesting topics that we are researching that you may be able to help with:

### Farming Around Kimberley

We know that many families – including the **Datnows**, the **Sussmans** and others were involved with Farming in the Northern Cape.

I am really keen to write about the Jewish families who were involved in farming and their farms in the Northern Cape around Kimberley, Schmidtsdrift, Free State, Campbell, Taung and Vaal Hartz areas. Eg please say:

What was the name of the farm?

Area where situated – and size?

Name of farm owner?

Dates from when to when?

What was farmed, livestock, produce etc?

How this was the produce marketed?

Any other facts or anecdotes that could be interesting including where the family came from and when arrived in the area.

Please could you tell me about the farms you know about and also tell me who else to ask

**Leon Chonin** has kindly sent me some information and pictures of the **Oshry** and **Jocum** families who farmed around the Taung area. **David Lenhoff** has also sent interesting farming information. Others have promised.

Now is a good time to knuckle down to it? I look forward to hearing from you.

## And War Stories

People have been sending me stories and pictures of what (their menfolk particularly) did in WW2. This mainly consisted of going 'up north'. Many of our Kimberley men did this, but what did it actually entail? And what effect did it have on them? I have a wonderful story from **Dave Apter** about his father **Mendel's** activity in the navy and **Robin Apter** has sent stuff about his father Alec in the Airforce. I have heard from



**Selwyn Haas**, born in Kimberley (**Gertie and Ivor Haas' son**) about his family involvement with a picture (left) that includes the Sphinx, a Pyramid and South African soldiers on camels. When I have received enough information, I will write the article about war service.

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## Responses to Kimberley ex-pat Newsletter no 26

Its always great to get feedback from these Newsletters

### Who was the lady in the UJW photo? Jean Cohen!

I was delighted to get a message from Brian Cohen, in Guildford UK, on 28 February 2020 identifying the lady, third from left as his mother, He said: Dear Mrs Auerbach,



I have seen your news from Kimberley, which you send to my sister-in-law, Adele Cohen. Thank you for doing this, it's wonderful, and I'm very glad you take the time to compile these news updates. You ask for some names, in the one photo, second from the right as we look at it, ie the lady in the printed dress, (could be floral or

maybe some sort of paw print, with the white handbag) is my mother, ie **Jean Cohen**. [left is Beryl Kretzmar and right Perl Toooh. The other lady is Sally Kussell, a distinguished visitor from Head Office]

Brian Cohen continued: 'We left Kimberley as a family in 1956, moved to Johannesburg, where my mother seemed to fall ill soon after, and never really recovered. She had serious eye problems, and was in effect blind for many years, then she later contracted bone marrow cancer, which finally took her in 1979. She was married to **Cecil Cohen**, who was the son of Barney Cohen who was mayor of Kimberley in 1931-32 - **the grandfather I never knew**. We are related to the Frank family (Barney's daughter Anita Cohen married Masel Frank [Ed: you can see the whole story of the Frank family in Kimberley contributed by Sheila [Grant \(nee Frank\), Sheila](#)]

Brian said: Cecil was in north Africa for the war, also in Italy. He fought at the battle of Monte Cassino. where he was shot through the mouth. **Cecil and Jean Cohen** had three sons, **Raymond, David** and myself, **Brian**. Adele is married to David, they live in Vancouver and also Melbourne, Raymond is in Vancouver. I live near Guildford, UK and have done so for over 40 years. Adele will clue you in, if you need to know anything, she has done the research on our family.

I recognise many of the names you mention, eg Marie Datnow, Jawno, and the others, my mother talked of them often, and as a small boy I heard all this, and still recall. I am 67 now (2020). My mother was certainly active in Kimberley with the community there. Her father was Jimmy Callis, (James) married to Bessie, both moved to Johannesburg later in life, after we moved.

When I told him, Brian said 'Very glad to know my mother had been in the UJW chair, it could not have been for long as about then ie 56 or 57, (I thought it was 56, as I was only 4 when we left, born in 52) we left to live in Johannesburg. I knew Joan Rauff too, as her husband Arnold was my older brother's best friend, they remained close until Arnold passed not all that long ago. Sadly he and Joan had divorced some years before that, but she was really a lovely lady. Thanks, a lot of good info there, my mother sadly died in 1980, in Johannesburg, my father also passed the year after.

Brian Cohen is going to write the fascinating story of his father's association with Sir Ernest Oppenheimer and his intelligence services to the British! I can't wait.

[look on the family page of the website for all these, and other family entries [Family Stories](#)]

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## In response to: Favourite Home Tried Recipes



### Stella Weinberg's Fudge

in response to the recipe book of the UJW in 1945  
Trevor Toubé says:

Another good Newsletter, Geraldine. Thanks for all that you do. I have made **Stella Weinberg's** fudge recipe many times.

As for the 'Pizza', that is usually spelled 'P'cha' You can actually buy it here, under the name 'calf's foot jelly'. As far as I am concerned, the p'cha queen was



**Mrs B Goldberg.** She would occasionally give a few helpings to my father. He and I loved it; I suspect the ladies of our family did not.

## Lily Jawno's Cheesecake

**Shelly Catzel, nee Jawno writes**

Hi Geraldine

A fascinating read. I was surprised to read that a cookbook called "Favourite Home Tried Recipes" published by the Union of Jewish Women Kimberley Branch was ever published. In it reference is made to "Lily Jawno's Cheesecake"

I am going to ask you if it is possible to send me a copy of her recipe or if there are any others that were included by her. I never knew anything about my mother's culinary skills. Would love to have them to give to my granddaughters. Much appreciated

Shelley Catzel (Jawno)

Do you know if one is able to ever purchase this book?

[maybe we can try to digitize it and upload it on the site]

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## Grandchildren writing projects on Kimberley history

Today I had a happy surprise email from Beverly Datnow

She said: 'My grandchild is planning a history project and I have suggested that she base it on the history of the **Kimberley Shul**. The project requires inter alia, photographs and information linking her ancestors to the Shul.



Those ancestors (for the purposes of this project) can include:

- All the Datnows: Marie, Mike, Jennifer, Denise, Sirrel, Julian, Levine, Betsy, and me
- Of particular interest is a prior newsletter in which you showed photographs of various wedding photos on the steps of the synagogue. Here I am hoping that you can find the one of **Jennifer and Herbert Hendler**, not sure if there is one of **Marie and Mike; Benice Datnow** and **David Kretzmar; Richard and Beverly Marcus?**

Well as I replied to Beverly, that the Kimberley Jewish Community website is full of such information and what a great idea for your grandchildren. This site provides so much material. So maybe you also want to suggest such a project to your own grandchildren? I also asked Beverly in return to supply me with the missing Datnow information and help – with her sisters and cousins to fill us in about the Farming activities of the Datnow families.



### **Eric and Roger David with CC9400**

Schoolfriend Lindsay Ross writes:

I used to play in a folk duo (sometimes included my sister Hazel Ross) with **Roger David** in Kimberley. We used to play at the Dragon Inn in Kimberley (Beryl Syman) on Saturday nights.

I will always remember **Eric David** at their house at one of our "practices" standing on top of the cupboard and singing an Elvis song through a toilet roll as a mike. If only I could turn back the clock to those wonderous Kimberley days.

Thank you very much for this Geraldine. Always appreciated. Still my pal **Kingsley Dean** and I haven't yet been able to contact my good old friend **Bernard Werner** from Kimberley days. I'm sure if try we could re-live some great and funny memories from the 60s.

**Lyndsay Ross**

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### **My Granny was Dora David**

Dear Geraldine

I live in Perth and know Eli and Jill Rabinowitz who gave me your email. **I am the niece of Solly and Julie Jacobson and my granny was Dora David** I do find your Kimberley news very interesting. Please add me to your mailing list thanks. I have a sister in Cape Town and brother in America and **Reisa Bronks née Jacobson** (my dad and mum's cousin) is still alive and living in Cape Town so have forward the Kimberley news to her.

Thank you, Best wishes, Marcelle Plaut nee Jacobson

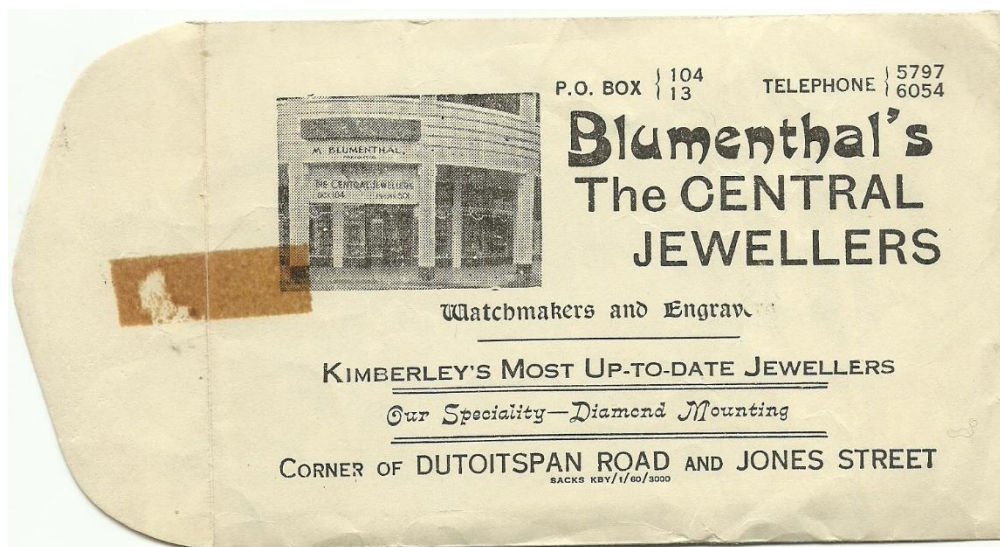
And **Denise Fletcher** in Sydney, Australia wanted me to let **Marcelle Plaut** know that:

'I'm the daughter of Naomi Fletcher who was one of Reisa Bronks's very good friends - I think they were at UCT together (many moons ago!) and I'd love to pass on my best wishes to Reisa whom I knew when we lived in Cape Town.'

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## Jewellery Business in Kimberley

Daphne Gillis (née Toube) writes:  
"Geraldine, You mentioned **Gertie Haas**. I remember the story that a young manufacturing jeweller a *landsleid* of my grandfather **Max Blumenthal** who had a jewellery business in Kimberley came to work for him for a while".



Daphne continues, "I suspect my grandfather thought he might be a good match for one of his daughters. But this young man **Ivor Haas** met a friend of the youngest Blumenthal daughter, Hilda and fell in love with her. That was **Gertie Goldberg** who became **Gertie Haas**, a well loved and popular music teacher in Kimberley and then in Cape Town".

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We are so grateful to all those who have emailed us and shared their stories, comments, pictures and ideas.

**This Newsletter** and the **Website** are collaborative efforts made up of your valued contributions. I may be the catalyst, and **Eli Rabinowitz** the webmaster, but it's only because of your contributions and input that it exists and grows.

If you have a story to tell or comment about Jewish life in Kimberley, please write it up – or just jot down some notes and send it to us. We will be happy to help you edit and complete your story.

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