

# Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter #35 – Zoom & dressing up

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London, 9 February 2021

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It seems that the idea of a reunion get-together on Zoom appeals to many of you. Here are the login details and times and you are all welcome to join in one or other of the sessions or even both.

Kimberley get-together 1: **Sunday 14 February at 11.00am** UK time (suitable for Australians)

Kimberley get-together 2: **Sunday 21 February at 6.00pm** UK time (suitable for Californians)

## Zoom Login

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81104050877?pwd=YTIJTE13S2RUTC9oWEdXWVBncldWZz09>

See the details for the protocol of the meetings on page 7

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## Dressing up!

Long before social distancing, Kimberley folk had a great fancy dress party. It seems to have been a 'united nations' kind of thing with people representing a country. Delia found this very happy picture of some of our young parents. There are many familiar faces, but it would be great if we



could identify them all. We estimate it to be from the very early 1950s.

Jack and Sadie Sussman, in the middle of the front row, seem to be in Japanese outfits, Sybil Perel is brandishing a Britannia shield. Hannah and Jack Frank extreme left, seem to be Mexican with huge sombreros and Helen and Ikky Brown next to them are possibly Catalans or Bretons? There seems to be a Viking at the back, with horns – but who is he? The Jacobsons seem to be from the Punjab! (only Althea Kretzmar I believe is still alive in February 2021 just turned 96 in Cape Town)

**Here is what we know – or think – we know.** If you can identify anyone else, please let us know.

**Front row** (from left) Mossie Shapiro, Jack and Sadie Sussman, Betty Levinsohn and Louis Levinsohn

**Second from front Row:** Jack Frank, Hannah Frank, Alice Witepski, Sadie Shapiro, ? ? Bessie Stoller, Beryl Kretzmar

**Third from front Row:** Helen Brown, Ikky Brown, Solly Jacobson (with turban and beard), Julie Jacobson, Two faces close together is one Nina Tockar, who is the other? Then one with a mask – could this be Stella Levinsohn?

**Back Row:** (?lady in white dress) (?man with horns) (?lady with pearl necklace – could that be Irene Sellman?) (?man with white hat – is that Joe Sperber) Bertie Sperber, Wilhlem Witepski, (??two ladies, with ?man in hat behind them) Pearl Tooch? Noel Kretzmar – partly obscured by veil, (Sybil Perel in Union Jack shield) Althea Kretzmar (with trident) behind her Hymie Tockar.

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## Our website is gaining traction

I recently received emails from interesting people eg  
**Shelagh Mazey, novelist:**

Hi Geraldine,

I have read your work, **Alfred Beit: South Africa's Financial Genius** on the internet, as part of my research for a fictional story set in Hopetown between 1874-76. In addition to learning about this fascinating man, I found it very useful as background information on the diamond mining industry as a whole, and on the area around Kimberley.

My novel is self-published and is the fifth story of a series that I began called 'Brandy Row', set on Portland in 1830, and my characters have since travelled to both Australia and South Africa. This book is going to be called, **All that Glitters** and is due to be published in February, by Matador. I am printing only 500 copies and hope to make some of my money back by charging £9.99 per copy. (you can get it at Amazon)

Although I don't believe I have specifically quoted from your work, I wish to acknowledge you as a source of my research and to obtain copyright clearance. I have only recently discovered your home page, which also would have been useful information for my story, but the Publishers already have the manuscript. I will however in due course enjoy reading about your family.

With best wishes, Shelagh Mazey



I have been in touch with

**Adam Mendelssohn**, Director of the Kaplan Centre at UCT who said:

Dear Geraldine

Thank you for your marvellous site (I've used it many times before). And congratulations on this **engaging account of Alfred Beit**. As you've described, he has not received his due in popular memory. With your permission, I'd like to discuss your Kimberley site with Gavin Morris, the director of the South African Jewish Museum. We're working with Gavin and the Museum on making archival material accessible online, and there may be potential overlap and opportunities with your site.



and

**Gavin Morris**, Director of the South African Jewish Museum said:

Kol Hakavod on the work you have done, and I am sure that future historians will be in your debt for it. We are also in the process of building a new museum website, which will include links to SA Jewish interest sites, and I will happily include Kehilalinks in that list.

**Eli Rabinowitz and I** are going to be working with both the Kaplan Centre

and the Museum and others to see how we can encourage more activity in this area, as Gavin says: 'As you can imagine, there are many towns and congregations who want their history to be recorded and kept alive. We rely on persons such as yourself who are willing to do the work'. (This silver replica of our Kimberley shul resides, for safekeeping, at the South Africa Jewish Museum.)

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**Natalie Sussman wrote:**

I chuckled at your description 'Milchig and Fleishig' for the last Newsletter #34. Very clever and as we are writing about our kosher grandparents it is very apt. We all admire you for the many hours you spend on research and your talent for telling our stories.

Most Historians record the lives of the famous. But you are unique in recording the lives of generations of good, kind, caring people who did not annex lands for the King of England, but who laid a firm foundation for the generations to come, an example to follow of the importance of family loyalty to your own traditions and loyalty to the country which gave you shelter. You have enshrined all these facts in great detail: our Shuls, Army service, ambitions to succeed in a new country. On behalf of the six generations of our families, thank you. It is memories that we cherish of our loved ones that enrich our lives.



## Losing friends – those who still have the memories ....

### Sheila Grant

As Sheila Grant (who was in my class at school) said to me last year: 'I keep saying that the saddest thing about growing older is that there are so few people still around who share my memories. You are absolutely amazing and doing such a superb job of keeping the old Kimberley folks together and bringing our early memories to life, not to mention compiling a record of a once vibrant community for posterity.

Sheila said she had at last retired from work in early 2020 and so she was hoping to share some input on our various records, 'if not in the next couple of weeks, then while I am away visiting my daughter and her family in New Zealand from mid-February to late May. (Well that proved a longer visit than she intended – but she was happy to be there and have quality time in the Pandemic)

**Leon Chonin**, in writing his **Jewish Education in Kimberley** article, had asked Sheila whether there had been an honours board at Girl's High School listing Dux Medallists. She said 'I don't know if there is an honours board but will try to find out. I do recall that most of the Jewish girls did pretty well at school. I know that **Brenda Frank** (maybe 1962) won the Dux Medal in her year, and I did in 1956, but was not aware that **Josie Shapiro** did so. My mother used to tell me that **Ashne Shapiro (née Kretzmar)** had also won the Dux Medal. I am not certain whether there were others who won this award or any sports awards. Anita Kaplan may have done so'. If any reader of this paragraph knows of any Jewish girl dux medallists, please let me know.

Sheila wrote the amazing story of the **Frank Family in Kimberley**. she said: Someone once remarked to me that almost every Jewish family in Kimberley was somehow connected to the Frank family, and I do believe this is true.



Here is a picture taken on one of my visits to Cape Town in the 1990s. I am back row left with Marcia Collins née Frank, Sheila Grant née Frank, Vicky Weinberg née Capon and in front are Nita Frank, Sheila's mother and my father Noel Kretzmar

Sheila went on: Originally the Frank family were called Podlifskey. They came from Slutzk, Belarus. The Patriarch, Ephroim Boruch (Bernard) Podlifskey, whose surname was later somehow changed to 'Frank', married a Miss Borodach (I think her name may have been "Minya") and they had three children, Judel, Annie and Israel. The family moved to America, where Minya sadly died. Ephroim Boruch returned to Slutzk where he married his late wife's sister, Stishie (Stella) with whom he had four more children, Solly, Rachael (Ray), Jack and Cyril (the youngest three being the same ages as his eldest son Judel's children Minnie, Nappy and Masel. To read the full story look here <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Grant.html>

In September 2020, Sheila was turning her attention to her mother's family, the Cohens.- Barney and Bertha. She wrote: I found the piece on Uncle Cecil (Cohen)'s wartime exploits most interesting. I knew he had served 'up North' but didn't have much in the way of details. Uncle Eric was Barney and Bertha Cohen's youngest son. They had six children - **Frances Kryn** (who was mayoress when Barney was Mayor of Kimberley), **Harold** (who had 3 children - Doreen, Valerie and Douglas), **Cecil, Ruth** Broude (Barbara's mother), **Eric** (who later changed his surname to "Conlyn"), and **Anita** Frank (my mother). As Uncle Harold's first wife died very young, and his second wife did not welcome the children, Douglas says he knows nothing about his father's wartime history, but I have an idea he did serve in some capacity. I have copied Douglas into this e-mail. Uncle Eric was a pilot in the RAF for the duration of the war and flew many missions. I am trying to contact his one remaining son, Trevor, who would probably have more information on Eric.

At that time, in September Sheila wrote: I am still in New Zealand, where most things are open and doing well (except that my daughter, Lauren, who is a Travel Consultant, has lost her job, like so many in that industry. Also, Tourism is a very important part of the economy in this beautiful country, and of course there are no tourists coming into the country. nor any locals going overseas. The North Island has a few Covid cases, mostly brought from abroad by returning citizens, here on the South Island there are no active cases. There are very few Jews in



Queenstown and no structured community or Shul, but we had 37 people for dinner on First Night Rosh Hashanah (apart from the 14 who were unable to make it!). I am, in no hurry to return to SA where the situation is bad, and in any event, there are no flights yet.

How ironic, that an over 80-year-old, safe in New Zealand from the dreaded Covid-19, raging in South Africa, should suddenly pass away. Our condolences to the family especially her daughter Lauren and Son Barry. We are all so grateful for Sheila's precious memories which she has been able to put down so succinctly and which are hopefully on the website for ever.

My cousin Alma Steinberg, née Frank and also Sheila's cousin - who grew up in Kimberley, lived in Johannesburg until her husband Arnold passed away, and now lives in New Zealand to be near her son Mark and Mandi, and family sent this picture above. Alma said: I heard the sad news about Sheila. It came as a shock to me as I had spent time with her only 2 months before. At the end of October I went away with Mark, Mandi and the kids for a long weekend to Queenstown on the South Island where Sheila was staying with her daughter, Lauren and family. Mark and Mandi had already met Lauren through mutual friends in Auckland.

I did not know Sheila very well in Kimberley and it was lovely to meet her. She is such a sweet and kind person. We had a couple of meals together with both our families. I also spent a day on my own with Sheila while the children went bicycle riding. She was enjoying her time with her daughter and was in no hurry to get back to Cape Town. We were all very upset to hear about her sudden death.

The picture was taken at a restaurant where we went to celebrate Mandi's birthday on the evening before we left. From the left, going round the table are Sheilas's granddaughter Madison, next to Alma's Granddaughter Mika. Sheila is sitting at the far end of the table next to Alma. Then Almas Grandson David, Mandy and Mark, then Sheila's daughter Lauren sitting next to husband David (who is probably taking the picture.)

## **Hilda Movsas (nee Silkiner)**

Hilda passed away on 6 February 2021 in Jerusalem aged 89. She was born in Kimberley in 1931, the older daughter of Sonia and Wolf Silkiner. Though her parents lived in Johannesburg Hilda was brought up in Kimberley by her uncles Solly, Ivan, Beady and Barney Diamond, and her aunt, Ray Diamond. You can read the story of the Diamond and Silkiner families here [Diamond Family](https://mcusercontent.com/9615bbf78ac360ba4aa396033/files/1ae99a0f-7d75-4d70-a1ab-055a19856e53/Newsletter_10_Wits_Medical_Library_v2.pdf) largely told by Hilda's sister Shirley who also became a librarian at Wits. (Shirley is a great artist and here is the story of her paintings at the Wits medical school library listing the different journals. [https://mcusercontent.com/9615bbf78ac360ba4aa396033/files/1ae99a0f-7d75-4d70-a1ab-055a19856e53/Newsletter\\_10\\_Wits\\_Medical\\_Library\\_v2.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/9615bbf78ac360ba4aa396033/files/1ae99a0f-7d75-4d70-a1ab-055a19856e53/Newsletter_10_Wits_Medical_Library_v2.pdf))

Hilda went to Girls High School where she made firm friends with Daphne Toubé Rina Cvy and Joy Goldman. She left Kimberley after gaining her Matric to live with her parents and sister Shirley in Johannesburg. She completed her BA at Wits University, qualified as a librarian, and worked at the University Library, and Wits Medical Library. She married Israel Movsas, who was a General Practitioner in Brakpan. They went to live in London, where her husband specialised in Radiology. When they returned to SA they lived in Durban, where Hilda worked as a librarian in the Killie Campbell Library. In 1995, they emigrated to Israel, to live in Jerusalem. She is survived by her three sons, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Once more, condolences.



## Bentley Klein

Condolences too, to the Klein family now in Melbourne en masse, on the untimely passing of Bentley, youngest son of Harry and Lilla Klein.

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## Our Zoom meetings

It's nice to see that our planned Zoom meetings are also bringing families who are spread across the world together with a focus on our hometown. We won't be sure how many people are coming and all are welcome. The meetings will have to be carefully managed though, to avoid chaos.

**The plan** is that you should please come in early (I will open the room 20 minutes before the start, so you can say hi to your family or special friends. Please see that you are sitting in good light s that we can see your face well. (We may not recognise each other anyway.) At the start of the meeting, I will mute everyone and invite you one at a time to unmute and say your name, where you are joining from and say when last you were physically in Kimberley and why. (or you can mention some special event you remember – or whatever you want to say). This should be very short, one or two minutes – so that everyone has a chance to introduce themselves. Then if there is more time, you can raise your hand if you want to respond to something you have heard, ask a question, or make a comment.

The meeting should be over in 75 minutes, but I will not close the room for another 15 minutes in case people want to linger and chat. How does this sound?

Here again are the login details

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Clicking this long link should take you right in as it already has embedded in it the ID and password, but in case you need them, Meeting ID: 811 0405 0877 Passcode: 958627

I look forward to seeing some of you on Sunday and next week!!

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