

Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter #41

Feedback – Sad Losses – War Stories

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London, 27 June 2021

It's lovely to have your feedback which I have included in this Newsletter. You wrote about people who have passed away and about various articles. In this Newsletter #41, I am also sending you the latest update on the saga of **Kimberley Jews in WW2**. At the end of this Newsletter is the table with names and the relevant page number, and a link to the article on the website (under 'Articles'). Before we finally sign it off, you have a chance to look at it again – and if there is somebody missed out, this is your time to fix that.



Just this week, in tidying a box of my late father's papers, I came across a cutting from the local Diamond Fields Advertiser written sometime in 1946 (see left) headed:

'JEWISH SERVICE PERSONNEL
WELCOMED HOME
Function in Constance Hall'.

In it, my father, **Dr Noel Kretzmar**, who was Chairman of the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation at the time, made a speech of welcome to the soldiers. Happily, they had all returned home – but some, as you know had had a horrifying time, being wounded or taken as prisoner of war. (You can read the whole cutting at the end of the War Story article on the website).

What was so interesting to me was that my father ended his speech by saying that **'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. I wonder, did he know (or did I know for that matter?) that one day his daughter would reach out 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'!

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## Feedback and news

It's always great to hear from **Natalie Sussman**, especially as she expresses herself so beautifully. She wrote in response to the March Newsletter (The Zoom Room and the Heritage of Kimberley Synagogue)

What a beautiful Pesach newsletter. I filled with emotion. We all have happy memories of our Shul and happy lives in our hometown. **Barry Katz** and **Laura** and I spent a very happy morning together in Cape Town recently. He told me that I would weep if I saw Kimberley today. When he drives past our lovely home in Edgerton Road, he has to slow down to navigate the potholes. The pavements are littered with debris and the Central Business District is dirty and fast becoming a no-go area. We used to dress up with hats and gloves to meet friends in John Orr's tearoom. It was a beautiful store. Do you remember the lift? There is no future for Kimberley. Very sad. Stay well, Love, Natalie

**Daphne Gillis** (née Toubé) wrote

Recently I re-read your story of how you became involved in Jewish music which led to your MBE. Although I knew the general story, I had never heard how you continued collecting and collating all the different stories and ideas. A good old Afrikaans word "deursettingsvermoe" shows how many strands came together. The same is true of the **Kimberley Newsletter**. It would have been easy to just collect the odd story that people sent you, but you have really persisted and made the whole history come alive. It really has been a monumental achievement....and is still ongoing. Your hard work is much appreciated by so many of us, Kimberleyites. Best wishes always, Daphne.

Re the May, **Fiddler on the Roof Newsletter #40 story written by Delia Benn** Natalie wrote:

I so enjoyed another trip down memory lane. You have achieved what science fiction writers dream about – 'A time machine'!. Your passion to record the family histories of Our Hometown takes us back to the life of our families centuries ago. It's fascinating to read how Jews struggled and of their tenacity to survive and to flee to the unknown to hope for a better future for their children. What would our world be today if those six million wonderful, talented, clever ancestors had been allowed to live? I always admired **Helen Brown** and **Delia (Benn)** was one of my favourite people. When my daughter Laura left to join her brother and sister Jeff and Sandra in. Cape Town, I was dealing with two problems – the empty nest syndrome and confined to bed with a back injury. Every morning Delia took her baby daughter **Lara** for a walk and popped in to keep me company. Really a very special person and **Bobby Benn** is a lovely man. Happy that life has turned out well for them. Have a good summer, Love, Natalie

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Sad Losses of Kimberley Ex-Pats

Althea Kretzmar, Jonty Sandler, Norman Jawno and Beryl Benn

Thanks to all of you who sent condolences and memories to me of my aunt Althea Kretzmar (who died at 97 after a long and happy life) and my cousin Jonty Sandler (who died suddenly aged 70)

within a week of each other in May 2021. We also mark the deaths of Norman Jawno and Beryl Benn

Daphne Toube (Gillis) wrote from Cape Town, Hi Geraldine Just as I was about to write to you to send condolences on **Althea's** death, I received your latest newsletter. So now I wish you and all your family long life on the loss of your aunt, as well as **Jonty Sandler** who was your cousin, if my memory is correct. Also note the death of **Norman Jawno** who was one of the crowd of young people with whom I used to go out dancing and partying every Saturday night. All three of these recent deaths make me realise how important your ongoing collection of family histories is.

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## Beryl Benn



**Barney Horwitz** wrote on 29 May, on the Kimberley Shul Facebook page: Dear Congregants, Shabbos is barely out, and I have just learnt that Beryl Benn of Kimberley, passed away peacefully this morning after a courageous battle with pneumonia. Our thoughts are with Delia and Bobby Benn, Beryl's brother. We wish you long life. This prompted 36 comments and condolences to Delia and Bobby Benn and family on Facebook including:

**Gail Bernard** (née Levinsohn) wrote from London. So sorry to hear of the death of Beryl Benn. I have such fond memories of times with her in Kimberley. She was so

interesting and such good company. Wish all the family long life. Xxx

**Roger David** said: My sincere condolences to the family, and long life - I have so many wonderful memories at the Benn's on Carrington Road playing cards and Mahjong and often think about Brian and Beryl!

**Daphne Gillis** (née Toube) continued: I was also saddened to read of **Beryl Benn's** death. She was indeed a character closely involved in Griqualand hockey of which my Mom was president for many years. I went to a number of tournaments with Beryl, including one to Rhodesia, as it was called in those days. Beryl was the ringleader in most of the 'mischief' we got up to. Even after I left Kimberley, she came to a South African Tournament we hosted in Oudtshoorn in 1959. She had half the bachelors in the town chasing after her. She is remembered with great fondness. Kind regards Daphne.

And Daphne's brother Trevor Toube wrote: I was sad to hear about **Beryl Benn**. She was definitely one of the most memorable of our contemporaries!

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Althea Kretzmar

Althea with Julius, Philip and David was a key part of my warm family fabric in Kimberley.

Barney Horwitz wrote on the Kimberley Shul Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/284879511607854>

Good evening all. I have just heard that **Althea Kretzmar** passed away at the age of 97 years in Cape Town this morning. My sincere condolences to **David, Philip** and families. Condolences too to Geraldine Auerbach since if memory serves me correctly, Althea was your aunt. Althea was a most gracious woman and one of the outstanding women in our Congregation in the 1950s to 70s. The wife of Julius, a highly respected medical practitioner. the couple were amongst the most prominent people in Kimberley at the time. Barney Horwitz.



Norma Friedman from Los Angeles wrote:

So sad to hear about Althea. We saw her when we were in Cape Town two years ago and she was amazing other than her vision which was failing. She is really the last of my mom's friends even though she was years younger. I suppose she is the last of your aunts/ uncles?

Sylvia Apter wrote from Israel:

Althea was often at our house in Carrington Road, playing bridge with my mom, Evelyn Apter, and Tilly Price and a different fourth every Wednesday afternoon. I had a cousin on a farm near Taung who married a hairdresser from Durban. Anita taught me to cut and style hair, so, when I asked my father for a portable radio he said OK as long as I paid half. This resulted in me starting my first business. Dad (Bert Apter) gave me a small loan and a few lessons in book-keeping.

See, in your mind, this picture of four women, including Althea, who my mother thought was a good 'shport', sitting around a bridge table with curlers! I had to wait until each one was dummy to wash and set. Dry their hair while they were making bids and then wait again for their turn as dummy to comb and style! When I think of Althea she had the biggest and most genuine smile. Thanks for letting me know. Sylvia Apter.

David Friedman, from California wrote

Dear Geraldine, I was very saddened to learn of the passing of Althea. She really was a wonderful warm and lovely person. I mentioned to you previously that it was my Mom and Dad, Joe and Kate Friedman who had originally introduced Althea to Julius leading to a very happy union. David

I (Geraldine) add: From the Zoom celebration of her life that her sons **Phillip** (in Ottawa) and **David Kretzmar** (Cape Town) organised for family and close friends, it was very clear that Althea had made a lot of people very happy. Everyone said that she always made them feel they were the special person – but the testimony showed that she made a lot of people feel special with her warmth and interest in everything about them and their families. What a gift. She had a full and satisfying life.

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## **Jonty Sandler**



My cousin Jonty's passing was a great shock. He was just 70 and had a sudden heart attack. Having incredible vision and international business connections, Jonty travelled abroad regularly. He would often appear at a moment's – or even no notice, at our front door in London. Having him with us was always an exciting time as his ideas and imagination were truly mind blowing.

Jonty leaves a wife Melody (who converted to Judaism) and a son Nathan. They have been staunch members of Temple Israel in Hillbrow, the first Progressive Synagogue in South Africa. Nathan lives with his mother in Botswana, while Jonty lived and worked in the Johannesburg area. The family spent a lot of time together before Covid struck.

Nathan who is 12, had just spent a month with Jonty before his sudden death. They were planning to go together to Kenneth Kaunda's 97<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations in Zambia – I wonder if they did. Nathan plays the trumpet – and also blows the shofar brilliantly – which he did with aplomb at their synagogue in Johannesburg at Rosh Hashanah 2019 – and in Kimberley before Covid. We had always been close, from the time he was a baby. Jonty always managed to be with us at special times like our daughters' weddings. He also happened to be with me at my house when the news came through of the death of his mother Eileen (née Bergman). He taught me a lot about business methods and ideas and loved Jewish music. It was Jonty who suggested we made a Bert Jansch Foundation after Bert and Loren died. [www.bertjanschfoundation.org](http://www.bertjanschfoundation.org). The London cousins all enjoyed spending time with Jonty and with Nathan and Melody when they visited. Nathan called me his London Granny.

## **Barney Horwitz writes**

Jonty Sandler was one of our strongest non-resident community supporters. Unseen and without fanfare he helped us regularly and not only is his passing a personal tragedy for his family and us, but one of the pillars of our support has fallen away. We wish his entire family long life and pray that they will be comforted together with all mourners in Zion at this time. We remember Nathan's stirring blowing of the Shofar in our shul shortly before Rosh Hashanah two years ago. At the time it was Jonty's wish to join us last year for the High Holy days but because of Covid19, plans had to change. What a pity it is that he will now, not be able to fulfil that wish. Barney

## **Jonty was a pupil at CBC**

After School, he achieved a BCom with Honours in Marketing from the University of South Africa and an MBA from the University of Cape Town. Jonty was a very gentle and very generous and fun-loving man but his ideas and vision were huge. He managed to achieve many of his projects, though things did not always go smoothly. He created the first Water Park 'Water World' and the amazing 'Shareworld' a theme park near Soweto – years before its time. He was always dedicated to equality of opportunity and to black empowerment. He worked with some of the most important black leaders in South Africa and many areas of Africa. He was project manager and director of many companies and endeavours. He will surely be sorely missed.



In this picture above. Jonty on the right is presenting the first President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, with a gift on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in April 2019. Next to Kaunda on the right is current Zambian President Edgar Lungu and on the left Past President Chissano of Mozambique and Past President of Namibia, Sam Nujoma. Jonty and Kaunda were close friends for over 20 years and Kuanda stayed with Jonty when in South Africa.



**Jules Lusman** wrote:

We were schoolmates @ CBC Kimberley. A brilliant scholar, we will miss you. I remember that Jonty Sandler was a great **equestrian** who loved show jumping. With my close friend, the late Anthony David – I would visit the equestrian show jumping school outside Kimberley. We would meet up with Jonty who had a passion for horse gymkhanas. Together we would go on rides in the veld outside Kimberley. Fond memories remain. A great mind, a loyal, ambitious, kind person.

I wish Jonty Sandler's family long life.

Jules Lusman

**Justine David** in California wrote:

I am so sad to hear about Jonty Sandler. I haven't heard of him or from him for many years. He was a very good friend of my late husband **Anthony David**. (Son of **Lorraine and Bobby David**) When Anthony passed away in November of 2000 Jonty appeared by our sides and his generosity was truly touching. I believe he has a son and wife, not sure where they live. I (Geraldine) replied: Dear Justine, I know that Jonty was good friends with Anthony. Jonty was the one who continually tried to connect me with the David family – and at last it happened through you, and from you, to your brother-in-law Rick. So now we have the 'David Family' story of Louis and Connie and children and grandchildren [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/David\\_Family\\_2.html](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/David_Family_2.html)) all thanks in a way to Jonty.

**Natalie Sussman** wrote:

Jonty's mother Eileen and I were close neighbours and shared a very special friendship. I remember the excitement and happiness at Jonty's arrival. We hugged and tears flowed like a river. Ella and Jonty grew up with our children. **Jeff and Jonty** both participated in show jumping events. We spent many happy weekends together at the Pony Club where the horses were stabled. The girls Ella and Laura also enjoyed riding, but we did not encourage them to jump, but rather to concentrate on dressage. Stay well Natalie.

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Norman Jawno

Norman was the son of Sam Jawno, the oldest brother of a large Jawno family that came to Kimberley from Shavel in Lithuania in 1912. Sam ran a fish business on the Market Square, which became the South African Fisheries, before selling it to brother-in-Law Laz Barnet and leaving Kimberley.

Sam's youngest brother, Lionel Jawno, opened the Advance Furniture and Removals business in Kimberley which he ran successfully with his sons Milton

and Brian. Lionel was later to become Mayor of Kimberley from 1959 to 1961. (See Lionel and Lily Jawno's story contributed by their son Milton Jawno here: [Jawno, Lionel](#).) Norman Jawno, Sam Jawno's son, went back to Kimberley after university and opened another furniture shop called Carlton Furnishers. Above we see Norman at 90 visiting his son David in Perth Australia.



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## Memories of the Kimberley Jewish Community

Through researching the **Sagar family**, I got an email from a contemporary of mine in Kimberley, Anna McClelland, who said. I'm really enjoying the website. There's a lot to read, I'm dipping into it all the time. We lived in **Synagogue Street**. I remember many of the families mentioned, but there are some notable absences too. I suppose you can only rely on the information that people contribute about their families.

Anna wrote: **Dr Norman Weinberg** was our family doctor, but no mention of his family. I remember there were three sons, the two younger ones were **Geoffrey and Keith**. I have a vague idea that Geoffrey was struck by lightning, but the details escape me. Keith was diabetic. I remember that because I was quite fascinated by having the wonder of insulin explained to me. Our family dentist was **Dr Harold Selman**, a lovely man. He really knew how to communicate with children. I quite looked forward to my trips to the dentist. (Also, my mum took me for ice cream in John Orr's tearoom afterwards). His partner was **Dr Phil Price**. No mention of either dental gentleman.

I went to boarding school in Cape Town for high school, Uni in Pretoria, and then I worked in Johannesburg so from teenage years I was only in Kimberley for holidays and didn't really interact too much. Still, in primary school days I remember a number of Jewish friends my age, who lived nearby that I played with: **Hannah Lurie** lived in Carrington Road and **Marcia Lipsitz** round the corner in Milner Street. Her little brother always tagged along?

Anyway, I was interested to see that your maiden name is Kretzmar. I seem to remember that my mother painted **Mrs Kretzmar's** portrait. In a green dress? But I'm not sure whether Julius or Noel's wife. She also painted **Lionel Jawno** in his mayoral outfit, if memory serves. Or maybe that was another mayor of Kimberley. Mayors tend to look alike in their glad rags. (My mother's name was Mrs Steenkamp. She painted under her maiden name, Nellie du Ploy). When I visited Kimberley in 2002, I saw the portrait of His Honour in the old public library, now the Africana Library. It was stuck in a dark spot under the stairs. I hope Mrs Kretzmar's portrait didn't suffer a similar fate. [Indeed it was my mother Beryl, Noel's wife, the portrait (left) hangs in my house]



I also don't see the **Spitz** family. Heather Miller (who put me in touch with you)'s mother was **Pauline Spitz** (a granddaughter of **William Sagar**) and she told me she spent many holidays with her family in Kimberley, as a young woman. I always teased her that she never had the

decency to phone me when she was in Kimberley! I wish I had known her then. Thanks for letting me see your website. Happy memories! Best regards, Anna ~~~~~



## Kimberley Jews and the Second World War

I have replaced the first draft of this article of your amazing individual war recollections with the latest update. Below is a table including the page numbers where individual stories are to be found, as well as **the link to DRAFT TWO of the article** on the website. I hope to finalise this in the coming weeks, so if you do have any additions or amendments let me know as soon as you can.

[https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Articles\\_files/Kimberley%20Jews%20and%20the%20Second%20World%20War.pdf](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Articles_files/Kimberley%20Jews%20and%20the%20Second%20World%20War.pdf)

### Table of Kimberley Jews who participated on active service

|    | Name               | Service and rank                                       | Page |
|----|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1  | Alufovitz Solly    | Army – PoW in Italy and escapee                        | 18   |
| 2  | Apter Alec         | Air Force – Bomber Pilot                               | 9    |
| 3  | Apter Lionel       | Medical Corps – Captain                                | 6    |
| 4  | Apter Mendel       | Royal Navy – Petty Officer                             | 41   |
| 5  | Benjamin Basil     | Army – Natal Carbineers, Sapper                        | 35   |
| 6  | Blumenthal Bob     | Army – PoW in Italy                                    | 34   |
| 7  | Brown Ikky         | Air Force – Photographer - cook                        | 14   |
| 8  | Cohen Cecil        | Army – Kimberley Regiment, Warrant Officer 2           | 24   |
| 9  | Cohen Eric         | Air Force – Pilot in the RAF                           | 12   |
| 10 | David Louis        | Army – Kimberley Regiment                              | 23   |
| 11 | Ellis Sam          | Army – no details                                      | 41   |
| 12 | Finberg Micky      | Air Force – Gunner, Bomb-aimer, Lieutenant             | 8    |
| 13 | Frank Jack         | Army – Kimberley Regiment Lieutenant                   | 36   |
| 14 | Friedman Joe       | Army – Judge Advocate of Natal, Major                  | 6    |
| 15 | Gluck Maurice      | Airforce – Bomber Command                              | 12   |
| 16 | Ginsberg Solly     | Army – 6SAAD, Artillery                                | 34   |
| 17 | Goldberg Abraham   | Medical Corps – 2SAAD under Montgomery                 | 38   |
| 18 | Goldberg Issie     | Airforce – Maintenance, Sergeant                       | 16   |
| 19 | Goldman Buddy      | Air Force – Pilot for troops and ammunition, Captain   | 10   |
| 20 | Goldman Vernon     | Air Force – Pilot 24 Squadron, Major                   | 10   |
| 21 | Haas Ivor          | Air Force – Mechanic                                   | 16   |
| 22 | Haberfeld Cyril    | Army – Staff Sergeant EM, military commendation        | 35   |
| 23 | Haberfeld Gus      | Kimberley protection unit more info needed             | 35   |
| 24 | Hecht Fritz        | Army – Kimberley Regiment                              | 27   |
| 25 | Hertog, Lucien     | Army – Kimberley Regiment                              | 31   |
| 26 | Horwitz Roy        | Army – 6 <sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division | 29   |
| 27 | Hotz Charlie       | Picture – more info needed                             | 17   |
| 28 | Jacobson Hirsh     | Hirsh Jacobson - posted in North Africa and in Italy   | 41   |
| 29 | Joseph Philip      | Air Force – Pilot training Kimberley                   | 13   |
| 30 | Kanushevsky Willie | Army – Kimberley Regiment up North and Italy           | 17   |
| 31 | Katz Jules         | Served with distinction in SA Artillery Corps in Italy |      |
| 32 | Klein, Harry       | Picture – more info needed                             | 17   |
| 33 | Kretzmar Ashne     | Air Force – Adjutant                                   | 37   |
| 34 | Kretzmar Julius    | Medical Corps, Captain                                 | 36   |
| 35 | Kretzmar Noel      | Red Cross, Medical Practitioners Pool                  | 36   |
| 36 | Lenhoff Misha      | Air Force – RAF Bomber Command                         | 12   |
| 37 | Lewis S Mitchell   | Medical Corps – Namibia                                | 38   |

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|----|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| 38 | Maresky Shimon    | Army – Anti-aircraft, Wounded                 | 20 |
| 39 | Odes Solly        | Army – Kimberley Regiment, 6SAAD Private MM   | 22 |
| 40 | Salkinder Dr Joe  | Medical Corps served in Egypt                 | 40 |
| 41 | Sandler Archie    | Archie was in the Army but I hve not details  | 41 |
| 42 | Senderovitz Mike  | Army – Scottish Regiment                      | 24 |
| 43 | Shein Poddy       | Army – PoW in Italy                           | 17 |
| 44 | Sussman Cecil     | Army – 6SAAD                                  | 23 |
| 45 | Tobiansky Woolfie | Air Force – PoW Guard (not from Kimberley)    | 26 |
| 46 | Tooch Joe         | Army – 6SAAD Captured at Tobruk, PoW in Italy | 31 |
| 47 | Toube Abie        | Army – Quartermaster, 2 Air Depot             | 13 |

We still need information on war service by Goldie Mehl and anyone else we have missed out.

**At the function at the Constance Hall** referred to on page 1: there were further comments:

**Mrs Fanny Brown**, Chairman of the Union of Jewish Women, also welcomed back the troops. 'We rejoice to have you with us again and we wish you the best of luck in your return to civilian life,' she said.

**Mr Louis David**, replying on behalf of the Jewish soldiers and ex-soldiers, paid a special tribute to the women and said they had done a grand job of work and by their efforts at home had done much to keep up the morale of the men at the front. 'We thank them, not only for what they have done, but for the spirit in which their task was performed.'

**Natalie Sussman** wrote about the War Stories:

Dear Geraldine, not only do you have a gift of reaching out to people But you have a gift of telling their stories and giving us all a treasured family history for our grandchildren and great grandchildren to pass on to future generations. In my family I have a 16-year-old and a 14-year-old fourth generation. My 9-year-old is learning about the war and is very proud to tell her class about her Oupa. And now, thanks to you, she has photo and a story.

Thank you for dedication and the many hours you devote to this project. I know it is a labour of love for our hometown and the Jewish Community and I feel sure you know how very much we appreciate your outstanding talents as our historian. Stay well Love, Natalie and family

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Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London, 27 June 2021