

Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter #32

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London, 8 December 2020

In this issue:

Jews and Diamonds in Kimberley

Here are some thoughts and stories about diamonds and Jews in and around Kimberley. It is not comprehensive, just snippets from here and there. You may have stories you can add.



It includes:

- Jews at the outset of the discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape
- Why diamonds are/were always a Jewish preserve
- Diggers and brokers and diamond buyers on the fields
- 'How the Christian beat the Jews' Story by David Harris
- Jews involved in the amalgamation and beginning of De Beers
- Those outside De Beers – the breakwater and alluvial men plus cutters and polishers
- The great Kimberley diamond robbery

The fact that Jewish merchants completely dominated the distribution of diamonds at the end of the nineteenth century when they were discovered near Kimberley was not particularly surprising. For a thousand years, diamonds had been almost entirely a Jewish business.

Jews and the early discoveries near Kimberley

The very first diamonds picked up in the Northern Cape. were first shown to and eventually verified by Jews. We all know the story of the small stone plaything of a Boer child Erasmus Jacobs, that passed for no consideration from the child's father to a neighbour Schalk van Niekerk in 1867. He showed it to travelling trader John O'Reilly. O'Reilly took it to Colesberg and showed it to the Jewish storekeeper TB **Kisch**, a nephew of Aaron de Pass of Cape Town. He then took it to Hopetown to show it to **Martin** and **Leopold Lillienfeld**. Louis Herrman, in his *History of South African Jews* says: 'They were not alive to the opportunity and refused to buy it'. The Civil Commissioner in Colesberg however, Lorenzo Boyes, was interested and suggested sending it to Dr Atherstone a mineralogist in Grahamstown. Atherstone did not get excited and took his time, but eventually declared it to be indeed to be a diamond and valued the stone at about £500. It was then sent to the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Philip Wodehouse who

consulted a Cape Town Jew, **Louis Hond**, who had been an expert diamond cutter in Holland before emigrating to the Cape. **Hond** confirmed Atherstone's valuation and Sir Philip bought the stone himself at that price. Even though he sent it to the world exhibition in Paris, no great interest was aroused in the possibility of finding diamonds in South Africa – except by van Niekerk, O'Reilly and **Kisch** and the **Lillienthals**. They kept hunting and looking and asking about pretty stones and more and more were found.

There were two things going on. There were those who could have done something who poo-pooed the idea of there being diamond fields, and said maybe a bird had dropped the stones. And there were those who suspected there might be diamond fields, who wanted to hush up the whole idea so that they could have an advantage.

It was not until two years later, when van Niekerk heard that a Griqua shepherd boy had picked up a large white stone, that the cat was out of the bag. He tempted the boy to part with it for untold wealth – five hundred sheep, ten oxen and a horse. Van Niekerk took it straight to the **Lillienthals** in Hopetown who sent for **Louis Hond** and on his advice, Lillienthal gave £11,200 for the stone. It was an 83 ½ carat gem which was later known as the 'Star of South Africa'. It was sent to London where the Jewish firm of **Mosenthals** sold it to the Earl of Dudley for £25,000. After that – the game was on – there was no denying the rich pickings. **Kisch** went seriously prospecting and was eventually one of the four discoverers of the richest Kimberley mine. **Hond** became a successful dealer on the diamond fields.

News of these finds attracted many Jews. It attracted the Western European diamond firms and also the Jews desperate to leave Eastern Europe. Soon all boats arriving in Cape Town disgorged eager diamond diggers. One entrepreneurial Jew already settled in the Cape at Ceres set up a transport company to carry people the 6000 miles up country where there was no railway and not even a road! Other travellers walked the distance beside an ox wagon for several weeks.



By the 1870s and 1880s Jews were already well represented in the digger community in Kimberley and nearly half the brokers and buyers were Jews. They also took a prominent role in the social life of the

diggings and emerging city. They featured significantly in boxing, racing, theatre, journalism, and other entertainments as well as in gambling (and reputedly in IDB – illicit diamond buying)

Louis Cohen, the colourful chronicler of the early days in his 'Remanences of Kimberley', embarked from London, in 1872, 'on the good ship, European' for the South African diamond fields. He was equipped with minimal mining gear, modest cash, and a 17-year-old's thirst for adventure. By the time he reached what he called the 'Diamond City of the Plains' it was teeming with people of differing tribes, including a reassuring abundance of his own. In his writings the all-too recognizable Hebrews are marked by Cohen as beings of questionable character. He writes:

'A few, a very few, appeared well bred, but most of them postured like pilfering tinkers who had got their best clothes out of pawn. They were, as a rule, smoking large cigars. On driving up the Main Street, I had noticed the self-same species of gentlemen standing in front of their framed canvas habitations, and when I read on the signs displayed outside these tented offices that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had recovered from their long celestial sleep, and gone in for earthly diamond buying, "at the very highest prices for the European market", I felt a real glow of hope as I inwardly ejaculated, "Thank the Lord I'm with my own people – and it's not Jerusalem!" But they certainly looked as if they had come from the Sublime East – of London'.

Why diamonds are/were always a Jewish preserve

Until the early part of the eighteenth century, the entire world's supply of diamonds came from India. The caravans that brought them across Arabia traded these rare stones to Jewish traders in Aden and Cairo for gold and silver. The traders then resold them to Jewish merchants in Venice, Antwerp, and Frankfurt. It was a natural enterprise for the Jews scattered throughout central Europe: Since they were moneylenders, they had to concern themselves with assessing, repairing, and selling gems that had been offered to them as collateral for loans. They also had close connections with the Jewish trading centres in the Ottoman Empire through which all the Indian diamonds passed.



The cutting and polishing of diamonds, moreover, was one of the few crafts that Jews were permitted to participate in by the medieval guilds in Europe. For most Jews, there was no choice in those days: If they wanted to have a vocation, it had to be either gem-polishing or money lending. In either case, they dealt with diamonds. This continued specially in Amsterdam and Antwerp even to today (see above).

The abundance of diamonds from the Kimberley mines

Jewish Diamond Buyers Syndicate

The vast supply and good quality of diamonds from Kimberley quite overwhelmed the market.

The rich European Diamond merchants all realised that firm control of buying from the Kimberley mines was needed and desirable to keep supply in line with the highest price available.

Very quickly a diamond buyers syndicate was formed to buy all the diamonds from the Kimberley mines. They could then be released gradually, so as not to flood the market and ruin it.



The diamond merchants, were all Jewish European merchants, pictured above:

Dreyfus representing Messrs Dreyfus Bernheim & Co, **GH Bonas** representing Joseph Bros; **Col. David Harris** representing LA Abrams (Barnatos); **Leon Sutro** representing Messrs A Dunkelsbhuler & Co; **H Hirsche** representing Messrs Porgès Wernher Beit & Co

They all realised that it was important to control both the supply and the purchase of diamonds to maintain high prices. But, the vested interests of each major diamond merchant firm, (many of whom were also to be big shareholders in De Beers) were so great, that they wanted the ability to produce and sell when they wanted to. So, who was going to be brave enough to make this a

binding commitment? Unless they could all agree to some measures that would restrain them, it would not work. But who had the authority that everyone would abide by, to do this?



Of course, you could guess this – there was only one person - it was the larger-than-life Cecil John Rhodes! (pictured left)

It was Rhodes who, with the crucial help of German Jewish financier, Alfred Beit, and the acquiescence of the East End Jew Barney Barnato, had eventually by 1888, amalgamated all the four Kimberley mines under one firm De Beers

Consolidated Mines Ltd.

Read the Alfred Beit story here: [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Alfred Beit.html](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Alfred_Beit.html)

Colonel Sir David Harris recounts ‘How the Christian beat the Jews!’

This story was told with much mirth and appreciation to Percy Fitzpatrick by one of the key diamond dealers involved (and a member of the diamond syndicate), Col (later Sir) David Harris.

Harris was not only an associate of Rhodes and a Director of De Beers but also a representative of the diamond firm Barnato Brothers (to whom he was related).

Harris prefaced his story to Fitzpatrick saying: ‘D’I ever tell you about how the Christian beat the Jews?’ Instead of waiting for an answer he roared with laughter and plunged straight into his narrative. The story goes like this:

The major diamond merchants were summoned to meet in the Boardroom of De Beers. Rhodes knew that he was dealing with powerful individuals, representing leading firms, who had all been part of the amalgamation process of controlling production and cutting costs. But they were also rivals in buying and selling diamonds. Any one of them would not be averse to having an advantage over the others, so some strong and binding incentive was needed.

Rhodes immediately started by saying that as the Chairman, he was going to represent the interests of the shareholders. (Of course, most of them were the biggest shareholders as well as the most important buyers and sellers) so they realised they had a big stake, but they had no idea what Rhodes had up his sleeve.

Down one side of the boardroom was a long teak trough, the bottom of which was twelve inches wide and the sides about two inches high.

Piles of sorted diamonds were laid out

Over the whole length of the trough of many feet, there were laid sheets of white paper, exactly fitting the floor of the trough and slightly overlapping as roof tiles. On this paper lining, the entire production of the mines was arranged methodically.



The gems were laid out in what the diamond dealers

would regard as a logical sequence. The various little piles represented collections or classes into which the diamonds had been carefully sorted. Everything was arranged to give the best and easiest opportunities for the potential buyers to inspect the stones and estimate their value.

Sorting diamonds like this, into the numerous classes and grades according to their size, colour, shape, cleavages, estimates of how they will turn out when cut etc, was expert work requiring lots of time and effort and the gathering appreciated that this had all been expertly done for them.

David Harris, who knew everyone there intimately, and knew the diamond industry and its characters inside out, chuckled as he told the story and there must have been many asides that he shared, that Fitzpatrick sadly did not relate in his book *South African Memories* – of how everyone reacted – many, experienced as they were, being very nervous.

Harris recounted to Fitzpatrick: 'Rhodes then explained to them, very frankly and in his usual practical way, what his proposal was, namely: that they should first have time to inspect the stones, decide on their value and talk amongst themselves. What Rhodes required, was a cash offer for the whole lot, made on behalf of all those present. They could agree amongst themselves as to the proportions they would take and as to how payment would be made, but he alone, acting for the shareholders, would decide whether their offer was adequate and if it was not adequate he would decline at once. Then he left the room.'

Harris says that there was considerable unease at Rhodes alone being the arbiter, as seen by the expressions on their faces, but they did not argue, as they knew that his attitude was not only justified but was absolutely necessary. They did some pecking and hedging and eventually decided on a price, which Harris says they realised was a first stab at it – and may not be accepted. He continued:

'Rhodes was sent for and re-joined the meeting. With no delay, he was very direct, almost curt in bringing them at once to the crux – the price. No doubt his manner impressed everyone. The

figure was barely mentioned when he said shortly “No gentlemen, it is not enough. I know the value as well as you do.” And turning to Brink, who had sorted the diamonds, he said: “Put ‘em back. That is not good enough!”



‘However, someone, probably one who knew what was in Rhodes mind, asked what value he placed on them and Rhodes gave the figure. – which was at least £100,000 or even £150,000 above the original offer. There was an appalled silence and some groans of despair, but Rhodes walked out without another word.

The discussion was renewed. However, within a few moments they had all agreed to Rhodes terms – the price, the contract with guarantees and the payment and delivery the following morning. They realised that this still left them a good profit to be made and the fact that the diamonds were already so well sorted was a big saving to them in time – maybe weeks – as well as money.’

Rhodes could not bind them to hold the diamonds and not flood the market, but he impressed upon them – what they already well understood themselves – that in their own interests it would not be a good idea to put so many diamonds on the market at once. Harris says, ‘We were all free and also all were rivals in the market and no one believed that everybody would exercise the restraint or comply with Rhodes wishes; after all, you know – business is business. I dare say every one of us had an idea of making safe at any rate by getting rid of a fair proportion of what we were buying. So, we all agreed to what he said. There was a little chaff amongst ourselves of Rhodes idealistic touch, but to many of us there was time to sort it out. We reckoned that this agreement which he spoke about would take a long time to draft and finalise in all its legal details and copy’

‘The first real jump we got was when Rhodes turned to his trusty officer and said coolly, “Brink, bring the agreements” ‘. Harris continued ‘We simply gasped. Brink produced the various copies completed by lawyers. Every essential just as he had explained it, was clearly expressed. Most remarkable of all the exact price was stated – Rhodes’ price – and it gave one an extremely queer feeling to realise that he must have done this with his lawyers properly engrossed and the price fixed, at least a day before the meeting.

Pictured right is Col Sir David Harris who is recounting this story of how Rhodes got all the Jewish diamond merchants to collaborate and buy all the diamonds at a good price.



'The agreements were duly signed, the lawyers present to complete it and then Rhodes said casually: "alright, you will get the stones tomorrow when payment is made, here in the De Beers office. Come along Brink, put them away".

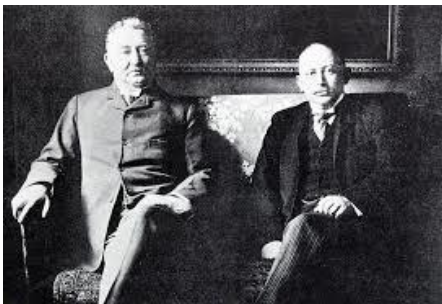
'For the moment, everyone was happy. Then Rhodes, strolling across the room, spoke to Brink from the head of the long trough where the diamonds lay grouped on their white paper. And as Rhodes told Brink to put them away, he raised the head of the teak trough and shot the whole lot into a wooden bucket strategically placed at the open end. He did it with a most casual movement – not saying a word to anyone and strolled out of the room seemingly quite unconscious of what he had just done!'

'Believe me' said Harris, 'the faces of our people were a treat, and as soon as Rhodes back was turned, there broke out a babel as each one realised some fresh result of Rhodes action. The whole work of the sorting was wiped out in a second - with the result that for 6 or 8 months the entire output was kept off the market as surely as if it would have been if locked up in De Beers safe. Then at the finish, Harris said, 'The position was relieved by the calm remark of one of our most prominent men "How the Christian beat the Jews!" and there was such a roar of laughter as you would only get from a gathering of Jews, who after all *can* enjoy a story at their own expense.

'And mind you' said Harris, 'Rhodes was perfectly right. Our stones were locked up, but when we could sell them we realised a much better price than we could possibly have done at the time. His judgement was completely justified.' This was yet another instance of Rhodes farsightedness and of his determined and authoritative action when such was called for.

So, in 1890, this was how, after amalgamation of the four mines in 1888, the new London Diamond Syndicate was formed which bought up the entire annual production of De Beers for mutual benefit and by mutual agreement, as a sort of balancing reservoir which could pay for, receive and hold diamonds for a period, if the demand and supply did not mutually balance.

This syndicate was the foundation on which Ernest Oppenheimer created the 'Diamond Corporation', which later became the 'Central Selling Organization'.



(This story is part of my monograph on Alfred Beit - pictured left with Cecil Rhodes on the left. This story reveals the charming character, central importance and genius of Beit, who is largely omitted from the story as usually written. It is the story of the right man in the right place at the right time and tells the nail-biting story of how the diamond mines were brought under one monopoly- with key players like Jules

Porges, Julius Wernher, Alfred Beit, Barney Barnato and of course Cecil Rhodes. As Lionel Philips said, 'It's impossible to comprehend the glamour of Rhodes at that time'. You can read my Beit in Kimberley story on the website under pioneers here:

<https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Pioneers.html>

So were there any who eluded the clutches of De Beers

De Beers not only held the monopoly of the mines, but they made it impossible for anyone to pick up a diamond in Kimberley without handing it in to them. They owned vast tracts of land round Kimberley as they bought up all possible farms, just in case diamond pipes were discovered on them. (This may have helped Jewish farmers around Kimberley who could lease farms at a favourable price to provide milk and meat for the growing city.

Where they could not own the property – they made sure that those who did, worked alongside them to keep the diamond business profitable. De Beers developed a monopoly of buying and selling diamonds that supported everyone. But diamonds were so plentiful and Jewish entrepreneurs so energetic that some independents seemed to have flourished.

Mr B Goldberg – the Breakwater King

One such independent entrepreneur was the famous Bernard Goldberg. I am not sure about his relationship with De Beers but I know that Mr and Mrs B Goldberg (Bernard and Sarah) were amongst the most prominent and prosperous families in Kimberley. Known as 'Mr B' and the 'Diamond Breakwater King' Bernard Goldberg built impressive breakwaters on the Vaal River alluvial diamond fields for over 50 years. Lawrence G Green, the South African chronicler, writes in his book 'There's a Secret Hid Away' of a trip to see the latest Breakwater with Mr B in 1936. He said 'The pool called Webster's Pool is a deep hole in the river-bed, a treasure chest guarded by water. When we arrived there, the pool was almost dry. Goldberg has spent £25,000, diverting the course of the river and draining the fabulous pool. You can read this chapter on page 107 here: <https://archive.org/details/TheresASecretHidAway/page/n107>



Here is a picture of them with their three sons Dudley, Alf and Sam on their 50th anniversary. You can read their story on the website here [Goldberg, Mr & Mrs Bernard & Family](#)

Jacob Bergman

Jacob Bergman, my grandfather from Latvia, who came to South Africa in 1887 as a teenager started his South African life on the Vaal River at Schmidtsdrift. As I now realise there were alluvial diamonds to be found all along the river and he became a respected alluvial diamond dealer with partners in Antwerp and Amsterdam. This is what they said about him in the DFA when he died in 1947.

The death occurred in Kimberley on Sunday [8 February 1947] of Mr Jacob Bergman, one of the best known and oldest diamond buyers on the Diamond Fields. Mr Bergman settled in Griqualand West in 1887 and except for a few years spent in Rhodesia, he concentrated all his energies and activities in this area. After conducting the business of the hotel and store at Schmidtsdrift for a number of years, he came to Kimberley where he established himself as a diamond buyer and exporter of alluvial diamonds and was a well-known and respected figure on the alluvial fields at the Cape and Transvaal. His judgement of diamonds was valued very highly by dealers and merchants in Europe and America. Throughout his life, Mr Bergman showed an intense interest in the creative aspect of farming and for the last 40 years, the most difficult in farming history in South Africa, his perseverance and progressive ideas were an inspiration and example to farmers of the plateau area of Griqualand West. Mr Bergman was one of the oldest members of the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation and will be missed by his many friends and all who knew him. He leaves four married daughters, all living in Kimberley, Mesdames N Hendler, N Kretzmar, J Frank and A Sandler.



above is a picture of Jacob and his wife Amalie with three of their daughters Beryl, Eileen and Hannah in Berlin in 1928, on one of their business trips to Amsterdam and to visit family in Latvia. Read their family story here [Bergman, Jacob and Amalie \(nee Friedlander\)](#)

Rosenstrauch Brothers

Simon and his brothers Bernard and Joseph managed to open an independent diamond cutting and polishing factory in Kimberley.

The Rosenstrauch brothers were born in Antwerp, Belgium in February 1888 where their father Naftali was involved in diamond cutting and polishing. At an early age Simon and his brothers began cutting and polishing diamonds. They made several trips to the United States from 1906 through to 1927 and made difficult trips to Georgetown, British Guyana, South America going up the river on difficult trips to trade in rough diamonds and other goods.

In 1927, the brothers were approached by a banker from South Africa, Mr. Korb who suggested that they should try to get a contract from the South African Government to establish a Diamond Cutting Industry in South Africa. They formed a company on April 26th 1927 called Rosenstrauch Brothers. They went to the South African Parliament to discuss the possibility of establishing the diamond cutting and polishing industry in South Africa and also getting supplied by the South African Government mines in Namaqualand, and South West Africa.

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, who was the Chairman and Director of De Beers, in Kimberley, did not want the Rosenstrauchs to get the rights to purchase diamonds from the government, as they wanted to keep their monopoly. However, the brothers were finally granted the rights on August 3, 1928, and they opened a cutting and polishing factory in 1928 in Kimberley, which became competition for De Beers. The Rosenstrauchs had to train 400 apprentices to do the work.



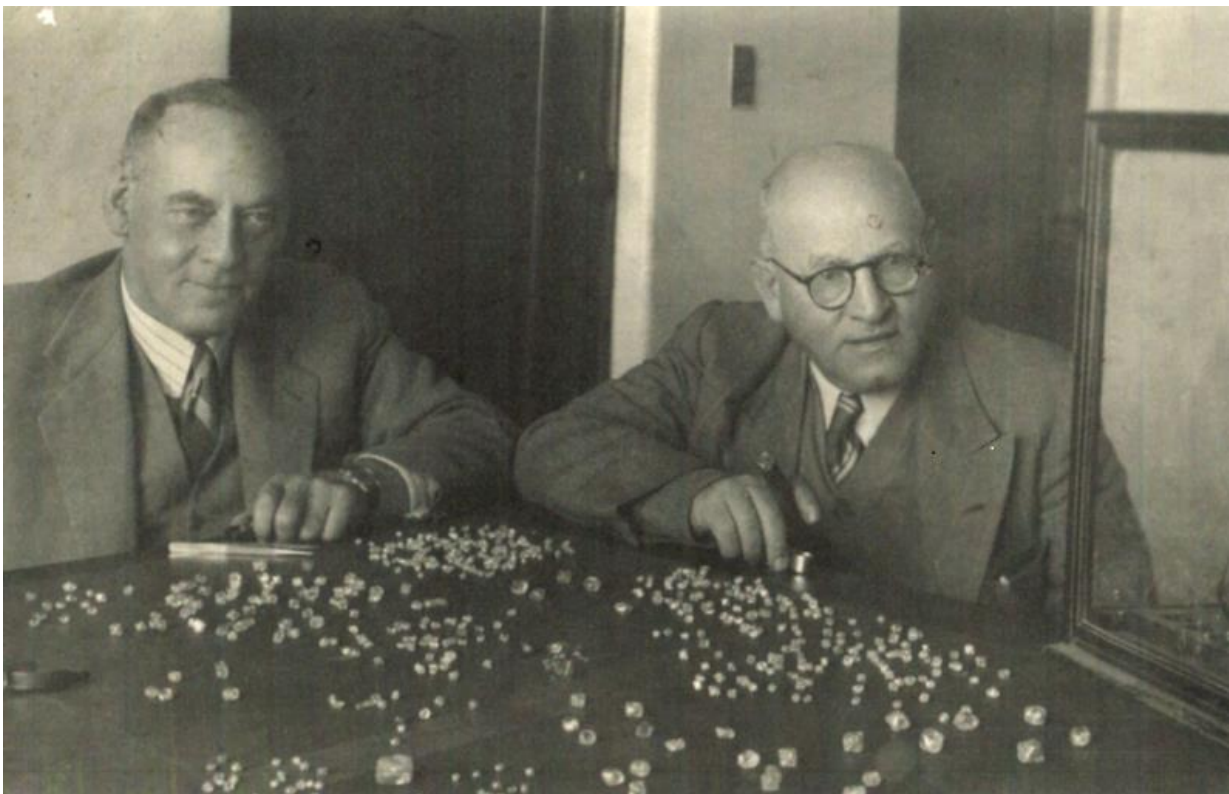
In this picture Hon F W Beyers, Minister of Mines is making the inauguration speech on the occasion of the Foundation stone laying of the diamond cutting factory in Kimberley.

In 1928, Simon met and married Gladys Cohen in Kimberley, where they settled and made their home. Gladys' sisters, Lily Hertog and Gussie Sussman were already both living happily in Kimberley. The following year the Rosenstrauch twins, Andrew (Adolph) and Henry were born in Kimberley on October 7th, 1929; and their sister Eva was born on January 21st 1932.

In 1932, there was a depression and the Rosenstrauchs suffered heavy financial losses. They decided to close the factory. Simon then took his whole family back to Antwerp in 1932 where he installed two benches and a cutting machine at his house, and began cutting and polishing again.

This was fine until it became untenable with war looming in 1939 and they knew they have to get out of Belgium. Hannah, another of Gladys' sisters, who was living in South Africa, contacted the South African government and managed to get papers for them to enter South Africa again.

With good fortune, they managed to escape the harrowing pre-war conditions and travelled from Belgium via France to Portugal and by sea, via Laurengo Marques, to South Africa. The family settled back in Kimberley. Simon (below right) started cutting and polishing diamonds with his brother Joe and together they re-established a factory called '**Pioneer Diamond Cutting Works**'.



Ginette Rosenstrauch, who was married to, Henry Rosenstrauch, twin son of Simon, writes: Simon passed away in Kimberley on September 15, 1952, and is buried at the Green Street Cemetery. Henry passed away on August 19, 2014 in Austin Texas. Andrew passed away in Johannesburg on June 20 2016 and Eva also passed away in Johannesburg on March 14, 2014.

The Great Kimberley Diamond Robbery

A true story as told by Trevor Toubé

I am not sure exactly which year this happened, but it must have been about 1950.

One evening, two strangers appeared for prayers in the beautiful Victorian synagogue in Kimberley, South Africa. In small communities, such as this was at the time, visitors were always welcomed – and subjected to extensive quizzing to find out who they are, where they have come from, to whom they are related, and why they are there. In this case, though, there was a problem: neither man spoke English (nor Afrikaans!)

It just so happened that the rabbi had a part-time job teaching French at the local Technical College, and that was the language these strangers spoke. They asked the rabbi where they could get kosher food, so he invited them to dine with his family in the Shul House, his home, a large bungalow with the typical Kimberley corrugated iron roof, situated right next to the synagogue.

Over the meal, the guests explained that they had come to Kimberley to buy some really good diamonds. Now, although the city was still one of the major centres of diamond mining in the world, and the headquarters of the De Beers Company was in the town, there was only one independent firm of diamond cutters in Kimberley. The rabbi undertook to take them over and introduce them to the Rosenstrauchs the following morning.



The Rosenstrauch Brothers firm was at that time run by the twin brothers, Henry and Andrew, born in Kimberley in 1929. The business had been founded by their father Simon, who had come to South Africa sometime in the 1920s, but had subsequently returned to his native Belgium. When the Nazis invaded Belgium, as his wife, Gladys told my mother, 'We ran, with just the clothes we stood up in.' (These clothes appear to have included two fur coats!) They also filled their pockets with diamonds and lived on the proceeds of their sale.

The next day the rabbi collected the two strangers and drove over to the diamond-cutting works. There Henry showed them what he had in stock and the visitors selected a few stones of high quality and considerable value.

Now, one would not of course be carrying around large sums in cash on the off-chance of finding suitable gems for purchase, and clearly a cheque with no backing would not do. In such cases, there is a clear procedure. The diamonds are folded into a special 'diamond paper' and placed in a stout envelope. Both parties to the sale examine the seal carefully and both sellers and purchasers sign across the seal. The buyers can then go away to raise the required money,



secure in the knowledge that the stones cannot be exchanged for any others. And that was what was done.

That night, just as the rabbi was about to doze off, he suddenly had a thought. Had he – or had he not – noticed that while examining the seal on the envelope, one of the visitors substituting for the envelope an identical one he'd removed

from the breast pocket of his jacket? The more he thought about it, the more convinced he became that an exchange had in fact taken place. What should he do?

He got out of bed and telephoned the Rosenstrauchs. Now, there was a problem: at this time, phonecalls went via an operator at the exchange, so he could not say too much in case the operator happened to overhear his comments. He explained that he needed to speak to them about that morning's events and arranged to meet them at the cutting works.

When they got there, the brothers opened the safe and took out the envelope. They felt it with their hands and noted there were the expected number of hard objects within. But they could not, of course, open the envelope to check, because, if the diamonds were in fact inside, when the buyers came back to collect them, they might legitimately suspect that the gems had been replaced by inferior stones and a valuable sale would have been lost.

There was, however, a possible solution. Diamonds are made of pure carbon, and carbon is a light element (Atomic Number 6), which means that they are essentially transparent to clinical X-rays, whereas stones are opaque to X-rays, so all that was required was an X-ray of the envelope and the answer would be known.

X-ray? Hospital!!! The Chief Surgeon of Kimberley Hospital was Noel Kretzmar, one of the rabbi's prominent congregants [and a near neighbour of mine; his daughter, Geraldine (Auerbach) was the founder of the Jewish Music Institute in London]. So off they went to rouse Noel from his bed. Once they had explained their dilemma, Noel was very sympathetic – but explained that the X-ray

Department at the hospital was closed at night so that nothing could be done until morning.

Then he remembered: his brother, Dr Julius Kretzmar, had a small X-ray apparatus at his consulting rooms in DuToitspan Road. He phoned Julius. Cautiously (in case the operator was



listening in to this phonecall between two of the prominent medical men of the city), he said, “Julius, I have someone here and I suspect he may have some stones. May we meet you at your rooms so I can take an X-ray” – and off they all went!

At Julius’s consulting rooms in ‘Pan Road they found the doctor waiting for them, with the machine already switched on and warming up. He was expecting ... someone with a suspected kidney stone? – gall stones? – certainly not a brown envelope! The situation was explained to him, the X-ray was duly taken and the film developed.

And it showed several dark shadows! The envelope contained pebbles, not diamonds. The seal was torn open and the truth confirmed.

At once the police were informed. A watch was placed on all ports and airports to intercept the perpetrators. It was all in vain. They had already left the country.

Some years later, one of the men was arrested in South America and deported to France, where he was wanted for some similar crime. Henry was flown to Paris to see if he could identify him – at the expense of the South African Police if it was in fact one of the thieves, but if not the Rosenstrauchs would have to pay. The identification was positive but no diamonds were ever recovered.



Sub-Saharan Africa
Channukah of Unity

we invite you to join us in celebrating the festival of channukah and the lighting of the menorah from the magnificent 119-year-old Grikualand West Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Kimberley

Wednesday 16 December 2020
South African Day of Reconciliation
via **Zoom**
18:00 SAST
email info@sjca.org.za

*if you will be in Kimberley en route to your holiday, please contact
082 440 2621 to arrange for your shul attendance*

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AFRICAN JEWISH CONGRESS
התאחדות היהודים באפריקה

SJCA
SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

COUNTRY COMMUNITIES

Chanukah Sameach

I send everyone good wishes for Chanukah. Jonty Sandler has brought to my notice that Kimberley shul is hosting a ‘**SubSaharan Chanukah of Unity**’. The details of how to join are below and in the poster. **I am assuming that Kimberley Ex-Pats would be welcome.**

The African Jewish Congress (AJC), the Small Jewish Communities Association of South Africa (SJCA) & the Cape SAJBD and its Country Communities Subcommittee invite you to the Sub-Saharan African Channukah of Unity event.

Celebrate the festival of Channukah and witness the lighting of the menorah in the magnificent setting that is the 119-year-old Grikualand West Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Kimberley. Please email info@Sjca.org.ZA for the ZOOM link and info@capesajbd.org for the livestreamed Facebook link.

Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter # 31
Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE
London, 8 December 2020.