



Perth Jewish Roots

Newsletter of the Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society of Western Australia Inc

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Newsletter

Vol.20 No.2 May 2018



SAMSON HOUSE

Ellen Street & Ord Street

Fremantle

Under National Trust WA

See Page 6 for Article

LATEST NEWS

After celebrating Shavuot last weekend with masses of cheese cake and cheese blintzes, we have lots of news to report in this Issue. Last December we had a Re-dedication ceremony at the East Perth Jewish Memorial Cemetery with Jeremy Joseph discovering some lost family history see Page 3 and 4.

JHGS-WA is helping **JewishCare WA** with their Wednesday morning Talks on the Theme of **"Through the Decades - Remember When"**. Look-out for when these are on, very enjoyable with memories and we need your Stories, so keep sending these in to Michelle. We have recorded each session, which are available.



Oral History - Interviews are being conducted with our Interviewer **Helena Cohen-Robertson**. Many people have already been interviewed, with many more to go. This Project will continue until the end of November 2018, but we need your stories and photos. These Oral Histories will be an important component of our collection and everybody has a story. Tell us yours !

From the Archives - We have received donations of people's memorabilia, certificates, letters, post-cards and photos. We are needing help with archiving these. Please get in contact with Michelle on jhgs@iinet.net.au or 0418 910 258.

Our **Membership for 2018** began in January, a huge thank you to those who have already paid. Help us continue to grow by paying your membership and make a Donation to the Museum / Library today and a tax deductible receipt will be emailed to you.

2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - On Sunday 26th August at 1.30pm. See you there.



IAJGS POLAND CONFERENCE STEAMS AHEAD

6 - 10 August 2018 - Warsaw, Poland - Hilton Warsaw Hotel

The organisers of the IAJGS conference in Warsaw in 2018 have been busy.

To facilitate communication between those interested in the conference

IAJGS have set up the **2018 IAJGS Warsaw Conference Facebook Group**.

Through this they hope to disseminate information as quickly as they can.

Website : iajgs2018.org/

2018 SOLOMON FAMILY REUNION



Participants at the 2018 Solomon Family Reunion, the oldest participant, Marjorie Luno (97) is seated at the right hand end of the front row.

Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon arrived in Sydney on the *Lady Castlereagh* on 30 April 1818. To mark the bicentenary of their arrival a Family Reunion was held at the Parkview Hotel, Melbourne over the Labour Day Weekend March 2018. Attended by 150 people, Michelle Urban being one of them, the Reunion opened with a Celebratory Dinner. The Master of Ceremonies was Emanuel Solomon (Phil Zachariah) and the After Dinner Speaker was Luke Gosling MP, the Federal Member for Solomon in the NT. The Reunion was officially opened by Miriam Margolyes followed by talks on the life and times of Emanuel and Vaiben as well as on genealogy and family history.

The Talks provided a great deal of new information, see AJHS Newsletter Issue No.112, May 2018 for more information. Website : www.ajhs.com.au

My English cousin Anthony Joseph has known Michelle Urban for decades. In mid-December 2017 he contacted her about an item in the Australian Jewish Historical Newsletter concerning the rededication at the East Perth Jewish Memorial Cemetery. He told Michelle that he had seen the list of the cemetery's burials, which included Eric Abraham Joseph, the infant son of Horace Belmore and Florence Beena Joseph (nee Goldsmith). Eric was one of three children of theirs who died in infancy.

Over the last few months, and with the help of Rose Raymen and Michelle, we've started unravelling the family history again, on my father's side. Some of it we knew before but, perhaps foolishly, I made no written copy. We started, this time, with the knowledge that my grandfather, Horace Joseph, was a successful lawyer in Perth, where my father (Basil) and his brother (Keith) were born early in the twentieth century. We also knew that their mother (Florence) had been left in Perth when the boys, then still infants, and their father moved first to Singapore and then Shanghai. (In fact, Singapore was wrong and they went to Penang in Malaya.) Apart from two brief stories of school in Shanghai, and a letter from Basil to his employers in the 1930s, we knew nothing further of Basil and Keith in the period to WWII. It seemed very little and, when we looked at it hard, it felt like even less. Some time ago I promised my sons, now in their thirties and forties, that I would find out more and, this time, write it down.

The first surprise, from an early quick and rough search in 2017, was to confirm that Basil and Keith had had two elder sisters and a brother, all of whom had died before they – Basil and Keith – were born. Names had never been mentioned – why should they be? – and we knew little of the dead infants, except that they might have died in an epidemic. (We know now that two died within three days in mid-1902 but have found no information on a likely contemporary epidemic – Eric had died in 1898 and it seems unlikely that his death is related to the others. Eric is buried in the Jewish Memorial Cemetery in East Perth, while Enid and Elaine [both died mid-1902] are buried in Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth.)



Eric Abraham Joseph's grave in the East Perth Jewish Memorial Cemetery WA—died aged 1mth

Having written down what we knew, the first port of call was Dr Anthony Joseph, well known as a genealogist worldwide, but especially in Britain, Australia and the USA. He couldn't help directly but kindly contacted Michelle in Perth. She sent me a picture of Eric's gravestone and then extended my contact to Rose Raymen, JHGS-WA's researcher. I'm really stunned by what's been confirmed and/or uncovered since then, thanks to Michelle and Rose. Both are totally addicted to genealogy, like Anthony, and my mother when she was alive, and I'm starting to understand why. The only answer – for me, perhaps – is compulsory restrictions. The others are far too far gone for any form of help.

Amongst the first things uncovered last year in Perth was confirmation of the children's dates of death and where they were buried. That was followed by information, from several sources – mainly newspaper clippings – about divorce proceedings between Horace and Florence, and their respective and partially related travels. Florence was devoted to her two small sons, which one would have expected but must have been reinforced for her because she had lost three other children previously, and made strenuous efforts to find them. She managed to discover where they were living in Malaya and went there, and seems to have confronted Horace. Later she went to London because she understood that they had gone there. That information was wrong and she eventually returned to Australia. It seems unlikely that she learnt that they had moved to Shanghai until she'd given up hope of regaining her family and divorce proceedings were well under way.

The divorce featured fairly heavily in the Perth newspapers at the time. Divorces were part of the stock-in-trade of newspapers then but, apart from that, this one caused some legal stirring because of its unusual aspects. Most of the court work seems to have been done in 1913, and was hampered to some extent because Florence was in London, while Horace and the children were in Shanghai. Florence said that she couldn't return because she was ill. Horace had no intention of returning. This combination caused some issues in court. After debate and with a reasonable amount of reluctance, the proceedings were finally heard in the absences of both plaintiff and defendant.

(Cont.... Pg 4)

(cont ... from pg 3)

One thing that was noted in both Keith and Basil's families – ie. the following generation – was that neither of them ever mentioned or wished to talk about either their father or the woman who had left Australia and, subsequently, lived in Shanghai with them. Neither ever mentioned her name. We still know nothing for certain of Horace or what might have happened to him. We believe that he was alive when WWII began, and had heard that he moved on to live in a village in Thailand, where he may have been alive as late as the early 1950s. Other researches, however, indicate that he might have moved to a remote part of Australia – where? – and died in or about 1944. We have no evidence for either story – it's unlikely that both are true and quite possible that neither is! – but a certain amount of limited background detail with respect to the Thai story suggests that that might be what happened.

The woman's name – Elizabeth Sarah Brown Huxley – was revealed in the divorce court reports. We know little more than that. She seems to have acted as Horace's wife in Penang and, presumably, thereafter, and we know that they got married, but neither when nor where. She had returned to Bacchus Marsh, Victoria by 1942 and died in Melbourne in 1958 – maybe she and he simply returned together. It would be interesting to know. Perhaps more strangely, we have yet to find anything further about Horace's activities – professional or otherwise – in Penang (about two years) or Shanghai, where he lived and worked for around 30 years.

There was a lot more. While we learnt a little of Horace and his companion, we really wanted more about Basil and Keith. Digging in Perth and elsewhere revealed a lot, and was well worthwhile. Our effective time-zero was the brothers' births early in the 20th century and we uncovered some of what they did in the 30s. Keith stayed in Shanghai – he was interned during WWII – and returned to Australia, having got married and divorced in the meantime. Basil made several long journeys in the 30s and moved to Britain prior to WWII. Intercontinental travel might have increased since the jet air-liner's advent in the 1950s and 60s, but much was done before that and ships' passenger lists, etc, include extensive details.

We also worked backwards from "time-zero", making further "discoveries". Horace was the eldest of nine. Quite extensive information has been collected about most of his siblings, including, for many, their spouses and children, if any, and their professions and where they lived. Florence, also known as Beena or Beatrice, was the youngest of six and, to date, we know virtually nothing of them – apart from Florence's divorce and the events leading up to it, and that she was living in Sydney by 1931 and died there in 1948.

There is still much to do, just to catch up with those who lived in the twentieth century. We have inklings from further back, too, that need to be followed in due course. Horace's father, Solomon, was a newspaper owner in Tamworth, NSW, and we have good pictures of him and his wife, thanks to Rose's efforts. Solomon's father, Abraham, lived in Plymouth, Devon (in England), and made his living selling slops – bedding and clothing – to the Royal Navy. He was commended in writing by the king for doing so. We have a picture of Abraham, too – all thanks to Rose's steady and knowledgeable input. It's time for my "compulsory restrictions" thanks to Rose's steady and knowledgeable input. It's time for my "compulsory restrictions" to kick in – see above – so I must stop.



Abraham Joseph (1799-1868)
Date and place unknown.
(Probably painted ca 1826 to 1830, (artist unknown).



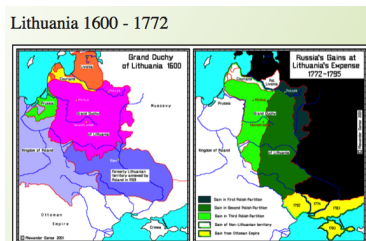
Solomon Joseph (1834-1900)
Horace's father—date and place unknown; probably after his marriage to Caroline Cohen.

Caroline Joseph (nee Cohen) (1844-1921)
Horace's mother - date and place unknown, but apparently after her marriage to Solomon Joseph.



MIKE ROSS: The Two Empires of the Ottomans and Russia

On 26 February, the Jewish Historical and Genealogical Society WA (JHGS-WA) welcomed Mike Ross as Sunday presenter to talk about how we might correctly identify the countries of origin of our forebears. The question of our ancestors' country of origin would be wholly unproblematic were they born in a country whose borders were constant such as those of Australia, but contentious where national boundaries came in for frequent re-adjustments over time.



Our Jewish ancestors were for the most part dwellers of villages and small towns and didn't much move. But whilst our forbear families stayed put for generations, the political borders did not! They were fluid and changed around them. And this is very much the case both for Sephardic Jews who mainly lived in the Ottoman Empire and Ashkenazi Jews who mostly lived in the Russian Empire and more specifically, within the area known as the "Pale of Settlement."

We forget nowadays just how vast was the Ottoman Empire which began its expansion around 1450, being at its most extensive at the end of the 17th Century, only to collapse at the close of the first Great War in 1918. It covered vast tracts of lands that we today regard as firmly "European," including the likes of Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and even Greece.

Jews were present in "Anatolia" - the earliest name for Turkey - around 2,000 years ago. The largest influx of Jews into the Ottoman Empire came after the expulsions from Spain and Portugal in the 1490's. At this time the ruling sultans appreciated the contribution immigrant Jews would come to make to their lands and positively welcomed them. For much of the rule of the Ottomans, Moslem Turkey was a safer haven for Jews than was Christian Europe. Here there were generally less restrictions imposed on Jews, such as in matters of permitted profession.

Whilst our Jewish grandparents may have told us that they or their parents had come from "The Pale," even that area had changing borders. Thus, looking at 17th Century maps, you would see a Grand Duchy of Lithuania covering areas we now would recognize as Ukraine and Poland. Indeed, Poland disappeared altogether as a separate country in 1795, only re-emerging as a nation state once more consequent on the 1918 Treaty of Versailles, which redrew national borders in settlement of the first Great War. Doubtless, the "Poles" who lived in that area in this time never doubted that they were "Polish!" And furthermore, as Mike Ross said, Jews well know how the borders of Europe "went all over the place" between 1900-1945.

The Pale of Settlement had been first established by Catherine the Great in 1791. Jewish people were in a sense "pushed" there from adjacent parts of Europe by governments instilled with Christian anti-Semitism and fuelled with resentment at Jewish economic and other achievement. Perhaps as many as 5 million Jews lived in The Pale at its height. It was abolished only by post-Tsarist Russian Government decree in 1917.

Mike gave interesting examples of how Jewish people had assimilated the food and cultural customs of the local inhabitants wherever they had lived in the Ottoman or Russian Empires. He noted how difficult it is for most of us to trace our Jewish family history further back than the mid/late 17th Century. Given the fluctuating borders of places where they typically lived, we need awareness of where these borders were drawn historically and thus, crucially, to know where in the countries of today's world are stored the records we now seek.

Mike warned us to be wary of hoary family legends. So my mother's maternal grandfather would boast that in 1884 as a 16 year old he had "walked out of Poland" finding his way to Leeds, Yorkshire. I discovered that in fact the "from Poland" bit had been something of a fabrication, since he had travelled merely from his home near Posen (nowadays Posnan) in Prussian Germany, no great distance from Berlin, and had most likely caught the train from there to Hamburg and thence to a new life in England! By *Michael Anderson*



Valerie White & Eva Smith



Joanne Chenik; Lesley Raiter; Eli Rabinowitz



Mike Ross & Jonathan Wolf

National Trust - The Story of Samson House

On Sunday 25th March, Anne Brake of the National Trust WA told members and friends of the JHGS-WA the fascinating story of National Trust WA property, including Samson House.

Lionel Samson and his brother William were very early Jewish settlers who arrived at the Swan River Colony (as WA was then known) in 1829. Lionel was a significant figure in early Fremantle - a merchant who established the first liquor business and first Post Office in the township. That liquor business continues to operate to this day and remains the longest running family business in WA. Lionel's son Michael carried on the family firm and he and his wife Mary, of working class Irish origin, built Samson House in 1889.

Situated at the corner of Ord Street and Ellen Street in Fremantle, Samson House, a large traditional colonial style bungalow with an enveloping veranda, was built on an elevated site in what was then bush. The house has a 'belvedere' tower which afforded good views of the town and harbour. Michael's son Fred was an avid gardener who planted a rose garden and many trees at the property as well as introducing garden water features.

Michael and Fred both served as Mayors of Fremantle and Fred was knighted for his service to the town. Fred died in 1974 and he left Samson House to the State of WA with a view to its being used as a museum. The National Trust WA has since taken over the property, which is fully furnished in the style of the late Victorian era. It is opened to the public on certain occasions during the year.

Anne discussed some of the other fascinating properties owned and managed by the National Trust WA. Anne's informative and well-researched talk was very well received and she was presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Society.

By Jonathan Wolf



Samson House
30 Arundel Street,
Fremantle

Lionel and Fanny Samson
And Family



The ACT Jewish Community has prepared an Honour Roll for the Australian Jewish War Memorial to be dedicated at the Australian Jewish Community Anzac Centenary Remembrance Service.

The Service will be held onsite at midday on Sunday 12th August 2018. The Honour Roll has been compiled in partnership with the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS), the Centenary of Anzac Jewish Program, and the Federal Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women.

You are invited to comment on the Honour Roll and comments can be emailed to: act.admin@actjc.org.au

The Honour Roll may be viewed at :

<https://images.shulcloud.com/674/uploads/AJWM/AJWM-Honour-Roll.pdf>

In addition, if you would like to donate to the AJWM, your tax deductible contribution should be made to :

ACT Jewish Community CLMA Fund

BSB : 062 902

A/C : 1034 1450

REF : AJWM

Once payment has been made, please email the ACTJC Office: actadmin@actjc.org.au with your details and a tax deductible receipt will be emailed to you.

All of us who have been raised as Jewish have acquired a Jewish identity with its many dimensions – religious, political, cultural among others. But what of your identity if, in late middle years and as a near complete surprise, you discover you are Jewish by direct descent?

This was the focus of Anne Atkinson’s talk to the JHGS-WA on Sunday, 29 April. Anne always had a vague sense that she had Jewish origins, but it was in only retirement that she came to research her roots.

Anne drew our attention to five generations of women in her Burak family. Her great-grandmother, Bella Burak (1878-1952) is buried in the Jewish section of Karrakatta Cemetery. Bella and many generations of her family before her lived in Sudilkov, a small town in what is now Ukraine, which had a high proportion of Jewish residents. After her marriage she lived in Berdichev. Sadly in 1905-1906, as happened all too often in the Pale of Settlement, murderous pogroms ensued. Bella, her husband and four daughters left Berdichev in 1908 for the newly established multicultural town of Harbin in Manchuria (now China), which had a flourishing population, including 8,000 Jews.

In Harbin, Bella kept a kosher kitchen, her family observed all the Jewish rituals and practices characteristic of Eastern European Jews of those days. The town was effectively administered by Russia and Bella’s daughter Rebecca (1900-1991), Anne’s grandmother, came to reject Judaism and with it her sense of Jewishness. She considered herself ‘Russian,’ this being confirmed by her developing attitudes as a communist in the Soviet era. It was not just a political choice for Rebecca. She had major personality clashes with her mother. Nonetheless, this was the “crucial break” in continuity of Anne’s forbears to continue their identity as Jews.

The Burak family moved from Harbin to Shanghai in 1919, where Anne’s mother, Dolores (1921-2003) was born. Dolores Burak had little sense of Jewish identity garnered from her atheistic mother and indeed, was educated in a Roman Catholic Convent School.

Anne was born in 1945 in Merredin and raised with no religion or reference to a Jewish past. It was when she retired that she began to research her ancestry, starting with her great-grandmother Bella and Bella’s immediate family who had arrived in Perth in 1951 from Shanghai as stateless refugees consequent on the upheavals of the 1949 Chinese revolution. It is ironic that Anne chose an academic career studying and teaching race relations and migration. But her focus was on *Chinese*, not on *Jewish* experience.

This fascinating and eloquently told story showed how a single individual had blocked the strong flow of Jewish heritage founded and developed many centuries before. For Anne’s grandmother, Jewishness was little more than adherence to a set of religious beliefs. But being Jewish goes well beyond the religious dimension. It embraces commitment to Israel, a shared history of persecution and achievement against all odds and a rich, many-textured culture.

Anne’s talk served to reinforce that though much is shared between us, because we come from different places with different families of origin, no two of us would have exactly the same sense of what it means to be “Jewish.” I have been asked by non-Jews whether I am a “practicing” Jew. My reply typically is that I have no need of “practice” as “I know how to do it!” For Anne, who discovered late in life that she has a Jewish heritage, the situation is very different.

Asked of her own sense of Jewish identity after the discoveries made in recent times, Anne responded it was a question she “is still figuring out!”



Back: Irene & Dolores (Rebecca’s daughters).
Seated: Solomon, Rebecca & Bella.
In Front: Rebecca’s son Eddie



Bella Burak’s grave



Anne Atkinson and Michael Anderson



Harbin Synagogue

By great demand, Shirley Atlas has been invited to come back again to give her talk which will be held on Sunday 24 June 2018, so Save the Date.

SUNDAY 24th June 2018

Guest Speaker : Shirley Atlas

“My Journey from South Africa to Australia

Starting life in a new environment could be challenging to anybody, most especially to new immigrants“

SUNDAY 2018

1.30pm for a 2.00pm start

Noranda Chabad Shule (NSHC)

11 Garson Court, Noranda

Cost : JHGS-WA

Members : \$5.00

Non-Members : \$10.00

Light refreshments will be served

RSVP : jhgs@iinet.net.au

