

SA-SIG

*Southern African Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group
Newsletter*

<http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/>

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The Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG)

The purpose and goal of the Southern Africa Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) is to bring together Jewish genealogy researchers with a common interest in Southern Africa and to provide a forum for a free exchange of ideas, research tips and information of interest to those researching Jewish family history in the communities of South Africa, Lesotho (Basutoland), Botswana (Bechuanaland), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Swaziland, Mozambique, Kenya, and the former Belgian Congo.

The SIG has been producing a quarterly Newsletter since 2000 in which is included articles on personalities in the Southern African Jewish community, religious congregations, communities – past and present and general news about the lives our Southern African families led.

Further information on how to subscribe to the Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/newsletter/index.htm>

If you would like to contribute articles to the Newsletter, accounts should include descriptions of families of the community, aspects of local Jewish life, its institutions and particular character. Jewish involvement in the community at large, its history, business life and development could be featured as well.

Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent to Colin Plen, Editor, at colplen@iafrica.com

General enquiries about the Newsletter can be sent either to Colin or to Mike Getz at MikeGetz005@comcast.net

The SA-SIG maintains a set of Web Pages that can be found at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The recent SABC series, titled *Shalom, The Beloved Country*, on Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft and his work in regard to country communities has highlighted the amazing work the Rabbi does all over sub-Saharan Africa. Places like Kenya and Mauritius are included, and I heard he recently spoke at that outpost called Ra'anana!

His work on recording, photographing and caring for rural cemeteries has been of inestimable value to genealogists; with Stan Hart's collaboration (and similar work in other areas), most of these data and images will soon be available on the *JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry* database. *JOWBR* currently contains more than 1.7 million names, and can be found at:

www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery

Rabbi Silberhaft provides a tremendous service in terms of providing welfare and food to many isolated and often abandoned Jews in small country towns.

What struck me in watching the SABC series is how he accepts any Jews, irrespective of religious affiliation or observance. It's a great shame that some of his rabbinical colleagues in South Africa and particularly in the UK are unable to do the same.

Kol HaKavod to Moshe.

Saul Issroff

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Editor's Note: Further details about the SABC series can be found in the article in this Newsletter on page 18.

EDITORIAL

Before Rabbi Silberhaft was appointed as the travelling Rabbi for the Country Districts, there was a Rabbi Stan Zaiden. Rabbi Stan travelled all over, but did not achieve the prominence of Rabbi Silberhaft. I first met Rabbi Zaiden when we were philatelists and his speciality was collecting postcards and stamps showing synagogues. He is now a Rabbi in London, and still collects postcards.

He sent us a postcard which many of you might find interesting.

Most of our readers are *uitlanders*, or at least expatriates, so some will not understand why we keep on writing about Rabbi Silberhaft. We have an article about him in this issue.

I have had an interest in the Spanish Inquisition for a long time. This month we are publishing an article on some of its aspects.

In the last issue of the Newsletter we featured Abel and Glenda Levitt's efforts in Plungyan. In this issue, they have brought us up to date with a resume of their work since the previous article.

Mo Skikne is an interesting person. So many facets, and each of them worth an hour's conversation. Mo is the Chairman of the JGS Johannesburg, now to be renamed the JGS South Africa. He is a chemist and a teacher and a religious boffin. He has written an article for us on the contribution of South African Jews in WWII.

Colin Plen

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A WALL OF MEMORY IN LITHUANIA

Abel and Glenda Levitt

Former Capetonians Abel and Glenda Levitt have been working for over a decade in the town of Plungyan to preserve the memory of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

We have written on previous occasions for the SA-SIG Newsletter [most recently in the October 2011 issue] about our interest in the Lithuanian *shtetl* of Plungyan. Our activities in the town, known in Lithuania as Plunge, have been varied, from leading a Levitt family group of 43 in 2001, to refurbishing the site of the Mass graves where 1800 Jews were murdered in July 1941, and to help in establishing a Tolerance Education Centre in the local Gymnasia, the Sauleis High School. Our establishing the Ronald Harwood Competition for works of the arts, takes us to Plunge nearly every year for the Prize-

giving of the impressive work of Lithuanian children.

From our first visit in 1998, when we learned of the list of names of 700 of the victims of the brutal murder carried out by the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators, we became interested in the search for more names, and the construction of a suitable memorial to honour the memory of the dead. That list had been compiled by the legendary Yacovas Bunka, who returned from six years in the Soviet army to discover what had been the fate of the community he had left at the outbreak of the war. Realising his role as the Guardian of the Memory, he went from house to house, from street to street, and wrote down the names of the people who, to the best of his knowledge, had lived there.



Yossel (Yaacov) Bunka and his son Eugenijus

To that list an Israeli researcher, Emma Karabelnik, born in Vilnius to parents who had escaped from Plungyan to Siberia, set about adding to the names. Fluent in Yiddish, Russian, Lithuanian, Hebrew, and English, Emma spent many months contacting people and adding to the 700 names. Glenda too researched names, particularly of our own Levitt family, and finally, helped by the Yad Vashem campaign to discover names, a list of 1200 names was available. The question was: how and where should the names be recorded?

The old synagogue, in a state of disrepair had, after repeated requests, been handed over to the *Plunge Jewish Society*, formed by Bunka in order to meet the conditions necessary to take possession of the building. A Yacovas Bunka Charitable Fund was registered and the title of the synagogue passed to

the fund. Unable to raise the US\$250,000 to repair and restore the building, it was sold and the funds placed to the credit of the Bunka Fund.

On one of our many visits to Plunge, we saw the hoardings that had been placed around the perimeter of the site, and learned from Eugenijus Bunka, the son of Yacovas, that the demolition was due to commence the following day. We discussed with him the saving of the bricks, to be used one day for a suitable project. Eugenijus, who for years had been active in the preservation of mass graves and research into the killings that took place in Lithuania during 1941, arranged for the bricks to be stored under canvas at a builder's yard. Before leaving the site that afternoon we sneaked into the fenced off area and managed to find two loose bricks that we could take away as mementos. One we gave to Emma Karabelnik, and the other rests on a table in our home together with other Plungyan memorabilia. It is here that we place our *Yahrzeit* candles on *Yom Hashoa*.

With the approach of July 2011, 70 years after the tragedy of Plungyan, our thoughts turned to the bricks, the names, and the need to build a memorial. Eugenijus Bunka arranged for an engineer and a builder to visit the site, the possibilities were discussed, and plans were drawn up. The target date for the completion of the construction of the memorial – 17th July, the 3rd Sunday of July, the traditional day for the service in the forest of Kausenai.

The ceremony this year would be special, as both the Israeli and the Lithuanian governments had decreed 2011 as a special year of memory, marking 70 years since the start of the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry.

The wall would be built of the bricks that had been saved from the old synagogue, and 1800 bricks would be used, one brick for each of the martyred Jews of Plungyan. The names would be engraved on granite slabs, and in addition a short history of Plungyan's Jews written by Bunka would be engraved, and would appear in Yiddish, Lithuanian, and English.

We were determined that the funding of the wall would not be the responsibility of the Bunka Fund, and were certain that the money could be raised by way of approaching a few people. And so it was that

the necessary funding was donated by a handful of benefactors with a Lithuanian connection.



Photo of Memory Wall at site of mass killings at Kausenai Forest outside Plunge



Detail of one of the plaques of names

Like many communal efforts this one was not without its controversy. We had wanted the names to appear in three languages, Lithuanian, Yiddish,

and English. But this was not possible and a much bigger memorial would have been necessary to accommodate the three languages. We were well aware that this was a “First”. For the first time a memorial had been built at the site of a Holocaust mass grave, with the names, or at least some of them, 600 names are yet to be discovered, of the victims. This memorial wall would be their tombstone.

We, as a family, were present at the unveiling. Our four children, Ari, Mia, Sonya, and Adam, all of whom had made previous visits to Lithuania, were with us. So were Dr Eliezer Yariv and his wife Rachel. In our research, we had learned that Eliezer’s father Zalman, had come to Palestine in the 1930’s and had ultimately been a pioneer of Kibbutz Dafna. Zalman’s sister Sara had married my father’s youngest brother, Yisroel. Those readers who have themselves engaged in research may have had similar experiences of connecting with family. Adam, our younger son, who serves as a paratrooper in the reserves, received permission from both his army officer and the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign affairs to appear in his Israeli army uniform.

It is difficult to try to describe the emotion of the event.

The names were covered with specially-made flags, printed on them were the words “Plungyan 1941-2011” in Yiddish and English. One of the mass graves, the one where 75 schoolgirls, having been raped and then murdered, are buried, was impressively decorated with flowers by a Lithuanian lady who does this every year. In this grave our young cousin, Rosa Levitt, 12 years old at the time of her death, is buried.

The diplomatic corps was well represented. Ambassadors or their deputies from Israel, the United States, Japan, Holland, Poland, Germany, Norway and others were there. As was the Deputy Foreign Minister of Lithuania, herself a former ambassador to Israel and South Africa, and the Deputy Speaker of the Lithuanian parliament. Also present was the Jewish Lithuanian parliamentarian, chairman of the Foreign Affairs committee, Mr Emanuel Zingeris. Yad Vashem was represented by Dr Irit Abramski, head of the Russian speaking department at the International School of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, and the Lithuanian Jewish community by Shimon Gurewitz who addressed the

gathering in Yiddish. Yacovas Bunka, the 87 year old sculptor, and the last remaining Jew in Plungyan, who together with artist friends had created the giant sculptures at the mass graves was visibly moved as he was called upon to uncover the plaques recording the Jewish presence in Plunge. Eugenijus Bunka was the Master of Ceremonies, with the translations done by the translator of the Lithuanian parliament. The Chief Rabbi of Lithuania, Chaim Burstein officiated.



Abel and Glenda Levitt at the ceremony

Abel was given the honour of delivering the main address and the call went out from him, as well as from Emanuel Zingeris, for other memorial walls, with names, to be built at mass grave sites throughout Lithuania.

So there is more work to be done!

In May 2011, having visited Plungyan to help finalise arrangements for the ceremony, we visited the town of Kedainiai in Central Lithuania. We had known that three synagogues had been restored there and were keen to visit them. We met with the Director of the Museum, and established an immediate relationship with him. We told him what was being done in Plunge, and suggested to him that he should become involved in a similar project at the mass grave where 2076 Jews are buried. “It is not so difficult,” we told him. Kedainiai has no Jews remaining in the town. “Yad Vashem will provide you with the names that they have recorded.” And so it was, that on 29th August, the 70th Anniversary of the killing of Kedainiai’s Jews, the Second memorial with names at a Lithuanian site of mass murder, was consecrated. This one made out of sheet metal, with the names cut out, is most impressive.

As result of our visit to Kedainiai, and with the initiative of Rymantas Zirgulis, the museum director, this memorial was built.

And to complete our story, we learned that Abel's aunt, Hena, a pharmacist, whom we had assumed had been killed in Plungyan, was in fact buried with her husband in Kedainiai.

Suggested websites for material on Plungyan (Plunge)

- Memories of Plunge
www.kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/plunge/plunge.html
- Plunge Lithuania Yizkor book
www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/plunge/plunge.html
- Yankl Bunk of Plungyan (In Yiddish)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=syiMAzYIP48

THE SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH CONTRIBUTION IN WORLD WAR II

Maurice Skikne

I was a kid of eight when the Battle of El-Alamein was fought by the Allies against the Axis forces, led by General Erwin Rommel in 1942. This battle was of particular interest to me as not only were family involved, but it also kindled in me a lifelong passion for the design, construction, and battle tactics used in tank and aircraft warfare and usage. Airplanes and armour caught my imagination, and propelled an interest in the field of the engineering of these devices. The area of battle planning and tactics and its logic also fascinates me. Warfare is effectively like three-dimensional chess and requires a sense of imagination in order to be successful at it.

I have given a number of lectures on the four Israeli Battles, which if not for the domination by Israel in tank and aircraft warfare, we would not be in a position to talk terms for cease-fires. However, what was galling in every one of these wars, was the demand for ceasefires, despite the victories by Israel, and by members of the United Nations. I have previously spoken on topics like the role of tanks in the four major Israeli wars (in open desert and mountainous terrain) as well as the Allied "Bomber Wars". But, what can be iterated about military and naval contributions? Terrestrial and Navy forces take and hold the territory during a

battle. It is the soldier and sailor who are the most long-term effective forces. They are in position at most all times, to be able to hold the terrain gained by being physically in position.

Which brings one to the point and essence of this essay's heading: how was it that the first generation of Jews born in South Africa became involved in the WWII conflict?

In 1938, when the then British government realized that long term, it would have to fight a war to protect the democratic freedom of the world, it began to re-arm itself, and train men for the coming conflict. The result was that in sympathy, Commonwealth countries followed suit. Although there was some resistance to this move by the coalition regime in South Africa and subsequent resignation by a group of Afrikaners sympathetic to the Nazi cause, many other like people in South Africa began to join up in concert with the UK.

Thus, training camps for military training were established at places such as Sonderwater, Wonderboom, Roberts Heights, Zwartkops, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban.

For flight training, Rand, Dunnotar, Northmead, Zwartkops, Bloemfontein, Baragwanath, Wonderboom, Durban, Langebaan, and Potchefstroom come to mind.

Children of the Jewish community countrywide became very conscious of the plight of their families in Europe, particularly in Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, at the hands of the Nazis. They rightly felt that they ought to involve themselves in combating this scourge sweeping Europe. They thus took their own initiative and volunteered to join various units. Listed below are the most popular branches these Jewish men and women served in. Listed also are some names of relatives and public figures involved in various branches.

Army

- Infantry (Issy Sher, Issy Sacks)
- Armour
- Artillery
- Sappers/Signals
- Medical (Jack Penn, Lester Brown, Louis Babrow)

- Entertainment [Sydney James, Laurence Harvey (Harry Skikne)]

Air Force

Some joined the RAF (Royal Air Force); the majority joined the SAAF (South African Air Force).

- Bombers (Lew Freeman – Lt. Gunner, Hymie Tobiansky – Capt. Navigator)
- Fighters (Cecil Margo – DFC, Issy Maisels – DFC, Trevor Sussman – DFC)
- Technical (Jack Brasg, Jack Levy, ? Tobiansky – Mechanic)

What theatres they served in

- Abyssinia (against the Italians)
- Egypt (involved Algeria and Tunisia; this also meant El Alamein and Tobruk)
- Sicily, Italy

In Egypt and Italy, the SA Forces formed part of the 8th UK Army, contributing the Armoured Brigade/Infantry/Reserve. The South African Jewish contribution to the war effort represented an army population of about ten thousand militia corresponding to about 9400 men and about 600 women. The total Springbok army constituted 211,193 personnel.

Some statistics about Jewish servicemen and servicewomen [1]

- 357 Servicemen were killed or died from their wounds
- 327 persons were wounded or injured
- 143 servicemen were mentioned in Dispatches
 - 2 were awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO)
 - 7 were awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE)
 - 20 received the Medal of the British Empire (MBE)
 - 14 received the Military Cross (MC)
 - 16 were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)
 - 22 received the Military Medal (MM)
 - 4 obtained the British Empire Medal (BEM)
 - 9 other awards were made

The Springbok contingent first saw action on the border between Kenya and Abyssinia, after being

shipped from Durban to Dar es Salaam. In Abyssinia, they met the Falashim community of Ethiopia. These very dark Jews are believed to have come to settle in Abyssinia in Cleopatra's time. The army had been well trained and was built up into a formidable fighting force. Following their attack on the Italian army in Abyssinia, the Italians were soundly defeated, many prisoners taken while the rest made their way into North Africa (Tunisia) [2].

Here they joined forces with the freshly-landed German army led by General Erwin Rommel. The first area of combat in Egypt was at Mersa Matruh followed by a push-back by the Axis army to Tobruk. Unfortunately, the Springboks were not able to hold them back, and thus a large contingent of our troops were defeated and captured. Amongst them were about 750 Jewish soldiers who actually feared for their lives as a consequence of learning what had been happening in Europe. However, they were treated equally with the non-Jews and no harm came to them. This was probably due to the fact that there were no *Waffen* SS troops among the German army in North Africa, and Rommel was a soldier not a politician. These prisoners were then transhipped into Italy and thence to Czechoslovakia and Germany. These soldiers only saw their relief when the war came to an ignoble defeat for Germany, at the war's end.

The troops remaining joined up with the 8th British Army and fought the battle of El-Alamein which spelled the beginning of the end of the war in Europe. The date was 23rd October 1942, and the Allied troops were led by General Bernard Montgomery (later Field Marshall). The 8th Army was joined by the Americans who landed in Tunisia and between them they drove the German/Italian forces back and captured and took about 200,000 prisoners.

The Allied command under the aegis of General Dwight Eisenhower now planned the invasion of Sicily, and then the landings in Italy. Once more the Springbok Division was seconded to the British 8th Army, fighting all the way up to the release of Monte Casino (a most famous battle). The Italian campaign was hard fought, although Italian troops, tired of fighting, soon made a cease-fire agreement with the Allied troops and dropped out, leaving the show to the Southern German army. They beat a retreat along the length of Italy right up to the war's end. Jewish soldiers and airmen were fully involved in this sector of the War. Bombing took place

almost daily, and airmen like Lt. Lew Freeman and Capt. Hymie Tobiansky were involved right up to the end.

As an aside, it was at this time that Laurence Harvey, then known as Harry Skikne, joined up to the Army's Entertainment Corps although at that time he was barely 17 years old. One sergeant Sidney James from Durban was in charge of this troupe to which Harvey attached himself. Although the Army learnt of Harvey's age, he was allowed to carry on as he was non-combatant. Sidney James of course went on to earn fame as an actor in *Doctor in the House* films and TV series. Harvey, whose stint in the military was short-lived (he only served in the Corps for a few months when the war ended), also went on to win much fame and fortune as both a stage and film actor. The way this happened is that when he was "de-mobbed," he requested the army to sponsor him in doing a course in acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London in lieu of a gratuity. The rest, as they say, is history. His name change to his acting title only came later on [3].

As a second aside, this writer has known both airmen cited above. Lew Freeman was the chairman of the Zionist Luncheon Club, at which I've given frequent lectures. Lew has been a great help in compiling this article, despite his great age. The late Hymie Tobiansky was most inspirational to me, because he taught me history at Benoni High School, a subject which has absolutely fascinated me ever since. He also was a very good instructor at School Cadets, always immaculately attired in his full Air-force parade uniform and swagger-stick, barking orders whenever we paraded at school! May he always be in my memory as an instructor who really turned me on to military history. One is also inspired by the likes of the late Jack Brasg and Jack Levy, both of whom were Aircraft Technicians involved in the repair of instruments and control systems. As very skilled craftsmen, it was amazing to see their application in peace-time operations: Brasg was an Instrument Mechanician, making a jig to cut and grind emerald gem stones, as an example.

Levy's forte was in making synagogue lamps and *Oren Kodesh* plaques of the 10 Commandments. He also built some extremely beautiful floor-standing grandfather clocks. Late Jack went on to become the originator of "shrink wrapping".

The contribution by our first generation born in South Africa, men and women, is not a subject that has been written about often. It is in this writer's opinion just another example of what *Unzer Yidden*, (our Jews) have contributed to the wellbeing of South Africa, but as in other spheres of endeavour, is hardly ever extolled. One often wonders why – is it convenient neglect?

Notes

- [1] Book: *South African Jews in WWII*, 1950, S.A.J.B.D.
- [2] The Italian prisoners landed up in Kenya and South Africa. Here they were allowed to be posted to jobs outside the prisoner camps. An agreement was reached with their officers that they were free to come and go as long as they did not attempt to escape. The prisoners were stationed at the Rand airport and Sonderwater for all the years of the War. This writer as a child well remembers talking to some Italian prisoners from the Rand Airport who on weekends frequented Germiston Lake and often would hire a rowboat and row around the Lake, playing concertinas and accordions, lustily singing beautiful Italian songs.

What is also interesting was that quite a few prisoners returned to South Africa after the War, with wives and even families, to make their lives here.

- [3] Book: *Life at the Top – the story of Laurence Harvey*, 2009, Anne Sinai,

SPANISH INQUISITION

Colin Plen

I have written before about the Spanish Inquisition, because I find it so interesting, and recently while we were sorting out some books, we found a book called *The History Of The Marranos*, and they said, "Here is the book for you".

If you look at this book next to my bed, the first thing you will notice is that there are ten pieces of paper marking various places of special interest, that I have gone back to.

What were the Marranos – a word meaning pigs in Spanish? They were also known as Conversos, those who had converted, and they were known in Hebrew as *Anusim*, the Forced Ones.

There had been a Jewish presence in the Iberian Peninsula for close to two centuries, since the time

of King Solomon when Israeli Jewish merchants and Phoenician seamen crisscrossed the Mediterranean, trading and setting up trading posts, some of which became permanent such as Barcelona and Seville. Jews had been responsible for developing trade in what was to become Portugal and Spain, and as happens with Jews, there were doctors, teachers, philosophers, poets, and writers who developed as the Jewish population grew.

When the Moors conquered the Peninsula, the Jews worked with the Moslem leaders to learn and to teach. There was no Spanish or Portuguese written language at first so the Spanish poetry written by Jewish poets was written in Hebrew and in Latin.

Jews rose to the fore with their natural abilities and many became very wealthy. Gradually the Christians reconquered the area and again the Jews acted as advisers to the Princes and Dukes, and maintained their positions. But their wealth, or possibly the hate instilled by preachers, caused antagonism to them, and especially in 1391, mobs went wild and killed many Jews until the Church said that if they converted, the mobs would be held back from attacking them. Many thousands of Jews converted then and afterwards in various forms of forced conversions, because if they were Christian, then surely they could not be attacked. These New Christians maintained a semblance of Catholicism but eventually the need for the Catholic Church to have only pure Christians resulted in the Inquisition being set up to investigate those who might not be good Christians.

Spies could report people to the Inquisition if they saw them observing Saturday as the Sabbath; putting on clean or festive clothes; arranging and cleaning their houses on a Friday; lighting new candles on a Friday; lighting candles earlier on a Friday than on other evenings; cooking on the Friday food for Saturday and then eating that food only on the Saturday; keeping Fasts; keeping the Festivals of the Jews, especially the feast of unleavened bread which occurs in Holy Week, if at that time they start their meal with celery and lettuce; cutting their nails and burning the parings; cutting away fat from meat; cutting away the sinew in the leg of meat; cutting the throat of fowls in the Jewish manner; not eating pork, hare, rabbit, strangled birds, conger eel, cuttlefish, nor eels; and on the death of parents sitting on low stools or on the floor; and if they give Old Testament names to

their children. There was no such thing as a good Christian simply claiming not to like pork; if he didn't eat it he was Judaizing and liable to be punished by the Inquisition.

The punishment was decided after he had been investigated. Investigation included many different tortures and many did not survive the tortures. Of course, if you went before the Inquisition, you lost all your property, and invariably your family was accused with you. If you professed repentance you could be reconciled to the bosom of the church. The punishment you would get could include fasting, or reciting paternosters or whipping or shaming, being paraded naked from the waist upwards in a public parade.

If you did not reconcile, you could be relaxed, which was being burned alive for heresy. If however, you admitted at the last moment that you were guilty and sorry, you would be strangled so that you were burned but did not suffer. There were cases of people who escaped from Spain or Portugal and so could not be punished but they were punished by being burned in effigy. Some who had died but were posthumously accused of Judaizing had their bones dug up and the bones were burned in *auto da fes*, in the mass burnings.

In Spain, in 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand had said that no Jews could remain there, and many escaped. In Portugal, Jews were not allowed to leave and were all forcibly converted.

Nevertheless, Jewish ability kept a large number of Jews with their natural aptitudes at the top of the heap, aiding and advising the Queen herself, as well as the Portuguese king, and other political leaders. Leaders in the Church were in many cases second-generation Jews, and not only Columbus had Jews to help him finance his explorations and to plan the routes, but Jews were responsible for much state planning and development. As Spain and Portugal set up colonies in the West Indies and in the Americas, Jews in the form of New Christians, went out to help settle these new areas. They went because the Inquisition was not active in the New World yet. Eventually the Inquisition did move out there, but by then many New Christians had relapsed into becoming Jews again and they assisted the Dutch and the English against the Spaniards.

Jews who had escaped from the Peninsula to Holland, England, Turkey, Italy, and other parts of

Europe, again showed the remarkable tenacity of Jews to survive. Beatrice da Luna, escaped from Portugal, and arrived as a refugee in Constantinople. She threw off her Catholic disguise and became Gracia Mendes the most benevolent and most adored Jewish woman of her day. Jews held world monopolies in pepper, spices, and other essential items. When the City of Ancona maltreated its Jewish citizens, Gracia Mendes was so powerful that she was able to arrange boycotts of Ancona which bankrupted the city. In London, Oliver Cromwell did not cancel the laws preventing Jews from living in England, but simply disregarded those laws because he knew that the Jewish connection would aid him in conquering Spain and Portugal and later would help him in his war against Holland.

Incidentally, it is of especial interest to note that the Board of the Dutch East India Company of Holland consisted mainly of Marrano Jews, and the East India Company did not allow anyone other than Protestants to live under its aegis in the Cape and in New Amsterdam.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM EASTMAN'S ON-LINE GENEALOGY NEWSLETTER

Richard W. Eastman

Editor's Note: Shown below are excerpts from three interesting articles from recent issues of Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter. The copyright of these articles is owned by Richard W. Eastman, and they have been republished here with the permission of the author. Information about Eastman's Newsletter can be found at <http://www.eogn.com>.

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You can perform a search at:

<http://books.familysearch.org>

or click on the links to the individual libraries themselves. They are Allen County (Indiana) Public Library, Brigham Young University Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University Hawaii Joseph F. Smith Library, Church History Library, Family History Library, Houston Public Library's Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, and the Mid-Continent Public Library's Midwest Genealogy Center.

The materials in the collections include family histories, county and local histories, genealogy magazines, how-to books, gazetteers, and medieval histories and pedigrees. Not all the books in all libraries have been digitized just yet. It is an on-going effort. If you don't find what you want in a search today, come back in a few months and try again. The book you seek may have been added by that time.

You can search easily by entering a name in the search box. That operates in more or less the same manner as Google or most any other search engine. However, I'd suggest you first click on "Advanced Search" and then enter a more focused search in the form shown below.

Using the Advanced Search will usually result in "hits" that are closer to your exact area(s) of interest.

This has to be one of the greatest online sources available to genealogists today. I am surprised at how little publicity has been generated about this valuable resource.

Try it yourself at <http://books.familysearch.org>.

DNA Testing Guide for Genealogists and Adoptees

Richard Hill is the creator of the *DNA-Testing-Adviser.com* web site. He recently created a 12-page overview of DNA testing that may be of interest to genealogists and adoptees alike. The full title is *How to Identify Ancestors and Confirm Relationships through DNA Testing*.

The booklet gives a short description of each of the four major types of DNA tests of interest to genealogists and adoptees and then provides a side-by-side comparison of each.

I found the booklet to be easy to read. That is, it is not full of medical and biological mumbo-jumbo that is common to other books about DNA. This won't help anyone who is already a DNA expert. However, if you're new to the subject and are trying to learn the basics, *How to Identify Ancestors and Confirm Relationships through DNA Testing* should give you a great start.

The booklet is free and contains no advertising. You can download it at:

www.dna-testing-adviser.com/DNA-Testing-Guide.html

Richard Hill's web site can be found at:

www.dna-testing-adviser.com

Extracting DNA Information from Postage Stamps

Would you like to obtain the DNA information of an ancestor who died years ago? Do you have any letters that he or she wrote? If so, you may already have the DNA information available.

Postage stamps and envelope flaps have been licked for more than 150 years, with saliva DNA being transferred to the item in question. DNA typing has been possible for about twenty years, but has rapidly developed to an immensely powerful technique for personal identification.

The possibilities of identifying a deceased person's DNA include crime solving, genealogy, and genetic disease identification. Many opportunities for further research exist.

Please note that there are no companies that I know of at this time who are offering tests of DNA information extracted from postage stamps or envelope flaps. Such tests today are only available from the FBI and a few other crime laboratories. However, if consumer demand builds, that could change in the not-too-distant future.

You can read a fascinating story about all this, written by Robert M. Bell and Robert S. Blackett, at:

http://stamps.org/userfiles/file/AP/feature/Feature_03_12.pdf

OPENING UP THE ANCESTRAL PAST: THE CAPE FAMILY RESEARCH FORUM

Sarah Jappie

This article was originally published by the Archival Platform on July 26, 2011, and is re-published here with permission. The Archival Platform web site can be found at www.archivalplatform.org

In the past two decades, the idea of 'tracing one's roots' has become more of a reality for South Africans previously kept in the dark about their ancestral pasts. Histories previously glossed over or unspoken, and records formerly inaccessible are being (re)visited by South Africans of all walks of life. One way in which this renewed interest in the past – particularly the personal past – is manifested is through genealogical projects. In particular, tracing family trees has offered a concrete way for everyday people to engage with their pasts and to discover their ancestral stories.

While genealogical research is often undertaken by individuals or specific families, there are also community groups fostering this kind of research. One such group in the Western Cape is the Cape Family Research Forum (CFRF), a unique network of family and community historical researchers based on the Cape Flats that is primarily concerned with tracing 'creole' genealogies, particularly Cape slave ancestries.

I recently interviewed CFRF secretary, Mogamat 'Kammie' Kamedien about the Forum and their work facilitating family history research on the Cape Flats. What follows is some insight into the Forum and their work, based on this exchange.

The CFRF was established in 2002 by a group of individuals passionate about archival research, and eager to discuss their work with people facing similar challenges in the field. As Kammie explains, the catalyst for the establishment was an Open Day organised by Zainab 'Aunty Patty' Amlay-Davidson at the Simons' Town Heritage Museum, to celebrate Heritage Day. During the Open Day, Aunty Patty organised for individuals, including current CFRF chairperson Shamil Gamildien, to display their personal genealogical research into several Cape Muslim families at the museum. These displays attracted the attention of other budding Cape Flats

researchers, bringing them together in discussion of their respective research. Not long after the event, meetings were held and the decision was made to establish a networking platform for amateur historians and researchers working on Cape slave and creole family origins. The Cape Family Research Forum was thus born.

Almost ten years later, the CFRF is still in operation, meeting regularly and holding a place of prominence in Cape Flats heritage circles and beyond. The group consists of between ten and fifteen core members, who meet on a monthly basis to discuss the progress of the various members' research. During these meetings they also address requests for assistance put forward to the CFRF by members of the public embarking on family research projects. Over the years, the group has become renowned for its work of tracing the ancestral origins of Cape 'creole' families and they regularly receive requests for assistance from outsiders. While these are mostly from individuals and families in the Western Cape, the CFRF has also assisted people in other parts of South Africa and the world, with calls for assistance coming from as far as the Netherlands and Australia. Although the group is more than happy to guide people to the relevant archival resources, it stresses that it cannot be commissioned to do the actual research for individuals and families. Its aim is to facilitate the research of others working on slave and creole genealogies at the Cape, and to build archival research skills and familiarity in Cape Flats communities.

Speaking on the challenges faced by the CFRF and others working on the genealogies of slave-descendent families, Kammie firstly notes a dearth of information in the official archives. As he explains, the early colonial archives, such as births and deaths registers, rarely contain information on the underclasses at the Cape. Consequently, researchers need to be creative and access alternative archival sources, including criminal records, hospital records and school records. They also need to think of other alternatives, including private family records, such as personal notebooks kept in families to record births, deaths and marriages. However, these kinds of documents are now extremely rare and difficult to come by. Aside from written sources, oral histories are also important sources of information. These stories contain crucial details of a family's origin.

Obtaining and recording these stories first can often direct family historians to relevant written archival sources.

Because of the abovementioned gaps in the archive, researchers need to stay motivated, and to persevere until they locate the information they are looking for. Trying to maintain this motivation, and also inspiring families and individuals to embark upon research despite these obstacles is another challenge that the CFRF faces. The group has spent a great deal of time and effort encouraging individuals and families to 'take the first step,' by writing down their family oral histories and acquainting them with the basics of archival research methodologies.

One way the CFRF has attempted to motivate people and to spark heritage interest is through community outreach. Members often run family history stalls at community fairs in Cape Town and the greater Western Cape region at the request of fair organisers, where they exhibit the results of their research, as well as general displays on Cape slave and 'creole' history. These stalls often attract a great deal of attention, with individuals eager to browse and find out information the CFRF has uncovered on their specific families, and to look at images of yesteryear. Following such events, the CFRF is often flooded with requests for assistance from people keen to start researching their own family histories.

Although the CFRF's main focus is genealogical research, over the years its scope has broadened. Due to both members' individual interests and a growing need for community representation on official bodies, the group has taken on roles in broader heritage and archival projects. This includes lobbying for greater access to non-catalogued archival collections in the state repositories and un-indexed community archives, being members on local heritage community structures and supporting emerging heritage groups focused on intangible Cape slave legacies and 'creole' identity issues. Despite the diversification of the group's role, it maintains that the core of its work and its main passion is archival research.

The CFRF aims to continue its work as a support platform for researchers working on Cape slave and 'creole' ancestral origins. The group sees continued growth in interest in family histories and hopes to tackle some of the challenges facing researchers in the field. As a part of this, it hopes to embark upon the digitization of community records, such as those

of the Muslim cemetery and burial society and non-government schools. It also hopes to train young people to become the next generation of community researchers, to work on recording local oral histories and to continue the task of collecting data in the archives and beyond. The CFRF hopes that such work will continue to open up the ancestral past for many more families on the Cape Flats and beyond.

Saarah Jappie is an occasional correspondent for the Archival Platform.

SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The following communication about the Spanish Civil War will be of possible interest to those who follow this topic. Martin Sugarman's article on the Jews who served in the International Brigade during this war can be found at:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/spanjews.pdf>

A reference on the Spanish Civil War can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War

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From: Justin Byrne <j.byrne@march.es>

To: Martin Sugarman

Dear Mr Sugarman,

My name is Justin Byrne. I am a British historian living in Spain, with an interest in the International Brigades, particularly from the US. I have consulted your article on the Jewish brigadiers many times over the years, so many thanks for making it so easily available.

I am just beginning a project on South Africans in the Spanish Civil War. So far I have identified about 20 people with South African connections (many appear to be have been British who passed through or were born there) who were involved in the war in some capacity or another, as medics, journalists, pilots, as well as in the International Brigade. About half of them were Jewish – there was mass emigration from Lithuania and the now Baltic States at the end of the 19th-20th century.

I am writing to see if you could give me any more information about any of the names which figure in your list, even if just the sources. They are:

- Leon Boyarski
- Samuel Epstein 1298 (MML)
- Vera Elkan (I have found a lot on her, very interesting)
- Jacob (Jack Flior) a pilot (I have found a little about him, mainly in an interview in a book on Jewish anti-apartheid activists)
- Wilhelm Herriberg (in Austrian list – South African/ British labourer, aged 5, wounded-in-action, maybe the same person as Willy Heriberg, a POW)
- Jacobs, a pilot
- Jacob Nuss Mendelson, a pilot
- Paul Schuster, Thaelman Battalion

I have also found listed as a South African:

- Maurice Goldberg from S. Rhodesia, held prisoner.

I would be very grateful for any information or suggestions you can give me.

Best,

Dr Justin Byrne, Visiting Scholar
Center for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences
Instituto Juan March
Madrid, Spain

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From: Martin Sugarman

<martin.sugarman@yahoo.co.uk>

To: Justin Byrne

Dear Justin,

Glad you like my work.

I only noted names and a few other details of my non-British lists, because there were so many names of Jews in the IB [International Brigades]. But in many of my sources there was more detail. These were:

David Diament's book in French, *Jews in the Spanish Civil War*; the box files at the Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell; and some files at the Imperial War Museum.

On South Africans, you could do no better than consult the Jewish Genealogical Society

of Great Britain and its South African Jewish experts, led by Dr Saul Issroff.

Good luck,

Martin Sugarman

NEW ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE INTERNET

The section describes some interesting new resources that are available on-line.

IGRA on South Africa

A new genealogy group has been formed by a group of experienced Israeli genealogists. The Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA) is a genealogy society that seeks to help Israelis as well as people around the world who are interested in Israeli genealogy and resources uniquely available in Israel to further their genealogy research.

The IGRA web site can be found at:

<http://genealogy.org.il>

Registration at the web site (which is free) is needed in order to access the online resources.

The Association has created several new Resource Guides including one on South Africa written by Paul Cheifitz. The South African Resource guide can be found at:

<http://genealogy.org.il/2012/01/05/new-resource-guide-south-africa>

The IGRA is also developing a new All-Israel Database, a preview of which can be found at:

<http://www.genealogy.org.il/allisrael.html>

JGSGB Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Lithuania

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain has recently revised and reprinted its publication *A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Lithuania* which is now available for purchase through the JGSGB website. To order a copy of this up-to-date guide to researching family in Lithuania simply go to

<http://www.jsgsb.org.uk/catalog/shop>

and add the Guide to your shopping basket.

The author of the Guide is Sam Aaron, a long-standing JGSGB member and a leading light in Lithuanian Jewish Genealogy.

The Lithuanian Guide provides clear information about how records were organised and at what levels of government the records were collected, and where they can now be found. There are details of the way various first and last names worked in Lithuania, which is an invaluable piece of information when trying to reconcile the names that people used in different situations – in Hebrew, in official records, as nicknames, and so on.

If you have Lithuanian ancestors, this book is a must to have.

Jewishgen LostNFound Desk

The JewishGen LostNFound desk, which was largely inactive for the last few years, is up and running again. Below is a description of LostNFound's services and needs from the LostNFound Coordinator, Marian Price.

1. LostNFound is a volunteer service of JewishGen to connect a genner with another genner whose e-mail has bounced or who is not answering e-mails. We will try to update the "lost" genner's address.
2. When you make your request, please put the person's name or JewishGen ID # in the subject line of your e-mail ("seeking Josef Levy" or "seeking JGID# XXXX"). Send your request to lostnfound@lyris.jewishgen.org. Spelling is important or the person may not be found in JewishGen's database
3. JewishGen has a privacy policy that prevents us from revealing someone's e-mail address or any other identifying information. You give your permission to reveal your name and e-mail address to the person you are seeking when you make a request through LostNFound (otherwise there is no way to link you to the person you seek). If we find your genner, it would be nice if you donate to JewishGen.
4. If you know of a genner who has died, please report this to LostNFound. If you have a link to an obituary, please send it. We will follow up and mark their profile RD (researcher deceased).

5. If you live outside the United States, we need volunteers to make phone calls to lost genners in other countries. When a request comes, you would be sent the information we have on that person (street address and phone).

RESOURCES FROM THE eGSSA

This article describes a number of services and resources that are available from the Genealogical Society of South Africa (GSSA) free of charge to anyone, whether they are members or non-members of the Society. These resources are all accessible from eGSSA, the virtual (on-line) branch of the GSSA.

The eGSSA web site home page can be found at:

<http://www.eggssa.org/>

Document extraction service in the National Archives

The eGSSA will photograph documents on request from the Natal (NAB), Orange Free State (VAB), and Transvaal (TAB) repositories of the National Archives. [The Cape Town Archives Repository (CAB) has banned the mechanical copying by any means of the documents that are in their care, and the eGSSA service is thus not available for this repository.] eGSSA researchers will visit the particular Archives branch and take high quality photographs of each of the document pages. The electronic images will then be provided to the requestor for a nominal charge.

In order to use this service, an order needs to be placed at the following link:

http://www.eggssa.org/sales/help_archive_docs.htm

Prior to initiating the request, one first needs to obtain the index information for the particular document of interest using the National Archives search engine (NAAIRS), which can be found at:

<http://www.national.archsrch.gov.za/sm300cv/smws/sm300dl>

Full details of the service as well as the associated costs can be found at the eGSSA links above.

Database resources

A number of databases exist on the eGSSA web site which contains a rich collection of records and images, including those for Jewish individuals. The following is a summary of the available databases.

- Gravestone photographs, with transcriptions: 350,000+ images

http://www.eggssa.org/library/main.php?g2_itemId=43

- Death notices and other archive documents: 20,000+ items

http://www.eggssa.org/documents/main.php?g2_itemId=54

- Books of genealogical/historical interest

http://www.eggssa.org/documents/main.php?g2_itemId=15

- Family Bible photos, with transcriptions: 900+ images

http://www.eggssa.org/documents/main.php?g2_itemId=383991

- Cremation records at the Cambridge crematorium in E-London: 20,000+ entries

<http://www.eggssa.org/transcriptions/CambridgeCrematorium/CambridgeCrematorium.htm>

- Baptismal register transcriptions

<http://www.eggssa.org/bdms/Baptisms.html>

- Marriage register transcriptions

<http://www.eggssa.org/bdms/Marriages.html>

- Burial registers

<http://www.eggssa.org/bdms/Burials.html>

- Newspaper Extracts (from the UK National Archives and the British Newspaper Library)

<http://www.eggssa.org/newspapers>

- 1820 settler correspondence (housed at the UK National Archives)

<http://www.eggssa.org/1820-settlers>

- Passenger lists (in various South African Archives)

<http://www.eggsa.org/arrivals/eGGSa%20Passenger%20Project.html>

- List of Natal Estate files 1852-1928 (not indexed in NAAIRS)

<http://eggsa.org/Pietermaritzburg%20Masters%20Office%20estate%20files.htm>

- Muster roll of the Free Settlers at the Cape of Good Hope in 1685

http://eggsa.org/transcriptions/monsterrollen/mr_intro.htm

EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Colin Plen

Letter from Rabbi Stan Zaiden

I recently received the following letter from Rabbi Stan Zaiden, the rabbi at Norwood in London. (You'll remember that Rabbi Zaiden wrote the article about the Jews of Bothaville, OFS, in the December 2010 Newsletter.)

Dear Colin,

The winter is beginning here in London. The weather is about 9 to 11 degrees, so not tooooooo bad yet.

I am still trying to bring my stamps under control and have made great strides.

I have many postcards of synagogue from all over Europe and these have to be mounted on pages and written up.

Every time that I have visited a city in Europe like Budapest or Venice I have come home with many postcards and this is a lot of work. Also when I was in Riga, Latvia I bought 40 postcards of *shuls* before the war and these too have to be researched and written up.

But I am slowly getting under control and therefore hope that it will all be complete before the end of next year.

Best wishes,
Rabbi Zaiden

He also provided me with a copy of one of the items in his collection: a 1920 postcard containing New Year Greetings from the Cape Jewish Orphanage. The card has a ½ d postage rate, and is dated Cape Town, September 10, 1920.



The inscription on the card reads:

With Compliments from the President and Committee of the Cape Jewish Orphanage.

May the Divine Father of the Orphans grant your Heart's desires for the Coming Holy Festivals and may you lend a sympathetic ear to the appeal of the Orphans in our midst as well also the heartrending cry of the helpless little ones in the Pogrom Areas of Eastern Europe for whom we are making ourselves responsible, by donating liberally during the New Year and Day of Atonement for the upkeep of those who are parentless, homeless and helpless.

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Stan Hart, the Cemetery Man

Stan resides in Durban and is an ex-chairman of the Chevra Kaddisha in Durban, but his interests spread far beyond the borders of not only KwaZulu Natal, but through South Africa and into the bordering countries in Southern Africa. I asked him how many cemeteries he has on his computer and he replied, "168," and then he said, "but that's in South Africa only, I also have Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mauritius, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, ..."

I have a certain amount of experience in photographing cemeteries, but Stan, in collaboration with Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft has indexed his photographs of gravestones, and has made lists of the names of the deceased, dates of death, dates of birth (if available), names of the mourners, and the epitaphs. Imagine all that for Volksrust,

Bloemfontein, Windhoek, and hundreds of others! He is working hard at present to prepare his sites for uploading to the JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) site, so if you write to him, don't expect a reply until mid-2012, unless you are sending him a joke, as he has a grave sense of humour!

Stan takes time off to travel to many little towns, sometimes with Rabbi Silberhaft, and has photographed very many of the Jewish cemeteries in them.

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Words, Words, Words

Have you heard the Yiddish word *Galach* which is a Yiddish word for a priest? How does this come about? If you read the story of Joseph in Egypt you will read that when the chief steward of Pharaoh (the one who was imprisoned with Joseph, and who dreamed about the birds eating his grapes) has been reinstated, he refers the next dream problem, that of Pharaoh's cows, to Joseph, who was still languishing in prison. The prison authorities fetch Joseph and tidy him up, and once he has been shaved (*galach*), he appears in front of Pharaoh. The use of the word is a sort of joke of Jewish scholars, because priests had tonsures which were shaved to create the bare head of hair.

While we are in that part of the Bible, the Chamberlain of the Butchers was Potiphar. The translation of butcher is *tabach*. I have met a family of Tabachniks, and their forebears were probably butchers. This leads to another aspect of the name, which is that I have known a family where the one branch is called Fleisher and the other, their first cousins, are Resniks. Both words mean butcher, the first in German or Yiddish, the second in Russian. Why should cousins have different names? The law in the Russian Empire was that men over 16 had to spend 25 years in the army. Jews did not want their sons to go to the Army for various fairly obvious reasons, so one way of getting out of it was to give their sons different surnames. The law said that only the first son could stay out of the Army to protect the parents. All the other sons were liable to conscription. So if the first son's surname was Fleisher, they would give the second son the surname Resnik, and the third son possibly Katzeff (which also means Butcher, in Hebrew). And, just by the way, Potiphar is later referred to as a Katzaf.

This explains why related families sometimes have differing surnames.

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Surnames

I found an interesting source of names emanating from Poland. I am busy reading a book called *Witness to the Truth*. The book is written by Nathan Shapell. The story is that he lived in a town in Poland and the town was occupied by the Germans, and gradually all the inhabitants were weeded out, most going on transports, some dying, and many being killed. He survived the whole War.

The town he comes from is called Sosnowiec. I know people in South Africa with the surname of Sosnovic. The next town he mentions, one in Germany, has the name of Lichtenfels. Our Rabbi, in Germiston, when I was a child, was Rabbi Dr Lichtenfeld. Bamberg was another town; another well-known surname. Hof is in Germany. I am friendly with a family Hof, and I assumed that they got their name from a court, being something in a court, because of the Afrikaans, Dutch and German word for court. Now I think they may have been named for the town.

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Anagram

There is this game we have in our local evening Daily News. They lay out 9 letters and you have to work out the main anagram and see if you can also find a number of words of 4 letters or more. One night we had the letters *G A O Y L N E G E*, and I got the necessary 13 words without much trouble, and then I got stuck. I could not see the main anagram. I asked my wife Evelyn for help as she is usually the whiz at the anagram and I invariably do the words, and she looked at me and refused. She said, "This time it is your word. You find it."

I suddenly woke up much later and said: "Yes, it is GENEALOGY."

I seem to get a mental block on words which mean something to me. A few nights later, I could not solve PHILATELY, another interest of mine!

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Random Thoughts

During the Second World War as the Nazis approached, the Jews of Cracow made a plan to flatten all the tombstones and to hide their cemetery from the approaching invaders. They broke the stones so that they would lie flat and covered them with soil, then they grew various weeds and trees over them. The Nazis did not find the cemetery, and of course, most of the Cracow Jews did not come back. In the last few years, a group of Christian youngsters, having heard about this hidden cemetery, searched and found it, cleaned it up as a project and have now 'presented' it back to the Jewish people.

...

We refer to 'the gypsies' as one of the groups persecuted in World War II but did you know that the word 'gypsy' is a denigratory word and is not used in politically correct situations? They are known correctly as the Sinti and the Roma.

...

David Rosen was chief Rabbi of Ireland, and in 2008 was knighted as a Papal Knight by the Pope for his work in bringing together the Jews and Christians of Ireland. He also received a CBE from Queen Elizabeth.

...

Ever heard of Bad Orelsen? It is a city in central Germany where the Nazis kept their records. Today it is being run as a search centre by the International Red Cross, and there are more than 17 and a half million names listed in thousands of files. Not only was the Nazi holocaust the worst that the world has ever seen but it was also the best documented!

...

In 1942, Germany had 18 million men under arms in their armed forces. The United States had about 16.1 million.

...

I read an article recently where it said that youth of the area who had learned of the terrible treatment meted out to the Jews by the Nazis and also by the Poles, have formed clean up groups and regularly spruce up the Jewish cemeteries and monuments in their town. One example of the history of anti-

Semitism in Poland is that when some survivors of the camps straggled back to places like Cracow, they were met by hostile Poles who were scared that the Jews would take back their homes and possessions and pogroms erupted, killing more Jews.

TV Documentary Review

SHALOM, THE BELOVED COUNTRY

A new TV documentary by Rabbi Silberhaft

Saul Issroff

Shalom, the Beloved Country is a 48-minute TV documentary on the work being done by Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, South Africa's Country Communities Rabbi, in Platteland communities and further afield.

The title plays on the multiple meanings of *Shalom*, as a greeting, a welcome, and a farewell, as well as on the resonance with Alan Paton's famous book on our beloved country.

A team from the SABC accompanied Rabbi Moshe on his pastoral work in the North West, Free State, Western Cape, and Bulawayo, where the Rabbi opened a library (the Rabbi Moshe Library) for schoolchildren in a suburb of the city.

The documentary explores the challenges faced by Jews in small country communities, and captures Rabbi Moshe's warm and strong relationships with communities that once boasted thriving Jewish populations.

We see many different aspects of Rabbi Moshe's work, from conducting evening services to "schmoozing" with his congregants, to visiting old abandoned synagogues, to looking after cemeteries, to providing help for Jews who have fallen on hard times.

We also see the Rabbi interacting with members of other faiths and communities, as part of his everyday work and mission as "the Rabbi with the biggest flock in the country."

The documentary is scripted and directed by Gus and Amanda Silber, and was first screened on Issues

of Faith on SABC2 on Sunday, November 13, 2011.
It is absolutely worthwhile watching.

The documentary is available on YouTube as follows:

Part 1:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8eyQySqPpU

Part 2:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=N50AfIWdGYQ

Part 3:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8p9cIx-kxQ

Part 4:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3LWZgszmw8

Part 5:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuEITbC6NXM



SURNAMES APPEARING IN THIS NEWSLETTER

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The numbers in brackets refer to the page numbers where the surname appears:

Aaron (14), Abramski (5), Babrow (6), Baleson (2), Bamberg (16), Bell (11), Blackett (11), Boyarski (13), Bragg (7, 8), Brown (6), Bunka (3, 4, 5, 6), Burstein (5), Byrne (13), Cohen (2), Cromwell (10), Da Luna (10), Davidson (11), Eastman (1, 10), Eisenhower (7), Elkan (13), Epstein (2, 13), Fleisher (17), Flior (13), Freeman (7, 8), Gamildien (11), Getz (2), Goldberg (2, 13), Gould (18), Gurewitz (5), Harris (2), Hart (2, 16), Harvey (7, 8), Harwood (3), Herriberg (13), Hill (10, 11), Hof (17), Issroff (1, 2, 14, 18), James (7, 8), Jappie (1, 11, 13), Kamedien (11), Kaplan (18), Karabelnik (3), Katzeff (17), Lee (10), Levitt (1, 2, 3, 5, 6), Levy (7, 8, 13), Lichtenfeld (17), Maisels (7), Margo (7), Mendelson (13), Mendes (10), Montgomery (7), Nel (18), Ogus (2), Penn (6), Plen (1, 2, 3, 8, 16), Price (14), Rabinowitz (2), Resnik (17), Rommel (6, 7), Rosen (18), Sacks (6), Schuster (13), Shapell (17), Sher (6), Silber (17), Silberhaft (2, 3, 16, 17, 18), Sinai (8), Skikne (1, 3, 6, 7, 8), Smith (10), Sosnovic (16), Sugarman (13, 14), Sussman (7), Tabachnik (16), Tobiansky (7, 8), Yariv (5), Young (10), Zaiden (2, 16), Zingeris (5), Zirgulis (6)

MEMBERSHIP DUES for 2012 / 2013

Subscription fees for the SA-SIG Newsletter are due.

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