FROM THE EDITOR: WHAT IS LIFE, IF . . .

Well, here’s a funny story... or not!

You have only just escaped finding a big white space here! Basically, not to sugar-coat it, I forgot. Mike sent a lovely tactful reminder four days after deadlines had passed, whilst Jackye was at the conference and when I was trying to wrap up my work - via the overtime route - before the summer break. I admit it, I had let things slide. Between pressure of work and software issues I had slipped way behind in all sorts of elements of list administration. Jackye has been particularly busy this year. She’s been gallivanting all over the place, doing school reunions and celebrating her own, and friends’, 70th birthdays. I have been knee-deep in a new job and time runs through my hands like water through a colander. My to-do list was growing and growing (despite the dry weather) and the check marks to say “done” were conspicuous by their absence. How would I get it all done? Could I get it all done? How could I have forgotten the editorial for the B-J News?

This train of thought got me to wondering, as I have many times before, whether our ancestors lived such stressful lives, rushing from place to place, with never enough time to do anything. Undoubtedly, for most, their lives had periods of immense stress: immigration, war, pogroms and the holocaust to name only a few. They most certainly had lives that were physically much harder than ours. Without modern conveniences such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners the daily grind was just that. Without the telegraph, the telephone and the internet they must have worried about family and friends in far flung parts. Things we now take for granted make our lives so much more comfortable than our ancestors’. However, I find it hard to imagine my great-grandparents rushing about the way we do today. Maybe I am wrong. I’d really like to know. Do any list members have this sort of insight? Most of us know when our ancestors were born and when they married and when they died and where they lived at certain points in between, but does anyone have more than this? Did our ancestors keep diaries . . .

B-J News 19 was brought to you by:
Jill Hyams Proof Reader
Mike Joseph Copy Editor
Sherry Landa Editor in Chief
Jackye Sullins Proof Reader
Spent the whole day rushing around. The Rabbi was cross with Hymie because he has still not mastered his Hebrew lessons. Sarah was too sick to go to school and I had to change her bed twice. I'd barely finished the second lot of washing when Morris came in demanding a snack because he was starving - Mr Faigin had him running about all over the town getting materials and trimmings and delivering garments. I was about to put the washing out when the heavens opened and I had to drape things all over. Then there was a huge queue at the butcher’s and also at the baker’s. The way people were buying you’d think the shops were closing for a week rather than just Shabbat. By the time I got back from the shopping it was time to pick the children up from school and then I had to black the grate and light the fire. We’re nearly out of coal so I had to run to the merchant to order for a Monday delivery . . .

. . . and so on. Is the lack of this kind of diary account, from people other than the rich, due to illiteracy or a lack of inclination? A more likely explanation is that our ancestors were actually so rushed off their feet that they were too shattered to write anything down. We can be sure of one thing: they can have had no idea of the pace we live at now! Life has changed so much, some for the better, of course, but some it would seem for the worse.

As internet genealogists we are often impatient. We want answers and we want them now. We expect to know, it’s our right! Many of us hardly write a letter that needs a postage stamp; some of us are forgetting how to write a cheque. Life “modernises” at an incredible rate; last year’s mobile phone is “old hat”. But, maybe, by the nature of what we do as a hobby, we should take some life-lessons. Maybe we of all people should realise the importance of stopping to smell the daisies, before we are lying under them.

Sherry Landa (Oxford, UK)

NEXT ISSUE
The next issue, B-J News 20, will be available to download from the website on or before Thursday 2nd December 2010. The submission deadline is therefore Sunday 7 November 2010.

---

COLNEY HATCH ASYLUM IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The following item first appeared in Shemot, the quarterly magazine of the Jewish Genealogical Society, [http://www.jgsgb.org.uk/journal1.shtml](http://www.jgsgb.org.uk/journal1.shtml), in 2005, and is reproduced here - with minimal editing - by kind permission of Bernard Valman, Editor of that publication.

A Tragic Landscape

The Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum was one of the most famous and dreaded of the many ‘warehouses of madness’ established in the mid 19th century. The reality of life inside was that it was a daunting, frightening and humiliating place. It was crowded, dark, smelly, freezing cold in winter, stiflingly hot in summer and had poor sanitation. The misery was palpable.

The separate sleeping-rooms to be 9 feet by 6 feet 6 inches and from 11 feet to 12 feet 6 inches in height; and the dormitories should contain 48 feet superficial, and about 576 cubical feet for each patient.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I had for many years been barred from access to the Colney Hatch Asylum records by the “hundred years rule” and, even though the person I was interested in died in July 1904; personal access was withheld even after July
2004 on the grounds that the record ledger for 1904 held 1905 entries too. Under the new Freedom of Information Act, I was able at long last in January 2005 to examine the sought-after records at the London Metropolitan Archives http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma without hindrance.

The Patient Records
The records I found consisted of

i. Admission and Discharge Registers (H12/CH/B/01/)
ii. Case books (H12/CH/B/11/)
iii. Photographs of patients admitted and discharged (H12/Ch/B/18/02/).

Male and female records were in separate ledgers and photographs of patients who died in the asylum were removed. The ledgers are in such poor condition it is not permitted to photocopy any entries because of the damage this would cause to the volumes. The case books give the dates of admission and discharge or, where a death occurred in the asylum, a copy of the death certificate is attached. A photograph of the patient on admission and discharge is attached to the entries, except in the case of death in the care of Colney Hatch Asylum.

The marital status, last address and the name of next of kin are given, together with the patient’s religion. Medical information is also found in the case books; this includes mental and physical condition of the patient on admission and the doctors’ and nurses’ comments on the inmate at various (usually weekly) intervals. Details of incidents of violence requiring “restraint” are also noted. Reports of insanity in the family and the patient’s previous history of mental disorder were noted as well as the “cause” of insanity if known. All patients had to be committed as insane.

For many the “previous abode” was a workhouse or infirmary. From the fact that even young unmarried persons whose parents’ home addresses were given had arrived from workhouses leads me to believe that the workhouses were used as holding stations for the mentally ill who could no longer be cared for at home.

The Medical Information
After quickly noting the entries relating to my own particular research I was drawn into looking at the sociological implications of the accumulated data presented. What did it tell me of the treatment of the poor victims of mental illness in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras in Metropolitan London? It is a heart rending picture of neglect and indifference.

The symptoms that caused them to be committed were described, but the medical “diagnoses” were pathetic: Hysteria, Epilepsy, Melancholia and Dementia seemed to cover almost all symptoms. Even a layman today could recognise symptoms of manic depression, schizophrenia and post-natal depression etc., and no treatment of any kind is ever mentioned. A note that a patient was force fed or restrained is frequently found; patients could be released on a month’s trial in the care of a relative or friend and were required to report back periodically until discharged. Unfortunately a large number died in the custody of the institution. The institution originally had its own cemetery but this was abandoned, it is reported, because it drew attention to the high mortality rate.

One cannot hold their ignorance against the doctors in those days before psychiatric medicine became a specialist discipline, but I what I found particularly shocking was the apparent absence of any proper physical examination of the patient on entry. For the sick the register entry “Physical Condition” was just noted as “impaired health”.

Deaths in the weeks after committal were not unusual. In the case I was researching the individual who, on entry, was noted as of “impaired health” died four weeks later of Chronic Heart Disease plus the usual “melancholic and exhaustion”. There was no post mortem; post mortems in fact were rare. The cause of death in many death certificates was just given as:

i. Melancholic
ii. Exhaustion
and Natural causes.
Jewish Inmates
I would estimate that at least one in ten of the patients were Jewish: an accurate statistic would be an interesting research project. I found this surprising bearing in mind the distance of Colney Hatch, in Friern Barnet, from Whitechapel, the area of London in which almost all the Jewish inmates lived. In one case a wife was described as “Hebrew” but it was noted for some unknown reason that the husband - who had a well known Sephardic name - had stated that his family had not practised the religion for two generations. All the inmates were technically paupers and the Jewish cases were, except for the incidence of drunkenness given as a cause of insanity, not untypical as one would expect. They all shared the same unhealthy overcrowded home environment.

Mental illness is a terrible affliction even today, a hundred years later, in spite of the advances in treatment, and I cite here two cases which may illuminate the past in this perennial area of human suffering.

A 19-year-old Jewish girl admitted from the Bethnal Green workhouse on 27 October 1903 had previously been a patient from 9 September 1901 to 24 April 1902. She was eventually released on trial in the care of her mother on 22 April 1904. On release it was noted that: “The patient’s mother made a complaint to the committee of ill treatment of her daughter by one of the nurses whom she could not name. The subject was investigated by the committee and the complaint believed to be groundless”. The unsatisfactory system of self-regulation was not invented yesterday.

Rachel J, a 29-year-old unmarried Jewish girl, was committed by her father to Colney Hatch Asylum in October 1904 as having suicidal tendencies. She was released on a month’s trial into the care of her father six months later. He wrote to the asylum before the trial month had passed saying “she is doing fine and able to work”, but fourteen days later she took her own life. I relate this terribly tragic story because, after her death, the father wrote to the asylum: “… she showed no signs of insanity during the five weeks she was with us. The only thing that could be relative for her suicide is she sometimes used to say she was afraid that they were coming to take her back to the asylum. She seemed to dread the name of the place otherwise she was alright and went about her business as usual”. He goes on to describe the terrible discovery of her death in the family home one Shabbat.

Reflection
My brief foray into the archives of Colney Hatch Asylum has brought home to me a singular truth, that the dates and relationships on your family tree give merely a skeletal picture of your ancestry.

The person whose impersonally written case history I read on my visit to the LMA was my mother’s stepmother, a real person. My mother never spoke of her early childhood - she may not have remembered - but I have discovered her mother died when she was seven years old and her first stepmother - she had two - died in an asylum when she was eleven. The dry and dusty Colney Hatch ledger recorded a statement, by my mother’s older sister, of the distressing symptoms of mental illness displayed by their stepmother which resulted in her being certified as insane. I was transported back a hundred years and felt the pain of that unhappy household in which my mother spent her formative years. I am forced to consider how these tragic events affected my mother and, by affecting her, perhaps in turn affected me: “the butterfly effect” applied to family history.

Genealogy, as in this instance, may lead us along unfamiliar paths in pursuit of our personal ancestry but I believe it is also important that we take every opportunity to pause and look for a moment at the historical landscape along the way.

Aubrey Jacobus

1 The Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum
www.bbc.co.uk/education/beyond/factsheets/mahhist/mahhist7_prog3k.shtml

2 Victorian London - Health and Hygiene - Hospitals - Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum (Colney Hatch) www.Victorianlondon.org

3 The LMA can provide you with digital scan prints which cost £4.00 for an A4 or A3 black and white scan. Alternatively for a charge of £2.70 a day you may use your own camera provided you can disable the flash. It would be necessary for a member of our Reprographics Department to inspect your camera. If you wish the LMA to locate the entries for you rather than visiting London Metropolitan Archives yourself, you may use their Family History Research Service. The minimum
charge of £40.00 for an hour’s work should cover the cost of the research and providing copies or transcripts of any relevant entries. (All charges quoted reflect increases since original publication in 2005)

Chaos theory - which attempts to explain the fact that complex and unpredictable results can and will occur in systems that are sensitive to their initial conditions.

JUST FOR FUN
THEN AND NOW – PAIR THEM UP
Twelve of our listers have each kindly supplied two photos of themselves, “then and now”, and we’ve shuffled them around to confuse you! Can you reunite each lister’s recent photo with its rather earlier counterpart? Answers on page 8.

. . . and, as a bonus question, which of the contributors above is an international athlete, seen here winning the Crete Marathon?
A SHAMEFUL SECRET? NO WAY!

Monica McMullin is engaged in writing a book about her twenty year search for her father, while continuing her research in the hope of finding her grandfather’s roots to complete the story. She has based the following piece very largely on a number of excerpts from her “book-so-far”, and would welcome any information that might help with her ongoing research. MJ

Since I began the search for my father, I’ve often heard people ask the question: “Why do some people wait until their family have died... before beginning to search for their family?”

I can only give an opinion based on my own experience and for people whose circumstances are similar to mine. I reckon this is because people are torn; torn between dying to know and scared to find out - especially when a heavy veil of mystery surrounds their birth, like adoption or illegitimacy. Perhaps there is an unknown father, or maybe a mother who left the family home. If you have never known the circumstances of your birth, and a deep family secret surrounds your very existence, then your imagination runs riot and you fear the worst. The deeper the secret, the more your imagination runs away with your fears. It's the fear of the unknown and the hurt is too deep.

So you wait; you wait until everybody you are close to has died, before you begin the search for that unknown mother or father. You want to be told facts without opinion, truth without anything added or taken away. It is too emotional to ask family you are close to; you would sooner ask a stranger and discover the facts alone, discreetly, without opening-up and telling even your closest friends, because you have absolutely no idea what skeletons you will discover hiding in that wardrobe, and so you would sooner open that wardrobe door alone.

This was my reason for putting my search for my mystery father onto the back burner for so long: far too long. I would try half-heartedly and then give up too easily. Of course, twenty years ago when my search began, I didn't have the Internet and, back then, it never even entered my head to use genealogy to trace my father. I was thinking more along the lines of a private detective - which, twenty years ago, was far beyond my purse, as every penny I had was ploughed into my business. You are driven by emotion, not logic or common sense, and you overlook the blatantly obvious, the things that are staring you in the face, the things that were, in my case, under my nose!

My family secret turned out to be nothing like what my imagination had feared. Far from it, because, instead of uncovering a sordid family scandal, I uncovered a heart-warming story, which has turned my mother into my hero. In addition, with the help of the friends I’ve made along the way, I have found a family to be proud of, with roots that have made the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end!

My father had been a complete mystery to me throughout my life, as my mother never married him, or anyone else for that matter. She had me at the age of forty, which must have been a very difficult thing to go through in the early 1950s, being from a small Catholic family with no money. It wasn’t until after she died in 1989 that I discovered the reason behind all the secrecy; it would take me a further twenty years before I actually found my father.

It was only after my mother’s death when I was going through her things that I found a letter; I recognised her shaky handwriting on the small blue stamped addressed envelope. The letter was dated 18th September 1987 and it was from the warden of Rose Bush Court, a retirement apartment complex in Parkhill Road, Hampstead, in London, that I later learned was owned by the Humanist Association. It appears that my mother had written to the resident warden there, enquiring about a man who lived in flat number 13. The letter gave her the news of his death.

To write a letter enquiring about a man was totally out of character for my mum, and somehow I instinctively knew this man had to be my father. I now had a name and an address and it was from then that my mother’s secret began to unfold. It was a secret that she had kept for almost sixty years.
My mother couldn’t very well hide the fact that I was illegitimate as this was common knowledge throughout the community and was the subject of malicious gossip, ridicule and much speculation. This was the early 1950s and, of course, to have a child out of wedlock was just not acceptable in those oppressive days, and some Catholic mothers were still sent away and their babies given up for adoption before they returned home. For a Catholic woman, to have a child in this way was a big enough scandal in itself, but, for a single Catholic woman, to have a child at the age of forty was an absolute disgrace, which brought shame not only to her family, but also to the whole of the Catholic community. Consequently, my mother was jangled about for many years. She was a very private, unassuming person. She was very self-conscious and had no confidence when in unfamiliar company. I never knew her ever to bother with men, and yet she was never accepted amongst her own generation, not even with the passing of time.

Essentially, my story is about my search for my father and using genealogy to trace him and his family. However, as I researched and learned about my parents, grandparents and my father’s family, my book evolved into far more. It evolved into a story about a generation now dead and gone. It’s about the people who struggled and paved the way for us to live far better lives than they had to endure. It’s about how they needed to duck and dive and hacked a life for themselves, burying their children along the way, before they had the support of the welfare state. It’s about a generation who fought in two world wars, and yet, they were given very little support from the country they fought for and were often forced to rely on charity, in the form of the Workhouse.

My mother’s family were just a very ordinary, average Liverpool family and their problems were no worse than many. In my search for my father, I have found a family who I have nothing but respect for and I feel both proud and absolutely fascinated by my newly discovered roots.

My story and my search are a great example of why family history websites are invaluable. To be able to pour your heart out, whilst remaining incognito is one of the best things that the Internet has provided. For me, it was important to remain incognito until I knew for sure that I had my facts right, as I had no idea what I was going to find. If I found my father had a family of his own, I would have kept my distance; I see no point in upsetting others. However, I found that, just like my mother, my father never married and I now know that my parents had kept in touch with each other throughout their lives and my father had kept an eye on me from a distance.

My parents’ story is as old as time itself. My mother simply fell in love with a Jewish man and spent twenty-five years meeting him in secret. There was no wrong in this. However, the times that they lived in, and whatever difficulties my mother had gone through within our Catholic community, had made her afraid to reveal my Jewish roots. There was no reason to keep my father’s identity a secret other than this fear.

My mother had gone through some very difficult times and she had not recognised that times, along with people, had now changed.

My father’s name was Harry or Henry Freeman. I learnt the hard way that the family name has evolved from Freedman and was originally Friedman. Harry was born in 1907 and was nearly 48 when my mother gave birth to me. Harry’s father’s name was Louis, Hebrew name Yahuda Arye Leib. On all UK censuses Louis always stated that he was a German national. His father’s name was Tobias. Louis was born about 1866 and was married and widowed three times. He married his first wife in Leeds in 1890. She was Russian born Rachel (née Simon) and after giving Louis six children, Rachel died in 1904 at the age of 40. Louis and Rachel lived at No. 37, Back Byron Street, in Leeds with Morris Rosenberg and his wife Rebecca (née Taylor) who were from Kovno, Russia. Morris Rosenberg was also a witness at their wedding and I feel that there is a connection with this Rosenberg family. The other witness was Morris Cohen who lived at 50, Copenhagen Street, Leeds, which was the house next door to where my grandfather Louis lived before he married Rachel. Morris and his wife Becca (née Bromberg) were from Germany.
Before Louis and Rachel left Leeds, they had their first son Daniel or Gedaliah, whose name evolved into Dal, Darley and finally became David. Louis and Rachel came and settled in Liverpool, moving around the old Jewish quarter within the streets around Brownlow Hill, where their second son Hyman was born in 1893. Hyman eventually changed his name to Harry, causing me much confusion trying to research two Harrys within the same family! In 1894 they had a daughter Nellie, who was known as Helen, Lillian or Lil. Then another son Samuel was born in 1896, followed by Elias in 1898 and finally Isaac in 1900.

After Rachel died, my grandfather Louis married Rebecca Cohen, who had previously been married to another Cohen. Rebecca was also from Russia and on the 1911 Liverpool census another son, Russian born Abraham, appears for the first time. I believe Abraham was perhaps Rebecca’s son from her first marriage, but nothing is known about him and I would love to hear from anybody who has any further details about him.

My grandmother Rebecca Cohen gave Louis two - possibly three - more sons. Teri was born in 1905 and changed his name to Edward or Teddy. My father Harry arrived in 1907, and there was another baby, Jacob, who died in December 1907, with some confusion in the records as to his age when he died.

Rebecca was only 36 when she died of cancer shortly after the census was taken in April 1911. Very little is known about my grandmother and so I would love to hear from anybody who might have a link to Rebecca in their tree.

After Rebecca’s death, my grandfather Louis was married for a third time, to Rosa or Rosie née Greenblatt, who herself was a widow, from Russia. She had previously been married to Solomon Yankelovitch and had a daughter Betsy Yankelovitch. Rosa gave my grandfather another daughter, Eva, born in 1914. Rosa died in 1932, while my grandfather lived until 1949. In his long eventful and very difficult life, he managed to hold his large family together, after being widowed three times, and only burying one child, little baby Jacob, out of all those children. That was remarkable, when the child mortality rate in Liverpool was amongst the highest, if not actually the highest, in this country. I have never found any brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles or parents of my grandfather Louis. His marriage records gave me the name of his father Tobias. I’ve found no naturalisation records for Louis and no trace of Tobias. What I have found, thank G-d, in this last year, with the help of friends, are the descendants of my father’s siblings, who have welcomed me warmly to their family and given me a photo of my father, my grandfather and his large family. In the process, I have solved a mystery for my newly found first-cousins, as to why their Uncle Harry suddenly disappeared in the mid 1950s and they never knew where he went or heard from him ever again!

So, while I prepare for the first Jewish wedding to which I have been invited, I hope these excerpts from my book will have grabbed your attention and jogged your memory. If you have any information and feel you might have a connection to my father’s family, or to either of the two witnesses at my grandfather’s first marriage; or, if you have a connection to any Cohen or Friedman family, with all its name variations, who came from Russia, Germany or any part of Eastern Europe to Leeds or to Liverpool in the late 1800’s, I would love to hear from you. Please email me at: monicamcmullin@mac.com.

Monica McMullin, Liverpool, UK

JUST FOR FUN
THEN AND NOW-THE ANSWERS

F & C: Ann Macey
G & T: Jill Hyams
H & M: Danielle Sanderson
I & D: Babs O’Connor
J & V: Naomi Barnett
L & R: Myra Waddell
N & K: Sherry Landa
Q & B: Richard May
S & O: Heather Denholm
U & P: Jackye Sullins
W & E: Mike Joseph
X & A: Miriam Margolyes

... and Danielle is the athlete putting us all to shame; well, most of us. Well - certainly me!
Our grateful thanks to everyone for entering into the fun.
Mike Joseph

DRIVING A HARD BARGAIN

Seventeen-year-old Mark had just passed his driving test, and asked his Dad if they could talk about his using the car from time to time.

His father said he'd make a deal with him: "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study the Torah just a little more - and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

Mark thought for a few moments before replying: "OK, Dad. Sounds fair enough to me!"

About six weeks later, over breakfast, his father said, "Well, Son, you've worked hard at school and brought your grades up, and I know that you've been studying the Torah as we agreed, but I'm disappointed that you still haven't had your hair cut."

"Well, Dad," replied Mark, "I've been thinking about that and, from my studies of the Torah, it seems to me that all the great patriarchs had long hair: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob ... and there's strong evidence that Moses and Aaron had long hair too."

"I don't doubt any of that", his father replied, through the faintest of smiles, "but didn't you also notice that they all walked everywhere they went?"

FINDING MY FACE: A JOURNEY OF SELF DISCOVERY

In the later years of her very long life, my paternal grandmother, Ray Bockner (née Rachel Solomons) often told me that I was the “image of her Auntie Raie”. I have never seen a picture of this woman but I now know who she was and where she fits on the picture of my father’s maternal family tree. I know the name of the man this great grand-aunt, who was born in London in 1887, married, and I have read original copies of some of the many public notices that the family placed in the London Jewish newspapers following her early death. I know facts and information about the life of her own daughter’s marriage to a spectacularly successful English entrepreneur and philanthropist, but I still don’t know what she actually looked like.

I knew Grandma Ray as an infant in London but my parents migrated to Adelaide, South Australia in the mid 1950s when I was just three years old. So I did not really get to know her until late in her very long life when she was already in her eighties and my father had finally managed to convince his elderly parents to move to Australia for health reasons in the late 1970s.

Ray was born in London in 1894, the second of a family of nine children of whom four survived into young adulthood and only two into old age. Her parents were part of the great wave of 1880s European Jewish immigrants to England, people who had been born in the small towns and shtetls of Poland and Lithuania, countries that were then part of the vast 19th century Russian Empire.

Grandma Ray was one of five similarly named girls who were collectively identified as Auntie Raie, Big Ray Meyer’s Raie, Little Ray - my grandmother - and Baby Rae. Anyone who has tried to find information about a Rachel Solomons born in London during the 1890s and early 1900s will have been confronted, as I was, by a bewildering number of girls all registered under this name. The name Rachel was used for many of the girls in this large family and all are believed to be named after Ray’s great-grandmother, who has recently been identified as Ruchel from Kutno in Poland. Ruchel married Szulim Jojszer and both were born some time during the early decades of the 19th century.
Their son, Judah Solomons (1840-1904) is my paternal great-great-grandfather and he had brought his family to London in the mid 1880s. With his second son, Charles Henry Solomons (1868-1923), he set up a fur manufacturing business in two large houses that had been built close to Spital Square for the earlier eighteenth century migratory wave of Huguenot weavers. Ray always called this area Bishopsgate, implying that it was a slightly better class area then the adjoining Spitalfields and Whitechapel. She grew up in a large extended family that included her own grandparents and great-grandparents all living in close proximity to each other. The surname of Solomons is believed to have come about through the adoption of Judah’s father’s name of Szulim as the anglicized family surname and this is supported by repeated family stories about the supposed ‘original family name’. While this information is not yet totally verified, new evidence provides a reasonable degree of certainty that merges with the documented facts and family lore.

The identification of this woman, her husband and their in-laws has come through a serendipitous meeting with a fellow researcher at the 2nd Australian National Conference on Jewish Genealogy held in Melbourne, Victoria in March, 2010. This wonderful new contact has opened up a line of European research that I thought would be impossible to penetrate.

I know about Grandma Ray’s life because a close first cousin, Claire Bockner, had the foresight to record her stories. Through the last years of the 1980s and the early 1990s she audio taped extensive conversations with our grandmother. While I had randomly written down notes on some of her stories she had routinely taken a small tape recorder, and often a bottle of wine, and captured a series of unique social history memoirs about her daily life within the Jewish community in London during the early 1900s. These early years were followed by a period of almost a decade of living in New York and then Toronto, Canada followed by a return to London in 1923. All told in vivid detail, these long ago memories of family joys, outrage at bad behaviour and unforgivable misdemeanors were still fresh and often emotionally retold over half a century later.

In addition to these tapes we also have a wonderful series of early 16mm film taken by her husband, my grandfather Morrie Bockner. Recently transferred onto DVD format, these capture images of my father’s family life from the early 1930s through until the 1960s. These mostly black and white films have no sound and until I began my family history research we had no way of knowing who many of these lively and animated people were. I have now been able to compile a running ‘shot list’ for each segment that can accompany the DVDs as we send them on to interested relatives around the world.

My genealogical journey of discovery really began in the year 2000. Kept at home by bushfires raging around the area where I then lived in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, I finally began the task of properly organising my grandmother’s photographic collection. Sorting and putting these old black and white images into proper archival albums I began to get a picture of people and lives previously unknown to me. However, the seed had been planted a full decade earlier when George Rigal, a cousin of my mother’s, had sent through what had then seemed a vast maternal family tree. He wanted information about the current generations of our scattered family, my mother replied with the basic facts and I was eventually shown these pages. I never questioned my mother’s apparent lack of interest in her family history and as the complexities of daily life intruded this goldmine of information sat in the cupboard for almost ten years.

My parents, and almost all of their siblings, died at relatively young ages and I still did not start to capture the ‘one day’ project of recording their life stories. Then it was too late, their entire generation was gone and there was almost no-one left to provide the first hand memories and facts about their lives. However, it was this loss that gave me the final push to begin to document our combined family histories and, while I know we have lost so much, I have also found information beyond my greatest expectations.

The possibilities of internet based research and the generosity of fellow genealogists has led me to discover previously unknown family lines. Beyond a very small circle of immediate uncles, aunts and cousins, I had grown up believing that we had no other family in Australia and I had
almost no real knowledge of my mother’s extended family at all. I have now discovered that these included people who came to Australia throughout the latter years of the 19th and early 20th centuries; people who built their lives and families in New South Wales and Victoria and whose descendants have dispersed across this vast continent, out to New Zealand and beyond. Some contributed much to their small, evolving Jewish communities; some like my immediate family were Jewish by cultural heritage only, any religious faith abandoned as they grew up. I have found new distant relatives in England, Canada, the United States, and even Tokyo, Japan who have generously given me on-line access to their research and a small ad-hoc, email based group of fellow family researchers has emerged to provide support and share information.

Working from known birth dates, street addresses and the existing, wonderfully researched maternal family tree referred to above, I began my on-line searching by trawling through the usual websites. The England census and UK births, deaths and marriages records, UK shipping and passenger lists and USA-Canada border crossing documents have all provided a wealth of factual information. JewishGen (www.jewishgen.org) and its associated links has supplied several death and cemetery records including photographs of actual family gravestones and I have had the unsettling experience of finding my own name and family listed on someone else’s on-line public family tree (with numerous errors!).

Akevoth (www.dutchjewry.org) gave me wonderfully detailed Dutch records going back to the early 1700s, with the added benefit that it was all in English, the London Gazette (www.london-gazette.co.uk) provided stories of bankruptcies and tantalizing glimpses of daily business life and the Jewish Chronicle (www.thejc.com) presented a long list of family names and references to check through and follow-up. I have found photographs of the streets, schools and places lived in by my ancestors and newspaper articles and books that reference their lives. Eventually, the link to the (UK) National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) led me to their Moving Here internet website (www.movinghere.org.uk). This fantastic resource, featuring personal stories of migration and life within the London Jewish Community took me to actual documents about my mother’s paternal grandfather, George Henry Cohen (1828-1890).

Source: 100 Years, 1834-1934, George Cohen Sons & Company Limited. Written to mark the Company Centenary, pub. Robert Maclehose & Co Ltd, Glasgow, Nov. 1934

Founder of the engineering company George Cohen, Sons & Company, this man is the image of a well assimilated Jew, a prosperous, Victorian businessman. He was also a man whose family, faith and community was demonstrably central to his life. His large family of many daughters and fewer sons appear to have married well and the descendants of one donated a collection of family photographs and documents to the Jewish Museum, London (www.jewishmuseum.org.uk).

These are now fully digitized and available to view on their Moving Here website. This collection includes a scrapbook, known as Percy Levy’s Book of Life (Cat. Ref: JML 1993.4.1); assembled by a grandson it includes original newspaper accounts of family weddings and associated ephemera such as table place setting cards and even some dried leaves and flowers from a wedding bouquet. It has newspaper cuttings, business and personal letters and graphic, original photographs from the battlefields of World War I France. This scrapbook gives a highly personal and moving snapshot into the life of one family over a period of about twenty years from 1897-1920.

It was in this collection that I found myself looking at an image of myself! George Henry Cohen’s eldest daughter, Sophia (1850-1904) is one of my maternal great-grandmothers. I already had good portrait photographs of Sophia and her husband John (Jonah/Jonas) Berlyn (1850-1902) but here was a photograph of the second daughter, Hannah (1851-1932) and there were pictures of her ageing from her early twenties through to old age. This experience of looking into a mirror from the past was extraordinary; it gave me a visceral jolt and connected me to family in a way that I had never experienced before. Perhaps I did resemble my other grandmother’s much loved Auntie Raie but I also looked uncannily like this previously unknown great, grand-aunt.
By the time my mother was born in 1927 Sophia’s son, George Berlyn, appears to have lost close contact with his mother’s vast extended family. One day I hope to find out how and why this happened. In the meantime I will continue to look for more documentary evidence to discover facts and stories that link me to my silent Jewish heritage. I have reached what currently seem like impenetrable dead ends for some people on the Tree and I will always regret the lost opportunity that I had to write the living histories of my own parents’ and grandparents’ generations. However, my research has ignited sparks of interest in other members of the family and hopefully this will ensure that our stories do not get ‘lost’ before it too becomes too late.

Caroline Berlyn, Adelaide, South Australia

MY GRANDFATHER AND THE CHICAGO WORLD FAIR – BUT WHEN?

My grandfather Israel Baker went to the Chicago World Fair. I know that, because he told me he did. He bought a dinner service there, and I still have some of the plates and a sauce boat. They are stamped on the underside with a picture of a globe, with two wings and Chicago written across the globe.

I know it’s true - but when could he have gone?

He was born about 1858 in, Lithuania. He left as a young man and went to the USA. He lived in Boston, Massachusetts, worked as a tailor, saved up and bought himself a gold watch, and returned to his parents. In addition, he bought that dinner service, at a Chicago World Fair.

On the move again, from Kalvarija, he boarded a ship which landed him in England; he travelled to Leeds where his sister Leah was living. In the 1881 census, Leah, her husband Jacob and their children are listed, and also at their house are Israel, his brother Isaac and their mother: it was quite a crowded house.

In 1890, he married my grandmother. They had a family and - more or less - lived happily ever after, in Leeds.

Now, how did he fit in his stay in the USA? He could have left Lithuania when he was 14 and arrived in the USA in 1872. He was in England by March 1881. So which Chicago World Fair did he visit? Wikipedia gives 1893 as the date of the Chicago World’s Fair - a celebration of Columbus’s arrival in America in 1492.
He could have visited Chicago after 1881, but had to have returned before June 1890 when he married.

He couldn’t have gone in 1893; he had too many family responsibilities by then. Besides, although he always wanted to go back to the USA, he wanted to take his wife and family with him.

So I have two windows of opportunity for him to have been in Chicago. It could have been between 1872 and 1881 or between 1881 and 1890.

I just can’t find any history of Chicago that helps me solve the mystery . . .

Theresa Stewart, Birmingham, England

REMEMBERED CONVERSATIONS & FAMILY NEWSLETTERS

A couple of items in the last issue of BJ News piqued my interest. Louise Goldschmidt’s article, “Things My Mother Said”, reminded me of a family story and childhood memory related to me by my own mother. The family story was one passed on to Mum by her maternal grandmother, Alice Raphael Bell (Nanny). According to Nanny, her Jewish mother, Annie Raphael, had been disinherit by her family for “marrying out”.

I’ve since discovered that Annie was aged just two when she migrated from England to Australia in 1849, aboard the James Gibb. The family then comprised Annie, her parents, Nathan Samuel Raphael, Elizabeth A T (née Hewitt), and three year old brother Samuel. The voyage took 132 agonisingly long days, withstanding gales, a hurricane, reduced water rations and the deaths of many of the other children on board. This and other interesting aspects of the voyage, I gleaned from an unpublished diary of a fellow passenger named William Nichols (National Library of Australia, Manuscript reference no.: NLA MS 8166).

It must have been an enormous relief to arrive, finally, in Sydney, not only with the family intact, but having increased by the birth of another son during the voyage. The report of the ship’s arrival, quoted from the Sydney Morning Herald of Mon 11 Jun 1849, included a very curious observation:

**SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE - ARRIVALS June 9 – James Gibb, ship, 813 tons, Capt. Jackson from London with immigrants and merchandise, having left the Downs on the 29th January. Passengers - Mr. King, and Dr. Leith, Surgeon-Superintendent.....the James Gibb one hundred and thirty days (sic) on their passage from the Downs.....The immigrants by the James Gibb number two hundred and eighty-four, namely, 58 married couples, 54 single men, 39 single women, 32 boys and 32 girls from one to fourteen years of age, and 11 (?) infants. They consist of English, Irish, and Scotch, and many of them, it is to be regretted, are mechanics.

After that closing remark, I was somewhat relieved to note that my ancestor’s occupation was recorded as “Scientific Carpenter”. Such a skill was no doubt very useful when the Raphael family joined the rush to the newly discovered goldfields in the Turon region of NSW. It was here that Annie grew up and met her future husband, John Bell. The marriage took place in the Christ Church Anglican Church, in the then thriving goldfields town of Sofala, on 6 August 1872. The presence of her family members at the ceremony, and their ongoing association in the years that followed, implies that it was more likely her English rather than Australian relatives who were the resented “disinheritors”.

This appears supported by Mum’s childhood memory of a visit to Australia in 1930 by an English relative named Walter Raphael. My very impressionable young nine year old mother later recounted her memory of being taken by her mother to meet this illustrious and very wealthy English “uncle”. She recalled being in awe as she was ushered into Walter’s suite at the very posh Australia Hotel in Sydney. Nanny was said to have angrily refused to visit because her mother had been disinherit.

Family lore is that the reason for Walter’s visit was, in part, to obtain some kind of release from the Australian Raphael descendants in respect of any possible claims against a family estate. One reason put forward was that the family “castle” was so decayed that funds available were not sufficient to affect the necessary repairs. There is little more than circumstantial (though
quite intriguing) evidence to support this story. Unfortunately, Mum’s only other memory of the visit was that she shyly refused to accept a chocolate from a box proffered to her by Walter.

This family story and childhood memory eventually led me on a journey of discovery that, sadly, Mum is no longer here to enjoy. However, as the creator of my own family newsletter, I have at least been able to share my discoveries with other interested family members.

My Raphael-Bell Family Newsletter is not as amusing or lengthy as The Moon, as described in Anne Joseph’s article, The Story - So Far - of a Family Newsletter. Even so, I thought you too might like to hear that I eventually found where Walter belonged on the family tree – and much more besides. So here’s my offering of a slightly modified version of the relevant excerpt from the July 2008 issue of my newsletter.

“So Much To Know ~ So Little Time To Learn”

How apt these words that greeted me as I entered through the gates of Brompton Cemetery to visit the graves of our ancestors, Samuel and Charlotte (née Levy) Raphael.

I’ve now spent four and a half years trying to learn as much as I can about our family history, and whilst I’ve gathered a huge array of information, there is still more awaiting discovery.

Sadly, if my planned family history book is to eventuate before you and I join our ancestors, the quest for information must eventually cease and the really hard work of putting it all together must begin. However, for those of you who have not yet submitted precious family photos and stories etc., there is still time to do so. I anticipate it may take up to another two years before the book is ready to go to press.

For now though, I’m absolutely delighted to share with you all just a snippet or two of what I learned about our English Raphaels on my most recent foray to England.

On our first day in London we visited Guy’s Campus at King’s College where we were warmly welcomed by Sheila Maister. In her capacity as the Information and Publications Officer at GKT School of Biomedical Sciences, Sheila had authored an article in a college newsletter which featured a bust of our relative, Henriette Raphael (our cousin Mahlah Murphy had brought this to my attention - thanks again Mahlah 😊).

Sheila very generously gave us copies of some of the documents and photos she had acquired in researching her article. We were also treated to a guided tour of the Henriette Raphael Building (previously the first purpose-built nurses’ home in Britain). Oh, and some yummy Marks & Spencer chocolate biscuits.

So who precisely is Henriette Raphael and how did the nurses’ home at Guy’s Campus come to bear her name?

Our particular interest in these questions stems from the fact that Henriette Raphael was the great-granddaughter of our common ancestor, Nathan
(Nathale) Raphael (b. 1726, d. 21 Sep 1808). Born into a life of wealth and privilege in Amsterdam, Holland on 16 Sep 1833, she was the daughter of Jewish merchant banker, Nathan Raphael “of Amsterdam and Paris” and Flora Abraham Van Raalte.

Henriette married her first cousin, Henry Lewis Raphael, on 7 Mar 1855. Henry was also the son of a wealthy Jewish merchant banker, Lewis Raphael (Henriette’s paternal uncle and her father’s business partner at R. Raphael & Sons) and Rachel Mocatta (the daughter of the magnate, Jacob Mocatta). The marriage took place at the residence of the groom’s parents, 18 Bedford Place, Middlesex, London.

At the time of the birth of their first two children, Flora Henrietta on 11 Dec 1855 and Alice Gertrude on 11 Jan 1857, the family was residing at Taviton Street, Gordon Square. The union produced eleven children in all, six sons and five daughters.

As their wealth increased under the astute stewardship of Henry Lewis, the family acquired more of the trappings of their status, including a number of homes. Their London residence was a handsome “Adam-style” house at 31 Portland Place where several of their neighbours were also family members. Directly opposite, at 42 Portland Place, their granddaughter Gladys would kneel on the window seat of the nursery and watch “Grandmother Raphael” and one of the aunts:

... being hurried across the gleamy pavement from 31, to where the brougham was waiting. The butler held a big umbrella over their heads and the footman held open the door. On the box sat Mr. French, the coachman, who had been in the family for years and who had married my father’s old nurse, Collins. Somewhere in the background, hovered two footmen.

I loved seeing my grandmother go out driving. It was so grand and stately, rather like one of the fairy stories Mrs. Mead read to me about queens and princesses. Gorgeous creatures.

A similarly enticing picture of indoor activity at 31 Portland Place is described by Gladys thus:

..... One heard every language spoken and every subject discussed, with highly sophisticated, expensive people from Vienna, Paris and Berlin constantly coming and going. In those days, Jews but rarely married outside their own faith and many of the wealthier, long-established English families had branches in other countries, cousins, once or twice removed, or brothers. So that one had the feeling that one was meeting one enormous clan. And, of course, one could be invited to similar parties in all the capitals of Europe and have exactly the same impression. To go to a party at the Paris Raphael’s, for instance, felt exactly the same as going to one at 31, Portland Place....

After her father’s death, when she was aged just 6, Gladys would be sent to spend a week each winter with “Grandmother Raphael” at their beautiful
Georgian mansion at Hove. This is where the family used to retire at that season “to avoid the fogs and other discomforts of the metropolis.”

These sojourns were short-lived however, as Henriette’s health declined. According to Gladys, she was nearly always lying on a sofa with a “cache-pieds” over her feet and being waited on by “one of her enormous sons. Or else in bed.” It seemed odd to Gladys that all her uncles were very tall yet Henriette and her husband were both small in stature.

The only other insight Gladys gives us about Henriette’s appearance or character is in likening her own father’s very kindly and placid nature to that of her grandmother, who she lovingly described as having straight, even features and calm eyes. She, it seems, was a loving and much loved woman. So loved and deeply mourned by her husband that he donated £1,000 to name a bed in perpetuity in her memory at the Queen Charlotte’s Lying-in Hospital, Marylebone Road and £20,000 for the establishment of the Henriette Raphael Nurses’ Home at Guy’s Hospital.

This largesse was not confined to Henriette’s grieving husband; her son Walter also contributed funds towards a luxurious Romanesque swimming pool in the nurses’ home. Though no longer in use, it still exists under the floorboards of the present staff common room.

Sadly, Henry did not survive to attend the official opening of the nurses' home by H.R.H The Prince of Wales, which took place on 2 July 1902. However, his eldest surviving son, Herbert Henry, gave a speech seconding the proposal of thanks for their attendance to T.R.H., The Prince and Princess of Wales. The published list of guests also includes the names of Herbert’s siblings. A glimpse of that momentous occasion is afforded us in the opening paragraphs of the following account:

….In brilliant sunshine, with a goodly gathering of gallant men and fair women, the great event of the year at Guy’s came and passed. As usual on these occasions academic dress was worn by all who were so privileged, and the rich hues of the hoods and the scarlet doctorate gowns gave a warmth of colour to the scene which was in itself both picturesque and artistic. Bunting and marquees lent the air of festivity but the real decorations were in the guests themselves, and in the due and proper appreciation of this fact lay much of the success of the afternoon.

The visitors were marshaled some little time before the arrival of the Royal party, and punctually at half-past three the National Anthem announced the arrival of the Prince and Princess.....

The same account includes a verbatim report of the speeches, the first of which was delivered by H. Cosmo Bonsor, Esq. (Treasurer of the Hospital), part of which is quoted as follows:

….within living memory the nurses lived within the basements; they were then promoted to the attics, accommodation which few people nowadays would care to put their servants into. We were aware of our need when the late Mr. H. L. Raphael was introduced to me; he took an immediate interest in our hospital, and gave £20,000 for the purpose of founding a nurses’ home, with only one condition attached, that it should forever bear the name of his late wife. We all regret that his
Life was not spared to see his work complete, but his family have taken and will take the greatest interest in his work...  

Now, more than 100 years since Henriette’s death from Bright’s disease on 4 August 1897, her name and image still, as Henry intended, preside quietly and unassumingly amidst the bustle of Guy’s Campus. However, he surely could not have foreseen that the lure of Henriette’s kindly face would inspire a visit by an obscure Australian relative hell-bent on uncovering her family story!

Note 1 The cited ODNB account fails to include son, Ernest Edward, who was born in 1867 but died in very early infancy, nor daughter Helen Maud (Cissy), who died aged 16 in 1886.

* Adam-style - mid-Georgian era (1750-1785) form of domestic neoclassicism that came to be named after the architect, Robert Adam [ref. Steven Parissien, Adam style, Phaidon Press Ltd., London (1992)].


Photograph Sources
PS1. From the private collection of Barbara O’Connor [photographer Kim O’Connor].
PS2. From the archives of Guy’s Hospital, London.

Bibliography
4. New Synagogue Register of Marriages, #139/1855, p70 [Henry Lewis RAPHAEL & Henrietta (sic?) RAPHAEL].
7. West London Synagogue of British Jews First Register of Marriages Book 1, #51 in District Register, #107 in Synagogue Register: Emma Jane RAPHAEL (daughter of Nathan RAPHAEL [dec] and Flora Abraham) & Frederic Elias WARBURG 05 Dec 1866 [this matches the relevant ancestor table from the 1937 German publication on the Warburg family, photocopied extracts of which were provided by Emma Jane’s grandson, Eric Warburg in April 2008].
10. Editor Angela Shire, New Synagogue Births (NSB): R006; RAPHAEL Henry Lewis [Tsebi Hirsh].
11. Ibid, NSB: R001; RAPHAEL Flora Henrietta.
12. Ibid, NSB: R002; RAPHAEL Alice Gertrude [Golda].
13. The Pall Mall Gazette (London), Thursday, August 1, 1867; Issue 772 [Deaths: Ernest E Raphael].
16. 1881 England & Wales Census: RG11 Piece 140 Folio 6 Page 6; 31 Portland Place, St Marylebone, Middlesex.
This excerpt is from one of only four family newsletters I’ve produced to date. As I’m just a teensy little bit older than the impish Pinto Joseph was when he embarked on his literary career, I doubt I’ll be able to mount a serious challenge to his prolific output. However, I’d love to read more items from his anthology, if Anne Joseph could be persuaded to submit them for publication in this forum . . .

Babs O’Connor, Penrith, NSW, Australia

SOME FREE ACCESS WEBSITES YOU MAY FIND USEFUL

www.snopes.com If you use email, then sooner or later you’ll receive an email you’re not sure about: “Is this message in my email box a fake or hoax?” Find out here.


http://www.xe.com/ucc/ Useful for planning research trips or buying goods online/paying for services abroad: currency conversions in real time at the going exchange rate.

http://www.timeanddate.com/ Want to ring a relative abroad or need to request something from overseas and not sure if the relevant office is open? Time conversion made easy.

www.openoffice.org Want to submit something for B-J News but don’t have Microsoft Word package? Here’s a free alternative - but make sure you save any B-J News submission as a Word document!


http://www.familytreelegends.com/downloads A free and workable family tree program.

http://unclosetedskeletonscloset.aimoo.com/ This group is dedicated to Family History research for Australia. You need to become a member to see the site and post a message.

http://www.webs.com/ How to create a website to show your research, share data with relatives or for any other reason. This is a free site: if you want to build a simple web site just follow the step by step directions: you can always change it later. Would suit anyone who has never made a web site; a “no special skill” one!

Heather Denholm

ME AND MY SCHOOL PHOTO: MIRIAM MARGOLYES

The following article, which is reproduced by kind permission of the Daily Mail, was first published in the Weekend magazine supplement included with the newspaper on 14 March 2010.

A veteran of stage and screen, Miriam Margolyes, 68, recently finished filming Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part II, the last in the series of films. She lives in London with her partner of over 40 years.
I am 12 in this class photograph at the Oxford High School for Girls. I was there from four to 18, and I loved it. My best friends are still my friends from school and, even now, I can name every one of the 24 girls in the picture.

I was born in 1941 and brought up in north Oxford, which has a very strong character of middleclass arrogance and self-satisfaction about it. My father was a GP and my mother, who was one of the cleverest women I've ever met, was uneducated but really shrewd. She had her own business buying houses and renting them out.

Before I was born, my parents lived in the East End of London. I was conceived during an air raid - which might explain a lot - and they were bombed out. They took a trip to Oxford, liked the place, and stayed for the rest of their lives. They must have missed their friends - all the Jewish part of their lives was in London - but I'm sure it was my school that kept them there. They wanted me to be well educated.

We had wonderful teachers - the sort who'd lost their partners in World War II and had dedicated their lives to their girls. Miss Stack, the headmistress, was a tall, fierce lady with a large bust, grey hair and an iron stare - she had previously been in charge of studies at Holloway Prison in London. She was a huge intellectual snob, and people like me, who came from the town as opposed to the gown - meaning the progeny of Oxford dons - got slightly short shrift from her.

There was considerable social snobbery at school regarding the two types of intake: fee-paying or scholarship girls - and there was a sharp distinction between those two. At a recent reunion, a classmate said to me, 'We never got asked to your parties.'

I hadn't realised that I was part of that snobbery, but I was. It's something I'm ashamed of and regret. I had rather good parties, I must admit. We used to take everyone to the pictures or have a picnic by the river. My mother was a sensational cook and made brilliant sandwiches and cakes. I suppose we had a Jewish sense of hospitality.

I talked too much at school and was known as the form wag. I was very naughty - not wicked, but naughty. For instance, when I was 14, I dressed up in my mother’s fur coat and came into the French class as a French lady. In a strong accent I explained I was checking the school for my daughter.

The teacher, Miss Willets, said, 'Stop being silly, Miriam', to which I answered, again in a French accent, 'How dare you speak to me like this.' Such fun.

I flowered in drama. Miss Bartholomew, who is now in her late 90s, inspired my love of English and drama. She was so enthusiastic about her subject she used to spit everywhere. She was an exceptional teacher, who also taught Dame Maggie Smith. Mary Plowman gave me elocution lessons. In Oxford you had to have the Oxford accent. Neither of my parents did, especially my father, who was born in Glasgow.

I hoped to be an actress, but never truly thought I could. All through my school days, my mother put me in for music festivals where you learn and recite poetry. She always believed in me as a performer. My father was more worried that I wouldn't be economically viable, and the school didn't really rate acting at all. I wasn't a very bright student. I wasn't stupid, but I was lazy. I was removed from the maths class for being totally incompetent and I was shockingly bad at science. But I took six A-levels, and English and history at S-level.

The happiest day of my life was the day I was told I could go to university - I knew it would open the door to my life. I can still remember reading out
my exam results in the headmistress's study and feeling an explosion of happiness. Then my mother did something terrific. One of my father's patients was Isaiah Berlin - the premier intellectual of his day and an Oxford fellow.

My mother suggested that my father should invite Isaiah to dinner. Somehow, she knew his name could conjure up magic in the world of academe. After cooking a wonderful meal, she asked Isaiah to sign his name as my sponsor on the college entrance form. She knew no college would dream of turning down someone who was Isaiah Berlin's protégée. And they didn't, either. I owe more than I can ever say to my mother.

My school and my mother were the two greatest influences of my life. Mummy was an ebullient and strong lady. She gave me a lot of confidence and made me feel I would be welcomed everywhere. I wasn't pretty and I was always fat, but I figured it didn't matter because I had a nice smile and I was friendly.

University was wonderful, and I made more lasting friendships. I also performed with the Cambridge Footlights satirical revue - the only woman alongside John Cleese, Bill Oddie and Graham Chapman. I was determined to cut a dash. I smoked a pipe, wore a blue fur hat and swore all the time. I did a lot of acting - I was in 20 shows in my three years there. That was my drama school.

**CRIMINALS AND CONDOMS: FROM JACOBY TO JACKSON**

Researching your Jewish roots is certainly a challenge: name changes, phonetic spellings and difficulty accessing records don't help, nor does not being Jewish! My paternal grandfather was Jewish but married out of the faith, which estranged him - and, in turn, his children - from his family. Consequently I set out to research my Jewish roots armed with very little first-hand information, but over the years I've found many pieces of the jigsaw - although there's always more to discover!

My great-grandmother Flora Symonds was the second eldest of the seven children of Saul Symonds, a cigar maker, and Hannah (Henrietta) Elkan. Flora didn't have a particularly happy life: deserted by her husband, estranged from her only son, she died alone in a nursing home. In contrast, two of her sisters married well and lived comfortably, one brother died young, one died in a mental asylum and one died bankrupt. Of all the siblings it was the third sister I knew least about that proved to reveal the most interesting story. Her branch of the family went from shaky and scandalous beginnings, via a name change, to entrepreneurial success and great wealth.

Marie Symonds was born in Margate, Kent, in 1855, the fifth child of Saul and Hannah. She was relatively old - 30 - when she married the younger Daniel Jacoby, a hairdresser, at the North London Synagogue on 27 October 1885. Daniel was the son of Siegmund Jacoby, a Berlin-born hairdresser, and Jetta (Henrietta) Meyers. Shortly after Henrietta’s death in 1873, Siegmund remarried - to Fanny Moses.

The 1891 census shows Daniel and Marie ‘Jacobi’ living at 95 High Street, St Pancras. No children were listed, although by 1901, Daniel and Marie ‘Jacobs’ were at Willesden Green with their four young children: Maurice Elkan, Lionel Alfred, Henrietta (Etta) May and Violet Maud. Why were there no children in the first six years of their marriage? Had earlier children died in infancy, or had Daniel worked away from home?

A posting on British Jewry resulted in contact from Susan McPhedran who has produced an excellent database of BMDs for members of the Jacobe/Jacobi/Jacobus/Jacoby/Yacoby families. This is available on the British Jewry website. Susan explained the reason for the six year gap between Daniel and Marie's marriage and the birth of their first child was that for five of those years Daniel was enjoying free room and board at Her Majesty’s Pleasure!

Logging on to *The Times* Digital Archive, I found details of Daniel Jacoby’s involvement in a case of attempted murder, in 1886. Along with a chap named Toussaint (who had already been convicted and sentenced), Jacoby
and four others were charged with robbery with violence upon an elderly Jewish diamond merchant, Julius Tabak.

The coverage in *The News of the World* made more salacious reading. Of particular interest was the evidence of Eleanor Denunzio, daughter of the aforementioned Toussaint, who said that she had first met Daniel Jacoby when she was 15 and worked in his service before becoming his mistress. She claimed that Jacoby had previously made her an offer of marriage but had then broken off the engagement. It was alleged that Denunzio had threatened to ruin Jacoby because he had married another woman. You couldn’t make it up!

The trial resulted in Daniel Jacoby being sentenced to five years’ penal servitude but, on his release, Marie apparently forgave him, as the 1891 and 1901 censuses and the appearance of four children suggest.

By 1911, the Jacoby family seemed to have vanished. Using first names only, I searched the 1911 census and found a ‘Jackson’ family - Daniel, Marie, Elkan, Lionel, Henrietta and Violet - at 537 Green Lanes, Edmonton, North London. This was more than just a coincidence. Daniel was a hairdresser and tobacconist; the sons were commercial travellers. ‘Jackson’ was an unremarkable name, far less conspicuous than ‘Jacoby’, and a convenient choice for a family wishing to discard its past.

I then came across the World War 1 army service record for Elkan Morris Jackson which gave his parents as Daniel and Marie Jackson of 46 Lower Clapton Road, London. But I could find nothing for Lionel: what did he do during the war?

A search of the *Jewish Chronicle* revealed that Lionel Alfred Jackson died aged 40 on 5 January 1934 and was buried at the Liberal Jewish Cemetery. There was no mention of a spouse. Elkan Jackson enjoyed a longer life, dying in his eightieth year on 6 February 1971. The *Jewish Chronicle* reports that Elkan Maurice Jackson of Thorpe Bay, Essex, late chairman of the London Rubber Company, left nearly £1.6 million net in his will.

The London Rubber Company is - or was - a very high profile company and is famous for a particular product. So, did Elkan establish the company? No, his brother Lionel did. A search of *The Times* newspaper digital archive produced details of the will of Mr Lionel Alfred Jackson (40) of Carlton Mansions, N, founder of the London Rubber Company (with net personally £14,798) in 1934.

Further information was provided by our wonderful community of British Jewry listers, including this:

*The company was founded by L.A. Jackson in London in 1915 to sell "barber's sundries". Whatever else the sundries were, the stock included rubber condoms, at that time imported from Germany. In 1915, Jackson’s London Rubber Co. was a small affair, selling its imported stock out of a small room behind a tobacconist’s shop.*

So that was how Lionel spent his war years, presumably working out of his father’s shop, and unquestionably providing an essential service to the war effort! How he managed to import products from an enemy country remains a mystery . . .

Clearly Lionel built a successful business which was continued by his brother. The London Rubber Company became London International Group, and later merged with Seton Scholl Healthcare plc to form SSL International plc. According to a history in the company magazine, the London Rubber Company was the first - in 1922 - to manufacture condoms in the UK, and, in 1929, it registered the brand name *Durex* which was chosen to represent Durability, Reliability and Excellence. The rest, as they say, is history . . .

---

1 British Library Active Paper Archive: [http://www.uk.olivesoftware.com](http://www.uk.olivesoftware.com)


1 *Be Inspired*, Spring 2010 issue, magazine of SSL International
Jill Hyams

SOJOURN IN THE HOLY LAND

I spent two weeks in Israel some many years ago,
The way I felt has never left me, and I would not want it to,
The sights, the sounds, the smell, the life, the atmosphere electric!
I had never seen before, buildings so ancient, so unexpected!
To stand upon the mountain tops where prophets fought with evil,
To Gaze from Mount Masada and hear the story that seemed so final,
To smell and feel the Dead Sea, hard, and have it stick upon my skin,
Watch others bobbing up and down knowing they won’t sink.
To see the Jordan River and know it wasn't always peaceful,
And Lake Galilee reflecting the mountains up behind it,
The Eagles soaring overhead and nesting in the crags,
The young boy just like David, a standing with his sheep.
To the Cap-er-nae-hum we travelled, we went there as a group,
In the Synagogue with pillars, we listened to our guide
Where Rami felt he could explain the beauty of his language,

This town is Cap-er-nae-hum, not that horrid word you use!
To the old city of Jerusalem, by walls of stone surrounded,
The cobblestones we walked on, so ancient, worn and shiny,
To stand in David’s square and think of others gone before,
The trials and tribulations that the city had to bear.
And then to stand, look to the wall of prayer, so sacred,
Where those who prayed, so earnestly, gave their all to God,
With nodding head they prayed, for their family and home,
And for peace within their country, Israel, the land they love.
My map was marked with all the glorious places we had seen,
My camera filled with photos, to show to those at home,
And though, I never will return to walk along those roads,
My mind was filled with wonder, so in my heart I come again!
I visit now this wondrous place, Israel, ancient land of mystery,
The sights, the sounds, the smell, the life! I am remembering.

H E Denholm

DIARY DATES

Taken from GENEVA website
http://geneva.weald.org.uk/
1st August 2010 to 31st December 2010 inc.

August 4 SoG, LND Visit: Freemason’s Hall Museum & Librar
August 12 Pudsey, WYK Using Family Historian 4 - Four Week Course
August 7 Epsom, SRY  Guild of One-Name Studies Computer Seminar
August 7 SoG, LND  Country Poor & Town Poor
August 7 SoG, LND  Tracing Scottish Borders Families
August 7 Chorley, LAN  Celebration of Family History
August 12 Pudsey, WYK  Bookmaking and Scrapbooking - Four Week Course
August 14 SoG, LND  Family Historian Software - Practical
August 14 SoG, LND  Publishing your Family History to the Web
August 14 Pudsey, WYK  Beginners' Lecture Day
August 18 SoG, LND  Visit: Bank of England Museum & Talk
August 21 SoG, LND  Tracing Royal Bastards
August 21 SoG, LND  Why Can't I Find them in the Census?
September 1 SoG, LND  London Streets for Family Historians
September 2 SoG, LND  Evening Skills Course 18 weeks - Advanced
September 4 SoG, LND  Palaeography for Beginners
September 4 Northallerton, YKS  Family History Skills Day
September 8 SoG, LND  My Ancestor was a Mormon
September 11 Newcastle Upon Tyne, NBL  The National Family History Fair
September 11 SoG, LND  Note change of venue
September 11 SoG, LND  Widowhood and the Final Years
September 11 SoG, LND  My Ancestor was a Doctor
September 15 SoG, LND  I'm Stuck
September 16 Poole, DOR  Organising, Presenting & Writing up Your Family History
September 17 SoG, LND  Walk: Stepney to Mile End Old Town
September 17-19 Lewes, SXE  The AKEHURST 2010 GetTogether
September 18 Thornbury, GLS  Bristol & Avon FHS Open Day
September 18 Thornbury, GLS  FFHS General Meeting (running alongside the Bristol & Avon FHS Open Day)
September 18 Durham, DUR  Unlocking your Past Family History Day
September 21 Chertsey, SRY  Free drop-in family and local history advice session at Chertsey Library
September 21 Romney Marsh, KEN  (5 week course) Building Your Family Tree
September 22 SoG, LND  Getting the Most from the Society
September 24 Poole, DOR  Ancestors from the Great War - Western Front Association led Workshop (repeated 25th)
September 25 Poole, DOR  Ancestors from the Great War - Western Front Association led Workshop (repeat from 24th)
September 25 SoG, LND  Records for One-Name Studies
September 26 Hampton, MDX  Cancelled: West Middlesex FHS Open Day
September 26 Horndean, HAM  Open Day
September 29 SoG, LND  Welsh Family History on the Internet & Other Sources
October 2 Woodstock, OXF  Oxfordshire FHS Open Day
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Walk: Westminster &amp; West London</td>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Learn about your Ancestors from Old Photographs - Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Careers in Genealogy: The Road to becoming a Member of AGRA &amp; Running a Genealogical Practice</td>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Family Historian Software for Beginners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Exeter, DEV</td>
<td>Devon FHS AGM &amp; Conference</td>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Black History Month: London Resources for Black and Asian Collections at the LMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Chatham, KEN</td>
<td>The Parish The Poor and The Land</td>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Open Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>In the High Courts of Justice: Chancery Records for Family Historians</td>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Death &amp; Resurrection: The Resurrection Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Genealogy from your Armchair: What's Free Online</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Canterbury, KEN</td>
<td>Branching Out: Parish Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Southport, MSY</td>
<td>Annual Conference and AGM</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>The National Archives for Family History: Using the Catalogue &amp; Online Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Llantrisant, GLA</td>
<td>Glamorgan FHS Open Day</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Organising your Electronic Family History Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Birmingham, WAR</td>
<td>Further Steps - Researching records before 1837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Debenham, SFK</td>
<td>The Suffolk Family History Fair</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Cambridge, CAM</td>
<td>Quaker FHS: Eastern One-Day Regional Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>My Ancestor was an Agricultural Labourer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>The Georgians: Sources for the 18th Century</td>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>My Ancestor was a Policeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Northallerton, YKS</td>
<td>Family History Beginners' Day</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Was your Ancestor Really Married: Marriage Laws, Records &amp; Customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Methodists, Baptists &amp; Presbyterians</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>The Plague is Upon Us: Plague, Action &amp; Remedies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15-17</td>
<td>Dublin, DUB</td>
<td>Back to the Past: The Irish Genealogy and Family History Show</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Chester, CHS</td>
<td>North West Group Family History Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Wallasey, CHS</td>
<td>FHSC Members' Day and AGM</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Northallerton, YKS</td>
<td>Ancestry in the Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Hull, EYK</td>
<td>Hull Family &amp; Local History Fair</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Woking, SRY</td>
<td>West Surrey FHS Family History Fair and Open Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Careers in Genealogy: Perfect Powerpoint Presentations</td>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Genealogy for Librarians &amp; Archivists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Railway Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Using Pay-per-View Websites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Canterbury, KEN</td>
<td>Wills and How to Read Them, day school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Batley, WYK</td>
<td>Family and Local History Fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Family Historian Software for Advanced Users</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Guidelines &amp; Standards: How to Avoid Mistakes in Genealogy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Padworth, BRK</td>
<td>The Berkshire Family &amp; Local History Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>Sevenoaks, KEN</td>
<td>Guild of One-Name Studies Born Abroad? Seminar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Creating Family Heirlooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>Taunton, SOM</td>
<td>The Somerset Family &amp; Local History Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>My Ancestor was Scottish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December  1</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Nonconformity &amp; Dr. Williams Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December  4</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>Latin for Beginners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December  8</td>
<td>SoG, LND</td>
<td>The Oldest Profession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>