



B-J News

The newsletter of the British Jewry mailing list
Saturday 16th December 2006/25 Kislev 5767

Welcome to the ninth edition of B-J News

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B-J News 9 was brought to you by:
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FROM THE EDITOR

As I considered this editorial, many themes came to mind but none seemed right. This is mostly because I've been out of the genealogical loop of late, trying to sell my house and ease myself into retirement, as well as see my son married.

I'm also helping to plan my 50th high school reunion - and there's my inspiration: I want to discuss universal networking. Three alumni, scattered in Arizona, Texas and California - not close together - are planning the reunion in Chicago! We've found all the graduates - including those missing since we had the first reunion. With the help of the Internet and e-mail, we've done just about everything, from finding a hotel to tracking women whose married names were unknown; from forming committees to finding pictures of the old neighbourhood. We've found people living all over the world and they've provided clues to finding others. My Texas friend and I were a team: I used Stephen Morse's site www.stephenmorse.org and she used www.zabasearch.com.

As most genealogists know, finding living family very often provides clues to our ancestors. The above techniques can just as easily be applied to genealogy. Consider our list. We have members living in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; in Canada, Israel and France; all over the U.S. and - of course - the U.K, to list just a few. You name a country and we've probably got a member there. I'm getting assistance and advice from a member in Israel, while giving help to another in Australia. Our list members are very special: so quick with assistance - even when it's not genealogy. One recently asked me to call a friend staying in San Diego, who was alone; this I did, and was able to reassure her. Listers are even meeting informally locally, and documenting the event with pictures posted to our website. Now to figure out how the listers in the U.S. can meet.

The bottom line is that networking, utilising e-mail and the Internet, has become an essential genealogical tool and can also be very helpful in other aspects of our lives.

Reminder: Purim is fast approaching, so get your thinking caps on and compose your contribution to BJ News 10. The deadline is mid-February, which gives us one month less than usual to Publication Date.

Jackye Sullins

EDITORIAL THANKS...

...go to Lionel Sharpe of AJGS (Vic). *Jewish Genealogy Downunder* is the quarterly newsletter published by the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) inc. Melbourne. In Vol. 8. No. 3 (Aug-Sept 2006), Lionel's editorial mentions our list in very flattering terms, including the following:

"Numerous postings come in every day and though topics often stray far from genealogical research such as Jewish cooking recipes, defining Jewishness, Jewish greeting customs etc. there is a sense of caring and sharing not often found in some impersonal groups". This is music to my ears...that's what it's about folks-caring and sharing.

Thanks also to Naomi, for sharing a copy with me.

Sherry Landa



NEXT ISSUE

The next issue, B-J News 10, will be available to download from the website on or before Sunday 4th March 2007. The submission deadline is therefore 11th February 2007. This doesn't give us as long as we sometimes have, so please contact me as soon as you can, if you have something to submit. jewish@slanda.fsnet.co.uk



FROM THE LIST...

In an October email, Carolyn Hahn re-lived a rewarding journey of discovery, allowing us to share in all her enthusiasm and excitement as her fund of family knowledge grew apace.

Hi, all. I got a burst of genealogical energy and started working on my Solomon roots in London. I came up with some good stuff, and wonder if I'm any closer to connecting to anyone here.

I splurged and spent the money for 24 hour access to the Jewish Chronicle archives. I searched for news of my ancestors, Benjamin Levy and his wife, Esther Solomon. I knew she had a brother (Emanuel) and I knew he had a brother (Solomon, who ended up in NZ and was the late Clyde Hurrell's ancestor) as well as a sister, Elizabeth (Betsy) Levy Hart. Knowing the date Benjamin died (1853-4) I quickly found something interesting: 4 to 5 months of pleas in the Jewish Chronicle for donations for the widow, whose husband had died "in her arms" of a burst blood vessel on the ship from Panama to California, leaving her with six little ones and far into pregnancy with my great great grandmother, b. SF 1854. Weirdly, the timing of this notice was that the oldest was now nearly 11 and the baby was 8 months old. How the heck did she survive in SF?

In the first notice, among those who offered to take subscriptions (donations) were "S Solomon and J Solomon, brothers of the widow" (DING DING DING!) and later notices gave their names as Joseph and Samuel Solomon, with their addresses. Interesting to me was that her brother Emanuel is not listed, although an E Solomon gave a few shillings. He had a young family, maybe he was too poor, or maybe they didn't need every member of the family to volunteer. Whatever. I now had a list of every person in England who cared enough to give money for this family. Some, like "a poor orphan girl" gave a shilling or two; some, like "A Lady", or N Solomon who had the school in Edmonton, gave a pound or two, and the final notice mentioned that with donations

and the help of the British Consulate, the widow had moved back to London and was now at a London address - and still seeking help. Armed with this list of maybe 25 donors and their addresses, I ran searches on Jeffrey Meyer's London Jews database (pre-1850 Jews and also London traders) for the name and then the address of every donor. If a donor was at Leadenhall Street, I ran a search in "any field" for the word Leadenhall, or Cree/Creed (Church lane). I could see from this if donors lived near each other, or near other known family addresses. For example, John Levy/Levi, clock/watchmaker and probably father of Benjamin, et al, is at 28 Minories circa 1818, and various Solomons come up at 26 Minories; Morris/Maurice Solomon is a family name, and he comes up as printer, stationer, engraver there in 1830. One of the widow's brothers lives at Alie Street - it's near the Jews' Hospital where all the Levi/Solomon children were helped; there is a Samuel Solomon who is the secretary of the Jews' Hospital, as well as a bookseller - could my Samuel Solomon be that Samuel Solomon? My Joseph Solomon is listed as an engraver (like his uncle back at 26 Minories?) at 2 Alie Street, and Samuel is later listed at Back Church Lane as a curiosity seller, though - how fancy a job would the secretary of the Jews' Hospital be? Anyone want to guess whether one would have to be highly educated for that? We know Solomon Levy of New Zealand was well enough educated to be able to teach Hebrew in Wellington, NZ, in his later years, at least.

I looked up streets of donors using the search function of the Old Bailey criminal records, and of course I ran the names through to see if anyone was every in a crime or a witness. Mainly it helped in establishing the flavour of the area, and it showed the street on a map, so I could see that "Cree" or "Creed Church" was a tiny lane off Leadenhall, so the family would use either or both to refer to the address, and I could see that one donor was a butcher who lived down the street from where the Solomon family was listed as living circa 1836, etc. The widow resettled at 8 Government Buildings, Commercial lane - gosh, that's half a block from her brother Joseph on Back Church Lane, where she also lived at the age of 13 - thank you, Pigot's - with Emanuel Levy, "Umbrella Maker". Is this her father or an older brother, Emanuel? Who knows - but I know before

she left for New Zealand, she and Elizabeth (Betsy) Levy, her future sister in law, gave that as their address. Clyde would have found that interesting - that his ancestor's sister was living with the Solomons; no living Levy relative in London? And among the donors to the widow - not a single Levy: her husband's family was truly out of London. One very useful tool was a *London AZ* street finder I picked up for fifty cents at the thrift shop; if you don't have it, you can probably get it on Amazon or somewhere. For anyone who sits around asking this patient list "where's Brixton?" as my poor late relative Clyde and I used to do: no longer. Between the maps on the Old Bailey site and my new trick of enlarging, say, map 63 of the London AZ (East London), names and relationships of streets like Great Prescott Street /Lemon/Alie/Leadenhall, etc are now much easier to see and figure out. I have also used this to check addresses for circumcisions in Myer Solomon's list, where I found both my great great great grandfather, Benjamin Woolf Levy, and his brother, Solomon Levy, sons of Jacob/John HaLevy/Levy/Levi. There's another Jacob HaLevy having children on this circumcision list circa 1816 - 1825, but he's at Little Queen Street (sponge merchant) and my Jacob (clockmaker) is at Holywell; again, the maps & directories helped establish the two distinct families. I have also found, I think, the marriage record of Esther's parents, but who knows - in the records of Hambro synagogue in May of 1820, Emanuel Solomon, Hebrew name Menachem Mendel, married Elizabeth (Beila) Lazarus, daughter of Joseph Lazarus of Cree Church Lane. He is the son of Asher, son of Nathan: he is a member; no other info. I know my Solomons named everybody in the family Emanuel - Esther's brother was Emanuel, they each had sons named Emanuel, plus, Esther's Ketuba gives her father's name as Emanuel, Hebrew name Menachem Mendel. I looked up every Lazarus I could in Jeffrey Mayer's pre-1850 London Jews/Commercial Traders database. I also cross checked in the Old Bailey records and my handy dandy AZ street finder and came up with the following: NO Lazarus donors were listed for the widow, circa 1854. Hmmm. But of course "Cree Church" and Leadenhall are in the thick of this tiny Jewish community. Of the relevant Lazarus names: Joseph Lazarus, 7 Cree Church Lane, Leadenhall, died 1817, Lazarus Lazarus, at 77 Leadenhall, tobacconist, mentioned in several Old Bailey

trials as a witness or giving character references for defendants. At that address, 7 Cree Church, there's Esther Lazarus, "pocket book manufacturer" from 1819 - 1825, and "dressmaker" in Robson in the 1830s. Who is this Esther? Joseph's wife? Elizabeth/Beila Lazarus's mother? If so, the fact that Elizabeth Lazarus Solomon named her daughter Esther after her mother makes sense. Although, as Clyde Hurrel would have said, I have no proof the Emanuel Solomon who married in Hambro in 1820 is my ancestor, I believe I am getting close to proving it through names and addresses.

So that's where I'm at. I know Esther's sister in law, Betsy Levy Hart, went with her to NZ in 1841, disappears for a while, and reappears, married to London born David Hart in Victoria, BC by 1860, so I looked up every Hart I could as well - or, rather, noted them when I did a street or donor search. So far, a few Harts at nearby addresses, but no proof. Anyway, long rambling note, but...if anyone can help me with that Hambro marriage, etc...say hi, and otherwise, hope my wacky search methods help some other insomniac out there. My husband sees me doing this and asks gently if I am "resurrecting dead Jews" - to which the answer is "yes".

Carolyn Hahn
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BEN or BAR?

Not long ago I asked, on the B-J list, if anyone could explain the difference between *ben* and the much rarer *bar* in patronymics. Most responses opted for "*son of Mr. XYZ*" and "*son of Rav XYZ*". However, since it was generally agreed that, in this instance, *Rav* would not necessarily imply *Rabbi*, in the strict connotation of that title, "*son of Mr./Sir/other honorific*" emerged as, probably, the most acceptable English rendition. Let me explain what prompted my original question.

My late American colleague, who provided the transcripts for many of the Synagogue records now posted on the B-J website, sent me the data in the form of flimsy carbon copies. Her antique typewriter harboured several "sticking" letters; she also seemed unwilling to replace worn typewriter ribbons (remember them?) or to jettison threadbare carbon papers (and those?). Added to these obstacles were innumerable notes, born of her encyclopaedic knowledge of the Anglo-Jewish families of the early 19th Century and an extraordinary ability to find links and connections, decades before Doreen Berger's invaluable "Jewish Victorian" publications, or the proliferation of other on-line archives became available. So you will understand the sheer number of hard-to-decipher pages involved.

Editing her transcripts, I had, regrettably, to discard most of this additional material. Much of it was, of course, speculative, although it is extraordinary how rarely she erred. Once or twice in these comments she noted "*ben, not bar*" or "*bar, not ben*". At the time, I did not appreciate the significance, and would excise the note along with maybe several other lines of knowledgeable insights. Too late I realise that, far from making an observation of minor academic interest, she was flagging up a difference from previous renditions of a recognised individual's Hebrew patronymic. Fast forward five years: B-J lister Danielle Sanderson posts a query regarding her MYERS ancestors - currently featured on Digital View - and the value of two seemingly insignificant letters ("en" or "ar") becomes clearer.

Post readmission, European Ashkenazi Jews, with very few exceptions, would not have had family names and would have had to adopt them on arrival in Britain. They could take the form of tribal names (*Asher, Levi*, etc); patronyms (*Abrahams, Samuel*); or place names (*Hamburger, Norden*). Combine this with the limited number of forenames used, and the result is duplication on a grand scale. The problem is compounded by the fact that in many early registers, few family names are recorded. Thus the Synagogue Secretary's careful noting of "*X bar Y*", rather than "*X ben Y*", assumes an added importance as another tool to help the researcher

distinguish between one *Abraham ben Jacob* and his half-dozen, or more, contemporary namesakes.

I have no remembrance of which of the thousands of transcribed records would have borne these notes which, through lack of understanding, I failed to include. In the event, it would be of no help to Danielle, whose particular request relates to a burial record taken from an LDS film, but the omission is a cause for regret, nonetheless.

Angela Shire



ANOTHER PLEA FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR SOURCES-AND THE CREATION OF NEW ONES!

Angela Shire's fascinating article in B-J News 8 made a plea that, in the future, "genealogists . . . search the records for themselves." This is something I have always considered to be the gold standard amongst genealogists. How many people simply accept what is online? How many go the extra mile demonstrated by Sherry with her Ehrengott/Errington¹ research?

There is still all manner of printed information sitting on shelves in libraries, yet to be catalogued or indexed for genealogical purposes. As an example, in the course of a certain research project, I discovered that a page was missing from a San Francisco city directory I was using, and I needed to find another copy. I knew there were six city directory collections in the San Francisco Bay Area - and I ended up cataloguing every available directory, from 1850 to 1988: quite a chore! I discovered, from the Excel spreadsheet I made, that there were quite a few years for which there was only one copy.

I also discovered, to my horror, that in some instances when libraries had re-bound well-worn directories they had included in the title a compound year date (e.g. 1907-08) when the publisher had only specified one year. Worse, there were also instances where the wrong year had been printed

on the spine! There has never been more truth in the saying "Don't judge a book by its cover." This is just one good reason for doing your own research. Not only do you learn something intimately, but others can benefit later on - if the database is uploaded to a web site, for example.

There is also another side to this plea, demonstrated by a discussion I was involved in after a presentation at a genealogical meeting here in the Bay Area. I stood up and asked everyone in the room how many of them had participated in the 2000 US Census. Naturally every hand shot up. I then asked how many had photocopied the forms prior to mailing them back. Not one hand was raised.

We are constantly involved in filling in forms, but do we make copies? How many people have made copies of their driving licences, or their passports, or any other official documents? Hands up all of you who made copies of your 2001 UK Census forms! I live in the United States, but I did get my parents to make a copy of theirs and send it to me. At least future generations won't have to wait 100 years for that information!

Another thing genealogists ought to be doing is making sure that all vital events are recorded in local and specialist newspapers. We are the self-appointed family historians, and we're the ones who need accurate information. So we should be the ones who record that information for posterity. When my parents celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2002, I placed an announcement in the *Jewish Chronicle*: for the cost of a few pounds, anyone can achieve immortality!

In other words, as official historians of our families, we should ensure that future genealogists have it a little easier than we have; we who mutter and groan about past record-keeping. I'm sure we won't want our great grandchildren cursing us from the other side of the grave because nothing of genealogical value was recorded on our gravestones.

Jeremy G Frankel
ex-Edgware, Middlesex, England now Berkeley, California, USA

¹ See B-J News 8



A MITZVAH FOR US ALL

Can you do a good deed? Can you give something small, and watch it become - with the help of the 250-plus other members of this List - something big? Can you make a difference?

Londonderry, Northern Ireland - hardly a hub of Jewish culture and civilisation - has a reference section in its library, and a City Archive, with almost no Jewish acquisitions. In an area where Christian sectarian differences have, for so long, been so important, Jews are practically forgotten. Practically - but not quite: behind the scenes there is a man with a mission. Sean Curley, with no budget, has set himself the task of setting up Jewish Materials sections in both repositories. He is a man with a dream: a dream that one day the people of Derry will have reference facilities in which to research Jews. Sean is looking for any and all materials, hard or electronic copy - providing it's legal, of course. No paper is too small, no tome too heavy; if you can get it to him, he'll accept it. All you need to do is be willing to part with it, and pay the cost of getting it there.

This is something that I would like us, as a List, to take on as a project for 2007. I would like to hear from Sean this time next year that he has received 250 items, one from every member of the List. Do we care enough to leave something behind for others who tread in our wake? Are we all generous enough to try to find something, however small, to donate? Some people have already given; they certainly shouldn't assume Sean would reject a further gift! However, this is principally an appeal to everyone else, whether or not they saw the original plea on List, to act now - please!

If you have something to give, please contact Sean, in the first instance, at member@scurley7.wanadoo.co.uk

Sherry Landa, Salford UK
(on behalf of Sean Curley, Londonderry, Northern Ireland)



HOW TO...FIND UNHAPPY FACTS

Much of my information on my paternal grandmother's family has been researched by my second cousin, Peter Norden.

However, until recently, we have both been frustrated by a sustained failure to find any record of our great-grandmother's death. Then, on the recent Friday-the-13th, I received an email from Peter and, with his permission, an edited version of his revelation follows.

As you know, Anna NORDEN, née HEILBRON, has become a bit of an obsession with me. The absence of a date of death coupled with the unusual entry in the 1891 census - if you remember, her name had been crossed out - just made me all the more curious to find out what had become of her.

She had featured in earlier censuses, and we had both speculated that on that night in 1891 she was away visiting relations. She had brothers in various towns in England and Scotland, but the censuses didn't show her visiting any of them. So, had she gone to her native Holland to visit relations there?

More questions are posed by the 1901 census: her husband Henry is living with their son Isaac, and is described as married - not a widower - so, presumably, Anna is still alive - but where? In the Family Records Centre today I re-checked 30 years of death entries (1901 - 1930) and found no trace of an Anna or Annie NORDEN. The only death I could find was of a Hannah NORDEN who died aged 72 in 1909; this was about the right age, but it was in Barnet, quite a distance from Haggerston where Henry had been living in 1901.

It was then that a horrible thought occurred to me. We lived for a while in Barnet, and just opposite our house was the old Friern Mental Hospital, now closed. Could our Annie have been a patient, and died there? At the FRC I turned to the 1901 census again, looking for a NORDEN born in Holland 65 or so years earlier and residing in Barnet.

Nothing! So I tried entering even fewer details: female, born in Holland and living in Barnet. What came up was still a shock, even if I had anticipated it. There was an H.N. - only initials were used for inmates - married, aged 58 (!) but born in Holland, and described as a lunatic and an inmate or patient of the Colney Hatch Asylum. Everything fitted into place now, but even so it was still a terrible confirmation and one I wish I hadn't found.

The 1891 census for the Asylum wasn't conclusive. Again, there was an H.N., but she was a widow with no place of birth given; however, the age of 58 this time was closer. I consulted a member of the FRC staff who suggested I try the nearby London Metropolitan Archives, where I might be able to find her full name and date of admission. At the LMA I ordered 3 tomes to view in the reading room. The first volume titled "Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum - Colney Hatch" contained the admissions from July 1888 to July 1894 and there, on the very first page of the Ns, I found her:

Date of Admission: 30 April 1890
Name of Patient: NORDEN Hannah
Parish of Which Chargeable: Shoreditch

By the time she died, she had been incarcerated in that place for almost twenty years. I was so saddened by the thought of the conditions that must have existed there at that time, and that she had to endure; saddened too, for our respective grandparents, your Sarah aged 24 and my Abraham aged 19, to have lost their mother in such a way - twenty years before she died! To think that I lived for 5 years opposite that Hospital, never knowing that our great grandmother had been confined there. Now the building, which boasts the longest corridor in Europe, has been converted into luxury apartments for wealthy celebrities.

I have ordered copies of her death certificate and of her Asylum admission entry, and will forward copies to you.

The death certificate confirms beyond any doubt that "Hannah" NORDEN was indeed our great-grandmother Anna (Annie) NORDEN. Peter had finally found her, laid to rest at last, by following up a fateful flash of inspiration on a traditionally unlucky date!

Mike Joseph, Ashford, Middlesex, England,
with grateful acknowledgments and thanks to
Peter Norden, London, England

HOW TO....FIND THE UNFINDABLE



We all get stuck, from time to time, with our research. Everyone has one of those lines where everything grinds to a halt because a relation can't be found in a vital record index, or is "missing" from a census. We have all tried searching by surname only, or forename only, or using soundex. We've all tried to second-guess enumerators and transcribers and looked for SAUNDERS as LAUNDERS because Victorian Ls look like S-es.

However, recently on List, something new came to light. A member *knew* that Susser had found her family in the 1841 census, but she couldn't find the entry in the on-line version. She asked for help, and the result was a little surprising. The folio she wanted had not been transcribed - up to fifty names were missing - but another list member found it. How did she do it? She found a page a little way away from the missing pages, and then used the next and previous page arrows to navigate to the one she wanted. You can do this with the CD versions of censuses, or the films - in fact you have to if you want to search a street - but I did not think it would be possible with the on-line versions. So, there it is: another little tip to help knock down some of the brick walls. Now, if only I could find the marriage of...(shuffles off, muttering to self)....

Sherry Landa
Salford, Lancs (based on list correspondence between Eve and Jocelyn)



A BAR MITZVAH WITH A RICH HERITAGE

The Bar Mitzvah of Matan Daniel GNESSON took place at Beit Shean, Israel, in the shul located in the beautiful guesthouse where all his family and friends stayed for the weekend. Matan, the son of Helen & Stuart, grandson of Arnold and the late Daphne GNESSON, and of Ruth and John RAISMAN, read the complete sedra. As the shul's sifrei Torah were Sephardi (vertical), Stuart had arranged for his cousin David LUSTIG to bring his own very old Ashkenazi sefer. He had bought it from a shul in Hull that was closing down, and had dedicated it to his wife's late mother, Rene FISHMAN, and his own parents.

Using the JC Archives, Matan had discovered that his maternal ancestors, the LICHTENSTEINs and the RAISMANs, lived in Hull and district from the 1850s, so it is very likely that he read from the same sefer as his 4x great-grandfathers. The mantle covering the sefer had been lovingly made and embroidered by his maternal great-grandmother Rebecca DORFMAN, née BINSTOCK, for Matan's shul in Israel, so the family connections were very strong.

He had also confirmed that his great-great-grandmother, Rebecca RAISMAN, née LICHTENSTEIN, was headmistress of the Hull Hebrew Girls' School¹, and that her father in-law Moshy RAISMAN was one of the founders of the New Briggate Shul, Leeds. Moshy started the first commercial matzo bakery in Leeds in 1875, trading as RAISMAN & Morris². He later moved to Preston, trading as RAISMAN & Co.³ and, during the 1914-18 war, producing biscuits for the military. The firm moved back to Leeds about 1920, and rumour has it that the factory was sold to Rakusens.

Matan also found a report of a rose bush being planted in memory of his late grandmother Daphne GNESSON, a teacher at Rosh Pinner School⁴. Another covered his mother Helen's Bat Mitzvah, the first in Princes Road Shul, Liverpool⁵.

If anyone has any information on any of my antecedents I would be pleased to hear from them.

John Raisman
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JC sources

¹14/10/1892, p16; ²11/3/1892, advertisement; ³26/2/1915, p 26; ⁴5/2/1988, p15; ⁵3/9/1976, p11



MISPOOCHAH OR THE BIRTH OF A HEDGE

Once upon a time, before so many records became available on-line, there was a girl...who thought she would make the world a better place for researchers by collating Jewish records she found relating to Leeds, Yorkshire. If a marriage or a burial or a census entry or a newspaper article, between 1840 and 1918, referred to Leeds she would collate it into a massive database. Of course, if she had stopped to think of the work involved, she would never have started. The resulting giant tree would become known as the All Leeds Database (ALD): a series of trees within trees of people who formed part of Leeds Jewry. There was a problem, though. No, not the normal troubles of whether or not this Jacob COHEN is the same as that Jacob COHEN, or how to ensure people know about the countless variant spellings of names like RAISMAN. The problem was that Leeds Jews didn't conveniently just get born, marry, live and quietly die in Leeds. They mingled and meandered - and, in some cases, fairly galloped - their way around the country. They had the audacity to be born in one place, and die somewhere else, and to have fourteen residences in forty years, without a by your leave to the researcher trying to trace them some hundred years later.

It is true, if we are all descended from Adam and Eve, that we are all related: mispoochah. So, when is a tree a tree and when does it become a hedge? Where do you draw the line about attaching one person to

another? In a personal tree, one is free to choose where to stop. Some people, for example, might put in-laws on their tree, but then stop. With something like the ALD there is no stopping. The in-law of the in-law of the Joseph LEVY you input a moment ago is in fact the sister's fiancé's cousin's half-brother from a first marriage. Every in-law brings a whole new family - and problems. You know you have probably gone far enough, when you realise the database includes almost as many families who never saw Leeds as those who lived there. It has got a bit out of hand, perhaps, when you realise that the in-law of the West Country Jew you're reading about was a Manchester rabbi, and that you've seen his name on authorisations where the couple he married have some tenuous link to Leeds. You know you've "lost it" when you start to wonder: should this rabbi be in the database and if so, how do you note him?

When you get to 30,000 people and you still haven't finished the 1901 census, or all the marriages after 1910, and you have hardly touched the burials, you start to wonder. When you find yourself making files of Jews from other areas, "just in case" they might link to Leeds later, you probably need help. When you start to think what a good idea it would be if all the databases ever produced by anyone could all be merged by a computer, then you have to consider your sanity. So, be careful and be afraid, very afraid, when you think we are all mispoochah, that you don't wake up one day and find, that despite your best efforts, you have turned into....me!

Sherry Landa, Salford UK - in therapy

MISPOOCHAH OR THE BIRTH OF A HEDGE - REPRISE

Social interactions make a tree not just names and dates. Vying against each other are the mispoochah or amount of information, and the bare facts in a tree. A tree can groan under the weight of its branches when one counts mispoochah, but it is ever interesting. I had written the first part of this article and knew it needed something else. I was pondering

on what that was when a chain of events unfolded which I feel beautifully illustrates what I was trying to say.

Elsewhere in this edition, you will read an article by John Raisman, about a Bar Mitzvah. John contacted me to say he was submitting this after seeing an article about the RAISMAN family, in B-J News 2, by his cousin Theresa Stewart, and a review of his other cousin Geoffrey's book, in the same edition. Theresa and I were corresponding about something else entirely, at the time, and I mentioned I had been "talking" to her cousin John. She explained that John is actually her second cousin, once removed, being the great-grandson of Moshy RAISMAN, while Geoffrey is her first cousin, as she they are both grandchildren of Hoshy RAISMAN, Moshy's brother. Here it might have ended, but Conrad's name cropped up, and I asked Theresa if she was related to him, because I am - very vaguely - related to his wife. Conrad, it turns out, is Theresa's second cousin. His maternal grandmother was Esther BAKER, and one of Esther's brothers was Israel BAKER, Theresa's maternal grandfather. Esther & Israel's older sister, Leah, married Jacob BARNETT and was the great-grandmother of Mervyn BARNETT, husband of our list member Naomi. Conrad is married to Margaret, whose mother was Renie LEVY. Renie's oldest sister, Nellie, was married to Julius BERNSTEIN and Julius's mother, Leah, was the half-sister of my grandfather Dick. By my reckoning John, Theresa, Geoffrey, Mervyn, Conrad and I are all mispoochah. I daren't even start on how I am related to other list members.

Sherry Landa, Salford UK

www.stephenmorse.org has some new search capabilities. Stephen was awarded the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award last August. Not surprisingly he continues with his excellent work by allowing us now to use his search engine to search some British and Canadian censuses.



COINCIDENCE AND PERSEVERENCE

Some years ago a Benjamin Dunham in the USA responded to my posting, on the Jewish Gen Family Finder site, for information on the JOEL family. He asked about a Coleman JOEL, thus making it apparent that, alas, we were looking for different families; but I offered to help him if I could. He had researched many JOEL families, and offered to share what he knew with me.

Ben had masses of information on my JOELS and sent me a long descendant chart which was most helpful. I told him that I lived in England and could easily access records which perhaps he could not. He was seeking information about a branch of the JOELS in Brighton - where I live! I could make enquiries at my local synagogue and, at Brighton library, I could look in old street directories for names from the list he gave me.

The old disused cemetery in Florence Place is in poor condition, the stones mostly unreadable. I pulled back some brambles and found Samuel JOEL'S gravestone, but he was not on Ben's list. Later, I discovered he was the brother of my paternal 3 x great-grandfather Isaac JOEL, born c.1811. I was not much help to Ben at that time, but coincidence has a long arm and I was able to repay him in due course.

He asked if I knew anything about Henry MARKS, born c.1838, the second husband of Priscilla LEAPMAN, née JOEL, another Brighton connection. I was able to tell him that Henry MARKS was my maternal great-grandmother's brother, and I sent him my MARKS family tree. Finally, in this tale of coincidence, I was researching the family of my paternal 3 x great grandfather, John MITCHELL, born c.1810. His sister Esther, born c.1805, was married in the Great Synagogue in 1823 to the same Coleman JOEL about whom Ben was enquiring! This makes Ben my distant cousin.

This story of co-operation shows that, in Anglo Jewish genealogy, families

can become closely linked over the centuries without knowing it. One must never reject out of hand the possibility of a coincidental connection, no matter how unlikely.

Georgina Phillips
November 2006.



INDEXERS DON'T ALWAYS GET IT RIGHT

In the main, Ancestry is good value: but strange anomalies can crop up when you're searching. One of the biggest problems many researchers have is thinking that, because they know everything about an individual, they ought to fill in every field. NO! One cannot assume that Ancestry's database contains the same information, or that spellings coincide. If you submit five pieces of information, and Ancestry has only four of them, you won't get a hit. If a transcriber made a spelling error, again, you won't get a hit. That said, a truncated name followed by an asterisk is a good search tool, although one can end up ploughing through a large dataset.

Because of this problem with mangled names, one trick I have taught myself is to search for someone without using any name whatsoever! As there are many other fields, I try to use these to reduce the dataset to a manageable number to search through and see if the mangled ancestor is hiding there

As an example of this, I was looking for a Thalia YAFFEY in the 1930 US Census. I almost drove myself crazy using all sorts of permutations in my search but, eventually, I found her. The Ancestry indexer had misread the gorgeous italic script as GAFFEY! I was then able to tell that three-year-old girl - now the almost-80 year-old member of my genealogical society - that I had found her in the census!

My most recent project has provided me with the best illustration so far. I was searching for a family in the 1900 US Census; a typical family consisting of a father, Samuel Alexander, his wife Olga, and their three sons, Adolph, Theodore and Irving.

The enumerator showed up sometime on June 6th 1900, to enumerate the families of their street. Although Samuel and Olga had then been living in the States for some fifteen years, there could have been a problem with the heavy accent the enumerator encountered, or a mutual lack of understanding. Whatever it was, when he had finished, the enumerator had written down BRESLAUER as the family name: this was actually Olga's maiden name. He had also possibly misconstrued Samuel's answer when asking for his first name, as he had written down what looked like "Alisander". Hence the head of household was recorded as Alisander Breslauer.

That might have been the end of the story, but for something that was to happen a little over one hundred years later.

Ancestry.com had been indexing local and federal records and placing them online. As they were dealing with millions of names, the company contracted and sub-contracted the work and, in many instances, English was not the indexers' native tongue. They were also probably urged to work as fast as possible.

Thus, in the Ancestry compiled index to the 1900 US Census, the indexer inadvertently noted down the name of the person immediately above Samuel: someone in the previous family - and a woman at that! Hence, anyone looking for Samuel Alexander and his family in the Ancestry index to the 1900 US Census will - albeit with considerable ingenuity - find instead an Elizabeth Breslauer married to Olga . . . with three sons!

A shame really, as this was the only surviving census Samuel ever appeared in; he had emigrated two years after the 1880 Census, the 1890 Census was destroyed in a fire, and he died one year before the 1910 Census.

Jeremy G Frankel
ex-Edgware, Middlesex, England now Berkeley, California, USA



WHERE A CHANCE WEBSITE FIND MAY LEAD. .

A message on a genealogical forum, pointing to a website for World War 2 evacuees, set me browsing through a page of messages from people searching for contacts.

One that caught my eye was from a Dorothy Yeldham, who mentioned her evacuation to the Lincolnshire village of Barnack.

Now Barnack was the place my sister Betty and I found ourselves on 2nd September 1939, together with Dorothy and her cousin. We knew neither of them, but discovered that Dorothy was from the same North London school as the two of us. We four were among the last to be chosen by the local people accepting evacuees: most wanted only single children - or two of the same sex, no doubt for reasons of sleeping accommodation. My sister and I were lucky to be selected by a really nice elderly couple, whereas Dorothy and her male cousin were moved to another village where they were not quite so lucky. They eventually returned to London, and Dorothy was moved again, this time to Chartridge in the Chiltern Hills of Buckinghamshire - which is where my wife Hilary and I now live: amazing coincidence? There's lots more!

Dorothy was very unhappy to begin with, for she was billeted with an extremely unpleasant woman and her daughter. They were sadistic, and very nearly killed her and another child, holding pillows over their heads until they could hardly breathe. She was too scared to tell her mother, and found friendship with Billy Scott, a local boy who taught her much about the countryside.

Eventually her mother found out how unhappy she was, and planned to take her back to London, but her friend Billy's family took her in. He and his sister Jane regarded her as their other sister, and she was very happy. Sadly, Billy later died in a road accident. Dorothy and Jane remained close friends for many years, but they lost touch some time ago.

Dorothy now lives in Nottingham, and poor health has left her virtually housebound; she has been trying, without success, to find Jane. I spoke to John - another local resident - who knew the Scotts and is a friend of Jane. He gave me her phone number, and I put her and Dorothy in touch; rumour has it that, after a full month, they haven't stopped talking yet!

At the time of writing, Hilary has just brought in a large bunch of mint and roots from Alf, whose wife Freda once lived in 'The Bell', the pub opposite our house where her father was the publican. Dorothy remembers them well.

The story hasn't finished yet!

Shirley Collier is a leading member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, to which Hilary and I belong; we have attended meetings together without actually knowing each other. Now Shirley's maiden name was Rose, and Hilary's mother's maiden name was Collier! Also, Shirley went to the same school as Dorothy and my sister and I, in Stoke Newington, North London, and was a close childhood friend and neighbour of Dorothy.

Shirley and I were recently invited to lunch in a super new restaurant in a listed building right opposite our old school. In the 1930s the building was a maternity hospital - and that is where Shirley was born, just one day after I was, nearby!

So many coincidences - it has been difficult to know where to start! However, it has been a wonderful experience, finding contacts for Dorothy - and it's still on-going. Very recently, I was able to send her several photographs of the village as it is today, including the places where she lived. Moreover, even as I've been relating these amazing coincidences, Hilary has come across another local with memories of Dorothy, and anecdotes for me to pass to her

Stan Rose, in the Chiltern Hills "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty"



THE DIARY OF ISRAEL DAVIS

Introduction

Israel Davis was born in Nottingham in 1841, the fourth son of Joel Davis, a Polish immigrant who was then head of the Jewish community there. Joel Davis died in 1863. His widow, Rosa, and seven sons, including Israel, moved to Birmingham shortly afterwards.

By 1873, Israel owned a ship with which he traded in the Pacific, from the South Seas to the Arctic. His Diary consists of a long letter to his mother and brothers. It is dated 1st July 1874, in the Arctic Ocean, but covers a voyage starting in Honolulu in December 1873 and continuing until September 1874; it was then "posted" with a mail boat to Australia. There are a few subsequent, shorter, letters.

Israel Davis's letters came into the possession of Mary, daughter of his youngest brother, Michael. After her father died, Mary lived with a Naomi Birnberg at a private school in Birchington, Kent. The original letters had become nearly illegible with age, and Mary therefore transcribed them. She entitled this transcript *Uncle David's Diary*, although the original letters are clearly signed "Israel". Later, Mary had her handwritten transcript typed under the heading *Letters written by David Israel (John) Davis to His Mother and Brothers*, subsequently deleting *John*. However, it is clear both from the signatures, and another reference, that the writer of the letters called himself "Israel". Mary had moved to Blackheath, London, and contacted the descendants of her late Uncle Jacob, most of whom lived in Manchester. She eventually passed Israel's letters, and their transcripts, to Marjorie Mendoza, a grand-daughter of Jacob, who lived near Blackheath. Mary Davis died in 1970, in Middlesex.

Myra Corwen, another grand-daughter of Jacob Davis, met Mary on several occasions and was familiar with the original diary. She maintained that, in his journeys to the Far East, Israel Davis had met Robert Louis Stevenson - although the diary contains no reference to this-

and that Stevenson refers to Israel in one of his books, possibly *Ebbtide*. The present writer cannot confirm this. The letters, although reasonably literate, include some peculiarities in spelling or in grammar, which have largely been preserved in the current copy.

B-J News Editor's Note

The author of the above unsigned Introduction is the late Vivian Pereira-Mendoza, whose widow is the Marjorie Mendoza to whom Mary Davis entrusted the letters, and who now owns the copyright. The email from her daughter Josephine, kindly giving permission for publication, reads thus:

Dear Sherry

Thank you for your email re Israel Davis's Diary...I have been trying to find information amongst my late father's papers about the origin of our copy but can only presume it was from my maternal grandmother's cousin who I knew as a child. I, therefore, know no reason why you cannot publish this and give you our permission on behalf of my mother.

I hope your readers find it interesting.

Kind regards

Jo Pereira-Mendoza

The Diary and Introduction have been submitted to B-J News by John Raisman, who received his copy from Vivian Pereira-Mendoza.

We cannot know what changes may have been made to the original letters, whether intentionally or inadvertently, in the course of the various transcriptions. We have not amended the version received from John, for publication in B-J News, save where we are confident that we are reversing simple errors in the transcriptions; e.g., "Sudsy" has been restored to "Sunday"! One date, presumably illegible in the original letter, and quoted as "nth January", is left in that form; other "peculiarities in spelling *and* grammar" also survive uncorrected.

We're sure that Jo Pereira-Mendoza's hope that "...your readers find it interesting" is about to be amply fulfilled, as you read the fascinating:

The Diary of Israel Davis.

**Cape East, Arctic Ocean,
July 1st, 1874**

Dear Mother and Brothers

In anticipation of finding some opportunity to forward you this letter, I have commenced writing to let you know my whereabouts, and to give you some faint idea of my cruise, but to go into details would fill a considerable sized book, so you must be satisfied with a rough journal, however small, will give you all particulars and leave room for large imaginations.

December 14th 1873. *All being ready for Sea, topsail sheeted home, and laying in Honolulu Harbour with stem line fast to the Wharf, find breeze blowing from the NE & fine weather at 11 a.m., took pilot and cut loose from the Dock. At noon outside the reef, fresh breeze, made all sail, and stood to the Southward, but too good to last, and my old luck commenced to show itself. At 2 p.m. a sudden squall struck us and carried away the foretopmast, and doing other damages, so had to put back, and at 5 p.m. anchored outside the Harbour, & went up to replace the damages. Two days we lay there, and got a new topmast, got it up, and the rigging replaced, and then made a fresh start once more with a fair wind and plenty of it. All went along well and Sunday arrived off Bannings Island(?) I went on shore in our Whaleboat, delivered papers and letters, and found no trade to be done. At 4 p.m. returned to the Vessel, and proceeded on the voyage.*

Friday January 9th 1874 *arrived off Byron's Island, traded for some Straw Hats for Tobacco. In the afternoon went on shore in a native canoe, found one man living there having been on the Island some 25 years. Obtained a few fowls and some Cooanuts and returned to the Vessel. Wind had then increased to make quite a heavy sea. Two large canoes were alongside trading. At 6 p.m. they left and went to the Island. The next morning, it being more moderate, a canoe came off and informed us that the two canoes had not reached the Island and it was feared they were lost. One canoe had 25 and the other had 14 people in them. So we left there and proceeded on our cruise, hoping to pick them up.*

Sunday, January 18th (1874) *We arrived at Appian. I went on the boat. I had to go some 15 miles to find a passage through the reef. The next day got into the Harbour and let go the anchor, the first time since leaving Honolulu. There was an American Missionary and his wife living here. Owing to the natives being at war, there was no trade to be done, so we remained there three days, got plenty of fish and fowls, some few yams and pumpkins - then left.*

Tuesday, nth January (1874) *Arrived at Pitt Island. Went to work next day after seeing the King and making him some presents, trading for cocoanut oil in exchange for rum, muskets, calico etc. Remained there 30 days and got 100 brrls. oil, and plenty of Fish and Ducks. The King came off every day and brought young cocoanuts and fish and remained a greater part of the day. He got up a dance onshore. I went to spend a day with him. The natives are perfectly honest and trustworthy and will not trouble Foreigners, although they were noted caniballs a few years ago, and now they eat their dead when killed in battle which they continually employed at. They have some very large canoes and sail exceedingly swift in smooth water. Their weapons consist of large Spanish Knives, Hatchets, Muskets, Native spears made out of Oyster shells, which make them a very dangerous weapon. They live on Cocoanuts and Fish which they eat in a raw state. Both sexes are tattoed and wear no clothing but a narrow petticoat of young cocoanut leaves, which does not reach to their knees. After there we went to Apamama. During the passage, our Cook died, buried him at sea. He was a native of Chillii.*

July 27th (1814). *Went on shore to the King's house, took some presents for him, stayed a short time and returned to the Vessel. Next morning, the King came aboard and inspected our trade and made arrangements which were far different from other Islands. I had to go ashore every day on a small Island, take my Casks for oil and my tobacco, and the natives came from the main island and brought the oil. No one allowed to go on board the Vessel but the King and Chiefs. I got 14 barrels per day of good quality, also got a lot of shells for pipes, scissors, beads, etc The King has full power over the people, is very strict with them. One man put about a pint of water amongst the oil he brought and if had not been for my interference they would have killed him. They killed one man for stealing two cocoanuts and if they catch a man making liquer they put him in a*

canoe and set him adrift. We got 100 barrels of oil here in 3 weeks. The people are very timid towards foreigners, but they are not to be trusted. They killed eight foreigners a few years ago. The Barassa English Man of War went there and killed some of the chiefs for it and since that time they (show?) some respect. They are a strong, healthy set of people and are much feared by the natives of other islands. I don't think they would hesitate to take a small vessel providing they had a good opportunity. The food consists of cocoanuts and Fish which they eat raw to a great measure. They all smoke tobacco and none but the King and chiefs are allowed to buy strong drink. Their are similar to the other islands but a great deal better made and carry from 6 to 10 people and are used with a triangular sail made out of cocoanut leaves and sail very fast and are good weatherley craft. The dress of the men, if such it can be called, is very poor, consisting of a place of matting wrapped round their waist, which they take off and use for a bed at night. The women wear petticoats made of young leaves and does not reach one half way down to their knees. They are a very superstitious set and are well acquainted with Astronomy, all the fixed stars are known to them and they have names for them which they use in many different ways, for telling fortunes, for fishing, also to tell how a Vessel will arrive to bring them a supply of tobacco. They allow their Dead to remain in the House 12 to 15 days and then bury them. There have been several attempts to put missionaries on the Island but to no purpose as the King will not allow any foreigners to remain there. They do not work on Sundays and do what cooking they require on Saturday nights. Also they catch fish on Saturday for Sunday's use. There is nothing grown on the Islands but cocoanuts, no wood or water but rain water which they collect in ponds, and consequently becomes very bad in a short time. Poultry and fish are very plentiful. We gat 60 chickens for a musket, cost 81200. There are also a few turkies. It is very seldom a Vessel comes to this Island as little can be said in their favour, although they appear very friendly to foreigners, they are not to be trusted. We left this Island November a~(1874) and after a good run made Ocean Island. There is neither Harbour nor Anchorage, the shores being steep all round. The natives are all leaving this island on account of having been stricken with a plague. Up to the time of our arrival, they had had no rain for seven years. We arrived in April 1874. All the cocoanut trees had died out and left the people in a starving condition. A number have been taken away by different Whaleships to Pleasant Island. There are still a number living there. They have no trade, with

the exception of tobacco, which grows wild all over the island. Three days later, arrived off Pleasant Island; like Ocean Island there is neither Harbour nor Anchorage. There are several foreigners living there. I went on shore in the afternoon and returned in the evening. We got a lot of matts (door mats made out of cocoanut) in exchange for tobacco, powder, shot and long knives. There is about 100 barrels of oil to be had yearly from this Island in exchange for half cash and half trade. The natives are a filthy set and always at war with each other & it is on no account safe for a small Vessel to get close in shore, especially at the East End of the Island. There have been several Vessels taken in the last ten years, all hands murdered and the vessels burnt. The foreigners here are what is termed Sydney Lags and are of a very bad character. I think they cause the trouble between the vessels and the natives. They are great thieves and should not be allowed on vessels decks unless (the crew are) well armed and prepared for them. There is neither wood nor water for a Vessel, but Pigs, Poultry and Fish are plentiful & cheap. The fish are caught when young and small and raised in ponds of rain-water, which makes them like freshwater fish and very good eating. From there we went to Ascencion (Bonapete), Strongs (?) Island, Wellington Island and McAskills. I cannot give you particlars of these places as it would fill a good sized book. As they are so frequently visited by Vessels, their histories are known to the world.

May 1st(1874). Arrived at my old station, Guani. Found all well there and greatly in want of goods which I did not have. Stayed there a week and sailed along the group of the Bonni Islands. Recruited the Vessel, got all in good order and sailed for the north.

June 1st Sighted Bebring Island and then got head winds and gales and got well towards Manchatka shores. June 10th. Made Cape Bebring and got fast in the ice for four days. A canoe came off with some 12 men and women, brought a little walrus ivory to trade, returned in the evening. Next day, got away, went to part Providence (?).....small Whale ship. Remained there two days and then started to Bebring straight to Cape East then to Diomide Island, Cape Prince of Wales and a general cruise all round until July 2nd. Left for St. Lawrence Bay and went to an Anchor. 4. got under weigh, when going out saw a schooner coming in, so we put back & spent the day together & very lucky it was for it

was the General Harvey from San Francisco via Honolulu. You cannot imagine my surprise when Capt. Redfield handed me your welcome letters of Feb. 24th and after an eager perusal to find all well T.G. but before going into the details of it, I will give you a faint description of this God-forsaken country which literally speaking is nothing but a mass of barren rocks and mountains covered by snow, its Iron-bound shore packed with ice. Summer continues from the middle of June until the middle of September and it is daylight the whole time, as the sun does not set. The remainder of the year it is Night, dark and cold, visited only by heavy Gales and Snowstorms with no light but the Northern Lights which shine with great brilliance. The Inhabitants are few and scattered all along the coast, living in huts made of skins and Walrus hides. They have no fixed place of residence but are continually on the move, building their huts on the most bleak and barren Spots, living on the Walrus, Seals and Whales, which they eat raw and drink the Oil. Their clothing consists of Deer skins. There are plenty of white and red Foxes, also of White Bears. Ducks of various species are to be seen in thousands, only in the summer months, also wild geese. Their Boats are made of Walrus Hide, stretched on frames made out of driftwood and are capable of carrying fifteen to twenty people. They use a sail also made out of thin Seal Skins. The people seem to be a very robust healthy set & seem to be perfectly contented with their lot in life. All they ask for is Rum and Tobacco for which they exchange Whalebone and Walrus Ivory, also Skins and a little Whale Oil. They do not crave after foreign fineries of food. A good Musket is a great boon to them also knives. They have no king or ruler of the people but live in peace amongst themselves and do not know anything about warfare. Sickness is little known amongst them and I have seen men, suppose, age from 80 to 100 years old, paddling in the boats often.

July 5th. Left St. Lawrence Bay after exchanging books and papers with the Officer..... and continued cruising, but owing to the vast masses of floating ice could not make much progress, lost the best anchor and fathoms of chain which was snapped like a pipe stem by a cake of Ice. Worked round to get into the Anaidav(?) Gulf but could not get in as it was full of Ice, some cakes which were 20 feet thick. Went back to East Providence, there filled our water casks, and on July 23rd left, bound for Hololulu. 26th passed St Mather Island. 2th., close to Rawls(?) and saw some thousands of fur seals, then set in thick weather and calm and not until 1st August did we get clear of the Fox Islands. Then the wind came

out ahead and now it is 4th August and have been out 21 days and not half way down and if we had had good winds we would have been in Honolulu by this time. We are now lying becalmed and what little there is made on the long and tiresome voyage, we are ... by men's wages and food. I cannot say what will be made out of the voyage until the cargo is disposed of which consists of 170 barrels of cocoanut oil, 60 lbs, tortoise shell, 100 doormats, 3 barrels shells, 51300 in cash, 100 barrels of whale oil, £3000 lbs of walrus ivory, 500 lbs of whalebone, 50 fort(?) skins, 2 bear skins, 100 goat skins, 1000 lbs. bullock hide. The expense of sailing the Vessel is 6~200 p. month, besides loss of anchor, chain, sails etc. Now here I cannot find anything about profit, only hope to find a good market for the cargo. I think a Vessel say of 400 tons fitted out in England for 3 or 4 years could do well in this trade as there is on an average 20,000 lbs of ivory, 10,000 of bone, 200 barrels of oil besides skins which the natives get every year. I had to pay for my trade some 50% over the English prices and the trade suitable for the South Seas 75 -100% over cost so you see I have had to work for others and the Insurance is very high. I paid 88 dollars before leaving Honolulu, insurance on \$12,000 for the voyage. Wages are also very high, and also provisions. shall try and make some different arrangements when I get back and if I can sell my Vessel, I shall come home at once, and then likely to begin a different kind of one, unless I can see a chance of making a good living there. In that case, salt water will never wet my stern sheets again. I am sorry to say my health has been very indifferent since I got up here. It is the sudden change of climate, I suppose. It has been very trying heat here, Mist, Fogs, Dews and Light Rains & Storms & Snow the whole time I have been here and I have to be up night and day. Being so much in Tropical Climates gave me a severe shaking-up, but since leaving the Arctic I have improved and I think will be alright in a few days. A light breeze is springing up so shall have this for a few days.

August 27th. Since writing this last, we have been blessed with good weather and have been making the last three days 200 to 220 miles p.day We are now about 200 miles from Honolulu and hope to be there on Saturday. So I shall finish the letter in order not to lose any time, as I cannot say when a Vessel will leave there for San Francisco. I am looking over yours of Feb. 24th I must say that I am truly sorry that I have been the cause of such uneasiness on account of your not receiving any letters from me, yet I assure you it has not been for want of

any good will of mine to write, as for the voyage before this I wrote to you from Guana via Manila, also upon my arrival at Honolulu early in October, I sent you a paper and a packet three days after my arrival. As I was daily expecting to make some arrangements as to my future moves kept postponing giving you any particulars. You must see that there is little or no chance of sending you any letters when upon a voyage, as a Vessel might be out 12 months and not meet with a single opportunity of communicating with you. For instance, it is now nine months since I left Honolulu and I have not seen the first chance of dropping you a line, as the only chance of doing well in a trading voyage is to avoid opposition and therefore to keep away from other vessels. No, my dear Brothers, I do not think you have entirely forgotten me, nor is there any forgetfulness on my part, for many a sleepless night have I passed thinking of those I could not wrong, even by a shadow of a thought, thinking what I might have been if it had not been for my youthful folly and the evil consequences of keeping bad company, and not being a dutiful son to my dear Mother who kept whispering good counsel in my ears. have been justly punished for my disobedience and as my dear Mother prophesied, have been sorry for it. ("Mark me, Israel, you will be sorry for it") Those words have haunted me through all my troubles and misfortunes and, like the writings of Belshazzar, have appeared in letters of fire and followed my inmost thoughts, through this wide, wide world. As to my prospects, I really am no better off now than when I left Yokohama - no, not so well off - neither in Health, Wealth or Happiness. You are quite right in saying there must be something more than the will to work. It is the will of God - it is Destiny, the follower of misfortune, for if ever there lived a man in this World who by industry, and hard work was entitled to success, I have been justly entitled to a share of that merit. For ten long years I have worked and toiled with perseverance and several times I arrived on the last step of the ladder when it suddenly gave way and left me to commence life's toilsome journey again. I was very glad to hear that you are making progress in your business, however slow it may be, for slow and steady wins the race. Allow me to congratulate brother Edward and his Wife upon their first born, may she prove a blessing to them. John's health, I hope, by this time has recovered. Glad to hear that Jacob intends settling in life and has my best wishes. Sorry to hear of an accident, but am kept entirely ignorant as to the nature of it. You said Harry and Michael are well. Hoping they will continue so. Sorry to hear of Neice (?) & Aunt Levy being... and wishing them a speedy recovery. I

have not heard from Cousin Mike in York since I left there and have written him several letters and sent him papers. Shall now conclude this long letter (leaving it open for a postscript), hoping it may find you in good health and prosperity. Remember me to all enquiring friends, Remain your forever Israel Davis.

(Following on the above letter:)

Arrived in Port Friday evening the 29th August (1874) and no chance of mailing a letter. The Str. from Australia is due here on 20th September and I shall send by that opportunity.

September 15. *Have just settled up the trading Voyage and sorry to say I have made a loss on the venture. I shall decide in a few days what I intend doing next. Am trying to sell Vessel - small chance, everything very dull here - money scarce. I observed the Holidays on Friday and Saturday last. (Possibly a separate letter, posted at the same time as the above) Honolulu. S.I.*

October 4th 1874 *Dear Mother and Brothers, I shall leave here tomorrow evening or Tuesday morning for Haiti Society Island. I have a small freight which I bought also three passengers to take. I have tried to settle up and sell the Vessel here, but times are dull; I could not get an offer. shall try in Haiti to sell out and if I do not I intend to go to Valparaiso. There I know that I can dispose of her. I have had quite sufficient of Trading and sick of the Sea, that is to say, under the circumstances. I lost considerable last voyage. Should I do well in Haiti and get a good freight to the coast, I shall come out all right. My mind is made up to sell out. I changed the Rag to English as I could not see any protection under the Knacka Rag. I hope, if all goes well to see you at the end of next year or sooner, as I shall come direct back as soon as I can dispose of the Vessel. Hoping that all are quite well - the same by myself. I remain your Israel Remember me to all enquiring friends.*

Oct 8th. *I leave here today at 4 p.m. for Haiti with a small freight, one passenger and 300 head of sheep. Hope that this will find you well I.C. Davis*



JEWISH PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Paul Werner, in South Africa, writes:

Many of the pirates of the Caribbean were Sephardic Jews who turned to piracy to get revenge on the Spanish Catholics who expelled them from Spain in 1492, murdered their families and stole their property. Six of Barbarossa's chief officers were Jewish! This article sheds light on one of the most famous Jewish Pirates: Jean Lafitte.

THE JEWISH PIRATE by Prof. Edward Bernard Glick

One of the things I do, since retiring from Philadelphia's Temple University, is lecture on cruise ships. My signature talk is the fifty-century-old history of piracy, whose practitioners I call "The Seafaring Gangsters of the World." A few weeks before my first gig, I sent a draft to my history-buff sister. She liked it, but was very unhappy that I had not mentioned Jean Lafitte. I hadn't included him because, except for two famous bisexual female pirates, Mary Read and Anne Bonny, I intended to deal with the economics, the sociology and the politics of piracy.

I simply had to talk about Lafitte, she said, because he was unique. He was a Sephardic Jew, as was his first wife, who was born in the Danish Virgin Islands. In his prime, he ran a whole fleet of pirate sloops; he even bought a blacksmith's shop in New Orleans, using it as a front for fencing pirate loot. He was one of the few buccaneers who didn't die in battle, in prison or on the gallows.

Though I didn't lecture about Lafitte at first, I have done so ever since experiencing a most remarkable circumstance of serendipity.

On a flight to Norfolk, Virginia, the man in the next seat began chatting with me, in Gallic-accented English. We quickly established that we were both Jewish - he wore a skullcap - and had both taught in Israel; he was a

mathematician. I asked the reason for his flight, and he explained he was hoping to secure a contract for his American employer. Our conversation continued:

“Why are you on this flight?” he asked.

“My wife and I are picking up a cruise ship in Norfolk.”

“Taking a vacation?”

“Not entirely. I’ll be giving lectures, every day the ship is at sea.”

“What do you lecture about?”

“Cruise lines frown on controversial topics. I have talked about Israel once or twice, but I usually talk about Latin America, which is my second specialty, or any one of a wide variety of other subjects. However, I always begin a cruise with a lecture on pirates; the kids love it, and the old folks like it too.”

“Do you talk about Jean Lafitte?”

“No”, I replied, repeating what my sister had told me.

He pulled out his wallet and handed me a business card bearing the name “Melvyn J. Lafitte.” He said, “I could tell you that, as we were chatting, I printed this card on a nano-sized printing press hidden in my pocket - and of course, you wouldn't believe me. The truth is that I am a direct descendant of Jean Lafitte. Your sister is absolutely right. Our family, originally named Lefitto, lived in the Iberian Peninsula for centuries. When Ferdinand and Isabella reconquered Spain and expelled the Muslims and the Jews in 1492, most of the Jews fled to North Africa. Others went to the Balkans or to Greece and Turkey. Some, however, my ancestors among them, crossed the Pyrenees and settled in France, where Jean was born in about 1780. He moved to French Santo Domingo

during the Napoleonic period. However, a slave rebellion forced him to flee to New Orleans. Eventually, he became a pirate, but he always called himself a privateer because that label has a more legal ring to it.

“In 1814, the British sought his aid in their planned attack on New Orleans,” he continued. “However, he passed their plans to the Americans and helped General Andrew Jackson beat them in 1815. A grateful Jackson, not yet president, saw to it that Lafitte and his family became American citizens. By the way, did you know that there is a town of Jean Lafitte, as well as a Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, in Louisiana?”

I was flabbergasted, not so much by the saga of Jean Lafitte as retold by a proud descendant, as by the fact that the two of us had met so coincidentally in the skies over Georgia. Melvyn Lafitte lives in Geneva and I live in Portland, Oregon - 5,377 miles apart. Unlike him, I am mathematically challenged, so I don't know the probability of a descendant of the Franco-Jewish-American pirate Jean Lafitte boarding an aeroplane and sitting next to me, even as I was agonizing over whether to mention his famous ancestor in a forthcoming talk.

(Item submitted by Miriam Margolyes)

BITS & PIECES

1837 online has changed. It's now called findmypast.com <http://www.findmypast.com/media/news/newname.jsp> . This is to reflect the broader range of new data that has now been added (Censuses, Overseas registers etc.) However, before paying, listers may like to try Ancestry www.ancestry.co.uk, which has the GRO index on free of charge at the moment.

DIARY DATES Taken from GENEVA website <http://geneva.weald.org.uk/> 15th December 2006 to 31st March 2007 inc.

December	23	TNA	<i>Closed for Christmas Holiday</i>
December	25-27	SoG, TNA & FRC	<i>Closed for Christmas Holiday</i>
December	30	TNA	<i>Closed for New Year Holiday</i>
January	1	SoG, TNA & FRC	<i>Closed for New Year holiday</i>
January	10	ONLINE	Records of the Poor in the 1800s
January	17	ONLINE	Scottish Research Online
January	20	Barking, ESS	The East of London Family History Fair
January	28	Bracknell, BRK	The Bracknell Family History Fair
February	2	Poole, DOR	Military Records Workshop
February	10	Canterbury, KEN	The Professional Approach
February	11	Crawley, SSX	The Sussex & South London Family History Fair
February	15	ONLINE	All you ever needed to know about Civil Registration
February	17	Bletchley, BKM	Guild Publications Seminar
February	24	Northwich, CHS	9th Annual Cheshire Family History Fair
February	25	Kidlington, OXF	The Oxfordshire & Bucks Family History Fair
March	10	Pudsey, WYK	Pudsey Family History Fair
March	10	York, YKS	Family History Fair
March	11	Poole, DOR	Dorset Family History Open Day
March	11	Port Sunlight,	The Merseyside & Cheshire Family

		CHS	History Fair
March	11	Poole, DOR	Dorset FHS Open Day
March	15	Canterbury, KEN	Introduction to Family History 6 week course
March	18	Poole, DOR	Dorset Family History Open Day – <i>date changed to 11th March</i>
March	22	ONLINE	Ireland: What Chance Success?
March	24	Haywards Heath, SXW	Sussex Family History Group Conference and 34th AGM
March	31	Wisbech, CAM	FFHS AGM & GM
March	31	Northallerton, NYK	North Yorkshire County Record Office Open Day
March	31	Canterbury, KEN	Reading Old Documents