



# B-J News

The newsletter of the British Jewry mailing list  
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## Welcome to the second edition of B-J News

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### EDITORIAL

As we produce this, the second issue of *B-J News*, we are encouraged by the positive reception of our first effort. We plan to continue as we started but we can't manage without you. Most genealogists have a story to tell and we urge you to share your research adventures with us all. Tell us about gaffes and goofs, mis-spellings, transcription errors, family legends. Let it all come out, you'll feel better! But don't let natural diffidence inhibit you: whatever you write will form a valuable memoir to add to the store of GenStuff you already have, and you can call yourself a published writer!

As the *B-J News* is written by genealogists for genealogists, it is relevant to discuss on this page how researchers can make serious mistakes (see Jeremy Frankel's article on Page 9). It is easy to assume we have the wrong family if some names differ from census to census - much can happen in ten years - but it is disastrous to draw conclusions from what is only a probability. Worse happens when guesstimated information is allowed to become fact. That can lead us the wrong way up a one-way street.

Wives disappear and another pops up. Children disappear from the census as they age and leave home and move to another census district. Babies appear, and there is a huge gap in the children's ages. So how old is the Wife now? This must be a second Wife - or maybe not. Perhaps she was a widowed daughter-in-law and it was expedient for the census taker to call her the Wife. Mistakes lead to guesstimating and add to the fun, but we can meet ourselves coming back on that one-way street.

The moral of this story is that guesstimations about probabilities can cause trouble for everyone. Unless we can document it, it isn't a fact yet, but by all means let us examine the probabilities. And be cautious.

Which brings us to the question of who will come up with the next batch of offerings for Issue No. 3?

June Solntseff

## **BITS AND PIECES**

**Error:** In Issue 1 there was a misprint of the film number for naturalisations in our HOW TO: article on page 10. The film number should read 824514 not 8224514. Sorry for any inconvenience. *SL*

**The National Archives** has a new website with easy links to all areas and a new URL: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

**The National Archives Catalogue** (PROCAT) also has a new URL: <http://www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk/default.asp>

Of particular interest to British-Jewry members is the growing index of naturalisations in the online catalogue. Home Office Naturalisation Papers up to 1922 are available for consultation or copying. There are entries beyond 1922 that are 'closed' but the Home Office will consider applications to see naturalisation papers up to 1945. To be able to examine or obtain copies of Home Office Papers for your forebears beyond 1922, **you must apply by letter** for 'accelerated opening' to the following address:

### **Record Management Services**

#### **Home Office**

**50 Queen Anne's Gate**

**London SW1H 9AT**

At the time of writing, there is no other way of viewing a document that is closed. The initial contact has to be made by surface mail and you should include an email address for the staff at the Home Office to contact you.

The process to obtain accelerated opening takes three months.

Pauline Eismark [genseeker@totalise.co.uk](mailto:genseeker@totalise.co.uk) London

<http://www.1837online.com/Trace2web/>

1837online.com is pleased to announce an alternative payment method for customers who prefer not to use their credit and debit cards on the web.

In addition to the fully secure online payment technology that is already on the site, customers can now choose to add their payments to their BT phone bill or by a Direct Debit payment. Called **BT click&buy**, the system provides Internet users with a fast, simple and secure means of

purchasing digital content and services online, and is used by many well-known websites.

**Free Images on Free BMD:** <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com/> has a new link. There is now a *View Images* button. Images of the BMD index are being scanned and uploaded so that users of the site can check the information (especially about unclear entries) before applying for certificates. The instructions for the link read as follows:

To view images of the original index, select from the drop down boxes below. Click on *Submit Query* to move to the next level.

- Please note that FreeBMD does not presently have images available for all years and events, and some images are unclear.
- We are unable to respond to queries about when any particular year or event might become available, or when clearer images might be available.
- Images on this site are supplied in a variety of formats (jpg, gif, tif), and you may need to configure your computer to work with these formats.
- FreeBMD cannot assist with configuring your computer.
- You must not re-publish images from the FreeBMD site without permission.

The process is quite lengthy as you first choose an event (birth, marriage or death); next you choose a year (1837-1910) and then you choose a quarter (March, June, September or December). After this you choose *Starting*

*With*. I could only find “?” as a search term, but presumably somewhere there are or will be initial letters of surnames. Finally you choose a page. It’s at this point that things really slow down. I was on at 5 a.m. testing the site; the previous screens were quick, though annoying in the amount of seemingly endless choices. This last page was VERY slow. At peak times I imagine it will become useless as a tool. I was disappointed to find I could not see any image, just that pesky little icon in the corner of the page which has geometric shapes on it. I tried several pages, to no avail. However, I do know that others have seen images, because there have been queries on lists about how to enlarge them so you can actually read the entries!

There is more on using the GRO Index in our “How to…” article. *SL*



## BOOKS

### Leeds Jewry

Murray Freedman has just finished his ninth book about Leeds Jewry. The working title is *Twenty Five Characters in Leeds Jewish History* but it seems that number might actually increase to twenty four. Murray says, “My aim is to reveal the history of the community through the stories of the lives of these people and to that end it will cover almost 200 years from 1817 when the first of the personalities came to Leeds, to 2004 when the last of them died”. For details of how to obtain a copy contact Murray by email at [Mpfreedman@aol.com](mailto:Mpfreedman@aol.com)

### The Jewish Victorian Volume 2

Doreen Berger’s follow up to the first volume, covering 1861-1870 is now published. Available from Robert Boyd Publications, 260 Colwell Drive, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 5LW. The price is £29.95, postage and packing UK £5. 00 *SL*

Has tracing your family tree changed your life? Have you made unexpected, startling or extraordinary discoveries while searching for your ancestors? Are you involved in an



ongoing search to uncover your roots? If so, a BBC TV series would like to hear from you. Do you live in the UK? Please call + 44 208 752 6689 or e mail [tim.whitwell@bbc.co.uk](mailto:tim.whitwell@bbc.co.uk)



**TU B’AV** is a minor holiday, celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> Av each year. It is the holiday of love. Tu B’Av commemorates the lifting of the ban on intermarriage between the twelve tribes. Prior to the lifting of the ban people were restricted to marrying within their own tribe. If you choose to marry on this day then you are exempt from fasting. Tachanun is not said today. In Israel people give flowers, so if you have not remembered, now is the time to make for the local florist's shop.

**SIMPLE CULINARY TOUCHES to help you celebrate TU B’AV:** since Tisha B’Av last Monday, wine and meat are back on the menu.

**Kir Royale:** using your best champagne flutes, pour about one tablespoon of strawberry liqueur into the bottom of each flute, top with well-chilled champagne or dry white wine. Cut a couple of strawberries vertically into slices to make heart shapes and drop those into the glass.



**Romantic Chopped Liver:** use your favourite chopped liver recipe or a chicken liver pate or even some good quality bought pate. Serve with heart-shaped toasts. Toast your bread in the normal way then use a heart-shaped cutter or cut round a heart shaped cardboard template to form heart-shaped toasts.



**Tu B’Av Pavlova:** draw heart shapes on non-stick baking parchment and then pipe the meringue onto the paper. Bake in a very low oven as usual for meringue. Cool, fill with whipped cream and fresh fruit of your choice. Use up those strawberries, or passion fruits are good.



### **A FIRST**

*Following our first edition, which appeared in time for Pesach, Louise Goldschmidt, a lister, friend and very dear soul, emailed me the following item, along with a poem she has written which follows.*

*She has kindly agreed to allow both to be included in this edition of the newsletter. SL*

This is the first Pesach without my mother. I couldn't discuss the Seder with her or ask her to make the motza kleis (dumplings) which were traditional in our family. Last year she taught my daughter Aviva how to make them from matzo, not meal. The matzos were soaked and then squeezed out and added to fried onions, herbs and salt, pepper, and ginger, then stirred into the beaten eggs. The mixture was left overnight in the fridge and then rolled into balls. The problem was that if I told her I needed too many, she got cross that I had invited so many people. If I pretended there were not so many guests, she didn't make enough. It was usually 100. The matzo balls would not be cooked in the soup as they would absorb all the soup, so during the Seder Service, they were boiled in water with onions and herbs. There is a place in my Haggadah where at a certain point I went out, 40 minutes before the meal started, to put the kleis in the simmering pot under her eagle eye. Alfred always got an extra one, as he took the service.

The big problem with making the balls was that the size and shape of the matzo varied over the years. In my mother's youth they were all round, and then they were square, and then the size altered. To insure uniformity, the measurements were written next to her recipe and we had to use a tape measure and do complicated sums to work out how many for this year's measurements, and compare with the original ones, and then multiply by

the number we required. This year we didn't make matzo kleis in our home for various reasons. But next year it will be my turn.

*Louise Goldschmidt, London*



### **THE GOLDFISH IN THE POND**

**By Louise Alexandra Goldschmidt**

A poem written in Memory of her Mother Phyllis Clayton nee Hart by a Goldfish Pond in Israel. February 2004.

Like the golden childhood moments  
I spent with you,  
Stay in the memory,  
As brilliant as the darting fish.

Our music together: singing Faust at the old piano:  
Watching Markova's Giselle at Convent Garden,  
Soothing eyes by the Fragonards and Hals  
In the Wallace, on the way from the Eye Specialist.  
English holidays with hot tea from a flask: a brisk towel wrapped around my  
body,  
As teeth chattering, I reach the sandy haven from the freezing sea.

Remember these moments before they dart away,  
Under the murky grey,  
Slipping out of my hand as I try to capture them forever

"On a festive day", Mishna says "You shall not hunt the fish in its natural abode"  
It darts and fires  
Like your memory in age.  
I cannot hold it.  
Sometimes vivid, scaled and glowing,  
The memories so brightly coloured in your past.

People, loved ones, fragments come and go,  
Sometimes the murky depth rise to the surface  
And flood with new memories.

No new admissions, no new recognition's.  
Clouds intersperse the sharpness of the mind:  
Words no longer flow.

At times I can hold you in my hand;  
Take you where you really want to go.  
We walk together in the sunshine or listen to other people singing,  
Or still, with your lovely voice, you sing to me alone.

You smell the lavender. You marvel at the garden in its summer bud:  
You hear the birds.

But mostly you say "No" to things you really love.  
"I don't feel so good today"  
"I can't"  
"Why do you make me?  
Or just "Stop!"  
"I want to just lie"  
"I want to just cry"  
"Go away!"  
"Hold me. Kiss me"  
"No man to kiss me now"  
"It's been so long since my  
Darling's gone"

I refuse to say you are old,  
But where are you?  
I can't find the mother I used to know.  
A time ago she slipped away.  
A hundred almost but for a few months and a day.  
I won't let you give in,  
I'll give you all my strength.  
Until there was none left to give.

And so you faded.  
One last time your flame rose high by the goldfish pond.  
You came alive from the dying embers,  
But in my heart I couldn't strive you more to live.

And now my last memory with you, is only  
That day in the garden  
By the Goldfish pond.  
And next, you're soft clean white hair on the last pillow,  
To feel against my face and whisper farewell.  
For you have gone to your darling.  
And he will kiss you still.



### **THE ENIGMATIC BASCH FAMILY-SNIPPETS OF JEWISH LIFE IN SHEFFIELD 150 YEARS AGO**

Before I began researching my family history, I expected to find details of the family's arrival in England following the pogroms in Russia in the early 1900s, or maybe after the first round of pogroms in the 1880s. I was surprised to find family in England in the 1850s, and possibly some who were born in England as far back as the 1830s.

The first solid evidence I found of family in England is a birth certificate for Isaac BASCH who was born in Sheffield in 1855. His father, Jacob BASCH appears in White's Trade Directory of 1856 as a cloth cap manufacturer at 94 Scotland Street, Sheffield. Additional information from the 1861 census showed that Jacob BASCH was 29 years old and was born in Sheffield (1832). His 27 year-old wife, Emma (1834) was also born in Sheffield.

Amongst Jacob's children listed in the 1861 census was Jeanette, from whom I am descended, age 19! My first thought was that the census enumerator must have taken down this information on the way back from the pub, for how could he list a 19-year-old woman as the daughter of a 29-year-old man! To complicate the matter even further, Jeanette's place of birth is given as Prussia and she is the only one of the family born outside England.

In addition to the census enumerator being in a state of inebriation, I considered several other possibilities for explaining these strange census entries. One possibility is that the information about Jacob BASCH's age is inaccurate and another 10 years needs to be added on. This would make it

reasonable to accept the record that Jeanette was his daughter. Another possibility is to consider that Jeanette was Jacob's sister. The name of both their fathers is given as Isaac BASCH (on other documentation in my possession) so it seems this is the most likely family connection. It is also conceivable that Jacob was born in Sheffield in 1832 and then the family was visiting Prussia when sister Jeanette was born in 1842. No trace of the BASCH family is found in the 1851 census of Sheffield, though a William Bash does appear in the 1841 census. The pre-1837 compulsory birth registration dates for Jacob and Emma's birth made it difficult for me to trace the BASCH presence in Sheffield any further back.

I therefore decided to explore further the links of the BASCH family to Prussia. I joined the German Jewish ancestry list and soon received a letter from a Mr. Lars E. Menk. Mr. Menk brought to my attention the results of an 1834 census of the Jewish population of the Prussian town of Graetz in the province of Posen. This census lists a cap maker called Isaac BASCH (born 1801) with a son named Jacob who was born in 1832. It seems a good probability that the Graetz and Sheffield BASCH families are one and the same, though common names like Isaac and Jacob, and common Jewish occupations like cap making are not necessarily incontrovertible evidence.

Assuming that the Prussian and Sheffield BASCH families are identical, the BASCHes clearly arrived in Sheffield in the early 1850s. Possibly, their departure from Prussia could be linked to the upheavals of the 1848 Revolution, which they might have supported, or from which they suffered business losses due to the disruption to economic life in this period of unrest. Since I do not know of any pogroms in Prussia in the 1840s, their emigration seems linked to economic factors. Why they chose to go to Sheffield is harder to explain since the Jewish community at the time was comprised of only about 20 families. There were much larger communities in London and Manchester which could have offered more opportunities. Again, I can only conjecture that perhaps they were planning on crossing England on the way to the USA and ended up stopping in Sheffield. If this was the case, it was a long stop-over, approximately 20 years.

The further history of the Sheffield BASCHes is also interesting. Jeanette married a Sheffield policeman in June 1861. PC Samuel WOLFSOHN deserves a special article in his own right but for the moment this brief mention will suffice. I assert once more my claim that he was the first ever full-time Jewish policeman in England.

By the late 1860s, Jacob BASCH's cap making business was in trouble. The recent posting on the British-Jewry list of a link to the Times index was very useful since I was able to find a record from May 1869 of Jacob BASCH being ordered to "Surrender in the Country." I am still far from sure of the meaning of this ambiguous term but it seems it was connected with the failure of his business and debts incurred. The last evidence I found of Jacob BASCH's residence in Sheffield is some mention of him in 1872; I cannot recall if the reference was in the synagogue records or in the trade directory. However, his days in Sheffield were numbered. In 1874 he sailed with his family for New York and in the 1880 USA census he is found living in the New York borough of Kings, still following his old occupation of cap maker. Interestingly enough the spoken language of the household is given as English. I continued to trace the family through the New York census records up to 1930, but I have not found any living descendants. I would be delighted to hear from any American readers who might have some knowledge about the present whereabouts of the American BASCHes, assuming the family is still around in New York.

Shimon (Steven) Fraiss



#### **RESEARCHING ABROAD- A VISIT TO LITHUANIA –**

**'...right back where we started from...'**

One of the main reasons I wanted to go to Lithuania was that I wanted to see Simnas, the village I had heard so much about, where my great-grandparents and their families lived and from which my grandparents emigrated.

What I knew about Simnas came from my grandmother Tsivia, whose family; the SHOCHETs were next-door-neighbours to the MANKUNSKYs, whose son David she married. Later in England the

name MANKUNSKY was changed to MYERS. Simnas in about 1870-95 was a rather isolated place where nothing much happened over the years. Grandma still talked about Napoleon's army passing through, probably in 1812, on their way to conquer Russia. When grandma was a girl Simnas residents were still talking about this: imitating the Frenchmen's strange accents and laughing at the way they shivered in the cold. This was the most fun, perhaps the only fun, the village had during the 19th century. There was also an economic spin-off: apparently some farmers made their fortunes selling fleeces to the shivering French, perhaps giving a whole new meaning to the phrase fleecing the tourists.

An additional piece of evidence for the village's isolation, which shines an interesting light on local transport, was grandma's story of her sister who married a man from a village a whole day's journey away by cart. The family mourned her as one dead: whoever would have the time and resources to visit her?

The cast of village characters who became as familiar to me as my own family were straight from the pages of *Sholem Aleichem*. There was Skobilov, the itinerant chazan who had a wonderful voice but was an alcoholic. About him villagers would sing '*Oy Skobilov. Vos zol er ton: In Rusland is Manipol gevoren*'. 'Oy Skobilov. What will he do? Prohibition has come to Russia'.

There was also the tailor to whom no one spoke after his religious transgression, working chol hamoed pesach, the days intervening between the yom tovim at the beginning and end of the festival. He was very bitter about this claiming that he was a poor man who had to earn a living. As the whole village was poor and had to make a living, this cut no ice.

Formal education seemed to be in short supply, certainly for women. Grandma could read but not write: her father said that even a girl should not stand like a stone in shool, unable to follow the service. But write? When would a girl need to write?

The advent of modern technology in Simnas was marked by a tale of the woman who went down to the newly opened railway station expecting to go on a journey. She sat in the waiting room....and waited.....and waited. Finally she got tired and came home complaining that she hadn't got anywhere. Perhaps this story was a shtetl myth.....perhaps not.... In summer the family would rent fishing rights in the nearby lake and grandma and her sisters were recruited to mend the fishing nets. The lake also served year round as the local laundry and women would crouch on the bank, beating the clothes on stones to get the dirt out.

Knowledge of the physical world was rudimentary or non-existent. The evil eye was everywhere and one could not be too careful. Even to say 'Very well, thank you' when asked about one's health was tempting fate. The proper reply was non-committal and indicated that one could be better.

Yet there was some knowledge of disease and its causes: my grandmother's mother, great-grandma Tzirl Shochet, died of typhoid which my grandmother said she contracted by drinking from a stream, indicating that they knew typhoid can be water-borne. Water-borne disease also figured in cursing: the worst thing you could wish upon someone was that they would catch cholera. Sewage disposal was obviously a problem and water supplies not uncontaminated.

Grandma didn't talk a lot about specific persecution but when she did, Khazaks figured a great deal in her conversation. They rode you down with their horses she would say darkly and Khazaks became the feared bogeymen of my childhood.

So, what did we find? Firstly, we found that the whole world seemed to be in Lithuania looking for its roots. We heard people speaking Ivrit in the elevator: 'Are you Israeli?' asked my husband, Robert. They glared at us suspiciously. Suddenly light dawned: 'Are you Jewish?' they asked. We shook hands and wished each other well. They were on the same errand. We even met a party of non-Jews from Bradford, 10 miles west of Leeds. They told us their ancestors had come to England in 1842. So maybe it

hadn't been too good for anyone in Lithuania, Jewish or not. On the last night we went to the best hotel (located appropriately enough in Zhyddu, or Jew Street, in the old quarter of Vilnius) for dinner. This was not expensive by our standards but out of reach for any Lithuanians but the mafiosi and there appeared to be a great crowd of mafiosi already there... who turned out to be a coach-load of Jews from Atlanta, Georgia seeking.....guess what?

We found that Simnas was indeed far away in the south of the country.....but now connected to everywhere else by good roads and about two hours drive from the capital, Vilnius. The Jewish population has all gone: shot, gassed, escaped into the Russian army or, as in the case of three of my grandmother's numerous nieces, to Palestine. The shool still stands, just, in a semi-ruinous state with a Magen David over the door on which is a plaque saying 'Sports Hall' in Lithuanian. It was closed, being Monday which is early closing day. The village square contained a police station with a squad car marked 'Polizei' parked outside. The Khzaks and their horses have long gone.

Education is now compulsory. Our guide had taught school in Simnas and in the village bar we met a crowd of her former colleagues, teachers having a drink together after school. We went into the bar in search of a decent toilet, the cafe next door having nothing which reached acceptable Anglo-American standards. The bar facilities, however, were only marginally better and I gained the distinct impression that sewage disposal is still an issue.

Although most things had changed, some things remained the same: we found the lake about 400 yards from the village centre and people with laundry baskets were crouched on the bank, washing clothes.

As we walked back to our minibus in the square, a group of young girls stood chatting on the corner and one or two women came out of the houses to stare at us curiously as we passed. I suddenly thought: but for accidents of history we would have been living here, and these people would have been our friends and neighbours. Maybe our grandparents and

theirs *were* friends and neighbours: but there was no way of knowing, no way of looking back.

*Shirley Holton, ex-Leeds and Sheffield, now of Chalfont St. Giles.*

## SIX OF THE BEST



**June Solntseff's top 6 web sites (excluding British-Jewry of course!)**

<http://www.historicaldirectories.org/> The University of Leicester's New Opportunities Fund project is creating a digital library of eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century local and trade directories from England and Wales.

<http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk> London, Edinburgh, and Belfast Gazettes are the official newspapers of record in the United Kingdom.

<http://www.jgstoronto.ca> The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) was formally established in 1985. It is now one of seven Jewish genealogical societies in Canada, and is part of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies ([IAJGS](#)) and its over 60 member organizations.

<http://www.londonancestor.com/index.htm> Genealogy, Local & Family History in London, England: Discover personal information about your London ancestors, and build your family tree.

<http://www.jewishgen.org/JCR-UK/susser/> The documents and papers of the late Rabbi Dr Bernard Susser, historian of the Jews of South West England, together with his computer disks, had been placed in the care of Frank Gent of the Exeter Synagogue. He extracted the data from Rabbi Susser's disks, and published these, in honour of Rabbi Susser's memory and his work for the Jews of South West England, both present and past. Frank Gent has now donated this information to JCR-UK

<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/index.php> Encyclopedia Titanica, is a unique resource for anyone interested in the Titanic. 2457 passenger and crew biographies, exclusive *Titanic research articles* and ongoing discussions

about the Titanic are all at this site.

If you'd like to submit your top 6 websites for this feature please contact us!



### **SOME PITFALLS OF ONLINE RESEARCH**

I don't know about you, but it seems that every time I log on to the Internet, a zillion new databases have been scattered to the four corners of the digital world (does anyone actually know where the four corners are?). Anyone venturing into a database ought to have a small checklist of questions to ask themselves: for instance, if the database is a name index, what is the source? Was it made many years ago, or is it new? A certain online commercial company has many census name indexes available, some of them created "in-house", while others were done many years ago by another company. Both are subject to errors.

This specific issue surrounding name indexes made me think about how accustomed we have become to typing on a computer keyboard, and seeing almost perfectly justified and kerned typefaces. I would venture to say that this has affected our ability actually to write with a pen. Additionally, because much of what we read is typed, some people's ability to comprehend hand-writing is diminishing, so reading poor hand-writing is becoming almost impossible. Throw in the extra swirls and flourishes of old script, the ascenders and descenders that overlap the words above and below, and it can become torturous to attempt to "translate" even English! Consequently, we now find that modern transcribers have made mistakes when reading old material.

Just recently I was looking up the name YAFFEY in a census. I couldn't find it, no matter how I tried. Even with all the various parameters I was offered: first name, last name, age, birthplace, current residence, etc. It really took some judicious search approaches to eventually find the family. However, they had been listed as GAFFEY, simply because the writing was in an italic style! Additionally, the mother, whose name was Doris, had been listed as Dixie!

Not all indexes are created equal. When the Ellis Island Database (EIDB) was unleashed to the world, and when I was finally able to get on, I looked for my KOENIGSBERG family who had emigrated from London to New York. Although I did find them, I was curious to discover how the EIDB fared compared to the 1930s Soundex index created by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). They were not equal! In both cases they showed some people that the other index left out. So, if there is more than one index, check them all and make your own complete list.

A more recent phenomenon concerns the service of making whole books available online. I had borrowed a book titled "*History of Barbour County*" from a genealogy library. This was a 1968 reprint of an 1898 book. Barbour County is in West Virginia. The last third of the book is devoted to Family Histories, in alphabetical order, and the author offers a potted history of some of the people in each family he chose to highlight. I searched the book page by page, all 182 of them, and line by line for any SHERMAN entries.

I was in e-mail contact with someone who alerted me to the fact that this book was available online and was completely word-searchable. My correspondent is a real SHERMAN enthusiast, with 150,000 of them under his belt, and he had beaten me in finding all the SHERMANS in that section. However, what I was privy to and he was not, was that on one page of the book there was a handwritten note stating that an entry which listed a SHERMAN as someone's wife was inaccurate, and the note cross-referenced to a later page which supported the correction. As I doubt that any company would scan a book that was full of scribbles in the margins, it is likely that these pencilled in corrections would go amiss. So once again, yes, by all means use an online source, but try to obtain a real print copy as well.

I noticed that someone else had copied the same error in their submission to an online database that hosts family trees. To paraphrase a well-known biblical saying: incorrect information begets incorrect information! I wrote

to the submitter, politely asking if she was aware of the error. I am still awaiting her response.

An annoying habit of genealogists is submitting information without citing their sources. People may not realize that so much of what we write is now preserved online in various archives, and many discussion groups "archive" all questions and answers. To ensure that these repositories will, in the future, be worth the value of all the hard work people have undertaken, we should make it obvious where we get our information, i.e. we should cite our sources.

In closing, I ought to say that originally I was going to write about the potential demise of the physical library. You remember that great store house of books and encyclopaedias? As you next stand in a library, look around you and realize that 99% of what you see will never ever be online. As good as online sources can be, there will always be hidden gems awaiting you between the covers of a book.

*Jeremy Frankel, California*



## **HOW TO: USE THE GRO INDEX**

### **Using the GRO Index**

This is relatively easy. It's what you do with what you find, or what to do when you do not find, which is the problem. The GRO Index is an index of the births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales since civil registration began in July 1837, and you need to understand the system. There is really no way to do this briefly, so bear with me. Firstly, until very recently there was no "burden of proof"; people believed what they were told. All the details on certificates are as given by the informant and no facts were ever checked or verified.

Prior to the introduction of civil registration there was religious registration, namely, bryss/baptism, marriage and burial. From 1 July 1837 everyone was supposed to register an event, though not everyone did, because they were worried about Government interference. When a child is born there is a six week grace period before registration, and births were

often not registered at all. After 1875, a 40-Shilling fine was imposed for non-registration within a 42-day limit, though it seems that few were penalised. From 1837 it was illegal to bury someone without a death certificate, so deaths were usually registered quite quickly. Marriages were, and are today, not registered by the couple themselves, but by the cleric performing the marriage. Hence they are usually registered appropriately.

Births and deaths were registered at the local Registrar Office. If a couple were unmarried, their child could only have the father's surname if he made the registration in person and declared the child his. Jewish children were sometimes registered using their Hebrew name and sometimes an Anglicised name. They might subsequently be known as something different! Once a child was registered it was hard to change the names, and if a family later decided the name was a mistake it was often easier simply to call the child by another name informally. Spelling was not consistent. When registering a death, the informant was often a near relative. Bereavement can distort information; inaccuracies occur, especially age, so be cautious when reading these records. Deaths registered by a Coroner will normally have an inquest associated with the death. Marriage registrations were done by the cleric and based on the information given by the couple.

All registrations are subject to error and the questions asked were often misinterpreted. For example, one certificate shows the maiden name of the maternal grandmother. Presumably the informant misunderstood the question "mother's maiden name" - whose mother? Leah LANDA (married Leeds 1895), when asked for the name of her father, said Isaac. Presumably she was not asked for his surname, which was CHMELNICK (sic), so it was assumed it was LANDA, and her marriage certificate says Isaac LANDA. Godfrey LANDA married in 1957 and he stated his father was deceased, which he was not, so Godfrey may have deliberately hidden the truth. No one was ever asked to produce their own birth certificate or their father's death certificate to prove any information given.

### **How the registration of the event gets into the GRO Index**

At the end of each quarter (31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December) registrations are collated and a copy of each entry is sent to the GRO (now Office of National Statistics, or ONS). From these the GRO makes its own index. Today this is mostly accurate but in the past many thousands of events have somehow missed being indexed. At the end of each year the GRO Index is published. Marriages outside the Registrar Office are the responsibility of the cleric who performs them. The cleric files quarterly returns at his local Registrar Office, which is usually at a fixed venue and will not move districts. However, in some cases the cleric is licensed, not the venue. This is not always the office close to where the wedding took place. For these marriages, the Registrar Office gets a first copy. They then re-copy this information and send the second copy on to the GRO. Mistakes can creep into each copy.

Most Registrar Offices have their own indices which help help staff locate events in order to produce copies of certificates. These indices have nothing to do with the GRO index. The GRO index is a completely separate system where records from sub-districts and all venues are “bunched” together under a single registration district and given a volume number which relates to the district (Watford is 3a, Leeds is 9b, etc.), and a page number. Each page has several records on it.

The GRO Index is on fiche, except at the FRC in London, where it is in book form. The fiches are films of the pages, so the format is identical. There is a separate register for each of the events: birth, marriage, death. The event is then broken down by year, and each year is then broken into quarters. 1 January to 31 March inclusive is quarter 1, or the March quarter. 1 April to 30 June inclusive is quarter 2, or the June quarter, and so on. Within each quarter, the surnames are in alphabetical order. Within each surname, the first names are then in alphabetical order. These quarters are by **registration date**. So, if Hannah COHEN was born on 22 March 1881, she might be registered in either the March or the June quarter.

Once you find an entry in the GRO index you need to look at the year and quarter, the district and volume number and the page number. This is the

information that ONS requires from you, together with the person’s name and the event, i.e. Birth Hannah COHEN, June 1881, Salford 8d page 27. Then they will supply you with a copy of that certificate for £8.50. Without those reference details the cost is £11.00.

You can see the GRO index in county record offices, the LDS family history centres, at the FRC in London and in main Local Studies libraries (check first, as not all the libraries have all the years, and some do not have any). You can also see extracts of the index on the internet at <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com/>. These are not yet complete and, even when they are, will only be full copies of the GRO Index, which, as already mentioned is not a complete index. Access is free. There is also access on a pay-per-view website at <http://www.1837online.com/Trace2web/>

### **GRO Appendix**

There are appendices to the GRO Index. These include births, marriages and deaths abroad, WWII civilian deaths, First and Second World War military deaths, and are normally found in the same venues as the GRO index.

### **The GRO Index and local Registrar’s Offices**

As already explained, the indexing system is not the same and, whilst many local Registrars are happy to provide copies of certificates for family history purposes, some will not. The main function of a Registrar Office is to register current events. It is not their job to look up your family history details, but most are obliging, courteous and prompt in trying to help you. Where they have an index, there is not usually a problem, but where there are no indices or where your request is vague (for example Jacob COHEN to Fanny 1880-1890 somewhere in London) then they can often not help you. Marriage venues are often extremely difficult to track. Given that some registration districts had 100 venues it is not reasonable to expect a Registrar to hand-search 100 venues for you. If, however, you can say “A Jewish marriage in Prestwich in the September quarter of 1912”, they might hand-search the synagogue-registered events for you. Some local Registrar Offices are now part of the UK BMD network where their indices are available on-line for you to search. Leeds Jewish marriages, for example from 1837 to 1950, are all on-line. The UK BMD home page is at

<http://www.ukbmd.org.uk/>. From here you can link to local county sites, many of which let you search multiple years and spelling variants. The use of these indices is free. The cost of obtaining a certificate from a local Registrar is £7.00 plus postage.

### **Points to bear in mind**

It has already been stated that what the informant registered is not always accurate. It is also true that mistakes can occur in the copying process. Many people did not register in the early years. The GRO Index has many records missing from its index. Spelling was inconsistent and first names were often changed. Errors occur in certificates, and therefore in their indices. A recent example was from Leeds in 1922: Stella LEVINE to Mavis SILBERG. Mavis was in fact MORRIS.

### **Certificates**

The certificates themselves often look different and this can be confusing. Sometimes they are typed, at others they are in modern handwriting, and sometimes they are photocopies. Many people assume that a photocopy means they are seeing a copy of the original - they almost never are. Local Registrars do not often photocopy their records because of the damage it does to the books. The ONS cannot photocopy an original, because they only have second copies, so any records from them are always copies of copies. Extracting records is a skill in itself and the Registrars may not have the training to decipher some of the things in their books. They will extract best guesses and if you push them they might photocopy a signature here or there, to help you confirm a name.

### **What to do with the certificate once you have it**

Extract the information from the certificate and enter it into your record-keeping system. File your certificate safely and, if travelling, take a copy, not your original copy, with you.

Pursue new trails: find a census entry from a street address, research an informant you did not already know about (especially if it is a magical "in-law"), look in Quarter Sessions records or a local newspaper for an inquest report, redefine a family's arrival in Britain based on the date of an event,

apply for further records based on the certificate. You might apply for sibling births if the certificate throws up an inconsistency in the mother's maiden name. You might apply for a marriage authorisation in the Hebrew names of a couple, after you find the date and venue from the certificate. You might contact burial societies once you know when and where someone died. The possibilities are endless. As with most family history research: one question answered usually leads to two more to be asked.

### **Ordering certificates from ONS-a post script from them:**

Applications for certificates from the General Register Office have reached record levels in recent months and we are processing over 30,000 certificates every week.

Currently many customers send their requests for certificates in the form of a letter. Transcribing all the information onto an application form is very time consuming and we would therefore prefer customers to complete their own application forms. This would not only be advantageous to this office but would be more beneficial to the customer as often important information, which is essential for a successful application, is omitted from their correspondence.

The General Register Office is committed to improving our service to customers and would therefore request your assistance in forwarding this email to all Family History Societies, to make their members aware of the benefits of completing an application form for their certificates. It will ensure that their request is processed more swiftly and because the details pertaining to the entry have been comprehensively completed on the form, the application is more likely to be successful.

<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/> as of 8 July 2004 overseas orders will be processed. Customers can use credit cards registered outside the UK, which was not an option, previously.

Sherry Landa (Co-Admin & Webmaster of British-Jewry)

**NEXT ISSUE**

Our next issue will be out in time for Chanukah. It will hit the website ready for download on 6 December 2004. Deadline for submissions is Sunday 21 November 2004. Contact [Jewish@slanda.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Jewish@slanda.fsnet.co.uk) with your submissions.



## USING THE FAMILY RECORDS CENTRE IN LONDON

Last summer (August 2003), I intentionally reserved the last few days of my holiday to do some London research. I sent my kids back to Israel (everyone thought it was a great idea) and on the Friday I set off to the FRC. The FRC is conveniently located, near to buses and underground stations.

I would like to say that I did feel a bit alien because there is a somewhat ecclesiastic atmosphere in this extraordinary building. It is very quiet and orderly. At the entrance, behind an official looking desk, sits a gentleman who requests that you 'sign in' giving name, nature of visit, time in, etc. So I did!

A cousin of mine was waiting for me in the records department. It was quiet there too – quieter than in the NA, but that's another story. The good ladies who work there were most helpful and explained how all the records are available both on microfiche and microfilm – depending on the source of the information. My cousin and I split the research between us: I looked at the microfilm records for our Lithuanian shtetls, my cousin looked at the microfiche for Leeds. I was directed to the reference books that are alphabetically arranged by towns/countries where I found the microfilms I needed. I was allocated a microfilm reader, which unfortunately didn't work, so I had to wait for another one to become available. They are quite simple to use but, as I had not used one in the past and wanted to complete as much research as possible, I was a bit irritated that I wasn't given a fuller explanation about how to get the best out of the reader. As a result, I had to ask the assistants for explanations more than once. Time was precious.

I have seen my family names in Cyrillic (COHEN/KAGEN, REICHZELIGMAN, MAGIDOWITZ) but it was a constant struggle to guess the names on page after page of microfilm, and I did not have the translated names in Cyrillic with me. Most inefficient of me! In frustration, I asked the good ladies if they, by chance, could either read Cyrillic (long shot), or if one of the 'regulars' there could (even longer shot). Still, I live by the motto: If you don't ask, you won't know. There was one bearded guy there who mumbled that he might be able to read Cyrillic – my hopes were raised and immediately dashed again. At the same time, my cousin, who was doing research of any kind for the first time, was struggling with the microfiche. You do really need patience and 20/20 sight when reading those leaves.

Time was marching on and we had family research of another kind to do, namely to meet some more cousins for tea, so I left a deposit for more film for one of my shtetls to be retrieved from the Salt Lake City archives. When the material arrived in London it was in Cyrillic again, so no one could translate anything for me.

In summary, unless you have a 'guide' for your first visit to any research centre, regardless of how efficient you are, it is always time-consuming until you learn the ropes.

Angie Elfassi, Israel



### BOOK REVIEW

#### **The Undark Sky: A Story of Four Poor Brothers**

by Geoffrey Raisman

Harehills Press

Reviewed by Naomi Barnett

"Even on the darkest nights there's always some light in the sky. However little it is, the sky never gets completely dark." This observation was made by the author's father, Harry Raisman, who had a lifelong fascination with mathematics and astronomy. Denied the opportunity to have a formal education because his income was needed to support the family, he

educated himself in other ways and left an indelible impression on his only son.

The theme of the book deals with a family of 11 surviving children and their parents seeking to succeed and improve their lot in life.

Like so many other families who suffered through the pogroms of Tzarist Russia, the Raisman family ancestors moved from “Der Hame”, a town called Shakee, and landed in Hull. The story moves fairly rapidly from their arrival in Leeds in 1876, through a failed business venture, to a lifetime involvement with the clothing industry - a course similarly traversed by many thousands of migrants. Tailoring was the means by which the family could earn enough to educate some of their children for a better future. Raisman paints very graphic pictures of the early days in Leeds. He describes the desperate poverty of all the Jewish migrant families who tried to eke out a meagre existence. To add to the Raismans' miserable poverty, they were gamblers, a disease which ran through several generations.

The author takes us on a journey through the growth of the family with its many extended branches, the plan made by his uncles Myer and Jeremy to take the family beyond the Leylands, through two Wars, the Great Depression and many other events. We read of the wonderful achievements of Jeremy in India. His fortuitous move in entering the Indian Civil Service was surely a life-changing experience and a major achievement for a child of a migrant. Following the end of the British presence in India, Jeremy continued his high achievements in commerce in England. There are sad tales about John, who lives in exile in Argentina, and Louis, who lost contact with the family and who died penniless in Canada.

Uncle Myer played a huge part in Raisman's life. The thread woven throughout the book shows how Myer lived a completely selfless life. He took on the huge task of staving off poverty and holding the family together, no mean feat, and a wonderful achievement. How satisfying it was for Myer that two of the brothers and, in his turn, his nephew the

author, attended Oxford University. Myer must have been so proud of Geoffrey's achievements; their relationship was very special! It seems they also shared a wonderful friendship. The author describes in touching terms how his Unky Myer died, and his last words of delight at imagining a prize acceptance by his nephew.

There are some wry observations scattered through the story. One about his father by Jeremy: “Other men live on their income, father lives on his outcome”. This was no doubt related to the gambling of Maurice. Again on the same theme: “A working man has to gamble, it's the only way he can make any money”.

An interesting touch by the author which made the book more appealing to me was his spelling of certain words in a homely North-Country “Yinglish” way; for example, Hymy, Maishy, Kovner, Matsy, Pailishy. I also enjoyed reading the familiar names of streets, landmarks, parks, shuls and cemeteries. I haven't been to Leeds but it has been a huge part of my life for almost 40 years, as my husband was born there.

Raisman has succeeded in telling a story about his ancestors in an entertaining way. At the same time he takes us for a vicarious journey along that path. **The Undark Sky** is a “must read” for anyone who wants to learn more about the tailoring trade's early days in Leeds, about the City of Leeds itself, and how the migrants struggled to survive in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



#### **VISITING LEEDS UHC CEMETERY**

*Theresa Stewart, who has written the companion article Finding the Story of Samuel Manham recently visited UHC in Leeds to pay her respects to members of her family. Here is a short account of her trip. SL.*

We really enjoyed our visit to Gildersome. David Rogers was most helpful; he spent two hours with us, helping us find the family graves. My daughters, Selina and Lindsey, accompanied me on the train and Naomi (Lindsey's youngest, a student at Leeds University), met us at the station.

We took the bus to the cemetery gates, where David met us. I had rung ahead and spoken to his wife, who was very helpful. David found my mother's grave easily: it looked fresh and clear, though he hadn't found the others, but together we found my grandfather, Israel BAKER, and then my grandmother, Millie. I tried to read the headstone but my Hebrew is pretty rusty [*try Digital View. Ed.*]. However, I took photos which came out well, so I will work on them.

We then found Rachel MANHAM and next to her, Jacob LYONS. I wanted to find my mother's brother, Harry N. BAKER, who I knew was in the cemetery up the hill [*Hilltop. Ed.*]. David took us up there and helped us in our search. Finally, Lindsey found it, fallen over face up. It was a most satisfactory morning.

As we were leaving, we chanced to see the gravestone of Freda RAISMAN buried in 1894. Freda was Geoffrey's and my, great-great-grandmother, Hoshy and Moshy's mother, [*see Naomi Barnet's book review, above, on "The Undark Sky" to know more about Hoshy and Moshy Raisman- Ed.*].



## FINDING THE STORY OF SAMUEL MANHAM By Teresa Stewart

My mother was a saver. She said, "I can't bear to throw things away!" so it took time to go through all her papers. Last year, seven years after she died, I was clearing out a box-file, full of old papers. There were recipes cut from magazines, birthday cards, photographs and a yellowing sheet from a newspaper, which I gave a quick glance before putting it in the throw-away pile. It was a copy of the *Yorkshire Evening Post* dated 1967, open at an article about the end of tailoring in Belgrave Street. "*Where a stitch has run out of time...*" was the headline. Belgrave Street had been a centre of tailors' workshops in Leeds for nearly a hundred years and the last workshop was moving out to give way to a new inner ring road. Skimming the story, I saw that my mother had drawn two lines by one paragraph.

**"In 1918 Samuel Manham, who left Russia in 1852, described how the Jews saved money to bring their families over, in an interview with the Evening Post."**



Samuel MANHAM was my mother's grandfather, my great grandfather. I knew he was one of the earlier Jewish settlers in Leeds, but I did not know much more. Could I track down this article?

My daughter, Selina, e-mailed the Yorkshire Evening Post. Did they keep copies of the newspaper? They replied that they were held at the British Newspaper Library in Colindale, London, and on microfilm at Leeds Central Library; helpfully, they gave the phone numbers.

Selina and I live in Birmingham, so last October at half-term we had a day out in Leeds. The library staff were very helpful and handed us the reels of film for the whole of 1918. They showed us how to use the viewers and left us to it. I took January to May, Selina took June to October. It was quite a task. Newspapers then had fewer pages because of paper economies in World War I but the large sheets meant shifting the viewer across the pages as we went through. Every day there were photos of young men killed in the War. Stories of the battlefields were frequent and there were occasional pieces on the Russian Revolution. We identified that the most likely spot for an article of general interest would be near the leading article, next to "*Gossip of the Day*", so we concentrated on that. After two hours we were both depressed and decided that this wasn't going to work. And then I found it! Friday, March 8, 1918, had an article headed "*The Coming of the Jews to Leeds and Their Influence on a Big Trade.*" There in the piece was Samuel MANHAM, under a sub-heading "*An Elder's Story*". It was a thrilling moment!

## AN ELDER'S STORY

One of the oldest members of that early brotherhood today is Mr. Samuel Manham, who, at the age of 84, is a real elder of the people, and amongst the most orthodox. He tells me that he came to Leeds from Russia in 1852 - a fugitive from Russian militarism. He was on his way to America, via Hull and Liverpool, when someone at Hull persuaded him to go to Leeds.

**“I took my chance here” he says, “and I have never regretted it. There were not more than a score Jews in Leeds when I came and most of them lived in a lodging house at the bottom of Templar Street kept by a woman known as “Blind Mary”. Those who did not stay there called in for their meals, so it was a regular thing for men to go there to make up a “Minyan” I travelled in jewellery, but we were all pedlars, either in jewellery, sponges, wash leathers or drapery. We had a place of worship in Back Rockingham Street and I was married there.**

**“All of those I remember of my early days in Leeds came here as single men. Later on men came with their wives from Russia, but the early ones were single who either made wives of Jewesses in this country or who sent to Russia for them. In my own case I had a friend who sent to Russia for his sister and I married her. It was a usual thing for young fellows when they had settled here to send to Russia for their parents and brothers and sisters and that is how the Jewish people made a home in Leeds.**

**“But they did not come in large numbers until Mr. Herman Friend began to find employment for them as tailors. His workshop was in the old workhouse yard, at the top of Lady Lane where all the sewing was at first done by hand. It was there that one of the first sewing machines in Leeds was introduced, somewhere in the late 50’s, and I remember what a wonderful thing it was considered and how lots of people used to go see it.”**

There were three articles; we found the other two in the following day’s paper, Saturday, March 9, and in Monday’s paper, March 11. Again the library staff were helpful and showed us how to copy the pages.

Back home, I transcribed the first and third articles as closely as I could to the originals, because the photocopy was difficult to read in places; the

second article was very badly copied and I decided to find the original in the British Newspaper Library in London. There, they have kept the original newspapers. I telephoned the day before and gave the name and date of the newspaper I wanted. I checked in at the desk, showing my passport as proof of identity, and was given a reader's ticket. I chose a desk and wrote the number on the request form. The newspapers were in a massive file. They were wheeled along in a cart and placed on a huge reading desk. I was able to write down the whole of the second article and check for follow-up letters on subsequent days. In fact there were two more letters, both about the location of tailoring workshops in the early days. The articles give a fascinating account of life for the early Jewish settlers in Leeds, but for me they were much more than that. I could actually read old Sam MANHAM's words as he spoke of his past.



My great grandmother, Rachel FRIEDMAN, married Samuel MANHAM in May, 1860. From the newspaper account I learned that her brother, Jacob FRIEDMAN, was living in Leeds in the 1850s and he sent for her to come and marry his friend. So now I was looking for her brother. After we found the newspaper articles in Leeds Library, we looked at their copy of the 1861 census. There it records a family called FRIEDMAN at 10 Lower Templar Street, Rachel's address when she married. There was

Sarah, wife, head of household and three children. Sarah was born in Warsaw, Poland, as was her oldest son, Harris, aged 8. The two younger children, Morris aged 3 and Nathan aged 1 were born in Leeds. I found their birth records – Morris born in July 1857; Nathan born in January 1860. Where was Jacob FRIEDMAN on census night? His name had been written into the census and then crossed out. He came to Leeds with his wife and son and found work (as a teacher on Morris' birth certificate and as a dealer in jewellery on Nathan's birth certificate). They had a home, so he brought his sister over to marry his friend. Their father must have died between Morris' birth and Nathan's birth in January 1860.

The wedding in May cannot have been a very happy occasion. In 1861 Rachel and Samuel had their first child, a boy called Nathan after Rachel's

father. But the child died when he was eight months old. Poor Rachel: Her father had died around the time she arrived in her new country, in Leeds, and now her first-born had died as a baby. She went on to have three more boys, who did survive, then three girls and then another boy. She died in 1900. One of her grandsons remembered her as "a bad tempered old lady" who swept him, aged four, off the front doorstep.

Samuel was remembered as a gentle, sweet-tempered old man who continued to peddle jewellery round the villages near Leeds until he was in his 80s. He had a strong Yorkshire accent. His older daughter, Amelia, my grandmother, moved in with her family to keep house for him after Rachel died. He died on December 3, 1919, aged 86. He had seen the Jewish community in Leeds grow from less than 50 to over 20,000.

Theresa Stewart

References (transcribed by Theresa Stewart from the originals):

1. *Yorkshire Evening Post, Friday December 1, 1967.* "Where a Stitch has run out of Time"
2. *Evening Post, Friday March 8, 1918.* "The Coming of the Jews to Leeds" First Article
3. *Evening Post, Saturday March 9, 1918.* "Cheaper Suits through the Jews of Leeds" Second Article
4. *Evening Post, Monday, March 11, 1918.* "A Short History of the Leeds Jews" Third Article

And with many thanks to Sherry Landa for enlightening me to many facts about my family in her research into "*One Manham Family*" which she put on the Internet.

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~chorleywood/Leeds%20MANHAM.htm>



### **JEWISH GENEALOGY IN LEEDS FROM ABROAD**

I was always curious about the origin of our surname. It seemed odd that other children had so many relatives with their same surname when my family had so few. The story went that when my grandfather arrived in the United Kingdom, he knew that his brother was known as Mr. JOSEPH, so he took the same name. Their name had been KUTCHINSKY, and grandfather Isaac JOSEPH (d.1945) told his son, my Dad, that people always said, "Bless you!" when they heard the name.

I did not think much about all of this until April 2002. The 1901 census was not available on the Internet at the time, so I looked for any family records my father had. All he had was a copy of the family's passport showing my grandfather's place and date of birth: Kolo, Russia, on 9 June 1875. It has a picture of my grandfather and a second picture which includes my grandmother and her two sons and daughter. What could I do with this information?

Using the Internet, I began to search for Kolo in Russia but my father insisted that Kolo was in Poland. Sure enough, doing a Google search, I found it in present-day Poland, approximately 100 miles (160Km) west of Warsaw, in the gubernia of Kalisz, Poznan province.

So this was good: I now knew more about where my family originated. Again through Google, I found a wonderful genealogy website, Jewish Records Indexing (JRI) and I located the town of Kolo. Searching for the name KUTCHINSKY, I found numerous variations which could sound the same and, using the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex technique, I found an "Icek" born in 1875. His birth record, Akt # 71, was to be found on a certain microfilm at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Centres (FHCs). Fortunately, I live less than two kilometres from one of the largest FHCs outside Salt Lake City, where I obtained a copy of the birth record.

I had joined the Jewish Polish Genealogy List's e-mail group and solicited someone to translate the document, which I had scanned into my computer. What a shock! It was written in Russian, not in Polish. I asked my cousin Lee, a Russian major at university, if she could translate our grandfather's birth record. She was very excited and told me that her late father had corresponded with our grandfather's brother in New York, and that she would fax me a letter that she had from him. This was a major revelation – we had some information on the brother who had come to the United States! I faxed Lee, the birth record, and I soon received the promised letter. Great-uncle Morris wrote that my Uncle Benje was quite accurate and that he had gone to the United States in 1905, but he made

no mention of coming from Leeds. Now I had some really solid information to work with and was able to go back to the Internet to search further.

Ellis Island, the most popular point of entry into the United States at that time, has a wonderful website with many search options and capabilities; one can easily find immigrants and obtain copies of the original ships' manifests which listed all passengers. It includes lots of interesting information such as where passengers were born, where they came from and where and to whom they were going. Other information I found later became useful in identifying the family in the 1891 and 1901 English census records.

Excitedly, I told my father about my latest discoveries. He had vague recollections of his brother making contact with their uncle in New York and he gave me some names and addresses of a few relatives who lived in the United States. Using an address and telephone numbers website I was able to find relatives who, I learned, were descended from Simon JOSEPH. He had never left the United Kingdom but had at some point left Leeds for Scotland. Now my grandfather had not one but two brothers!

I found a Russian-speaking neighbour who translated the birth record but to my disappointment I discovered that it bore the wrong name. I obtained the right record, and my neighbour provided a complete translation.

The records of that time contained two sets of dates: one set tells us the date of the event, the other shows when the event was recorded by the records clerk. One date is according to the "old calendar", the other is according to the "new calendar." The next revelation was that my grandfather's birth date, according to his passport, did not agree with either date on his birth record!

Using the information on the birth record and the JRI website, I was then able to ascertain the following:

- My grandfather's parents, Lejb and Marya (RAUF), married in 1862,
- Their first son, Szymon, was born in 1862,

- Their second son, Rywen, was born in 1867,
- Their fourth son, Mociiek, was born in 1880 (further proof that the letter-writer in New York was part of the family),

But who immigrated to Leeds?

In response to one of my inquiries posted by the JewishGen E-mail List, I was sent an Excel file of all JOSEPHs and GREENBERGs living in Leeds in 1901, which enabled me to identify each of the above people, including my great-grandparents – another surprise for my father! All of the names had been anglicised, and my great-grandparents had become Louis and Mary. Living with them was Morris aged 22, and Alick aged 14. From this I concluded that there was now a fifth brother!

The other surprise was the absence of my grandmother and her family from this 1901 Census file, despite their passport clearly stating that Fanny GREENBERG was born in Leeds in 1901. Once the 1901 Census went online, at the suggestion of one of the British-Jewry E-mail List Administrators I searched for all females named Fanny in Leeds at that time, of my grandmother's approximate age, and found Fanny GREENBORO. I then did a search for all GREENBOROs in Leeds and found a family of nine. My father was able to confirm most of the names as family members. I wrote to the people at the National Archives about this inaccuracy and I noticed they corrected the online information fairly quickly.

I have also searched the microfiche of the 1891 England Census at the FHC, noting many of the same family members who had been born at that time. Absent is my great-grandfather from the same address as that of my great-grandmother, my grandfather and others. My next step is to obtain his naturalization certificate and application to learn what I can of his entry into the United Kingdom.

As a result of my research thus far I have established the following: In 1891 my grandfather Isaac JOSEPH (KUTCHINSKY) went from Poland to Leeds at 16 years of age. I am not sure of the timing, but by 1901 his parents and four brothers were in Leeds too.

Isaac married Dora LEVENSEN (d.3 June 1913, aged 36) in 1898 in Leeds. They had three children that I know of: Anna/Hanna, Jeremiah and Henry. Anna died aged 3 in 1905, Jeremiah died at 18-hours of age in 1909. Their third child, my Uncle Henry, whom I knew and loved, was born in Leeds in 1899 and died in South Africa at age 69 in 1968, when I was 5 years old. My grandparents immigrated to South Africa in 1921 – between 28 April, the date on their passport, and 21 November, the date of my father's birth in South Africa.

Isaac became a British citizen in 1912: I have his naturalisation certificate and application. He re-married on 11 January 1914, to the surprise of everyone in my family! His second wife, my grandmother Fanny GREENBERG, was born in Leeds on 25 December 1890.

Most of my grandfather's immediate family and their spouses were buried in Louis Street Cemetery, according to the burial records provided to me by the United Hebrew Congregation of Leeds. Now I need to confirm that the family members are there, to determine their plot locations and to find out if there are any records of their next of kin. I learned that the UHC also has Louis Street marriage records with more information than the death records may contain; I hope to obtain copies of those records shortly.

Of my grandfather's four brothers, I have located descendants of two of them. Of the other two, one is listed in the 1901 census and I have found no other mention of him. The other is buried in Louis Street; I have the names of his children. I have possibly located his children's marriage records on Yorkshire Free BMD.

My primary goal is to locate descendants of these remaining two brothers. If you can help me, please contact me by e-mail at [JJLACA@aol.com](mailto:JJLACA@aol.com).  
*Jonny Joseph, Los Angeles, California, USA Edited by June Solntseff*



**THE BRITISH LIBRARY**

A million pages of 19th century newspapers are to be digitised

under a programme involving the British Library and an academic information agency. The project will mean that a million pages of the newspapers will be fully searchable, including texts and associated images. The papers are currently in print form in the library and, after the project is complete, would be made available for researchers in digitised form on websites.

The website resource would, in the first instance, provide an unparalleled and freely available resource for further and higher education.

"British Newspapers 1800-1900" is a project costing two million pounds, made possible through funding from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The overall digitisation programme is managed by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and represents a total investment of some £10m to be applied to delivering high quality content online, including sound, moving pictures, census data and still images for long-term use by the further and higher education communities in the UK. The newspapers will be selected in consultation with education communities through an online consultation in the summer of 2004. Suggestions will also be sought from the newspaper industry, to maximise partnership potential. It is anticipated that national papers to be digitised will include *The Morning Chronicle* (a reformist newspaper with a young Charles Dickens as a reporter and WM Thackeray as art critic) and *The Morning Post* (who engaged writers such as Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth).

Regional and local papers will be drawn from all regions of the UK. In the 19th century Britain transformed itself from an agricultural society to a commercial, industrial and military superpower with an empire that spanned the globe.

British engineers and inventors, such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Robert Stephenson, forged the Industrial Revolution. Social reforms, from the abolition of slavery, Catholic emancipation and the growing labour movement, were to transform the lives of British people. This project would represent these and many other developments. It would bring them to life through newspaper accounts to provide an

extraordinary resource for the education and research communities. Many of the proposed titles were the definitive news sources of their day and include not only news, but editorials, features, advertisements and photographs - cumulatively representing a resource of very significant historical and cultural value.

Ron Cooke, Chair of JISC, welcomed the new project, saying: "This is a marvellous example of collaboration between JISC and the British Library, one of our most important partners. Newspapers represent our culture in a unique way and JISC is proud to help create what will be an invaluable educational resource."

Ed King, Head of the British Library's newspaper collections in Colindale, commented: "The British Library is committed to making our collections accessible to as many people as possible. Before the World Wide Web existed, readers had to visit the newspaper archive in Colindale to look at all aspects of the collections. This means that digital copies will be available for web users who can explore these early out-of-copyright editions in their entirety."

JISC is a joint committee of the UK further and higher education funding bodies. It is responsible for supporting the innovative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, teaching, and research. It is best known for providing the JANET network, a range of support, content and advisory services, and a portfolio of high-quality resources.

The British Library Newspapers catalogue includes entries for over 52,000 newspaper and periodical titles. The collections include:

All UK national daily and Sunday newspapers from 1801 to the present; Most UK and Irish provincial newspapers, some dating from the early 18th century onwards; Selected newspapers from around the world in European languages, some dating from the 17th century onwards; A wide range of UK and Irish popular periodicals, covering all subjects from

fashion, pop music and cinema, to sports, hobbies and trades.  
*Thanks to Miriam Margolyes for this.*

## TNA NEWS

From January 2005 TNA will provide a Freedom of Information research service, with the help of temporary staff, until such time as the nature and volume of FOI enquiries can be defined more precisely, probably after 6-12 months. Prior to the introduction of the FOI service in January 2005, we shall launch a pilot paid research service from 1st October 2004. The charge will be £15 per 15 minutes research, including VAT.

## FROM THE PROVINCES



**Leeds**- The Leeds website has been reorganised. Things have moved about a bit (for example the 1914-1918 absent voters list) <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/> from there use the search button as the actual page has a URL that would take most of this newsletter to include!  
Synagogues, groups and kosher food for Leeds is at

[http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/291\\_leeds\\_jews.htm](http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/291_leeds_jews.htm)

**Liverpool** – Try

[http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/293\\_liverpool\\_jews.htm](http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/293_liverpool_jews.htm)

**Manchester** – A list of Manchester Synagogues and their contact addresses is available at

[http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/290\\_manchester\\_jews.htm](http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/articles/290_manchester_jews.htm)

**Scotland**- Similarly the link is:

[www.somethingjewish.co.uk/regional\\_jews/scottish\\_jews/](http://www.somethingjewish.co.uk/regional_jews/scottish_jews/)

**UK BMD Project** – This now includes a project for Bath. All the regional sites have been updated since our last edition. Please see

<http://www.ukbmd.org.uk/>

**Family History Fairs**- Summer is a time when there are not many fairs, but here are a few dates for your diary. They include closures of the National Archive and other useful dates. Details at <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~%7Emalcolm/genuki/geneva/> the references use Chapman codes for counties. You can go to the above site and hit the links to find out more about each event. *SL*

**Jewish Settlement and Development in Scotland 1879-2004:** A symposium at Barnethill Synagogue, Glasgow. See list archives for details: <http://listsearches.rootsweb.com/?list=BRITISH-JEWRY> keyword symposium and year 2004 will get you to Miriam's original post.

## Dates to note August-November 2004

August	7 SoG, LND	<a href="#">Special Collections and Unique Sources in the Society's Library</a>
August	7 SoG, LND	<a href="#">Using Family Historian (practical session)</a>
August	7 Long Melford, SFK	<a href="#">Suffolk Family History Society Fair</a>
August	7-8 Belfast, ANT	<a href="#">Local &amp; Family History Fair</a>
August	14 Llandrindod Wells, RAD	<a href="#">Powys FHS Local &amp; Family History Fair</a>
August	26-30 Loughborough, LEI	Federation of Family History Societies <a href="#">30th Anniversary Conference - A Flight of Yesterdays</a>
August	28 <i>TNA(PRO)</i>	<i>Closed for August Holiday</i>
August	30 <i>SoG, TNA(PRO) and ERC</i>	<i>Closed for August Holiday</i>
September	1 SoG, LND	<a href="#">British Jurisdictions Project (lecture)</a>
September	1 London, LND	<a href="#">Family History 35 Week Evening Course</a>
September	4 Merthyr Tydfil, GLA	<a href="#">Open Day</a>
September	4 SoG, LND	<a href="#">Photographs: People and Places (full-day)</a>
September	4 Llandudno, GWN	<a href="#">North Wales Family History Fair</a>
September	5 Maidstone, KEN	<a href="#">The Kent Family History Fair</a>
September	8 SoG, LND	<a href="#">Basic Britain: family history sources for York</a>
September	9 SoG, LND	<a href="#">Family History Skills Course: Advanced (18-week evening course)</a>

September 9 LND [SoG Visit: School of Oriental & African Studies](#)

September 11 Gateshead, NBL [The Great North Fair - The 2nd National British Fair for Family and Local History](#)

September 11 SoG, LND [Using Family Tree Maker Software \(practical session\)](#)

September 11 Staines, MDX [West Middlesex FHS Open Day](#)

September 12 Liverpool, MSY [The Liverpool Aintree Family History Fair](#)

September 12 Scarborough, YKS [Yorkshire Coast FHF -- date changed to 25 September](#)

September 19 Cheltenham, GLS [The Cheltenham Family History Fair](#)

September 22 SoG, LND [Fighting Talk: My Ancestor was a Royal Marine](#)

September 25 Scarborough, YKS [Yorkshire Coast Family History Fair](#)

September 25 Bridgewater, SOM [Open Day & AGM](#)

September 25 Kidlington, OXF [Oxfordshire FHS Open Day / FH Fair](#)

September 25 SoG, LND [Huguenot Ancestry](#)

September 26 Horndean, HAM [HGS Open Day and AGM](#)

September 28 Canterbury, KEN [Introduction to Family History 6 Week Evening Course](#)

September 29 SoG, LND [Using the Society's Library](#)

October 1 SoG, LND [What's in it for me? \(ten week course in SoG Library\)](#)

October 2 Manchester, GTM [11th Annual North West Group Family History Fair](#)

October 2 SoG, LND [LDS Resources: Online and on CD-ROM](#)

October 2 London, STS [An Introduction to One-Name Studies seminar](#)

October 3 Leamington Spa, WAR [The Warwickshire Family History Fair](#)

October 6 SoG, LND [Missionary Archives: Sources for Family Historians](#)

October 7 LND [SoG Visit: Society of Apothecaries](#)

October 9 SoG, LND [Beginners Course \(9 and 16 Oct\)](#)

October 10 Hastings, SSX [Hastings & Rother Family History Fair](#)

October 13 SoG, LND [Using the Library Catalogue](#)

October 16 Lambeth, LND [Family History Day Conference](#)

October 17 Eastleigh, HAM [The Eastleigh Family History Fair](#)

October 20 SoG, LND [Basic Britain: family history sources for](#)

October 23 SoG, LND [London](#)

October 27 SoG, LND [Using Family Historian](#)

October 30 SoG, LND [Using Legacy Software](#)

November 3 SoG, LND [Scottish Family History Sources \(full-day\)](#)

November 6 SoG, LND [Inherited diseases \(lecture\)](#)

November 6 Woking, SRY [The Census: Online and on CD-ROM](#)

November 8 SoG, LND [West Surrey FHS Open Day](#)

November 10 SoG, LND [Genealogy for Librarians and Archivists \(full-day\)](#)

November 13 SoG, LND [Forgotten Heroes: Researching Ancestors Killed in the Great War](#)

November 17 SoG, LND [Marriages Made and Unmade](#)

November 18 LND [Divorce Records \(lecture\)](#)

November 19- Canterbury, KEN [SoG Visit: Newspaper Library, Colindale Land and Manorial Records Weekend Residential Course](#)

November 21 Norwich, NFK [The East Anglia Family History Fair](#)

November 24 SoG, LND [Mayhew's London \(lecture\)](#)

November 25 LND [SoG Visit: The National Archives \(PRO\) Induction Day](#)

November 27 SoG, LND [Introducing Palaeography \(full-day\)](#)

November 28 Wimborne, DOR [The Dorset & S.W. Family History Fair](#)

Nov 29-4 Dec [TNA\(PRO\)](#) *Closed for Stocktaking*

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the B-J News. If you have any comments or suggestions please email us [B-JNEWS@slanda.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:B-JNEWS@slanda.fsnet.co.uk)