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**New web developments**

There have been a number of new advancements and additions to the CHOL website in the past month. We highlight some of them here. Huge thanks to **Bramie Lenhoff**, the webmaster, for his untiring efforts to keep everything on [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website) ship-shape.

**New Communities:**

**Worcester**

How lovely it is to have the history of the Worcester community in their own words as they celebrated their golden jubilee in 1953. We were delighted to receive a copy of the booklet they created to mark this milestone. It was sent to us, beautifully digitised, by **Jeremy Hodes** in Australia. **Rabbi Mark Lazarus Smith** who came out from London in 1948 to serve the Worcester community wrote in the 40-page booklet: *The whole story is one of grim struggle and resolute endeavour and affords enthralling reading as well as just cause for pride and satisfaction. Bearing in mind the economic hardships of the early settlers, the difficulties of communications and limited resources, one looks back on their primordial achievements with something akin to veneration. The inevitable squabbles and dissensions, an integral and inseparable feature of all forms of communal life, disappear completely in the ultimate satisfactory outcome. They have resulted in a solid, firmly united and well organised community, able to boast of social amenities, cultural activities and educational facilities obtaining usually in only the few very large Jewish centres.* We have created a 'community for [Worcester](#)

## Roodepoort

**Geoffrey Boner** in Israel is working steadily to populate the community of Roodepoort (including Florida and Maraisburg) on the CHOL website. We have uploaded the brief story of three outstanding personalities in the Town, **Dr Sabse Spiro** – GP, **Dr Jock Beron** – Headmaster of Roodepoort Primary and later of King David Primary School and **Morris Hockman**, a jeweller, who is named for the Roodepoort communal hall. The latest family stories are by **Bernard Kaplan**, now a renowned paediatric nephrologist in the USA whose father owned a shop on Kathleen Street Florida, between the Bantjes gold mine and the Florida Lake. There is also a family story by **Arthur Simon** whose father owned Simons Timber and Hardware.



The **Kaplan** and **Simon** stories now join the **Rosowsky, Boner, Blumsohn, Nafte, Schneider** (Maraisburg) and **Josselowitz** family stories on the site. [Roodepoort](#). Most people from there, write about the devastating Tornado that tore through the town in 1948. It was a most alarming event as reported by those that were small children at the time, seeing roofs flying through the sky. See [Roodepoort Tornado](#).

## Kimberley

If you are paying attention, you might have noticed, that although we have added **Worcester** to the 'communities' page of the CHOL website – the total number of communities is smaller than before. Why is that you may ask? It's because for larger cities, we have contributions about diverse online 'communities' within them. Before this gets out of hand, and also in order to describe each entry better, we have decided to make a 'homepage' for each 'metropolis'. Although hardly a metropolis, the **Kimberley homepage**, hosts four entries; the **Kehilalinks Kimberley Jewish Community** website created by Eli Rabinowitz and myself; the **Kimberley Virtual Cemetery**; and the history and the tours of each of the two **synagogues**. By clicking ['Kimberley'](#) you will get to the page that lists all the Kimberley entries. (If you click on the 'Virtual Cemetery' you will also be able to see all those that have uploaded pictures of their dear ones buried there.)

## Medical 'communities'

Medicine has featured prominently in the Jewish psyche over centuries. Achieving some of the highest matric results, young South African Jewish men and women often filled up to half the places in Johannesburg and Cape Town to study medicine in the 1950 and 1960s. Many graduates have excelled in all forms of medical practice, research and teaching in South Africa and across the world. Veritable 'communities' of South African medical practitioners have been identified and written about. We have therefore created a dedicated entry on the 'Communities' page for 'Medical Communities'. You can read about **Jewish doctors at Baragwanath Hospital**; about the **Wits graduates of 1960**; the **partners in Primary care in Cape Town's Northern suburbs** and other Jewish 'medical communities'

<https://chol.website/communities/medical/index.htm>

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## New Memoirs

**Professor Leo Schamroth (1924-1988)** was one of the most renowned of Jewish doctors at Baragwanath Hospital. After specialising abroad in cardiology and working at Bara with distinction for many years, Leo Schamroth was appointed Chief Physician of the Department of Medicine there in 1973, as well as being made Professor of Medicine at Wits. He remained so until his untimely retirement due to ill health in 1987. You can read his biography on the memoirs page and also reach it from the *Jewish doctors at Baragwanath Hospital* entry on the 'Medical Communities' page. Both of these entries were written by Leo's daughter-in-law **Naomi Schamroth-Rapeport**.

**Matthew Pamm: Arts Critic and Businessman (1914 – 1979)** became the arts reviewer for The Cape Times and was also a businessman in the clothing trade in Cape Town. His son **Anthony Pamm** has written a biography of his father. This includes information and pictures of their distinguished relatives: Abba Eban, Phillys Spira (ballet dancer) and the Braudo, Lynn, Pamm, Ruch and Solomon families.



**Dr Hannah-Reeve Sanders (1928-2024)**: Leila Bloch has written about the first female Chief Medical Superintendent of Groote Schuur Hospital (1976-1986) in the thesis for her Master of History at Stellenbosch University This shines a light on the 'achievement' and 'success' of a female doctor within the medical field in South Africa during the middle to late 20th century. (188 pp) Hannah-Reeve Sanders passed away on 4 June this year, aged 95.

As well as collecting together 'Medical Communities', we have also collected a number of '**Medical Memoirs**' and by putting 'medic' in the search slot on 'memoirs' you will reach a number of medical memoirs.

**Jeremy Hodes** also sent us a beautifully written and illustrated memoir written by his grandfather **Leon Hodes** (1893-1963): **From Riga to Rishpon** covers travel from Latvia to, and growing up in, Scotland before going to South Africa and then making Aliyah in the 1950s. Jeremy also sent a fascinating memoir written by his father **Lionel Hodes** (1924-2005) about his experience as one of the 800 South Africans who fought in the Israeli War of Independence. It

includes information on how Lionel organised his group of South African volunteers, how they left South Africa and how they managed to evade the British and get into Palestine. Read this memoir here: [The Israeli War of Independence](#). **Jeremy Hodes** PhD, who was born and raised in Johannesburg before moving to Australia in 1984 at age 25 says: 'My dad's and grandfather's memoirs are beautifully written and being now of historical value, they deserve a wider audience and that is why I am thrilled they will be available through the CHOL website.'

## Military memoirs

We have also collected a number of '**Military Memoirs**' and by putting 'war' in the search slot on 'memoirs' you will reach no less than ten memoirs that deal with South African Jewish people involved in wars from the Boer War through the Second World War to wars in Israel. (Watch out for the two rogue results: **Swartland** and **Zwartmodder** on this one!)



## New Resources

On the CHOL website, we have a small list of resources that we have selected that might help you in researching communities and families. These links include the archives of the **Kaplan Centre** and the South African Jewish **RootsBank**, the archives of the South African Jewish Museum (**SAJM**) as well as the **Jewish Gen SA-SIG** links.

To these we have recently added the South African **Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth** [Jewish life in South African country communities](#). This valuable material is only in book form, but we do include a link to where you can purchase the books and a list of the towns covered.

We have also added **Veronica Belling's** [Bibliography of South African Jewry](#) which lists all the books and articles written about South African Jewry and also literature by South Africans of Jewish origin. Also under resources, we have added **Gavin Beinart-Smollan's** website of South African Jewish cook-books, and also the list of publications of **Solly Sandler**. These include memoirs, essays and articles on Jewish life in South Africa and its Litvak heritage. Starting with the orphans in Arcadia (Johannesburg), the Ochberg Orphans, Oranjia (Cape Town) and the Pinsker Orphans, Solly has recorded histories/memories of about 400 children, which takes us back to the horrors in Eastern Europe between the world wars. Solly's rich material is not available online, but his books are obtainable from Solly via this [email](#).

## South African Jewish Yearbook 1967-8

Another great resource, also sent to us by **Jeremy Hodes** (whose family had once lived in Worcester) is a complete digitised version of the [South African Jewry Yearbook 1967-8](#) (2nd edition, edited by **Leon Feldberg** and published by Feldhill Publishing Co, Johannesburg, South Africa in 1968). Feldberg founded the Southern African Jewish Times in 1936 and was still editor when he published this yearbook. (Search 'Feldberg' in the Yearbook)

Jeremy said in response to my enquiry: *Thank you Geraldine for asking my motivations as to why I did it. I have always felt guilty that I was benefitting from the work and effort of all those people who tirelessly contribute to sites such as JewishGen and Family Search without giving anything in return, apart from my own family tree research. This project is my way of saying thank you and*

*giving back to all those people who have knowingly and unknowingly assisted me in my family history journey over the past 35 years. It took just over a year to do, and I really enjoyed reading the 2,400 biographies of so many extraordinary people, so many incredible stories, so much triumph over adversity, such incredible contributions to Jewish communal life and to the wider South African society and culture. That period in the 1960s and 1970s in my view was a golden age in Jewish life in South Africa and I am pleased and grateful that I am able to bring these people and their contributions to a wider audience. The biographies and the interesting longer articles are all available in full text with every word being searchable. This is useful if searching for locations, spouses, employment etc. For example. searching Ermelo brings up two biographies, Lazar Sidelsky and Lily Gladys.’ Search or click a name or ‘articles’. I am sure many of you will find this fascinating and helpful. (If you sign in with google you can leave comments for Jeremy on his ‘blogspot’.)*

I was touched that **Jeremy Hodes** added: ‘Geraldine I saw your articles on your family and have really enjoyed reading them. I did my army basic training in Kimberley in winter (July 1977) and can readily confirm how cold it was!’ **Bernard Kaplan** (Roodepoort) also said to me ‘I have been reading your family’s remarkable history. You write so beautifully and poignantly - it sent shivers down my spine. The photo of you and Queen Elizabeth is lovely. Kol hakavod! Thank you so much for all that you have done.’ (It’s here on the Kimberley website [Auerbach, Geraldine, \(nee Kretzmar\)](#) if anyone is interested.

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## SA-SIG Newsletters

This month we highlight Volume 1 issue 2 of the JewishGen **South African Special Interest Group Newsletter** which came out in August 1999, edited by the late Mike Getz and spearheaded by the president, the very much still present Saul Issroff. In this their second newsletter they are still feeling their way. Saul thanks ‘Trevor’ for giving them a presence on the web. This he says is ***an indispensable means of signalling our presence and carrying the message of Southern African Jewry, its history and genealogy.***

CHOL is clearly a ‘child’ of SA-SIG and salutes their Newsletters. The articles are of great relevance still, and we intend to highlight an issue in each CHOL Newsletter so that they are more widely appreciated. In this second edition of their Newsletter, are articles on **Machal** and the early fight for Israel by Ralph Yodaiken (which chimes in with Lionel Hodes’s Machal memoir); an article on the Memorial to the **Jewish Pedlar** in Graaf-Reinet; a report on **Zambia’s Resilient Jews**; and the establishment of a **Cemetery Maintenance Board** in Cape Town. We learn about their decision to instal a computerised index to assist visitors where screens will provide names, death dates and gravesite numbers. This is the start of the **Virtual cemetery for Cape Town** that you can see here: [www.jewishcemetery.co.za](http://www.jewishcemetery.co.za) and its spin-off – the [Kimberley Virtual Cemetery](#)

You can find this one here [SA SIG newsletter 2](#) (or go to our Resources page and look at all the resources available on ‘South African SIG’

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## Next CHOL Events

### We are delighted to announce three September Seminars in 2024

#### Tuesdays 10, 17 and 23 September 2024 7.00pm South African time

(10.00am California; 1.00pm New York; 6.00pm UK; 7.00pm South Africa, Europe; 8.00pm, Israel and some ungodly hour downunder)

- 10 September: Naomi Schamroth Rapeport  
**South African Second World War veterans' role in the fledgling State of Israel**
- 17 September: Danielle Lockwood  
**Herbert Kretzmer OBE - From Kroonstad via Fleet Street to Les Mis**
- 24 September: Professor Richard Mendelsohn  
**Commemorating the Jews of Parow, a microcosm of South African Jewry.**

(More details below) To join the zooms, ask for the link by emailing [info@chol.website](mailto:info@chol.website).

(Those already on this mailing list will receive the link in due course)

We hope you will join us on zoom to add to the discussion, as we get to know each other, from around the world.

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## More details of the CHOL September Seminars

10 September: Naomi Schamroth Rapeport

### **South African Second World War veterans' role in the fledgling State of Israel**

During the Second World War, over 10 000 Jewish men and women volunteers served in the Union Defence Force. Many had distinguished military careers. In 1948 when the State of Israel was proclaimed, amongst 800 volunteers from South Africa were numerous war veterans, who contributed to the military success of the State. Many held major positions, particularly in the Israeli Air Force, 505 Squadron – Radar, and in the field of medicine.

**Naomi Schamroth Rapeport**, was the first woman clinician in private practice in Johannesburg where she was active and honoured in medicine and medical politics uniting clinicians of all races. She is married to cardiologist Colin Schamroth, (son of Professor Leo Schamroth) and mother of cardiologist and financial analyst daughters. Since retirement, Naomi has volunteered at the South African Jewish Museum archives and was an advisor to Mark Wade and Alan Swerdlow who produced the film series *Legends and Legacies*. For the past 3 years she has been collating the profiles of over 3,000 Jewish South African men and women who served in the Second World War, for the Chaim Herzog Museum in Latrun, Israel. She has also written about the Jewish doctors who contributed to Baragwanath Hospital.

17 September: Danielle Lockwood

### **Herbert Kretzmer OBE – From Kroonstad via Fleet Street to Les Mis**

Journalist and lyricist Herbert Kretzmer was born in Kroonstad. For 70 years until his death in 2020, he lived in London – at the very heart of British culture. He contributed to the 1960s BBC satirical TV programme *That Was the Week that Was*. An award-winning Fleet Street journalist, he was TV critic of *The Daily Mail* and theatre reviewer of *The Daily Express*, attending over

2,500 first nights. As lyricist he worked with ABBA's Bjorn Ulveas and Benny Anderson on the musical *Kristina* and wrote the lyrics for the musical 'Our Man Creighton'. He is best known for writing the lyrics for the musical phenomenon *Les Misérables*, and his chart-topping collaboration with Charles Aznavour. This talk encompasses his life, both professional and personal through the eyes of his daughter, Danielle.

**Danielle Lockwood's** professional career in the film industry culminated in the position of Head of Publicity for Warner Bros Film Distributors, where she compiled and supervised the UK press and publicity campaigns for amongst others, Clint Eastwood, Warren Beatty, Robert de Niro and Oliver Stone. Relocating from London to the south coast to bring up her young family, Danielle focused on her own education, completing a BA Hons in History at the University of Chichester, and, as a recipient of the Karten Scholarship, a Masters in Jewish History and Culture at the Parkes Institute, University of Southampton. Danielle also lectures on history through film and organises Southampton's annual Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations and is a consultant for London's annual Jewish Film Festival.

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24 September: **Professor Richard Mendelsohn**  
**Commemorating the Jews of Parow, a microcosm of South African Jewry.**

September sees the launch in Cape Town and Ra'anana of a deeply researched book on the Parow Jewish community; of a richly documented state-of-the-art Parow website; and of a novel and immersive Parow exhibition at the South African Jewish Museum. Richard Mendelsohn, historian and Parow boy, reports on these.

**Richard Mendelsohn** is a retired former head of the Department of Historical Studies of the University of Cape Town and Deputy Dean of the university's Faculty of Humanities. He is the author of *Sammy Marks: The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal* (1991) a biography of the pioneering South African Jewish industrial and mining entrepreneur; co-editor of *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience* (2002); and co-author with Professor Milton Shain of *The Jews in South Africa: An Illustrated History* (2008 and 2014) the first comprehensive history of the community to appear in over fifty years. As Richard grew up in Parow in the 1950s and 1960s, its Jewish heyday, the social history of its Jewish community is a project that is both professional and personal.

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## Talking of Kretzmar/ Kretzmers

### Good news from Lithuania

I have just received a short message from Michael Kretzmer via Gideon Shimoni regarding recent developments in Lithuania, in the aftermath of his powerful film *Je Accuse* about Lithuanians not taking responsibility for their atrocities against Jews <https://trinitymedia.ai/player/share/0deb8728abd83aa634ecba18157378294965>. He says some good news about Lita. Deserves to be disseminated.

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**Your feedback to the Newsletter** would be welcome. Please send to [info@chol.website](mailto:info@chol.website)  
Please keep us informed of your own 'Community History On-Line' activities and interests. If you know people who might be interested in CHOL activities, please forward this Newsletter to them or pass on their details to CHOL.

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**CHOL Newsletter no 7** compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London July 2024, comes to you with every good wish for calm and peace in a troubled world.

Checkout the CHOL website: [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website) which now has on it:

- 49 communities <https://chol.website/communities.htm>
  - 51 Memoirs <https://chol.website/memoirs.htm>
  - 142 original stories <https://chol.website/stories.htm>
  - 30 Videos of presentations <https://chol.website/presentations.htm>
- also on the site are resources and journal articles and all our CHOL newsletters
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**CHOL – Community History On-Line** is a forum set up in 2020, under the auspices of the Kaplan Centre at UCT and the South African Jewish Museum – bringing together all those working on / or interested in creating an online presence relating to the **History of Jewish Communities in Southern Africa**. see [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website) contact [info@chol.website](mailto:info@chol.website).

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**SAJM**  
South African Jewish Museum

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(If you would like to – or even rather not – receive CHOL communications, please email [info@chol.website](mailto:info@chol.website))