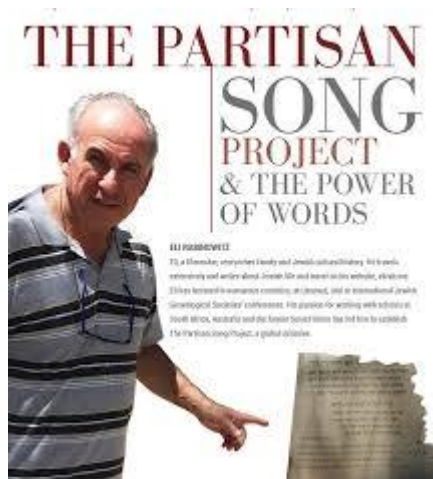


# Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter no 22, August 2019

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE London, August 2019

Dear Friends

As you have probably heard, London has experienced real Kimberley weather lately with temperatures well into the 30s C. fortunately we have cooler days in between and with a background in Kimberley – nothing can floor us.



We are getting a bit of a log jam on the Kimberley website, as our webmaster **Eli Rabinowitz** in Perth, has been caught up with his **global project: 'We are Here!'**. In this he is teaching and encouraging Jewish children all round the world to learn about and sing the anthem of the Partisan's during the Holocaust – 'Never say it's the end' '**Zog Nit Keynmol**'. This has been an incredibly successful journey where Eli has brought children from Jewish schools in Cape Town and Perth together in a live link-ups with children from Ort Schools in Moscow, Vilnius, the Ukraine and many other places round the world including the USA. Eli is passionate that they should learn this

song in its original Yiddish and also in their own language, so they understand it and its history. This song is a powerful message for the younger generation, to know that there was a resistance against the Nazis, and it is an important aspect of learning about the Holocaust. You can see Eli, and the children in the SABC TV programme about the project here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnaCtuqVBgg>. There are many other You tube clips too. So, congratulations Eli, from all of us – you have done a marvellous mitzvah for the next generation.

But if we can pinch a little of you back Eli, to your other mitzvah – the amazing kehillah-links, especially the Kimberley one – to make a few corrections and additions to the website <https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Home.html> like the birthdate of Gwynne Robins, and to put up the stories of several families – the **Diamonds**, the **Aaron Senderovitzs**, **Harold Hecht**, **Rev Moross** etc and also post the **Newsletter no 21 – and 22**. They are all waiting patiently in the queue.

## Leon Chonin to Guest edit next Newsletter



Also waiting in the queue is the excellent article from **Leon Chonin**, on **Jewish Education in Kimberley**. It's a great survey and I am attaching it here for you to read anyway. If you have any recollections or pictures relating to this aspect, to go with this, Leon would be pleased to hear from you. [chonin@rogers.com](mailto:chonin@rogers.com)

Leon has been one of the website's most consistent supporters. Although, like many of us, Leon has been away from Kimberley since he was a teenager, he has a great memory of how it was in Kimberley and has written many articles about his early life. First, he wrote a wonderful appreciation of his grandparents. His grandfather Lipi Weinstein, who undertook the entire spiritual leadership of the Baronial Street Synagogue for over 50 years. The life of this

synagogue is wonderfully evoked. As a child I was of the opinion that this was the 'old' synagogue that was replaced by the Memorial Road one. But I learned that this was absolutely not the case. The opulent synagogue in Memorial Road, opened in 1902 by the mining magnates, did replace older synagogues that have vanished. But it was when the Eastern European Jews arrived at the turn of the century and found the kind of Anglo German worship not religious enough and not to their taste, that they formed a separate community and built and opened their own shul in 1911. Gradually the two communities merged. You can read all about a this here:

<https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Chonin.html>

From Leon's page you can also read about his time as Rosh Madrich of [Habonim in Kimberley](#) 1961- 1963 (posted 2016) His superb business and professions survey of Kimberley Jews from about 1930 to 1970 (posted 2017) can also be found there, called: [Jewish Business activity in Kimberley](#). You can also read his article on [Maintaining a kosher home in Kimberley](#) (posted 2018). Leon has also written separate entries under 'families' for his late brother Seville Chonin and father Edel Chonin. He has also written an amazing story of connections with family from the Shtetl of Utian.

As Leon has shown so much interest in the endeavour of memorialising the Kimberley community, I have invited Leon to become a member of the editorial team of the website. And I have invited Leon to **Guest Edit Newsletter no 23**, whenever he feels ready to do so. So, please expect to hear from Leon soon as to what he wants to do with his Newsletter. He certainly wants to involve you all.

### Harry Potter Kimberley connection



I have just learned from a BBC genealogy programme 'Who do you think you are' that Harry Potter, or at least the actor, Daniel Radcliffe who plays him in the films, has a Kimberley connection. His great-great-grandfather **Louis Gershon** from Posen in Germany went out to Kimberley to seek his fortune in the early diamond days – as one did.

By 1901, Louis Gershon had relocated to London and set up a jewellery business in Hatton Garden. By 1930, his son Samuel Gershon (Radcliffe's great-grandfather) had taken over the business with his brother, got married to Radcliffe's great-grandmother Raie Jacobs, and moved to Southend-on-Sea. But did not turn out too well for them in the end.

In 1936, the Gershon jewellery business was apparently burgled – the equivalent of £250,000 in today's money was taken – but the police declined to pursue an investigation. It was their contention that the heist was bogus, the basis for a fraudulent insurance claim. They said the Gershons had form: two very similar burglaries in their shop had been perpetrated in the preceding decade, followed by disputes with insurers. Sadly, Samuel subsequently took his own life.

Pictured are Daniel and his mother, who is a casting agent. (Well she certainly landed a great job for her son Daniel, didn't she?)

## **Shul Facebook Pages**

Those of you who are members of the Kimberley shul Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/284879511607854/> will have seen some lovely aerial photographs of Kimberley and also the warm tribute by Barney Horwitz to Bessie Cohen, wife of late Leon Cohen, who passed away last month.

We congratulate Barney who has now taken on a new role as the first Chairman of the newly set up Small Communities Association (SCA). Rabbi Silberhaft its first executive director, while continuing also to serve as CEO of and Spiritual Leader to the AJC. This is a change and the new body will be independent of the South Africa Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), while it will have a representative on the Board's National Executive Council.

In a joint communique of the SCA and the SAJBD, Barney said: "As a member of one of the oldest country communities I have a passion for ensuring that the rich legacy of Jewish communities throughout South Africa be preserved and that Jews, no matter their affiliation or level of observance, be cared for. For me it is an honour to have participated in the design of the SCA and to being an active partner in its future success".

Enjoy the rest of your summer – or winter, wherever you are

Leon will be in touch with you very soon. he will be wanting to have your collaboration in the next Newsletter, and I hope you will respond readily

**Geraldine**

**Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London August 2019**