

# Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter #47

## 1985 UCT Interviews with Gus Haberfeld and Bernard Wulf Alfred Beit and Imperial College

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London, February 2022

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I have (gladly) been inundated with new material for the website. It's amazing how things develop so that each new bit of information throws light on a whole lot of previous narratives. It's all connected, and many stories and family pages now need to be updated.

For this Newsletter, I am particularly grateful to Gary Sussman (who has created such a superb website for the Vryburg Jewish Community <https://gary2452.wixsite.com/website-2>) who tipped me off about interviews done by the Kaplan Centre at UCT in the 1980s. Of particular interest was one with our very own **Gussie Haberfeld** and another with **Rev Bernard Wulf**, who 'ministered' to the Kimberley Community between 1941 and 1943 when Rev Yesorsky had enlisted in the army and was sent 'up North'. We had no information about him at all. It turns out he was a remarkable character who had unique experiences as a Minister in Kimberley that you can read about in this Newsletter. Thank you to Archivist at the Kaplan Centre, Katie Garrun, who has sent them to me and allowed me to share the information in them with you. .

### The 'Greener' or 'Grinne' Community



**Gussie Haberfeld** was able to elucidate more about the so-called 'Greener' community and their preferences. He says: 'I think the 'greeners' had a more intimate relationship with Jewish life than the others, that is how I saw it. And by the way, we did not class ourselves as 'greeners'.'

Gussie, born in Kimberley in 1904, explained: 'In my childhood there were three places of worship. Our family first used to go to the nearby Zionist Hall service on a Friday night, before coming home, making kiddush and having dinner etc.' Gus continued: 'Where we lived in Bloemfontein Road, it was more or less a Jewish ghetto. There were

Jewish shopkeepers all the way around, there was a milk dairy there. At the back of the dairy, the man who used to run it had a bit of a cheder. [Maybe that was Mr Jack Maresky [Maresky, Jack, Shim & Helen](#) who was a learned scholar and ran a dairy]. Opposite the dairy, we had a kosher butchery, we had all little shops, Yiddish shops, around there, and they were all more or less what were called the 'Greener' congregation.'

Gus explained further: 'Then in 1910 the 'Greeners' got together, there was a Mrs Cohen who had a plot of ground, and they built the 'Greener' or 'Grinne' Shul, in Baronial Street. Its official name was the **Beth Hamedrash Linas Hatzedek** (right). It opened in September 1911. Thereafter they used to hold daily services there and services on





Friday nights, and Yom Tovim. I don't think they held services on Saturday morning as most people had to open their businesses on Saturday.

'They did not have ministers there, only lay readers. In the early days there were Steinberg and Baruch Leib. One was a shoemaker; one was a glazier. Later there was **Lipi Weinstein**. (left) who was a tailor. Lipi was the regular prayer leader in the Grinne Shul for 45 years, from **1928 to 1973**. Lipi also worked with the ministers of the Memorial Road synagogue when the communities merged in the 1940s and 50s. Read

Lipi's story written by his grandson, Leon Chonin here: [Weinstein, Lipi and Hannah \(nee Erlich\)](#)

Does anyone remember the Bloemfontein Road Ghetto? Where was it?

### The 'Grinne' Shul Key

Do you remember that **Gwynne Schrire** sent me a picture of a Key that had been given to her? She said: I knew nothing about the key – or the building to which the key belonged until you (Geraldine) sent the article about the 'Grinne' Shul. The key had been presented to my great grandfather and the inscription on it says: *Beth Hamedrash Linas Hatzedek Kimberley, Opened by E Senderovitz 24 Elul 5671 (18.9.1911)*

Gwynne's grandmother Sarah Neche Schrire (née Senderovitz of Kimberley) had given it to the old South African Jewish Museum. They did not seem to want it for the New Museum. [A pity as that seemed to be the only relic of the building.] Gwynne gave the key to her son, who is the chairman of a Cape Town shul, and placed it in a frame made by her other great grandfather (Schrire). You can read more about this key and about Gwynne on [Robins \(nee Schrire\)](#), [Gwynn](#) and about Raphael Senderovitz here [Senderovitz, Raphael](#)



Then I had a delightful surprise when Cyril Salkinder out of the blue sent me a picture of one of the pew benches of the Grinne synagogue. He said ' My father Louis Salkinder, bought the benches from the Grinne Synagogue when it closed down. I have restored a four-seater which features prominently in my TV room. See the picture left.

**I am busy updating the Synagogue pages I am working on a new page for the Grinne shul with all the new information. If you have any anecdotes or snippets of memories or**

**pictures, please send them ASAP.** (And at last you can read Cyril's family story and about his sporting achievements [Salkinder, Cyril](#). I have also updated Gussie's story and Eli will upload it when he can on [Families](#).)

## Rev Bernard Wulf in Kimberley – during the War 1941-1943

Bernard Wulf served in Kimberley for two years during the war. I knew nothing about him – but reading the transcript of the interview from the archives at UCT, I have learned what a forward-thinking and interesting man he was.

He was a graduate of the famous Ponewyz Yeshiva in Lithuania, who came to South Africa as a very young, qualified Rabbi in 1925. He served smaller congregations like Carnarvon and Victoria West before going to Upington for eight years. He married an Upington girl, Mollie Nurick, who's mother Sally Sarah Nurick (née Goldberger) was born in Kimberley. Sarah's sister Dora married Maurice Friedman of Kimberley and her sister Julia Goldberger of Kimberley married Adolf Friedlander, the brother of my grandmother Amalie Bergman (née Friedlander). Mollie's father Abram Nurick was a well-to-do businessman in Upington. Rev Wulf and Mollie went back to Upington afterwards. His time in Kimberley was truly special as he relates.

He said: 'Kimberley always had ministers provided by England, trained at Jews College. Kimberley tried to maintain the same status, the same type of congregation as Gardens Shul, because the original congregants were English pioneers there, the Oppenheimers, Harrises, Barnatos and all that history. And then they had an advert in the paper they were looking for somebody with my qualifications. I applied and it turned out to be a temporary position at the time when a minister that they had brought out from England (Rev Yesorsky) joined the forces and went 'up North' as a Chaplain. I took it on, and we got on very well together. I was the first from Eastern Europe who



occupied the pulpit in that shul, beautiful shul (above), the most beautiful shul in South Africa. Somehow, I fitted in with respect

He describes the situation he found in Kimberley 'There were three types of Jews in Kimberley. There was still a remnant of Jews who used to talk about Rev Harris Isaacs of 50 years ago and there were the Eastern Europeans, my fellow immigrants from Poland and other parts, older than me of course who came out long before, and there were quite a number of local born. Somehow or other, I managed to fit in with all sections of the community and we got on very well together.' I wonder if anyone remembers Rev Wulf or has any photographs of him?

### **Rev Bernard Wulf's adventures as Chaplain to the Air Force**

He describes his time in the Army: 'There was a big Air Force camp in Kimberley, and I was made the Jewish Chaplain and given the rank of Captain. I organised services and other facilities for the boys there and I got to know them each one and I took a lot of interest in them as well as generally in the city. 'The army was very cooperative. Every Friday night the Air Force boys used to come in full force to shul and during the week when I used to go there to give services, they were all available and I had good attendances. I used to give the other Chaplains a chance to come to my services, the Methodist ministers and so on ... in this respect I would like to tell you a little incident.



'One evening I arrived for service and there was a YMCA hall which had various rooms. We the Jewish boys were supposed to assemble at a certain room. When I came, I found that most of the congregants were on duty and I only had 3 or 4 Jewish recruits, so we started talking. While we were talking, I noticed a sergeant passing by up and down, eventually he came up to me: I was in uniform, which for me had Mogen Dovid on my cap and epaulettes and he saluted. He said Sir may I speak to you, I said certainly what can I do for you? He said we of the Dutch Reform Church assembled in room so-and-so, but our padre Bekker has not turned up, will you take our service?

'I looked at him and said you realise to what denomination I belong, he says yes, I know, and you know the best attendance you had was from the Afrikaners, so I said to the boys in my room, the 3, 4 boys "Come on" let's see what we can do.

'So I came into the room and they all stood up and I introduced myself, I could have done it in Afrikaans but by that time I was quite fluent in English. I had my set service, so I said to them you can sing any of your Psalms that you know and then we will carry on. They sang a Psalm, I read to them another Psalm, I addressed them on the goodwill, the usual address in war years, what we are up to and what we are trying to achieve by doing this, and it turned out to be quite successful evening, half an hour, they all filed by past me and saluted, and thanked me. To take part in inter-denominational services was not uncommon, we often used to come together in services for the soldiers on parade ... but to be directly delivering a non-Jewish service was something else!

### **Death and Funeral of Colonel Sir David Harris (b London, 1852)**

Rev Bernard Wulf related his experience of something else, which he says does not happen to every Jewish minister. He explained: 'Colonel Sir David Harris, KCMG, was a well-accepted Jew in his day, He was a Director of De Beers when it was formed. He was also the Colonel of the Kimberley Regiment and had been in the Parliament.

When I came, he was about 90, paralysed, sitting either in a chair or in bed. I used to visit him very, very often, at least once a week and we became quite friendly. Contrary to other pioneer Jews like the Oppenheims and so forth, he kept to his Jewish faith and remained in Kimberley. [His marriage to Rosa Gabriel had been the first Jewish wedding solemnised in Kimberley in 1873 even before there was a synagogue.] He was very much Jewish in his behaviour and so on and eventually he became very ill. One afternoon, the nurse said to me, it looks to me like we are coming to the end. People called me when there was a death any time day or night, so I said to her don't hesitate to call me.



'I was called at about five o'clock the following morning, (23 September 1942). I actually held his hand while he died, I said a prayer, his daughter was with him, his daughter was married out of faith. She turned round to me and said Mr. Wulf I married out of faith, but I'd like my father to have a proper Jewish funeral, I said certainly.

'Now in all the years of my service I have spoken on all different types of occasions, but I made up my mind from the first day never to prolong a funeral. I never delivered an oration, whoever it is, I looked for opportunities at later dates, maybe the shiva house, maybe at a special memorial service and so on, so I said certainly, I immediately phoned the Chevra Kadisha to make arrangements but everything got stuck, the minute his death was announced – they came.....'

He said: 'I don't know if I was right, it depends on which way you look at it. He was Colonel, pre-Boer War and so on, he was an ex-Member of Parliament a man of great standing and all wanted to give him honour, and they came together, the Mayor from his side, the Army from the other side, they wanted to give him a military and civic funeral.

Reverend Wulf had to think on his feet how to marry, without offence to either, the Jewish requirements and the honour the military and civic authorities wanted to pay to this great and popular soldier, statesman, politician, financier and Jew.



'Now what does that consist of: the Mayor, the Councillors and so on, in all their robes following the hearse: the military wanted to give a company of soldiers with a band, now this gave me a bit of a shock, I did not know what to do, if it means giving honour to a Jew – and through this perhaps we can bring together closer the Jewish sections, the Jews and the non-Jews, and they want to honour a Jew, I said all right we will do it. They said, we want three days to organise it, so they were organising this.

I stipulated that from the house, the pall bearers, from the house to the hearse, and from the hearse, I mean the Chevra Kadisha will do their job as usual. I followed the hearse in the car and then followed the military and the Mayor and Civic Dignitaries and the band, all this, down to the cemetery the pall bearers even non-Jews until the gates of the cemetery.

'Once we arrived at the cemetery gates (left) I insisted

the Chevra Kadisha must take over. It was quite an occasion, quite an occasion, and I said to them I am not going to make any oration I do not want to treat Sir David in any other way than any other Jew, but I said to the Mayor, the City Council can organise a memorial service two weeks later or so, they had a daily newspaper there, advertise as much as you can, and we organised a memorial service two weeks later in the shul, in the synagogue, and there I will deliver my oration. And that is what we did ... this is something maybe a minister of a big congregation will not have this opportunity. As I say it gave me a bit of a sleepless night, I know in certain respects I am not doing right, but I had to weigh the pros and cons. I thought to myself ... it was a very trying time, (1942) we had the Nazis working, we did not know what's happened to our people and this gave us an opportunity to bring us together.'

What a brave and forward-thinking man. I am sure he did absolutely the right thing.

With all this new information I have completely revamped Newsletter 29 which was about **'Kimberley Jewry and its religious provision 1873 - 2020**. Its now quite a comprehensive document about the Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation with interesting information about the two communities the two synagogues and almost all our ministers.

You can read it here [Kimberley Jewry and Ministers 1873-2020](#)

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## Family stories and updates ready to go up:

### Ivor Brown

We are very pleased to have a new family story for the web. This is for Ivor Brown, son of Fanny and Benny Brown, supplied with lovely pictures by stepson Lance Michalson. Ivor was an exact contemporary of mine and Trevor Toube.

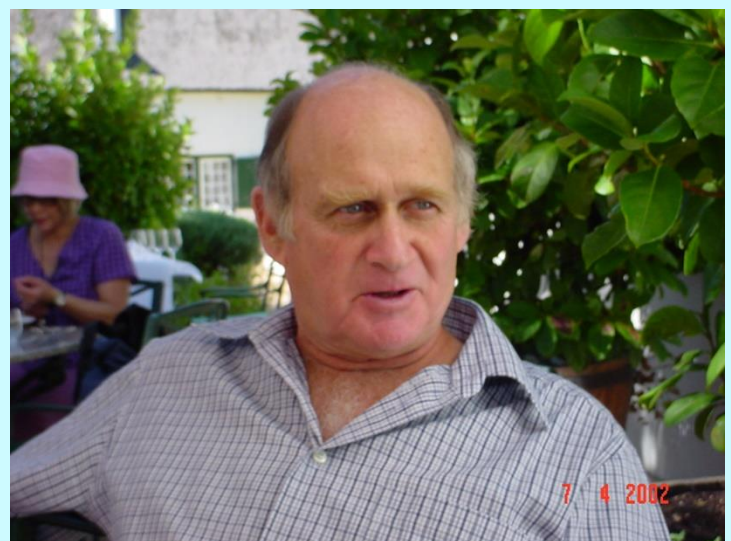
At the age of 22, in 1961, (after his father became ill) Ivor went back to Kimberley after living in Cape Town and London to join the family wholesale firm, Awerbuck and Brown. The business prospered until he closed it and retired to Cape Town with his wife Laurian in 2001.

Lance remembers how Ivor loved travelling, fine wine, wonderful restaurants, Turkish coffee, Persian carpets and the share market. He was also a great and meticulous cook and produced fine curries.

Lance's brother Garth Michalson recalls Ivor's exceptional knowledge and love of classical music. In typical Ivor fashion, not only did he know the composer, but he also knew the opus number, and on listening to a recording he would know who the soloist was, if there was one, who was conducting, and which orchestra was playing, and invariably he also knew the location of where the recording took place and when. His memory was phenomenal which you have already mentioned.

He also loved dogs, especially Alsatians. He was very proud of his Jewish heritage and was a stalwart of the Jewish Community in Kimberley.

Ivor died in Cape Town on 8 July 2005 aged 66 and was buried in there on 11 July 2005. Look out for the Ivor Brown story which Eli Rabinowitz will post as soon as he can in [Families](#) on the website.



## Wholesalers Article

With the new information on several firms, I have greatly updated the Wholesalers article. We have more on Ivor Brown and **Awerbuck Brown & Co** and also from Gus Habberfeld who in the 1985 interview, has given us much insight on his time working for **Louis Isaacson and Son** (which he and his brother Cyril and Abe Pollen bought in 1936 after Louis died in 1931.) Also, Dinah Lotter, who worked at Wightman and Co for several decades told me more about that business. The new version of 'Important Wholesalers' will be posted on the [Articles](#) page.

## Stanley Eberlin



I was very pleased to hear from Stanley Eberlin. Many of you may remember Stanley who was born in Kimberley in 1942. His older sister was Dorina b c1935 whom some of you may remember.

**Here (left) are Stanley and Dorina together**

The family left Kimberley in 1954 when Stan was just 11 after Stanleys father Harry died suddenly of a heart attack.

He finished his schooling and lived and worked in the watch industry in Johannesburg.

In 2011 Stanley sadly, lost his wife of 47 years to cancer. He later met and married Maureen Labe who had similarly lost her husband of 44 years.

In 2017, for Stanley's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, Maureen took him on a nostalgic trip to Kimberley retracing his youth together. This is where the Eberlins lived when they were small.

His parents had a dress shop 'Annette's' on the corner of Pan Road and Chapple Street. Stan would be happy to catch up with anyone who knew him on his email [staneb8@gmail.com](mailto:staneb8@gmail.com)

See his updated story and pictures when it goes up at [Eberlin, Stanley](#)



## Alfred Beit and Imperial College, London

Last November, I was intrigued to have been contacted by a Professor from Imperial College who said: 'I believe you are the author of a biography of Alfred Beit that I have enjoyed reading. I was fascinated to read this as it supplemented my reading of Geoffrey Wheatcroft's *The Randlords* and covered much of the old material written by people who knew Alfred Beit.'

The reason he contacted me was that he was doing due diligence, as suddenly a 'History Group' in the college in the wake of the George Floyd murder, had chosen to denounce their great benefactors TH Huxley and Alfred Beit (clearly without due diligence). They wanted to remove their names and statues. He told me: 'Your history shows what a fine person Beit was'

I was very touched: a) that he had read my story of Beit which I had really loved researching and learning how much his contemporaries admired and even loved him and b) that he should seek my thoughts in this important matter.

T H Huxley and Alfred Beit were the two most important individuals involved in the creation of Imperial College, the first Institution dedicated to science in London, Over many years T H Huxley had collected in South Kensington the pieces from which Imperial College, was assembled: the Royal School of Mines, the Royal College of Science, and the City and Guilds of London Institute. For his part, Alfred Beit very largely paid for the foundation of Imperial College. So, to suddenly think these people had become personae non grata was a shock.

Beit was one of the richest men in the world at the time. He was always very generous during his lifetime. When he died, he left a large bequest to Kimberley 'for the benefit of the people', that is still being used. (The money for the 'Cosy Corner' tea for the pensioners that the Union of Jewish Women used to serve, came from the Beit bequest.)

His biggest endowment was establishing the Beit Trust to complete Rhodes' dream of developing Rhodesia, with infrastructure, roads, railways and bridges. And this still continues today in what is now Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi where The Beit Trust continues to provide resources for





schools, hospitals, wildlife conservation, and postgraduate scholarships for study in South Africa and the UK.

Education was very important to him (as it was to Rhodes). Several universities around the world have benefited from Beit's largesse, including Wits, Cape Town and Rhodes Universities in South Africa, and also Hamburg, and Oxford, but Imperial College in London, was the most fortunate.

Alfred Beit, and his brother Otto Beit, together with Alfred's partner Julius Wernher were the most generous donors in the history of Imperial College, largely paying for its foundation, in 1907 and



continuing with a long line of generous benefactions over decades. Both Julius Wernher and Otto Beit sat on the Governing Body. They have been praised for their integrity. The current family members are still involved.

You can see the elaborate statues that Imperial erected flanking the main entrance in Prince Consort Road (left). On the left is Beit and the right Werner (Beit's statue is enlarged on the previous page) . These, the 'history group' wants to deface in some way.

Given the long list of donations, and the very positive relationship Imperial has enjoyed with the Beit family, you can imagine that neither Imperial, nor the Beit family are happy with the recommendations of the 'history group'. Repudiating a respected donor, when no unfavourable information has come to light, and where the donation satisfies standards such as the Yale principles, entails a moral imperative of reimbursement, irrespective of the date of the donation!

I can only hope that sense will prevail at Imperial. And I agree with Geoffrey Wheatcroft, author of *The Randlords* who said: 'Once you start judging the past by today's standards and expunging supposedly bad people from our history, where do you stop? Even though Wheatcroft did not admire Rhodes' imperialism, he also said: 'I don't think the bust of Rhodes in Oxford should be removed, or Rhodes House and the Rhodes scholarships should be renamed. Or, if they are, perhaps all the money Oxford has received should somehow or another be returned. And the same goes for Imperial College (has anyone suggested changing that name?) which has benefitted so enormously from Beit's huge philanthropy.'

Wheatcroft continued: 'It's ironical, by the way, that Beit should now be suspect: at the beginning of the last century, he and the other Jewish Randlords were the subject of vitriolic antisemitic abuse, mostly from the Left. But unless mining diamonds and gold is regarded as more iniquitous than

other forms of capitalism, or even any other ways of getting rich, on which education has always indirectly depended, I see no reason to single out Beit.'

I just heard today that after much deliberation, Imperial has decided not to rename or remove – but to consider adding names of underrepresented people in the history of the college.

If anyone has not yet read my story of Alfred Beit in Kimberley – it's here under 'Pioneers'

[https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Alfred\\_Beit.html](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Alfred_Beit.html) :



I will get on with polishing part two that I have written on Beit's life and his doings on the Rand and in London. The picture left, is of the home he had designed and built for himself at 26 Park Lane – roughly where the London Hilton now stands. He also bought his country house Tewin Waters in Hertfordshire where he sadly died, unmarried and with no direct heirs except his brother Otto, in 1906.

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**I love to hear from you** – with information, anecdotes, requests – even complaints, so do get in touch, even if just to say you have received and read the Newsletter.

**How lucky we are again** that our families struggled to get away from the Russian Pale of Settlement that is in ferment again today.

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**Kimberley Ex-Pats Newsletter #47**

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE London,

Here is a great date: 22.02.2022 (or 22.2.22)

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their stories.