



Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy SA-SIG

The Poor Jews Temporary Shelter London, U.K.

Editor: [Dr Saul Issroff](#)

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URL: <http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/pjts/index.htm>

Revised: 4 May 2001

There were numerous synagogues in the vicinity of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in the days when it was open. Rising prosperity enabled many local residents to move out of the area and several synagogues closed down.

The following synagogues are still active and were the subject of an article in *London Jewish News* for 4 May 2001, page 4:

1. Bevis Marks (Sephardi), Heneage Lane, E1
2. Commercial Road Synagogue, E1
3. East London Synagogue, Nelson Street, E1
4. Fieldgate Street Synagogue, E1
5. Hackney Synagogue, Brenthouse Road, E9
6. Sandy's Row Synagogue, E1
7. [Synagogue at] Stepney Green Day Centre, E1

Poor Jews Temporary Shelter database:

<http://chrysalis.its.uct.ac.za/shelter/shelter.htm>

Kaplan Center at the University of Cape Town:

<http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/kaplan/>

Jewish immigrants came by ship with the major port of entry being at Cape Town, although a minority entered at Port Elizabeth, Durban and Lourenco Marques (now Maputo). The major waves of migration occurred from 1895 onwards. Shipping agents, Knie and Co. and Spiro and Co., had sub-agents in shtetls who accepted bookings for passage to South Africa. Many of the Jews embarked initially at the ports of Libau and were transported on small cargo boats under crude conditions to England. A smaller number passed through Hamburg or Bremen. Many came first to Grimsby or London and were taken to the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter

in Lemn Street in the East End of London.

Many records of the inmates of the Shelter are available. Some assistance in the form of board, lodging, medical advice and advice on travel was given by the Shelter. In one year from Nov 1902, 3600 out of 4500 inmates went on to South Africa. From here most went on the Union Castle Line to the Cape. In 1902 the fare was £10.10.0 (ten guineas)- more than the fare to America. (For a more detailed discussion of these and shipping records see the article by Prof. A Newman in SHEMOT, Vol. 1:3, 1993. This is the Journal of the [Jewish Genealogy Society of Great Britain](#).)

The 'Poor Jews Temporary Shelter' functioned in London in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Probably the best known was in Lemn Street in London's East End. Another was located at No.5, Mapesbury Road, Kilburn, London. It was still functioning as a temporary home, although not specifically for Jews, when I visited it to do some genealogical research in March 1995.

A paper entitled The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter The story of the development of a database on Jewish migration, 1896-1914, has been published on the Jews Temporary Shelter database. The paper gives background information about the Shelter itself, and about their Project. It includes, for example, line graphs which compare the numbers of migrants who passed through the Shelter en route to South Africa, America and other places.

Many of the Jews embarked initially at the ports of Libau and were transported on small cargo boats under crude conditions to England. A smaller number passed through Hamburg or Bremen. Many came first to Grimsby or London and were taken to the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in Lemn Street in the East End of London. Many records of the inmates of the Shelter are available. Some assistance in the form of board, lodging, medical advice and advice on travel was given by the Shelter. In one year from Nov 1902, 3600 out of 4500 inmates went onto SA. From here most went on the Union Castle Line to the Cape.

The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter Database is a project of Professor Aubrey Newman and Dr. Graham Smith, both of the Department of History in University of Leicester, in the United Kingdom. Because many of the people that passed through the Shelter between the years of 1895 and 1914 came to South Africa, the project is of considerable potential interest to the South African Jewish community, and has been financially supported by the Kaplan Centre at the University of Cape Town.

Date: Wed, 12 Jul 1995 19:47:22 +0100
Reply-To: M.Y. Mindel (mym2@leicester.ac.uk)
Sender: Jewish Genealogy Discussion Group (JEWISHGEN@mail.eworld.com)
From: M.Y. Mindel (mym2@leicester.ac.uk)
Subject: Poor Jews Temporary Shelter - London
Lines: 39

The Poor Jews Temporary Shelter was the place where poor Jews from eastern Europe (mainly the Baltic States) were offered shelter before they moved on.

The Shelter records date from 29-05-1896 to 01-08-1914. These records have been put on a computerised database held in the University of Leicester lead and supervised by Prof. Aubry Newman. This project is nearly completed now (there are still about 6,000 names still to be

entered).

Prof. Newman has agreed to accept e-mail queries regarding the people who might have stayed in the shelter.

Before all the queries start pouring in please note the following:

1. People going to the Americas arriving in the UK at Hull or any other east coast port usually went overland to Liverpool and hence did not pass in London and will most probably not be included in the database.
2. People heading to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand are more likely to be included.
3. There are inaccuracies and discrepancies in the database due to faulty historical entries, spelling mistakes and so on.
4. In order to submit a query that can be answered the following details should be included:
 - A. Surname - all alternative variants of spelling
 - B. First name - the vast majority of entries take the form of initials only, there are hardly any full first names.
 - C. Date of birth - this is entered in the database in the form of age.
 - D. Place of origin - the region or Gubernia not villages and shtetels.
 - E. Marital status - single/married
 - F. Occupation.
 - G. Destination - if known
 - H. Name of ship when leaving the UK and port of embarkation if known
5. A personal remark: I have spent an hour with Prof. Newman today searching for certain MINDELS there were only 7 entries of this rare name, none were related according to my data. I was also looking for WIENBERGS and there are simply too many, none fitted the description of my ggf.

If you have read so far and you still want to go ahead Prof. Newman's e-mail address is: NEW@LE.AC.UK

Good luck.
Gali Mindel
Leicester, U.K.

March 1995

Dear [name deleted],

I visited the Jews' Temporary Shelter last Tuesday 28th March 1995.

Five books of records were available for inspection and I understand from Mr. Cedric Lauder (manager) that there are many more books in store.

The pages of the books were not numbered so I couldn't calculate how many entries were in each book. I did however count about thirty leaves and then try to deduce from the thickness what the total might have been. I think that a book might contain about 250 leaves. There were sixteen entries on each double page spread which was of "landscape" format with entries across a double spread. I might have looked at some 4,000 entries per book. The thickness of paper in a book might have been about 3 centimetres.

In the time available I looked through two books and recorded the items which are appended below. I have recorded all the occurrences of the main surnames in your list plus a few others which caught my eye. Cooperstein was not represented but may be in another book.

Not all details were filled in and the books have been written in ink in a number of different hands, not always legible. There were also some pencilled additions and inky scratchings out.

The books are consulted several times a month and although they are still in fair condition, many pages were loose.

I entered the data into a spreadsheet and then printed it into an ASCII file. The resulting table is a copy of the format of the book and is about 170 characters wide. You will have to print it in sections and then gum the pieces together. If you have a wide carriage printer which can print 17 characters per inch then the table may be printed on a single sheet.

I was exhausted when I returned home. Not from the minor effort of reading but from the realisation that every name represented a tragedy of some sort.

[Click here](#) for a table of excerpts from

the Record Books of the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter.

The PJTS listing in the London telephone directory for 1995 is as follows:

Jews' Temporary Shelter,	
5 Mapesbury Road, NW2 4HX	0181-451 0233
Residents NW2 4HK	0181-459 7000
Fax NW2 4HX	0181-830 2203

Date: Thu, 24 Aug 1995 13:20:37 -0700
Reply-To: Batya Olsen (batya@sauna.pn.com)
Sender: Jewish Genealogy Discussion Group (JEWISHGEN@mail.eworld.com)
From: Batya Olsen (batya@sauna.pn.com)
Subject: London, Lyman Shelter?
Comments to: SGJEWISH@trace.cgsg.com

Lines: 15

This morning as I read through some 170 messages (my mailserver had been down a couple of days) someone asked about a shelter for Jews in London, asking if it was specifically for Jews. I think the author called it the Lyman Shelter. Unfortunately I wasn't careful enough and the message is gone.

However, in describing migration through London's East End in the 1880's in his book, *Shores of Refuge* (ISBN 0-8050-0563-3), Ronald Sanders refers to the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter at 82 Leman St., London, "which housed the needy up to two weeks at a time."

Could they be the same?

Batya Olsen, Concord, MA

JGSGB

batya@sauna.pn.com

Dear [name deleted],

Thank you for your message <13 Apr 1995 01:38:06 GMT> received here this morning.

You enquired about the Union-Castle Shipping Line.

This company was owned by British and Commonwealth Shipping, which in turn, was owned by Caledonia Investments PLC. (This is genealogy of another sort). I spoke to someone this afternoon at Caledonia Investments. He told me that a "vast [shipping] archive" had been transferred to the National Maritime Museum (NMM) in Greenwich in south-east London.

He had however heard a rumour that the archive was stored in the basements at the NMM and was not available for inspection. I told him the nature of my enquiry and he was most apologetic that he could not help any further.

I then telephoned the NMM but was connected to a telephone answering machine. I left a message. The "archive" department may have closed down early for the Easter weekend. I will try them again next week.

Date: Aug 1995

The Union-Castle Shipping Line archive was transferred to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England, some years ago.


- 1.. The archive is stored at an "out-station".
- 2.. There are twenty or thirty archive boxes, each about 6" deep by 18" long by about 12" wide.
- 3.. There is a list of contents but it is incomplete and is only a rough guide.
- 4.. By prior arrangement, the contents of boxes may be examined at Greenwich, or by special arrangement, under supervision, at the "out-station".
- 5.. The NMR will perform a search and will charge GBP 6.50 per 15 minutes.
- 6.. A letter from you asking about feasibility of a search is recommended. They will consult the list of contents (item 3, above) to see if there is anything relevant. They do not charge for replying to this letter.

Write to:

MIC Maritime Information Centre, National Maritime Museum,
Park Row, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF, United Kingdom.
Telephone: +44 (0)20-8858 4422.

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, UK:

NMM homepage: <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/>

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			 go to JewishGen