

EAT, PRAY, NACHES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Waverley Council, NSW

HENRY BENJAMIN: Oral History Transcript

Interviewee: Henry Benjamin

Interviewer: Ashley Roan

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Interviewer: Henry, can you please tell me your name and when and where you were born?

Henry Benjamin: My name is Henry Benjamin and I was born in Glasgow, Scotland on the 10th of May, 1941, at 5:00 in the morning, which coincided exactly with the time that Rudolph Hess decided to parachute into the UK and landed on the fourth green of what is now the Jewish golf course in Glasgow.

Interviewer: That was a nice little fact. Can you tell me what was happening in Scotland and circumstances that led up to you and your family leaving?

Henry Benjamin: I didn't leave with a family; I left with my wife, who was Australian. I had lived in Glasgow from 1941 to 1962, '63, when I moved to London. I met her in London. I never had any aspirations, whatsoever, about making a new life for myself in Australia. In fact, I remember clearly the day I met my wife for the first time and I said to my flatmate as I left the party, I said, "Who was that South African girl?" I didn't ever relate to Australia. We were confronted with a situation when we decided to get married, that my family were in Glasgow and her family were in Sydney, and as you probably are well aware by now, family life is very important within the Jewish community. The prospect of living in London, especially in 1970, because people didn't travel so much as they do today, was quite daunting, so we decided that we would come to Sydney because Sydney looked exciting. We made plans to spend our life in Sydney. We came here from Glasgow immediately after our marriage.

Interviewer: You flew?

Henry Benjamin: That's a very good story. I'm not sure if I should tell this on camera, but I will. Jews are very good at finding out who knows who and what and when and wherefore, and so on and so forth. If they can shortcut, they will shortcut, so in this particular case I had made contact with somebody at the Australian High Commission in London, in The Strand. We went to see this guy and sat down there with an airline timetable and it was like, "Pick your own flight." What was also interesting ... I can't remember whether we were five pounds or ten pounds; I think it was five pounds at that time. My wife, although she was an Australian citizen and ... She wasn't born here, she was born in Slovakia, but she came here when she was two ... Because she had now become my wife, she could also migrate from Britain to Australia for five pounds. I don't know if you've heard that before ... Aussies could come back for five pounds, too, and she did.

Interviewer: We know you had a good visa because your wife was Australian and it obviously paved the way for you to settle in on [unclear].

Henry Benjamin: The program was in place at that time, actually, so you paid your five pounds or ten pounds, whatever it was and you were welcome.

Interviewer: Why did you decide to settle in the local area?

Henry Benjamin: Her parents lived in Bellevue Hill and she had been brought up in Bellevue Hill and all her friends were in the Eastern Suburbs. I had met a few of them who had been visiting London, for business or for whatever reason, prior to emigrating, but I clearly remember the day, April the 11th, 1970, when I arrived, was a Saturday. I remember that because my wife's mother was very, very religious, and so was her father, and it was the one and only time I ever recall her driving

on a Saturday, because she came to the airport to pick us up. On the Sunday, we went down to little reserve at Dumaresq Road in Rose Bay and there I met all her friends. I was coming at a very fortuitous time because that whole social crowd had all recently just got married, so everybody was starting from that same base. I actually, unlike a lot of families who had to come in and make their way in Australia, I had a ready-made package waiting for me.

Interviewer: What did it feel like when you first arrived in the region, your first impressions?

Henry Benjamin: As I said, my mother-in-law picked me up and insisted in stopping at Bondi Junction, where Kathy's brother-in-law had an optometry shop. He was pretty well known to the Jewish community in the Eastern Suburbs. He's since retired. It was straight into it; I'm meeting people before I even get to the house from the airport. The people were very, very warm. I looked like a freak because I'd come from ... I really can't go into my full background of what I did in the 1960s ... But I arrived in coloured shirts and embroidered and flared pants, and whatever, and at that particular time, so many people wore walk shorts with long socks and white short-sleeved shirts. This was kind of the mood of the day and I looked like I'd come from another planet.

Interviewer: What was it was like to actually be near the beach or the ocean, and water that you could actually swim in?

Henry Benjamin: Good question. To answer that question, I'm going to take you to Majorca; it's an island in the Mediterranean and very, very popular with Brits for holiday. I'm in Majorca. I don't particularly like the sun. I don't like just basking in the sun, covered in oil from top to bottom. My friends are all sitting around the pool and I go into the hotel during the day, I'm playing a little piano in the cocktail bar and having a couple of drinks. I'm watching reps coming into the hotel and selling things to the hotel. I thought to myself, it must be amazing to actually live and work in an environment like this, with the beaches and with the clubs and whatever and so on and so forth. I immediately related that to Sydney, to the fact that here I am, with a beach five minutes away from the house. I remember going up to Camp Cove when my first baby was born and I can tell you, I remember precisely, it cost \$6 for a parking fine in those days. There was no tow-away, which there had been in London, and it cost \$6. I thought to myself, I'll take this ticket with pleasure. How could I even dream of sitting at a beach like this and looking at this cityscape and kids playing in the sand and it's cost me \$6. This is like for nothing!

Interviewer: Did you have any particular challenges when you and your wife first arrived in Australia?

Henry Benjamin: Well, of course. The initial challenge was the one of starting a business. I had been a journalist and I had gone into the rag trade in London when I had tired of the world of journalism and I wasn't to revisit that until the year 2000. I had to start looking at businesses. I'd been involved, as I said, in the rag trade, so I was looking. At that time, Dunlop were buying a lot of companies. A friend's father, his best friend, was looking for someone, because if he had the right management, he could sell the business to Dunlop. I had worked for Marks & Spencer in London, so I had a pretty good pedigree in terms of the textile and clothing business.

When I went to see him, he told me that my employment would start in six weeks because he was going away overseas on a business trip and he didn't want me going in when he wasn't there.

He paid me to sit on the beach for six weeks. When he came back, he found that his son, who was studying to be a doctor, was driving a taxi. He asked his son, "Why are you doing this?", and his son said, "Look, I don't want your money. I'll do things by myself," so he said, "Well, why am I running this business?", so he immediately closed the business down. I'd been hanging around for six weeks and then told I wasn't wanted.

It ended up, we met this delightful couple that I do want to talk about, called Freddy and Elizabeth Simpson. They lived in Dover Heights and they had a small clothing business in the city. We bought their business, because they were both aging. We bought their business for \$1,500, I remember that clearly. They were quite important to me because they didn't have any children. Even now, which is, we're talking 45 years later, I remember when our first child was born, this couple who had survived the Holocaust and she's holding this baby in her arms and she's looking up at her husband and she's saying, "See, Freddy. See what we missed?", and that vision stayed with me. Of course, Sydney was to be their departing port from this planet and to this day, I still think of that moment. We bought a business that was very old-fashioned and just built on that.

Interviewer: How do you think the Jewish community has shaped the local area here?

Henry Benjamin: Apart from Brisbane, the Jewish community's demographic has always been together. Brisbane is quite an unusual city because they're all over the place. There's no Jewish centre in Brisbane. The Jewish centre makes you somewhat oblivious to what's going on in the rest of the community. I remember one day I was booked to photograph a function at the Yeshiva on a Saturday night and I remember walking up Flood Street and seeing all the doors were open, the kids were running in and out of each other's houses. This is not my community, this is a community within a community, but I really thought I was in Anatevka [from Fiddler on the Roof]. I thought this didn't even feel like Sydney. I think the Jews made their own mark in their city and they made it within religion, they made it within commerce, they made it within entertainment, they made it within the arts, and I think they've made a strong contribution to this community.

Growing up in Glasgow, I think it was about 1953 when Lord Russell of Liverpool published a book called *The Scourge of the Swastika*. I remember in Hebrew class, this book was being passed around. It was the first time that we had seen photographs and very graphic images at that, of what had happened to the Jews in Europe. Bear in mind, this is seven years after the war and this is just getting out. Growing up in Glasgow, we were pretty well ignorant of the Holocaust. We didn't even know that it had happened. When I met Kathy in London, all the stories came through. In fact, I spent six hours doing what we are doing now, and then I filmed my mother-in-law every Sunday morning for six weeks, for about an hour, telling her whole story of what had happened in Europe. That's filed away in family vaults now.

Yes, there was a huge component in the ... I don't think I was a knight on the white horse coming to re-establish a family, but the feeling of the re-birthing of this family is very important. I've observed this in the behaviour of my Australian friends, as against the behaviour of my British friends. We all grew up in Britain, with a plethora of cousins and uncles and aunts and grandparents and I have so many friends here in Sydney who never had a grandparent and very lucky to have one or two uncles and a handful of cousins. That feeling of re-birthing is very strong within the community itself; it's just self-evident.

Interviewer: Of course, food is a very important part of Jewish culture. Can you tell me about the food that you would eat in Scotland, typically, and a memory about eating your favourite food?

Henry Benjamin: Glasgow was quite a strange city inasmuch as the people were not all that religious, but the vast majority, a much higher percentage ...but I'm talking when I was a kid; it may be quite different today ... The vast majority of people kept kosher homes, even if they weren't religious, you kept a kosher home. I remember being absolutely shocked, the guy's name was Peter Jacobs, he was a friend of mine, I went into his house. It was the first time I'd ever seen inside somebody's fridge, a piece of pork or some bacon, or whatever. This is the first time I had seen this within a Jewish house. It just didn't happen. Even when I came to Australia, it was different to Scotland.

When Moriah College was founded, it made quite a dramatic change in people's eating habits in Australia. A lot of people at that time were eating what we call chazer, were eating bacon and pork and whatever. That stopped. They didn't become kosher, but it kept the ... There's two lovely words; I don't know if you've heard them in these interviews ... There's a word chazer, which relates to pig products, and then there's a word treif which relates to meat products. You can go into a kosher butcher and buy a nice steak and it's kosher. You go into a non-kosher butcher and buy the same steak, and it's treif, but it's not chazer. It was like a middle ground. I think Moriah was responsible ... I saw a lot of people change. That was in the '70s. In Glasgow, most people were kosher. I think the Kashrut Authority in Sydney today would love the figures that Glasgow had in the 1950s and '60s, but I suspect the Glasgow figures may be different today. I did grow up in a kosher home.

Interviewer: Can you tell me one typical meal that you would eat?

Henry Benjamin: My mother made a dish called Kishka in leber. It was like liver with onions in a thick sauce. I always said to myself, "If this dish existed between here and the moon, I could eat my way to the moon." She was a great cook. I have memories of my mother sitting on the phone, talking to her friends and writing down recipes. This is how they did things in those days. The traditional food from Europe was very strong in the Glasgow diet, and not very healthy, either. A lot of deep-fried, a lot of fat. One would consider how they would approach cooking today, if they knew how bad a lot of that food was for you. Yes, we had all the traditional food, the food I'm sure every interviewee has spoken about, the chopped liver, the chicken soup ...

I'll tell you what was interesting, and I'm not sure anybody's discussed this, but a couple of things about Friday night. The Shabbat dinner was very important. I digress a bit because I remember interviews being done with people who knew the victims of the Bali bombing, when those poor Australian kids died in it, I remember being shocked, listening to somebody saying this guy was an exemplary character, he was a wonderful man. He called his father every Christmas. This is just foreign language to Jews because the Friday night binds them together. It's a very important part of their lives.

Interviewer: What did you think of Australian food when you first arrived? How do you think it's changed across the years?

Henry Benjamin: My first Australian meal was actually a kosher meal I had in London. When Kathy's mother came over to meet me ... I've got these two food stories ... Before she met me, I had to be checked out by an uncle who lived in Stockholm. He flew to London. What was more important to him than checking me out was going to Bloom's in the Whitechapel Road and [he] got some wurst and some meat to take back to Stockholm. Food made its appearance at that meeting with Kathy's uncle and then when I met her mother, who is the uncle's sister, first thing she did was made me a potato kugel in Kathy's small flat in Abbey Road. I think food is a way not just to a man's heart, but I think it's a vital part of the Jewish culture.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about any special foods that were prepared or eaten during family get-togethers and Jewish holydays?

Henry Benjamin: This is one of the things I was going to talk about. Growing up in Scotland, we didn't have a lot of anti-Semitism in Scotland. There was always a bit, there was always some trouble, but one of the things that used to amaze the non-Jewish friends that I had was the fact that we had chicken every Friday night because at that particular time in history, chicken was something that they had a Christmastime. It rarely appeared. I think special foods within the Jewish culture is probably something we all share. I think the dishes are pretty standard. By the time you've had chicken soup, and kneidel and lokshen, by the time you've had your chopped liver and your fried fish and whatever ... Not very big on desserts, strangely enough. I don't recall any great strength in Jewish desserts. I think by the time you finish the main course you probably couldn't handle a dessert, anyway. They were very big into second portions, "Have more!", and "You haven't eaten enough."

Interviewer: Okay. We'll move on now to the pray section, which is of course about Judaism and traditions and the essence of Judaism is in its rituals and observances. In this section, we'd like to hear about mitzvahs and traditions and how it shapes your identity and also passing down from generation to generation. How do your religious practices now compare to before or around the time you [immigrated]?

Henry Benjamin: Mine personally? We had in our synagogue in Glasgow, we had a children's service. I used to lead that service. I think there was some concern that I might be getting too religious, but I think it was more just the going back to the naches thing. I think it was the joy of doing it that I enjoyed more than the religion. When I joined the world of journalism, I was to lose religion. I saw too much. I think most journalists see too much. I'm not making a straight-out statement that every journalist is irreligious or doesn't have religion, but when you see as much as journalists see, you do scratch your head and say, "How can this happen?" I don't know if you want me to expand on that, but there were two particular instances, in 1958, '59, whatever, I was covering for the Daily Mirror, where I worked, and it was called the Daily Record in Scotland. I was covering a story of a kid with leukemia who had lost his dog. The kid was dying and it was a typical Daily Mirror type story, "Where's wee Jimmy's dog? Let's find it!" When you're a hardened journalist, you're not feeling particularly empathetic; you just want to get the story in the can and then go and have a beer afterwards. And that's what we did. We went down, photographed the kid, did the story, and we were driving back to the office in Glasgow and we ... There were always three, a team of three because it's heavily unionised, so there's a driver, a photographer, and there's a journalist. At that time I was a journalist.

Call came through in our two-way radio that there was fire brigade activity in a place called [Cheapside]. [Cheapside] is an extremely narrow street, so there was no way that we could take the car up. We left the car at the main intersection and I went up with the photographer; his name was Ian [Orr]. We got to this building; there was about four or five fire tenders there, but there was no fire. I knew, obviously from other jobs, the fire captain and quite a few of the firemen. This building was a Whisky Bond. I'm looking under the door of the Whisky Bond and I can see smoke coming out. The firemen can't get in. Their customs and excise have got this building so secure, they've called customs and excise to come and open the building for them. We were just standing there talking, talking. Suddenly there was a rumble, a deep, deep rumble. I looked up and the building was starting to swell up like a pregnant woman's stomach.

I'm going to use an expletive here; you can edit it out if you want, but the fireman turned around to us to either myself; there was no other journalists there, and said, "Run for your ***** lives!", which we did. We turned around and ran. The fire brigade's procedure, the fireman's procedure was to take cover behind the fire engines, which they did. That whole building went up like you would light a box of matches. The whole building went up and that whole building came crashing down on top of those fire engines. In the space of one or two seconds, 19 firemen lost their lives. I'd been there chatting to them and talking to them, so incidents like that ... That's when I first heard of the Sydney Morning Herald because I visited every one of their homes over the next 48 hours and we did the cover stories on the firemen. Incidents like that ...

In 1966, Aberfan in South Wales, when these two slag heaps came down and wiped out a school, killed 126 children and 16 adults and virtually wiped out the whole population of the village. When things like that happen, you ask yourself, "Why?" But traditionalism is very strong. I've always been a member of the synagogue. When I came to Australia in 1970, I joined the Yeshiva, which my father-in-law had helped found in 1968. When I'd had enough of that, which was only a couple of years later, I went to Central Synagogue and I've been a member there ever since. Do I enjoy going to shul? Not really. I find it a little bit boring for this Scotsman. It does and should be the centre of the community.

. I should mention that we have the Friday nights every week.

I would say from the religious point of view, my wife's from a much more religious family than I am. My father couldn't speak Hebrew. I remember transcribing the Kiddush for Friday nights. We had a very big siddur and so he had it in there, so when we had visitors nobody knew that he couldn't speak Hebrew, but he did it phonetically. We went to synagogue in Glasgow, like everybody else did. I just don't think he was particularly interested. He had his own tragedy in his life. When the family moved from Poland to Glasgow in 1901 and their first child was born in Glasgow in 1907; her name was Elizabeth. In 1921 she was the victim of a very vicious murder in Glasgow.

I actually spent a few hundred pounds and got the court records from Edinburgh and it's quite daunting to see your father, as a 20-year-old, giving evidence to the court. She was murdered by a husband and wife; everybody believed that the woman actually did it, but the husband hanged for it. He had that in his background and I have to say that each member of the family reacted differently, but I think my father, once again, had no particular interest in religion. But Friday nights were Friday nights and somehow or another, within the Jewish tradition, it doesn't matter what your background is; there's something holy about Friday night.

Interviewer: Is that something that you feel passionate about in terms of passing that on to your own children?

Henry Benjamin: Yeah. There was no question, when I had children, that they were going to go to Moriah. Moriah, for some families, could be described as some sort of a religious babysitter. They would do the work that other people couldn't do at home. I feel this today because my grandson is at Moriah and I just feel the warmth of the school and the warmth of community. I find it's very hard to replicate that anywhere else. Some people resist it, some people don't want it, other people are totally enamoured with it and just bathe in it. It's wonderful. That's how I feel it is. When we sit down on Friday night and I see my 10-year-old getting involved now, that feeling of continuity that you mentioned is very important.

Interviewer: Of course, every Jewish person wants some naches in their life. Naches can also be seen as success in learning and giving back to the community, of course. What does the word naches mean to you and does it have any special significance?

Henry Benjamin: I think it's something which heightens your feelings. It certainly lifts you from your day-to-day activities. Naches for me, to be trite, I'm sure everybody's getting naches from their children and their grandchildren and whatever, but I think the continuity aspect of what you mentioned is very important. One of the photographs that I submitted to [this project] is a photograph of me as part of a committee in Glasgow, called the Board of Guardians Auxiliary, which is akin very much to JewishCare and JCA here. What had happened in Glasgow was that the Jews had moved to a very famous area called the Gorbals. Then once they started to succeed and flourish in the early 1900s, they moved out. By the early 1960s, there were still 15 families living in the squalor that was what the Gorbals was to become. It was a mission of this particular group, The Board of Guardians, to move these families out. We engaged in all sorts of fundraising activities to do this. My father had also been very involved. He'd been involved with the JNF [Jewish National Fund] and in 1964 had been responsible ... You've got to remember the time, 1964, no television, no this, no that ... He was responsible for bringing the fabled Real Madrid soccer team to Glasgow to play Glasgow Celtic for JNF. There were iconic players involved, Stefano, Puskas amongst them.

I'd grown up in this environment of involvement, so I was quite shocked in 1974 to go to a UIA [United Israel Appeal] function at the [inaudible] ... This was a free lunch and I made my pledges already in the rag trade. I think I gave \$300, which to me was quite a lot of money in 1964. Then I had to excuse myself from the table and go to the bathroom. When I came out of the bathroom, I walked past a table at which a guy called Walter Ginsberg was sitting and he worked for UIA. They were reading out the pledges and I heard this \$5, \$7, \$10, \$15, and I went back to my table and I was shocked. I said, "They simply don't know how to give." I called 10 guys to my house the next day and I said, "I want to do things like my father did for JNF," so we talked about bringing Shirley Bassey or Max Bygraves or bringing big acts over and that we were going to then take the money and get it to Israel. I only had one problem. The problem was, how do we get the money to Israel.

I phoned up the UIA and I spoke to a guy called Joe Silverstein and I said, "I've got these 10 guys here and this is what we want to do," and he said, "Don't move, I'm coming over." That was the beginning of United Israel Appeal's Young Leadership Division. That was how it was created. I got a lot of naches. We weren't backslappers; in fact, we were the opposite. We at that time took UIA, we took all the names off the letterheads and we ran an organisation which had no president, no

treasurer, no CEO, nobody, no titles. I did it with a guy called Henry Brender and the only titles we gave ourselves were spokesmen. There was a woman called Carol Prior, who lived in Bundarra Road, Bellevue Hill. We operated from her house every night and we sent people out knocking on doors, we did face-to-face canvassing. There were no functions.

Everything that I dreamed of with these big functions ended up being like door-to-door salesmen for Israel, suffering abuse. We would only involve people if the couples, if the husband and the wife came in because we felt that if only one did it and the other didn't, then the other one would get fed up with it, but we never sent husbands and wives out together. You always went out with somebody else's. It was very effective. I stayed with UIA until 1992 and I got a lot of naches. To this day, I get naches still from seeing that young leadership division is still active in 2015. Naches from working within the community was very important to me and naches from the family is something that everybody hopes for. You get that in a much more micro form; you'll get naches by going to a Moriah concert and watching your grandson playing trumpet and knowing that he's part of this whole scene.

Interviewer: What do you hope for your children and grandchildren?

Henry Benjamin: In this troubling time, and I see these times as quite troubling, I'm very grateful that we live in Sydney. If there are any problems that may or may not be within the community in terms of antisemitism and I know that I probably should [inaudible] the results of the antisemitism report. They don't make for pleasant reading, but I think all in all, as we go around our day-to-day lives, that we're not really confronted with it and I'm very grateful for this. My main hope is that this situation will continue, as it is in Sydney, so you can't deny that there's antisemitism, it will always be there, but it's at, in my view, quite a low level in Sydney.

For example, I covered that attack in October two years ago, when the five were attacked by these guys in Glenayr Avenue in Bondi. I'm still not totally convinced that it was an antisemitic attack. I think these guys were out to get anybody that didn't meet with their pleasure. The attack on the school bus at Bondi was another one which ... There'd be something wrong with you if you didn't have an element of fear or upset. That burst the naches balloon big time, but somehow or another we have to overcome these things. Sadly, I think they'll rear their ugly head again in the future, but my hope for naches is that these incidents will be very minimal.

Interviewer: We'll wrap up the naches section with what activities, because I know you mentioned your community involvement, or other things that gave you naches across the years, or about activities that you're involved with for the wider Waverley community that also bring you naches.

Henry Benjamin: For the Waverley community. I live in Woollahra. What brings me naches? I'll give you an answer to that question. I belong to the North Bondi Surf Club. There's a whole bunch of guys that go there and religion never enters into it. There's never even been [inaudible] to enter it in there. I also have a son who's a very high-powered lawyer, in New York. He's a senior partner in one of New York's major law firms. He comes back to Sydney; he's a very strong man and very clearly defined in the way he goes about things. As far as he's concerned, his Sydney friends are a part of his past. They're not part of his present and he doesn't play games about must I see them, mustn't I, because for him that doesn't function in his day-to-day life. What does function for him is when he

comes back to Sydney and he comes down to Bondi Beach and he stands against the railing at Bondi Beach, which are part of the Eruv as we all know. He just looks out at the beach and he just stays absolutely silent. He just breathes in the whole atmosphere of what Waverley's got to offer that New York doesn't.

Interviewer: That's nice. You're not going to get better than that. We might finish up by if you could tell us a little bit about your work with J-Wire.

Henry Benjamin: As you know, my early years were involved in newspapers and there was enormous hiatus, which burst in 2000. It burst with something called the Olympic Games. I went into a friend's clothing factory in Alexandria and this guy was quite well known in Sydney, a guy called Paul Hotz. I'm sure he won't mind me mentioning his name. Paul was a boxing fanatic and a martial arts fanatic. He became a fifth Dan in karate. He had this clothing factory in Alexandria and if you went through all the garments that were hanging up, if you pushed your way through the garments, you'd find a door. If you opened this door, inside the door was his fully equipped boxing gym. Not just a gym, a boxing gym, with a ring and all of the accoutrements. What happened in 2000, we had something in Sydney called the Olympics. A boxing team arrived from Swaziland. I think there was one boxer, two managers, and a trainer; it was a team of four. They said to the Olympic authorities, "Where do we train?" They said, "You were supposed to have organised that," and they said, "We haven't." The boxing guys knew of the existence of this gym, so they sent them to see Paul and Paul welcomed him. Paul was not happy with the way the trainer was training the boxers; he took the job over himself.

I've been down in that gym on a Saturday morning with my kids and I've watched Paul, lovely angelic Jewish boy from Cape Town take on Jeff Fenech for 10 rounds. I've actually sat there on a Saturday morning and watched him fight Jeff Fenech. That's the kind of guy he was. This was a great story, so I tried to sell this story to a friend of mine in Jerusalem. This is a Scottish guy that I had worked with in Scotland and he had gone to live in Israel and I had played for a few minutes with the idea of going to Israel and becoming a journalist there, but every Jewish journalist has done that, it didn't happen. He said, "Look, so much goes on in Israel, we won't run that story here," so to cut a long story short, we ran it for the Jewish Chronicle in London. Jewish Chronicle in London was the only Jewish newspaper in the world that had its own foreign correspondents. They said they loved the story, "We'd love it if you could handle Australia and New Zealand for us," so it suddenly ... On a part-time basis, not full-time, so I'm still running my business ...

Suddenly I find myself back in the world of journalism. Then a very well-known person in Sydney, a guy called Jeremy Jones, had been doing JTA, which is a Jewish telegraphic agency, which is like the Jewish writers or the Jewish Associated Press. He had now a conflict in interest because of what he was doing within the community. He asked me if I could do that, too. Suddenly, I've now got two masters, one in New York and one in London, and they're both taking the same copy, so this was very easy for me to do. I did this for about eight or nine years. I was at a wedding with Robert Goot, who is currently the president of the ECAJ [Executive Council of Australian Jewry]. I said, "You know, the Jewish News is fine," and I still love the Jewish News. "To this day I still love the Jewish News, but the world's changing and the people want things on a day-to-day basis." I said to him, "I really want to start doing a news service within Australia and New Zealand itself, focusing only on news which is

of interest to Australia and New Zealand, so if there's a bombing in Belgium or a murder in Toulouse, that's not for us to do because it doesn't impact in our communities."

That was the birth of J-Wire. When I started that, I gave the Jewish Chronicle and JTA work away to Dan Goldberg and J-Wire virtually started from scratch. Organisations like the JNF believed in us and backed us from day one. To this day, we produce copy on every day except Shabbats and chagim, and to all my religious readers I have to say, it's really tough, but if a big story broke on Shabbat, we would still publish, but if we don't have to, we won't publish on Shabbat and the chagim. It's built up; it's got a different type of readership to the Jewish News. Basically, people who are interested in what goes on on a day-to-day basis. I run it ... I've got a couple of volunteers but basically run it by myself.