

1811 –1872 the Jews Burial Ground

Burials from the beginning of settlement were in St David's Burial ground, now St David's Park, at the corner of Harrington and Davey Streets Hobart, and included all denominations. This area had been chosen by Lieutenant – Governor Collins and the Reverend Robert Knopwood on 27th April 1804. ^{12/}

The town had been formally laid out from a disorganized straggle of streets and structures to the present central grid by Governor Macquarie's surveyor, James Meehan, in a visit of December 1811. This formed the streets and boundaries and gave locations for civic buildings, burial grounds, street widths and minimum setbacks for buildings.

The earliest use known by Europeans of the area occupied by Windsor Court is as 'the Jews Burial ground' in 1828. Remains of early Jewish inhabitants interred from as early as 1811 were transferred from St David's to the new burial ground in 1828, however these are not recorded in the Hobart Town Jewish Synagogue Burial Register ^{13/}.

The two-acre parcel of land was granted to the Jewish Community by Lieutenant Governor George Arthur in 1828, after a partition by Mr Bernard Walford. Walford was a publican and one of the most promising of settlers to reach Van Diemen's Land. He had arrived in 1818 and his name appears in His Majesty's Magazines. ^{14/} Walford settled in Hobart and married a non-Jew, allowing him to become a seat – holder in St David's Church. Nevertheless, he remained a practising Jew and was head of a Committee formed to request Lieutenant Governor George Arthur in 1828 for the grant of land for a Jewish Burial ground. ^{15/} This partition was well received and a grant of land was given on the 18th of May 1828. The Hobart Town Courier reported a week later the following:

“BURIAL GROUND FOR THE JEWS – The want of a Burial Ground for the Jews has long been felt by the inhabitants of Hobart Town, professing that religion, and we have much pleasure in stating, that Mr Bernard Walford, senior, has at last taken the matter up, and has presented a memorial on the subject, on behalf of his brethren in that persuasion, to the Lieutenant Governor, praying for a piece of land to be appropriated for that purpose. His excellency, we understand, has in the most handsome manner, cheerfully given his consent, and last week a piece of land was allotted off by the Surveyor General, contiguous to that already occupied by the Roman Catholics”. ^{16/}

At the time of the granting of the land, long before the building of the Synagogue, the land was at the edge of the northern boundary of the town, on an outlying hill. The Hobart Town boundary was about 50m north of Warwick St running on an east – west sense. The northern town boundary was moved many times further north over time. At the time of granting (1828), the land would have been considered 'on the fringe' but within the known bounds of Hobart Town.

Walford ironically had good sense to partition for the burial ground – he was soon dead and was the first to be buried there. The headstone has the following inscription:

*“Mr Bernard Walford
died Sept 20 1828
The above Bernard Walford
Was the person when living who
Applied to His Excellency
Governor Arthur for government
Permission to appropriate this spot
Of ground for a Burial place
for the Jews”*^{17/}.

The Burial ground was used from 1828 to 1871. It is interesting to note census figures from 1841 to 1933 concerning the Hobart Jewish population. In 1841, there were 259 Tasmanian (Hobart is not itemised) Jews, roughly 1/3 of the number of NSW, the second largest number in the country. This figure grows to a peak [1851] just before the 1850s Victorian gold rush of 435, nearly half the number of NSW or 25% of the national population. After this, figures fall rapidly and are never the same again. By 1933 the total population of Tasmanian Jews is 70, with 40 in Hobart.

What these figures serve to illustrate is the declining numbers of migrants to Tasmania identifying themselves as Jewish, a shrinking congregation, the transitory nature of groups of people according to wealth centres, and how few of the real population of 19th century Jewish citizens were actually buried in the Jews Burial ground.^{18/}

The area used for the Burial ground was to the top western boundary of the site, for 30 metres, running parallel to the western boundary in a north-south axis with remains laid in a 6' grid. This was standard burial practice of the nineteenth century, with the deceased symbolically able to 'sleep while watching over the town'. In terms of public health, the remains were uphill and upwind from houses and by the late nineteenth century such burial fashions were popularly thought to be causes of plague.

It is an interesting note on the poor record keeping of 19th century burial practice that the Jewish congregation had a burial register recording 44 persons from 1844 to 1862^{19/}. An undated cemetery plan circa 1950 has been located, showing the location of 20 headstones, of which only 12 were able to be read^{20/}. The Hobart Town Courier recorded the deaths of Jewish citizens being interred at the Jews Burial Ground in Harrington street as late as 1871, well after the date of the Register^{21/}. However, 57 human remains were unearthed in the exhumation process in 2002. The Hobart Synagogue has identified the names of 51 people that were buried at the burial ground, though remains of each person were not identified in the exhumation process. The remaining six human remains exhumed add up to the real number of burials, though who they all are is at present unknown^{22/}.

Who were some of those that were buried here and why was the burial ground closed?

The most infamous member of Hobart's early nineteenth century Jewish community was Isaac (Ikey) Solomon, who is recorded as No.8 in the burial register.^{23/} 'Ikey' Solomon is widely considered by literary historians to be the real life inspiration for Charles Dicken's character Fagen in 'Oliver Twist'. It is worth quoting from his two page – entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography^{24/} .

“SOLOMON, ISAAC (IKEY)(1787-1850), convict and dealer, was born one of a family of nine children in Gravel Lane, Houndsditch, London. He married Ann, daughter of Moses Julian, coachmaster, of Aldgate. Solomon first had a shop at Brighton, but later opened what was ostensibly a jeweller's shop in Bell Lane, London, where he carried on business as a receiver of stolen goods. In 1810 he was arrested for picking pockets, tried at the Old Bailey in conjunction with Joel Joseph and sentenced to transportation for life. Solomon went no further than the hulks, where after three or four years he managed to escape from the hulk 'Zetland'. He continued his business as a fence and achieved such notoriety that, when again arrested, three pamphlets containing highly exaggerated accounts of his criminal activity were published about him. At his arrest on 25th April 1827 he was charged with theft and receiving, the goods involved being 6 watches, 3 ½ yards of woollen cloth, 17 shawls, 12 pieces of Valentia cloth, lace, bobbinet, caps and other articles. He was committed for trial and lodged in Newgate prison. On a writ for habeas corpus [unlawful detainment] he was taken to the Court of King's Bench, but the application failed and he was led to a hackney coach to be conveyed back to Newgate. Unknown to his captors the coach was driven by Solomon's father –in-law, whom the turn-keys permitted to make a detour through Petticoat Lane. At a prearranged place some of Solomon's friends overpowered the guard and released him.

Solomon fled the country, going first to Denmark and then to the United States. A reward was offered for his capture and his wife was arrested for receiving stolen goods. Ann Solomon was sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. She had two grown-up sons, John and Moses, two younger sons aged 9 and 3 and two daughters aged 7 and 5. Ann was transported in the ship 'Mermaid' and arrived in Hobart Town in June 1828 with her four youngest children. She was assigned as a servant to Richard Newman, an officer of Police, her sons John and Moses migrated to Van Diemen's Land to live with her.

Solomon meanwhile migrated to Rio de Janeiro whence he sailed in the 'Coronet' to Hobart, travelling under the assumed name of Slowman. However, Hobart was the enforced home of many of his old colleagues and customers and he was soon recognized. He bought real estate in Hobart and opened a shop. Quarrels broke out in the Newman household, Mrs Solomon's assignment was revoked and she was placed in the Female House of Correction. Isaac applied to have his wife assigned to him. It was notorious that Solomon was a fugitive from justice, but Lieutenant –Governor Arthur could then do nothing to apprehend him because he had no warrant, although on 17 October 1828 he had written to the Colonial Office asking for one. After repeated requests had been made for Ann Solomon's release, Isaac entered into a £1,000 bond to guarantee that she would not escape from the Colony, and a number of local publicans and merchants including John Pascoe Faulkner, entered into sureties of £100 or £200 each. Arthur relented and allowed Mrs Solomon to be assigned to her husband.

When the Lady of the Lake arrived in Hobart in November 1829 it brought warrants for Solomon's arrest, and these were immediately executed. Solomon's counsel, however, had him brought before the court on a writ of habeas corpus and, because of a technical fault in the warrants from London, the application for his release was sustained by the court. The Judge fixed bail at £2,000 with four sureties of £500, and Solomon's friends found it difficult to raise so much money. Arthur was in a dilemma, and finally issued a warrant in his own name against Solomon and had him placed in the Prince Regent for England. Sydney and Hobart newspapers denounced the governor's refusal to abide by the principles of habeas corpus. Thomas Capon, the chief constable, was put in charge of his special prisoner because the master of the ship had refused to guarantee his safe arrival.

Solomon was tried at the Old Bailey on 8 charges of receiving stolen goods, found guilty on 2 and sentenced to transportation for 14 years. He arrived at Hobart in the William Glenn Anderson in November 1831 and was sent to Richmond goal, where in 1832 he became a javelin man. In 1834 he was transferred to Port Arthur and in 1835 he was granted a ticket of leave on condition that he lived at least twenty miles from Hobart. He took up residence at New Norfolk and was reunited with his family, although the two eldest sons appeared to have left Van Diemen's land by this time. His family had by this time become estranged from him and there were violent quarrels. Most of the children took their mother's part and he turned them out of his house.

Mrs Solomon was sent to the Female House of Correction again as a result of some of these altercations, and her daughter Ann had to write numerous petitions before her mother was released in September 1835. The elder Ann Solomon was granted a ticket-of-leave in November 1835 and a conditional pardon in May 1840. Isaac lived apart from his wife after this, remaining in New Norfolk until 1838. He was living at New Town in 1840 when he was granted a conditional pardon. He received the certificate of his freedom in 1844. Solomon died on 3rd September 1850 and was buried in the Jewish Burial ground on 4th September. His estate did not exceed £70-^{25/}.

Esther Solomon was the wife of Judah Solomon, the leading Jewish merchant of Hobart of the first half of the nineteenth century and was buried on the 25th September 1861, No. 40 in the register^{26/}. Her life is rare for a Jewish woman in nineteenth century Hobart as, like that of her merchant husband, it is well recorded.

Born in 1771, she was 34 when she married Judah in 1805, who was seven years younger. In her petitions to Lord Stanley at the Home Office she states that she was married "according to the rites of the Jewish Law in Sheerness (England) in January 1805"^{27/}. They lived together until his transportation, when she was left with nine children, expecting a tenth. In default of any application by Judah to have his family sent out, in accordance with an indulgence allowed to convicts, she was unable to join him in Van Diemen's Land until December, 1832, when she arrived by the 'Palambam'.

According to Esther's petition, Judah was convicted of a "Capital Offence" and was sentenced to death at the Kent Assizes on the 2nd August 1819, had his sentence commuted to life, and was sent to NSW by the "Prince Regent" in 1819. He was transferred to Van Diemen's Land by the "Castle Forbes" soon after following misconduct. His brother, Joseph, was sentenced at the same session at the Kent Assizes and arrived in Van Diemen's Land, via NSW at the same time. From the

time of his arrival in Van Diemen's Land, Judah lived with the daughter of a convict, Elizabeth Howell. In her petition in 1843, Esther informed Lord Stanley of Judah's petition to Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur for a free pardon, and the latter's indignant refusal on the grounds "of the immoral state in which he was then living under the very eyes of his lawful family, and almost within a stone's throw of His Excellency's Residence".^{28/}

Hence we infer that Judah's petition was addressed to the Lieutenant - Governor Arthur before 1836, when the latter left Van Diemen's Land and after 1832 when Esther arrived. Further petitions by Judah to Sir John Franklin, Lieutenant - Governor Arthur's successor, had the same fate.

On Esther's arrival with her two daughters, Sarah and Rebecca, in December 1832, Judah - according to Esther - attempted to deny his marriage with her. Between August and November 1843 Judah petitioned again for a free pardon to the new Lieutenant-Governor Eardley-Wilmot, the granting of which was recommended. Esther realised that a free pardon would allow her husband to travel home to England, obtain a divorce from her and marry Elizabeth Howell and "complete the repudiation of his wife and children and deprive them of their rightful inheritance of his property"^{29/}. For this she received no satisfaction. She thence wrote to Lord Stanley citing him as "the most ineligible for the indulgence of a married Sovereign" and that he had already made over a "the greater part of a large property" to Elizabeth Howell and their son, praying that he would cancel Judah's pardon.

This property was considerable. Judah Solomon owned Temple House, on the corner of Argyle St and Liverpool St Hobart (now owned by the Department of Police). Despite numerous petitions for a grant of Land for the erection of a Synagogue, Governor Franklin refused citing the Jews to be 'ungodly'. Judah Solomon gave the land that was then in his garden for the construction of the Hobart Town synagogue, consecrated in 1844. Judah was one of the first shareholders of the Van Diemen's Land bank, licensee of the 'Albermarle Head' public house in Liverpool St, the Castle Inn, Pontville, a flour mill in Hobart, a house in Macquarie St and a total estate of more than £30,000-^{30/}. Esther Solomon continued to petition against her husband's pardon for fear of losing the property.

Judah Solomon eventually died without having divorced Esther. Mrs Elizabeth Howell was left an annual life annuity of £300 and mentioned in his will as "housekeeper".^{31/} Judah Solomon, the wealthiest Jewish merchant of Hobart died on 18th February 1856 and was interred in the Jewish Burial ground, register no. 33. Most of his property was left to his son, Joseph Solomon. Esther died on 24th September, 1861 and is listed in the burial register as "widow of the late Judah Solomon".^{32/}

Other members of the congregation were less successful with their lives, for example the convict, Moses Cohen. Moses was convicted at the Old Bailey, London on the 20th February, 1822, was given a life sentence. The crime is not stated. He arrived in Hobart on the 'Arab' in November 1822. The convict records record the following brief facts of his life:

"March 25th, 1829 - Absent from duty. - 50 lashes

October 17th, 1829 - Absent all night - 25 lashes

July 27th, 1839 - Conditional pardon

October 20th, 1842 - Free Pardon^{33/}

Moses and Elizabeth Cohen are recorded as the parents of two children buried in the Jewish Burial ground, Ebenezer John who died on 13th January 1850 and Simon, who died on 8th January 1854^{34/}. Little else is known of lives of this family.

The last register recorded burial at the Jewish Burial ground is that of Henry Marks, buried on 16th March 1863.^{35/}

It is not intended for these stories to be exhaustive, or all known burials to be researched as this is beyond the brief. What is important is the significant social history of the site of Windsor Court, to an important sub-cultural group of nineteenth century Hobart, and the research potential of the place.

In 1870 legislation was introduced to Parliament which provided for the closing of existing burial grounds, then considered a health hazard and ‘plague spots’ often being sited on badly drained land. Closing was to take place three months after the opening of the new public cemetery, the development of which was to funded with £8,000- provided by the Government^{36/}. The Jews Burial ground was closed in 1872, after which Jewish burials were performed at the Cornelian Bay Cemetery, near New Town, Hobart. As a result, most old burial grounds were closed around Hobart at this time.

In the 1900s concern was again raised over the condition of the old closed burial grounds. The *Cemeteries Act 1880* empowered the Government to close older burial grounds located within one mile of a newly opened cemetery. These powers were then transferred to the Hobart City Council by the *Health Act 1889*. As a result, a special committee of the Council was formed in 1898 to look into the state of the closed burial grounds within the city. It’s findings were published in 1902.^{37/} The Burial ground was inspected by a City Health Officer who found that it was the only closed burial ground in Hobart at the time to be in good order.

“No effort has been spared to keep ever sacred the memories of those buried there. Tombstones are well cared for, and the ground presents the appearance of a soft green lawn”.^{38/}

According to a report in the Tasmanian Mail in October 1902;

“Neither graves nor monuments are numerous in the little cemetery. Save for the Hebrew characters on some of the headstones, one might imagine himself at first glance in a Catholic Burial ground”.^{39/}

The *Local Government Act 1906* allowed for Council to take over the management and maintenance of many older cemeteries within the city. By 1939 the Hobart City Council had control of the majority of these sites. From the 1910s to the 1940s many of the old cemeteries were transformed into public parks, recreation grounds and schools.^{40/} In various minutes of the meetings of the Hobart Synagogue reference is made to problems with the Burial Ground. Repairs and upkeep were needed, however it brought a small income as part of the land was leased for grazing purposes. In 1944 the Burial Ground was bought by the Education Department for £1,000, a very welcome addition for the Congregation which had by then been re-established due to the arrival of refugees from Europe. This was codified in the Jewish Cemetery (Vesting) Act, 1945. There were certain clauses within that Act that required the identification and relocation of headstones. As late as 1955 Barnard Walford’s headstone was held by the Director of Housing with a note that ‘others stones are still on the property’. The issue was discussed with a Mr Thomas Walter, who stated that no one wanted any of the other stones. It is not known what became of these.⁴¹

Some remains that survived in the period of non use of the site from 1872 to 1950 were removed or relocated in 1950-53 to the Cornelian Bay Cemetery.

Others that were not removed at that time have since disappeared. More of these were recovered in the subsurface areas during the exhumation process and these have been photographed and form part of the photographic documentation of this history. The originals or fragments have either been re-interred with human remains or kept by the Hobart Synagogue. The Archaeologist's Brief for work carried out in this area of Windsor Court has been included as appendix 1/ of this document.

The following images of the Jews Burial ground come from the Archives office of Tasmania and were taken in January 1941, all are titled *Jewish Graveyard, Hobart, January 1941*.

Image No. 5 *Jewish Graveyard, Hobart, January 1941*. View looking south on the western boundary. Kodachrome paper print. Original size unknown Archives Office of Tasmania.





Image No. 6 *Jewish Graveyard, Hobart, January 1941. View looking north.* Kodachrome paper print. Original size unknown Archives Office of Tasmania.



Image No. 7 *Jewish Graveyard, Hobart, January 1941. View looking south west. Note: remains of this monument found 15/01/02..* Kodachrome paper print. Original size unknown Archives Office of Tasmania.