

## A Personal Reminiscence

I will try and set down here some of my memories of Strathfield Shule and even though neither my parents, my brother or I were members, we certainly had a lot of connection to the place,

My first memories were before the building of the new shule and even though many years have passed, I will never forget going on a Sunday morning to Miss Boaz and learning the *Birkat Hamzon* – page 180 in the siddur if I remember correctly. Just to set the record straight, I also had Mis Boaz in Lindfield – North shore Synagogue, and there too, I learnt page 180, *Birkat Hamazon*. Weird that we never got past that page and she must have cringed through the years hearing us all recite it week after week.

My brother, Don, and I were 11 and 9 respectively when we also began Habonim in the old building. To get to either Cheder or Habonim required a 15-20 minute walk to Normanhurst railway station, a wait of at least 15 minutes for the train and a 30 minute journey to Strathfield. I'm not sure how we got to the shule, but we probably walked or took a bus and the whole thing had to be repeated all the way home.

If I live in Israel today, it is to a large extent due to the brain washing I so eagerly lapped up in Habonim. Apart from singing songs in Hebrew, which I didn't understand of course, and as I later learnt when I finally began to understand and speak Hebrew, were quite off the mark in meaning and pronunciation, we really just muddled through very happily.

We also played Machanayim in the grounds during breaks and we were joined in this fun and games by playing against Betar - a really terrible club who believed in two sides of the Jordan and kept singing unintelligible songs about it just to annoy us. We, of course sang our own brand as mentioned above, also loudly and just to annoy them.

My cousins were our constant companions during these times and when the new shule was built, we of course came to see and be part of their interest and love for the new building. I remember when their father, Joe, passed away and was very moved to see that a new window was eventually placed in the shule to remember him by. I loved him very dearly and it was a comfort to know that there was something so permanent to honour and remember him. In fact, when I was told about the shule closing, my first thought was for the window and what would happen to it.

So yes, even though I wasn't a part of the Strathfield Shule, I did and do have so many happy memories of this institution and join all of you who take the time to write something and remember.

by Angela Grossman (nee Kensell)  
October, 2013