

On Keeping a Promise

The Kol Nidrei before the birth of my daughter, Ron, my husband, walked with me from our flat in Edgecliff Road to the old Central Synagogue in Grafton Street. There, not having a seat, I was refused admission. I was in tears. He put his arms around me and there in the street said "I'll build you a synagogue", a promise he was later to keep.

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We moved to Strathfield in 1952 and our two children joined Strathfield Hebrew School. We found old friends amongst the parents and soon were an integral part of the community. Ron, who had only been to shule twice in his life, for his barmitzvah and his wedding, became a member of the committee. The Sunday school occupied an old two storey building, which the community had purchased and within which it was decided to create a Shule. That was when Ron really kept his promise "to build me a shule". He organised the little band of men and did a huge part of the labour, being the only tradesman in the group. He also installed the electricity. We bought old pews from a disused church. One of the members brought back a Sefer Torah from Europe, and Ron and three other men covered the cost of purchase by buying a "handle" each.

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At a farewell party in the old building the Strathfield Community presented Ron and I with a silver Shabbat tray, inscribed "As a token of our esteem, August, 1955". It was time to leave ...

by Anonymous

Excerpted from an autobiography self-published in 2000