

Strathfield Memories

I prepared for my Bar Mitzvah in 1955 with a group, in Reverend Goran's home in Belfield. Others in the group were: John Ziegler, David Brem and Peter Goldman. I would ride there on my bike – 6.5 kms from Kingsgrove. My Bar Mitzvah (Parashat *Chaye Sara*) was in the synagogue in an upstairs room in "the old building".

My father was very actively involved, being Treasurer for several years, and a member of the Building Committee. I remember helping, by writing receipts for donations towards the building fund.

My brothers and I would travel by bus for Sunday School, usually trying to sit in the upstairs front seats in the old double-deckers. During *cheder* classes, I had extreme difficulty learning to read Hebrew, and was often shouted at in frustration by Miss Boaz or Reverend Goran.

My brothers and I usually had new suits and ties for the High Holidays, and were always pleased that Dad chose to sit with us instead of on the *bima* with other Board members. I didn't know much about the *Shoah* at that time, and was always perplexed and upset when, during the Yom Kippur service, I and others were asked to leave the synagogue during *Yizkor* and hearing wails of despair and sadness from those inside.

I was a member of the junior Habonim group that met on Sunday afternoons. Later, for a short time, I was a *madrich* there for a junior Habonim group. (I would then travel to Edgecliff for the senior's group meetings.)

Mum was also very much involved with the Ladies' Committee, and always seemed to be making sandwiches for meetings and functions. We, with the Toisters, Gorans, Goldmans, Cohens and Brems always seemed to be the last to leave any functions, and I would not be able to count the number of chairs Peter, Tom, Sharon, Geoff, David, Deanne, Ellen and I stacked and moved for storage until they were next needed.

by Kevin Sekel
November, 2013