

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY e-REPORT

www.ajgs.org.au



April, 2010

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A new year for the Society begins after our successful AGM on 14th March, which was enhanced by an enjoyable and noteworthy speech by our guest speaker, renowned US genealogist, Sallyann Amdur Sack-Pikus.

I congratulate the new committee, most of whom renominated. I am delighted to welcome our new Vice President, Miriam Shifreen, a longstanding committee member who is also Editor of the e-Report, our new Treasurer, Evelyn Frybort, who is also a standing committee member, and new committee member Dani Haski.

Our next function takes place at the North Shore Synagogue, Lindfield, on 9th May at 2.30 pm. The speaker will be Sister Marianne Dacy, archivist of the Archive of Australian Judaica.

I have pleasure in welcoming new members John Bevan, Karen Saul, Ron Shapiro, John Shrimski, Naomi Silverton and Elizabeth Suggit.

Thank you all for renewing your membership. We appreciate your support and look forward to another interesting year in genealogy.

Jeannette Tsoulos
President

Workshop Dates

Sundays 9.30 am - 12.30 pm May 9 June 6 July 4
Mondays 10.00 am – 1.00 pm May 17 June 21 July 12

PRESIDENT'S AGM REPORT, 14 March 2010 at the COA

It gives me great pleasure at the end of my first year as President to be able to report that our year has been a satisfactory one. Our aim remains always to assist our members in their family research and all our activities have been planned with this in mind.

Beginning the year for the first time in our history without our newsletter, the Koshers Koala, we wondered whether this would cause a drop in membership, but are delighted to report that it made little difference. Our old members stayed with us and new members have joined, and our e-report, now one year old, continues to keep members up to date with research developments, under the expert guidance of our editor, Miriam Shifreen. We thank all of you who sent us interesting articles to publish and ask you to please send us more!

Members and visitors continue to find success at our monthly workshops, with the help of a handful of members who come to assist and advise. In particular I thank Rieke and Peter Nash, who are virtually always

there, and others who have helped out in times of need – Kim Phillips, Gary Luke, Terry Newman, Nigel Meinrath, David Laufer, and Michael Taub, who helped with the Central Coast workshop.



Sunny Gold, and Jeannette Tsoulos as Greta Davis gives her report at the AGM

One or two helpers, though, are really not enough to help all those seeking assistance on Sundays, so I seize this opportunity to ask if any of you would like to become a volunteer. All you need is familiarity with a couple of websites and some research experience and we will be delighted to welcome you on board. Needless to say, we would be even more delighted with an offer to stand for nomination to the committee.

Our functions during the year have been varied, beginning with an interesting presentation by Professor Konrad Kwiet on the Bad Arolsen archives at last year's AGM. We held a workshop for the Central Coast group, another workshop on the Shoah Testimonies at the Sydney Jewish Museum, opened our library for the Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage organised by B'nei B'rith and enjoyed talks by Daniela Torsh on Czech research, Greg Sachs on his Polish journey, and Kim Phillips and Rieke Nash on the Gallipoli trip connected with Kim's Gallipoli project.

A number of our members attended the Second National Conference on Jewish Genealogy held by the Victorian AJGS in Melbourne last week, which was a great success. We were delighted that Sallyann Amdur Sack-Pikus and Todd Knowles agreed to talk to us in Sydney, and we greatly enjoyed Todd's informative discussion of Jewish UK records three days ago. We look forward very much to hearing Sallyann speak this afternoon.

Since we stopped publishing the Koshers Koala, the savings we have made on printing and postage have allowed us to expand our resources in the library and will provide funds for needed equipment in the future. Keeping the library up to date with the latest publications is Rieke's special interest and is vital to the success of members' research.

Members of the Society have given talks to other organisations on Jewish genealogy, in particular Peter Nash, who spoke at the 2010 reunion of Shanghailanders in Florida about the documents that he has obtained from many sources relating to his refuge in Shanghai and emigration to Australia in the 1930s and 40s.

Our Yad Vashem project is in its early stages, as is the photographing of the synagogue memorial boards.

Our discussion group, AJGen, continues to be a useful vehicle for genealogical queries and discussion, thanks to moderator Gary Luke.

We wish to thank:

Our sponsors, the Jewish Cemetery Trust,
Rabbi Paul Lewin, Maish Grauman and President Sarah Zukerman of the North Shore Synagogue for their continued hospitality and generosity,

The Society Committee:

Nigel Meinrath, Vice President,

Greta Davis, formerly James, Treasurer,

Sunny Gold, Secretary and Minutes Secretary,
Miriam Shifreen, Editor of the e-report,
Rieke Nash, Resources Librarian,
Kim Phillips, Website Manager,
Peter Nash, Evelyn Frybort, Annette Winter and Kym Morris,
Paul Winter, our Auditor and Representative on the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.
Steve Traurig and Summit Internet, who have supported us with our website.
The Jewish Centre on Ageing, for their support when meetings need to be held in premises more accessible for our Eastern Suburbs members.

Two committee members will be stepping down today, Nigel Meinrath, who resigns as Vice President, and Greta Davis, who resigns as Treasurer. We thank them both very much for the hard work and support they have given the Society over many years.

Every year brings new discoveries in genealogy, and we look forward to bringing these to you, always with the hope that you may find just the thing you are looking for.

In conclusion, I have enjoyed the privilege of being your President, and thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Jeannette Tsoulos
President

REFLECTIONS OF A CONFERENCE NEWBY

By **Dani Haski** (dani_haski@optusnet.com.au)

I'm fairly new to Genealogy as an organised hobby having only started researching my family history properly about 18 months ago. I became interested - and subsequently obsessed - gradually, in part thanks to Rieke Nash, a cousin, who has spent years researching our common Isenberg/Eizenberg line. Being a diligent researcher, and having the wonders of the internet at my fingertips, I quickly discovered a plethora of references pertaining to other branches of my family tree scattered through online indexes and archives around the country, and the world. This led to a treasure trove of documents and information. I was hooked.

I joined the AJGS in Sydney and in early March attended my first conference - Our Jewish Roots: the 2nd Australian National Conference on Jewish Genealogy - held at the Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre in Melbourne. The day before the conference commenced Melbourne was lashed by a supercell storm, flooding the CBD and damaging buildings across the city. Hailstones the size of golf balls had crashed through roofs and car windscreens but thankfully the conference centre was undamaged and delegates were well protected from Melbourne's notoriously unpredictable weather.

On signing in at registration I was handed a goody bag with the conference program booklet, a list of participants and their contact details, assorted research guides and leaflets, some handy pens, pencils and highlighters and a complimentary bottle of water. There was a solid turnout, around 180 people, and the main auditorium was buzzing with anticipation.

Allan Jankie - chair of the AJGS-Vic executive welcomed us, opened the conference and introduced the keynote speaker, Dr Sallyann Amdur Sack-Pikus - a legend in Jewish Genealogy. In a lively and entertaining address, Sallyann recounted the early days of Jewish genealogy and how, in attempting to research her own family, she ended up establishing a publishing empire - Avotaynu. She discussed how the fall of the Soviet Union opened up access to previously restricted and unknown archives and how today modern technology was opening even more doors. The future, she insists, is bright for genealogists.

One of the highlights of Sallyann's talk was her description of the gains made in her own research with the advantage of the internet. Through a website she developed she has managed to connect disparate branches of the Amdur tree and discover her relationship to Amdurs, Amders and Emdurs (not to mention Amdursky's) around the world - including Australia's very own Larry Emdur!

Following morning tea, we were treated to another feisty speaker, Schelly Talalay Dardashti - writer of the highly informative Tracing the Tribe blog and an expert in Sephardi genealogy. Schelly is also a great champion of the way DNA technology is being applied to genealogy and spoke at length about the Iberian Ashkenazi DNA project. Through this project Schelly has come to the conclusion that, in fact, we're all Sephardi, and she's convinced she has the tools to prove it!

Straight after the plenary we broke into groups for smaller, concurrent sessions. It was hard choosing which one to go to but eventually I settled on the Sephardi SIG - which ended up being run by Schelly. As we had just heard her downstairs she conducted more of a Q&A and we were able to ask questions specifically related to our own research.

Over a lovely stand up lunch of felafel with hummus and salad, and a nice cup of tea, I had a chance to chat with Schelly and went to her next session on "The New Technological Frontier: Social Networks and Blogging". Having had some success myself with tracing Haskis on Facebook I was very interested to hear more details about the potential and pitfalls of online collaboration. Schelly's blog - Tracing the Tribe <http://tracingthetribe.blogspot.com> is a great resource and an excellent way to keep abreast of the latest news and innovations in the Genealogy sector.

Next I went back to the main auditorium to listen to Sydney's own Gary Luke moderate a session on Researching Early Australia. I was very interested in this as many of my ancestors had arrived in Australia before 1900 and one branch - the Schlossman/ Davis clan - had lived in Melbourne, Sandhurst (now Bendigo) and Echuca. During the discussion the participants mentioned a book called The Jews in Victoria in the 19th Century by Rabbi L M Goldman - self published in 1954 - so after the session I went to the Makor Library (located at the front of Beth Weizmann) and looked through the index of this book and lo and behold found a reference to a J. Davis and A. Schlessman (with an 'e'). On flicking to the page I found a report regarding the refurbishment of the Sandhurst Synagogue in 1871. There on the building committee were these two names next to each other. Considering I have a multitude of other evidence putting both my great great grandfather John Davis and his father in law (my 3rd great grandfather) Solomon Schlossman in Sandhurst in 1871, these names side by side on this list led me to deduce they are the same men, spelling notwithstanding.

In one of the last sessions of the day our very own Rieke Nash explained the genesis of the JRI Poland project and explained how the operation worked and what kinds of information researchers could expect to find on it. Due to popular demand she gave a practical workshop on the site the following day.

At the end of day one delegates strolled up the road to the beautiful Glen Eira Town Hall for an informal evening function. Over delicious kosher canapes and some lovely local wine we got to chat with one another and the guest speakers. The Mayor of Glen Eira City Council - the impossibly young Cr Stephen Tang - welcomed everyone and told us of his own fascinating family background containing both Polish and Chinese ancestry. Most importantly came the announcement that the Genealogy section of the Makor Library would now be called the Les Oberman Wing, in honour of the late president of the AJGS-Vic who passed away suddenly last year. Mr Oberman's widow and son accepted the honour and a plaque was hung at the entrance of the wing the following morning.

Day two of the conference began with concurrent sessions on Czech research, beginning your journey and writing family newsletters. With my interest in communicating my own research I chose the latter presented by the very enthusiastic Bubbles Segall.

After the morning tea break we all gathered once again for two plenary sessions. The first was a quick yet very informative overview of the major archival institutions - National Archives of Australia (NAA), the State Library of Victoria (SLV) - which has a dedicated genealogy wing - and the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV). Professionals from each institution gave excellent presentations on accessing the various collections and what one might expect to find there.

After a short break we were in for a real treat. The Israeli Ambassador to Australia, Yuval Rotem, arrived (amid a cluster of young men in black suits speaking into their wrists) and recounted his own genealogical journey of discovery. Being a diplomat he had a few advantages already and early on he had the good fortune to be stationed in the US, with Utah under his purview. He obtained invaluable assistance from the Mormon

Family History centre and was ultimately able to trace his family all the way to Australia, finding some long lost cousins in Melbourne - one of whom was sitting in the front row.

Following Ambassador Rotem's spirited presentation renowned author Arnold Zable picked up on the passion and pleasure of storytelling. This is a particular interest of my own so I listened intently. Arnold's illustration of techniques - using readings from his own work - was wonderful and reinforced for me the path I was already on.

After lunch - more felafel - Shauna Hicks, an independent genealogy researcher, gave an excellent presentation on Caring for your Family Records, recommending a range of useful products and ideas. She also touched on succession planning - after all why do all that work if no one gets it after you're gone!

The afternoon was taken up by a plenary session with Sallyann on Holocaust research and a final "ask the experts" panel where our overseas guests and some home grown experts were asked their advice on specific roadblocks and problems.

So there was the formal part of the proceedings over. But wait, there was more!

The AJGS-Vic had arranged tours of various institutions for Tuesday so after an early breakfast with a friend I arrived at the Public Records Office of Victoria in North Melbourne. James McKinnon, who had presented at the conference, took us for a behind the scenes look at this incredible archive, leading us into the stacks and explaining how it all operated 'under the hood'. Grabbing a lift with Ziva Fain and Schelly Talalay Dardashti I then made my way over to SLV for a tour of the beautiful genealogy section. I was frustrated that I didn't have the time to stay and dive into these incredible resources right away.

All in all the conference was an extremely valuable and informative experience. The networking opportunities and access to resources it offered were invaluable and I recommend attending similar events to anyone wanting to expand their knowledge of the available resources and research options.

Tracing the Tribe

From Lionel Sharpe

Those of you who were unable to attend the 2nd National Conference on Jewish Genealogy on March 7th-9th have an opportunity to read some reflections on a blog, "Tracing the Tribe: The Jewish Genealogy Blog", written by our Israeli guest speaker, Schelly Talalay Dardashti. Schelly is a journalist who started this blog in 2006. //tracingthetribe.blogspot.com/2010/03/melbourne-conference-opens.html Click on *Older Post* and *Newer Post* on the bottom of the page to see more postings.

2010 Reunion of Shanghai Refugees

From Peter Nash

Over many years there have been reunions of so-called Shanghailanders, that is Holocaust survivors from Europe (mainly Germany and Austria) who found refuge in Shanghai mostly in the period 1938 to 1949. The 2010 Reunion was to be on a Cruise ship sailing from Florida through the Caribbean Sea with stops at two ports in the Netherland Antilles. Rieke and I were invited to participate in a program of presentations. The topic I chose was "One Shanghai Experience: How a WW2 Story can be Documented". Rieke availed herself for assistance in genealogical research.

The number of Shanghailanders was 33, so with their partners and friends there were close to 70 in all. The only other Australians were Susanne Sambor from Melbourne, also her son and a friend. Another guest speaker Tess Johnston came from Shanghai with the rest from the U.S. and Canada. Three other speakers spoke on their published memoirs.

I have a lot of documents and items that my parents brought with them from Berlin to Shanghai and then to Sydney. Quite a number relate to attempts to get entry to Australia and the U.S. and the official stance taken for rejection. I have over 40 letters that passed between us and my father's parents who were deported to the ghetto in Piotrkow Trybunalski in Poland (my mother's parents also came to Shanghai.) The letters describe the conditions and circumstances endured on both sides - terrible in the ghetto and very harsh in Shanghai. Although our lives in Shanghai were broadly similar many of the others were amazed with what I showed.

I also surprised the Shanghailanders. I researched the HIAS files which are stored on microfilm in New York and obtained records for their families with data that many did not know. Although some said there were some inaccuracies (such as wrong birth date, incorrect arrival data, etc) which suggests that you cannot always believe what you see.

After the week's cruise we were able to attend a meeting of the Greater Miami JGS with the outstanding Steve Morse as their guest speaker, whose One-Step search engine is without peer. Although we had been to his talks before he had two new topics and spoke for 3 hours in all. All in all we had a fantastic visit to Florida

Australian Pre-1920s Passenger Records

From Gary Luke

Records are held by the archives of the state of their arrival port. Some of the state archives have online searches. Another way to trace their background - by the time of the Great War, non-British citizens would have either been naturalised, or would have had to register as an alien.

Alien Registration records for the WWI period are by held the National Archives. Read their guide sheets for Alien Registration and for Naturalisation, and search the RecordSearch database for their names, all on www.naa.gov.au

Naturalisation was a State matter before 1904 when it became Commonwealth Government business. Victorian & South Australian pre-1904 naturalisations were passed to the National Archives - check RecordSearch on the NAA site. NSW and other states retained their pre-1904 naturalisation records in their own archives. The NSW index is online among the indexes at www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/indexes-online/indexes-online

Many European Jews who stayed for a while in the UK around the last decades of the 1800s arrived here on an assisted passage. Try the NSW indexes as above, or the Victorian passenger indexes listed on the www.ajgs.org.au Links page.

SUCCESS STORIES

Quite frequently members of the Society have amazing success with finding living relatives. In Melbourne at the Conference there were some emotional reunions and often at our workshops some researcher will make a long-looked for breakthrough. However the latest story from one of our members is quite exceptional.

Leo has been a member of the Society with his wife, Ronnie, since 1998, always renewing his membership and supporting us. When he joined, he entered his family information on JewishGen's Family Finder (JGFF) (www.jewishgen.org/jgff). Last month he had an email from Moscow from a researcher claiming that he was a relative. Being a cautious type, Leo was a little suspicious until the researcher sent photos of Leo and his family that had been sent to Russia during the War years from Shanghai. The researcher, a second cousin, had kept the photos for 60 years, despite Soviet suppression and had recently found Leo's contact information on the JGFF.

Another heart-warming experience concerned our March guest speaker from Salt Lake City, Todd Knowles, who had generously given up his time to assist many of us with his great knowledge of the opportunities for UK and LDS research. As a surprise we were able to introduce him to a Sydney researcher, Barbara O'Connor, who had his line on her family tree. His reaction to this previously unknown source was delightful.

Both stories show that success doesn't always result from persistence and determined research, just being involved can be sufficient.

GREAT BRITAIN SITES

Are you a Hart researcher?

Do you have UK **HARTS** you cannot find or place as it is such a common name? Help is at hand. A new Internet SIG has been formed called Hart-Hunters contact anitagoldhill@yahoo.com who will send you an invitation to join the group.

The final update of the 1851 ANGLO-JEWRY DATABASE is now on-line

Go to the web-site www.jgsgb.org.uk and click on the last but one button on the right. If you had ancestors living in Britain in 1851, the chances are you will find them. It is the most amazing job, covering probably well over 90% of Anglo-Jewry in mid 19th century. Our thanks are extended to Petra Laidlaw, who put together the contributions of over 250 researchers worldwide (as well as quite a lot of research of her own) and to Louise Messik who, without any prior knowledge of programming, has been able to ensure that the Study is on-line for us to use in our research today.

Anglo-Jewish Sites

If your family has deep English roots, a site www.Synagoguescribes.com, has an index to more than 16,000 birth, circumcision, marriage and burial records, from London's synagogues, 1785–1865.

Another Anglo-Jewish database of more than 10,000 Jewish burials can be found at www.Cemeteryscribes.com

Commercial Directory of the Jews of the United Kingdom, 1894

The full text can be found on

www.archive.org/stream/commercialdirect00harfiala/commercialdirect00harfiala_djvu.txt

Historical Directories

is a digital library of local and trade directories for England and Wales, from 1750 to 1919. (A University of Leicester project from a few years ago.) www.historicaldirectories.org

Transcriptions from the West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser 1836-1887 of BDM records,

[//bit.ly/d2MLt8](http://bit.ly/d2MLt8).

Don't overlook sites such as this one. Searching on the word "Synagogue" produced a number of interesting items such as:-

1836 At the Jewish Synagogue, Portsea, on the 19th instant, Mr. Moss Jacob, of Falmouth, to Miss Eliza Emanuel, of the former place.

1840 NEW SYNAGOGUE - On Sunday last, the Jews of Penzance consecrated their splendid new Synagogue. It was said to be a very interesting ceremony, and was witnessed by a great number of the most respectable inhabitants, who appeared highly delighted.

1850 At the Synagogue, Birmingham, September 6, Edward Krauss, of Kimberley, South Africa, to Annie, second daughter of B.H. Joseph, Hagley Lodge, Edgbaston, Birmingham, and granddaughter of Mrs. Henry Joseph, of Pensance. (A relative of our member, Anthony Joseph?)

OTHER WEBSITES FOR RESEARCH

The Online Catalog of Photographs of Jewish Life in Prewar Eastern Europe

The website *People of a Thousand Towns* at YIVO has photos from ancestral Shtetls

[//yivo1000towns.cjh.org/search.asp](http://yivo1000towns.cjh.org/search.asp)

Scotland Vital Records

Indexes to modern marriage records from 1934-2006 have now been added to the ScotlandsPeople site at <http://scotlandsppeople.gov.uk/>. The site now has indexes of Scottish births, marriages and deaths (1855–2006) and images of births (1855–1908), marriages (1855–1933) and deaths (1855–1958).

The Routes to Routes Foundation (RTR)

now has databases searchable by family name and with photos onsite at [//rtrfoundation.org](http://rtrfoundation.org).

The site has the most complete inventory of Jewish record holdings in the archives of Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine.

Lo Tishkach Foundation

has developed an online database of more than 10,000 Jewish cemeteries located throughout Europe. www.lotishkach.org/. Touch the "Database" tab to open a pull-down menu with the option to search the database. The Search tab on the home page is used to search the web site, not the database.

Dictionary of Jewish Bulgarian Surnames

(1) surname (2) all its variants (3) language it derives from (4) its meaning,(5) when available, a reference to its historical background in medieval Spain. The database can be found at www.sephardicgen.com/databases/BulgarianSurnamesSrchFrm.html. Other Sephardic databases are at www.sephardicgen.com/databases/databases.html.

The Ukraine SIG website has given us a beautiful new design

by webmaster, Hilary Henkin, www.jewishgen.org/Ukraine/

And for an update on the latest activities of **Susan King**, founder of JewishGen, click on www.susaneking.com

Google Translations

From Rieke Nash

Using the automatic Google translation facility is amazingly helpful, but be careful! My inland Polish town of WLOCLAWEK is regularly translated as THUNDER BAY!

NEW BOOKS IN OUR LIBRARY

We have recently purchased a few multiple copies of the JGS of Great Britain's series, Jewish Ancestors? They currently include the Lithuanian, United Kingdom and the German and Austrian editions and are available for borrowing.

Jeremy Frankel, President of the San Francisco Bay Area JGS, has kindly donated to our Society *Cosmopolitans, A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area* by Fred Rosenbaum ((2009) University of California Press.

Jeremy, originally from the U.K., is well known to many of our members whom he has helped over the years and is actually related to a few of them.

From Avotaynu

Google Your Family Tree by Daniel Lynch (2008)

A detailed guide to all the techniques and tools for using Google applied to family history research. Also available from Gould Books.

A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery by Rabbi Joshua Segal (2007)

Everything you ever needed to know about the topic with lots of illustrations and examples.

Road to Victory, Jewish Soldiers of the 16th Lithuanian Division 1942-1945 Edited by Dorothy Leivers (2009)

This is a collection of lists and stories of Lithuanian Jews who fought for USSR during World War II. Translated from Hebrew and Yiddish, with many photos and memoirs of those who survived the lists should be scanned by anyone with Lithuanian roots.

Jews – Officers in the Polish Armed Forces 1939-1945 by Benjamin Meirtchak (2004)

This latest translation is additional to his previously published Jewish Military Casualties in the Polish Armies in World War II and lists almost 5,000 Officers who served in Polish forces against the Nazis.

LOS ANGELES CONFERENCE

11-16 July, 2010

www.jgsla2010.com

A great opportunity to hear the best and the latest at the lowest dollar cost for a long time.

Don't forget, if you have a story, or a discovery that will help others in their research, please write to me. Best wishes

Miriam Shifreen editor
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