

KOSHER KOALA

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society
www.ajgs.org.au



March 2015



18-19th century Seder Plate, Eastern Galicia or Western Ukraine

The Jewish Museum, New York

The AJGS Committee wishes all our members a very happy Pesach!

2015 AGM

This is an edited version of the President's Report to the AJGS AGM, 8 March 2015

This has been a year with a steep learning curve for me. I could never have imagined all the little details (and the big ones) that Rieke Nash and Jeannette Tsoulos attended to in past years. The things that take time and thoughtfulness, like remembering to check with the office staff that they know we are coming for a workshop, and that access to the library is available. Rieke always prepared all the papers for our membership and AGM mailouts, the flyers for events, the resources catalogues and attended to countless other details that kept our society running smoothly. No matter how early I managed to leave home, I would always arrive at our workshops to see Rieke already at work and with a smiling face to greet arrivals, old and new.

For those of you who have not yet heard, Rieke has been undergoing chemotherapy since last October. Her absence leaves a large gap in our effort, and I keenly miss her wise counsel. We all wish her well, and look forward to her return.

I feel as though I still have training wheels and think I will retain them for some time to come.

We had 165 paid members for 2014, with several new members who joined when they attended the Gesher Galicia Seminar.

During the year, we had a number of speakers and one full-day seminar. Dianne Johnstone talked about her Lithuanian adventures following the 2014 AGM, Ivor Epstein spoke most interestingly about Sephardi Genealogy in July, and Ethel Davis detailed her Latvian research in October. At the end of March, we had a wonderful day, *Galicia Galore and More!* with Pamela Weisberger who generously shared her vast experience in researching that part of the world.

We held workshops one Sunday and one Monday per month, here at Lindfield. The Sunday workshops have been quite popular, while the Mondays are quiet. I particularly want to thank Jeannette Tsoulos who comes to all of them, and shares her wealth of expertise with old hands and newbies. With Rieke Nash's absence in recent months, Jeannette has also taken over managing all our research resources. For this we are very grateful.

Thanks also to Evelyn Frybort, Dani Haski and David Laufer who helped at these workshops. We did not hold any Eastern Suburbs activities in 2014. We will focus efforts on re-building these during 2015. We would welcome more members, with a little expertise, volunteering to assist newbies at all our workshops.

Led by Dani Haski, and supported by Kym Morris, we have begun revamping our website. We would welcome your input, and will be seeking volunteers to help update the website's information sheets and guides. 'Thank you' to Bill Bowes and Summit Internet, who support and sponsor our website and who will assist us with the transition.

I only managed three editions of *Kosher Koala* in 2014, instead of our usual four. I hope you will agree that they were bigger and better than previous ones. I am aiming for four again this year.

Kosher Koala continues to extend its reach. I have had positive feedback from people who have read it in the UK, the US, Israel, and around Australia. We have agreed to permit the National Library of Israel to digitise all past issues of *Kosher Koala* and the *e-Report*, and to place them online alongside their other digital newspapers and newsletters. We are hoping that this will make them searchable, and thus more user-friendly than our current 2009-2014 collection on our website.

I thank all our members who have contributed articles and reviews, or passed on new and interesting items that help to make *Kosher Koala* an interesting read and a useful resource.

We continue to receive requests for assistance in researching Jewish ancestors, at the rate of two or three per week. Some are of the "I think my grandmother might have been Jewish because her name was Esther and her brother was named Joshua". These we deal with promptly and politely, but the ones that give greatest pleasure are those that either break down brick walls that have been frustrating the

enquirer for years, or those that re-unite long-separated branches of families. These require a little more research assistance, and sometimes some tact and diplomacy to establish the contact. It is a *mitzvah*, and hugely satisfying. If you would like to assist with these requests, please let me know to add your name to the list of possible responders.

We have established a fine reputation for our assistance with handling referrals from the Red Cross Tracing Service, Jewish Care and the Jewish Museum. When relevant, we cross-refer to our counterparts, AJGS Vic. I particularly recognise the expertise and generosity of Liz James, who responds quickly and knowledgeably every time.

This past year, we spent some money upgrading equipment. We purchased a small PA system, so that when we host larger seminars, the speakers will not have to shout, and those with less acute hearing will not have to strain. It will also permit us to play soundtracks in Power Point presentations and video clips.

In addition, we purchased a laser colour printer, so that we can print our own seminar materials and flyers as the cost of bulk printing has become astronomical.

North Shore Synagogue has been our home for many years. I thank Rabbi Lewin, Sarah Zuckerman and Jess Freeman for making us so welcome here at Lindfield.

I thank:

Paul Winter, our Auditor and delegate to the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies;

Gary Luke, the AJGen moderator; and

Peter Arnold, Sub-editor of *Kosher Koala*, whose keen eye and amazing way with words makes the newsletter such a pleasure to read.

Finally, I thank the Society's Committee –

Kim Phillips, Vice-President and Website Manager;

Sunny Gold, Secretary and Minutes Secretary, who turns our rambling deliberations from gibberish into succinct summaries; and Kym Morris, Committee member, who stands in for Sunny when needed – with similarly miraculous outcomes;

Eva Browne, our reluctant Treasurer for the last few years, who wrestles with the numbers and compiles meaningful accounts;

Rieke Nash, Librarian and Resources Person;

Jeannette Tsoulos, past-President and Committee member, who, as previously mentioned, has stepped up in Rieke's absence to administer our ever-growing collection of resources;

Evelyn Frybort, Dani Haski, and Annette Winter; and

our recently co-opted member, Michael Taub.

As I said at the beginning, it has been a challenging year. I look forward to 2015 and your active participation in our society.

Robyn Dryen
President

Eat Pray Naches

JEWISH COMMUNITY STORIES

*Stories connect us to our
history, our traditions,
and who we are.*



Waverley Council is seeking submissions from Jewish post-war immigrants and their families to be interviewed for a project that will document, preserve and celebrate their rich history and contribution to the community.

Interested? Or know someone who would be perfect?

To register your interest in sharing your story:

- 📄 Register on the website: www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/ept
- ✉ Email: tellyourstory@waverley.nsw.gov.au
- ☎ Call: (02) 9386 7778

Submissions close 17 April 2015

AJGS News

Your AJGS Committee for 2015

At the AGM in March, the following members were elected to the AJGS Committee:

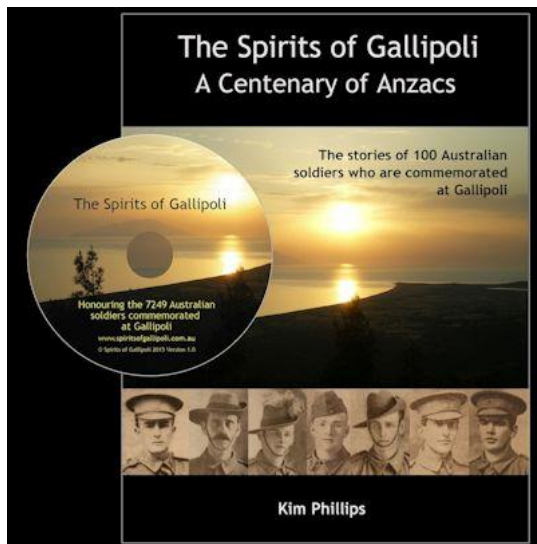
| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| President | Robyn Dryen (and Editor, <i>Kosher Koala</i>) |
| Vice President | Kim Phillips (and Website Manager) |
| Secretary | Sunny Gold (and Minutes Secretary) |
| Treasurer | Michael Taub |
| Resources Co-ordinator | Jeannette Tsoulos (and Librarian) |
| Committee Members | Eva Browne Evelyn Frybort (assisting with resources) Dani Haski (developing new website) Kym Morris (developing new website) Annette Winter (and Membership) |

Honorary Memberships

At the conclusion of the AGM, Rieke Nash, Peter Nash and Gary Luke were recognised for their years of dedication to the AJGS. We awarded each with Honorary Membership, and made a small presentation to thank them for their great support of Australian Jewish genealogy.

Mazel Tov to all three.

The Spirits of Gallipoli – Kim Phillips in print!



Our Vice-President, Kim Phillips, has released her new book and accompanying CD, *The Spirits of Gallipoli – A Centenary of ANZACs*. This extraordinary work honours the 7,249 Australian soldiers who are commemorated at Gallipoli. The book, arranged chronologically as the campaign unfolded, details the landings and battles, and the lives and families of 100 of the soldiers. The CD has some information on each of the 7,249. It runs in your browser, on PC or Mac, and requires no new software.

It is an incredibly detailed and moving account of the 1915 events at Gallipoli and the lives affected by this campaign.

The book and CD cost \$50 (+ \$15 postage and handling) and can be purchased through the web site www.spirits-of-gallipoli.com/book/thebook.htm

Mazel Tov Kim!

Preserving Our Treasures – Karen Coote

The thirty of us who attended the AGM were rewarded with a fantastic workshop on preserving our treasured artefacts. It was led by Karen Coote, a leading conservator, who has worked with major collections in museums and galleries.

She invited participants to bring along treasures in need of some tender care. We busily took notes and watched intently as Karen discussed the items and talked entertainingly about their care. Daniela Torsh

brought along a self-portrait her mother had painted, Dani Haski brought along a beautiful but deteriorating photo album. Lesley Goldberg offered two very fragile 1861 identity documents that had belonged to her great-grandparents. Karen brought along a late 19th century tapestry she had been asked to conserve and re-frame. The common requirement for all these items was to remove dust and other accumulated dirt.

The photo album provided an opportunity to talk about digitising collections and the best format for distributing copies to family members.

It was a very interesting and engaging workshop, and everyone left feeling just that little bit more confident about preserving our treasures.



Karen Coote

photo: Nigel Meinrath

Much More Than a Mere Merchant!

By Dani Haski

It's sometimes surprising where one discovers genealogical gems. My cousin, a well-known journalist, released a memoir/biography last year, exploring the complicated relationship he has with his family. On page 242, I read two lines that have subsequently propelled me down a whole new rabbit hole of research about our mutual great-grandfather, David Eizenberg – a man I had almost dismissed as having no story to tell. How wrong I was!

My cousin wrote in his book¹:

...My mother's mother, Hansey Eizenberg, was a concert pianist. Her English born grandfather², David Eizenberg, was a violinist taught by Czech maestro Jan Kubelik, and requested by Dame Nellie Melba to play her obligatos [sic.] whenever she toured Australia.³

What? Melba? How come no one had mentioned this before???

Certainly NO-ONE in my immediate family seemed to know anything about it!

I emailed David to find out where he got this juicy little tid-bit. "Oh... Hansey told me when I interviewed her years ago," he told me. I thought that, he as a journalist, might have done a little fact checking; able to cite a source or two other than hearsay – but no. So now it was up to me to find some definitive proof of this tantalising brush with fame!

I had searched for *David Eizenberg* in Trove, early in my research journey, but in the last couple of years the NLA has added many, many more newspapers, particularly regional publications, to this incredible collection. This time, when I put his name into the search box (in several variations), I got hundreds of entries! The diamonds in this treasure trove were two entries from 1930 and 1931 in *The Western Champion*, the local newspaper for Parkes in NSW. One was an interview **with** David, and the second was a column written **by** him. In both articles, he tells stories of his life as a professional musician. These two sources, accompanied by a multitude of other newspaper and documentary mentions, have allowed me to put together a picture of David's remarkable life.

¹ David Leser, *To Begin To Know*, Allen & Unwin, 2014, p.242

² David was Hansey's father, not her grandfather. Perhaps my cousin meant his mother's grandfather – then the sentence makes sense.

³ I have found no evidence of a relationship between Jan Kubelik and David Eizenberg, although Kubelik did visit Australia several times so David may have attended a masterclass or had private tutoring from him.

David Eizenberg was the first-born child of Harris and Esther Eizenberg. Harris, a divorcee, came from Wyszkw, in Poland, while Esther was born in Plosk. They married in London on 14 February 1877. David was born in London on 26 December 1877 and emigrated to Australia with his mother aboard the *Peterborough*, arriving in Sydney on 6 May 1879.⁴



Harris and Esther Eizenberg

The family initially settled in Sydney. Early in the 1890s they re-located to Brisbane. Harris was a tailor and business seemed to be going well. The first hint of David's musical ability came in a short newspaper mention in 1894:

*Two entries, both of boys, appeared in the violin competition, Master D. Eizenberg, aged 16, and Master Bond, aged 13. The former, a pupil of Mr. Lawrence, the well-known amateur, played Charles Danola's '6th Air Varie' in a manner betokening a natural aptitude for the instrument and for his years and experience considerable skill. He is certainly a promising pupil. His fellow competitor essayed Baff's 'Cavatina' and naturally showed less advancement. The judges in giving Eizenberg the first place, thoughtfully added that "the performance of the younger boy was very good in consideration of his age."*⁵

Over the next couple of years, David performed in and around Brisbane and then, in 1897, advertised his services as a violin teacher in Charters Towers – claiming to have been a conductor at the Brisbane Opera House.⁶

By 1898, the family had re-located back to Sydney. David advertised in *The Hebrew Standard* as a violin teacher. He also began building his professional career, playing for social engagements in the community. It is evident that David was not the only musical talent in his family. His sister, Annie (b. 1 January 1880, Sydney) played piano and they would often accompany each other in concert.

The new century brought great changes in David's life. In 1902, he married Ms Ettie Diamond (b.1879). Ettie and her family had come to Australia in the 1880s from Latvia (although Ettie had been born in Zagare, Lithuania). She was the youngest of eight children. All but two of her siblings were living in Australia. The Diamonds had a thriving estate-buying business. David began to divide his time between learning the business of trade from his brothers-in-law and his music.

David and Ettie's first child, a daughter named Hansey (Hannah), was born in 1904; followed by two sons – Hyman (b. 1908) and Leonard (my grandfather, b.1911).

Using wonderfully vivid newspaper advertisements, I have traced David's business activities across New South Wales, where he sold everything from ribbons and lace to ironmongery, plant and equipment. In 1903, he was liquidating bankrupt stock in Bourke; in 1905, he was in Maitland; in 1906 in Grafton; then Bathurst, Tumut, Gundagai, Newcastle, Grenfell, Mullumbimby... and the list goes on. He sold his wares from the Northern Rivers to the Snowy Mountains. In each town, he would take out enthusiastic advertisements in the local papers, sometimes taking up a full page, telling the residents of the enormous bargains to be had.

⁴ Harris lists his arrival as August 1877 on his naturalization application, but I have yet to find him in a corresponding manifest.

⁵ *The Queenslander*, 20 January 1894, pp. 122-3

⁶ To date, I have been unable to independently verify this claim.

In 1914, David visited Warwick in Queensland. The local paper, *The Warwick Examiner and Times*, reported the event but the report has thrown up another mystery. The article states that David had come to visit his brother, Hyman, resident of the town. However, David didn't HAVE a brother!⁷ Hyman Eizenberg of Warwick was the son of Morris Eizenberg, who in turn was the son of David Eizenberg. My David DID have an Uncle Morris. However, his grandfather's name was Avraham, not David, so it's all very confusing. I am currently trying to ascertain where Morris Eizenberg (of Brisbane) was born and if he could be David's great-uncle, thereby making Hyman Eizenberg of Warwick his second cousin. A mystery indeed!

On a musical note, the article also mentioned that while in Warwick, David played a well-received concert accompanied by his 10 year-old daughter, Hansey, and that he was on his way back to Sydney to take up a three-year contract with the J C Williamson company.

There are very few mentions of David in the records between 1914 and 1920, although there are indications that he was very involved in his local Hebrew Congregation, leading services, as his father had, during the High Holy Days.

Late in the 1920s, advertisements began to appear once again for bargain sales in places such as Cootamundra and West Wyalong, and then, in 1930, David set up shop in the NSW town of Parkes. A journalist from *The Western Champion*, visiting his office, noticed the fine violin sitting on his desk. This observation resulted in an extraordinary interview, with David waxing lyrical about his career.



D. Eizenberg and Sons shopfront, Crown St, Wollongong

Photo: From the collections of the Wollongong City Library and the Illawarra Historical Society reproduced with permission.

On the 1900 Italian Opera Season, produced by J C Williamson, David says:

*... Puccini's 'La Boheme' was produced for the first time in Australia. It was a wonderful success ... Some of the leading instrumentalists came from Italy and other parts of Europe for this season, others being selected from Australian players ... We used to rehearse every day, and to me it was a treat, as I enjoyed playing and listening to the artists in the various operas. The rehearsals were often amusing, inasmuch as the artists mostly possessed excitable temperaments, and many scenes were staged which were not on the official programme. Often the performances were delayed at night owing to some unrehearsed interlude, but it was such a grand and exciting time that I was sorry when the season ended.*⁸

David appears to have worked on many of the J C Williamson light operas and musicals, recounting with pleasure the premiere seasons of JCW penned *Floradora*, *Djin Djin* and *Australis*, as well as more well-known productions, such as *The Merry Widow*, *Aida* and *Tosca*.

He also worked with George Musgrove, a partner of Williamson and an impresario in his own right; the popular Newbury-Spada company headed by Philip Newbury and his wife Emily Spada, which

⁷ David had a sister, Annie, three years his junior. He did, however, name his first-born son Hyman.

⁸ *Western Champion* [Parkes, NSW], 11 August 1930, p.10

regularly toured Australia; and the original Sydney Symphony Orchestra,⁹ under the baton of Mr Joseph Bradley.

But it is the legendary Dame Nellie Melba whom he held in the highest esteem, telling the reporter:

I would like to say a word for her genius. Not only had she the reputation of being the greatest singer in the world, but she was a mistress of stagecraft, producing and, in fact, anything connected with the stage. She could teach the stage manager his business and could even detect anyone singing out of tune in the chorus. On one occasion she asked me to take my instrument on to the stage to detect someone who was singing false notes in the chorus. It was the opening scene from 'Samson and Delilah', and even the conductor had not been able to notice it. She also complained that the organ used in the church scene in 'Faust' was out of tune, and was told that the instrument had only been tuned that morning. Melba insisted that she was right, and the organ had to be tuned again. The fault was so slight that only the keenest of musical ears could have detected it. There were some very fine artists in that company, but Melba shone out above them all. I played with the orchestra all that opera season, having been engaged nine months previously... We first opened in Sydney for 10 weeks, then a six-weeks' season in Melbourne, returning to Sydney for another six weeks—the most arduous season in the history of Grand Opera in Australia. Sixteen operas were produced with a Company equal to anything in the world.¹⁰

In 1931, in a column David wrote for *The Western Champion*, he reflected sadly on the death of the great diva:

News has come through of the death of Dame Nellie Melba. May her soul rest in peace. All music lovers feel depressed, especially those who had been associated with the greatest singer in the world in her musical productions, operas, etc. Her genius was not only in the art of singing but in management, as she showed exceptional gifts in the production of grand opera, and all of the mechanics, producers, and musical directors bowed to her superior knowledge.¹¹

Some of his recollections shine a fascinating light on his character. He certainly seems to have been something of a rebel and was assertive and confident:

In the 1920 Italian Grand Opera season, when going to receive my first week's salary, I refused to accept the amount offered, as I considered it too low, the salary offered being that for ordinary musical comedy productions. The orchestra was composed of selected players... When, they learned of my decision not to accept the salary offered, they were with me. Signor Hasan, the Maestro, was sent for, who agreed with me, so peace was restored. The salary I asked was paid.¹²

By 1932, David had brought his sons into the business. They re-located from Canberra to the Wollongong area buying three shops in Wollongong, Woonoona and Thirroul, selling anything and everything.

⁹ This orchestra was created by the Professional Musicians Association in 1908 and played through to about 1914 under both Joseph Bradley and Henri Verbrugghen

¹⁰ *Western Champion*, 11 August 1930, p.10

¹¹ *Western Champion*, 2 March 1931, p.3

¹² *Ibid.*



David Eizenberg

Despite moving around the state for decades, David also maintained a family home in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, where his wife raised their children. In 1918, he purchased the house at 69 Cook Rd, Centennial Park (now a block of flats). It was in this home that David died of a heart attack on 24 August 1933, at the age of 55.

I have only one photograph of David – a professional headshot where he looks handsome and dignified. I hope to one day find photos of him in the orchestras he played with, but until then we have his stories of grand opera and wonderfully witty newspaper advertisements to remind us of his exciting and extraordinary life.

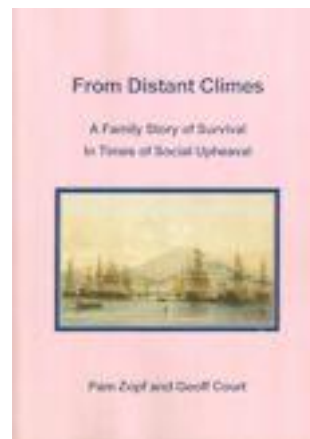
Book Review

From Distant Climes, by Pam Zopf and Geoff Court

Curry Printing, Rosebud West, Victoria 2014

Reviewed by Jeannette Tsoulos

Pam Zopf and Geoff Court have produced a sequel to their previous book, *From Iberia to Van Diemen's Land – A Cohen Family Odyssey*, printed in 2008, a copy of which they had donated to our Society. That book was the result of much research undertaken by Pam Zopf with the help of other descendants of Benjamin Cohen, a Jew of Sephardic background who was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1836 on the *Lord Lyndoch*. The new book, *From Distant Climes – A Family Story of Survival in Times of Social Upheaval*, printed in 2014, covers the same ground as its predecessor, but with expanded genealogies, some new information and a few corrections. It is a thoroughly researched and fascinating book, full of information about the conditions prevailing in the period which it covers.



Both Benjamin Cohen and his wife, Sarah née Torres, were Sephardic Jews – that is, their ancestors had lived in Portugal and possibly Spain. The Portuguese origin of a number of their forebears is confirmed in the early circumcision and marriage records of the Bevis Marks Synagogue in London.

The book begins with an account of the rise of the Spanish Inquisition and the forced conversion or expulsion of Jews from Spain after 1492 and from Portugal, five years later. Many of those who left fled to the Netherlands, a Protestant haven from the Catholic Inquisition, though *conversos* from Spain and Portugal were still professing to be New Christians in Holland, while practising Judaism in secret.

The book then takes us on a journey through the history of the Netherlands at that time, including the loosening of ties to the Spanish Empire and the part played by Jewish or New Christian merchants in overseas trade, particularly in the Dutch East India Company.

The next section of the book mentions the Resettlement of 1656, when Oliver Cromwell allowed Jews to return to England after an exile lasting 366 years. The Dutch Sephardis arrived and were welcomed, bringing as they did their business acumen. Not expected was the influx of *converso* refugees escaping from Portugal, who streamed in throughout the 18th century.

The story then moves to the Cohen family in London and a detailed account of their genealogy and their involvement in the confectionery trade. As elsewhere in the book, the authors have taken the time and

the trouble to find relevant information that fleshes out the story and sheds a light on life in those early times.

Benjamin's arrest for receiving stolen goods and his trial at the Old Bailey are fully documented, along with a description of the hulks on which prisoners were detained until their transportation. The vicissitudes Benjamin suffered as a convict and his assignation to a remote outstation in Van Diemen's Land probably played a part in his deteriorating mental state, leading to his suicide just as his wife and children were preparing to join him.

Sarah Cohen, widow, with a family to support, set up a confectioner's shop in Hobart Town. Her story in the book is intertwined with that of the evolution of the Jewish community in Hobart.

The rest of the book is taken up with extensive family histories, along with relevant information. For example, the story of Elizabeth Saville occasions the inclusion of several pages on the treatment of convict women and an account of Hobart's Cascades Female Factory, where pregnant convicts waited to give birth, and the high mortality rate of their babies.

The 634 pages of this book are full of interesting information and photographs. The list of contents, along with family trees and background material, includes a name and photo index and a bibliography, with suggestions for recommended reading.

The book, like its first edition, has been printed and distributed only to family members. It will not be published commercially or uploaded to the web. The conditions of use specify that all details of living persons are to be kept within the family and not made publicly available.

Pam Zopf and Geoff Court have generously donated one copy of the second edition to our Society and one to the Australian Jewish Historical Society, with the request that the earlier version be removed from our libraries and replaced with the updated book.

News

IAJGS conference, Jerusalem 2015

<http://www.iajgs2015.org/>



Registration is open, and earlybird discounts apply until 6 May 2015.

Registrants can win prizes as your registration is entered in a raffle. Prizes include hotel accommodation, free registration to "Exploration Sunday," MyHeritage.com subscriptions, Ancestry.com subscriptions, touring, and expert assistance to locate your Israeli family.

For \$50, the conference organiser, Ortra, is offering 'no questions asked' cancellation insurance. This covers both hotel and registration. Notice of cancellation must be received prior to 21 July 2015.

The preliminary Conference Program and Schedule are now available on the website. Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, will deliver the keynote address, "Connecting to Jewish Heritage through Jewish Genealogy". Rabbi Lau was among the youngest survivors of the Holocaust. In 1945 he was liberated from Buchenwald at the age of eight.

Changes to Polish records

The Polish government has changed the privacy laws relating to marriage and death records. Previously, these were embargoed for 100 years, but this has now been reduced to 80 years. The 100-year rule still applies to birth records.

Thanks to Jan Meisels Allen, Chairperson, IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee, for keeping us apprised of this development, and to Pamela Weisberger and her Gesher Galicia colleagues, who lobbied passionately for improved access to the records.

Avotaynu Online!

<http://avotaynuonline.com/>

Avotaynu Inc has announced the creation of *Avotaynu Online*, a new venture intended to stimulate collaboration among Jewish genealogists in all its forms. Leading participants in the various areas of genealogical research will provide in-depth articles on events and discoveries on a regular basis.

Avotaynu Online will be available free of charge from the venture's website, and will be shared simultaneously on Facebook and Twitter. Content will be delivered in different formats, including text, video and podcasts.

As a bonus to readers, all articles from 2007-2011 published in *AVOTAYNU*, the International Review of Jewish Genealogy, are available at no charge at the *Avotaynu Online* website. Articles from all other years will continue to be available on a subscription basis.

You can subscribe to the *Avotaynu Online* news feed by registering your email address at the top of the web page.

Avotaynu Online is intended to be entirely distinct from the existing print journal, *AVOTAYNU*, and from the weekly, *Nu? What's New?*.

The Buchenwald Ball released online

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/buchenwaldball>

Identity Films, the makers of *The Buchenwald Ball*, have announced that the film is being re-released for on-demand viewing. This is to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Buchenwald.

The Buchenwald Ball followed a group of Buchenwald survivors, who immigrated to Australia, as they set about celebrating the 60th anniversary of their liberation with a gala ball. The film originally screened on SBS in 2005.

It costs \$4.99 to view over a 24 hour period and \$10.99 to download for anytime viewing. All proceeds from downloads will go towards a new documentary about Holocaust survivors, set in the Holocaust Museum in Melbourne.

Thanks to *J-Wire* for this alert

Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 [UK] - amendments

The UK Parliament passed the *Deregulation Act 2015*. This Act has many parts and wide application, but of interest to genealogists are the resulting changes to the *Births and Deaths Registration Act*. These amendments permit the responsible Minister, to make regulations that will make it possible to obtain non-certified copies of births and death registrations, or to gain access to the information contained in them in a form other than a certified copy.

This will mean that once the regulations are made and the technology adopted, digital copies or transcripts of certificates registered in England and Wales will be available (as they are in Scotland). Hopefully, this will mean faster and cheaper access to these vital records, but this legislative change is merely the first step.

Update on murder of Jiří Fiedler

One year after the murder of Jiří and Dagmar Fiedler, *Respekt*, a Prague newsmagazine, reported the arrest of a suspect.

The report claims the suspect contacted Fiedler through the Prague Jewish Museum. Like so many others, he had asked for help with mapping a Jewish cemetery in northern Moravia. He is reported to have had three meetings with Fiedler and then came again and robbed the apartment and murdered the couple.

The suspect confessed to the murder and faces life imprisonment if found guilty.

Source: *Prague Daily Monitor*, Czech News Agency (ČTK), 25 February, 2015,
<http://www.praguemonitor.com/2015/02/25/respekt-prague-jewish-historian-fiedler-killed-thief>

New and interesting websites

England's Immigrants Database

<http://www.englishimmigrants.com/>

This is a new fully-searchable database from the UK National Archives. It contains over 64,000 names of people known to have migrated to England from 1330-1550. While this seems to be a little early for Jewish immigrants, I found at least two people who are thought to have been Jewish – Simon Jude and John Imanuel Themelio/Tremellius. Themelio was Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge and a convert from Judaism.

New Findmypast database – UK School Admission Registers

<http://tinyurl.com/UKschools1870-1914>

Findmypast has a new database, the *National School Admission Registers & Log-Books 1870-1914*.

The school records include birth date, admission year and the school attended. You may also be able to discover parents' names, father's occupation, exam results and any illnesses that led to absence from school.

The index is free to search, but viewing the record or transcript requires a subscription or pay-per-view credits. Not all schools have yet been uploaded; they will be progressively added during the year.

Jew's Free School, Spitalfields – indexes added to JewishGen databases

Thanks to the marvellous effort of Louise Messik, 20,000 records from the boys and girls entry registers of the Jews' Free School, Spitalfields [London] have been added to the JewishGen UK database. These records are entries from ca.1856 to ca.1907 and include name of both pupil and parent or guardian, address, date of entry, previous school (where noted), date of birth, date of leaving and reason for leaving school.

To search, go to www.jewishgen.org/databases/UK. The results return in their own category – *JEWS' FREE SCHOOL, Spitalfields*. They do not show as part of the *JCR-UK School Records*, or the simple *School Records* categories.

Thanks to the *JGSGB-DISCUSS Digest* for this alert.

Lodz Ghetto Transport lists

<http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/39/278/0/19/1229/str/1/1/15#tabSkany>

The Polish State Archives has digitised the 1942 transport lists of Jews deported from the Lodz ghetto to Chelmno. The files are neither indexed nor in alphabetical order, so you will have to scroll through the 290+ images.

Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e.V (German War Graves Commission)

<http://www.volksbund.de/graebersuche.html>

The German War Graves Commission is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of German war graves in Germany and elsewhere. The German War Graves Commission offers an accessible online database of 4.6 million individual names for World Wars I and II

Most of the Jews to be found here died during WW1, though there are also some burials listed as being Jewish for the years 1940-1945. The site is in German, but a web translator will help you navigate the search.

Thank you to Ramona Leff (via Daniela Torsh) for this link.

Israel State Archives – naturalisation request files

<http://www.archives.gov.il/ArchiveGov/ArchiveNavigation.aspx?ID=11.1.6>

The State Archives of Israel has begun uploading digital files of requests for naturalisation in British Mandate Palestine 1937-1947. To date, there are 1,315 digital case files. The files are in a mixture of English and Hebrew, but the list of names appears in English. I was unable to find a way of searching for a name, or changing the number of files to be displayed at once (default is 10), so finding a relevant file may be a slow process.

FamilySearch adds New Zealand probate files, 1843-1998

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1865481>

FamilySearch has uploaded digital images of New Zealand probate files, 1843-1998. The collection is not yet fully digitised – images will be added progressively. The images for files from the last 50 years will not be available on the website, but reference details will be indexed.

This is an interesting collection as it includes files for those who sought letters of administration when the deceased died intestate.

Dates for your diary



The China Cultural Centre (Sydney) and the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum are hosting a travelling exhibition: *Jewish Refugees and Shanghai*. A similar exhibition toured Germany in 2011, Israel in 2012 and the United States in 2013.

Date: 21 April to 6 May 2015 (Except 1 May and Australian Public Holidays)

Time: 10am-1pm & 2-5pm, Tuesday-Saturday

Venue: China Cultural Centre, 151 Castlereagh Street, Sydney

Cost: Free



In conjunction with the exhibition, there will be a talk by Prof. Andrew Jakubowicz.

The talk explores the background, journeys and struggles for survival of Jewish refugees from Hungary, Austria, Poland and Germany who found refuge in Shanghai. He draws on the story of four of the families.

Time & Date: 6pm-7.30pm, Tuesday 28 April

Venue: China Cultural Centre, 151 Castlereagh Street, Sydney

Cost: Free **but RSVP is essential** via info@cccsydney.org

Workshop Dates for the rest of 2015

The Society will hold workshops on the following dates at:

Rev Katz Library, North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, Lindfield:

| Sunday workshops 9.30am to 12.30pm | Monday workshops 10.00am to 1.00pm |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 12 April | 20 April |
| 3 May | 18 May |
| 14 June | 22 June |
| 5 July | 20 July |
| 2 August | 17 August |
| 30 August | 21 September |
| 11 October | 19 October |
| 1 November | 16 November |
| 6 December | 21 December |